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Digital Content Strategies to Set Real Estate Projects Apart and Boost Sales in a Competitive Market in Santa Elena Province

Estrategias de contenido digital para diferenciar proyectos inmobiliarios y acelerar las ventas en un mercado competitivo en la provincia de Santa Elena

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Abstract

The real estate market in the province of Santa Elena exhibits a high degree of homogeneity in digital communication strategies, which has intensified price-based competition and reduced profit margins for companies in the sector. This article analyzes the case of InmoCosta, a real estate development company that has experienced a decline in digital lead conversion, an increase in the time to close sales, and a growing reliance on sales discounts. The objective of this research is to evaluate the most appropriate digital content strategy to differentiate InmoCosta's real estate projects and improve its

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commercial performance in the medium term. A case study methodology with a descriptive–analytical approach was used, supported by commercial indicators, financial analysis, and comparative matrices of strategic alternatives. The results show that a comprehensive digital content strategy focused on differentiation generates greater economic and competitive benefits compared to traditional strategies or basic optimization strategies. It is concluded that strategic digital content is a key asset for strengthening market positioning, improving lead quality, and ensuring business sustainability in highly competitive real estate markets.
Keywords: digital content, real estate marketing, competitive differentiation, digital strategy, sales.

Resumen

El mercado inmobiliario de la provincia de Santa Elena presenta una alta homogeneidad en las estrategias de comunicación digital, lo que ha intensificado la competencia basada en precios y reducido los márgenes de rentabilidad de las empresas del sector. El presente artículo analiza el caso de InmoCosta, una empresa desarrolladora inmobiliaria que evidencia una disminución en la conversión de leads digitales, un incremento en el tiempo de cierre de ventas y una creciente dependencia de descuentos comerciales. El objetivo de la investigación es evaluar la estrategia de contenido digital más conveniente para diferenciar los proyectos inmobiliarios de InmoCosta y mejorar su desempeño comercial en el mediano plazo. Se utilizó una metodología de estudio de caso con enfoque descriptivo–analítico, apoyada en indicadores comerciales, análisis financiero y matrices comparativas de alternativas estratégicas. Los resultados evidencian que una estrategia integral de contenido digital orientada a la

diferenciación genera mayores beneficios económicos y competitivos frente a estrategias tradicionales o de optimización básica. Se concluye que el contenido digital estratégico constituye un activo clave para fortalecer el posicionamiento, mejorar la calidad de los leads y asegurar la sostenibilidad empresarial en mercados inmobiliarios altamente competitivos.
Palabras clave: contenido digital, marketing inmobiliario, diferenciación competitiva, estrategia digital, ventas.

Introduction

The digital transformation has significantly changed the behavior of real estate consumers, who now demand clear information, visual experiences, testimonials, and content that builds trust before making a purchase decision. In this context, real estate companies face the challenge of differentiating their projects beyond price, using digital content strategies that add value and guide the customer throughout the decision-making process.

In the province of Santa Elena, the growth in real estate supply has created a highly competitive environment characterized by generic digital communications. InmoCosta, a real estate development company operating in the area, has seen an 18% decline in the conversion rate of digital leads to in-person visits over the past 12 months (from 32% to 26%). At the same time, the average time to close a deal increased from 45 to 63 days (a 40% increase), and the proportion of sales requiring discounts rose from 12% to 27% per project. These changes are accompanied by an estimated 15% year-over-year drop in actual sales, despite the fact that advertising investment levels and digital traffic have remained essentially constant, which is affecting the company's profitability. This scenario highlights the need to evaluate strategic alternatives that will improve commercial performance through the efficient use of digital content.

Taken together, these indicators highlight the urgency of the problem and provide a quantitative basis for evaluating alternatives that will help recover conversion rates, reduce closing times, minimize the need for discounts, and restore sustainable profitability levels.

The objective is to increase InmoCosta's commercial performance in the province of Santa Elena by implementing a comprehensive digital content strategy aimed at differentiating its real estate projects, with the goal of improving lead quality, accelerating sales closures, reducing reliance on discounts, and strengthening the company's profitability and competitive positioning in a

Digital content has established itself as a central element in contemporary marketing strategies, especially in high-engagement sectors such as real estate. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), valuable content enables the building of long-term relationships with customers, influences brand perception, and reduces price sensitivity. Likewise, Pulizzi (2014) emphasizes that content marketing is not limited to generating information but seeks to create relevant experiences aligned with consumer needs.

