



Universidade do Minho
Escola de Economia e Gestão

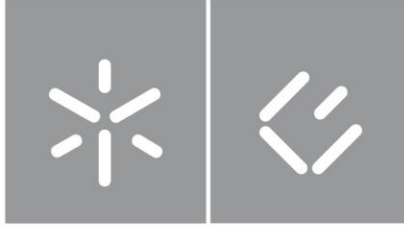
João Pedro Ferreira Gonçalves

Marketing Plan for EEG

João Gonçalves **Marketing Plan for EEG**

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Escola de Economia e Gestão

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Internship Report

Master's degree in Management and Businesses

Work carried out under the guidance of

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University of Minho, May 31st, 2023

Signature: 

Acknowledgments

I must be grateful, primarily, to God, for giving me guidance throughout my entire life.

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To all,

Thank You!

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I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Minho.

Abstract

This report is based on the three months internship in the EEG (School of Economics and Management of Minho University), between 2022 September 7 and 2022 December 7.

This document highlights the activities developed along the 3 months in the institution to comply with the duties of an intern. The main purpose of the internship was to develop a marketing plan for EEG, in order to attract international students to the school, have a defined marketing strategy and establish a strong brand, in the internal and external markets. After addressing literature about marketing plans and branding, specialized in higher education, and researching other universities marketing strategies, of national and international competitors, I started developing the marketing plan, adjusting to meet the requirements of the EEG.

The plan developed took in consideration the different aspects of targeting and segmentation, determining the right processes, strategies, and actions for each segment of potential students. The marketing plan emerges as the achievement of the main goal of the internship.

The result of this report made it possible to elaborate concise planned actions and where were some shortfalls in the general communications plan and social media altogether. It aimed to convey the planned message to all possible future students, in all study cycles of higher education, from different cultural backgrounds and geographical setting.

Keywords: Branding; Digital Marketing; Higher Education; Marketing Mix; Social media;

Abbreviations

Uminho- Minho University

EEG - School of Economics and Management

SWOT- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

FEP - Faculty of Economics of Porto

Nova SBE - Nova School of Business and Economics

ISEG - Higher Institute of Economics and Management of the University of Lisbon

LBS – London Business School

HEIs - Higher education's institutions

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1. Introduction

1.1. Internship and topic motivations

The main motivation for this report is the elaboration of a marketing plan to the School of Economics and management at the University of Minho. The plan intends to reflect and consolidate everything I have learned during the curricular internship. An internship is an opportunity to know a work field before fully entering the job market. It gives contact with the professional reality and access to training for field related activities. The best way to develop skills is on the job, and internships are the perfect way to do it (Margaryan, Saniter, Schumann, & Siedler, 2022). As a current professional, it was truly important that I had more intensive contact with work reality and contributing actively to daily activities.

Thus, the pedagogical practice is of great relevance, as allows: to put into practice what we have only addressed in theory so far, to face obstacles, learning from our mistakes, dealing with unexpected situations, and living unique experiences. Cooks, Stokes, & Parker (2015) found that students internships led to many benefits, such as increased their ability to get along with others at work, facilitated one's growth in maturity (Taylor, 2021), helped them to apply 10 classroom ideas to the work environment, and increased their job search confidence. According to research, there is a positive relationship between internship programs as a university student and potential employment after graduation.

The subject for the curricular internship was the need of the School of Economics and Management at the University of Minho to seek an elaborated marketing plan, to further position itself up on the global market of higher education, and to advance its credentials and prestige.

1.2. Internship location identification

The internship took place on the intern's support office, in School of Economics and Management of University of Minho. The University of Minho is a public institution of higher education, founded in 1973, in Braga, Portugal, as part of the group of "New Universities", that changed the landscape of higher education in the country, that followed the new political and social position of the country. Following the normal structure of Portuguese universities, University of Minho is managed by a rector, which is made up of a rector, a general committee, and five internal units that organize the different internal entities, by intervention areas. The campi of the University of Minho are divided

between the cities of Braga and Guimarães. It is one of the most respected institutions in the country, attracting thousands of students each year, and has always been known for its high quality, being among the best 400 universities in the world, for several years, with EEG being in the top 300 as recent as 2021, and top 3 nationwide (*World University Rankings 2019 by subject: business and economics*, 2018).

A close connection with the business environment makes it possible to offer bachelor, master and PhD degree programmes tailored to the needs of the labor market, combining solid theoretical foundations with a strong practical component. The offer of PhD courses in scientific areas, is based on exceptional conditions for research, such as access to databases and support software, as well as a faculty trained in North American universities such as Oxford, Manchester, Warwick, Lancaster, Essex, Cornell, Stockholm, London School of Economics, Tinbergen Institute, or the European University Institute (Florence) (*EEG Faculty*, 2023).

1.3. Identification of internship members

On September 7, 2022, I began the 3 months internship period at University of Minho, in the School of Economics and Management. The internship took place at the communications department, under the organizational supervision of the Dean of the School of Economics and Management, Dra Cláudia Simões. Dra Luísa Araújo, from the department communications, was also part of this internship, providing advice and help when needed, giving me the opportunity to contribute to events that EEG organized during my internship, as EEG Welcoming Days, EEG Business Day, the visit of the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal Augusto Santos Silva, etc.

1.4. Problem addressed

Attracting international students to a university is a common challenge faced by many institutions worldwide. According to a report by the World Education Services, there has been a steady increase in the number of international students seeking education opportunities abroad in recent years. This trend is expected to continue, with an estimated 8 million students expected to be studying outside their home countries by 2025 (Loo, 2020). Hence, it is crucial for universities to develop a strategic marketing plan that effectively targets this group of students.

The first step in creating a marketing plan is to conduct market research and analyze the competition. This involves gathering data on the competitors, studying their current marketing strategies, and evaluating their effectiveness. As noted in an article by Forbes, conducting a competitive analysis is crucial in identifying the unique selling proposition (USP) of the university and highlighting its strengths and weaknesses in comparison to other institutions (Tompkins, 2021)

Once the strengths and weaknesses of the university have been identified, a SWOT analysis can be conducted to determine the best way to apply the marketing plan. A SWOT analysis is a useful tool for identifying internal and external factors that may affect the success of the marketing plan. By conducting a SWOT analysis, universities can identify opportunities to improve their marketing strategies and mitigate potential threats (Cohen, 2021).

One of the challenges in marketing to international students is segmentation and targeting. International students come from diverse backgrounds and have varying needs and preferences. As noted in an article by Higher Education Marketing, segmentation involves grouping students into smaller segments based on common characteristics such as age, nationality, interests, and academic goals. This allows universities to tailor their marketing strategies to meet the specific needs of each group (*Inbound Marketing for Schools: How to Attract New Students*, 2022b).

Targeting involves selecting the most appropriate segment to focus on. This requires understanding the preferences and behaviors of the targeted segment. Universities should aim to develop a deep understanding of the targeted segment's culture, values, and beliefs. This will enable the university to develop marketing messages that resonate with the targeted segment and increase the likelihood of success (Hemsley-Brown, 2017) .

In addition to segmentation and targeting, universities can also leverage digital marketing channels to attract international students. According to a report by QS Enrolment Solutions, digital marketing is an effective way to reach international students as it allows universities to reach a wider audience at a lower cost than traditional marketing channels. Digital marketing channels such as social media, search engine optimization, and email marketing can be used to create targeted messages that appeal to international students (Tattersfield, 2022).

In conclusion, attracting international students to a university requires a strategic marketing plan that is tailored to meet the unique needs of this group of students. This involves conducting market research, analyzing the competition, conducting a SWOT analysis, and developing a segmentation and targeting strategy. Digital marketing channels can also be leveraged to reach a wider audience of international students. By implementing a well-planned marketing strategy, universities can increase their visibility and appeal to international students, ultimately leading to increased enrollment and revenue.

1.5. Research objectives

The goal of this work was to examine marketing strategies and implement actions that would be successful at engaging and attracting prospecting students, to all cycles of higher education. By attracting more skilled foreign students, exceptional expert foreign academical professors are expected to follow, expanding the prestige of EEG.

1.6. Methodology

The methodology used on the internship was split between 3 steps. The first part was to further read on the subject and start the benchmarking of EEG, in the marketing field, on national and international markets. After careful consideration, I decided the most valuable factors of comparative analysis, which competitors and a swot analysis of EEG. Also, research was done on the aspects more considered by students, national and international, when they choose a foreign university, and how they were connected with EEG, if directly or indirectly.

Next is segmentation and targeting. The marketing plan cannot be directed to every foreign student and from the different cycles of study, a segmentation was done. For example, the strategies for students from Portuguese speaking countries differ from non-Portuguese speaking countries. Students that previously done an Erasmus semester in University of Minho, already have a connection with the university, the initial phase of display the campus and facilities is already surpassed, and we can focus on other aspects for marketing. The methods varied, according with the needs of the student, between bachelor, master and PhD cycles, and the plan was adapted for the cycle sought.

The last stage was deciding which practical actions EEG has to put in motion and put together a

marketing plan that will allow to pass the intended message, to the intended target, with the intended outcome. Establish which KPI's will be used to control the plan effectiveness and the steps to get there.

1.7. Report structure

This report is structured in 7 chapters, each divided into subchapters. The initial chapter of the study is divided into seven subchapters and aims to provide a brief introduction to the presented research. These subchapters include the internship and topic motivation, identification of the location, identification internship members, problem addressed, research objectives, methodology, and structure of the report.

The second chapter of the report is dedicated to the literature review and serves as the foundation for the research. It aims to present a comprehensive overview of the existing theoretical framework related to the topic of investigation. It is divided in 3 subchapters: International Education – directed to the understanding of the importance of a multinational education and its gains; Marketing and Branding in Higher Education Institutions – related to subchapter 2, we conduct our attention to higher education marketing and more specially to branding; Importance of Marketing Plan – in the final subchapter we understand the written literature about the importance of a well-conceived marketing plan.

Thirdly, the internship itself is analyzed, through 3 aspects. The adaptation and initial processes are first explored, to understand the first part of the internship. Afterward, we go into a detailed account of how the report was developed and the thought process behind it. Finally, it is presented some of the extra activities that I had the magnificent opportunity to contribute during the 3 months of the internship.

The fourth chapter a brief explanation about the chosen methodology, why it was selected, and explaining how the conclusions were drawn.

