

## The Main Factors of Consumer Engagement of Apple Smartphones

### Principais Fatores de Engajamento dos Consumidores de *Smartphones* Apple

Luciane Pereira Viana<sup>1</sup>, Paola Ramona Dapper<sup>2</sup>

Submission: May 10, 2019

Approval: July 15, 2019

#### Abstract

This article analyzed the main factors of engagement between Apple and its consumers of smartphones. Due to the competitive environment faced, companies must understand the importance of marketing and brand equity in order to enable customer loyalty. It is through brand equity that the brand value is managed in the market, being possible not only to improve what already exists, but also to be able to generate a better result with the characteristics that make the company to become strong. Marketing is an ally of this scenario, as it serves to assist in strengthening and establishing trust in the relationship with the consumer. In this way, it was chosen a descriptive study with SNA (Social Networking Analysis) and a questionnaire that answered by 107 people. From the analysis of the data collected with the questionnaire it is possible to conclude that Apple brand has added value with its consumers, customers prefer it, since they have created a relation of trust. It is possible to perceive that the brand understands that its products take its consumers to its identity and that it is through it that it becomes remembered and guarantees its reputation in the market.

**Keywords:** Engagement marketing. Brand Equity. Apple. Smartphone.

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD in Cultural Diversity and Social Inclusion by Universidade Feevale. Teacher at Instituição Evangélica de Novo Hamburgo Faculdade (IENH). Address: Rua Frederico Mentz, 526, 93525-360, Novo Hamburgo, RS, Brazil. E-mail: luciane.v@ienh.com.br

<sup>2</sup> Graduated in Business Administration from Instituição Evangélica de Novo Hamburgo Faculdade (IENH). Works at Ocean Express Serviços em Comércio Exterior Ltda. E-mail: paolaramonadapper@gmail.com

## Resumo

O presente artigo tem como objetivo analisar os principais fatores de engajamento dos consumidores de *smartphones* Apple. Tendo em vista o ambiente competitivo que se enfrenta, as empresas devem entender a importância do marketing e do *brand equity* para que seja possível a fidelização dos clientes. É pelo *brand equity* que se gerencia o valor da marca no mercado, sendo possível, a partir dele, não só aperfeiçoar o que já existe, mas também conseguir gerar um resultado melhor com as características que fazem a empresa se tornar forte. O marketing é um aliado deste cenário, pois ele serve para auxiliar o fortalecimento e estabelecer a confiança da relação com o consumidor. Dessa forma, optou-se pela pesquisa descritiva com Análise de Redes Sociais (ARS) e questionário que foi respondido por 107 pessoas. A partir da análise dos dados coletados com o questionário pode-se concluir que a marca Apple possui um valor agregado com seus consumidores, os clientes a preferem, pois criaram uma relação de confiança. É possível perceber que a marca compreende que seus produtos levam até seus consumidores a sua identidade e que é por meio dela que se torna lembrada e garante sua reputação no mercado.

**Palavras-chave:** Marketing de engajamento. *Brand equity*. Apple. *Smartphone*.

### How to cite (APA):

Viana, L. P., & Dapper, P. R. (2019). Principais fatores de engajamento dos consumidores de Smartphones Apple. *PMKT – Revista Brasileira de Pesquisas de Marketing, Opinião e Mídia (on-line)*, 12(2), 19-40. Recuperado de [www.revistapmkt.com.br](http://www.revistapmkt.com.br)

### How to cite (ABNT NBR 6023/2018):

VIANA, L. P.; DAPPER, P. R. Principais fatores de engajamento dos consumidores de Smartphones Apple. **PMKT – Revista Brasileira de Pesquisas de Marketing, Opinião e Mídia (on-line)**, São Paulo, v. 12, n. 2, 19-40, 2019. Disponível em: [www.revistapmkt.com.br](http://www.revistapmkt.com.br). Acesso em:

## 1 Introduction

In the contemporary world it is more and more perceptible the speed of changes and also the transformation that has been happening in the habits of consumers, that because of being connected to their *smartphones*, have a greater easiness to clarify doubts, make comparisons and even know the opinion of others about what they look for.

In this perspective, the brand needs to build a differentiated relationship with its customers, in order to identify and satisfy their necessities and desires, this way showing its differential so that, indeed, it can face the constant changes and consequently engage these consumers. One of the brands with great evidence in this area of *smartphones* is Apple. According to Teleco (2018a), 215 million of smartphones were sold in 2017 around the world.

According to the report published by G1 (<https://g1.globo.com>, 2018) Apple reached US\$ 1 trillion in market value in august 2018, being the first private company to reach the stage of trillions. It's possible to say that in comparison, Apple is more worthwhile than the 360 Brazilian companies listed in Bovespa. Still in accordance with G1 (<https://g1.globo.com>, 2018) "the value of the company businesses increased 17%, US\$ 53,3 billions in relation to the same period of the last year, especially due to the sales of *iPhones*, online service and accessories".

Given that, this paper defined as general objective, analyze the main engagement factors of Apple *smartphone* consumers, and as research question: Which are the main engagement factors of Apple *smartphones* consumers?

As for methodology, the descriptive, quantitative research was chosen with data collection through a questionnaire and Social Networks Analysis (ARS), data analysis with the analysis of content under the categories, engagement and experience (Prodanov & Freitas, 2013). The bibliographic research discusses questions about the path of the consumer in the connected world having as basis authors such as Aaker (1998), Rocha (2005), Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2017), Samara and Morsch (2005), among others. The field research counts on an online questionnaire carried out between July and August 2018, reaching 107 answers.

This paper is structured beginning by this section with the introductory aspects, the relevance and objective of the research. The second section presents the literature review, the third presents the methodology used, the fourth brings the results and analysis, and the last shows the final considerations.

