


# STRATEGIC NARRATIVES FOR GLOBAL BRANDS: CRAFTING CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA


*Narrativas estratégicas para marcas globais:  
construindo a comunicação transcultural na era digital*

**Bárbara Mota**<sup>1</sup>

 0009-0005-0207-6994

✉ barbaramota4@gmail.com

**Marlon Dalmoro**<sup>2 3</sup>

 0000-0002-6211-0905

✉ marlon.dalmoro@ufrgs.br

<sup>1</sup> Robert Bosch S.A., Portugal

<sup>2</sup> Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul - UFRGS, Brazil

<sup>3</sup> NOVA Information Management School, Portugal

## ABSTRACT

Social media have disrupted corporative global communication and marketing practices, providing valuable opportunities for global engagement, customer relations, and brand promotion. This study investigates how companies develop and apply social media strategies, adjusting them to different markets and cultural contexts. To this end, we develop a four-phase empirical analysis, using qualitative and quantitative approaches, on Instagram strategies of five global brands - Samsung, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and IKEA - in ten different countries. Results indicate that global brands thrive by balancing global consistency with local presence and relevance, paying attention to cultural content adaptation, linguistic nuances, and consumer preferences in each market they operate. This strategy ultimately promotes consumer loyalty, as they can relate to the brand and feel it is an integral part of their communities and daily lives. Findings contribute to understanding digital marketing in global branding and offer practical insights for companies looking to navigate the complexities of cultural diversity in their social media strategies.

**KEYWORDS:** social media marketing, digital communication strategies, cross-cultural branding, local social media accounts, Instagram.

## RESUMO

As mídias sociais transformaram a comunicação corporativa global e as práticas de marketing, oferecendo valiosas oportunidades de engajamento global, relacionamento com clientes e promoção de marcas. Este estudo investiga como as empresas desenvolvem e aplicam estratégias de mídias sociais, ajustando-as a diferentes mercados e contextos culturais. Para isso, desenvolvemos uma análise empírica em quatro fases, utilizando abordagens qualitativas e quantitativas, sobre as estratégias no Instagram de cinco marcas globais (Samsung, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Starbucks e IKEA) em dez países diferentes. Os resultados indicam que marcas globais prosperam ao equilibrar consistência global com presença e relevância local, atentando para a adaptação de conteúdos culturais, nuances linguísticas e preferências dos consumidores em cada mercado em que atuam. Essa estratégia, em última instância, promove a lealdade do consumidor, uma vez que ele pode se identificar com a marca e sentir que ela faz parte integrante de suas comunidades e vidas cotidianas. Os achados contribuem para a compreensão do marketing digital em estratégias de branding global e oferecem insights práticos para empresas que buscam navegar pelas complexidades da diversidade cultural em suas estratégias de mídias sociais.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** marketing em mídias sociais, estratégias de comunicação digital, branding transcultural, contas locais em mídias sociais, Instagram.

## Introduction

Social media has revolutionized how businesses engage with their audiences, shaping a new global landscape of communication and marketing strategies (Tuten, 2023; Forbes, 2023). Social media's pervasive impact transcends borders and industries, offering organizations a powerful platform to connect, interact, and promote their brands on a global scale. From enhancing customer relationships to driving sales and brand recognition, social media has become an indispensable tool for businesses across diverse domains (Tuten, 2023), including those aiming to operate globally (Saari et al., 2022). The universalization of social media platforms has made it crucial for businesses to adapt their communication strategies to engage diverse audiences around the world (Forbes, 2024). As businesses strive to adapt to this trend, the need to tailor their approaches to specific markets, regions, and cultural contexts has become paramount for effectively engaging with diverse audiences and establishing a strong digital presence that resonates with consumers worldwide (Khajuria, 2017).

The central dilemma revolves around the strategic approach to global brand marketing – whether to adopt standardized global strategies that maintain consistency across diverse markets or to implement localized, personalized strategies that address the unique nuances of individual regions and cultural contexts (Grigorescu & Zaif, 2017). This debate gains even more prominence in the digital age, where social media platforms transcend geographic borders, creating opportunities and challenges for companies seeking to communicate with global audiences (Fazil et al., 2024).

As social media, especially platforms like Instagram, continue to gain popularity around the world, the challenge of adopting localized marketing communications strategies becomes increasingly complex (Tuten, 2023). Despite being a global network, Instagram is characterized by localized content and interactions. This phenomenon can be attributed to the diverse cultural backgrounds of its users, influencing the content they create, share, and engage with (Sun, 2020). This content localization is a manifestation of cultural diversity in the digital realm, challenging companies to navigate the intricate balance between global brand consistency and localized communication strategies. The theoretical basis of this challenge lies in the concept that, although social media platforms connect individuals globally, the content and interactions within these platforms are shaped by local cultural contexts (Sun, 2020). Participants on social media put their cultural perspectives, values, and preferences into play, influencing the content they consume and create. This dynamic interaction between the platform's global nature and content localization highlights the need for companies to develop differentiated strategies that resonate with different audiences (Sun, 2020).

The gap and logic behind this study is the importance of understanding how brands leverage social media to differentiate themselves, foster specific connections with users and followers, leave a good impression, and create a positive impact in a highly competitive digital landscape. In light of this, we pose the following research question: “How do global brands adapt their social media communication strategies to effectively interact with culturally diverse audiences on Instagram?” This question is fundamental to deciphering the success or failure of global brands in navigating the complex web of cultural diversity in the digital world.

This study analyzes the interaction and communication strategies of global brands on different local Instagram accounts. Using four different data-collection phases, we explore how global companies combine global branding, involving broad and universal actions and local interactions, which focus on region-specific and culturally differentiated branding tactics. We also emphasize how these strategies converge by highlighting the importance of

adapting to various cultural contexts in digital marketing. Our findings contribute to brand management literature by revealing that, although brands maintain a consistent global identity, there is indeed a concern when it comes to adapting their content considering different local cultures, resulting in varied consumer engagement and perceptions. By identifying the prevalence of positive sentiment towards localized content and collaborations with strategic influencers, we particularly demonstrate the critical role of cultural adaptation in managing global brands in the social media landscape. The next sections detail the theoretical nuances of cross-cultural branding facing the social media phenomenon, as well as describe the method section and detail the empirical findings. We close the paper with the discussion section, offering theoretical insights on cultural adaptation and balancing global consistency with local relevance to increase engagement and brand loyalty.

## Literature Review

In the context of Digital Marketing, which develops in a dynamic scenario of communication and connectivity in constant evolution, social media has emerged as a transformative force. These digital platforms redefine the way individuals interact, collect information, and connect with the world (Tuten, 2023). Khajuria (2017) defines social media as interactive online and mobile environments facilitating discussion between stakeholders. The influence of social media goes beyond personal spheres, penetrating the domains of business, politics, and social dynamics. They facilitate communication, information sharing, collaboration, and relationship-building between people, groups, and organizations globally (Tuten, 2023). These technologies have revolutionized social interactions, allowing communities to form around common interests and causes. It offers innovative opportunities for businesses to connect with customers, promote products and services, and engage in innovative marketing strategies (Tuten, 2023). It is considered a powerful marketing tool, with consumers finding social media more trustworthy than traditional marketing channels (Khajuria, 2017).

The persistence of the lasting impact of social media is evidenced by the significant increase in the total number of global users since the pandemic's start, as highlighted by Kepio's analysis (Kemp, 2024). At the start of 2024, there are more than 5 billion active social media user identities, with the global total reaching 5.04 billion (Kemp, 2024). A growing user base on these platforms is seen as a significant advantage for business promotions and marketing efforts, positioning social media as a powerful marketing platform (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshm, 2012).

## Branding in Social Media

Brand communication on social media refers to any brand-related content shared on these types of platforms, allowing Internet users to access, share, interact, contribute, and co-create the content. Khajuria (2017) emphasizes the need to understand how brand communication on social media influences consumer perceptions and brand equity, focusing on brand awareness, brand association, perceived brand quality, and brand loyalty. Khajuria (2017) indicates a significant correlation between social media brand communications and all four brand equity constructs. Social media brand communication impacts and positively influences brand awareness and associations. The author also suggests that while such communications may not directly affect quality and loyalty understanding, they create awareness and foster brand attachment (Khajuria, 2017). Yoo et al. (2000) argue that positive customer response to a brand communication message increases the likelihood of the brand's inclusion in customer considerations, accelerating the decision-making process and modifying choice into habits, thereby improving brand value (Khajuria, 2017). A positive brand value occurs when consumers react favorably to brand recognition. Krishnamurthy (2003) emphasizes that marketing through online communities transmits positive messages,

making it easier for people to understand the product customers, and thriving online communities foster a strong sense of belonging (Khajuria, 2017).

