



## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN THE CONTEXT OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE CULTURE – THE CASE OF BARRA DOS COQUEIROS

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### Summary

This study presents the results of a survey conducted between 2021 and 2022, entitled “Marketing and communication strategies in the context of media convergence – The case of Barra dos Coqueiros”, conducted by the Research Laboratory on Entrepreneurship and Innovation of the Federal University of Sergipe (LEI-UFS). The project is linked to the CNPq PQ2 Grant (nº 312260/2020-2) and PIBIC, and is part of a set of studies that investigate marketing and communication strategies in different regions, such as Aracaju and São Cristóvão. The main objective was to analyze the profile of entrepreneurs in the city of Barra dos Coqueiros and the communication strategies adopted by them. The methodology included a theoretical survey and qualitative research, with semi-structured online interviews. The analysis of the collected data revealed that the city has 1,423 individual microentrepreneurs, of which 51.31% are women and 48.69% are men, with an average age of 39 years. The study is justified by the need to support microentrepreneurs in view of the region's population growth, driven by the construction of new luxury condominiums. In addition, it aims to foster the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem, ensuring that these entrepreneurs are monitored in compliance with Brazilian laws and in the development of their activities.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Innovation

### Abstract

This study presents the results of research conducted between 2021 and 2022, titled “Marketing and Communication Strategies in the Context of Media Convergence – The Case of Barra dos Coqueiros,” led by the Research Laboratory in Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Federal University of Sergipe (LEI-UFS). The project is linked to the PQ2 Fellowship from CNPq (no. 312260/2020-2) and PIBIC, and is part of a series of studies investigating marketing and communication strategies in different regions, such as Aracaju and São Cristóvão. The main objective was to analyze the profile of entrepreneurs in the city of Barra dos Coqueiros and the communication strategies they adopt. The methodology included a theoretical review and a qualitative study, using online semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the collected data revealed that the city has 1,423 individual micro-entrepreneurs, of which 51.31% are women and 48.69% are men, with an average age of 39 years. The study is justified by the need to support micro-entrepreneurs amid the region's population growth, driven by the construction of new luxury condominiums. Additionally, it aims to foster the ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation, ensuring that these entrepreneurs are supported in complying with Brazilian laws and developing their businesses.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Innovation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the results of a survey carried out from October 2021 to September 2022 called “Marketing and communication strategies in the context of convergence media – The case of Barra dos Coqueiros” which was carried out by the Entrepreneurship Research Laboratory and Innovation of the Federal University of Sergipe (LEI-UFS).

This project is linked to the CNPq Bolsa PQ2 project (nº 312260/2020-2). and also to the pro-

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PIBIC project "Marketing and communication strategies in the context of media convergence - Entrepreneurs from Aracaju" and "Marketing and communication strategies in the context of media convergence - The case of Rosa Elze in São Cristóvão", all carried out by LEI, with the objective of generating an analysis between the results obtained in each region.

The purpose of the research is to seek and understand the profile of entrepreneurs in the city of Barra dos Coqueiros and the communication strategies used by these professionals in their businesses. To this end, we used a survey of theoretical materials as methodological procedures in order to assemble a bibliographic arsenal that served as a basis for subsequent discussions; in addition to this activity, the main point of the research was data collection, through qualitative research using the application of semi-structured surveys conducted online and, finally, the analysis and treatment of the collected data. According to MaisMei<sup>1</sup>, there are 1,423 individual microentrepreneurs registered in Barra dos Coqueiros, of which 51.31% are women and 48.69% are men, and the average age is 39 years.

The work is justified by the understanding that microentrepreneurs are dealing with the increase in population due to the large number of new luxury condominiums that have been emerging in the region, and the need to foster the ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation in the referenced institution so that these sellers are supported and have the appropriate monitoring, until they maintain legality before the Brazilian laws that govern this sector and the needs that arise throughout their journey as small entrepreneurs.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 MARKETING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

In a competitive market, there are some factors that transform and make a company become a market leader in relation to others. Analyses and studies on entrepreneurial marketing emerged after the challenges of applying traditional marketing concepts to the reality of small businesses.

The pillars of traditional marketing were formed taking into account the operating model of large businesses, while small and medium-sized businesses have had difficulties in their direct application. It is worth highlighting that the main difference between micro and small enterprises (MSEs) and large companies is their availability of resources and their significantly more restricted potential for capacity development (Stokes, 2000 and Gilmore and Carson, 1999). And this causes difficulties for entrepreneurs in these companies to use the forms provided for in traditional marketing.

Faced with the difficulties of formalizing marketing activities, microenterprise owners use informal and unstructured marketing methods to create differentiated products based, usually, on innovations to prospect new markets, advertise and promote products to reach new customers (Stokes, 2000, Gilmore and Carson, 1999). This current unstructured marketing process is called entrepreneurial marketing and, according to the author Stokes (2000), it consists of marketing carried out by small business entrepreneurs.