The fifth chapter is about all the analysis that were crucial for the report. As the chapter is named “EEG Current Marketing Analysis”, it's focused on the present status of the EEG Marketing. First, it is presented a competition analysis between EEG and some relevant competitors in the national

panorama. Second, the targets of the plan are analyzed and segmented. Third, the current image and awareness of EEG is examined. Subsequently, a SWOT analysis is presented, disclosing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the EEG Marketing. Finally, we dive into the marketing message that will conduct the plan, explaining the value proposition, mission, values, and vision of EEG. Everything on this chapter is extracted from the plan, in order to better understand what was achieved.

On the sixth chapter, we arrive to concrete results and actions. We introduced a more detailed segmentation, in order to understand the target for the message, in various study cycles and geographical backgrounds. After, it is explained the message channels that were chosen, with a mix of online and offline channels. Next, one of the key points of the plan, the marketing goals, that are clarified and the intended purpose of them. Another important result of the plan is presented next, the marketing mix, present throughout the report. The concrete action plan is indicated next, with the control aspect of the plan concluding this chapter. As in the previous chapter, this one is also heavily influenced by the results of the marketing plan.

The final chapter is the final considerations of the report, also followed by the references.

2. Literature review

A literature review is a critical evaluation of existing literature on a particular research topic. It is an essential component of a master dissertation's it helps to identify the gap in the existing literature, understand the current state of knowledge, and develop a theoretical framework for the study. A thorough literature review ensures that the research is not redundant and that the research question is significant and relevant to the field. Moreover, a literature review provides a foundation for the development of the research methodology, data collection techniques, and analysis. It also helps the researcher to identify potential research designs, theoretical models, and research questions for the study. Additionally, a literature review helps to identify and understand the key debates, controversies, and challenges in the research area. This understanding is crucial for developing a critical perspective and analyzing the research findings (Fink, 2014).

In summary, a literature review is a vital aspect of a master's thesis as it provides a foundation for the research, identifies gaps in the existing knowledge, and helps to develop research questions and hypotheses. It also assists in selecting the appropriate research design, data collection methods, and analysis techniques.

2.1. International Education

The rise of internationalization in higher education has led to an increase in the number of international students across the globe. As a result, universities have become increasingly competitive in their efforts to attract these students, with the development of marketing plans being a key strategy in this regard (Figueiredo, 2019). The importance of a well-designed marketing plan for higher education institutions has been highlighted in various studies, including those discussed below (Mogaji et al., 2023).

In a study by Park and Kim (2020), it was found that an effective marketing strategy is crucial for universities seeking to attract international students. The authors noted that universities need to develop a strong brand image that appeals to international students, and that the development of an effective marketing plan is key to achieving this goal. The study also highlighted the importance of understanding the needs and expectations of international students, as well as the cultural differences that may affect their decision-making process.

Another study by Altbach and Knight (2007) emphasized the importance of universities

understanding the cultural differences of their target audience when developing marketing plans. The authors noted that international students come from diverse cultural backgrounds and have different needs and expectations. Therefore, it is important for universities to tailor their marketing strategies to appeal to these differences.

The importance of word-of-mouth marketing in attracting international students cannot be overstated. Personal recommendations from friends and family are a crucial factor in international students' decision-making process. Universities should aim to create positive experiences for their current international students, as this can lead to positive word-of-mouth marketing and attract future students.

In the specific case of EEG, it is crucial for the institution to develop a marketing plan that sets it apart from other higher education institutions in Portugal. Universities need to identify their unique selling points and highlight them in their marketing strategies. EEG should focus on its strengths, such as its faculty members' expertise, research opportunities, and the quality of its facilities and resources, in order to differentiate itself from other universities and attract international students.

In summary, the importance of a well-designed marketing plan for higher education institutions cannot be overstated, particularly in the current context of increasing globalization and competition. A successful marketing plan should take into consideration the cultural differences of the target audience, utilize digital marketing tools, and focus on creating positive experiences for current students to generate positive word-of-mouth marketing (Figueiredo, 2019). EEG should develop a marketing plan that highlights its unique selling points to attract international students and remain competitive in the higher education market.

The phenomenon of international students has become an increasingly popular topic in recent years, as the number of students studying abroad has grown rapidly. As noted by Perraton (2020), this growth can be attributed to the increasing globalization of education and the development of programs such as the Erasmus program, which have made studying abroad more accessible to students from all over the world. However, in order to attract and retain international students, higher education institutions must develop effective marketing strategies. Stein and de Andreotti (2016) noted that the competition to attract international students has become intense, with universities now viewing international students as a necessity, rather than a luxury.

In this context, a literature review is essential for developing a successful marketing plan for higher

education institutions. Such a review can help institutions identify the factors that are most important to international students when choosing a university and a country in which to study. As noted by King and Raghuram (2013), these factors can include demographic, ethnographic, and historical considerations. Moreover, a literature review can help institutions understand the personal experiences of international students, including their feelings and perceptions about their time abroad. International students generally have positive feelings about their study abroad experiences, and these feelings can play an important role in their decisions about where to continue their studies (Slof, Mittelmeier, and Rienties 2021)

In addition to these considerations, a literature review can help institutions identify the key challenges and opportunities that come with internationalization. Mittelmeier and Ying Yang (2022), refer that internationalization can bring significant benefits to institutions, including enhanced diversity, improved academic quality, and increased revenue. However, internationalization also presents significant challenges, including the need to develop effective support services for international students and the need to adapt to new cultural norms and expectations.

In conclusion, a literature review is essential for developing a successful marketing plan for higher education institutions that wish to attract and retain international students. It helps identifying the factors that are most important to these students, as well as the challenges and opportunities of internationalization. As such, institutions can develop effective strategies to meet the needs of this increasingly important segment of the student population.

2.2. Marketing and Branding in Higher Education Institutions

Marketing in higher education institutions (HEIs) was traditionally rare as their main mission was to serve the community, conduct research, and educate students. However, due to the increasing competition both domestically and overseas, HEIs have started to align themselves with business marketing principles in an effort to increase their institutions' awareness. Social media marketing has become a popular tool for HEIs to reach and engage with current and potential students (Bamberger et al., 2020).

Research on the use of social media by HEIs for non-pedagogical purposes is limited, but it is an effective and low-cost tool that HEIs can use to increase their audience reach. As a result, higher education marketing has rapidly shifted to digital formats. Websites are among the most widely used forms of marketing communication in higher education (Figueiredo, 2019).

HEI marketers have started to focus on the concept of relationship quality to help facilitate the process of building and maintaining positive relationships with their stakeholders, particularly students. Social media has been particularly useful in engaging with students due to their high degree of knowledge and usage (*Inbound Marketing for Schools: How to Attract New Students*, 2022). While social media is a compelling tool for HEIs, many universities are intimidated by the possibilities that come with using several platforms and the responsibility that comes with that possession. Some universities over-control digital media messages, while others fail to govern or respond at all (Siakas et al.).

Developing a solid university community on social media is crucial for recruiting the target audience to the institution, securing them, and sustaining their loyalty and effective word of mouth once they finish their education. Universities should customize the material to their community-building objectives and evaluate their audience groups to ensure they are getting the most out of social media (Siakas et al.). A sense of community is crucial for HEIs to create and maintain positive relationships with their stakeholders. The feeling of belonging to the community, interest in what goes on in the community, and feeling an important part of the community are among the main items that can explain why people tend to feel a sense of community (Vrontis et al., 2018).

In conclusion, HEIs must create different sorts of direct and clear communications and start to engage with potential “consumers” to avoid being influenced by their own perspectives. Social media marketing is a powerful tool for HEIs to engage with their stakeholders, particularly students, and build positive relationships. Developing a sense of community is crucial for maintaining these positive relationships. HEIs should evaluate their audience groups and customize their material to their community-building objectives to get the most out of social media marketing (Bamberger et al., 2020)

Branding plays a crucial role in the success of any organization, including higher education institutions. A strong brand identity can help institutions differentiate themselves from their competitors, attract students, and build long-term relationships with their stakeholders. In this report, we explore the importance of branding in higher education institutions and examine some relevant literature to support our arguments.

One of the critical reasons why branding is essential for higher education institutions is the highly competitive nature of the education sector. With an increasing number of institutions offering similar programs, students have more options to choose from than ever before. In this context, a strong brand can help an institution stand out and create a unique identity that resonates with prospective students (Siakas et al.)

A study found that students are more likely to choose an institution whose brand personality matches their own personality traits. For example, if a student identifies with a brand that is seen as innovative and creative, they are more likely to choose an institution that portrays itself as such. Similarly, if an institution's brand personality is seen as dependable and trustworthy, it is more likely to attract students who value these traits (Kirloskar & Inamdar, 2021).

Another important aspect of branding in higher education institutions is the ability to build strong relationships with stakeholders, including students, alumni, and faculty. A strong brand can help create a sense of community and belonging among stakeholders, fostering loyalty and engagement.

Moreover, branding can also help higher education institutions attract top talent, including faculty and researchers. A strong brand identity can signal to potential candidates that an institution is committed to excellence, innovation, and academic rigor. A study found that an institution's brand image has a significant impact on its ability to attract and retain top faculty members (Why Branding for Universities is Important for Enrollment, 2022)

Despite the benefits of branding in higher education institutions, some argue that branding can also have negative consequences. For example, critics argue that branding can lead to a commodification of education, where institutions focus more on marketing and less on academic quality. Additionally, branding can create an elitist culture, where students and alumni are valued based on their association with a prestigious institution rather than their achievements and merit (Tight, 2022).

However, proponents of branding argue that these negative consequences can be avoided by developing an authentic brand identity that aligns with an institution's core values and mission.

In conclusion, branding plays a crucial role in the success of higher education institutions. A strong brand can help institutions differentiate themselves from their competitors, attract students, build long-term relationships with stakeholders, and attract top talent. However, it is essential to develop an authentic brand identity that aligns with an institution's core values and mission to avoid negative consequences such as a commodification of education or elitism (*Why Branding for Universities is Important for Enrollment*, 2022)

2.3. Importance of Marketing Plan

A marketing plan is a strategic tool that outlines an organization's marketing goals and the strategies to achieve them. It provides a roadmap for businesses to connect with their target audience, build brand awareness, and drive revenue growth. For higher education institutions, a marketing plan is equally important as it helps to differentiate them from their competitors, attract prospective students, and enhance their reputation (Raheel, 2015).

A marketing plan helps to identify the institution's unique value proposition, target audience, and the most effective channels to reach them. It also outlines the strategies to create awareness about the institution, its programs, and its brand. The plan typically includes market research, brand positioning, target audience segmentation, and messaging development. It also includes tactics such as advertising, social media, email marketing, events, and content marketing (Tattersfield, 2022).