With globalization, intercultural issues have become essential in the management of international companies (Sahem, 2023). Although traditional brand management advocates global uniformity, many authors question this approach, highlighting that the meaning of a brand is a collective result, shaped by various stakeholders, including consumers themselves, and strongly influenced by the specific context of each brand experience (Bengtsson, Bardhi, & Venkatraman, 2010). Cayla & Arnould (2008) disagree with the idea that branding is a universally applicable technique, questioning the assumption that the principles for building strong brands are the same across cultures. The authors advocate a cultural strategy for global branding that values and accepts varied approaches to thinking and practicing brands in different cultural environments and highlight the need to examine the brand as a cultural expression, considering historical, geographic, and social contexts. This adaptability is crucial in a globalized market where consumers have varied origins, values, and preferences (Cayla & Arnould, 2008). The emphasis is on the understanding that in unfamiliar cultural environments, consumers may seek different values from global brands, challenging the placement of consistent significance across contexts. The relevance of global brands is emphasized in providing a sense of home and comfort for individuals exploring foreign cultural scenes, questioning the idea of a total convergence of brands in different contexts (Bengtsson, Bardhi, & Venkatraman, 2010).

### Cross-Cultural Branding Strategies in Social Media

Sahem (2023) discusses the concept of cross-cultural marketing, also known as ethnic or multicultural marketing, which involves tailoring marketing strategies to consumers from different cultural backgrounds:

*“The word “cross-cultural” is used to denote an organization’s endeavors to enhance its client base by augmenting its understanding and proficiency in engaging with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The use of cross-cultural approaches has significance within multinational companies as it facilitates enhanced collaboration and effectiveness among individuals hailing from varied cultural backgrounds” (Sahem, 2023, p. 174).*

The globalization of markets has emerged in recent decades due to several factors, such as the opening of markets, global investment and production, the increase in world travel and consumer sophistication, advances in telecommunications, and the growth of global media, among others. Some academics and media commentators argue that these forces lead to cultural homogenization, benefiting marketers who position their brands as symbols of Global Consumer Culture (GCC). On the other hand, globalization also provides opportunities for local brands to differentiate themselves based on unique characteristics provided by Local Consumer Culture (LCC) (Steenkamp, 2019). Despite often being described as opposing forces, the local and the global are interdependent. This mutual dependence is essential to recognize both: without multiple localities, the concept of global cannot exist.

The success of such marketing efforts requires a deep understanding of various cultural dimensions, including language, religion, social norms, values, education, and lifestyle. Companies need to respect cultural rights and acknowledge the global marketplace dynamics. Brands must be willing to break away from a Western-centric brand perspective and adopt a culturally sensitive approach to more effectively adjust to the diverse cultures of local markets (Cayla & Arnould, 2008). People around the world have specific needs shaped by their cultural environments, and multicultural marketing regulates and appreciates these differences (Sahem, 2023). Understanding and appreciating different cultural norms is crucial

when implementing practical strategies. Multinational companies are encouraged to engage in diverse communication and adapt products to meet the specific demands of local markets, thus promoting successful cross-cultural marketing (Sahem, 2023).

The concept of culture encompasses all aspects of life, from economic and technological situations to educational systems, political institutions, and means of communication (Sahem, 2023). This influence is reflected in various aspects, such as language, body language, negotiation techniques, and manual gestures. Onkvisit and Shaw (2009) define culture as a set of traditional opinions and values transmitted and shared in society, covering norms, values, customs, art, and much more. Human relationships, including employee-customer, customer-supplier, and stakeholder relationships, are shaped by cultural norms. Culture also impacts the four Ps of marketing (product, price, place, and promotion) (Sahem, 2023). The "borderless" nature of contemporary markets and cultural boundaries are crucial in dealing with items and companies exclusive to certain cultures. Understanding cultural norms and values is vital for global economic development, demographic behavior, and global corporate practices (Sahem, 2023). The term "cross-cultural marketing" involves targeting individuals with distinct cultural backgrounds, considering language, religion, social norms, values, education, and lifestyle.

Understanding the influence of culture on consumption is vital to understanding consumer behavior. Successful marketing strategies recognize and incorporate cultural nuances, seeking a deep connection with consumers (Onkvisit & Shaw, 2009). Studies on acculturation regularly highlight social media's role in forming community identities and constructing self-identity based on diverse cultural representations (Kizgin et al., 2018). In this sense, and in the context of global brand branding, the interaction between social networks and cultural communication is crucial to successful marketing strategies and identity construction. Contextual engagement demonstrates cultural sensitivity and allows brands to integrate into local communities (Kizgin, Jamal, Dey, & Rana, 2018). Brands that effectively communicate messages of respect and cultural inclusion are more prone to establishing a strong presence and community, fostering a positive reputation, and cultivating great relationships with their customers. (Cayla & Arnould, 2008).

Cross-cultural marketing requires understanding and adapting to diverse cultural backgrounds. Globalization offers opportunities for homogenization and differentiation for brands. Success requires deep cultural knowledge, respect for local nuances, and strategic adaptation. Effective use of social media and cultural sensitivity in communication is crucial to engaging global markets and fostering strong customer relationships. As Grigorescu and Zaif (2017) refer "Consumers want brands that are both global and local: to feel like they are part of an international community, (global) and local, so that they feel connected to their culture, respecting it and representing their tastes, feelings and preferences." (p. 74).

Recognizing that social media have become pivotal in contemporary branding and that global brands must navigate the challenges presented by the diverse cultural backgrounds of their audiences, next, we outline the empirical approach employed to explore and understand these dynamics.

## Methodology

The research employs qualitative and quantitative methods and unfolds in four phases. We selected five prominent brands on Instagram: Samsung, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and IKEA. The selection criteria for the five companies considered a combination of strategic factors to ensure comprehensive and geographically diverse representation.



The choice to focus on the analysis of Instagram to the detriment of other social networks is justified by several strategic and contextual reasons that align with the objectives of this research. Firstly, due to its cultural and global relevance, Instagram is a global visual platform that transcends language barriers. Secondly, analyzing how brands use this aesthetic dimension in their communication strategies, especially considering cultural diversity, where aesthetic preferences can vary significantly (Appel, Grewal, Hadi & Stephen, 2020).

Another fundamental aspect is that almost all, if not all, global brands maintain a robust presence on Instagram, using specific strategies to connect with local audiences. Focusing on this platform offers an in-depth look at how brands manage their identities globally and locally. Also, Instagram has become a culturally relevant platform in several countries and regions. By analyzing how brands fit into this cultural context on Instagram, we can gain more specific insights into how they integrate into local social and cultural dynamics. Lastly, because of its potential for comment and sentiment analysis. The comments functionality on Instagram offers a unique opportunity to analyze users' sentiments and interactions in response to brands' content. This contributes to a deeper understanding of the reception and perception of communication strategies (Appel, Grewal, Hadi & Stephen, 2020).

Phase 1: General Analysis of the Top 50 Global Brands of 2023

The research focuses on the top 50 global brands of the 100 best brands of 2023, recognized by Interbrand. The objective is to collect data about Instagram profiles and countries where each brand is present. Verified accounts were manually selected from a dataset, ensuring minimal duplications. The dataset, represented in Table 1, was divided into Global, Local, and Regional categories, and was enhanced with an “iso3” column using the “country\_converter” Python library. The visualizations were created to better understand the data, exploring whether brands maintain a unified global presence or tailor profiles to specific countries, providing insights into their global social media engagement strategies.

Column Name	Variable Type	Explanation
instagram_id	tag	the instagram ID of the brands
brand	string	the name of the brand
country_code	string	the two-letter country code for each localized account
continent_region	string	the continent or region of each country
global	boolean/binary	1 = Global Page 0 = Local Page

Table 1 - Dataset Information

Phase 2: Interviews with Marketing Experts

Marketing experts with knowledge of global brand communications are selected for in-depth interviews. Discussions focus on understanding the importance of cultural adaptation in brand communication and exploring effective strategies for global brands to establish a strong presence in local markets. Thematic analysis is carried out based on interview data. Three very informative and insightful interviews were conducted with "Person A," Head of Brand, Acquisition and Growth at a retail company; "Person B," Head of Marketing and Communications at a technology sector company and "Person C" CEO of a marketing agency. A guide with 11 questions based on literature review supported interviews. One of the interviews was conducted in person and the two others over the platform Google Meet. All of these interviews were recorded and posteriorly transcribed using the AI tool Hugging Face - Whisper Web.

Phase 3: In-depth analysis of Instagram profiles

The third phase of the project is the central one, analyzing Instagram profiles in Portuguese, English and Spanish for Samsung, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Starbucks and IKEA. Pepsi was excluded to increase sectoral diversity, with IKEA taking its place despite being sixth in the rankings. Profiles from ten countries (Portugal, Brazil, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, India, Spain, Mexico, Chile and Colombia) were analyzed to gather diverse cultural insights, although IKEA is excluded from Brazil. The United States was also excluded because many brands use global pages to communicate there. The objective is to discern communication patterns, adaptation of messages to cultural contexts and main nuances (Table 2). Content analysis continues until data saturation, using ten classification categories: Product, Events and Sponsorships, Humor, Influencer Partnerships, Global Promotional Ads, Local Promotional Ads, Events, Social Causes, Community Proximity, and Seasonality. Brand consistency is evaluated globally, considering the visual identity, the adaptability of the marketing strategy and the product presentation. The observations were documented through screenshots and notes, supported by the defined categories.