The conceptualization used by the author to define this concept highlights the marketing perspective of the entrepreneurial profile owner as a factor that determines the marketing practices adopted in his company. Stokes considers that behavior, academic and professional training will influence the company's marketing decisions.

The management model is an administrative function, that is, the results obtained by the company are proportional to the marketing tools it applies in its daily life. The author believes that small companies need to adapt to marketing to meet their needs, but it makes no sense to make conceptual changes based on marketing theories. Small companies that have adopted marketing theories

marketing, they chose the methods that best suit their own circumstances and "trying" methods marketing strategies for each stage of the company's development. According to Stokes (2000), the initial marketing activity is word-of-mouth communication and then the capture of new information with the help of the entrepreneurs' networking network. The cycle of the entrepreneurial marketing process is complemented by the return of the first item, that is, incremental innovations and adjustments. Moraes (2008) understands entrepreneurial marketing as a practice of basic actions, which goes through several stages, in an evolutionary process that culminates in the adoption of integrated and formal marketing strategies. Entrepreneurial marketing is considered as the marketing that entrepreneurs of medium and small companies use and occurs contrary to what is recommended in the marketing model written by Kotler, where the process

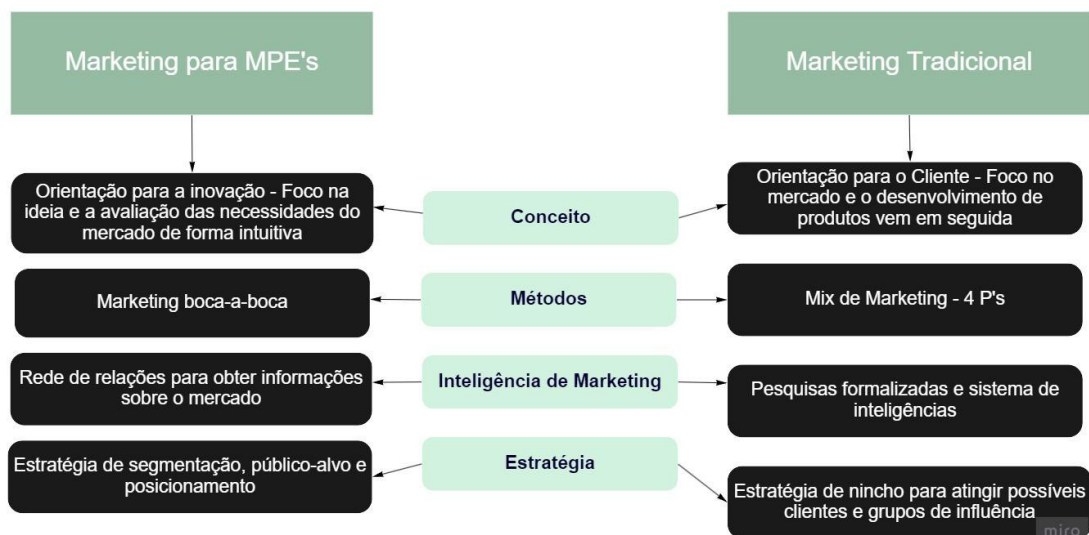
should start with identifying market needs, including the selection of target markets and product knowledge.

In entrepreneurial marketing, innovation is first worked on (LIMA and ZOSCHKE, 2008). In a new venture, most of the marketing effort consists of persuading customers to buy the company's new products or services.

advertising, creating brand names and forming sales teams occur relatively late. During the process of selling the new product or service, the entrepreneur must arouse the customer's interest by informing them that there is a new product or service that will meet some of their needs. After that, the entrepreneur identifies the customer's requirements and tries to overcome the possible problems of the new product or service and, finally, the sale will be made (BARON AND SHANE, 2007).

Stokes (2000) formulated a model to explain the marketing practiced in SMEs. To do so, he used the four approaches of traditional marketing (marketing as a concept, strategic marketing, marketing methods and intelligent marketing) and compared them with the way entrepreneurs act in their SMEs. With the framework adapted from the concepts brought by Stokes, it is possible to understand better.

Figure 1: Marketing Concept for SMEs vs. Traditional Marketing



Source: Adapted from Stokes (2000)

## MEDIA CONVERGENCE

The Internet has become a space where people have sought information, consumed materials in various formats or even passed the time. Based on the information mentioned above, many companies have sought to analyze and adapt various issues so that their message reaches their audience in the most effective way. This attitude is due to the fact that consumers have started to more rigorously curate the materials they want to consume and what they want to see, thus segmenting their interests. This is directly related to the culture of convergence, which, according to Jenkins (2008, p. 43),

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does not only involve commercially produced materials and services, convergence also occurs when people take control of the media." According to the author, consumers are increasingly are using the technologies they have access to in order to have greater control over the level of advertising they interact with, thus changing their role from passive recipients of messages to active users.

Jenkins (2009) also highlights that, in this context, new media are not coming with the purpose of destroying traditional media, but rather to coexist with them and relate to them in increasingly deeper ways, both in relation to the production of media content and its consumption. This directly influences the theme of entrepreneurial marketing, where owner-managers seek knowledge through digital media.

