Relationship marketing - A case study of the Premium Outlet[1]

Marketing de relacionamento - Um estudo de caso do *Outlet Premium*

Alessandra Barroso Moreira*
Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG), Goiânia, GO, Brazil

ABSTRACT

The present article shows the importance of valuing customer service digital channels, specifically in projects with a focus on retail. The current was provided to virtual consumers a greater ease in communicating online, and with that the customer services also being carried out on social networks and websites. However, wonders, the SAC (Customer Service) in digital media is being efficient? We can say that the online culture, presented to customers, more communication options through different channels, and all of them easily accessible. The objective of this research is to understand this scenario, and to present the importance of the relationship with the client within the SAC. This will be done through a case study, a company located in Alexânia, Goiás, and the Premium Outlet Brasilia.

*Alessandra Barroso Moreira
Post-Graduate degree in Communication Relations from Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG). Marketing Analyst at Mestiça Propaganda - São Paulo.
Address: Outlet Premium Brasília, BR 060 KM 21, s/n, CEP 72920-000, Alexânia, GO, Brazil.
E-mail: alessandrabm1@hotmail.com

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RESUMO

O presente artigo mostra a importância de valorizar o atendimento ao cliente nos canais digitais, especificamente em empreendimentos com foco no varejo. A atual era virtual proporcionou, para os consumidores, uma maior facilidade na comunicação on-line e, com isso, o atendimento ao cliente também está sendo realizado em mídias sociais e sites. No entanto, questiona-se, o Serviço de Atendimento ao Consumidor (SAC) no meio digital, está sendo eficiente? Pode-se dizer que a cultura on-line, apresentou para os clientes, mais opções de comunicação por meio de diferentes canais e todos eles de fácil acesso. O objetivo desta pesquisa é compreender este cenário e apresentar a importância do relacionamento com o cliente dentro do SAC digital. Isso será feito por meio de um estudo de caso, de uma empresa localizada em Alexânia, Goiás, o *Outlet Premium* Brasília.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Marketing de relacionamento; *Outlet*; Atendimento ao cliente.

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1   INTRODUCTION

Currently, a market scenario has been witnessed, in which companies look for ways to stand out from their competitors. The consumption of new media differentiates the way of communicating with customers and generates more space for the interaction, characterized by the autonomy and accessibility of the client to the information. As Costa says (2010, 110), "the culture of the spectator, increasingly, is reconfigured in the culture of the participant, or participatory culture, in which the power to transmit is distributed and shared by all." This change in the media scenario brought a new vision for the virtual world and also the insertion of companies in the online environment, following the new behavior of the consumer. This format is called Convergence:

> A process called convergence of modes is making inaccurate the boundaries between the media of communication, even between point-to-point communications, such as the mail, telephone and telegraph, and mass communications, such as the journalism, radio and TV. A single physical medium - whether wires, cables or waves - can carry services that, in past, was offered separately. Inversely, a service that, in the past, was offered by a single way - whether broadcasting, the journalism or telephony - can now be offered in a number of different physical forms. Thus, the one-to-one relationship that existed between a mean of communication and its use is corroding. (Jenkins, 2006, p. 35)

It is an accelerated process of communication transformation that has been absorbed immediately by the public and by companies, directly influencing the routines. With this transformation the companies have a new perception of customer relationships. Nowadays, a good option for this has been the use of marketing and its various unfoldings and segmentations, such as, for example, relationship marketing.

Relationship marketing is a business strategy that demands attitudes and change actions in companies, because it deals with a new communicational context to reach the client, seeking to solve the needs of the public and the best way to serve them. The relationship is at the core of human behavior and central to the people doing business, as Gummesson (2010) points out. For Vavra (1993), relationship marketing is defined as a process that ensures continuous satisfaction and reinforcement to individuals or organizations who are current clients or who have already been clients. Customer service is a fundamental tool of relationship marketing, and should be used by all institutions, even those that do not work with direct customer service, such as cases of companies that deal with suppliers or B2B - Business to Business, which means, Company to Company. According to Ching (2010) are companies that conduct business, one to the other, business transactions and done business between companies and not directly to the consumer.

In all cases, the maintenance of this service is a competitive differential used in the marketing strategy and is intended to have good results that even reflect in the financial numbers. Peppers and Rogers (2000) synthesize that relationship marketing means doing business like our grandparents.

The search of companies for a competitive differential in the market has led the focus and the search for innovation, for the achievement of a good relationship with the customers and how the direct connection with the public can be made in various forms, including digital media. This current digital attendance scenario is part of a new moment of consumer behavior, which is more demanding and present in the virtual world. In 2010, Kotler cites the change that opens several doors to a new communication model and, to attend this new need, companies must see the insertion of digital as an investment in the way of attend and seeing relationship marketing as the key among companies and the market, establishing mutually satisfactory and long-term relationships, in order to win and retain customer preference.