Column Name	Variable Type	Explanation
Country	string	the country representing the profile of the analysed post
Link	string	the url of the post
Categories	string	the category representing the theme of the post
Brand	string	the continent or region of brand that is being analysed

Table 2 - Dataset Information

Phase 4: Sentiment Analysis

In this phase, comments from the chosen brands' Instagram profiles are subjected to a comprehensive sentiment analysis to understand how users in different regions perceive brand communication. Sentiment analysis uses natural language processing and computational linguistics to extract subjective information, categorizing comments as

positive, negative, or neutral. This approach aims to uncover cultural variations in audience responses, providing insights into global communication strategies' effectiveness.

Data was collected using an API via APIFY, stored in CSV files, and included features like the number of likes per post, the commenter's username, post URL, and comment text. LLama 3, Meta's latest Large Language Model (LLM), evaluated each comment for sentiment, filtering out harmful or offensive language. Sentiment pie charts and word clouds were generated to visualize the distribution of sentiments and highlight keywords associated with positive and negative emotions.

The datasets were merged with previous data by post URLs for demographic analysis, focusing on sentiment results, country, and categories. Visualizations included a pivot table and clustered stacked bar chart. This phase builds on the initial analysis of the top 50 Interbrand Ranking brands, interviews with experts, and the practical application of adaptation strategies on Instagram. The goal is to understand the impacts of these strategies on user perception across different cultural contexts.

Results and Discussion

Identifying the Global Brands with Digital Marketing Strategy Using Local Instagram Account

Interbrand's Top 50 Brands 2023 dataset reveals that only 30% of these brands maintain a single global Instagram account, while the rest have at least one local account. A heatmap visualization was created with Plotly, it shows a predominant presence in North America, Europe and Oceania. Notably, Brazil, India and East Asia feature a higher density of local accounts compared to their continental peers, bringing a strategic focus on rich markets in these regions.

Figure 1 demonstrates the analysis of the top 5 brands with the highest number of local accounts – Samsung, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and IKEA – and provides a distributed view across different markets, avoiding an excessive emphasis on competitors such as Pepsi in the drink sector. On the other hand, the top 10 brands with fewer local accounts are especially technological, reflecting a specific presence in fewer markets. This suggests that while many brands focus on developed countries, emerging opportunities exist in regions such as Brazil, India, and East Asia. The next research phase will explore marketers' insights into adapting Instagram communications strategies to balance global reach with local relevance.

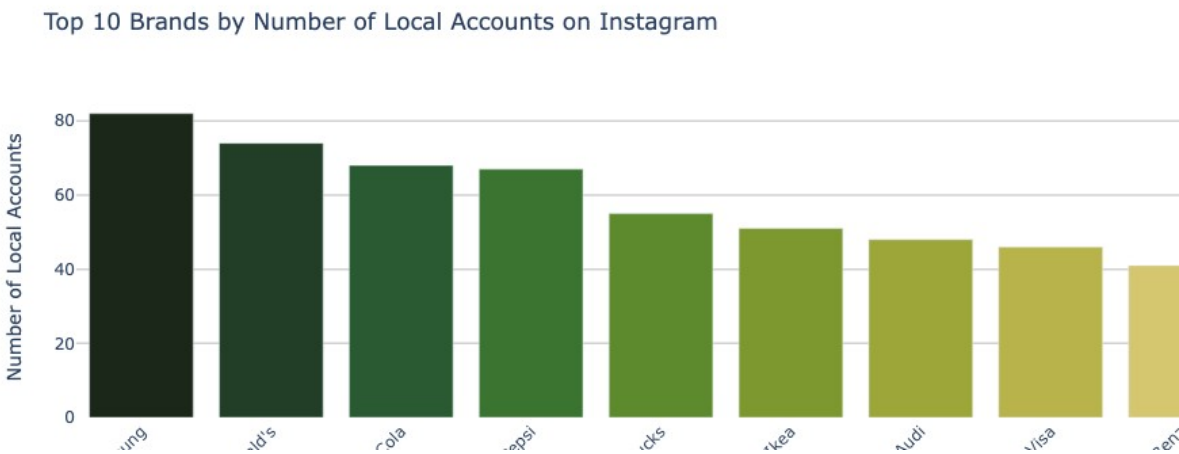


Figure 1 - TOP 10 Brands by Number of Local Accounts on Instagram



## Interview Analysis

The insights gained from interviews with marketing professionals highlight the critical role that social media plays in shaping brand perception, promoting consumer trust, and facilitating cultural adaptation.

**Social Media Relevance.** It is common, among all those who responded, that the relevance of online presence is an unavoidable topic when it comes to a brand's global communication strategy. Person A says that:

*“Increasingly, social media functions almost like your cover page; if we need to know more about a brand, nowadays our first move is to check social media. [...] It is already a common practice to look at social media often to understand the products, see if they have campaigns, and grasp the brand's personality. [...] More and more, consumers choose or prefer a brand based on whether they identify with the brand's personality, and not just its products.”*

Likewise, Person B highlights the need to maintain a prominent presence to ensure sustainable business growth, in which brand recall can have a significant impact. In turn, Person C addresses the inevitability of social media presence, looking at the specific targeting capabilities of platforms like TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Personalized social media strategies prove to be essential across different audience segments, improving the overall effectiveness of communication. Social media also plays a crucial role in building consumer trust and loyalty. Respondents pointed to the fact that consumers often turn to social media to assess a brand's personality, product offerings, and customer interactions. Visible engagement and responsiveness on social media platforms can significantly increase consumer trust in a brand. Given the interactive nature of these media, feedback and fostering dialogue is extremely important in establishing a strong relationship between brand and consumer. Ease of interaction allows brands to quickly understand and respond to consumer needs and preferences, further solidifying trust and loyalty.

**Cultural Adaptation.** Regarding cultural adaptation, it is unanimous to highlight the need for brands to have local relevance in communication on social networks. National adaptation is essential for brands to resonate with different audiences. Person A argues that *“[...] national adaptation is essential. Nowadays, [...] it's no longer a choice, there really has to be this local relevance”* and still emphasizes this added importance in retail businesses that end up having personal contact with their consumers. It is very important to understand and incorporate cultural nuances into global communication strategies. Differences in cultural practices, consumer habits, and social norms require personalized approaches to ensure global brands remain relevant and relatable to local audiences.

*If brands “don't communicated based on the way people live, they distance themselves greatly because people don't see a reflection of what they like and want in the brand. Once again, social networks play a much more local role here because they provide the space for freedom. All important brands, including major international ones with very well-defined communication strategies, recognize this.” – Person C*

When we talk about “dangerous” or critical topics that brands should consider when creating content, Person A advises caution when approaching sensitive topics like politics, religion, and social issues, emphasizing the importance of respecting diverse perspectives. Person B and Person C adds that understanding local contexts and behaviors is vital for effective communication. Person C highlights the universality of certain themes, such as family and love, which can transcend cultural boundaries and resonate with a wide audience.

However, they also highlight the need for local adaptation to reflect specific cultural contexts and increase brand engagement.

These days, consumers demand brands to be authentic, rejecting the outdated practice where brands could say anything to sell a dream or a perspective. Person C notes that this change is driven by a more literate and attentive consumer base, especially among millennials and younger generations. *“There has never been so much talk about brand purpose as in recent years, brand purpose was something that was not talked about 20 years ago, there was talk about vision and positioning, etc. But there was no talk about the purpose, which is something that is above what the commercial is.”* - Person C. Person A says authenticity is crucial to brand trust and engagement, as evidenced by brands that embrace their regional culture and use humor to convey authenticity. Without authenticity, consumers feel disconnected and distrustful of the brand. Person B emphasizes that authenticity *“is very important, because it is the seal of trust. What we want here is for there to be a parallelism between what we proclaim and who we really are and what people say we are.”*

A very interesting perspective presented by Person A is that one of the biggest traps for global brands is trying to please everyone, which leads to superficial and inauthentic messages. Brands must choose specific axes to position themselves, even if this means not pleasing everyone. Trying to participate in every trend can result in forced and irrelevant messages. In Person C's opinion, for example, brands should carefully select trends that align with their identity and avoid getting involved in sensitive areas like religion and politics without a well-considered approach. - *“There are flags that I think (brands) should approach and should be agents of cultural evolution. Brands are also cultural agents from this point of view, but they have to measure very carefully what topic they are going to deal with, how they are going to deal with it, because they also cannot be offensive agents for people.”*

**Marketing Strategy: Global and Local Adaptation.** To maintain global coherence and at the same time personalize content for specific markets, Person A argues that:

*“For a brand that is international and wants to maintain that coherence, there are areas that must be maintained and there are areas that can be localized. For example: the brand positioning must be maintained. The graphics, the fonts, that must be maintained. [...] Great causes that you support, because nowadays brands are also asked a lot to show what their values are and to support certain causes, therefore socially, environmentally, economically certain causes, what does the brand bring to on the table? [...] This is increasingly required of brands. And the big values must be international. A brand must embrace its values. Then there are other things that can be localized and should, for example, tone. The way you speak, the influencers [...], the type of things you humor must also be adapted to the culture [...] local causes must be adapted because cultures can be very different, and they are.”*

This approach allows brands to effectively engage with diverse markets while maintaining a unified global identity. Person C highlights examples of brands such as IKEA and Dove exemplifying this strategy by maintaining a coherent global presence while adapting their messages to resonate with local cultures, while the big challenge for brands is to adapt communication strategies without compromising the core identity of the brand.