## 2 Literature Review

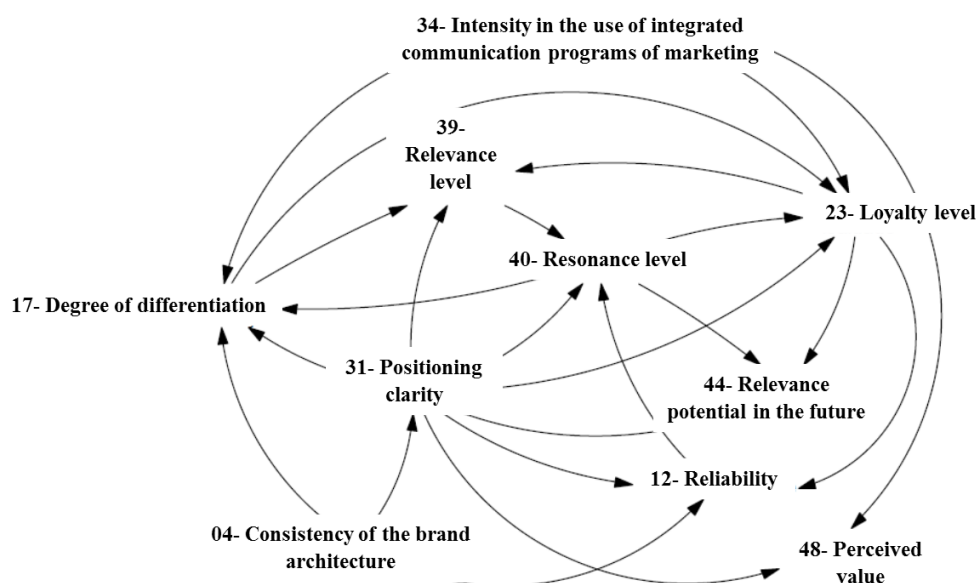
### 2.1 Brands management and engagement

For the comprehension of the path adopted by the consumer it is necessary to understand some elements. The term *brand equity*, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2015, p. 265), "it is a measure of capacity of the brand to conquer the preference and fidelity of the consumer". It is the effect that the name of the brand has in relation to the attitudes the customer will have upon the product or service. For Aaker (1998) the *brand equity* is formed and analyzed in five categories: loyalty to the brand, recollection of the name, perceived quality, associations to the brand and the assets of the company.

According to Martins (2006, p. 8), "the brand is the union of tangible and intangible characteristics which can be symbolized in its logo, when managed in the correct way and when they create influence and generate value". It is possible to understand that the brand refers to an integrated system that guarantees the delivery of results and solutions which are desired by people. Churchill and Peter (2010), as well as Caldas and Godinho (2007) emphasize that the consumers are used to guiding themselves about the benefits and also the messages the brands

transmit, in other words, if used as brands management, determined elements make them to get unique meaning to their consumers, this way facilitating their activities and simplifying the decision making at the moment of purchase.

In this context Crescitelli and Shimp (2012) explain the ten most important constructs for the formation of *brand equity* (Figure 1). The study shows that even all the constructs contributing to the formation, not all of them exert the same influence on the process, instead, some generate more impact, and others suffer more impact. The authors complement that to promote *brand equity*, the initial positive identity choices of the brand are the ones that will generate this value with a good name and logo, but the main thing is how they create favorable associations and with the effort of marketing, since the brand equity depends on the track the brand will have in the market and the guarantees that can bear the information provided.



**Figure 1** – The most important constructs and their relations in the formation of brand equity  
Source: Crescitelli and Figueiredo (2010, p. 12).

So that the brand can conquer new buyers and make them to become loyal defenders, it has to involve “several consumer engagement activities”. Kotler et al. (2017, p. 183 and 184) cite three techniques to increase the engagement in the digital era:

- 1) The use of apps for mobile phones and mobile devices: they aim at improving the experience of digital consume of the customers;
- 2) CRM (relationship management with the customers): to engage the customers in chats and provide solutions;
- 3) Gamification: for engagement fostering certain sets of consumption behavior of the customers.
- 4) Minadeo (2008) states that some basic ingredients are necessary to build value between the brand and the engagement with its consumer:
- 5) Content: it is the responsible for arising in the customers the interest in relation to the brand, and also the message that the brand wants to convey concerning the product;
- 6) Media: it is the element that has the function of making the communication between the brand and the consumer;
- 7) Context: so that the context makes sense for the transmission of the message, a proper environment is necessary for that.

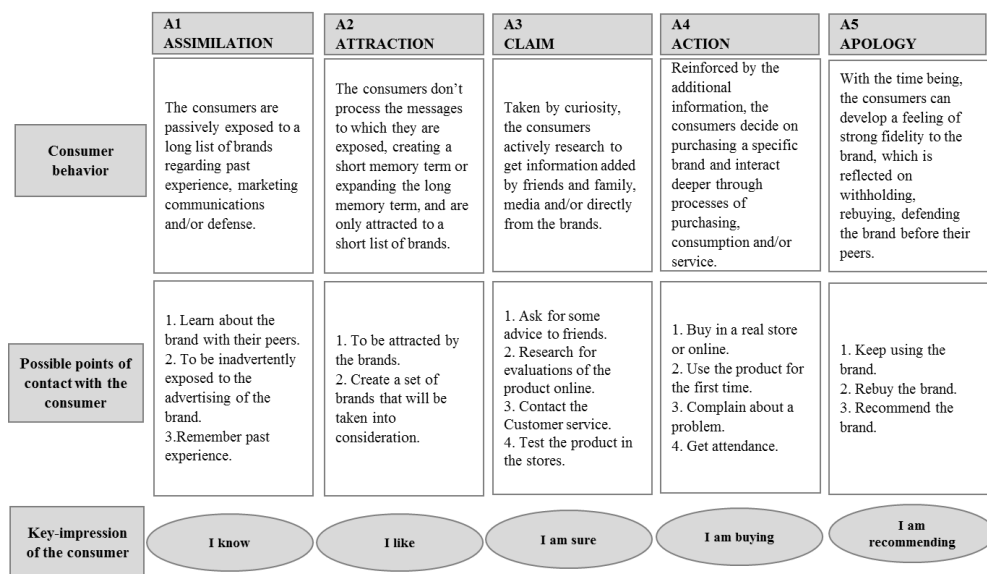
At last, due to these engagement factors of the customers, according to Keller and Machado (2006), as to Las Casas (2008), it is possible for the brand to establish a prominent place in the mind of the potential consumer and foster consumption. Consuming is not just the fact of getting the product, but also acquiring a symbolic value that it represents. Rocha (2005) highlights that the consumption occupies an essential place when talking about practices that regulate the social relations, and as structuring value, since they build identity and define new consumers.