Relationship marketing preserves the values of brands on a continuous way and transmits this to the customer, with the aim of maintaining loyalty and maintaining a relationship always lasting, as well as seeking the conquest of new markets. As author Gummesson (2010) argues, the improvement in perceived quality by the customer will increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and profitability. In

the business context, the good use of relationship marketing only has to add up and it is important to highlight that it means doing continuous work, which must be monitored and sustained always in the best way.

Kotler and Keller (2012) point out the positive aspects of the customer relationship as the higher quality of products and services, customer satisfaction along with their loyalty and greater profitability, as customers begin to realize the value added to the product. An important definition on the subject is made by Martins (2006: 80) "if you want to seek new forms of communication to establish a deep and lasting relationship for clients, prospects clients, suppliers and all intermediaries, as a way to gain advantage competitive sustainable."

Within the tools of relationship marketing we can mention the effective use of social media for communication with the customer, which engages and, in the long term, has the possibility of being converted into sales. The corporate profile of the brand, within the virtual portals, should maintain the *branding* position, which means brand management, the identity that the company has in the perception of the consumer. For Kotler and Keller (2012) it is the added value, attributed to products and services to generate well structured relationships, that bring better performance to the company. According to Rett (2014), it is fundamental that companies monitor what is broadcast on social media and use their resources, providing an adequate and responsive response to their client. This care may be exactly what differs from an opportunity of a crisis and this happens because of the transparency existent on the internet, and the immediacy of the information conveyed in that channel.

Therefore, it is perceived the importance of a company to meet the expectations of its clients in relation to the service rendered to it: everything should be enlightening and done in a welcoming way. This contact gives the customer an impression that is associated with the brand image and can be a decisive factor when choosing the product and the purchases. The communication presented by the company, through advertising, must be in accordance with the service and attendance that are provided to the public, if an advertisement speaks for a brand and is transmitted in a positive way, the customer service must be performed out the same way, for that no happen contradictions and the customer creates another view of the brand after contacting their Customer Service (SAC). It is essential that the company understands that the good attendance provided on the internet, is seen by the customer as an extension of the company's services and that the SAC is a direct communication with the customer.

According to Barbosa and Minciotti (2007), "SAC aims to open a channel of direct communication between the company and its clients, enabling them to express opinions or make suggestions about the products or services placed at their disposal." For all communication to happen in an aligned way across all departments of the company, including customer attendance employees, marketing is fundamental. It is able to detect problems and solve them in order to meet the customer's need and to sell your product. The message that the company transmits to the internal and external public should be exactly the same, accurate and without noise, in this way good service will be provided always and in any channel. With a well-trained and qualified team, SAC provides the best support service and solves the best way each service provided.

Slongo and Liberali (2004) talk about the interaction of company employees with consumers, which is the key to relationship marketing. Every employee in direct contact with the consumer is a potential builder or destroyer of relationships and, for the success of that operation, specific support is required for employees, starting with the training that is essential to align communication and leaving the employee enabled for contact with the public. This growing concern of companies with the excellence achieved in the SAC, opens up to increase profits, in general, and improves the institutional image of the brand, reinforcing the *share of mind* that expresses brand remember, which for Shimp (2002) represents strong and unique associations about a brand that is only possible due to communication efforts.

In some cases, SAC is negatively associated, by some people, with a department that is directed only to complaints without solutions, which aims to preserve the brand and not the customer. This is due to the bad reputation of big brands that provide poor service, as is the case of Vivo, one of the largest telephone operators in Brazil which, in 2017, ranked first in the *ranking* of companies with

the highest number of complaints on the portal *Reclame Aqui*, with more than 80,000 contestations. In Figure 1, it is also possible to find other great names like *Casas Bahia* and *Mercado Livre*, which like Vivo work directly with the public attendance. Among the top ten in the ranking, most of the telephone companies in Brazil are also included, which are known for the high level of consumer complaints about the service provided.

Figure 1 - Ranking of companies with the largest number of complaints
Source: Site Reclame Aqui, 2017. Retrieved from https: //www.reclameaqui.com.br

According to Silva (2012, page 44), "identify dissatisfied or with doubts consumers and respond them quickly, saves headaches and maintains customers. By directing efforts to monitor business opportunities, one can take advantage of the moment of purchasing decision". This helps to reinforce the plurality and convey to the customer the various functions that the SAC can have, as well as finding in every contact with the customer, an opportunity for brand growth. A well-received complaint can be absorbed and influence the decisions of the company in order to improve what has been exposed by the customer, can be learned with constructive criticism, or even have the opportunity for growth through a return given by customers who know and use the products and services of companies, and that is the main focus of sales.

Starting from the principle of relationship marketing, SAC 2.0 is a branch that accompanied the technological advance and the mass entry of brands in the virtual and, currently, gave another format to the traditional customer service, since it was added to the media social policies. A faster and more efficient way of communicating with companies that were once far from their consumers. The *Blog Marketing de Conteúdo* (2016) defines SAC 2.0 as: "use of digital channels to provide customer attendance. This includes social media, but is not limited to them [...]. Another factor that encompasses SAC 2.0 is the need to monitor customer reactions and react to them as quickly as possible."