The interviewees believe that in culturally diverse regions, global brands must respect and embrace minorities, reflecting the increasing fragmentation and diversity of consumer bases. Brands must remain agile, adapting to social changes while maintaining a coherent core identity. This involves balancing local perceptions with a consistent global personality. Person C notices that *“[...] there are human behaviors that are transversal across humanity,*

*regardless of culture. And normally, when brands run global campaigns, with many results, they are brands that manage to find an insight that is transversal to human beings, there is no way to go to certain countries. That's why it's strong."*

The main success indicators of a global communication strategy on social networks can be evaluated from several perspectives, as highlighted by the interviewees. Person A emphasizes that success is primarily reflected in the brand's overall reputation. The authenticity and legitimacy of the topics covered, as well as the courage to take a stance on different issues, are elements that signal a successful strategy. Maintaining authenticity and relevance, while preserving legitimacy, is essential for success. On the other hand, Person C highlights levels of notoriety and sales as primary indicators. Therefore, an effective communication strategy must result in alignment between good communication and increased sales.

**Future Marketing and Communication Trends.** Looking ahead, People A and C predict that artificial intelligence and personalization will significantly shape the future of global brand communications. Person A emphasizes that brands will need to position themselves regarding the use of artificial intelligence, whether for customer service, content creation, or other functions. Personalization will become increasingly important as consumers seek relevant, individualized communication. Person C argues that brands that effectively combine AI tools with a human touch, creating personalized yet emotionally engaging experiences, will stand out. Person B also leaves a very interesting insight:

*"[...] something is still missing, which is the human touch, and increasingly it is the human side that touches people. It's the question of feelings that, until you see, a machine can't emulate. This is where companies will stand out, that is, in the sense that the company can use the machine, in this case, AI, to help with the most common things, [...] but the company that will stand out is the one that can combine this with wit, being able to use humor, irony, etc. The most memorable elements we take from campaigns are those that made us feel something."*

In conclusion, the insights gathered in this research phase highlight the crucial importance of online presence in brands' global communication strategy. As evidenced by Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) in the literature, social networks are seen as essential for initial contact with consumers, building trust and loyalty, in addition to ensuring relevance and sustainable growth. In this way, we were able to conclude that authenticity emerges as a central element for brand trust and engagement. Regarding the importance of cultural separation, the data reveal that, in confirmation of Cayla and Arnould (2008), cultural adaptation is equally vital, requiring a deep understanding of local nuances to resonate with different audiences.

Now that insights have been gathered about the adaptation of brand communication on Instagram, considering different cultural backgrounds, the next chapter will explore a real and concrete analysis of how the brands selected in Phase 1 apply this practice based on certain categories.

### Instagram Profiles Analysis

This chapter presents a qualitative analysis of how each brand adapts its communication depending on the country or market in which it operates. The brands analyzed include Samsung, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and IKEA across ten Portuguese, English, and Spanish-speaking countries: Portugal, Brazil, Spain, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Canada, India, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

A survey of publications was conducted until data saturation was reached, organizing them based on several adaptation axes such as Product, Events & Sponsorships, Humor, Partnership with Influencers, Global Promotional Ads (ads produced globally by the company and adapted for each country's language), Local Promotional Ads (ads produced by each country, usually with greater cultural relevance in terms of scenarios, actors, language, etc.), Ephemeris, Social Causes, Proximity with the Community (cultural approximation, language adaptation, product adaptation based on the local culture, brand positioning actions promoting proximity to consumers and the community), and Seasonality. Table 3 shows the distribution of content collected for the analysis based on these categories.

Categories	Occurrences
Product	54
Events & Sponsorships	35
Humor	40
Partnership with Influencers	144
Global Promotional Ads	34
Local Promotional Ads	16
Ephemeris	36
Social Causes	38
Proximity with the Community	53
Seasonality	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>483</b>

Table 3 - Number of post occurrences per category

These categories will also be used for sentiment analysis and gathering insights in the next phase of the research. The objective of this stage is to analyze and evaluate each brand's communication strategies via local Instagram profiles and understand how they adapt their content (or not) while maintaining their global identity.

**Samsung accounts analysis.** As a global technological giant, Samsung has the most local accounts among the analyzed brands, with around 85, highlighting the importance of adapting communication for the company. Across all accounts, there is a notable balance between globally promotional posts, consistent across all accounts but adapted with localized key text (headlines), and posts with a strong local focus. In its global promotional posts, Samsung demonstrates a commendable commitment to inclusivity in the choice of actors. This inclusivity is also naturally present in the more locally focused posts, reflecting a thoughtful and organic integration of diverse representation.

Partnerships with influencers and celebrities play a crucial role in enhancing physical identification among consumers. Samsung heavily invests in these partnerships across all countries, selecting influencers from various niches. This includes world-renowned celebrities, such as musicians and actors, who typically feature in Global Promotional Ads (Figure 2). On a more local level, Samsung collaborates with influencers, not only in the



technology sector but also in beauty and lifestyle, ensuring that the audience of each local profile can identify with and relate to these celebrities (Figure 3).



Figure 2 - Examples of content in partnership with global influencers (Samsung)



Figure 3 - Examples of content in partnership with local influencers (Samsung)

Another interesting aspect of Samsung's communication adaptation is the use of humor, which is more prominent in European and Latin American countries.

In terms of positioning and supporting social causes, Samsung is involved in the "Solve For Tomorrow" program across Latin America and Canada. Present in 19 countries in the region, this initiative aims to motivate students and teachers to find solutions to local problems, fostering the development of a better world. Additionally, Samsung is committed to sustainability and actively supports the LGBTQ+ community.

In some countries, Samsung officially sponsors various local events, showcasing its commitment to being an integral part of local communities and contributing to their development. This direct involvement strengthens the bond between the brand and local consumers, generating a positive image and enhancing brand loyalty.

In addition to events, Samsung implements various initiatives to foster closer connections with its local community, engaging with consumers directly through street interactions, which may include content creation. Moreover, the brand prioritizes cultural identification, as evidenced by initiatives like a technology-focused podcast activation in Mexico. This podcast aims to bridge the gap and create a sense of closeness with the tech community, demonstrating Samsung's commitment to nurturing relationships within local contexts.

Furthermore, the framing of product posts serves as another reminder of Samsung's efforts to foster proximity and relevance, incorporating small cultural nuances and interests related to each country's culture. Celebrations, commemorative dates, or significant events



serve as potent marketing strategies to deepen the connection between brands and consumers. When leveraged creatively, these occasions enable companies to showcase empathy, reinforce shared values, and foster closer, more emotional communication with their target audience. Samsung exemplifies this by demonstrating attentiveness and care for its users, crafting specialized content for such occasions.

Samsung excels in adapting communication globally, showcasing empathy, inclusivity, and community engagement. Through localized content, partnerships, and culturally relevant initiatives, Samsung builds strong connections with diverse audiences, reinforcing its leadership in the global market.

**McDonald's accounts analysis.** With around 74 local Instagram accounts, McDonald's stands out as one of the largest global fast-food chains, boasting a substantial presence in numerous markets, as mirrored in its local Instagram profiles. McDonald's typically opts for localized promotional campaigns over global ones, fostering closer and more resonant connections with consumers in specific markets. By incorporating local restaurant scenes and featuring regional actors in its campaigns, McDonald's effectively captures the unique culture, values, and preferences of each area.

In addition to local campaigns, it's evident across all profiles that McDonald's prioritizes close engagement with its followers, leveraging various cultural elements, language adaptations, and specific expressions. This includes referencing local tastes, television programs, sports styles, cultural events, and current trends. By doing so, McDonald's cultivates a more authentic and meaningful connection with its target audience, reinforcing its relevance within each community (Figure 4).