One of the key benefits of a marketing plan is that it helps institutions to differentiate themselves from competitors. In a highly competitive higher education market, institutions need to stand out to attract prospective students. A marketing plan helps to identify the unique value proposition of an institution and how it differs from others in the same category. By communicating this effectively, institutions can differentiate themselves and position themselves as the best choice for prospective students (Mogaji et al., 2023)

Another benefit of a marketing plan is that it helps to target the right audience. Not all prospective students are the same, and institutions need to understand their unique needs, preferences, and pain points. A marketing plan helps to segment the audience and tailor messaging and tactics to

each group. By doing this, institutions can communicate more effectively and build stronger relationships with prospective students (Raheel, 2015).

A marketing plan also helps institutions to establish their brand identity. Brand identity is the perception that people have of an institution, and it encompasses its values, culture, and reputation. A marketing plan outlines the strategies to develop and communicate the brand identity effectively. This includes developing a consistent visual identity, messaging, and tone of voice. By doing this, institutions can enhance their brand equity and build stronger relationships with stakeholders (Mainardes et al., 2012). Marketing plans are also beneficial in tracking progress and measuring success. By setting clear goals and KPIs, institutions can track their progress and make data-driven decisions. This helps to ensure that resources are being used effectively and that the institution is achieving its marketing objectives (James, 2022).

In higher education institutions, a marketing plan is particularly important for several reasons. Firstly, higher education is a highly competitive market, with institutions competing for the same pool of prospective students. A marketing plan helps to differentiate an institution from its competitors, which is crucial for attracting students (Cardello, sem data). Institutions that invest in marketing plans can benefit from increased brand recognition and awareness, improved enrollment rates, and higher revenue. Marketing plans are also essential for attracting international students. According to a report by QS Enrolment Solutions, "higher education institutions need to take a strategic approach to their marketing activities to effectively reach prospective international students", (James, 2019). A marketing plan helps institutions to identify the most effective channels and messaging to reach international students, who often have different needs and preferences than domestic students (Byrd, 2022).

In conclusion, a marketing plan is an essential tool for any organization, including higher education institutions. It helps institutions to differentiate themselves from competitors, target the right audience, establish their brand identity, and track progress. With increased competition in the higher education market, institutions that invest in marketing plans can benefit from increased brand recognition and awareness, improved enrollment rates, and higher revenue.

3. Internship: The experience

This chapter in my report is devoted to addressing the experience that I gained during my internship and to provide an analysis of the process of adaptation and integration that I underwent while working at the organization. During my time as an intern, I was able to develop my skills and knowledge in various aspects related to my field of study. Additionally, I will also delve into the extra-curricular activities that I was fortunate to be part of during my internship, as they played a significant role in shaping my overall experience. All these aspects of my internship experience will be analyzed in this chapter, providing a comprehensive understanding of the value that the internship added to my professional and personal growth.

3.1. Adaptation and initial processes

On September 7, 2022, I embarked on a new journey as an intern at EEG. I was filled with excitement, eagerness to learn, and a desire to gain self-knowledge. I knew that the next three months would be an incredible opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. As I stepped into the EEG offices on the first day of my internship, I was greeted with a warm welcome and an introduction to the team I would be working with. Although I have been studying in EEG for 4 years, I was not fully familiarized with all the departments and personnel of the school. It was really stimulating to get to know all corners of EEG, how it works and the people that compose it.

In the first weeks there was the need to present the internship proposal, a reduced version of this report, aiming to outline the intended purpose of the internship. With that in mind, I started reading literature related to marketing and branding, directed closely to international students. This happened because the first intention of the internship was to direct its efforts only to international students. After careful consideration, the scope of action was widened into a full marketing plan to the whole school. Subsequently, alongside Dra Cláudia, it was established what the plan needed to contain, what it required to achieve and to whom it should be directed to. I was ready to immerse myself in the task and activities that laid ahead, and I was determined to make the most of this experience.

3.2. Project Development

With the initial planning and research stages completed, I was able to dive into the development of

the report itself. Drawing on my knowledge and understanding of the EEG, I conducted a comprehensive analysis of the current situation, examining various factors such as the competitive landscape and EEG image and awareness. Another key aspect of the report that I paid particular attention to, was the target audience. As part of this process, I also conducted a thorough assessment of the EEG marketing situation, utilizing a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This allowed me to gain a more complete picture of the EEG landscape.

Once I had completed the initial analysis and research stages, it was time to move on to developing the marketing message for the plan. In this crucial stage, I worked closely with Dr^a Cláudia, leveraging her expertise and insights to ensure that the plan fully reflected the mission, values, and vision of EEG. Using the substance that had already been aligned, as the mission, values and vision of EEG were already established, I began to craft a value proposition that would effectively communicate the key messages of the plan. This involved identifying the unique strengths and advantages of EEG, as well as the needs and desires of the target audience.

With the marketing message solidified, the next step was to determine the message target and channels through which it would be delivered. To ensure the plan's success, I carefully identified and distinguished each potential student that the message should aim to reach. This involved segmenting the target audience according to their cycle of studies, geographic background, and other relevant factors, in order to tailor the message to their specific needs and interests.

Once the target audience was identified, I turned my attention to selecting the most effective message channels. Given the current digital landscape, it was clear that digital marketing channels would play a significant role in the plan's success, including social media platforms. However, it was important to strike a balance between digital and traditional methods, as there are still many students who value in-person touch and physical advertising. As a result, we also considered other channels such as school visits, physical advertising forms such as flyers, and print advertisements.

After identifying the target audience and message channels, the next step was to establish the marketing strategy and specifically, the marketing goals. We defined four key goals that would guide the overall marketing strategy: Awareness, Reputation and Attractiveness, Engagement, and

Repertoire Building. The first three goals - Awareness, Reputation and Attractiveness, and Engagement - were selected with the intention of increasing their respective metrics. The fourth goal, Repertoire Building, was more focused on the long-term perspective. Each goal was carefully described, outlining what it aimed to achieve and how it would contribute to the overall success of the plan. By establishing these goals, we were able to align the marketing strategy with the overall objectives of EEG and create a clear roadmap for achieving success in each of these areas. The information was combined in table 1, as one can see.

Goals	Description	KPI	Target Metrics
Increase awareness	<p>The proportion of prospect students in the field of economics, management and political science who are aware of the academic offer at EEG and its student experience opportunities.</p> <p>This goal and related objectives focus strongly on international markets, considering existing full national awareness of University of Minho as an institution with an offer in the fields of economics, management, and political science.</p>	<p>Number of webpage visitors / new visitors</p> <p>Number of followers in social media and conversion rate in webpage visitors originated from social media</p> <p>Number of followers and webpage visitors from international markets</p>	<p>Increase 30% the webpage visits from international markets</p> <p>Increase to 15% the conversion rate of social media in website visits</p>
Increase Reputation and Attractiveness	<p>The recognition of the prestige of the school by the mediatization of education and research activities, as well as the expertise of the faculty in the field of economics, management, and political science, including the ability of knowledge transfer to society.</p> <p>Our value proposition must be attractive and high standard, in order to people perceive EEG as a school with an outstanding reputation.</p> <p>All content must be, design wise, appealing to everyone who follow our marketing channels.</p> <p>This goal considers the school to be a reference in the fields of economics, management, and political science, overcoming the association of being a regional School for residents.</p>	<p>Number of faculty members with media coverage</p> <p>Number of news published in the media</p> <p>Publicity value in the media covered by faculty members and EEG mentions</p> <p>External Invitations to consultancy and technical partnerships</p> <p>First choice rate among bachelor students</p> <p>Geographical influence in students' attraction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase to 1000 the number of news published in the media - Have 12 different faculty members interacting with the media, providing opinion and/or sharing research allowing a diversification of media coverage - Increase to 50% EEG bachelor students who chose the school as first choice (+13,7% than in 2017) - + 3% international students - + 10% of students from outside Braga District
Improve engagement	<p>The focus here it's connected more with the social media channels and digital ones. Prospective students will be able to give us insights of future needs and we'll be able to answer their doubts about higher education. It'll be as well a way to connect with current students, understand the current needs and how we can improve quicker.</p>	<p>Engagement rate in social media</p> <p>Alumni involved as LinkedIn followers and alumni Portal (Graduway) subscribers</p> <p>Number of webpage visitors</p> <p>Number of participants in EEG events and EEGenerating Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Duplicate the number of alumni followers in LinkedIn, tagging the school in the personal profile and the number of alumni subscribers - Achieve 1000 subscribers in the Graduway Alumni Platform - Increase in 10% the number of participants in School events organized by the Careers Office
Create a repertoire	<p>We intend to build a compilation of media, designs, and templates ready to use for every instance that the EEG needs a new post, handout, merchandising or related content. Interviews and content produced with the help of students is also desired. It's important on the branding issue, to maintain a continuous visual plan.</p>	<p>Number of brochures produced</p> <p>Number of handouts distributed at events</p> <p>Number of visitors/downloads of digital brochures</p> <p>Number of languages and courses covered in interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brochures for all cycles of study - Detailed booklets for each course - Interviews with national and international students, of every course - Handouts produced for every EEG event

Table 1 - Marketing goals (elaborated for the Marketing Plan)

The next step was to develop the marketing mix. In addition to the traditional four Ps of the marketing mix - product, price, promotion, and place - we added a fifth P: people (Riserbato, 2021). This reflected the importance of the human element in the success of EEG's marketing strategy, particularly in terms of building and sustaining relationships with potential and current students. Each element of the marketing mix was customized to align with what EEG represents and how its marketing strategy was connected to the mix. The product element, for example, focused on the unique educational programs and offerings of EEG, as well as the value proposition that set it apart from competitors. Another example, the people element of the marketing mix was focused on building and maintaining strong relationships between EEG and its students, staff, and faculty. This included strategies such as providing personalized support and guidance throughout the student journey, fostering a sense of community, and belonging through events and activities, and ensuring that staff and faculty were highly trained and knowledgeable in their respective areas of expertise.

After developing the marketing mix, the next step was to create an action plan that outlined the concrete procedures required to achieve the defined goals. This plan, as we can see in Chapter 6.5. Action Plan, was developed with a focus on ensuring that each goal was supported by specific actions, and that these actions were aligned with the unique needs and preferences of the target audience.