According to Samara and Morsch (2005) the new consumer can be described as the one who has multiple facets, being them: global, aware, digital and very well informed. As a consequence, the consumers demand new attitudes and new postures from the marketing professionals. For Kotler et al. (2017), so that the new brands can stand out in this new mobility and connectivity market, they have to map the consumption path of their products, and interfere where it most interests them. An example is the one of the four as, a tool that describes the process and that is similar to a funnel in which the consumers explore and are able to evaluate the brands. According to Gobe et al. (2007), the four as method has four basic functions: analyses, adaptation, evaluation and activation. On the other hand, Kotler et al. (2007, p. 78 and 79) also describe the four as method, but under other terms: assimilation, attitude, action and new action.

The objective of this model is to obtain a tracking of the after-purchase consumption and this way measure the customers withholding; in doing so it is possible to perceive if the customer rebuys and if this happens, it is a strong indication of the fidelity of the client before the brand. Kotler et al. (2017 p. 79) complement saying that the customers “get to know a brand (assimilation), like it or not (attitude), decide if buying it (action) and if it is worth repeat the purchase (new action)”. However, the connectivity is possibly the most important changing agent, and the new consumers have an active voice being able to dictate rules. The authors describe three changings that are shaping marketing:

- 1) From exclusive to inclusive: the new trend is inclusion. Social media changed the way people interact giving them the opportunity to relate without geographical and demographical barriers. Social media fosters social inclusion which generates the feeling of belonging.
- 2) From vertical to horizontal: the innovation flow in the companies is no longer vertical, but horizontal, as well as the concept of confidence of the consumer. The authors point out that several researches have as a result the fact that the majority of consumers consider much more the social factor, in other words, friends, family, followers and digital influencers. Bearing this in mind, the authors state that the brands cannot see their consumers just as a target anymore, but consider them as friends, thereby the brand can pass to these consumers its real personality and show its true value, this way gaining their confidence.
- 3) From individual to social: the consumers have their individual preferences when they make purchase decisions, but also for a desire of social compliance. Consumers give more and more importance to the opinion of others and, to facilitate, social media makes these changes easy because they provide the platforms and tools.

This way, Kotler et al. (2017) suggests that the path of the consumer is updated to five as: assimilation, attraction, claim, action and apology, as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2** – Mapping of the consumer path along the five As  
 Source: Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2017, p. 84).

This model of five as is a tool that can be used to describe the path of the consumers, getting as close as possible to the path they really cover. This way it is necessary to have an attentive look upon the changes that that have been happening so that it is possible to accompany them, without making the consumers unsatisfied.

### 3 Methodology

This research is descriptive, quantitative and used the Survey technique, according to Prodanov and Freitas (2013). As for collecting data, the Analysis of Social Medias (ARS) and a questionnaire were used.

According to Recuero (2009), ARS is a study of social groups. For this research the systematic and non-participating technique was used, since the researchers didn't interfere or influenced in the networks analyzed. The research in the social medias of the brand happened during the months of June and August 2018. Yet, the questionnaire was applied by internet using Google forms in July and August 2018. The pre-test was carried out on July 19<sup>th</sup> 2017. As a sampling technique we opted by the non-probability sample for convenience. The research was answered by 107 people.

The questionnaire counted on seven questions, being three of them closed questions, two opened questions and three multiple choice ones. In question 2 the basis used for the age scale were the definitions adopted by 'Estatuto da Juventude Brasileira' - Brazilian Statute of the Youth (Brasil, 2013) which defines as young people, the ones with ages ranging between 15 and 29 years old, and the 'Estatuto do Idoso' - Statute of the Elderly (Brasil, 2003) which assures differentiated rights to people 60 or more years old. In questions 3 to 7 the method of five As was used following the order: assimilation, attraction, claiming, action and apology (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017).

After collecting the data resulting from the questionnaire, the analyses and understanding of data started. According to Roesch (2005), the data need to be organized, reduced and assembled so that it is possible to extract the conclusions and alternatives for determined action. In this study, we opted for the "content analyses". This analysis, in accordance with Bardin (2006), is divided in three phases which are fundamental ones: the pre-analysis of data, the exploitation of the material and the treatment of the results.

Thus, following these three phases and by the results obtained, graphics were formulated, the engagement and experience categories were defined, and the treatment of the results was carried out. The intention was to show which were the main engagement factors in the process of decision making on the purchase of the survey respondents.

#### 4 Analysis and Results

In this section we aim at presenting data about the brand Apple; in the subsection 4.1 the marketing actions from the brand Apple are described; the actions were analyzed as of the social networks of the brand, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and You Tube channel; in the section 4.2 the results and analysis of the questionnaire carried out.

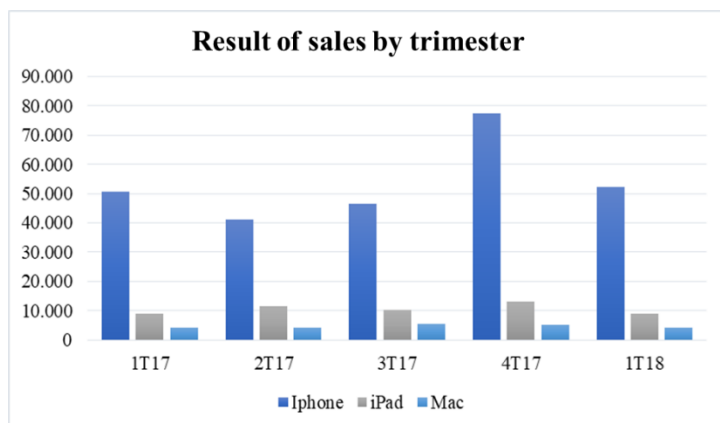
The term “*Smartphone*” was idealized in 1990. According to Voltolini (2014) since the beginning of 1980 a more sophisticated and modern design of telephones which were able to do several tasks were thought about. In 1983, a German company, Frog Design created a device that was able to carry out other functions besides calls, but it kept just as a prototype and was not commercialized.

According to data from Teleco (www.teleco.com.br, 2018b) 1.462,5 million cellphones were sold in the world in 2017, and from those, 50,8 million just in Brazil. In accordance with Teleco records (www.teleco.com.br, 2018b), and IDC Brazil (http://br.idclatin.com, 2018), in the fourth quarter of 2017 a total of 12,5 million *smartphones* was sold.