In media convergence, the flow of content across different complementary platforms allows audiences to always be connected, following the development of narratives in the multiple channels where they are inserted, that is, it allows entrepreneurs to publicize their enterprise in this context. Transmedia culture adds a lot in this sense by allowing the production of the same content in different media, making them suitable for the consumption of their products.

Despite this, convergence is not an exclusively technological phenomenon and should be perceived as a cultural transformation, since it encourages consumers to explore different means to find the information they seek. It is due to this factor that Jenkins (2009) analyzes that media convergence occurs in the brain of each individual and in their social relationships and not only within mobile devices and computers.

Considering all these factors, we will analyze below how media convergence is present in the communication of street vendors in Barra dos Coqueiros.

### 3 MATERIAL AND METHOD

The method used to develop this research was characterized by a qualitative bias, a method used in the Endeavor Brasil study with the support of Ibope Inteligência (ENDEAVOR, 2013) that was used in the PIBIC 2019 and 2020 surveys, and of a technical nature in view of the proposed objective of mapping small entrepreneurs and their communication strategies.

The profile of the interviewees was then defined (Table 3). Initially, the plan envisaged that specific segments of local residents would be interviewed, excluding gastronomic establishments.

The main instrument was the application of interviews, where a script with semi-structured questions was developed so as not to lose focus, but to allow space for the interviewee to add elements that were not previously defined. In this way, answers outside the script can also be considered. The script included in the developed appendix was based on aspects previously raised by members of the UFS Research Laboratory on Entrepreneurship and Innovation - LEI/UFS in the project "Communication and management strategies in the context of media convergence - understanding the profile of entrepreneurs in the Immediate Region of Propriá - SE" and also in the PIBIC survey "Marketing and communication strategies in the context of the culture of media convergence - entrepreneurs from Aracaju" and in the PIBIC survey "Marketing and communication strategies in the context of the culture of media convergence - the case of Rosa Elze in São Cristóvão". Some questions were removed or reformulated to better suit potential interviewees.

Despite the difficulty in finding the target audience for the research, especially considering that this activity could easily be carried out in a non-pandemic context, the scholarship holders managed to survey 89 businesses located in Barra dos Coqueiros using the resources offered by Google Maps, also included in the appendix. In order to establish contact, we searched for the respective names of the establishments via Instagram or used the information available on Google, such as websites, contact numbers and social networks. Instagram was the main social network for this contact, thus obtaining a total of 9 interviews.

The next step consisted of recording interviews conducted via the Google Meet platform using the interview script. Once this step was completed, transcriptions were performed using the Sonix.ai platform,<sup>2</sup> which offers automatic transcription service in 40 languages. The transcripts were named in the following format: **INTERVIEW NUMBER - NAME OF THE ENTERPRISE**. Then, the respective responses that meet the research objectives are reviewed and listed.

The guiding criteria for the research were: management of the enterprise, use of knowledge to achieve the organization's objectives, knowledge about management and marketing, a tool strategic tool for business, and management of communication and productivity tools, which is related to production capacity over time. From the data collection and organizing the available materials through the bibliographic and theoretical survey carried out in the bibliographic research phase, it was possible to carry out a Content Analysis presented by Bardin (2016).

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<sup>2</sup>Sonix.ai is an online automatic audio and video transcription software. Available at: <<https://sonix.ai/pt>>.

The established determinant was the pandemic period, as the presence of new ventures is perceived as an alternative to unemployment in the pandemic, thus, we categorized the entrepreneurs to be



analyzed taking into account those who were already working before and after the pandemic period. It is possible to analyze that most of the ventures emerged during the pandemic, with a total of 6 in this classification, while only 3 emerged before this period. Thus, it can be concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged the emergence of new entrepreneurs, which contributed to the modification of the national economic scenario and, therefore, being the focus of the sample.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONTEXT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Entrepreneurship is a relevant topic that deserves special attention since the market is constantly changing. With each passing day, competition between companies grows and job opportunities have become scarce, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic that changed reality. For Dornelas (2008), an entrepreneur is a person who finds opportunities and creates a business to profit from them, assuming possible risks. The concept of entrepreneurship, in Hatfield's (2006) view, is related to a concept of actions and thoughts. For Paim (2001), he states that it is linked only to the relationship of creating companies where one of the main themes is freedom.

From this, it is clear that entrepreneurship represents a strong pillar of the economy that contributes significantly to the development of the local economy. According to Alfredo (2009), since the beginning of humanity, it is possible to say that primitive humans have had an entrepreneurial character, given that in order to survive it was necessary to build tools to make hunting for food faster and a more practical way of living. After thousands of years, entrepreneurship took a great leap forward thanks to ancient civilizations, such as the Egyptians, who are famous for their pyramids, agriculture, medicine and engineering.

However, the role of the entrepreneur is fundamental to the development of a society, intensified in recent decades due to technological advances, increasingly demanding entrepreneurial people, based on innovation and quality (LA FALCE, 2012). Also according to the GEM research, Brazil is among the countries that most entrepreneurs in the world, however, the factors that motivate this behavior are the need for survival, unlike other countries where entrepreneurship is more related to business opportunities.