Given this, it can be concluded that the evolution of the SAC to a 2.0 format is nothing more than: the relationship of companies with their clients through social media, becoming not only a means of complaint, but also of exchange of experiences. Even though it is not a simple task, in addition to online service, it is also necessary to monitor how this service is provided, since something on the Internet can have a high propagation dimension, being accessed by considerable numbers of people anywhere in the world. A mistake in the service can viralize in a short time and in great proportions,

affecting the image of the mark, being, in some cases, irreversible, due to the fluidity that the message is shared. Nowadays it is very common to encounter these situations on the internet (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Post about royal family
Source: Magazine Quem, 2017. Retrieved from https: //www.senhasegura.com.br

Finally, we begin to notice the entry of commercial profiles in social media like Instagram and Facebook, and the brands increasingly focused on online service. As Madruga (2010) cites, one effective way to keep your customers is to use relationship marketing that helps companies become different, closer to their customers and market leaders. It is noticed that the new era of marketing, has as a characteristic the focus also on the customer and not only on sales, therefore, the concern to serve the public well publicizing this work of relationship along with products, discounts and services.

2 METHODOLOGY

For the analysis of the phenomenon, we used in this study a bibliographical research based on books, websites and articles on relationship marketing with the intention to base the arguments and data better.

The option for the case study was based on the strategy of researching the experiment proposed by publicity agency to your customer. According to Yin (2005), case studies represent the preferred strategy when questions arise such as "how" and "why", when the researcher has little control over events and when the focus is on contemporary phenomena inserted in some context of the real life.

With the data of the project, information about the client and collection of the opinions of some involved, it was possible to organize the methodology of the case study, even with the complexity and largeness of the subject, because according to Eisenhardt (1999), it is important to take two aspects within this method: properly delineate the scope of the problem and determine the potential factors or variables that will be observed. The relevance of this methodology is perceived in the classic Building Theories From Case Study Research and, precisely in this sense and in the line of reasoning the following case study, tries to expose the SMART project in a clear way, as Stake (2000) thinks because it is a complex entity, located in an environment or incorporated in a given situation.

3 OUTLET PREMIUM CASE STUDY

Considering the importance of relationship marketing, is presented in this topic, the study of the Outlet Premium case. According to Von Poser (2005), the relationship is a strategy that leads to a goal, and this is how the company in question plans its involvement with the client, always aiming at reaching the main objectives.

Outlet Premium is a complex of the General Shopping group, in the format of open mall, with four units located in different states of Brazil, they are: Goiás, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. All

made up of national and international brand stores such as Lacoste, Brooksfield, Schutz, Calvin Klein, among others. Focused on commercialize products of high quality and with differentiated prices, the concept Outlet recently entered Brazil and, in the case of the General Shopping ventures, has a little more than 8 years of market that, in turn, is expanding in the country and conquering an adept public.

Unlike conventional malls/shopping centers, the Outlet network does not work with collection launches and aims to maintain expressive discounts throughout the year. The open mall model is also a characteristic peculiarity of Outlets that, according to Zaffari (2012), is a trend coming from the United States in the 80s that makes costs feasible and results in a more pleasant space for the public.

According to the ex- president of General Shopping, Alexandre Dias, responsible for Outlets, the low price is what attracts the public and this value proposition is what makes the results appears (Annex A).

The venture has a marketing plan focused on the dissemination of the Outlet concept and the products marketed. For this case study, we used as an example the social media of Outlet Premium units and the significant way of publicizing the discounts of all its stores to attract customers and convince them by the price. The discount is, in fact, the great differential of the enterprise, since the units do not have great entertainment options like movie theaters and playgrounds, so communication is focused on price disclosure and brand enhancement.

The choice of social media as a tool in the Outlet's communication mix was, mainly, due to the low cost of the platforms and the great reach of the public. In the example shown in Figure 3 it is possible to see how the disclosure is made in Instagram of one of the units of the company.

Figure 3 - Discount Post Scala
Source: *Outlet Premium* Brasília, 2017. Retrieved from https: //www.instagram.com

The planning of postings on both Facebook (social media founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004, focusing on profiles of users and their publications) and Instagram (social media for online photo sharing, created in 2010 by Mike Krieger and Kevin Systrom), is carried out by the advertising agency contracted for this purpose and is characterized by the daily frequency of product posts, always with communication of the price as follows: From: R$ x, By: R$ y, also explaining the name of the brand, as value added. This point differentiates the social profiles of Outlet Premium from other malls/Shopping Centers, where communication is more focused on institutional posts, launching of collections, events and entertainment like cinema and playground.