For each of the four marketing goals - Awareness, Reputation and Attractiveness, Engagement, and Repertoire Building - we developed a series of actions that were tailored to different cycles of study and geographical backgrounds. We also ensured that current students and alumni were included in the plan, as they are important participants in the overall success of EEG's marketing strategy.

Finally, in order to ensure that the marketing plan was achieving its intended goals, we developed a system of key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress and track success. For each of the four marketing goals - Awareness, Reputation and Attractiveness, Engagement, and Repertoire Building - we identified a specific set of KPIs that were closely aligned with the intended outcomes of the plan. By regularly tracking these KPIs, we will be able to gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of the marketing plan and adjust as needed. We also will use these metrics to report progress to key stakeholders and ensure that everyone involved in the plan was aligned on goals and progress.

3.3. Extra activities

During my internship, I had the privilege of engaging in various activities, however, the ones that left an indelible mark on my experience were the EEG Welcoming Days, EEG Business Day, and the visit of the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, Augusto Santos Silva. These activities provided me with a unique opportunity to learn and gain exposure to different facets of the organization.

For a period of four years, I was on the side of being a student, attending university events and experiencing them from the student point of view. However, during my internship at the university, I was given a unique opportunity to work from a different perspective - that of the university itself. I was tasked with preparing and organizing events for the incoming generation of students, which allowed me to gain an entirely new and valuable perspective on the process.

Having been a student myself, I understood the importance of making sure that these events were not only informative but also engaging and enjoyable. I used my experience as a former student to guide me in creating events that would be both informative and fun, helping to make the university experience more enjoyable for the incoming students. This experience allowed me to develop a range of skills, from event planning and organization to communication and teamwork, which will undoubtedly serve me well in my future career endeavors.

4. Methodology

The objective of this research is to develop a marketing plan that will successfully attract the best-qualified students and faculty from diverse backgrounds. To achieve this, we adopted a practice-based research approach that allowed us to adjust and corrections along the research journey. We conducted both internal and external analyses of EEG's current communication, image, and social media presence.

To gain insights into effective marketing strategies for higher education institutions, we conducted a qualitative analysis of marketing and communication plans from other universities. This provided us with a broad understanding of successful marketing practices in the higher education industry.

In addition, we conducted a quantitative analysis of EEG's social media platforms to gain a better understanding of their reach and engagement with potential students and faculty. By analyzing

engagement rates, follower growth, and post reach, we were able to identify areas for improvement and adjust our marketing strategy accordingly.

5. EEG Current Marketing Analysis

In this chapter, all the analysis made for the investigations are presented. They are important to understand why certain decisions were made.

5.1. Competition analysis

We consider our main competitors, in the national context, to be the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto (FEP) for its quality and reputation and due to its close geographical proximity (just 50 km away); and Nova SBE (Lisbon), ISEG (Lisbon), Católica Lisboa Business School, for their quality, prestige and international projection. Nova SBE has conquered a leadership position nationally in the areas of Economics and Management, both in education and research. FEP has a strong tradition in the North of the country, being our most direct competitor. It enjoys considerable prestige with prospective students, parents, and employers.

In this context, EEG can be considered among the top 3 or top 4 universities for Economics, Management and Finance at the national level, both in education and research. Our undergraduate programs in Management and Economics attract hundreds of candidates every year (889 and 730, respectively, in 2021) and entry grades have consistently been among the top 3 in the country (*World University Rankings 2019 by subject: business and economics*, 2018). EEG has started to feature in world rankings, such as the Shanghai Ranking where the areas of Economics features in 401-500 and 3rd among Portuguese universities (this position has been maintained since 2019), and in 301-400 in Political Sciences (*World University Rankings 2019 by subject: business and economics*, 2018).

In a marketing perspective competition analysis, social media presence, across all main platforms is worth a consideration. On the beginning of the internship, a comparative analysis between the main social medias of the beforementioned schools was prepared, as one can see in Table 2.

		EEG	FEP	Nova SBE	ISEG	Católica
Instagram	Followers	2913	5571	19500	12600	7786
Facebook	Likes		20493		34950	42336
	Followers	9200	21498	31000	36184	43569
LinkedIn	Followers	4731	25323	67153	45911	41792
Twitter	Followers	140	1563	4144	1537	1150

Table 2 - EEG and competitors social media numbers (elaborated for this report)

As we can see, EEG has a real deficit on its online presence. All other competitors have an established reputation. In today's digital age, having a strong online presence is crucial for any organization looking to succeed, and this is particularly true for educational institutions like EEG. While EEG may have a solid reputation in the field of neuroscience, its competitors have been more successful in establishing themselves as leaders in this space through their online presence. This deficit is a major challenge for EEG, as it makes it difficult to attract and retain the best-qualified students and faculty from diverse backgrounds who may be drawn to institutions with a stronger online reputation.

Internationally, EEG still has a long way to go, to compete with the very best. Presently, EEG main competitors internationally are universities and schools located in cities with the same dimension as Braga, important cities to the country but not the major ones. For example, when referring Spain, one thinks immediately in Madrid and Barcelona, and intending to compete with schools from those cities, would be a mistake currently. Instead, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Universidad de Sevilla, Universitat de Valencia and Universidad de Salamanca, would be more realistically competitors. Based on the world rankings (*World University Rankings 2019 by subject: business and economics*, 2018), there are some universities, located in large populous cities, that are not well placed. Palermo, Italy's fifth largest populated city, does not have a university in the first 500 places. Like Eindhoven, Netherland's fifth largest populated city, also in the same situation and this city only has a technologically oriented university. Other cities worth having present when preparing a strategy to capture international students are Austria's Salzburg, Belgium's Antwerp and Germany's Stuttgart and Leipzig. Like the cities previously mentioned, these cities could be a focus point where EEG could procure new students and faculty, because they lack compactivity in the economics and management field.

5.2. Target analysis

The target consumers for the marketing plan developed by EEG will be mainly divided in 3 major categories:

Prospective students:

- High school students;
- Potential masters and PhD programs students, currently not enrolled in EEG;
- People already in the labor market, wanting to expand their knowledge;
- International students, looking for an abroad experience in a top university.

Current students:

- Bachelor's students, intending to pursue a masters;
- Masters students, intending to pursue a PhD;
- Students of all cycles, being informed of all EEG opportunities.

Alumni:

- Former students that can contribute with valuable inputs;
- Former students already on the labor market, with the necessity to increase their current cycle of studies;
- Former students who would be interested in short executive programs

Several additional tertiary audience segments also exist. These audiences will be predominantly based on the geographic position of the target, the cycle of education that the targets are enrolled and field of work. Our goal is to clearly identify our target audiences and deliver a marketing message that is tailored to that individual's unique perspective. This aids improvement returns on investment and helps to prevent squandering valuable resources on activities that don't produce efficient results.

5.3. Image and Awareness analysis

By being part of University of Minho (UM), EEG share its good and increasing reputation. UMinho has a nationwide presence, in the major fairs related with universities, congresses and media. Internationally, there's a deficit of presence of the university as a whole, although EEG is strongly present. This is beginning to change, with UMinho being, for the first time present on the World rankings (*World University Rankings 2019 by subject: business and economics*, 2018), In certain instances, some students from Lisbon and Porto have chosen EEG courses instead of one similar

on their cities, citing the curricular offer as the main reason for choosing EEG. It's also important to notice that, sometimes, UM brand "suffocates" EEG, meaning that, sometimes, prospective students know UM as a whole, but EEG is unknown to them, as an individual school. Could be interesting to promote EEG separately, to increase image and awareness.

5.4. SWOT Analysis of EEG

SWOT analysis allows to analyze a company's strengths and weaknesses, check the opportunities and threats to which it is exposed. Strengths and Weaknesses is part of the internal environment of the company, but the opportunities and threats are part of the external environment and are affected by the market. The primary role is to provide the choice of an appropriate strategy to the achievement of certain objectives from a critical assessment of the indoor and outdoor environments (Cohen, 2021). To find the strengths and weaknesses of EEG Marketing, a SWOT analysis was carried out, aimed at current marketing processes, as per Table 3.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Value proposition	Marketing actions too close with UM
Alumni success	Lack of awareness of extracurricular offers
Media presence	Limited resources
Strong northern position	Low number of followers on social media
	Absence of brochure
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Specific executive programs	Continuous centralized government funds
Partnerships	Carry through its plans
Expanding extracurricular offers	
Internationalize the offer	Financial independence
Braga as emerging city	

Table 3 - EEG Marketing SWOT analysis

5.4.1. Strengths

- **Value proposition:** EEG's innovative approach of going beyond the classroom is a unique selling point that sets it apart from other educational institutions. This proposition helps students develop real-world skills that are in high demand in the job market.
- **Strong northern position:** EEG's strategic location in the north of Portugal is a major advantage that attracts students from important urban centers and connects them with major companies in the region. This location provides EEG students with ample opportunities to network and secure internships.
- **Alumni success:** EEG can leverage the success stories of its alumni to attract new students. These alumni can serve as brand ambassadors and demonstrate how EEG's education helped them achieve their career goals.
- **Media presence:** EEG's faculty members' strong presence in national media on important subjects enhances the institution's reputation and helps attract potential students.

5.4.2. Weaknesses

- **Marketing actions too close to UMinho:** One of the weaknesses of EEG is that its marketing actions are still closely tied to UMinho, which can have a negative impact on the institution's brand identity. When EEG participates in fairs or similar events, it is often under the umbrella of UMinho, which can lead to confusion among potential students and dilute the unique offerings of EEG. This lack of differentiation in marketing can be a significant issue for EEG, as it can make it difficult for the institution to stand out in a crowded marketplace. Without a clear and distinct brand identity, EEG may struggle to attract prospective students who are looking for a specialized and unique educational experience. To address this weakness, EEG can take steps to better differentiate itself from UMinho in its marketing efforts. This might include developing a separate branding strategy for EEG, with a unique visual identity and messaging that emphasizes the distinct strengths and offerings of the institution. EEG can also work to increase its presence at events and fairs as an independent entity, rather than relying on UM's brand recognition.
- **Lack of awareness of extracurricular offers:** EEG offers a range of supplementary workshops, seminars, and masterclasses that are designed to enhance the educational experience of its students beyond the classroom. However, despite the numerous benefits

that these programs offer, many students are unaware of their existence or fail to participate in them due to a lack of promotion or advertisement. This lack of awareness is a significant issue for EEG as these programs are an essential part of its value proposition. The programs offer unique opportunities for students to acquire new skills, network with peers and professionals in their field, and gain exposure to cutting-edge industry trends and practices. Furthermore, participation in these programs can set students apart from their peers and give them a competitive edge in their future careers.