In the real estate sector, the use of audiovisual content, virtual tours, and storytelling helps reduce the uncertainty associated with purchasing high-value assets (Ryan, 2017). These tools help nurture leads, improve the quality of prospects, and accelerate sales cycles. Content-based differentiation, therefore, becomes a sustainable competitive advantage over strategies focused exclusively on prices and promotions.

It indicates that marketing strategies encompass four basic areas of decision-making: product, place (distribution), promotion, and price collectively known as the four Ps—and thus strategies are developed to align with the real estate agency's current competitive position.

Digital transformation has structurally altered the way consumers search for, process, and evaluate information before making purchasing decisions involving significant financial commitment. Within the framework of Marketing 4.0, consumers combine online and offline interactions within a nonlinear decision-making process influenced by digital content, social recommendations, and brand reputation (Kotler et al., 2017). This phenomenon has led to a gradual shift from traditional promotional models toward strategies centered on the digital experience and the generation of informational value.

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) argue that the customer experience must be analyzed throughout the entire customer journey, recognizing that each touchpoint influences the final perception of value. In this context, digital content acts as a mechanism for reducing uncertainty, especially in stages preceding an in-person visit or contractual negotiation.

From the perspective of service-dominant logic, value is not delivered unilaterally but is created through interactions between the company and the customer (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Consequently, digital content should not be understood solely as a promotional tool but as a platform for strategic interaction that contributes to building trust and organizational legitimacy.

Content marketing is defined as the strategic creation and distribution of relevant, consistent, and valuable content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience, with the ultimate goal of driving profitable customer actions (American Marketing Association, 2022; Pulizzi, 2014). Unlike traditional advertising, strategic content prioritizes education, guidance, and trust-building prior to the commercial transaction.

Rowley (2008) conceptualizes content marketing as a structured process that must align with the consumer's informational needs at each stage of the buying process. In both B2C and B2B environments, Holliman and Rowley (2014) demonstrate that the most effective practices are grounded in thematic relevance, narrative consistency, and multichannel integration.

In the real estate sector, where the decision involves a significant investment, building trust becomes a strategic asset. Wang and Zhang (2020) empirically demonstrated that coherent, value-centered content strategies increase brand trust, which directly impacts purchase intent and willingness to pay. This finding is particularly relevant in markets where price-based competition erodes profit margins.

Kotler and Keller (2016) argue that creating perceived value reduces price sensitivity and strengthens differentiation. Consequently, strategic content serves as a mechanism for building symbolic and reputational capital.

Strategic marketing decisions must be grounded in rigorous financial analysis. Duque (2020) states that the viability of business projects should be evaluated using indicators such as Net Present Value (NPV), Internal Rate of Return (IRR), Return on Investment (ROI), and payback period.

In the context of digital real estate marketing, the financial impact of a content strategy can be measured through variables such as increased conversions, reduced discounts, shorter average closing times, and improved margins. When content generates sustainable digital assets and strengthens market positioning, its effect extends beyond the short term, becoming a strategic investment with cumulative returns.

Methodology

The research was conducted using a qualitative–quantitative approach based on the case study method. Internal data from InmoCosta regarding sales, lead conversion, closing times, and the application of discounts over the past 12 months were analyzed. Additionally, three strategic alternatives for digital content were evaluated using multi-criteria matrices that considered commercial impact, required investment, sustainability, and level of differentiation.

The financial analysis included indicators such as return on investment (ROI), net present value (NPV), internal rate of return (IRR), and payback period. This approach allowed for an objective comparison of the alternatives and the selection of the most suitable strategy for the company.

Results

Based on the assessment conducted, the analysis of the real estate sector in Santa Elena Province, and the identification of the main gaps in InmoCosta’s current digital communication strategy, three strategic alternatives are proposed to address the core problem identified: insufficient differentiation from the competition, a situation that negatively affects the quality of leads, sales conversions, and the company’s profitability. The alternatives presented are as follows:

Alternative 1:

Continue with the current digital communication strategy, which is primarily focused on publicizing property listings, prices, and availability on real estate platforms.

Category	Details of Alternative 1
Scope of the Alternative	▪ Maintains the current digital presence ▪ Continued use of real estate portals and basic advertising. ▪ Does not incorporate differentiation or lead nurturing.
Pros (Advantages)	▪ Does not require significant additional investment ▪ Easy to implement; already operational. ▪ Does not result in organizational changes or internal resistance.
Cons (Disadvantages)	▪ Does not address the root causes of the problem. ▪ It maintains dependence on price and discounts. ▪ Risk of losing competitiveness against competitors with more advanced strategies.
Expected Financial Impact	▪ Estimated sales: \$80,000 per month × 12 = \$960,000 per year. ▪ No sales growth is projected. ▪ Risk of a gradual decline in actual sales (estimated −10% to −15% annually).
Relevant KPIs	▪ Digital conversion rate (stable or declining). ▪ Percentage of unqualified leads (high). Average gross margin (under pressure).

