

The Importance of Promoting Cultural Production through Marketing Strategies

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Abstract. The field of culture is pivotal in the production of knowledge, primarily through various artistic expressions that educate and foster critical reflection. Notably, artistic movements, such as feminist art from the 1970s, alongside contemporary works by artists like Rosana Paulino, exemplify how art can effectively engage with pressing social issues, including racism and racial awareness. Institutions such as the University of the State of Santa Catarina (UDESC) serve as vital centers for artistic and academic production, offering programs that promote the creation and dissemination of knowledge in the arts. This article explores the necessity of expanding access to cultural production, particularly for non-specialized audiences. To facilitate this democratization of art, the research proposes communication strategies that leverage digital marketing. A case study of the Communication Center at UDESC's Center for the Arts will be presented, emphasizing its initiatives aimed at broadening public access to artistic production. Such efforts are essential for fostering a more equitable and inclusive society, ultimately contributing to the democratization of cultural engagement and awareness.

Keywords. digital marketing, cultural production, arts, communication,

1. Introduction

The field of culture is a significant producer of knowledge. This is because various artistic expressions are responsible for arts works that teach, educate, and promote reflection. The field of the arts serve as a way to foster important and current reflections, stimulating discussions and encouraging critical thinking.

In the visual arts, numerous movements and artistic productions have addressed major social issues, such as the feminist art movement that emerged around the 1970s, particularly in Northern countries of the globe. Today, in Brazil, the works of artist Rosana Paulino, for example, represent her experiences as a Black woman in a country that still lacks racial awareness and suffers from the ills of racism, while also focusing on education and consciousness through art.

For all these reasons, it is important for cultural production to reach more people. In Brazil, the right to culture is guaranteed by Article 27 of the Federal Constitution. Furthermore, the United Nations recognizes access to culture as a part of human rights, especially in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in conventions such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The freedom to participate in cultural life, to enjoy the benefits of science and culture, and to have access to cultural education must be ensured due to their vast importance in social construction and the development of a more just society. In this sense, how can art and cultural production truly reach more people? How can art move beyond a specialized audience to also engage those who are not directly involved in an artistic context?

The answer to this question may lie in communication strategies. The objective of this article is to propose the use of communication strategies to promote artistic productions and enable them to reach a broader audience. Within these strategies, we will highlight digital marketing. We propose a case study focused on the actions of the Communication Center of the UDESC Center for the Arts, a sector that is exclusively concerned with ensuring that the artistic productions created at the university reach more people.

2. Social engaged art

By analyzing history, we can perceive that art, culture, and artistic movements have the capacity to mobilize and transform realities. According to Biesdorf and Wanderscheer¹ reference Fischer in their work, “[...] one of the great functions of art in an era of immense mechanical power is to show that there are free decisions, that humans are capable of creating the situations they need, the situations toward which their will inclines.” In a globalized world, individuals are undergoing a transformation, changing habits, concepts, and thoughts; however, it is essential to seize the freedom to express oneself, and the artist, being free, must utilize that freedom to fulfill their social role.” Thus, it is noteworthy that the role of the artist and the art they produce can be directly linked to an attempt to understand and question society.

In a historical context, art associated with feminism, for example, began in the 1970s and was very active in the United States. Artists engaged in discussions about gender prejudices were responsible for fostering discussions that resonated within the artistic community and also reached the general population, provoking questions about prevailing social norms. In this sense, artists such as Judy Chicago, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, and Barbara Kruger, also served as agents of social transformation through their artistic practices. Currently, in Brazil, artist Rosana Paulino focuses her artistic production on social critique regarding scientific racism and the status of black women in Brazilian society. On her website², she advocates that her works address various forms of violence resulting from racism and the historical consequences of slavery. She is also concerned about exposing the scientific racism Brazil faced through its history. The artist, who has international recognition and has exhibited in countries such as Argentina, Germany, Portugal, and the United States, is a researcher in the field of visual arts and also focuses on education, particularly in ethnic-racial education, a topic of significant social relevance.

When thinking about art that engages with the public, we highlight a passage from Claire Bishop's article "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents," in which she discusses politically engaged art and relational art. Bishop , (3p150) “Such an ethical imperative finds support in most theoretical writings on art that collaborates with ‘real’ people (that is, those who are not friends of the artist or other artists)”. In this context, we posit that art which transcends the confines of the museum is characterized by its ability to engage a non-specialized audience. Therefore, it is pertinent to ask: how can we broaden this reach? What strategies are valid and viable for this purpose? In this sense, it is possible to propose pathways by thinking about communication strategies, with an emphasis on the capabilities of digital marketing.

3. Marketing as a strategy

Communication can also be interpreted as attracting and retaining people's attention to the message that wants to be conveyed. Philip Kotler, considered the "father of marketing" and the author of several books, defines marketing as a social and administrative process through which individuals and groups obtain what they need and desire. Marketing strategies have been developed in response to market competitiveness to attract people's attention. Thus, marketing is a communication strategy that is born, grows, and develops based on the market, and considering socially engaged art linked to marketing can seem contradictory. Nevertheless, it is worth considering that art, to fulfill its social role, to reach and impact more people and to enhance the value of the artist's work and culture, can utilize online means and social media to reach more individuals.

Over the years and with technological development, traditional marketing has had to adapt to the digital world, and in this scenario, attracting attention also means being present on digital platforms. In this regard, Philip Kotler (4 p18), argues that “the old patterns of civilization—political, economic, socio-cultural, and religious—were being destroyed and replaced by a more horizontal and inclusive set of social standards”. Thus, marketing that adapts to social networks is also more interactive, more responsive to the opinions of users who engage with these platforms and act simultaneously as spectators and consumers.