The Facebook profile of a large mall/Shopping Center in São Paulo is a good example of the overall communication, as shown in Figure 4.
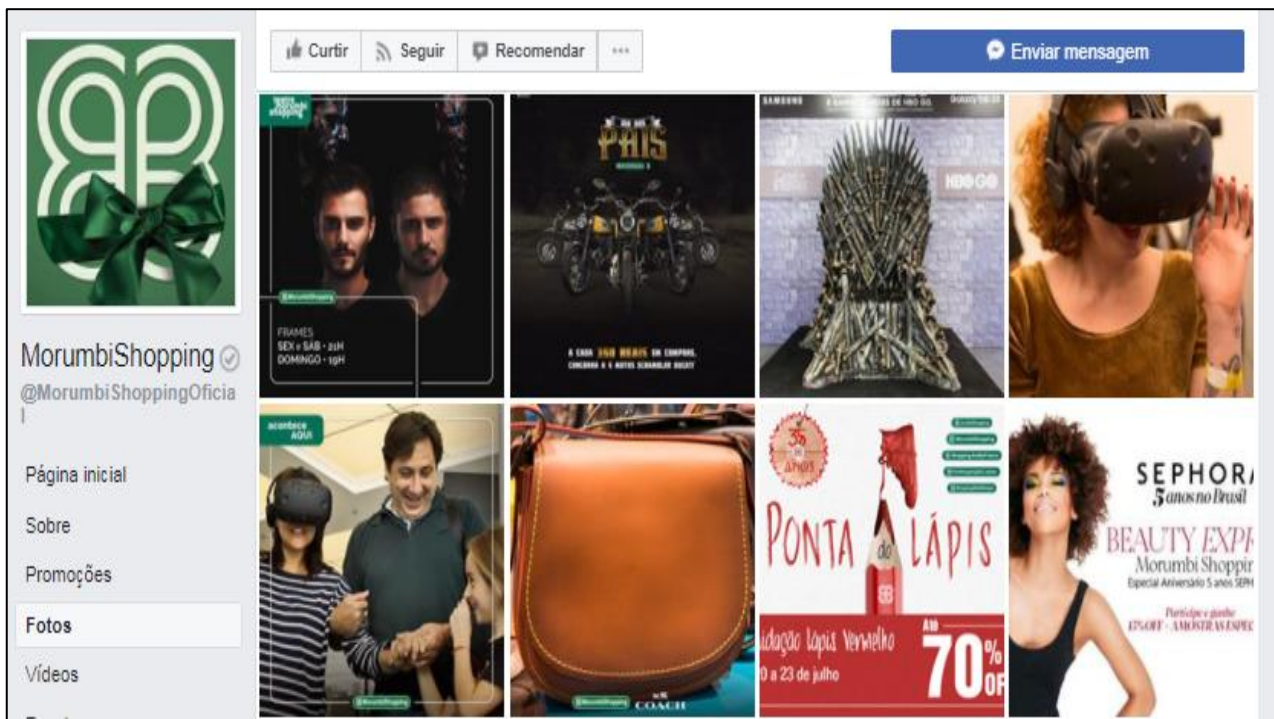
Figure 4 – Facebook Profile
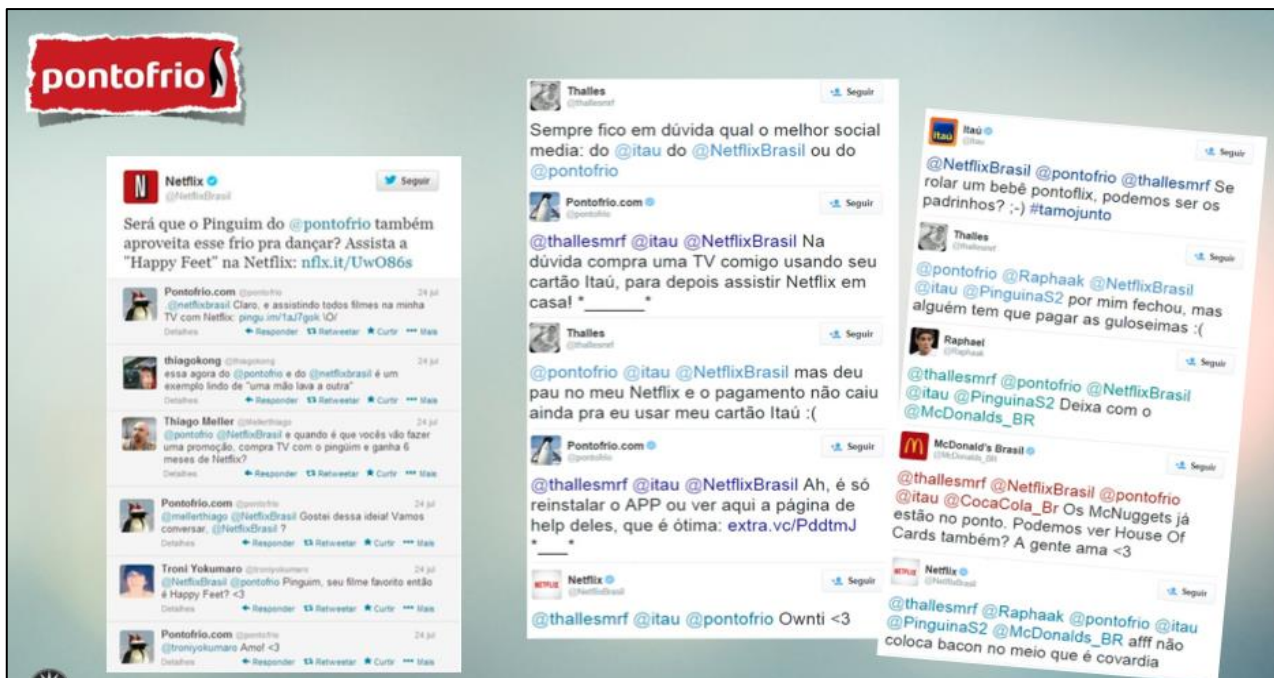Source: Morumbi *Shopping*. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com

Figure 5 - Netflix, Ponto Frio and Itaú Interaction.
Source: Mestiça Propaganda, 2016.