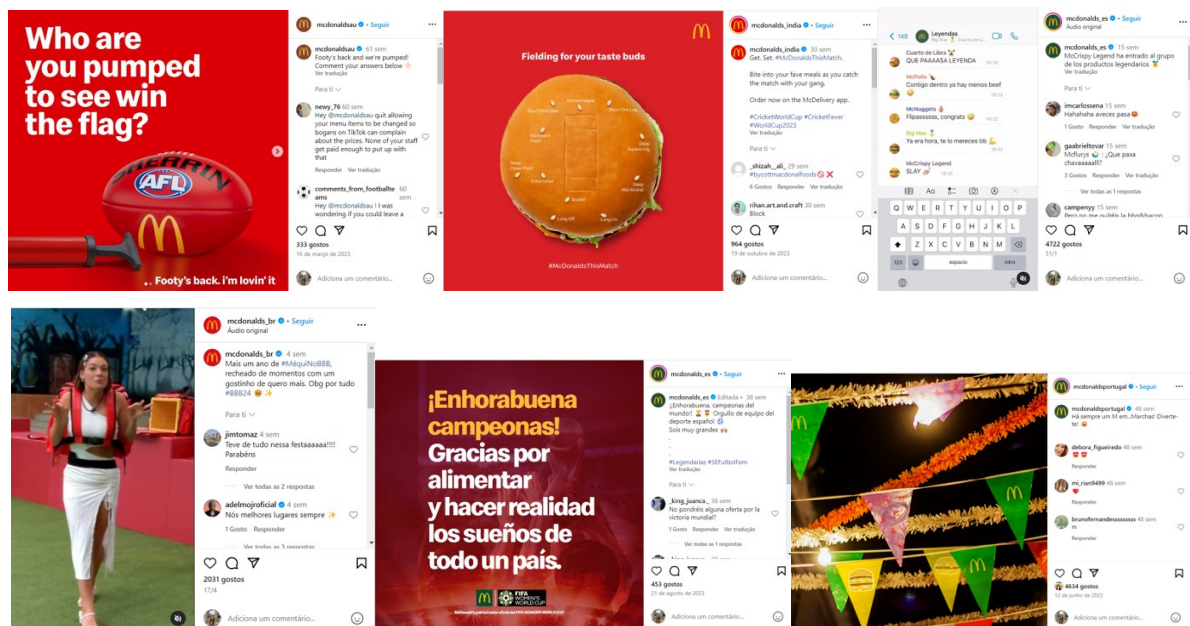


Figure 4 - Examples of local adaptation and proximity content (McDonald's)

Highlighting the seasonal variations across different countries and featuring key products that resonate during specific times of the year is another integral aspect of the brand's communication strategy. This approach plays a crucial role in fostering local brand proximity, ensuring that McDonald's remains relevant and connected to its audience within each region (Figure 5).

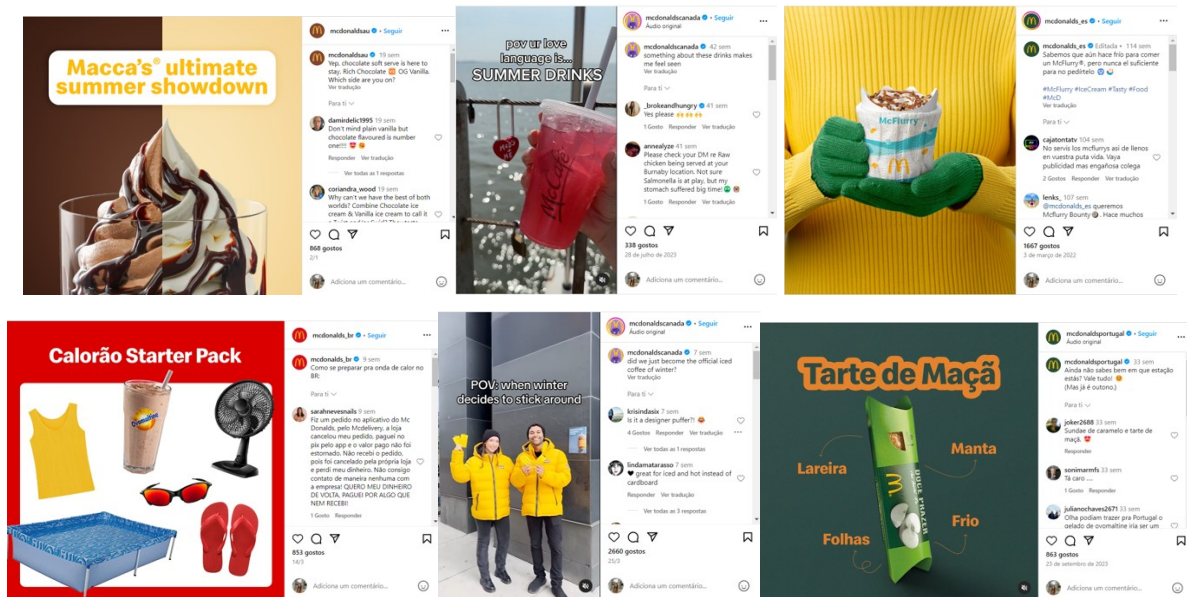


Figure 5 - Examples of Seasonally Adapted Content (McDonald's)

For McDonald's, creative events are also a proximity approach, creating specific content for special dates depending on the location. One characteristic that highlights McDonald's communication is the use of humor, which reflects the brand's relaxed, close, and youthful communication. Partnering with influencers is a consistent strategy across all profiles, utilizing strategic personalities to endorse the brand.

Regarding events and sponsorships, McDonald's actively serves as an official sponsor of numerous local events, demonstrating its dedication and engagement with local consumers.

In terms of social causes, McDonald's demonstrates support for various initiatives, whether through partnerships with associations or its foundation, such as the Ronald McDonald Children's Foundation. The brand is renowned and valued for incorporating cultural elements from each country into its products, a practice that is highlighted through dedicated posts on Instagram.

McDonald's effectively connects with local communities through tailored campaigns, cultural integration, and engaging content on Instagram. The brand's commitment to humor, influencer partnerships, event sponsorships, and social causes reinforces its relevance and resonance globally.

**Coca-Cola accounts analysis.** Coca-Cola, boasting around 69 local Instagram accounts, stands as one of the largest and most renowned beverage brands worldwide, maintaining a significant presence across multiple markets. Differing from McDonald's, Coca-Cola primarily concentrates on disseminating global campaigns tailored to each country's language. This strategic approach highlights the brand's commitment to diversity and inclusion, which is evident in its campaigns featuring various ethnicities. Notably, India sees a greater emphasis on locally produced campaigns.

While the product itself may not be inherently seasonal, Coca-Cola is intrinsically linked with Christmas, and it is during this time of the year, the brand is most prominently featured, with frequent posts evoking the festive spirit across its global campaigns and social media platforms.

Coca-Cola undertakes various initiatives to foster closeness with its followers, ranging from supporting sports events and athletes like the Olympic Games and women's national football teams to participating in significant cultural moments. Examples include their presence in the *Caravana Navideña* parade in Chile and street activations during Christmas in London and São Paulo, among others. These efforts demonstrate Coca-Cola's commitment to engaging with its audience and being part of their everyday experiences.

The brand demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting social causes, focusing on various issues relevant to each country and current events. A cornerstone of Coca-Cola's local strategy lies in its sponsorship and active participation in local events. This aspect is a consistent element across the diverse cultures analyzed (Figure 6).



Figure 6 - Examples of event and sponsorship posts (Coca-Cola)

Partnerships with influencers play a pivotal role in Coca-Cola's communication strategy, standing out as the brand that invests most in this form of content among those analyzed. One notable strategy involves collaborating with chefs or kitchen influencers to create dishes typical of each country, accompanied by Coca-Cola products. This approach fosters proximity and cultural relevance and leverages the brand's association with culinary experiences. Additionally, Coca-Cola occasionally partners with influencers to promote social causes, extending its impact beyond traditional marketing efforts.

Coca-Cola's global influence and diverse strategies underscore its leadership in the beverage industry. Adapting campaigns to local languages emphasizes inclusivity, particularly in India. Strong Christmas associations resonate widely. Through engagement, social causes, and influencer collaborations, Coca-Cola maintains its commitment to global connections and cultural relevance.

**Starbucks accounts analysis.** With about 55 local accounts, Starbucks exhibits the least dynamism in content among the brands examined. However, its predominant use of static images for product promotion does offer noteworthy insights for this study. Across countries, language adaptation is consistent, whether through text, voiceovers, or locally produced content. Notably, Starbucks' global communication strategy heavily involves employees in content creation, fostering not just linguistic but also identity-related closeness, often through physical traits. Product consistency across countries with occasional seasonal variations also reflects global branding, referencing diverse elements like hemispheric seasons (Figure 7).