Linhares, Castro and Takamatsu (2017) describe that Apple Computers, Inc. was founded in 1976 by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak with the intention of revolutionizing the way people used their computers, changing them by small equipment which require a simple handling, this way people could use them inside their homes. Their first creation was Apple I which was something revolutionary for the time. After three years Steve Jobs gained the confidence of the market getting to reach new contacts, and with this, could count on new professionals who brought their experience to contribute with the new project.

The first *iPhone*, whose launching happened in the United States in June 2007, counted on a back cabinet made of anodized aluminum, and was the first *smartphone* with the *touchscreen* technology. It counted on a 3,5 inches screen with 320x480 pixels resolution, and a 2 megapixels camera (Apple, 2018).

According to Teleco (2018a) Apple has been leading the industry with innovations in its professional computers and apps, and also in the evolution of digital music with the *iPod*. It is possible to see the sales of the main products from the brand Apple by trimester in 2017 and 2018 in Figure 3.



**Figure 3** – Sales of products from Apple by trimester 2017 and 2018  
Source: Teleco (www.teleco.com.br, 2018a).

## 4.1 Marketing actions from the brand Apple

According to Kotler et al. (2017), in relation to the engagement of the brand in the digital era three techniques are mainly involved:

- 1) The first technique cited by the authors and used by Apple is the use of cellphone apps, it's through them that the brand can, many times, attract its customers, because it has in its apps several uses. A negative aspect observed is that the *iPhone* comes with 44 apps already installed and 8 apps pre-installed. For some users this can be excessive and useless. Another negative aspect is that the user can download just through the Apple store, which in other brands is made easier because the user can download from any website.
- 2) The second technique is the relationship with the customer. It was observed in a social network that the brand uses automatic messages with no filters and outdated to answer to the customers as it is possible to see in the example of a post using Twitter (App Store Apple), on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018. A follower commented on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018 "thanks for adding cellphone data to the control center in iOS 11, but add the TNX localization service bottom (GPS), as well", and the brand answered on the same day, the following: "We love to hear comments and suggestions from our customers. To send yours, click here: <http://apple.co/Feedback>". It is possible to see that the brand could have used better this technique to keep a good relationship with its customers by not using an automatic answer.
- 3) The third technique is the use of gamification aiming at fostering the curiosity of its users. One example of this is the account the brand has on Instagram, where the users send videos made with their *iPhones* and which are selected to be posted online by the brand.

From the analyses in the social medias such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter from Apple, it was possible to identify the use of *brand equity*, which according to Kotler and Armstrong (2015) is the efficiency with which the brand gains the customers guaranteeing the establishment of a linking with the brand through the value it can convey.

On Facebook the brand counts on two profiles: one for App Store Apple and another for iTunes. The App Store in Facebook has 14 million followers and it just posts information about apps. The interaction of the users is very large. An example that can be cited is the post the brand made on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 which has a thousand likes; another example is the post on the 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 which had 776 sharing, and another on the 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2018, whose number of views was of 9,6 million. iTunes has 30 million followers and promotes music sold in iTunes Store. There are other webpages located for many countries where the store is present. The brand has also a webpage on Facebook intended for Brazil which counts on 11 million followers.

Another social network in which the brand Apple can be found is on Instagram with 6,5 million followers. In the description products/services the summary that the brand put is "*everybody has a story to tell. Mark the #shotoniiPhone to be part of it*". In this social network the brand uses just images and videos which the users take with their *iPhones*; the user should post the picture under the tag *#shotoniiPhone* and then the brand shares on the official profile. In this page, the brand doesn't post commercial or marketing images. It is possible to verify the interaction of the users, because all the posts are liked and commented by several users. The brand Apple is present on the YouTube channel where it has 636 thousand subscribers and 68 million views. The brand has one channel for each country. The brand posts tutorial videos about the *iPhone*, *iPad* and *Mac*; the videos are short, not exceeding two minutes.

Another network analyzed was Twitter, and it is possible to verify that it doesn't use itself as an active network, because even having 1,92 million followers it didn't have any post.



Whereas the Twitter Apple Support has 901 thousand followers, the posts are more frequent. The interaction with the users is made by providing its customers some tips, support, tricks and information. As an example, we can cite the way to keep all the photos, videos and files along the years, even if the person has a new Mac. But they don't make any direct interaction with the customer by answering questions, just automatic messages are used. The webpage also says that for further interest the user might have, the link that describes the brand Apple deals with personal information and protects the data of its customers. It was also observed that there are more accounts associated to the brand Apple on Twitter:

- 1) AppStore: posts just tips of apps (in English), and has 4,7 million followers;
- 2) iBookstore; dedicated to the news of the bookstore (in English), the webpage has 456 followers;
- 3) iTunesMusic: news in the Apple music store, it has 3.818 followers;
- 4) iTunesTrailers: *trailers* of the last Hollywood launchings, it has 2,84 million followers;
- 5) iTnesFestival: happening always in July, Apple makes a music festival in London, it has 60 followers;
- 6) iTunesMovies: movies on sale at the store, it has 2,29 million followers.

From this analysis of the social networks of the brand Apple, it was possible to verify that the brand has a division on its webpages in which not all the webpages show advertisements of the brand, but images and videos made by its followers with their *iPhones*; what it intends to show to its users is the quality of the image and sound, in other words, advertisement made by its own consumers.

Another important factor observed is that on the Twitter of the brand Apple there wasn't any post, yet in relation to the profile *Twitter Apple Support*, the brand can reach an interaction with the customers that look for the webpage in order to clarify doubts, which transmits confidence to the users. Even this happening without much direct interaction between brand and consumer.

Therefore, it was possible to conclude that the brand Apple uses Instagram, for example, as a channel to show the utility of its devices making advertisement through its users; yet on others it uses them to advertise its services, like iTunesMusic, iBookstore, among others.

## 4.2 Results and questionnaire analysis

Thereafter, we present the first question of the questionnaire which was intended to the respondents: if they had or still have an Apple, according to data showed in Table 1.