Due to the large number of posts, the engagement is also high and, therefore, the followers interact with the Outlet Premium profiles looking for products and information in general. This interaction in social media is the beginning of a company / follower relationship and, from that moment on, the marketing department of the group, realized the need to provide a personalized service in this channel, which has characteristics of the company and a professional language. Something capable of reverting in sales, a simple question about time of operation, address or even the extension of the Physical Information Desk that is located inside the Outlet, but incorporated into the digital media.

The online consultations carried out by other companies served as inspiration for the client's briefing and also as an example for the agency to initiate the project that was based on analyzes of social profiles of companies like Netflix and Ponto Frio (Figure 5).

The attendance shown in Figure 6 was also mentioned in the briefing as an example and was the first experience of the Outlet Premium profile, with what is called SAC 2.0. The language used was an adequate feature and performed according to the customer's need, healing its accuracy and promoting the brand and digital performance, further proving the importance of a good SAC to provide better experiences to the public.

Figure 6 - Customer Service Outlet Premium
Source: Mestiça Propaganda, 2016.

After a long study, the agency Mestiça, from São Paulo, which attends the Outlet Premium, presented a solution based on customer relationship and SAC 2.0. Something that matched the briefing and went beyond a project. What attracted the attention of the creation of the agency was the sensitivity of companies that already had this kind of online customer service and also served as inspiration for the creation of the Outlet Premium SMART project. The SMART project called Monitor Service, Attendance and Relationships with the *Target*, aims to strengthen the relationship of the Outlet group with the online public and to show a new way of interacting that is more dynamic, fast, closer and real.

The need to formalize this service came soon after the client's approval for the agency, and then began in October 2016 the project which, according to the managing director of the Mestiça agency is an important idea for all companies focused on retail:

Every retail brand should have a SMART within their business place. The scope lives up to the name and tends to break this barrier that the interaction on Facebook is just a SAC service. The professional dedicated to this scope must be prepared to monitor the client and references in social media, have excellence in serving the online and offline SAC, know how to best relate, and even identify sales opportunities. SMART is a key-piece of the Outlet Premium planning and I miss not having one in the other clients of the agency.

In this way, was allocated in each square a digital attendant, named by SMART, to solve all the calls coming from the social media, talking with the client and answering their questions according to the needs, but always with the final objective very clear: relationship for sales conversion. A digital platform was used to support SMART, as it facilitates and filters the calls coming from all social media.

Professionals from the communication areas with a creative profile were selected, so that they could interact with the *target* and generate intelligent responses, inserting the client into the brand universe. All this service is provided based on the monitoring of the social media that Outlet Premium operates.

It is important to emphasize that the professional is strictly aware of all the information passed, since the solutions to the clients are given in an exact form and without noise, avoiding a possible misunderstanding. Because it is not a robot with automatic responses, SMART was necessary for the accomplishment of a closer service, the construction of a character with peculiar qualities to please the public, but not in personified format as is the case exemplified in Figure 7.

Figure 7 - Character Lu of the company Magazine Luiza.
Source: Mundo das Marcas, 2017. Retrieved from http://mundodasmarcas.blogspot.com.br

This was the great differential of the project: a real attendance, that cares about with providing close and humanized in fact, is a human mechanism that happens within a digital platform.

Because it is a digital SAC, the SMART professional is also required to meet not only information but also complaints of all kinds. But what characterizes personalized service is the way to find a solution in cases like the one shown in Figure 8.

After the implementation, the project went through great highlights of calls such as praise and sales of facts materialized, in addition to attending to the problematic of the online call of the profiles. As is the case of the attendances shown in Figure 9, all performed by SMART.

The opportunity for customer interaction in the case of Figure 9, emerged from a user marking another profile on the post to share the information, this is a very common practice in social media, when a person wishes that his friend also see the publication. SMART then had the sensitivity to transform that simple tagging between friends, into an opportunity to communicate and gain the empathy of two potential customers, since they were already interested in the message that was posted.