The author (4p26) also asserts that “in the online world, social media have redefined the way people interact with each other, allowing them to develop relationships without geographical and demographic

barriers (...). The impact of social media does not stop there. It also promotes global collaborations in innovation.” Within the logic of a marketing approach that adapts to new standards and realities, it is pertinent to recognize the potential for employing these strategies in cultural dissemination, not focusing on the market but rather on expanding cultural access for the population. Therefore, associating the dissemination of cultural production with digital marketing strategies can be a viable option to attract more people to artistic productions.

According to the Meltwater Digital 2024 Global Overview Report⁵, the average global time spent on social media is 2 hours and 23 minutes. There are 5.04 billion users, with 62.3% of the world’s population using social networks. Furthermore, 94.2% of internet users are on social media. Additionally, the report highlights various reasons for using social media. Some of the categories noted include messaging friends and family, sharing posts of photos and videos, following brands, and looking for entertaining content. The selection of these categories by users varies across different social networks and their respective objectives; however, it is relevant to observe that they encompass broad and diverse areas of life and individual goals. On these platforms, people inform themselves, entertain themselves, and share information. In this sense, attracting attention in this medium also involves creating awareness and relevance. Successful dissemination on social media ensures that information reaches a larger audience, which is a challenge encountered in cultural promotion.

4. Case study: communication applied to artistic productions

The Communication Center (NC) within the Center for Arts, Fashion, and Design at the University of the State of Santa Catarina (UDESC) exemplifies a sector dedicated to the targeted communication of cultural productions and scholarly research. As outlined on its official website, the Center is tasked with promoting activities and academic research generated by the UDESC academic community in the fields of Arts, Design, and Fashion. This is accomplished through various channels, including social media, press releases, and additional dissemination platforms.

In interviews with communication professionals who have worked at the Center and faced the challenge of

navigating the intersection of artistic production and communication, Heloíse Inês Guesser⁶, UDESC’s Secretary of Communication and a Master’s graduate in Media Studies and Journalism from the Nova University of Lisbon, emphasizes the importance of disseminating cultural productions: “the contribution that art brings to people’s lives, to the formation of critical thinking (...) Engagement with art and art as science is revealing for those who are involved with it. Getting closer to the entire diversity of cultures that a community possesses only contributes positively”⁶.

The current coordinator of the Center, Carolina Teixeira Weber Dall’Agnese⁶, who holds a PhD in Communication from the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM, Brazil) and a PhD in Communication Sciences from the University of Beira Interior (UBI, Portugal), explains some of the communication strategies employed by the center. She notes that their dissemination efforts are primarily focused on “the production of content for social media”⁷ and advocates, “We have discussed how to produce content more suited to the platforms, which truly engages with these spaces, seeking a balance between being attentive to trends while not losing sight of the educational and institutional character”⁸. Moreover, regarding the significance of a presence on social media, she stresses: “Critically important, nowadays we can say it is essential to be on social media to reach more people, especially the younger audience, who are the main target of our (undergraduate) courses. Among the platforms, our primary focus today is Instagram, which has been growing in audience and engagement. Through it, we receive considerable feedback on the actions we promote. It is also a channel for clarifying people’s doubts”⁸.

The importance given to both dissemination and digital marketing strategies within the activities of the Communication Center is evident. It is noteworthy that this commitment to dissemination comes from a sector that belongs to a public and free university located in southern Brazil, in Santa Catarina, and that analyzing their actions significantly contributes to understanding how communication can align with the promotion of cultural productions.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, disseminating artistic production through communication strategies based on digital marketing can be an effective way to reach a broader audience, moving beyond a select group of individuals and fulfilling its social role in fostering culture and

engaging in people's lives. To illustrate the importance of making art accessible to more people, we discussed the connection between art and the feminist movement, highlighting artists like Rosana Paulino, who address themes of racism in their work, as well as artistic reflections that resonate with society as a whole.

To advocate for marketing as a relevant communication strategy applied to cultural productions we referenced Philip Kotler's insights on marketing. Moreover, the significance of marketing adapted to social media becomes evident when analyzing the Meltwater Digital 2024 report, which highlights social media usage patterns. We also provided a practical example of an active Center effectively working towards promoting artistic productions: the Communication Center of the Center for Arts, Design, and Fashion (CEART) at the University of the State of Santa Catarina. Through insights gathered from professionals at the CEART Communication Center, we recognized the importance of their initiatives, with digital marketing serving as a foundational pillar in their strategies to reach a wider audience.

Thus, we propose the use of digital marketing as a valid communication strategy that should be explored by cultural agents and institutions concerned with the preservation and dissemination of cultural productions. Within this proposition, there's a contradiction: socially engaged art, which aims to provoke reflection and act as an agent of social change, often opposes the market-driven logics that traditional marketing underlies. Nevertheless, it is essential to reflect on the fact that to fulfill its social function and reach a broader audience while enhancing the value of artistic and cultural work, art can leverage digital platforms and social media to influence more people.

Among the challenges encountered, the lack of existing literature on this specific topic has resulted in some gaps in the research that still need to be addressed. The absence of real data regarding the impact of marketing applied to specific dissemination actions poses a barrier to demonstrating its actual effectiveness; however, current interviews and literature suggest that the use of digital marketing can be beneficial for promoting the arts.

It is crucial to recognize that communication strategies can enhance the reach of cultural production, stimulating discussions that directly impact the construction of a more aware, critical, and fair society.

Despite the challenges, this article highlights the potential of this association and paves the way for further studies, research, and significant outcomes.

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