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Option 2: Implement a basic conversion-oriented digital content plan focused on generating clear, timely, and practical information that facilitates the transition from prospect to customer

Category	Details of Alternative 2
Pros (Advantages)	▪ Improves lead quality ▪ Increases conversion in the middle stages of the funnel ▪ Reduces buyer indecision time ▪ Moderate and manageable investment
Cons (Disadvantages)	▪ Limited differentiation from competitors ▪ Limited impact on brand positioning ▪ Limited long-term strategic results
Expected financial impact	▪ Estimated annual sales increase of 5% to 10% (USD 48,000 – USD 96,000). ▪ Improves commercial efficiency but does not result in a significant reduction in reliance on discounts or a meaningful expansion of margins.
Relevant KPIs	▪ Conversion rate by funnel stage ▪ Number of qualified leads (MQLs and SQLs). ▪ Engagement rate on functional content.

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Option 3: Develop a comprehensive digital content strategy that addresses the entire sales funnel, focused on competitive differentiation, brand strengthening, building trust, and optimizing the sales process in the medium term.

Category	Details of Alternative 3
Pros (Advantages)	▪ High level of differentiation from the competition. ▪ Acceleration of the sales cycle. ▪ Gradual reduction in reliance on discounts. ▪ Strengthened market positioning and profitability.
Cons (Disadvantages)	▪ Higher initial investment ▪ Greater operational complexity. ▪ Requires sustained commitment from management and the sales team.
Expected financial impact	▪ Estimated annual sales increase of 15% to 25% (USD 144,000 – USD 240,000). ▪ Improved margins due to reduced reliance on discounts and a higher perception of value.
Relevant KPIs	▪ Lead-to-sale conversion rate. ▪ Percentage of qualified leads (SQL). ▪ Reduction in the percentage of discounted sales

Category	Details of Alternative 3
	▪ ROI by campaign and by project.

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It is evident that Alternative 3 is the best-suited strategic option for InmoCosta, offering a structural impact on digital differentiation, brand positioning, and commercial performance. Although it requires a higher initial investment, its potential for return on investment, sustainability, and reduction of competitive risks justify its selection as the optimal alternative in the current business environment.

SUMMARY TABLE OF PROS AND CONS WITH FINANCIAL IMPACT

The economic analysis of the alternatives is based on InmoCosta's current estimated sales volume of $960,000 per year ($80,000 per month) and takes into account key financial indicators such as the required investment, expected revenue growth, ROI, NPV, IRR, payback period, and break-even point, as indicated in the Duque23020 business model.

Scenario	Alt 1: Continuity	Option 2: Basic Plan	Option 3: Comprehensive Strategy
Initial Investment	$4,700	USD 45,000	USD 85,000
Sales Increase	USD 0–19,000 (not guaranteed)	USD 114,000	USD 237,500
ROI (Year 2)	Low or not significant	Medium (23%)	High (58%)
NPV	0 or negative	USD 3,850	$14,841
IRR	Not significant	20%	52%

Scenario	Alt 1: Continuity	Option 2: Basic Plan	Option 3: Comprehensive Strategy
Payback	No payback	9–12 months	Approx. 14 months
Reliance on discounts	High (27%)	Medium (20%)	Low (12%)
Strategic impact	Low	Medium	High
Break-even point	Does not recoup the investment	9–12 months	11 months
Sustainability	Low (Unstable)	Medium (Dependent)	High (Digital Assets)