- **Limited resources:** EEG needs to allocate its marketing budget more effectively to improve its visibility and attract new students. By investing in a diverse range of marketing channels, creating high-quality marketing materials, and engaging with potential students through events and workshops, EEG can improve its visibility and reach its target audience effectively.
- **Low number of followers on social media:** Having high-quality posts on social media is not enough for EEG to attract prospective students, as the limited reach due to a low number of social media followers can cause missed opportunities. EEG can benefit from effective social media marketing strategies to increase their reach and engagement with potential students.
- **Absence of brochure:** EEG's current lack of a high-quality brochure that properly showcases its courses and unique value proposition could potentially be a major weakness for the organization. In today's digital age, most students and parents rely on online resources and marketing materials to make informed decisions about which educational institutions to consider. Without a comprehensive and visually appealing brochure, EEG may be missing out on an opportunity to effectively communicate its strengths and differentiate itself from its competitors. This brochure can be distributed both online and offline, providing a powerful marketing tool that can help EEG to attract and retain students.

5.4.3. Opportunities

- **Specific executive programs:** One of the opportunities that EEG can capitalize on is developing specific executive programs. These programs are designed to meet the needs of certain industries or executives, and EEG can create them with a view to tailoring them to meet the specific needs of the industry or executives in question. This strategy can help EEG attract a more targeted audience, improve its visibility, and generate new revenue streams. However, effective marketing policies must be put in place to promote these programs effectively to the target audience.

- **Partnerships:** Another opportunity EEG can explore is the formation of collaborative partnerships with major companies in the region. Such partnerships can create a win-win situation for both EEG and the companies involved. EEG students can secure internships and job opportunities while providing companies with a talented pool of potential employees. Additionally, these partnerships can provide EEG with valuable resources and connections to help it improve its programs, increase its visibility, and attract new students.
- **Expanding extracurricular offers:** EEG can also broaden its complementary offer by producing a more diverse and appealing range of supplementary workshops, seminars, and masterclasses. Currently, these programs are underperceived by students, limiting their participation. By expanding the range of extracurricular offers, EEG can attract and engage students with valuable opportunities to supplement their education, network with peers, and develop new skills. This can also help to differentiate EEG from its competitors and increase its appeal to potential students.
- **Internationalize the offer:** Another opportunity that EEG can capitalize on is to internationalize its offer. By offering full courses in English and developing marketing strategies to promote them globally, EEG can attract international students and establish itself as a global player in the education sector. This can be a significant opportunity for EEG to diversify its student body, improve its reputation, and generate new revenue streams. However, internationalization requires significant investment and careful planning to ensure that courses are tailored to the needs of international students and the marketing strategy is effective in attracting them.
- **Braga as emerging city:** The city has been investing heavily in infrastructure, tourism, and education to improve its economy and attract more visitors. This presents a significant opportunity for EEG to benefit from these investments and promote its programs to potential students. As the city develops and expands, more people are likely to be drawn to the area, providing EEG with a larger pool of potential students to recruit from. With its strong position in the north of the country, EEG is well placed to take advantage of this growth and to position itself as a leading provider of higher education in the region. In addition, Braga's investment in education provides EEG with an opportunity to form partnerships with other educational institutions in the area, potentially expanding the range of courses and programs that it offers. This can be achieved through collaborative activities such as joint research projects, student exchange programs, and joint conferences or seminars. By working together, EEG can

leverage the expertise of other institutions and improve the quality of its educational programs. Overall, Braga's emergence as a growing city presents EEG with a valuable opportunity to enhance its visibility, attract more students, and establish itself as a leading educational institution in the region.

5.4.4. Threats

- **Continuous centralized government funds:** One of the main threats to EEG is the limited funding opportunities it faces due to government investment policies that tend to favor Lisbon and Porto. EEG's location in Braga, a city that is not as well-known as the other two, means that it may have a harder time accessing government funding. This puts the institution in a difficult position as it may have to rely heavily on self-made income, making it harder to invest in the improvements and programs that would help it grow. To mitigate this threat, EEG could explore alternative sources of funding such as private investors, philanthropic organizations, or crowdfunding campaigns. Additionally, EEG could leverage its partnerships with local businesses to secure funding for specific programs or initiatives.
- **Carry through its plans:** EEG's success in achieving its strategic, communication, and marketing plans will largely depend on its ability to remain committed and focused on its goals. The institution must ensure that its plans are well-structured, achievable, and aligned with its overall mission and vision. It must also have a clear roadmap for implementation, with measurable targets and timelines to track progress. To ensure successful implementation, EEG could establish a project management team or hire a consultant to oversee the implementation of its plans. This would help to keep the institution accountable and focused on achieving its objectives.
- **Financial independence:** EEG's reliance on UM for a significant portion of its income could hinder its ability to invest in the improvements and programs necessary for growth. This lack of financial independence could also limit EEG's autonomy in decision-making, making it harder to respond quickly to changing market conditions or student needs. To achieve greater financial independence, EEG could explore alternative revenue streams such as licensing its intellectual property or developing its own commercial products. The institution could also explore ways to reduce its operating costs, such as by streamlining administrative processes

or renegotiating supplier contracts. By achieving greater financial independence, EEG could gain more control over its own destiny and be better positioned to invest in its future.

5.5. Marketing Message

5.5.1. Value proposition

The content marketing strategy should run side by side with sponsored publications in social media, to reach new audiences, in new markets, particularly international student markets. In terms of media relations, it is important to promote a better tag of the School brand in the intensification of interactions of the faculty from the School with the national media, and the consequent disclosure of those interactions in the official communication media platforms of the school. Finally, another communication priority regards the communication of the School at the international level, through the international ambassadors, with the creation of an alumni community in foreign countries, and with the presence in specialized paid media with contents targeted to prospect higher education students and information aggregator websites, in addition to the sponsored publications in social media.

5.5.2. Mission

“EEG’s mission is to generate knowledge and develop innovative and transformational life-long learning journeys that support impactful and sustainable practices in businesses, organizations and policy making”. This is the mission than EEG wants to convey.

“Generate knowledge” - we mean that our focus is on developing forward-looking multi/interdisciplinary research with an international relevance by establishing national/international research partnerships and dissemination. “Develop innovative and transformational learning journey” - we mean that our purpose is to transform our students into global citizens, nurturing future generations of executives, entrepreneurs, and decision makers. “Support impactful and sustainable practices in businesses, organizations and policy making” - we mean developing partnerships with practitioners to co-create impactful realities for various stakeholders and society, using our research and teaching initiatives. In line with our values, our focus starts in Northern Portugal and expands to national, European, and international applications.

The mission of the school aligns with the mission of the University of Minho in its purpose to “generate, disseminate and apply knowledge, promoting higher education and contributing to sustainable development, well-being and solidarity”, as per the university website (as per internal sources).

5.5.3. Values

Critical thinking: We promote critical thinking and multiplicity of insights and perspectives in research, education, and overall academic participation.

Impact: We are committed to have an impact at regional, national, and international levels. We produce and cultivate international level research and establish national and international educational partnerships. We contribute to the social, cultural, and economic development in the northern area of Portugal. We value and disseminate knowledge through education and across connections with businesses, organizations, and social and political actors.

Innovation: We continuously look for new ways of delivering our offers. We seek for relevant multidisciplinary streams of innovative research. We want to bring together new ways of co-creating the student and other stakeholders’ journeys and experiences when they come across our School.

Ambition: We are ambitious in our endeavors. Over the years we have been expanding in scope and impact. We aim at always getting better and, in going an extra mile. We want to learn about economic, managerial, and social challenges that communities/societies face and contribute with solutions.

Diversity: Diversity is highly valued at EEG. Our community is diverse and inclusive. Our staff and students come from different and diverse backgrounds. Our research is theoretical, applied, and interdisciplinary, produced within and across disciplines in Economics, Management and Political Science. We value our members’ different profiles – research, practitioner, public - and their wide range of participation in external institutions and initiatives.

Integrity and transparency: We demonstrate integrity and transparency throughout our endeavors: research, education, and institutional management. Our actions are guided by the principles of ethical conduct of the University of Minho (as per internal sources).

5.5.4. Vision

“EEG’s Vision is to be a leading Portuguese University-based School of Economics, Management and Political Science with an international scope and relevance. EEG aspires to have a key impact in research, education and transformation in organizations and society”. This is the vision of EEG,

“Key impact in research” - we mean producing research that fosters knowledge in the areas of Economics, Management and Political Science with an international scope and relevance.

“Key impact in education” - we mean the integration of knowledge in the development of relevant education and training areas for practice, profiling excellence and change makers in organizations and society.

“Transformation in organizations and society” - we mean the development and dissemination of expertise in our areas of Economics, Management and Political Science, within the practical community contributing to a sustainable and better world, as per EEG website.

This vision implies that EEG sets a general goal of consolidating its place among the three best performing Portuguese universities in related fields in research, education, and interaction with wider stakeholders (e.g., community, organizations). To attain a significant degree of international recognition, we aspire to enter and/or improve our position in international rankings by subject (e.g., THE, QS, ARWU-Shanghai) and, at the same time, be among the top-3 Portuguese institutions in those rankings. We recognize the challenge that this represents in an increasingly competitive landscape, but we are ambitious to achieve our maximum potential.

6. Results and Action Plan

In this chapter, the results that were possible to obtain during the internship will be presented. In first instance, focused on the publications present on the alumni platform, an analytical description of the publications was carried out, after this presentation a quantitative analysis regarding the performance of the same publications through the collection and processing of data from the platform.

6.1. Message target

6.1.1. Prospective Students

6.1.1.1. For the Bachelor Programmes

6.1.1.1.1. National Students

Normally, this group is the main target of universities marketing content, as they compose the majority of its students. The current reach of EEG nowadays is beyond Braga, with students from Porto, Coimbra, Lisbon, choosing our courses as their first choices.

For this target, a more personal touch is required, through fairs, events, and school presentations, because the choice of the bachelor's degree they'll attend it's, for the majority, their most important choice until that point in their life. Simultaneously, transmitting through our online channels the value proposition of EEG, its sense of unity, its prestige, and having trending content on its social media.