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Since the 1990s, there have been frequent discussions about the importance of initiatives aimed at improving individual and small-scale entrepreneurship in both the public and private sectors. In these two areas—need and opportunity—self-employed activities and small “businesses” occupy significant spaces in the Brazilian economic and social structure, making institutional changes and the proliferation of training and socialization actions aimed at the sector understandable. (Cordeiro & Mello, 2006)

A relevant aspect in this path refers to institutional changes, the Statute of Microenterprises and Small Businesses (Complementary Law 123/2006, popularized as the General Law of Micro and Small Businesses), which established differentiated treatment for small businesses through a series of measures: considerable reduction of bureaucratic procedures for opening, operating and closing a small business; reduction of the tax burden, ease of access to credit and participation in acquisitions.

provision of goods and services by the public authorities; measures to stimulate innovation, entrepreneurial education and associationism.

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Complementary Law (LC) No. 128/2008, which came into force on July 1, 2009, allows these individuals to develop their businesses informally and establish themselves as legal entities, that is, the individual microentrepreneur (MEI), by defining a specific tax regime for self-employment, in addition to a simplified online system (Entrepreneur Portal) for registering beneficiaries and including them in the social security system. The legislation considers an Individual Microentrepreneur (MEI) to be a person who works on their own and who legalizes themselves as a small business owner. The required conditions include a maximum turnover of up to R\$81,000.00 per year and not participating in another company in the

condition of partner or owner. A salaried worker who receives the minimum wage or the category floor and an individual entrepreneur, a designation reserved for those who carry out a business activity in their own name, as an individual owner of the company, may also register as an MEI.

According to ASN (2020), Brazilians' motivation to become entrepreneurs is becoming stronger, especially in times of crisis. A survey by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) reveals an increase in entrepreneurship. Initially, interest occurred during periods of recession and, based on the results between 2009-2009 and 2014-2016. The indexes indicate that Brazil reached a 23.3% rate of initial entrepreneurship, the highest mark since 2002. It is estimated that there are a total of 53.4 million Brazilians conducting an entrepreneurial activity, opening a new business, related to the creation of a new venture or directing efforts to an already consolidated venture. Also according to ASN (2020), GEM research shows that the potential entrepreneurship rate in 2019 was 30.2%, that is, for every 10 Brazilian adults, 3 are interested in opening their own business in the next three years.

Brazil has the 4th highest Initial Entrepreneurship Rate – businesses up to 3.5 years old - (TEA=23.3%) among the countries included in the survey. This rate is higher than those recorded, for example, in the BRICS countries, the USA, Colombia, Mexico and Germany. Considering the Established Entrepreneur Rate – businesses with more than 3.5 years of existence - (TEE=16.3%), Brazil has the 2nd highest Global rate. The result also places the country in a leading position among the BRICS, the USA, Colombia, Mexico and Germany. A similar highlight is that achieved with the Total Entrepreneurship Rate, where Brazil has the 4th best rate (TTE=38.7%) in the world and the highest rate among the BRICS. (GEM, 2019, apud ASN, 2020)

The importance of entrepreneurship as an ally to economic growth in several countries is noticeable, mainly due to the introduction of new products into the market or the evolution of existing products, as well as changes in the production process and increased competitiveness (FONTENELE, SOUSA E LIMA, 2011).

A study conducted by Almeida, Valadares and Sediya (2017) shows that entrepreneurship has a strong contribution to the economic growth of Brazilian states during the period 2001 to 2011, of a homogeneous and positive nature, in addition to the increase in the generation of local income production. Brazil is still moving towards strengthening entrepreneurship as a culture. To this end, the government and organizations must come together to develop a system for entrepreneurship development.

entrepreneurship in the country, such as new courses, patents, scientific research and stimulation of entrepreneurial cultures in more remote regions.

An important concept in this context is that of entrepreneurship by necessity and entrepreneurship by opportunity, which are extremely significant in the informal market. Entrepreneurship by necessity is a solution found by older professionals, with “unemployability” limitations and with few educational qualifications, who are seeking to avoid difficulties faced by maintaining formalized businesses, where they hardly promote the necessary conditions for the inclusion of this type of worker (KLECHEN, 2007). Entrepreneurship by opportunity is where the entrepreneur sees opportunities in market niches and seeks advantages in terms of quality and flexibility (Pamplona, 2001).

“Entrepreneurs by opportunity: are motivated by the perception of a potential market niche and Entrepreneurs by necessity: are motivated by the lack of a satisfactory alternative for occupation and income” (GEM 2005).”

6 The categories have the common goal of obtaining profits, however the distinction between them is in the motivation to undertake. Entrepreneurship by necessity is characterized when the individual, due to a lack of many opportunities, needs a fixed income for reasons of survival and family support, which, according to Nassif, Ghobril and Amaral (2009), the Brazilian economic scenario is full of adversities and discontinuities, which causes the search for survival in adapting to the adverse situations of an unstable economy, and thus, undertaking becomes an alternative to unemployment.