Table 1

### Do you have or already had an Apple Smartphone

1. Do you have or already had an Apple Smartphone?	Total	%
Yes	58	54%
No	49	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

According to the result presented, 58 stated that they had already had or still have a *Smartphone* Apple and 49 stated they hadn't. This question was applied so that it could be possible to have some basis for following answers, aiming at understanding and differentiating them, taking into consideration the association of the other questions to this answer.

The second question asked the age of the respondents (Table 2).

Table 2

**Age**

<b>2. Age</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Under 15 years old	6	6%
From 15 to 29 years old	48	45%
From 30 to 59 years old	48	45%
Above 60 years old	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

According to the result presented, the groups 30-59 years old and 15-29 years old had 48 respondents each, yet the group under 15 years old and above 60 years old had 6 and 5 respondents respectively. This question was used so that it was possible to evaluate what each age group thinks and which are the issues that differentiate their behaviors, aiming at using these results in the following questions, so that we could verify what influences each group.

The third question asked the respondent what makes him remember a *smartphone* brand (Table 3).

Table 3

**What makes people remember a *smartphone* brand?**

<b>3. What makes people remember a <i>smartphone</i> brand?</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Innovation	59	55%
Physical aspects/design of the devices	38	36%
If the brand conveys confidence	31	29%
Posts of the brand	21	20%
Others	13	12%
Brand ethics/the way the brand acts in the market	9	8%
Social and environmental causes the brand supports	2	2%

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

According to the data presented, it is possible to point out that 59 answered that innovation is what makes them remember a smartphone brand; 38 answered that it is the physical /design aspects of the devices; 31 answered that it is when the brand can convey confidence; 21 answered that it is from the posts made by the brand; 9 answered that it is when the brand is ethical or the way it acts in the market; two answered that it is when the brand supports social and environmental causes, and 13 answered that other issues matter.

In Table 4 the analysis of answers regarding the respondents who answered YES (have or had a *smartphone* Apple) is presented.

In Table 4, it is observed that all the ones under 15 years old who answered this research have a *smartphone* Apple and what makes them remember the brand is mainly the innovation, in other words, the qualities and attributes that it has.

Regarding the age group 15-29, it was observed that what makes them remember the smartphone brand, as the group above mentioned, is the innovation of the brand, followed by the design and the physical aspect of the devices; they also take into consideration a factor that was not even mentioned in the first group that is the confidence and posts made by the brand.

**Table 4**  
**Assimilation of people who have a smartphone Apple**

Age	Quantity	Assimilation	Total	%
Under 15 years	6 people	Innovation	5	83%
		Physical aspects/design of the devices	2	33%
		Status	2	33%
		Posts of the brand	1	17%
15-29 years	30 people	Innovation	20	67%
		Physical aspects/design of the devices	12	40%
		If the brand conveys confidence	7	23%
		Posts of the brand	4	13%
		Status	2	7%
		Performance of the device and cost/benefit	1	3%
30-59 years	17 people	Innovation	10	59%
		Physical aspects/design of the devices	6	35%
		If the brand conveys confidence	6	35%
		Ethics/the way the brand acts in the market	4	24%
		Posts of the brand	3	18%
		Logo of the brand	1	6%
Above 60 years	5 people supports	If the brand conveys confidence	5	100%
		Social and environmental causes the brand	2	40%
		Ethics/the way the brand acts in the market	2	40%

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

Regarding the age group 30-59 it was not possible to observe much difference between the above groups, they also remember the brand of smartphones when the matter is innovation and physical aspect of the devices, but these ones, a little different from the others, also associate the way the brand acts in the market.

To the age group above 60, what makes them remember the brands of smartphones the most is a little different from the other groups, for them it's mainly the confidence, followed by social and environmental causes the brand supports, ethics and the way the brand acts in the market, innovation was not mentioned.

In Table 5, the analysis of the respondents who answered NO is presented.

**Table 5**  
**Assimilation of the people who don't have a smartphone Apple**

Age	Quantity	Assimilation	Total	%
15-29 years	18 people	Physical aspects/design of the devices	7	39%
		Innovation	6	33%
		Posts of the brand	6	33%
		If the brand conveys confidence	4	22%
		Ethics/the way the brand acts in the market	3	17%
		Memory, camera, performance and configurations	1	6%
30-59 years	31 people	Innovation	16	52%
		Physical aspects/design of the devices	11	35%
		If the brand conveys confidence	8	26%
		Posts of the brand	6	19%
		Price and fashion	1	3%

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

For the ones that answered NO in the first question and who are between 15-29 years old, the physical aspect and design of the device come before the innovation and posts of the brand. Yet, the ones between 30-59 have as main attributes the innovation, design and confidence.

Based on these data, it was possible to verify that there is a difference among the factors that make these groups remember brands of *smartphones*. According to Kottler et al. (2017), in the assimilation phase the consumers are exposed to several brands available in the market and they will remember the one that brought them positive memories and are a differential in the market. According to what was observed through the research, the most people associate a *smartphone* to innovation, followed by appearance, and then confidence. That's what they want when they think about a *smartphone*.

It is also possible to point out that for each age group there is a different way to associate the brand to the product. Kotler et al. (2017) state that nowadays the way to interact with these consumers has changed, so, it is also necessary to change the way of creating a link with them. It was not observed on the social medias, which are a strong allied for selling the products, the explicit sale of the devices like the product with the description and the value, but it was not observed that the brand has any focus on the relationship with its customers as well, since it uses automatic messages to answer, and it was not observed users recommending the brand too.

The following question describes why they feel attracted to the brand Apple (Table 6).

Table 6  
**Why people feel attracted to the brand Apple**

4. Why people feel attracted to the brand Apple?	Total	%
I am not loyal to the brand	32	30%
It conveys more confidence	26	24%
It has good recommendations	24	22%
Apple catches more the attention than others	24	22%
Already had another device from Apple	21	20%
Differentiated models	21	20%
Others	11	10%

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

In this question, 32 people answered that they are not loyal to the brand, followed by 26 who cited it conveys more confidence; a tie between having good recommendations of the brand and the brand that catches more the attention than the competitor with 24 people; another that was tied was the fact they already had a device from Apple, and for having differentiated devices with 21 respondents; the others had 11 ones. In Table 7, the analyses of the answers in relation to the ones who answered YES is presented.