6.1.1.1.2. International Students

Here lays, perhaps, the major challenge. Currently, the number of international students of the 1st cycle of studies, is minimal on EEG. It's not impossible to achieve higher numbers, as we can perceive from our competitors. Even though the attractiveness is intrinsically connected with the city of Braga, EEG must be able to pass its value proposition across boards. Attracting these students gives a higher reputation to the school.

At this juncture, the in-person connection is more complicated, as opposite to national students. Although we could be present in some international fairs, the communication with these students will be through digital channels. Therefore, all our channels must be updated in English, and, if it justifies in some instances, in other languages. We must do the work of translation, as our content will be truer to our intended message.

6.1.1.2. For Master and PhD Programmes

6.1.1.2.1. National Students

On this segment, we're discussing the students that completed their bachelors on another institution or on another school of University of Minho. We're looking into convincing them to continue their studies here in EEG. Some students like to stay where they already are, having a sense of belonging. Others like new challenges or just want a new environment. The value proposition presented to them must be about the aspects that the EEG does better than the other

because they already have a degree of comparison, different from the prospective bachelor's students.

EEG could be present on other institutions fairs and events, presenting about the differences of both establishments, with a short SWOT analysis about the courses and EEG as a whole. It's also important to intensify the digital presence around March, when the students start to apply to the 2nd cycle of studies.

A subdivision are the prospective students that concluded their 1st cycle years ago and intend to start study again. Here, valuable partnerships with companies can be arranged because it would be of their interest to have personnel with higher degrees of education.

6.1.1.2.2. International Students

This section should be treated as the 1st cycle international students, focusing on the differences from EEG and their current institutions. A major key sub-target here must be the students that previously did the ERASMUS program in University of Minho. We have to convince them to relocate for a longer period and begin their 2nd and 3rd cycles of studies here. The part of presenting the school would be more disregarded, as they already know EEG, and the focus would be on the curricular offer and its prestige.

The digital communications are the most viable channel, trying to transmit our value proposition on their language, to create a more personal connection. EEG would need to have the curricular offer fully in English, to be more attractive.

6.1.2. Current Students

With the students already enrolled in our school, we want to make them feel pleased with the level and prestige of EEG, for them to progress into the 2nd and 3rd cycles of studies here. Extracurricular offer must be a key aspect, showing what we do different from other institutions.

Furthermore, the new generation of students feels the need to see the higher education institutions in a more informal way. We have to engage them in social media, trying to add valuable digital content outside the classroom, that will also help us to perceive better their needs and wants. Produce trending content on social media and integrate the students in its creation, as they like to see a familiar face.

6.1.3. Alumni

Alumni in prominent positions, are the best ambassadors of success in employability at EEG. It is necessary to give former students a voice, explore their full potential through interviews in the newsletter, videos on social media and on the website, use their messages in the presentation videos in high schools. They should also be targeted with relevant contents that developed for the EEG alumni platform. Those contents will consider information about the community, events at the school, business opportunities, recruitment opportunities.

6.2. Message channels

6.2.1. Social media

As previously analyzed, EEG social media platform are still on an early stage of growing its reach. The number of students does not match with number of followers in all platforms, and that should be the bare minimum goal. We should also look to further than our students, to bring more awareness for EEG.

Social media is the key channel of marketing, in present days. If we want to reach the world and be competitive, we must be active and skilled in transmitting messages through social media. The kind of content produced for one social media does not and should not be the same for all, like a one size fits all. The demographic, purpose, tools, and resources of all social media are distinct, so the message should also be differentiated.

Instagram

Instagram is the most used social media today, generally by millennials and generation z, who are the main targets for bachelor's and master's programs, is expanding to generation x and boomers, who can influence youngest generations.

Instagram allows more than the simple "post", with its stories format. This tool can be used to directly interact with students and prospective students. We can ask questions and get answers, ask them to rate an image or a topic, do quick questionnaires, do answering videos with faculty or guest, etc. It allows a whole new dimension of interaction, and not just the usual one.

Reels format also are an option for brief and concrete information, behind the scenes videos, trendy content and more "out-the-box" content. In reels we could explore the transition to TikTok, who

use the same kind of content as Instagram reels, mainly. The posts on the feed are intended to transform some information or event in a more permanent one, and not as temporary as stories and reels.

Being below the 3000 followers, EEG Instagram still has a lot to grow and reach its competition.

Facebook

Although it got surpassed by Instagram, Facebook still is a major player in social media planning. The youngest generations don't use it regularly or use it out of habit because they've groups and chats formed there. The main demography present are generation x and boomers, who usually aren't as considered in marketing related strategies. But, as previously mentioned, they are main influencers in the choices of millennials and generation z.

Facebook allows the same kind of content as Instagram, although not as optimized. The content that could be cross posted in both would be simple image and video posts. One option that will be discussed further, this social media still is a good place for advertising and promotion, as Facebook ads are well optimized and will be delivery to our desired target.

With 9200 followers, it's our "strongest" social media, but with a quick analysis, one can perceive that the engagement is absent.

LinkedIn

Perceived as a "professional" social media, publications on LinkedIn require more thought on them and are not, generally, just a simple image with a sentence captioning it. It's ideal for sharing events, milestones, accomplishments, and more work-related content.

Several companies and associations use LinkedIn to share their reports, articles, journals, and compilations. It has a simpler logistic than printed material, and a great share of people interested in this content follows them and look forward for this information.

Other relevant posts that one can find on LinkedIn, are opinions on relevant current news, day-to-day actions are examined from managers and workers and insights on specific topics. Infographics particularly excel in this social media because they compact information and are, usually, visually

appealing.

With only 4700 followers, LinkedIn could be an excellent bet to elevate the awareness of EEG between companies, potential faculty and guests, paving way to events and media appearances.

Twitter

Twitter main users are the same as Instagram, millennials and generation Z , so the content should be directed towards this audience. This social media is known for its short-form content. A "tweet" is short message, initially composed in only 140 characters, now in 280, with a very succinct intent. By having restraints, Twitter should be used to engage or inform. Engaging by asking a question or sharing a story that individuals will comment on. Inform with news and announcements.

Here we have our most lacking social media, with only 140 followers, although if we look to our competition, this is also where they've the reduced number of followers. Twitter has a stiff model that could allow a good engagement on a university profile.

6.2.2. Website

The institution website is the go-to source for all the information related to curricular offer, where one can analyze the individual courses and what will be lectured. Currently, EEG website follows the same pattern of other UM schools, same design, and scheme. This should be changed, creating a stronger brand message. EEG also has other platforms, like EEG Skills, Intranet, Jobteaser, Alumni, (etc.) that perfectly serve their purpose and are a key part of student's daily life.

6.2.3. Events/ Fairs

This channel englobes a lot of potential ideas. Some are already on track like EEG Business Day or UMinho Summer on Campus. Still, there are a lot of suggestions that would raise awareness and increase the reputation of EEG.

6.2.4. School presentations

The first form of school presentations is in the national high schools. High school presentations must be scheduled throughout the year and follow an image strategy – standardized materials should be used for these presentations.

The schools defined as priorities in Portugal, expand beyond the area of influence in the

Braga/Minho region to also include the wider area in Porto, like some of the following examples, on table 4.

Braga area and outskirts:	Porto area
Escola Secundária Alcaides de Faria – Barcelos	Escola Secundária Carolina Michaëlis
Escola Secundária de Barcelos	Escola Secundária Infante D. Henrique
Escola Secundária Martins Sarmiento – Guimarães	Colégio do Rosário
Escola Secundária Padre Benjamim Salgado – VN Famalicão	Colégio Alemão

Table 4 - Suggested schools for presentations

Also, the possibility of going to schools with professional courses, connected with economics and management will be studied.

To optimize resources and communicate with students, the presentations will be made through videos. The presentations in schools will be uniform, fast, and assertive. This should be created within an advertising logic using testimonies from real students – students who speak to students, from Braga, Porto and other places in the country, other nationalities, and alumni. The key ideas to convey are the quality of teaching, welcoming university environment and relationship with faculty, the employability, dynamism of the city of Braga (cultural events, etc.) and university campus. The video should be short (no more than five minutes), dynamic and inspiring.

In order to further attract best students, the presentation should include the presentation of the faculty, including the most media-active professors, the position of the EEG in the rankings, the relationship with companies, research centres, the typology of events organized (national and international) and the members of staff with presence in the media.

Further on, the school will explore the possibility of having presentations with EEG ambassadors, knowing that this requires another kind of logistics.

6.2.5. Media

The research generated by EEG faculty has the relevance to be regularly published in the national press, such as, *Jornal de Negócios*; *Jornal Económico*, *Dinheiro Vivo*, *Expresso*, *Público* (etc.). In addition, to media relations established by press releases, it is essential to make the pivots from general media identify the fact that they are professors at EEG- UMinho, as well as to disseminate

their contributions in the media, showing the quality and relevance of EEG activity.

6.2.6. Handouts

Physical materials still are not outdated, as one may think. They are extremely useful as a supplement for some of the channels previously mentioned since they could be used as a memento from a presentation or for a prospective student pick one up from a stand on a fair or event. Handouts could exist in many varied forms, with different intents. Small size, short on information but with a captive design. Few pages booklet describing all available courses. A bookmark with enticing images from the school. A 3-way flyer with some information about extracurricular activities. There are a lot of ways we could produce handouts, based on the target and where they would be distributed.

6.3. Marketing goals

Goal 1 – Awareness

The primary objective of this goal is to raise the visibility of EEG and to educate the public about its educational offerings, courses, and extracurricular activities. The aim is to establish the school as a well-known and respected institution, to increase its reach, and to create a positive brand image.

To achieve this goal, a series of actions will be taken to raise awareness and increase exposure.

These actions may include:

1. Developing and implementing an advertising campaign to reach a broad audience, using various media channels such as social media, television, print, and radio.
2. Organizing events and workshops that showcase the school's programs, courses, and extracurricular activities.
3. Partnering with local businesses, organizations, and educational institutions to promote the school's offerings and reach a wider audience.
4. Utilizing content marketing tactics, such as blog posts, infographics, and videos, to educate the public about the school's programs, courses, and extracurricular activities.
5. Encouraging current students, alumni, and staff to share their experiences and positive feedback about the school to increase word-of-mouth exposure.

By executing these actions, the school will increase the visibility of its brand and help the public understand the many benefits of the programs and courses offered. By establishing a positive

reputation and reaching a wider audience, the school will be well on its way to achieving its long-term goals.

Goal 2 – Reputation and Attractiveness

With awareness of EEG established, the next step is to ensure that the school's value proposition is attractive and perceived as high standard by the public. This will help establish the school as an institution with an outstanding reputation, attracting students, faculty, and other stakeholders.