Among all the businesses analyzed, 2 were presented as a necessity, as an alternative to unemployment and the search for a fixed income, highlighting the following common factors: low investment, low preparation in opening, little knowledge of management and marketing. This can be seen in the text

de Guimarães, Oliveira, Dimas, Corrêa (2022) state that those who undertake out of necessity still have little experience and theoretical knowledge in the business sector, which can bring greater difficulties, but it does not prevent the start of the business.

Table 1 - Categorization of interviewees by need and opportunity	
NEED	OPPORTUNITY
Interviewee 03	Interviewee 01
Interviewee 08	Interviewee 02 Interviewee 04 Interviewee 05 Interviewee 06 Interviewee 07 Interviewee 09

Source: Own authorship

Unlike opportunity-based entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur has the possibility of choosing between one option among others, not due to a lack of employment, but because he wants to add something more to his income and identify an opportunity in that sector, as stated by Rocha (2014) when characterizing it as one that involves innovation in the context of the creation of opportunities perceived by the entrepreneur.

Thus, during the analysis of the interviews, we realized that 7 ventures are suited to the opportunity category, as can be seen in the table above, with the main common factor being the vision of finding the resources needed to develop a business within a reality in which the supply of services and products is minimal.

### 4.3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic has had a major impact on the growth of entrepreneurship, as the world is currently undergoing a complete change in its consumer and sales culture. This is because there has been a major disruption in the labor market, and consequently the unemployment rate has increased along with inflation, which in emerging countries like Brazil is showing a negative economic outlook. New entrepreneurs have emerged in the midst of this scenario as a creative and innovative solution for survival, a

way to guarantee good financial conditions and face unemployment, since a large part of Brazilian necessity entrepreneurship results from a question of survival, since its growth is linked to an economic crisis (GUIMARÃES; OLIVEIRA; DIMAS; CORRÊA, 2022). The few public policies to guarantee an adequate livelihood for the families most affected by an economic crisis is the ideal scenario for the growth of new entrepreneurs.

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Table 2 - Relationship between pandemic and enterprise	
PANDEMIC PERIOD	ENTREPRENEURS
PRE-PANDEMIC COVID-19 (< 2020)	Interviewee 2
	Interviewee 4
	Interviewee 6

DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (2020 - 2021)	Interviewee 1
	Interviewee 3
	Interviewee 5
	Interviewee 7
	Interviewee 8
	Interviewee 9

Source: Own authorship

The pandemic period was also fundamental in changing consumer behavior. Due to the need for social isolation and the closure of physical shopping centers, online sales became a necessity and the only alternative to remain in the market. Social networks are the main means of communication between companies and their consumers, which contributes to the growth of e-commerce. In a survey conducted by CNN Brasil, it was revealed that data from the Federal Revenue Service analyzed by the Getúlio Vargas Foundation indicate a 73% growth in online sales in June 2020, three months after the WHO decree on the pandemic.

E-Commerce, or electronic commerce, is a type of business that occurs entirely online, from product selection to payment, through electronic devices such as computers and smartphones. This modality occurs in

Brazil since 1996, but I achieved success in 1999 with Submarino<sup>3</sup>, however, social isolation contributed to an increase in sales (PREMEBIDA, 2020) with a turnover of R\$ 161 billion in 2021, an increase of 27% compared to 2020, data from Neotrust<sup>4</sup>.

Given this reality, consumers need to adapt to online shopping, so people who have never made an online purchase are making their first purchase. According to Stangherlin, João and Oliveira (2020), consumption habits have already been transformed, consumers are much more connected and digital, in addition to being attentive to the purpose of companies. These habits will continue after the quarantine, it will be the “new normal”.

In this scenario, the search for alternatives to win new customers and keep regular ones found solutions in digital marketing, in addition to expanding their products and brands to other territories through the support of social media, while carrying out sales remotely. For new entrepreneurs, this was the opportunity to open a business without the need to open a physical location, creating their brand and advertising only with digital marketing, as stated by Vizotto et al:

“Investing in digital marketing is a viable path for those who are interested in continuing their business, or even starting something from scratch, seeking to use social media so that they can get the idea off the ground and start the company's activities.” (VIZOTTO, CARDOSO, BAPTISTA, 2021)

Social networks<sup>5</sup> They have tools that enable greater feedback collection and the creation of sufficient content to attract new followers, who become potential consumers.

Social media has provided opportunities for new businesses that seek to improve quality of life, giving rise to digital entrepreneurship that seeks to visualize business opportunities, where there is an incessant search for innovations, taking calculated risks with the intention of obtaining income, recognizing cement and growth in the market, as proposed by Oliveira et al (2019). Through bibliographical readings, realizes that the concept of entrepreneurship is linked to an economic activity that involves the ability to innovate products and services that generate opportunities that are studied and explored, thus, digital entrepreneurship develops this activity, but focused on the use of digital means for marketing and dissemination.