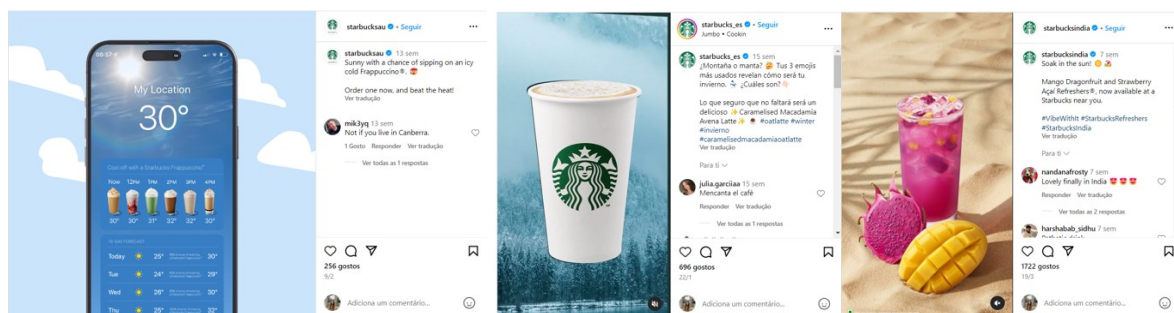


Figure 7 - Examples of Seasonally Adapted Content (Starbucks)

In general, Starbucks is not a brand that actively participates in or sponsors local events. However, in certain countries, it strives to foster community closeness, such as through adapting complementary offerings. For instance, during the Christmas season in Brazil, they offer Chocolate Panettone, a popular local treat, while in Colombia, merchandising may feature culturally adapted graphics.

Another prevalent aspect across the diverse profiles is the emphasis on environmental and sustainability initiatives. The brand actively motivates and encourages customers to opt for recyclable cups when visiting the café, refining its positioning along this axis (Figure 8).

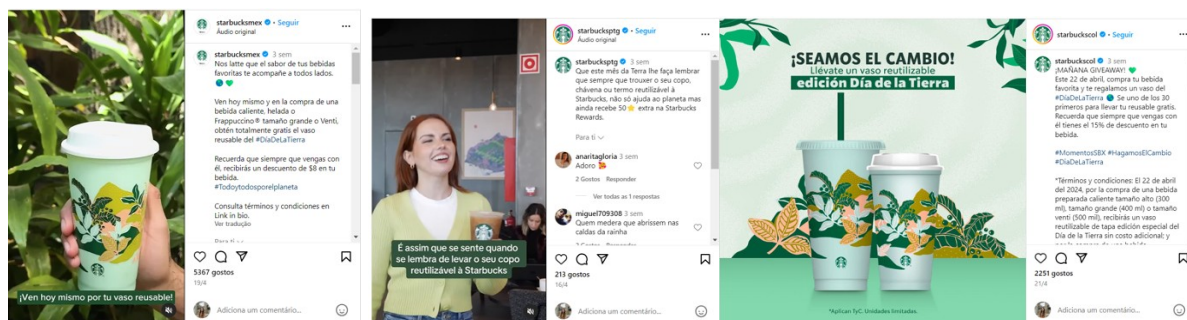


Figure 8 - Examples of content related to supporting social causes (Starbucks)

Countries like Chile, the United Kingdom, and India are the only ones that invest significantly in creating partnerships with influencers, choosing to follow some trends and create more dynamic content to increase their relevance and identification within the community. Although it maintains a more macro approach in its communication, Starbucks stands out for its linguistic adaptation and the involvement of employees in creating content, strengthening its global identity.

**IKEA accounts analysis.** With approximately 52 local Instagram accounts, IKEA is one of the largest and most recognized furniture and decoration brands globally, boasting a significant presence in numerous markets. Since IKEA is not present in Brazil, I focused on analyzing the brand's activities in the remaining nine countries. Primarily, IKEA's posts revolve around its products, featuring inspirational reels, usage ideas, trends, and even employee participation in content; all carefully adapted to the respective languages. Unlike some of the brands analyzed, IKEA does not heavily rely on publishing global or local campaigns, with only a few references noted.

Another interesting aspect to highlight regarding product adaptation is that IKEA also reveals an (inevitable) attention to the seasonality of the countries where it operates (Figure 9).

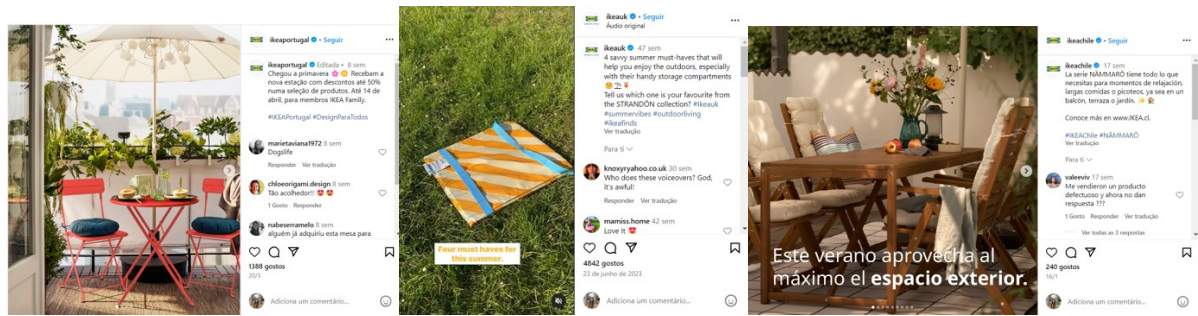


Figure 9 - Examples of Seasonally Adapted Content (IKEA)

It's worth noting that among the analyzed accounts, the Portuguese profile showcases the widest array of content types, creativity, and relatability. This includes initiatives closely integrated with local communities, such as association partnerships, customer interviews, podcasts, and publications highlighting Portuguese community experiences.

Humor is a prominent feature of IKEA's communication strategy and is intrinsic to the brand's personality. Consequently, it pervades most profiles across various markets (Figure 10).

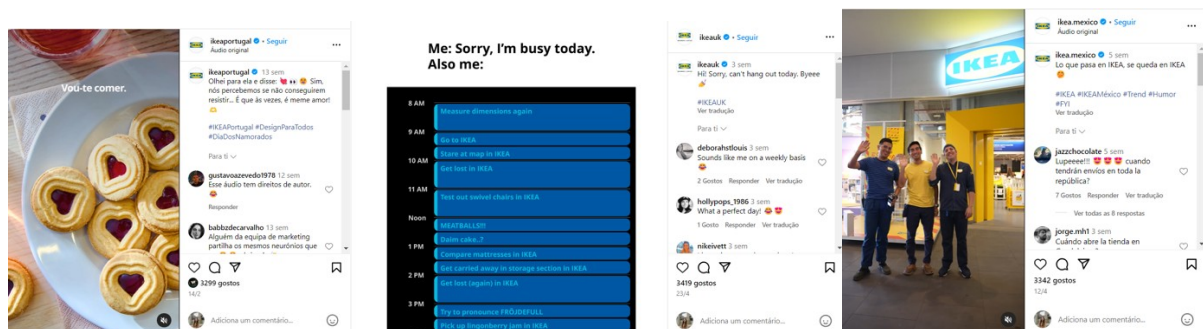


Figure 10 - Examples of humorous content (IKEA)

Supporting social causes, particularly in sustainability, is a crucial focus for IKEA, aligning closely with its brand positioning. This commitment is evident through various initiatives, including contributions through its foundation and other impactful actions.

Finally, the vast majority of IKEA's content, like Coca-Cola, is in partnership with influencers. We noticed that this strategy is quite recurrent across all brand profiles, thus also maintaining its congruence.

IKEA's global influence in furniture and decoration is evident despite its absence in Brazil. On Instagram, product showcases tailored to local audiences dominate its content strategy, with minimal reliance on global or local campaigns. Notably, the Portuguese profile stands out for its diverse content and community engagement. Humor is integral to IKEA's communication strategy, and its dedication to social causes, especially sustainability, is apparent through impactful initiatives. Influencer partnerships further strengthen its brand identity across profiles.

This analysis phase provides a comprehensive qualitative approach to leading brands such as Samsung, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and IKEA, adapting their communication strategies in 10 different countries and markets. By categorizing the collected data based on several axes of adaptation, we can understand the multifaceted nature of brand communication in different cultural contexts.



Through this analysis, it becomes evident that successful communication adaptation is a multifaceted effort that requires a deep understanding of local cultures, preferences, and social dynamics. As pointed out by Cayla and Arnould (2008) and Sahem (2023), the success of intercultural marketing depends on a deep understanding of various cultural dimensions, including language, religion, social norms, values, education, and lifestyle. Companies must adopt a cultural approach that consumers identify with and adapt products to meet the specific demands of local markets. Language, in particular, is a crucial aspect of cultural and linguistic differences, and all the brands analyzed demonstrate a great concern for this central aspect. Successful marketing strategies must incorporate cultural nuances to establish a deep connection with consumers (Onkvisit & Shaw, 2009). Adapting to local communication styles, including tone, approach, and content selection, is crucial for brands to effectively integrate into local communities (Kizgin, Jamal, Dey, & Rana, 2018).

Despite cultural adaptations, all the brands analyzed have one thing in common: they maintain a consistent visual identity throughout their communication, using uniform graphics, font style, and color palette. This approach guarantees brand recognition worldwide, reinforcing its image and positioning. Constant visual elements allow brands to adapt content for different cultures without losing message cohesion and integrity, creating a homogeneous and trustworthy brand experience essential for success in global markets.