To achieve this goal, a series of actions will be taken to enhance the reputation and attractiveness of the school. These actions may include:

1. Consistently delivering high-quality education and student experiences, to establish the school as a leader in its field.
2. Continuously improving the school's curriculum, resources, and facilities to ensure they meet the highest standards.
3. Developing partnerships with industry leaders and other educational institutions to provide students with opportunities for internships, research, and hands-on learning experiences.
4. Highlighting the successes of the school's students, alumni, and faculty, to demonstrate the high standards and reputation of the institution.
5. Ensuring that all content, including marketing materials, websites, and social media, is visually appealing and consistent with the school's brand.
6. Collecting and showcasing positive feedback from students, alumni, and stakeholders to demonstrate the high-quality of the school's programs and services.

By executing these actions, EEG will be perceived as an institution with an outstanding reputation, and will continue to attract students, faculty, and other stakeholders. By establishing a positive reputation and delivering a high-quality education experience, the school will be well-positioned to achieve its long-term goals.

Goal 3 – Engagement

The third goal of the plan is to increase engagement with prospective students and current students through social media and digital channels. By doing so, the school will be able to better understand the needs and concerns of its target audience and respond to them in a timely and effective manner.

To achieve this goal, a series of actions will be taken to increase engagement and connect with students. These actions may include:

1. Developing and implementing a social media strategy to connect with prospective and current students, and to keep them informed about the latest news and events at the school.
2. Encouraging prospective and current students to provide feedback and share their experiences, so that the school can continually improve its programs and services.
3. Hosting virtual events, to engage with prospective and current students and provide them with valuable information and insights.
4. Utilizing data and analytics to track engagement and understand the needs and interests of the target audience, and to make informed decisions about future initiatives.

By executing these actions, EEG will be able to increase engagement with its target audience and provide valuable information and support to prospective and current students. By staying connected and responsive, the school will be well-positioned to achieve its long-term goals.

Goal 4 – Repertoire building

The fourth and final goal of the plan is to build a comprehensive collection of media, designs, and templates that can be easily utilized for various communication and marketing initiatives. The purpose of this goal is to maintain a consistent visual plan and enhance the overall branding of the school.

To achieve this goal, a series of actions will be taken to create and maintain a repertoire of materials that can be used for various purposes. These actions may include:

1. Creating a library of images, graphics, and other visual assets that can be used in a variety of contexts, such as social media posts, handouts, merchandise, and other marketing materials.
2. Developing a set of templates for various types of materials, such as brochures, posters, and email campaigns, to ensure that all communications are consistent with the school's brand.
3. Establishing a system for managing and organizing all media and design assets, to ensure that they are easily accessible and can be quickly retrieved for use.
4. Continuously updating and refining the repertoire of materials to ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with the school's goals and objectives.

By executing these actions, EEG will be able to maintain a consistent and effective visual plan, which will enhance its overall brand and contribute to its long-term success. Having a well-established repertoire of materials will make it easier for the school to communicate its message and reach its target audience, which will be critical to achieving its goals.

6.4. Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is a crucial element in developing an effective marketing strategy for a company. According to an article published in the *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, the marketing mix, also known as the 4Ps (product, price, promotion, and place), is a set of controllable variables that can be used by marketers to influence consumers' decisions. Each element of the marketing mix must be carefully considered and tailored to meet the needs and preferences of the target market.

Another article in *Forbes* highlights the importance of balancing the marketing mix elements to achieve optimal results. The article emphasizes that pricing should be aligned with the perceived value of the product, and promotion should effectively communicate the unique selling proposition of the product to the target market. Additionally, the article notes that product design and distribution channels should be aligned with the target market's preferences and behaviors (Tompkins, 2021).

In summary, the marketing mix is essential in developing an effective marketing strategy by providing a set of controllable variables that can influence consumer behavior. By carefully

balancing the marketing mix elements, companies can effectively communicate the value of their products or services to their target markets, ultimately driving sales and revenue growth.

6.4.1. Product

We can divide our product in 3 dimensions:

Classroom product – Everything one can expect to get in the traditional classroom setting. The product is the knowledge the student gets from the faculty member, in classes. In this product, EEG has an excellent reputation, with ever changing study plans, shaped by the needs of the industry, using the feedback we get from the companies we work with.

Extra classroom product – EEG has an innovative approach in extra classroom offer. With EEG Generating Skills, students have the opportunity to further develop their soft and hard skills, that they'll need during their careers. Ranging from workshops, lectures and data analysis, these skills were identified as sought by managers when hiring. Other universities aren't offering this innovative method. Also, the JOBTEASER website, where one can search for job opportunities, making connection between the university and work field. Furthermore, the organization that EEG has, is attractive to students. For example, all the dates of written tests are available since the beginning of the year. With this information, the students can plan better their lives, and schedule better their studying schedule.

Further education product – With the executive MBA that EEG offers, UminhoExec, one can further develop their knowledge, with specific, tailored courses, that reflect real opportunities to attack gaps in the market. Additionally, our research centers are referenced as ones of the best in the country and Europe. Students can use them for their assignments and latter, contribute to them.

6.4.2. People

One of the leading parts of EEG offer is its people. The faculty members, among them, collect a sizeable amount of experience, with PhD's in the top 10 Universities of the world, in economy and business. Along with international faculty, almost every member has experience in international conferences and projects. The constant presence in the media indicates that our faculty opinion is sought by different fields, like economy, marketing, in journals, radio, television (etc.).

Not only faculty constitute the people of EEG. Its workers, since accountants, technics, and assistants, are all integral part of the school. A major part of them has higher education concluded, some even with masters and PhD's, a few concluded in EEG itself.

6.4.3. Place

Our product will be available in the educational facilities of both the University of Minho and EEG. The classes for the program will typically be held in Complexes 1, 2, and 3 of the University of Minho. Meanwhile, workshops, lectures, MBA programs, and other additional offerings will take place at the EEG facilities.

In line with the current trend towards blended education, some aspects of the program will also be delivered online, in order to increase accessibility and convenience for students. This approach allows students to balance their academic and personal commitments while still receiving a high-quality education. The online component of the program will be designed to complement and enhance the in-person classes and will provide students with additional resources and support as they pursue their education. Overall, the combination of in-person and online instruction will provide students with a comprehensive and flexible learning experience that meets their needs and helps them achieve their goals.

6.4.4. Price

With regard to tuition fees, the prices for bachelor's programs for national students are capped to a nationwide limit set by the governing body. However, for master's, PhD's programs and for international students, EEG has the discretion to set its own prices. Despite charging a higher fee compared to its competitors, EEG believes that the added value and extra features offered in its programs justify the difference in price.

The UMinhoExec program, on the other hand, follows the principle of premium pricing, as the sense of a premium course is reflected in the fee. The higher cost of the MBA programs reflects the quality and level of content offered. The program is designed to provide students with a comprehensive education and a wide range of practical skills and knowledge that are highly valued in the job market. With the UMinho Exec program, students can be confident that they are receiving

a high-quality education that is worth the investment.

6.4.5. Promotion

The promotion for the product or service in question will be executed in accordance with the established marketing plan and communication plan, following a comprehensive review and update. This review and update process will ensure that the marketing and communication plans are current, relevant, and aligned with the organization's goals and objectives. After the plans have been updated, the promotion will be conducted according to the strategies and tactics outlined in the plans. The goal is to effectively communicate the benefits of the product or service to the target audience, increase brand awareness, and drive sales. The promotion will be carefully monitored and evaluated to assess its effectiveness, and the marketing and communication plans will be adjusted as needed to ensure continued success.

6.5. Action Plan

The resulting action plan can be consulted in the table 5 and 6. It was the intended outcome of this plan, as it gave clear instructions of what we could do to achieve our goals.

Goal	Action
Prospect Students – Bachelors Programs	
National Students	
Goal 1: Awareness	Action 1: Do school presentations. First in the Braga Region, expanding to key major cities Action 2: Be present in high school events that gather a significant number of students Action 3: Distribute handouts on school's entrances Action 4: Continue to dynamize the Best Student Event, Open Days, Summer on Campus for prospective undergraduate students
Goal 2: Reputation and Attractiveness	Action 1: Promote the extracurricular offer of EEG Action 2: Exhibit life on campus and of an EEG student
Goal 3: Engagement	Action 1: Create social media posts targeting high schoolers Action 2: Interact with them in events that they're present, recording it
Goal 4: Repertoire building	Action 1: Production of Presentation Videos about the EEG offer. Action 2: Development of digital material with information about the academic programs Action 3: Produce handouts with simple key information
International Students	
Goal 1: Awareness	Action 1: Implement ads targeting international students, in their own language, on major social media Action 2: School presentations/events/fairs in international high schools Action 3: Implement EEG International Ambassadors
Goal 2: Reputation and Attractiveness	Action 1: Promote EEG faculty participation in international events/lectures, while using EEG Materials Action 2: Dynamize events/activities with EEG International Ambassadors
Goal 3: Engagement	Action 1: Implement ads targeting international students, in their own language, on major social media Action 2: Call-to-action in foreign languages Action 3: Interactions with Erasmus students of EEG, outgoing and ingoing
Goal 4: Repertoire building	Action 1: Have all material, digital and physical, translated in the most strategic languages. Action 2: Have a compilation of interviews with current international students

Table 5 - Part 1 of the action plan

Prospect Students – Master's and PhD's Programs	
National Students	
Goal 1: Awareness	Action 1: Being present in other universities events/fairs Action 2: Target ads to where isn't a university offering masters in EEG field.
Goal 2: Reputation and Attractiveness	Action 1: Give focus on the extracurricular offer and partnerships with companies Action 2: Share the good results of investigation by students and faculty members Action 3: Provide insights on current events by associations or faculty members
Goal 4: Repertoire building	Action 1: Brochures about the curricular offer of Masters and PhDs, with every course thoroughly explained Action 2: Handouts prepared to distribute about the 2 nd and 3 rd cycles Action 3: Record interviews with current students, about the courses.
International Students	
Goal 1: Awareness	Action 1: Implement ads targeting international students, in their own language, on major social media Action 2: School presentations/events/fairs in international universities Action 3: Implement EEG International Ambassadors Action 4: Being present in major international fairs/congresses
Goal 2: Reputation and Attractiveness	Action 1: Promote EEG faculty participation in international events/lectures, while using EEG Materials Action 2: Dynamize events/activities with EE International Ambassadors Action 3: Invite faculty/students from other universities to events
Goal 3: Engagement	Action 1: Implement ads targeting international students, in their own language, on major social media Action 2: Call-to-action in foreign languages Action 3: Interactions with Erasmus students of EEG, outgoing and ingoing
Goal 4: Repertoire building	Action 1: Have all material, digital and physical, translated in the most strategic languages. Action 2: Have a compilation of interviews with current international students
Current Students	
Goal 1: Awareness	Action 1: Expose them to all the extracurricular offer EEG has Action 2: Regularly promote the courses of the 2 nd cycle
Goal 2: Reputation and Attractiveness	Action 1: Promote direct contact with companies Action 2: Have all-year events
Goal 3: Engagement	Action 1: Create interactive content on social media Action 2: Use, as much as possible, student collaboration in creating content Action 3: Elaborate a schedule, to give a equal space to all courses on social media
Goal 4: Repertoire building	Action 1: Record interviews with current students, about the courses.