#### 4.4 ENTREPRENEURS' PROFILE AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FROM BARRA DOS COQUEIROS

Regarding the profile of entrepreneurs, a socioeconomic profile, general characteristics such as age, sex and level of education were highlighted, which will be presented in the following graphs. In relation to sex, the



Women appear in the majority, totaling 7, while men are in the minority, totaling 4.

Table 3 - Socioeconomic Profile - Sex	
Woman	Man
Interviewee 01	Interviewee 02
Interviewee 03	Interviewee 04
Interviewee 05	Interviewee 06
Interviewee 07	
Interviewee 08	
Interviewee 09	

Source: Own Authorship

When analyzing the age range of entrepreneurs, it is noticeable that there is no fixed pattern, varying between 19 and 45 years old.

Regarding the interviewees' education, it can be observed that the majority completed high school or technical school. For those who completed a technical course, they worked in their field for a while before becoming professionals. dedicate themselves to entrepreneurship.

Table 4 - Socioeconomic Profile - Education		
Complete Higher Education	High School/Technical Education	Not informed
Interviewee 02	Interviewee 04	Interviewee 01
Interviewee 03	Interviewee 05	
Interviewee 07	Interviewee 06	
	Interviewee 08	
	Interviewee 09	

Source: Own authorship

Based on what was described in the project methodology, the groups for analysis were divided into three main subgroups: high, medium and low experience, totaling: 3 with high experience, 4 with medium experience and 3 with low experience. The segmentation was done according to the main networks used for advertising, the difficulty of time provided for the enterprise, whether it has the assistance of someone and uses some form of management.

Table 5 - Definition of high, medium and low experience		
HIGH EXPERIENCE	AVERAGE EXPERIENCE	LOW EXPERIENCE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Main networks social: Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp</li> <li>➤ Do you have any management application?</li> <li>➤ Assistance from a person for the disclosure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Main networks social: Instagram and WhatsApp</li> <li>➤ Difficulty in managing time for dissemination</li> <li>➤ Use of offline resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Instagram as the main and only social network</li> <li>➤ No use of online resources as posts and boosting</li> <li>➤ Difficulty in maintaining the social network</li> </ul>
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Source: Own authorship

Barra dos Coqueiros has a large number of small businesses of various types and, with the increase in luxury condominiums in the city, the researchers analyzed a small and varied group of MEIs with different segments to prepare the project. The entire analysis process was carried out by checking common words reported in the interview with the help of the Infogram application to create word clouds for better understanding.

## HIGH EXPERIENCE

The sample of highly experienced entrepreneurs is made up of four people, three of whom are men. Within this group, the members have quite different ages, ranging from 22 to 40 years old. Regarding education, the characteristics are also quite discrepant: we have the presence of people who are still studying higher education, people without a degree and even people who have already completed their degree.

“And then came the pandemic, which was a big challenge for the business. But as I say, it was difficult. I tell everyone that it was a big challenge.”

opportunity I had to discover myself. I'm not even going to discover, reinvent myself. I discovered myself with another entrepreneur. I was able to point out things that really had value for.”(Interviewee 08)

The reality of many entrepreneurs in Barra dos Coqueiros was affected during the pandemic, which influenced the difficulty of undertaking, and this was reported among the highly experienced interviewees. One of the strengths emerged after the lockdown period, in which they rediscovered themselves and took charge of their enterprise to grow and gain positive points for their business.

It is possible to analyze the fact that the number of customers is changing through a more applied and in-depth study of entrepreneurship. It is worth noting that the three businesses were opened between 2016 and 2019, and can be considered new in the market. Two of the three entrepreneurs reported that they felt the need to carry out some type of advertising when opening the establishment.

“...the first four months I actually did some advertising on TV Atalaia. I used a lot of sound trucks, I also handed out leaflets and many times I would stand in front of the gallery with the speaker playing and handing out leaflets until I became known.” (Interviewee 03)

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There is an important point in this speech, the sound car, during the interviews it is common to notice the presence of its media outlet. In the city, according to the interviews, the return of this vehicle brought positive results for the businesses, unlike TV. Since the television medium did not only reach the public of Barra dos Coqueiros, but mainly reached the public of Greater Aracaju.

“And I also decided to remove it from the TV Atalaia advertisement because I was getting more feedback in relation to Aracaju than Barra dos Coqueiros. I was receiving a lot of calls and I was receiving a lot of

all other WhatsApp messages but everyone was asked if it was in Aracaju. Then I noticed that the Barra group suddenly didn't watch TV Atalaia as much." (Interviewee 03, Barra dos Coqueiros)

Finally, the result of advertising for growth was focused on social networks, with a focus on Instagram. One of the three entrepreneurs has the help of a third party to promote his business. Another means of advertising that has stood out is the use of *buzz marketing*, word of mouth marketing, which after investing in the online and offline parameters, referrals have become a great ally for these entrepreneurs.