The suggestions highlight the importance of maintaining a balance between global consistency and local relevance, highlighting the ability of brands to promote strong connections with diverse audiences while reinforcing their leadership positions in the global market.

After the practical application of cultural adaptation has been analyzed through various Instagram profiles, the last section will explore the impacts of this adaptation on the users/consumers of each of the countries under study. Firstly, a broader analysis will be performed to understand each brand's sentiment, followed by a more detailed analysis based on the countries and communication categories.

### Sentiment Analysis

In this chapter, sentiment analysis will be carried out based on comments collected from each brand's publications, considering the ten profiles. Firstly, a global analysis of each brand will be carried out, comparing the results collected. After that, a demographic sentiment analysis will be carried out. In the second phase, we will perform a demographic analysis. This stage aims to gather insights related to each culture by examining the categories of publications.

The purpose of this phase is to attempt to gather insights into the impacts that adapting communication has on users and consumers. At this stage, the objective will be, through comments, to understand the most positive and negative aspects of the brand according to consumer feedback and also which themes (considering the selected categories) tend to have better or worse reception depending on the culture and country.

**Brands Sentiment Analysis.** Based on the sentiment analysis of the Instagram profiles, Coca-Cola stands out with the highest positive sentiment at 63.4%, suggesting that for the accounts that were analyzed, this brand has a more favorable presence compared to the others. IKEA follows with a positive sentiment of 55.2%, Starbucks, with a positive sentiment of 54.6%, Samsung at 53.4%, and McDonald's, with the lowest positive sentiment at 51.4%. Nevertheless, all analyzed brands show a positive sentiment above 50%, indicating a generally favorable perception among the majority.

Regarding neutral sentiment, it's interesting that all brands hover around 20%. IKEA has the highest percentage of neutral sentiment comments at 29.6%, while Coca-Cola has the lowest at 21.5%. This suggests that these brands' content tends to be more polarizing, eliciting stronger positive or negative reactions.

Regarding negative sentiment, McDonald's has the highest at 24.6% (a significant value), indicating more dissatisfaction or negative interactions compared to the other brands. Samsung and Starbucks follow at 19.3% and 17.9%, respectively. Coca-Cola and IKEA have the lowest negative sentiment at 15.2%, reflecting a comparatively more favorable reception on Instagram.

Positive and negative word clouds were also developed for each brand to identify the main words associated with their respective sentiments. For Samsung, positive sentiments dominate with words such as "gracias," "love," "mejor," and "amo," indicating high satisfaction with the brand's product quality and features. However, negative sentiments highlight recurring issues with product reliability and customer service, evidenced by frequent mentions of "problema," "garantia," and "cliente."

McDonald's sentiment analysis reveals a strong emotional connection with the brand, with positive words like "love," "volta," and "great" reflecting customer affection and appreciation for specific menu items. Nonetheless, significant concerns are raised regarding the mobile app and order processes, with negative words like "app," "pedido," and "reembolso" indicating dissatisfaction in these areas.

Coca-Cola's sentiment analysis showcases a nuanced perception. Positive sentiments are associated with terms like "love," "mejor," and "gracias," reflecting gratitude and enjoyment, especially around festive seasons like Christmas. In contrast, negative sentiments include "Boycott," "servicio," and "problema," pointing to dissatisfaction related to customer service and possibly social or geopolitical issues.

Starbucks' sentiment analysis shows a split in customer perception. Positive words such as "gracias," "mejor," and "bebida" indicate customer appreciation for beverages and the overall experience. However, negative sentiments include "Boycott," "nunca," and "vasos," suggesting significant concerns over corporate practices, pricing, or specific incidents, particularly related to environmental issues with cups.

IKEA's analysis reveals strong positive emotions with words like "love," "encanta," and "hogar," highlighting customer attachment to the brand and its products. Conversely, negative sentiments focus on "cliente," "mueble," and "pedido," indicating dissatisfaction with customer service and order fulfillment.

**Demographic Sentiment Analysis.** When examining sentiment analysis findings derived from Instagram comments across ten countries, several patterns emerge. Figure 11 demonstrates in detail the feelings collected by the country for each of the communication axes. In general, positive sentiment prevails, especially in discussions related to seasonal products and themes.

Brazil and India stand out as the countries that are most likely to comment on Instagram posts, whether negatively or positively. On the other hand, countries like Australia and Mexico are the countries that, in general, comment the least. The high number of comments on posts relating to partnerships with influencers is notable, across all sentiments, but in particular, the positive comments stand out. In this area, countries such as Brazil, Chile, and India show particular interest and enthusiasm, although all cultures comment a lot on this type of content.

Apart from these, we can also see that strategic axes such as support for social causes, ephemeris, proximity to the community, and even seasonality - all of which are themes very directed to the location and the particularities of each culture - are, then, those that embargo the largest number of comments. We were able to understand that content that works with local, cultural, and consumer proximity is content that stands out, not only in terms of engagement but is also very positively perceived by users. Interestingly, the event category does not represent a very significant number of reactions.

Themes such as products, whether culturally adapted or global, are also a theme that reveals several positive reactions from the community. Humor can be a sensitive topic, and therefore, among the countries that react best to humor, we can highlight the United Kingdom, Portugal, Brazil, and Canada. India is a culture where humor does not stand out, whether positive or negative, so we can say that it is an axis of communication that is not used much and if it is, it does not cause significant reactions from users.

The analysis of Instagram comments in different countries reveals different engagement patterns, highlighting the predominance of positive feelings on topics such as products and partnerships with influencers, in addition to the influence of cultural nuances on mood and interaction with the community.

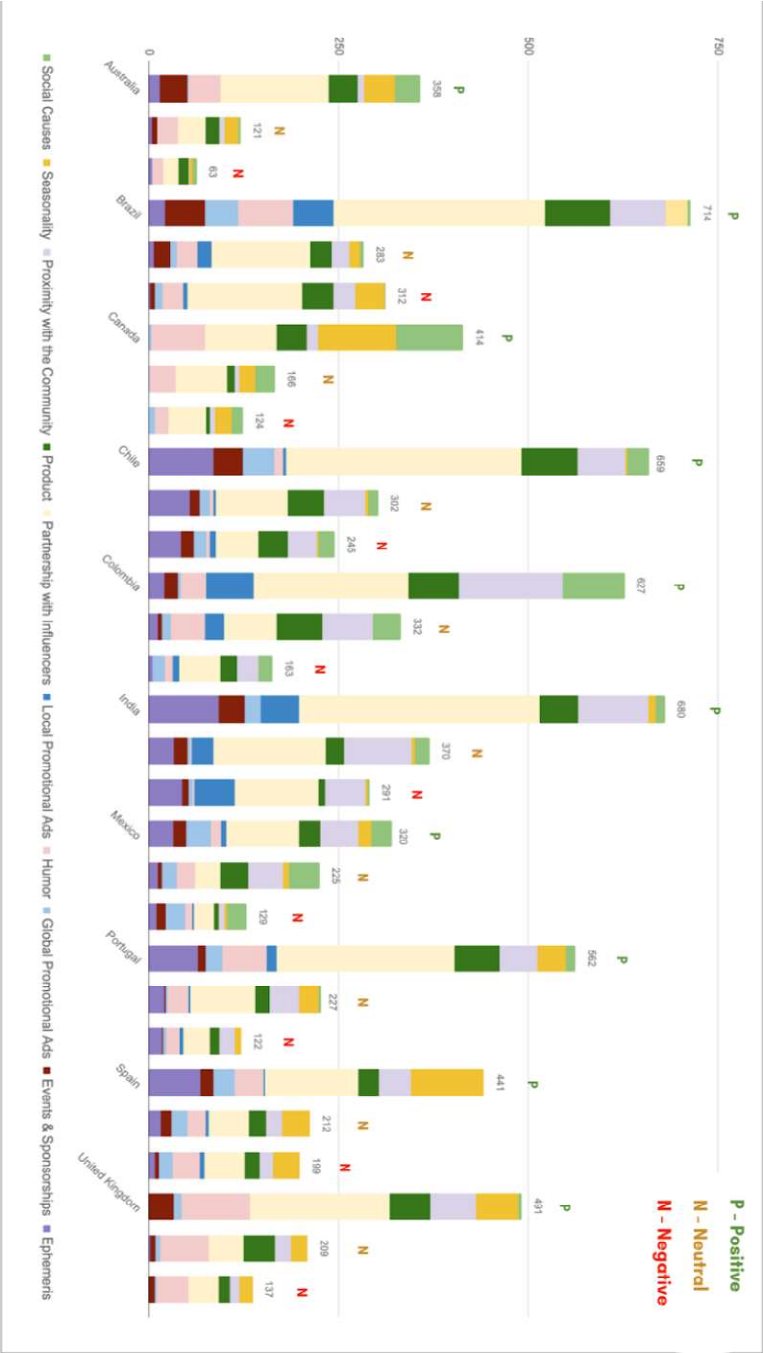


Figure 11 - Demographic Sentiment Analysis per Communication Category

## Discussions

Along with four empirical studies, we investigate how top global brands manage regional Instagram strategies, underscoring the significance of cultural adaptation in global brand management. In particular, our findings reveal four key insights. First, considering that 70% of top global brands operate localized Instagram accounts, we underline the relevance of regional communication strategies even in a global social media-mediated society (Fazil et al., 2024). In line with Grigorescu & Zaif (2017) and Saari et al. (2022) which highlight the importance of global companies paying attention to local characteristics of social media, we observe that global brands prioritize adapting their communication to different countries, cultures, and markets. This strategy primarily targets developed regions such as North America, Europe, and Oceania, and emerging markets such as Brazil, India, and East Asia, leveraging their diverse consumer bases and robust economies.