Table 7  
**Attraction of people who have a *smartphone* from Apple**

Age	Quantity	Attraction to the brand	Total	%
Under 15 years old	6 people	The brand Apple catches more your attention than the competition	4	67%
		It has good recommendation	2	33%
		Already had another device from Apple	1	17%
		All my friends have	1	17%
		It's a stylish device	1	17%
		Status	1	17%
		Already had another device from Apple	14	47%
15-29 years old	30 people	The brand Apple catches more your attention than the competition	11	37%
		It has good recommendation	11	37%
		It conveys more confidence	10	33%
		Differentiated models	6	20%
		I am not loyal to the brand	3	10%
		It conveys more confidence	7	41%
		Already had another device from Apple	5	29%

30-59 years old	17 people	I am not loyal to the brand	5	29%
		The brand Apple catches more your attention than the competition	3	18%
		Differentiated models	3	18%
		It has good recommendation	2	12%
Above 60 years	5 people	It conveys more confidence	5	100%
		I am not loyal to the brand	1	20%

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

In Table 8, we present the analyses of the answers in relation to the respondents who answered NO.

Table 8  
**Attraction of people who don't have a *smartphone* from Apple**

Age	Quantity	Attraction to the brand	Total	%
15-29 years old	18 people	I am not loyal to the brand	8	44%
		The brand Apple catches more your attention than the competition	3	17%
		Differentiated models	2	11%
		It has good recommendation	2	11%
		I don't have a <i>smartphone</i> from Apple	1	6%
		It conveys more confidence	1	6%
		I don't feel attracted to the brand	1	6%
		I don't like	1	6%
30-59 years old	31 people	I am not loyal to the brand	15	48%
		Differentiated models	10	32%
		It has good recommendation	7	23%
		The brand Apple catches more your attention than the competition	3	10%
		It conveys more confidence	2	6%
		Never had an Apple device	2	6%

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

In this question we used the second from the five phases cited by Kotler et al., the attraction phase. It is in this phase that the consumers process the information and identify the ones that most fulfill their necessities or their taste. According to Aaker (1998), the *brand equity* is formed and analyzed in five categories: loyalty to the brand, the remembrance of the name, the perceived quality, associations to the brand, and the assets of the company.

Regarding the age groups, it is possible to analyze that the attraction of each group is also different, and indeed, because as stated by Kotler and Keller (2006), each person has a different understanding. Usually, the procedure happens through three processes; selective attention, which is when a filter of all the information received is made, and just what adds value to the person stays; the selective distortion, which is to bring together everything perceived and transform this into something meaningful for the person himself; and the selective retention, which is when the person remembers the brands that pleased them, and, with this absorbed just information that are in accordance with what he believes.

The following question asked how the interviewees used to research about the *smartphone* Apple before carrying out the purchase; the results are described in the Table 9.

Table 9  
**How do people use to search about the *Smartphone* from Apple before purchasing it**

5. How do you use to search about the <i>Smartphone</i> about Apple before purchasing it?	Total	%
Online evaluation research (social networks, etc.)	42	39%
Asks for advice to friends	39	36%
Compares prices	26	24%

Others	15	14%
Tests the product in the physical store	14	13%
Analyzes the advertisements from Apple	11	10%
Asks for advice in the family	7	7%
Contacts Apple Call center	4	4%

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

The research of online evaluation (social networks, etc.) had a total of 42 respondents; followed by 39 who ask for advice to friends; 26 compare prices, 14 test the product in a physical store; 7 ask for advice in the family and 4 contact the call center of Apple. In Table 10, we present the analyses of the answers regarding the ones who answered YES.

Tabela 10  
**Claiming from people who have a Smartphone from Apple**

Age	Quantity	Claiming to the brand	Total	%
Under 15 years old	6 people	Asks for advice to friends	5	83%
		Online evaluation research (social networks, etc.)	4	67%
		Why do you feel attracted to the brand	1	17%
15-29 years	30 people	Online evaluation research (social networks, etc.)	17	57%
		Asks for advice to friends	13	43%
		Compares prices	7	23%
		Tests the product in the physical store	6	20%
		Analyzes the advertisements from Apple	4	13%
		Asks for advice in the family	1	3%
30-59 years	30 people	Online evaluation research (social networks, etc.)	6	35%
		Asks for advice to friends	4	24%
		Tests products in the physical store	4	24%
		Compares prices	4	24%
		Asks for advice in the family	3	18%
		Contacts Apple Call center	3	18%
		Analyzes the advertisements of Apple	2	12%
Above 60 years	5 people	Tests products in the physical store	3	60%
		Analyzes the advertisements of Apple	2	40%
		Compares prices	2	40%
		Contacts Apple Call center	1	20%

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

In Table 11, we present the analyzes of the answers in relation to the ones who answered NO.

Table 11  
**Claiming from people who don't have a Smartphone from Apple**

Age	Quantity	Claiming to the brand	Total	%
15-29 years	18 people	Online evaluation research (social networks, etc.)	6	33%
		Asks for advice to friends	6	33%
		Doesn't buy Apple	4	22%
		Doesn't research, because is not interested	4	22%
		Doesn't use and doesn't have	4	22%
		Compares prices	3	17%
		Asks for advice in the family	1	6%
		Analyzes advertisements of Apple	1	6%
		Asks for advice to friends	12	39%
		Online evaluation research (social networks, etc.)	10	32%
30-59 years	31 people	Compares prices	10	32%
		Asks for advice in the family	2	6%
		Analyzes advertisements of Apple	2	6%
		Doesn't buy Apple	2	6%

I wouldn't buy, because I don't have financial conditions	1	3%
Compares performance with other ones	1	3%
I don't search for Apple's devices	1	3%
Tests products in the physical store	1	3%

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).

To build this question the third phase cited by Kotler et al. (2017) was used, which is the phase of claiming. It was possible to verify that nowadays what most is taken into consideration by the consumers, at the time of researching about the desired product, is the experience of other people, being them known or not. Samara and Morsch (2005) report the profile of this new consumer who is much more demanding, because they have more knowledge about the product they look for.

Kotler et al. (2017) complement saying that in the technologic phase, connectivity is one of the main factors for this change of behavior, passing to the consumers the power to impose and propose new market patterns. It is from this that the companies need to work to gain the fidelity of the customers, and also a good relationship with them. Another factor that can be noticed is that few people analyze the advertisements, since the new consumer doesn't have patience, neither time to watch advertisements anymore, they prefer to go after what let them in doubt, trusting more in what the others say about the product they want to buy.