Figure 8 – Interaction Rio de Janeiro 1
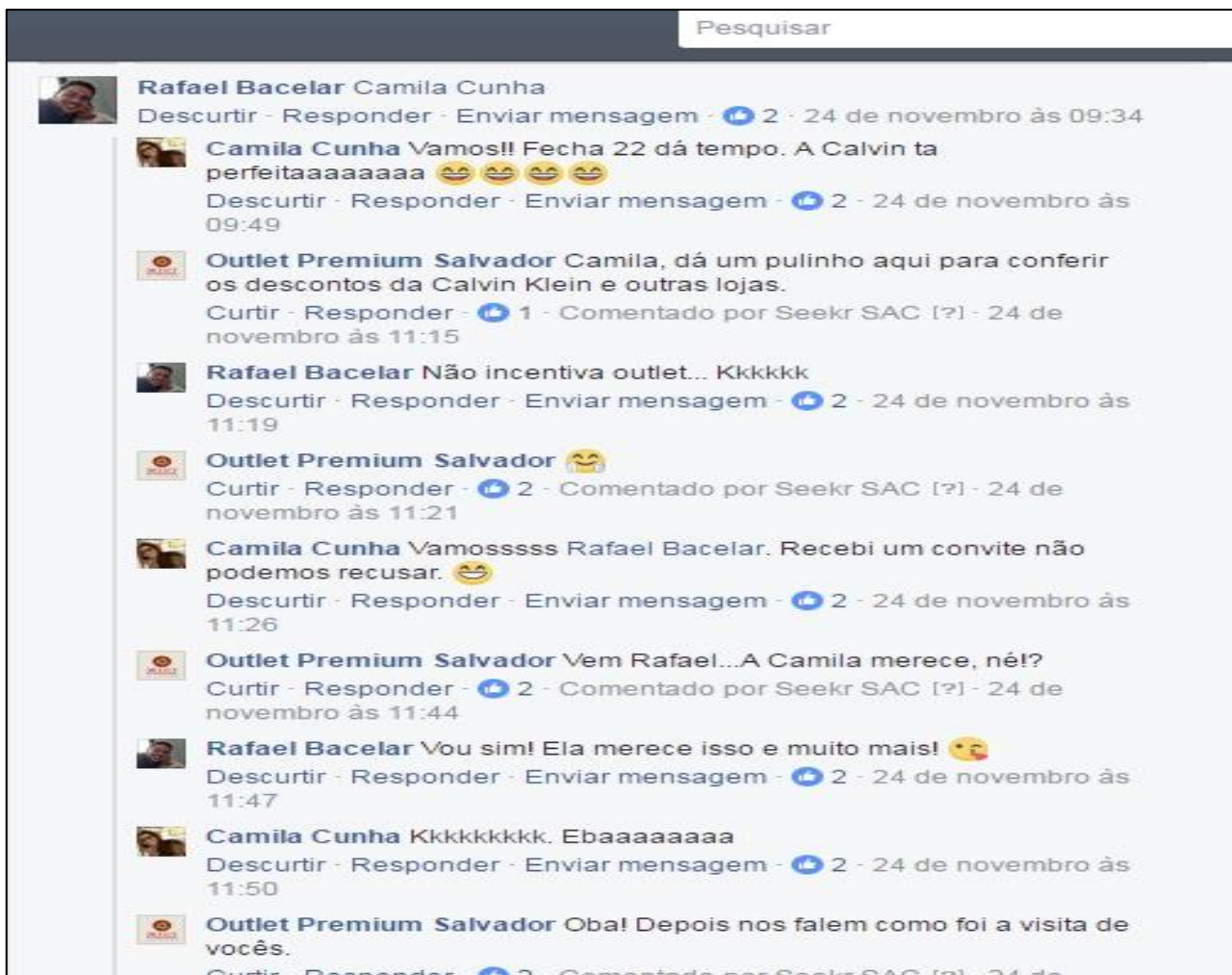Source: *Outlet Premium* Rio de Janeiro, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com

Figure 9 – Interaction Salvador
Source: *Outlet Premium* Salvador, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com

This way also happened with a marking of friends in the Outlet Premium Rio de Janeiro profile, but this SMART service within the interaction, was focused on redirecting the client to visit the site, providing more information for both users, such as store contacts, photos and product prices (Figure 10).

Figure 10 – Interaction Rio de Janeiro 2
Source: *Outlet Premium* Rio de Janeiro. Recovered from
https://www.facebook.com/125333914291766/posts/848901338601683

Figure 11 – Brasília Interaction
Source: *Outlet Premium* Brasília. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com

As well as targeting to the site, the SMART professional also aims to engage the audience and earn their trust for that an interaction be transformed into customer registration. And this disclosure is very attractive, because as soon as the user registers on the Outlet Premium site, he / she starts to receive exclusive discount coupons, as explained by the interaction of the Brasília profile (Figure 11).