"So Studio S is becoming a reference, if word of mouth is working and Instagram marketing is working very well today and is reaching other cities and other cities." (Interviewee 03, Barra dos Coqueiros)

About the vision of the local economy, the Caravela economic portal highlights the construction of luxury condominiums (110), which contributes to the increase in the flow of people and demand for the developments. A new reality is being installed in the city, but the economy, in the view of one of the interviewees, is improving with the arrival of this new public and the territorial expansion of the island, even though the money invested is relatively small.

"To be able to talk about the economy of Barra, but it is like this, what I see in general, I think that it is a relatively good economy, let's say, from my point of view, you know, I think that the time has passed for Barra to have a small economy, but today I see Barra dos Coqueiros as being in a much better situation, when compared to other much larger cities here, the investment that is applied in Barra, both in the issue of the expansion of condominiums today and in the expansion of the city itself, so I do believe that they are relatively good economy..." (Interviewee 06, Barra dos Coqueiros)

When asked about management applications that facilitate professional planning and organization, the three interviewees have a tool, a form or an application to manage the business. Among them are Excel software, Google Calendar and the Witsel application.



Figure 6 - Word cloud of High Experience respondents extracted from Infogram

Caravela Data and Statistics. Available at <<https://www.caravela.info/>> .

## AVERAGE EXPERIENCE

The medium-experience sample is composed of 4 entrepreneurs, all managed by women aged between 19 and 45 years old and with different levels of education: some have only completed high school while others have some type of undergraduate or postgraduate degree. Regarding the beginning of their entrepreneurial activities, two mentioned that it was due to opportunity, as they noticed a certain shortage of services and products that they would like to offer in the region, as was the case of Interviewee 07 who transformed the shortage of the service she offers into an opportunity to undertake, thus beginning her journey:

"I think it was because of the opportunity. I think it was because I saw a door there and I saw that there wasn't one in my city. I saw that I wouldn't have any problems with competition and because I could stand out more easily. The scarcity and the interest as well. I was very interested in the

area and that was it.” (Interview 07))

And two mentioned that it was out of necessity, with the pandemic, that their respective workplaces were closed, causing the need to look for alternatives to guarantee an income for family survival, which soon becomes a fixed income. This can be seen in one of the interviews:

“So my motivation came after the pandemic. At first, I had a salon, right. And then I had to close my doors during the pandemic and I found myself very interested in this jewelry business. In addition to being a therapy, it has profitable funds, so that's what led me.” (Interview 10, Barra dos Coqueiros)

The new Coronavirus pandemic has changed the behavior of product supply and sales when small entrepreneurs emerge within the digital environment, without a physical location. This is no different from the interviews, in which 3 of them, with the exception of the physiotherapy studio that opened after the reopening of the establishments, started online and then moved to the physical field, an example is in the report of Interviewee 08: “[...] First, the virtual one started and now we have a physical store that is not very old, our physical store is about three, four months old”.

When talking about competition, it is noticeable that they are not concerned or do not recognize any of it, which is, in the interviewees' view, direct competition or a threat. Regarding the difficulties, very different points were mentioned, such as digital marketing and the use of software to better monitor consumers. This distinction does not appear when discussing the differential, since the quality of service delivery is common to all.

In the following excerpt about competitive advantage, it is interesting how customer service is prioritized, as it is linked to quality delivery.

“So, the service we are prioritizing is to serve a maximum of three people per hour. Do you understand? Because there are other studios and I have seen up to six people, because it is possible. But we prioritize paying more attention to quality. So we are serving a maximum of three people per hour.” (Interview 09)

Although incentives for small entrepreneurs are recent and are gradually occurring in the municipality, as the municipality is expanding with new real estate constructions, which contributes to the growth of the economy and new local businesses, all interviewees highlight the importance of entrepreneurs. undertakings in the municipality is seen in a positive light.



Pouco investimento  
Pouco investimento local  
Expansão  
Crescimento Devagar  
Burocrático

Figure 7 - Cloud of most repeated words about the economy and local incentive

Regarding knowledge about management and experiences, it stands out for the search for improvement in the entrepreneurial scenario through courses offered by state or private institutions, in addition to consuming content on the subject through other channels. When referring to tools or applications for the dissemination of services and products, it shows the online performance in several social networks (Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook and Tik Tok), also used as a communication bridge with customers, as is observed in the cloud of words below about the most common means of communication and carrying out training courses.



Figure 8 - Cloud of most repeated words about media and management knowledge

Finally, regarding the formalization of commerce in the MEI, formalization of a self-employed professional, a professional who carries out his/her activities without an employment relationship (SEBRAE), from the opening of a company, all were registered and receive the benefits, highlighting these as the main advantages of being a MEI and not mentioning any disadvantages, with the exception of one entrepreneur who does not recognize many advantages in this type of business category:

“No, I’m self-employed. I was going to register as an MEI, but the fees were too high, I had to pay a lot of things, I said “man, it’s not worth it”, because besides that, I have a degree in human resources, I’m not working at the moment, but every year I have the blessed annual fee, there are fixed costs, right at home, so the MEI would just be another cost, it wasn’t bringing me any advantage at the moment.” (Interview 01).