The next question asked the respondents to report their experience with the purchase and after sales of the brand Apple. Basing this question, the fourth phase cited by Kotler et al. (2017) was used, which is the phase of action. It is in this phase that the consumers absorb all the information about the product and go after making the purchase. Thirty-five people commented that they don't have any experience with the brand. Four respondents complained about the experience, according to answers in Table 12.

Fifty respondents commented positively about the experience. Figure 4 illustrates the most cited words by these respondents using a graphic resource called "words cloud".

Table 12

**Claiming about the experience of purchasing and with the after sales of a smartphone Apple**

Number of respondents	Answers
01	A good quality device, but started with problems, I bought from another brand with the same benefits, but with a much better price.
02	Illusion! It's good in the beginning, but with the time being the cellphone starts to "reduce its qualities", such as the camera, apps and failures processing.
03	The quality of the product is good, but it is not worth the value paid.
04	I had an iPod. It lasted for a long time and thought it was a good purchase, but I was never attracted to the smartphones from Apple because I think they are too expensive.

Source: elaborated by the authors (2018).







In the face of this, we can conclude that the customers realize the value generated by the brand, Martins (2006) points out that the brand is a union of factors and when well administered, they influence their consumers. Kotler and Armstrong (2015) complement saying that the construction of this value before its customers is the best way to keep a good relationship and generate satisfying results.

After this construction of value between brand and consumer, it is easier to make this customer loyal to the brand, because of the quality realized and associations that he will make with the brand. This way, according to Kotler et al. (2017), it is then that, with the time being, these users start to develop a feeling for the brand. So, they start to consume it more repeatedly, to make references to it and also to defend it.

## 5 Conclusion

This study aimed at presenting the importance of marketing and *brand equity*, having as focus the brand Apple. It is possible to evaluate how much the brand uses its image to attract its customers, getting to make people associate the brand with quality and innovation along the years, through the launching of its products, this way, adding value to them.

It was observed that the brand benefits from constructs and competitive advantages from the five categories cited by Aaker (1998): loyalty to the brand, knowledge of the name of the brand, quality perceived, association of the brand and assets of the organization in charge of the brand:

- 1) Loyalty to the brand: nowadays the goal of Apple is to “change the world through technology” and, this way, it has been making their customers loyal, since technology has been gaining more and more space among the consumers; even not making so many changes in its devices annually, it has already made many of them loyal;
- 2) Knowledge of the name of the brand: the brand has been passing to the market in which it acts that it brings in its products much innovation, standing out before competitors what generates a reference to the consumers. This way, they associate the brand or the symbol to this brand. As the brand involves the emotion of consumers, Apple uses this connection for creating its identity. The consumers can remember much more the brands which convey something that makes them feel good, in the case of Apple, it is possible to see by everything it has been making along its trajectory and not just by its *smartphones*;
- 3) Quality perceived: the brand Apple looks for bringing differentiation and innovation as the main focus, showing to its consumers that the products of the brand have a superior quality compared to the competitors, and in its marketing campaigns which involve these actions together with the emotions of the consumers. Regarding the *smartphones* from Apple, it can be verified that from the comparison between them, that there is not so much innovation annually, but it was possible to see that besides this, the consumers tend to observe all the products and services of the brand, in other words, they take into consideration several factors the brand has;
- 4) Association of the brand: when we talk about Apple, the consumers soon associate it to technology, innovation and the image of being “top of mind” in its segment, this way conveying the personality of the brand and everything it intends to represent. The brand had already had many innovations, like being the first to have the *touch* resource in its devices, and this way consolidating the credibility of an innovative brand;
- 5) Assets of the organization in charge of the brand: Apple is registered around the world making its market much wider, because from this it is possible to enable

distribution channels for the commercialization of its products. This makes the brand very known, and bring to its consumers more confidence at the moment of making a purchase.

Another factor that has to be highlighted is the identity the brand could built. According to Kotler and Keller (2006), so that we can have an effective identity it is necessary to carry out three functions:

- 1) Establish the personality of the product and the proposal of value: nowadays the brand brings a differentiated concept by putting in its products its personality which is technology, and this way adding value to the product;
- 2) Communicate this personality in a differentiated way: Apple has a differentiated personality and conveys this in its marketing, as well; for example, there are webpages dedicated to Apple's products in social networks; the advertisements of the brand convey confidence and the brand tries to invest, since 2017, in regional commercials which guarantees even more the acceptance of the brand by the consumers, according to MacMagazine (2017);
- 3) Convey an emotional power which is something beyond the mental image: the brand uses its own devices to make images or videos for advertisements, transmitting to its users the functionalities and benefits of the products (*smartphones*), and with this, it is possible to observe that the brand can create a memorable identity.

It is also possible to point out that the elements which make a brand are extremely important, the *design* of the logo, the website, the layout of the physical stores, the way the salespeople approach the customers, and even their uniform are fundamental elements for building the identity of the brand. To build such a value between the brand and the consumers. Minadeo (2008) points out that some basic elements are necessary for this composition and are used by Apple;

- 1) Content: the brand looks for fostering the interest of its consumers by the confidence it conveys and the quality of its products, this way guaranteeing that its consumers indicate the brand to other people;
- 2) Media: the communication from which the brand Apple has benefited is different from the one found in the market and can be realized by the social networks. An example of this is Instagram on which we don't find advertisements of products or anything like that, but yes, we can find the utilities of its products demonstrated by its own users. This kind of communication makes the brand different in the market; it's another way to advertise the brand;
- 3) Context: the brand can convey to its users the much its products are innovative and have an advanced technology which can be seen in the authorized stores, since the salespeople have a differentiated behavior when selling the products from Apple. The brand worries about qualifying its salespeople so that they understand what they are selling, this way showing how much they care about the customers.

It's understood, therefore, how much the brand Apple has been using these factors to keep active in the market and deliver to its customers differentiated and innovative products, according to what the brand itself states. Taking into consideration the facts pinpointed, it is possible to verify that the brand understands that its products convey its identity to the consumers, and that it is through this that it becomes remembered and guarantees its reputation in the market.