In addition to the attention SMART must have to find the opportunity and get closer to the public through social media, the responsible for the service, should also be sensitive in dealing with complaints and offenses from clients, once that social media also give space for the public to express all their ideas. All kindness and cordiality are needed when responding to the call to reverse the situation and achieve affinity with the client. In these cases, the form that the complaint is answered can be a great differential, since it can feed even more the user's concern or provide an enlightening solution that satisfies him. A good example of this is the interaction shown in Figure 12, from the Facebook profile of the Outlet Premium São Paulo, in which SMART is committed to serving the customer in the best way and still offers to find products with the best prices, according to the customer's needs.
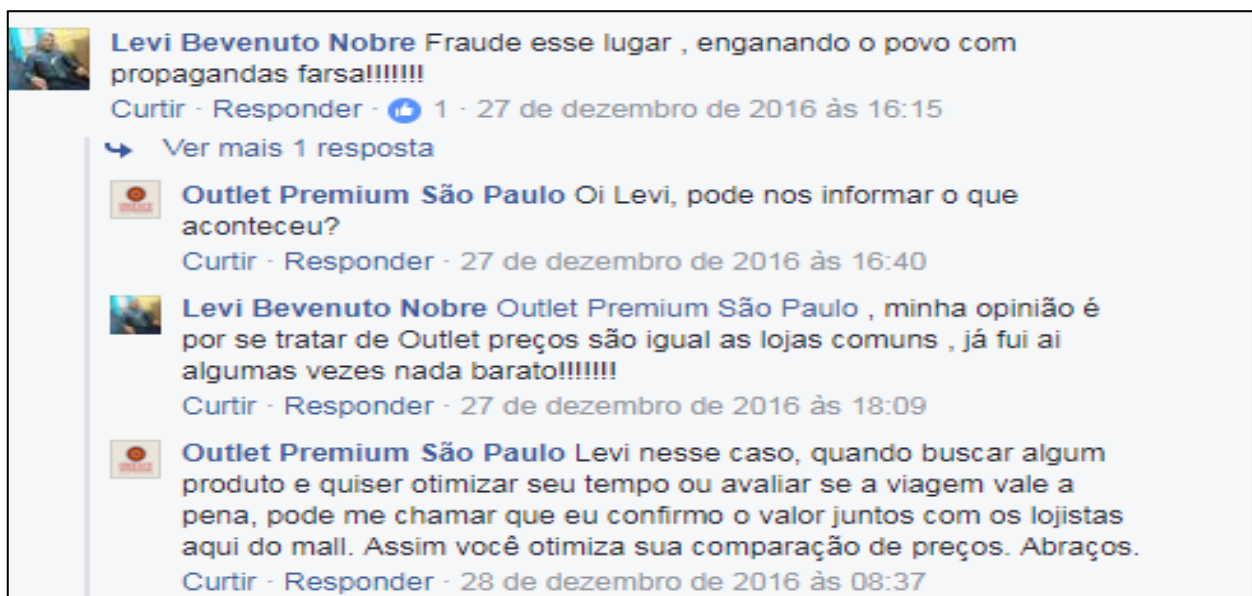

Figure 12 - Interaction
Source: *Outlet Premium* São Paulo. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com

Finally, the return delivered to Outlet Premium customers in the digital environment, is the highlight of the project and, according to Outlet Premium Marketing Coordinator Brasília, Janaína Barroso:

It became fundamental in our contact with customers, did not know this format of personalized service and, through it, you can get solve doubts, reserve products, between serving various other types of immediate customer needs, since the return does not take even 24 hours.

It is clear, therefore, after the analyzes of calls who were served that, both the online public and the Outlet Premium company, accepted the SMART project in a positive way and adhered to this facilitating idea, as a big step inside the relationship marketing of the brand.

4   CONCLUSION

It is concluded that relationship marketing is one of the keys of the approximation between the customer and the company and can be a great competitive advantage nowadays. He is able to bond and offer personalized experiences. However, not always the service provided in this modality, by

most of the current brands, gets great highlight and aims to captivate the public. You lose, this way, many sales opportunities.

As customers are increasingly demanding and information is instantaneous, the business world must follow that breakthrough and use it to their advantage, paying attention to the importance of relationship planning and focusing on the best results. The actions taken to plan relationship marketing today become imperative and, for those who adhere to them, guarantees the benefits to the company and customer loyalty. These contacts can be made since from a call until a social media page evaluation. As it is a subject that is still little implemented in the corporate communications sector, the objective of this study to show the relationship between the companies and the clients, was only reached after the analysis of the pioneering of this recent phenomenon in bigger brands, as was the Outlet Premium case study. The applied methodology was efficient, since it is an in-depth research of the operation and effectiveness in detail of a new project between agency and client. On the other hand, the analysis and introduction, to the innovative theme: relationship marketing paves the way for future studies of the effectiveness of these relationships that can trace a new behavior between the public and the companies.

The structuring of the relationship project is fundamental to the success of the operation. Both the brand and the customer must be sure of the contact made and information exchanged, thus ensuring a noise-free and efficient communication. It was in this way that the Outlet Premium realized the need to improve communication with the customer and solved, through the SMART project created by the agency Mestiça, which today is the great highlight of the relationship marketing service rendered.

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ANNEX A – INTERVIEW ALEXANDRE DIAS FOR ABRASCE

Outlet: An all special deal
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After a frustrated experience in the 90's, the Outlet found success in the Brazilian market in recent years. Some of the major national entrepreneurs want to ensure that the expansion cycle continues for a long time.