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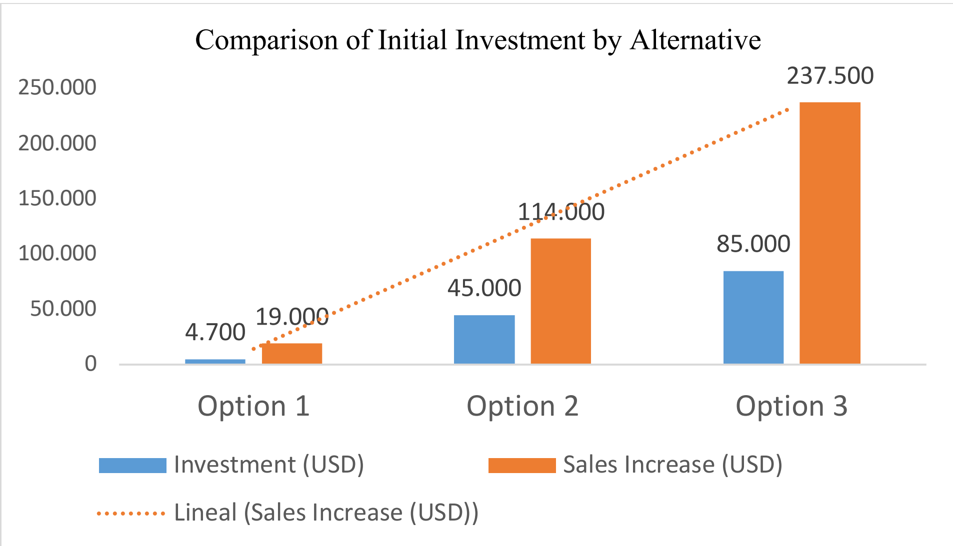
Figure #1



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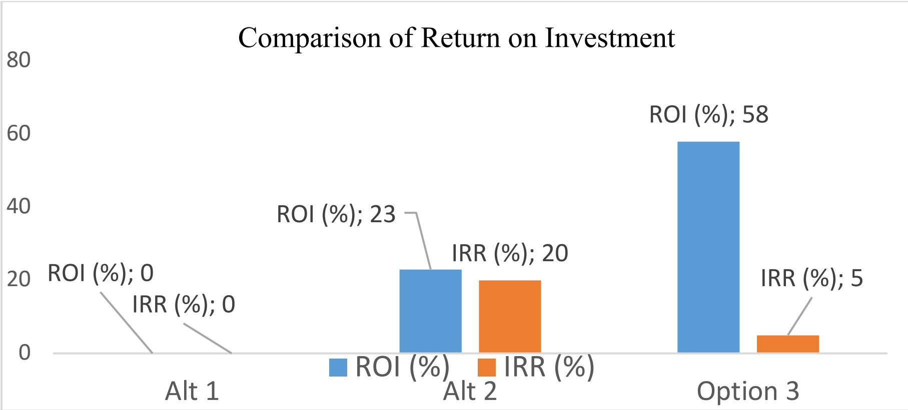
Graph #2:



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The financial charts show that, although Alternative 3 involves the highest initial investment, it also generates the highest economic return, sales growth, and financial sustainability, which justifies its selection from both a financial and strategic perspective.

Conclusions

A comparative analysis of the strategic alternatives revealed significant differences in terms of business impact, profitability, and competitive sustainability. Continuing with the current digital strategy demonstrated a limited ability to reverse the downward trend in key performance indicators. The lead conversion rate remained stagnant, closing times did not show substantial improvement, and reliance on discounts continued to put pressure on profit margins.

The second alternative, involving a basic content plan focused on conversion, yielded mixed results. A moderate improvement in lead quality was observed, along with a partial reduction in buyer decision times, attributed to the availability of clearer and more practical information. However, its impact on brand positioning was limited and easily replicable by competitors, which restricts its potential as a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

In contrast, the comprehensive digital content strategy yielded the most favorable results. Projected scenarios indicate estimated sales increases of between 15% and 25%, a gradual reduction in the proportion of sales made at a discount, and a significant improvement in the quality of sales leads. Furthermore, the financial analysis showed a higher return on investment than the other alternatives, with a positive net present value and a payback period consistent with medium-term growth strategies.

These results confirm that differentiation based on strategic digital content not only impacts immediate business metrics but also contributes to building intangible assets associated with the company's positioning, consumer trust, and digital reputation.

Based on the results obtained, we propose the implementation of a comprehensive digital content strategy aimed at achieving competitive differentiation for InmoCosta's real estate projects. This proposal is grounded in the systematic development of high-value content aligned with all stages of the sales funnel, from lead generation to closing the sale.

The proposal includes the production of professional audiovisual content, such as virtual tours, customer testimonials, real estate storytelling pieces, and educational material designed to reduce buyer uncertainty. This content is integrated with a targeted digital advertising and remarketing strategy, supported by a CRM system with lead scoring and sales automation capabilities.

The phased implementation of this proposal allows InmoCosta to reduce its reliance on discounts, improve its profit margins, and establish a sustainable competitive edge in a real estate market characterized by uniform communication.

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