## LOW EXPERIENCE

The last analysis is of low experience, consisting of 2 businesses, all managed by women between the ages of 22 and 26, with different levels of education: a degree in Nutrition and a technical degree in Logistics. Regarding the start of the activities, two paths were taken: while one business was planned, the other emerged without any type of planning. This division can be seen in the following statements, the first with the business in which planning was carried out:

“I had a passion for entrepreneurship and that’s when I said no, I’m going to set up my own store and then I opted for women’s fashion, which I have more contact with, I like fashion, so that’s when I. For me, I planned and opened my store.” (Interview 09)

And the second, the one where there was no planning:

“We didn’t plan how it would be, but we literally ate at a place that we didn’t like and we had been living here for a while but we hadn’t seen any other sushi places, so we decided to do it because we always liked cooking” (Entre-  
view 03)

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Planning and preparation in advance for opening a business that speaks about the reason for it, whether it is out of necessity or opportunity. This is observed during the analysis of the interviews, interview number 4 says that he was interested in undertaking and saw an opportunity, as stated in the following transcript “I spent 6 years working in the area, then I had a passion for undertaking and that's when I said no, I'm going to set up my own store and then I opted for women's fashion”.

While interview number 9 mentions the need to generate an income, he states in the following transcript: “It was a necessity, because I had just graduated, I graduated right after, in 2019, in January, there were festivities right after, isolation started right after, everything started to close, so I was out of work for a while.”

In the municipality's economic scenario, it is clear that real estate expansion influences growth. development of new local entrepreneurs, as the arrival of new residents generates an increase in customers and sales.

“In the city’s economy itself, how has it changed in the past year, with the new luxury condominiums that are arriving, new types of clients are coming and so on. Yes, Barra is growing a lot, so these condominiums are coming, right? And so, the economy is improving for us here, because more people are arriving here in Barra, so there are more sales, more clients who can get to know our work and I believe that with this condominium arriving, a lot of people are coming, so I think it is improving.” enough, that the economy in Barra dos Coqueiros.” (Interview 09)

However, encouraging entrepreneurship and helping with business management is still a recent initiative by the local government.

“And it is well organized, we never participated, but there is this incentive. In fact, there was also a program for kiosk entrepreneurs, the city hall was doing, but So I only know about it, but it always exists.” (Interview 03)

Regarding management knowledge, all of them sought information in online courses and videos accessed on YouTube. In terms of means of communication used, the business owners highlighted Instagram as the main vehicle for promoting services and communicating with their customers. They mention use of some delivery and sales applications, however, the main network and most used is Instagram.



Figure 9 - Cloud of most repeated words about media and management knowledge

And to conclude the analysis, the use of MEI by both businesses took a long time to start because they were not fully aware of the benefits of this program. With the exception of interviewee 09 who is still in the process of formalization, interviewee 04 already uses the resources.

“But now we needed some things from the bank to the account, to buy from some suppliers, you know, so we really had to... It was worth it. And so, I believe that since we want to grow, we want to take it seriously

You have to adjust, there was no way, this is the way, soon there will be another framing.” (Interview 04)

“It’s to stay regular, to keep everything in order because working properly is better than paying a certain type of tax with your own CPF. It’s not possible. So if you stay as an MEI, it’s even better for you to have a regularized company.” (Interview 09)

As a result, MEI is positively accepted among new entrepreneurs, always highlighted as advantageous and of great help to those who are starting out in the business.

Even with the limited number of interview samples carried out due to the pandemic situation and the return of businesses to work, it was possible to draw some important conclusions, however, they cannot be considered to assume or generalize situations present in a larger universe of people.

The objectives established at the beginning of the work were met, managing to outline profiles of different branches of enterprises, as well as the communication strategies used by them, dividing them into high, medium and low experience. It was

It is also possible to understand how they are dealing with the new market scenario through communication and marketing, even without the full support of the municipality.

Based on the analyses carried out, it is possible to assimilate the following issues: first, the city annexed to Greater Aracaju, Barra dos Coqueiros, is receiving a new public due to the large investments in civil construction, especially luxury condominiums and, therefore, the strategies of local entrepreneurs are changing because they are receiving greater demands and consequently investments since the city of Barra dos Coqueiros has evolved its economy. Another point is that the pandemic was, for some interviewees, a potential motivator to undertake, while for the other portion it was one of the difficulties to undertake. During the analysis of the interviews, some characteristics appear to be consistent with what we expected before the investigation and some factors appear to be contradictory within reality.

Thus, with the opening of the economy through the entry of new residents, people see the city as a potential for new entrepreneurs, finding opportunities in various segments. The new Coronavirus pandemic has anticipated the expansion of e-commerce and digital marketing, which are widely used by new entrepreneurs who are starting their journey.

#### **Acknowledgements**

To the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development - CNPQ for the scholarships of the authors Ysla Beatriz Xavier Feitosa (IC / CNPQ); Anna Ingrid Muniz Prado Silva (IC / CNPQ) and Matheus Pereira Mattos Felizola (PQ2 - number 312260/2020-2).

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