Second, we reaffirm the relevance of cross-cultural brand communication in contemporary brand management (Cayla and Arnould, 2008) but highlight the essential role of social media and its challenges. While global brand coherence is crucial, adapting content to resonate with local audiences is imperative. This involves customizing communication tones, leveraging local influencers, and aligning with culturally relevant causes. Thirdly, we illustrate how companies act to balance global promotional strategies with locally focused content. These adaptations include language adjustments, seasonal campaigns, and community engagement, all enhancing brand relevance in specific markets. Finally, sentiment analysis quantifies consumer perceptions, confirming the importance of cultural proximity and local engagement, particularly in markets like Brazil and India.

Our findings align with the literature on the importance of cultural adaptation in global marketing. Consistent with Onkvisit and Shaw (2009), Sahem (2023), and Cayla and Arnould (2008), our study provides empirical evidence that cultural sensitivity is crucial for enhancing brand engagement and positive perception in diverse markets. This research contributes to the broader understanding of how global brands can effectively balance global consistency with local relevance.

The study highlights the managerial implications for brands' global communication strategies on Instagram. For brand managers, it is crucial to consider that while global brand consistency is important, local adaptation of messages is equally essential to achieving market success. Throughout the research, it is demonstrated that, in fact, brands stand out when personalizing their content to reflect on regional cultural nuances and consumer preferences. Marketers must invest in developing local communication strategies on social media that have an impact on target audiences, integrating authentic, relatable, and relevant content while maintaining the core values of the global brand.

Additionally, leveraging insights from sentiment analysis and demographic engagement can guide more effective and responsive communications strategies. Adopting a differentiated approach that balances global and local elements can improve brand perception, fostering stronger connections with consumers and fostering brand loyalty across diverse markets.

The analysis provides several crucial managerial contributions to improving overall brand communication on Instagram. Firstly, it highlights the importance of local adaptation in brand strategies. Marketing managers must consider that a universal approach is often insufficient and invest in content creation. Messages should be adapted depending on the region, culture, and country, reflecting local cultural norms and consumer preferences. This localized strategy increases engagement and relevance, as brands like Coca-Cola and McDonald's demonstrate.

Furthermore, the study highlights the need for both equally useful and complementary approaches. A balanced approach between global consistency and local relevance is

required, and brands must ensure that, at the same time, they maintain a unique identity and their communication strategies also incorporate local elements that consumers can relate to and identify with. This balance helps preserve the brand's fundamental values while bringing proximity to the customer. The insights gleaned from sentiment analysis reveal the value of understanding consumer perceptions. This is one of the things to keep in mind when reviewing and refining marketing and communications strategies, as well as addressing consumer feedback and trends to improve content and brand reward.

One of the biggest enablers and benefits will also be investing in regional partnerships with influencers, events, and relevant causes approved with the brand values, which can help amplify messages, strengthen community connections, increase transmission, and promote greater engagement. Brands build stronger emotional connections with consumers by participating in local community events. Ultimately, this approach drives brand leadership and sustains success in competitive global markets.

### Final Remarks

Several aspects of the current project could be refined to increase the strength and applicability of future research on global brand communication strategies on Instagram. Firstly, the brands and countries analyzed only represent a small sample, which is not fully representative when discussing global branding practices on Instagram. In future research, it would be interesting to consider a broader sample of brands and countries to increase the generalizability of the results (both in phases 3 and 1). Another aspect would be to collect more insights from interviews with marketers. Although the results were homogeneous, the research would gain more credibility with more interviews. It could also be interesting to explore the integration of machine learning models to predict consumer trends and behaviors or even the inclusion of a longitudinal study element that could track changes over time, offering insights into the evolution of consumer strategies and responses.

The analysis highlights the importance of local strategies and cultural adaptation in global brand communication. Brands' success in navigating diverse markets depends on their ability to balance global consistency with local relevance, embracing cultural diversity, linguistic nuances, and consumer preferences. By doing so, they can engage with diverse audiences, foster stronger connections with consumers, and foster brand loyalty. This approach ensures sustained success and positions brands as respected entities in the competitive global marketplace.

### References

- Appel, G., Grewal, L., Hadi, R., and Stephen, A.T. (2020). The future of social media in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(1), 79-95.
- Bengtsson, A., Bardhi, F., and Venkatraman, M. (2010). How global brands travel with consumers: An examination of the relationship between brand consistency and meaning across national boundaries. *International Marketing Review*, 27(5), 519-540.
- Cayla, J., and Arnould, E. J. (2008). A cultural approach to branding in the global marketplace. *Journal of International Marketing*, 16(4), 86-112.
- Dencheva (2023). *Social media advertising and marketing worldwide - statistics & facts*. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/topics/1538/social-media-marketing/#topicOverview>
- Fazil, A. W., Hakimi, M., Akrami, K., Akrami, M., and Akrami, F. (2024). Exploring the Role of Social Media in Bridging Gaps and Facilitating Global Communication. *Studies in Media, Journalism and Communications*, 2(1), 13–21.
- Forbes (2023). *How Social Media Is Changing Business Strategies*. Jan 19, 2023. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/01/19/how-social-media-is-changing-business-strategies/>
- Forbes (2024). *Social Media Marketing In 2024: The Ultimate Guide*. Aug 2, 2024. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/social-media-marketing/>



- Grigorescu, A., and Zaif, A. (2017). The concept of glocalization and its incorporation in global brands' marketing strategies. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 6(1), 70-74.
- Kemp, S. (2024). *Digital 2024: Global Overview Report*. DataReportal. Available at: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-global-overview-report>
- Khajuria, M. I. (2017). Impact of social media brand communications on consumer-based brand equity. *Indian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies*, 8(3), 124-131.
- Kizgin, H., Jamal, A., Dey, B.L., and Rana, N.P. (2018). The impact of social media on consumers' acculturation and purchase intentions. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 20, 503-514.
- Kucuk, S.U., and Krishnamurthy, S. (2007). An analysis of consumer power on the Internet. *Technovation*, 27(1-2), 47-56.
- Onkvisit, S., and Shaw, J. (2009). *International marketing: strategy and theory*. London: Routledge.
- Saari, M., Haapanen, L. and Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, P. (2022). Social media and international business: views and conceptual framing, *International Marketing Review*, 39(7), 25-45.
- Sahem, M.S. (2023). Cross-Cultural Marketing Communication: A Comparative Analysis of Strategies in Global Campaigns. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research*, 13(6), 172-181.
- Saravanakumar, M., and SuganthaLakshmi, T. (2012). Social media marketing. *Life science journal*, 9(4), 4444-4451.
- Steenkamp, J.B.E. (2020). Global brand building and management in the digital age. *Journal of International Marketing*, 28(1), 13-27.
- Sun, H. (2020). *Global social media design: Bridging differences across cultures*. Oxford University Press
- Tsimonis, G., and Dimitriadis, S. (2014). Brand strategies in social media. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 32(3), 328-344
- Tuten, T.L. (2023). *Social media marketing*. Sage Publications Limited, 4 -28
- Yoo, B., Donthu, N., and Lee, S. (2000). An examination of selected marketing mix elements and brand equity. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28, 195-211.

## Authors

**1. Bárbara Mota**, M.Sc. in Data-Driven Marketing, NOVA Information Management School, Lisbon, Portugal. Digital Marketing Manager at Robert Bosch S.A., Lisbon, Portugal.

**2. Marlon Dalmoro**, Ph.D. in Management Sciences, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). Professor in the Department of Management Sciences at UFRGS, and at NOVA Information Management School, Lisbon, Portugal.

## Contribution of each author

Contribution	Bárbara Mota	Marlon Dalmoro
1. Definition of research problem	✓	✓
2. Development of hypotheses or research question (in case of empirical studies)	✓	✓
3. Development of theretical propositions (in case of theoretical work)		
4. Theoretical foundation / literature review	✓	
5. Definition of methodological procedures	✓	✓
6. Data collection	✓	
7. Analysis and interpretation of data (when applied)	✓	
8. Revision of the manuscript		✓
9. Manuscript writing	✓	