In recent years, the development of the Shopping Centers sector, in the wake of a decade of continuous economic expansion, opened up opportunities for a resurgence of a type of enterprise very popular in American retail, but which, in Brazil, was seen after a unsuccessful experience in the 1990s, with many reservations. The Outlet inaugurated in the country in this decade show, however, that with a more mature retail this model of Shopping Center plays an important role for entrepreneurs, shopkeepers and consumers. Since 2009, some of the country's leading entrepreneurs have opened seven Outlets in several regions. "In each new operation, we learned a little more", comments Alexandre Dias, CEO of General Shopping Brasil, which operates four Outlet Premium in the domestic market (São Paulo, Brasilia, Salvador and Rio de Janeiro) and pioneered the new phase of sector. "The Brazilian likes Outlet, so much that he buys a lot when he goes to the United States, but even so the concept was seen with reservations when we started at the end of the last decade," he recalls. This was largely due to the bad experience of the 1990s, when, boosted by the post-Plano Real economic stability, some entrepreneurs bet on more Spartan malls that would act as a brand stockpile. For various reasons, the concept did not emerge. At the end of the last decade, the largest maturation of Brazilian retail, with several networks with at least 50 stores (which allowed the balance to be sold in the Outlet), a more favorable scenario in the granting of investment credit and a project studied for which had financial viability in its construction, design and operation gave life to the Outlet Premium SP, located on the Bandeirantes Highway, between São Paulo and Campinas. "We have two theme parks in the neighborhood, serving as reference points, and we developed the venture in such a way that the cost of condominium is 70% lower than that of a traditional mall. This allows you to reduce the price of products and creates a value proposition that attracts customers, "comments Dias. A peculiar feature of the Brazilian Outlet market is that its operation is more complex than that of its similar Americans. "Perhaps the Brazilian Outlets are the ones that face more restrictions," Dias

comments. "Because of the history of the industry in Brazil, we do not sell defective products and we need to have a greater price difference than the American and European Outlets. To exorcise the impression left in the 1990s, we were more rigorous, "he says. The rigor has compensated: when Nike opened its store in the pioneering Outlet Premium SP, the queues were constant. The venture proved to be a winner from the outset and was awarded by the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) in 2011 as the best Latin American project and one of the three best in the world. The project is expanding and, at the end of the year, it inaugurates a deck park with 2,000 parking spaces and receives a series of new brands. Even today, the brands that arrive have an impact: this year, Burberry Outlet Premium SP was, after the inauguration, among the three best in the world in billing. The partnership with the retail, by the way, is an essential factor for the Brazilian Outlet. "Our expansion is done with four hands with the shopkeepers and even the choice of the squares for the development of the Outlet is made based on what the retail needs," says the executive. It makes sense, since the Outlet is based on the flow of products from previous collections of desired brands, at affordable prices. "Without good brands and no product volume, no Outlet is sustainable. That is why we are always in line with the tenants in our actions, "says Dias. "Since our first Outlet, international brands have given a lot of credibility to the ventures. Lacoste, Nike, Adidas, Calvin Klein and other retailers already accustomed to this business model abroad were fundamental to the viability of the project and served as a benchmark for national retailers who did not know how to operate in this concept, "he says.

One factor that contributed to the rapid acceptance of the Outlet model in Brazil was the realization of real discounts. "Unfortunately, Brazilian retailers still have many 'half-double' deals. When consumers realized that it was worth taking a half-hour's drive to go to an Outlet and make real gains, success came quickly, "he theorizes. "The shopkeeper also realized that he would gain in scale and for this, it was very important to have a strong partnership with international brands that operate on this model abroad and helped us to show less experienced retailers that just the low price is that it brought the public. With this, the value proposition was maintained and the results appeared, "he explains. The good numbers of Outlet Premium SP led General Shopping Brasil to open, in 2012, a similar venture in Alexânia (GO), near Brasília. In 2013, the Iguatemi Group opened the I Fashion Outlet in Novo Hamburgo (RS), while General Shopping arrived in Camaçari (BA) with Outlet Premium Salvador. The following year, JHSF would increase competition in the state of São Paulo with Catarina Fashion Outlet, in São Roque (SP). "We saw that there was a pent-up demand for this kind of enterprise, Brazilians' growing habit of seeking better prices for quality products, and also for the expansion of retail brands in the country," said Robert Bruce Harley, CEO of Shopping Centers of JHSF. With a growth of 40% in sales compared to 2015 and around 2 million visitors (20% annual expansion), Catarina Fashion Outlet showed that the company's premises were correct. Already in October of 2015, with a year of life, the enterprise received its first expansion. Currently with 105 stores in a gross leasable area of 24,100 square meters, the Outlet already has its second expansion in development. "We will have 25 more stores in 4,5 thousand square meters of GLA, which will increase the attractiveness of the Outlet and reinforce our commitment to make Catarina the best enterprise of its kind in the country," says the executive.

Source: Muller, 2017. Retrieved from http://www.abrasce.com.br