Alumni	
Goal 2: Reputation and Attractiveness	Action 1: In events/workshops/etc. ask for the collaboration of Alumni (CEO Talks and Alumni Talks) Action 2: Implement EEG International Ambassadors Action 3: Newsletter Action 4: Content Marketing in the Alumni Platform and LinkedIn about topics of Economics, Management and Political Sciences
Goal 3: Engagement	Action 1: Develop content for the EEG Alumni platform Action 2: Call-to-action on social media directed to Alumni Action 3: Dynamize events specifically to Alumni
Goal 4: Repertoire building	Action 1: Record interviews with Alumni, for all courses. Action 2: Production of presentation videos about academic programs, in an academic progression perspective

Table 6 - Part 2 of the action plan

6.6. Controls

The KPI's presented on the action plan will be further explained.

Awareness:

1. Number of webpage visitors / new visitors: This KPI measures the total number of visitors to the EEG

(name of the school/institution) website, as well as the number of new visitors. The goal is to track the growth of the school's online presence and to see how well it is attracting new visitors to the site. A high number of visitors and new visitors suggests that the school's online marketing efforts are successful in reaching its target audience.

2. Number of followers in social media and conversion rate in webpage visitors originated from social media: This KPI measures the number of followers the school has on its social media channels and the conversion rate of those followers who visit the website after following the school's social media accounts. The goal is to see how well the school is engaging its audience on social media and how effectively it is directing them to its website. A high number of followers and a high conversion rate suggest that the school is effectively using social media to reach its target audience.

3. Number of followers and webpage visitors from international markets: This KPI measures the number

of followers the school has from international markets and the number of visitors to the website from those markets. The goal is to see how well the school is reaching its target audience outside

of its local market and to gauge the success of its efforts to attract international students. A high number of followers and visitors from international markets suggests that the school is effectively reaching its target audience and that it is well positioned to attract international students.

Reputation:

1. Number of faculty members with media coverage: This KPI measures the number of faculty members who have been featured in the media. The goal is to see how well the school's faculty is being recognized in the media and to measure the impact of their research and expertise on the school's reputation. A high number of faculty members with media coverage suggests that the school is effectively promoting the expertise of its faculty and that they are well respected in their fields.

2. Number of news published in the media: This KPI measures the number of news articles published in the media that mention the school. The goal is to track the school's media coverage and to see how well it is being recognized in the media. A high number of news articles suggests that the school is being actively covered by the media and that it is attracting positive attention.

3. Publicity value in the media covered by faculty members and EEG mentions: This KPI measures the estimated value of the publicity the school is receiving in the media. This can be calculated by using metrics such as the number of impressions or reach of the media coverage, the estimated cost of equivalent advertising, and other factors. The goal is to see how much value the school is getting from its media coverage and to track the impact of its efforts to promote itself in the media. A high publicity value suggests that the school is receiving substantial exposure in the media and that it is effectively promoting itself.

4. External Invitations to consultancy and technical partnerships: This KPI measures the number of external invitations the school has received to provide consultancy or technical services. The goal is to see how well the school is perceived by other organizations and to track the impact of its expertise on its reputation. A high number of external invitations suggests that the school is well respected and that it is in demand as a consultant or technical partner.

5. First choice rate among bachelor students: This KPI measures the percentage of bachelor

students who choose the school as their first choice. The goal is to see how well the school is perceived by prospective students and to track the impact of its marketing and recruitment efforts. A high first choice rate suggests that the school is effectively attracting the students it wants to attract and that it is well positioned to enroll a strong and diverse student body.

6. Geographical influence in students' attraction: This KPI measures the geographical distribution of the school's students and the extent to which students are coming from different regions. The goal is to see how well the school is attracting students from different geographical areas and to track the impact of its recruitment and marketing efforts. A diverse geographical distribution of students suggests that the school is effectively reaching a wide range of prospective students and that it is well positioned to enroll a diverse student body.

Engagement:

1. The engagement rate in social media: This KPI measures the level of interaction and participation from the audience on the school's social media platforms. This includes likes, comments, shares, and other forms of engagement such as mentions and direct messages. The engagement rate is an important metric to track as it reflects the level of interest and involvement of the audience in the content and activities of the school.

2. The number of alumni involved as LinkedIn followers and alumni Portal (Graduway) subscribers: This KPI tracks the number of alumni who have subscribed to the school's LinkedIn page or alumni portal, indicating their continued interest and engagement with the school even after they have graduated.

3. The number of webpage visitors: This KPI tracks the number of unique visitors who access the school's website and provides an understanding of how many people are interested in learning more about the school.

4. The number of participants in EEG events and EEGenerating Skills: This KPI tracks the number of attendees or participants who take part in events and activities organized by the school, indicating their level of interest and engagement with the school's offerings.

Repertoire:

1. The number of brochures produced: This KPI provides a measure of the reach and visibility of the school's marketing efforts, as well as the resources invested in producing these materials. This includes the number of physical brochures printed and distributed, as well as digital brochures that can be downloaded from the school's website.
2. The number of handouts distributed at events: This KPI provides a measure of the impact and reach of the school's events, as well as the interest level of the attendees in learning more about the school and tracks the number of informational materials given out at events and activities organized by the school.
3. The number of visitors/downloads of digital brochures: This KPI tracks the number of people who access and download the school's digital brochures from its website. It provides a measure of the visibility and reach of the school's marketing efforts, as well as the interest level of the target audience in learning more about the school.
4. The number of languages and courses covered in interviews: This KPI tracks the number of different languages and courses that are covered in interviews and provides a measure of the reach and visibility of the school, as well as its impact and reputation among different language groups and potential students interested in specific courses.

7. Final considerations

The purpose of this final chapter is to present the main conclusions drawn from the internship. In this way, it is divided into three subchapters referring respectively to the main conclusions, contributions to practice and their implications for practice, and limitations and suggestions.

7.1. Conclusions

Since the beginning of the internship, the importance of a well-thought-out marketing plan for the branding of a HEI has been emphasized. It became evident that tailoring the marketing plan to the intended target audience was crucial, as there is no one-size-fits-all approach in marketing. Recognizing the diverse preferences and characteristics of prospective students is essential for effective outreach.

Moreover, it was concluded that a balanced blend of digital and physical marketing strategies is vital for reaching different prospective students. In today's digital age, an online presence is indispensable for any successful marketing campaign. Utilizing various digital channels such as social media, search engine optimization, email marketing, and online advertising can significantly expand the reach and visibility of an HEI. However, it is equally important not to neglect the power of physical marketing efforts. In-person events, campus visits, printed materials, and traditional advertising methods still play a significant role in capturing the attention and interest of prospective students.

In addition to planning and implementing a marketing strategy, it is crucial to monitor, measure, and evaluate its success or failure. This ongoing evaluation allows for continuous improvement and adaptation of the marketing efforts. Regular monitoring of key performance indicators (KPIs), such as website traffic, conversion rates, engagement metrics, and enrollment figures, provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the strategies employed.

By analyzing the monitoring reports, it becomes possible to refine existing strategies and develop new ones with even greater potential. The data-driven approach allows for informed decision-making, enabling adjustments to be made based on the identified strengths and weaknesses of

the marketing plan. This iterative process enhances the overall marketing strategy's efficiency and increases the likelihood of achieving the objectives previously defined by the company, such as increasing enrollment numbers, enhancing brand awareness, or improving student retention rates.

In conclusion, a well-thought-out marketing plan tailored to the target audience, encompassing a combination of digital and physical strategies, is essential for the branding of a Higher Education Institution. However, the journey does not end with implementation; monitoring, measuring, and evaluating the success or failure of the marketing strategy are equally vital. These evaluations provide valuable insights for refining existing strategies and developing new ones, ultimately increasing the potential for achieving the EEG's predefined objectives.

7.2. Contributions and implications

The marketing plan was a crucial requirement for EEG (the Higher Education Institution) and formed the primary objective of the internship. While EEG had already implemented a communication plan, it recognized the necessity of a comprehensive marketing strategy to pursue further international certifications and expand its reach. The marketing plan provided the school with a well-defined roadmap, serving as a practical tool with concrete actions that could be promptly executed.

One of the significant advantages of having a marketing plan was its immediate applicability. The plan was meticulously designed to address the specific needs and goals of EEG, considering its target audience, competitive landscape, and desired outcomes. By having a well-structured marketing plan in place, EEG was able to initiate its implementation without delay. The plan acted as a comprehensive guide, outlining the necessary steps and resources required for each phase of execution.

The marketing plan also served as a means to measure progress and track the success of each action. It established key performance indicators (KPIs) and benchmarks to evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing strategies deployed. This allowed EEG to monitor the outcomes, make data-driven adjustments if necessary, and ensure alignment with the predefined objectives.

7.3. Limitations and suggestions

With the daily changes in marketing and social media, it is a hard task to remain updated to the content requirements. Some strategies that should work or have worked in the past may not be the best ones for the present, simply because something changed without warning, or a new trend was settled. And, as it is the first time that EEG utilizes a marketing plan, it is susceptible to some unforeseen mistakes.

The duration of the internship was sufficient to produce the plan, but insufficient to apply and draw the conclusions and adjust. This was the main limitation, has it been all just theoretical, leaving EEG with the task of applying to reality and draw real conclusions, and controlling the KPI's.

I suggest that a continuous assessment of the goals and actions should be put in place. The channels used should also be monitored, because of the daily changes in media platforms previously mentioned. It is also important to converge the marketing plan with the communications plan, to establish a single line of thought throughout the EEG branding.

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