However, we can see that the brand uses some automatic responses to answer its followers. The new consumer wants direct interaction with the brand, because of this the new generation of consumers prefer to query friends and social networks. The digital era changed the behavior of the consumers, nowadays they have a higher level of requirement, they are much more informed and influencers.

Finally, the research carried out could reach the goal proposed, since it was possible to see that the main engagement facts of the consumers regarding the brand Apple are the by word of mouth marketing and the brand equity. It was observed that the brand has a relation of confidence with its consumers and that it could make many of them loyal not just by the product – *smartphones*, but by all the other services that it offers. As seen, many people that don't have the device would indicate it by the simple fact of hearing that it is good and innovative.

Regarding the possible restrictions and limitations found for carrying out this study, it is possible to point out the short time for applying the questionnaire and the sharing just on the social networks of the researchers. For future projects, we suggest a comparison among the social networks of the brand Apple and other brands of smartphones, aiming at seeing which are the strategy differences used for engagement with the consumers.

Lastly, this research enabled the understanding of the way a brand positions in the market to guarantee space in such a disputed market. Apple, for many people, is a reference when someone mentions technology, innovation and confidence, but what can be perceived, not underserving the credibility of the brand, is that the brand has competitors in the market who produce similar devices, and many times even cheaper, but even so some people prefer Apple. And it is exactly because they have gained their customers and made them associate the brand with something that is important to whomever uses it.

As technology and innovation improve, the communication gets new directions and the customers become more and more demanding. The new consumer is even more connected becoming much more attentive and well informed, and when searching for some products they already have specifications about them before going for it. This makes that the companies have to be always searching for ways to please and understand their customers.

## References

- Aaker, D. (1998). *Marcas – Brand Equity: Gerenciando o valor da marca*. São Paulo: Elsevier.
- Apple. (2018). Recuperado de: <https://www.apple.com/br/>
- Bardin, L. (2006). *Análise de conteúdo*. Lisboa: Edições 70.
- Brasil. (2003). *Estatuto do Idoso: E normas correlatas*. Brasília: Senado Federal, dispositivos constitucionais pertinentes Lei nº 10.741.
- Brasil. (2013). *Estatuto da juventude: Atos internacionais e normas correlatas*. Brasília: Senado Federal, Coordenação de Edições Técnicas.
- Caldas, A., & Godinho, L. A. C. (2007). *A percepção quanto ao valor da marca*. Belo Horizonte.
- Churchill, G. A., & Peter, J. P. (2010). *Marketing: Criando valor para os clientes*. São Paulo: Saraiva.
- Crescitelli, E., & Figueiredo, J. (2010). *Uso de diagramas causais na construção de um modelo de brand equity*. Florianópolis/SC: EMA.
- Crescitelli, E., & Shimp, T. A. (2012). *Comunicação de marketing: Integrando propaganda, promoção e outras* (8a ed.). São Paulo: Cengage Learning.

- G1. (2018). *Apple atinge marca de US\$ 1 trilhão em valor de mercado*. Recuperado de: <https://g1.globo.com/economia/noticia/2018/08/02/apple-atinge-marca-de-us-1-trilhao-em-valor-de-mercado.ghtml>
- G1. (2018). *Apple se aproxima da marca de US\$ 1 trilhão em valor na bolsa*. Recuperado de: <https://g1.globo.com/economia/tecnologia/noticia/2018/08/01/apple-aproxima-da-marca-de-us-1-trilhao-em-valor-na-bolsa.ghtml>
- Gobe, A. et al. (2007). *Administração de vendas* (2a ed.). São Paulo: Saraiva.
- IDC Brasil. (2018). *Vendas por trimestre 2017 no Brasil*. Recuperado de: <http://br.idclatin.com/>
- Keller, K. L., & Machado, M. (2006). *Gestão estratégica de marcas*. São Paulo: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2015). *Princípios de Marketing* (15a ed.) São Paulo: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2017). *Marketing 4.0: Do tradicional ao digital*. Rio de Janeiro: Sextante.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2006). *Administração de marketing: A bíblia do marketing* (12a ed.). São Paulo: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Las Casas, A. L. (2008). *Administração de Marketing: Conceitos, Planejamento e Aplicações à Realidade Brasileira*. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Linhares, T. B., Castro, M. L. C., & Takamatsu, R. T. (2017). *Criação de Valor Simbólico: Uma Análise da Marca Apple*. Universidade Estadual de Minas Gerais. Belo Horizonte.
- MacMagazine. (2017). *Apple muda estratégia de campanhas globais para propagandas mais regionais*. Recuperado de: <https://macmagazine.com.br/2017/02/20/applemuda-estrategia-de-campanhas-globais-para-propagandas-mais-regionais-edigitais/>
- Martins, J. R. (2006). *Branding: Um manual para você criar, gerenciar e avaliar marcas*. São Paulo: Global Brands.
- Minadeo, R. (2008). *Gestão de marketing: Fundamentos e aplicações*. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Prodanov, C. C., & Freitas, E. C. (2013). *Metodologia do trabalho científico: Métodos e Técnicas da Pesquisa e do Trabalho Acadêmico*. Novo Hamburgo.
- Recuero, R. (2009). *Redes sociais na internet*. Porto Alegre: Sulina.
- Rocha, E. (2005). *Culpa e prazer: Imagens do consumo na cultura de massa*. Recuperado de: <http://revistacmc.espm.br/index.php/revistacmc/article/viewFile/29/29>
- Roesch, S. M. A. (2005). *Projetos de estágio e de pesquisa em administração: Guia para estágios, trabalhos de conclusão, dissertações e estudos de caso* (3a ed.). São Paulo: Atlas.
- Samara, B. S., & Morsch, M. A. (2005). *Comportamento do consumidor: Conceitos e casos*. São Paulo: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Teleco. (2018a). *Dados econômicos trimestrais e anuais da Apple*. Recuperado de:  
<http://www.teleco.com.br/vendors/apple.asp>

Teleco. (2018b). *Vendas de Smartphones*. Recuperado de:  
<http://www.teleco.com.br/smartphone.asp>

Voltolini, R. (2014). *Conheça o primeiro smartphone da história*. Recuperado de:  
<https://www.tecmundo.com.br/celular/59888-conheca-primeiro-smartphone-historiagalerias.htm>