VISUAL REVIEW | Vol. 18, No. 9s, 2026 | ISSN 2695-9631

International Visual Culture Review / Revista Internacional de Cultura Visual

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USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SPANISH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE COMPANIES

CONTENT ANALYSIS ON INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK

USO DE REDES SOCIALES EN EMPRESAS HORTOFRUTÍCOLAS ESPAÑOLAS
ANÁLISIS DE CONTENIDO EN INSTAGRAM Y TIKTOK

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KEYWORDS

Social networks
Reputation
Fruit and vegetable products
Communication
Notoriety
Brands
Consumer

ABSTRACT

This article examines the impact of communication on social networks as part of the marketing strategy of Spanish fruit and vegetable companies. The objective is to examine the type of content that these companies share, demonstrate the need for interaction between brand and consumer to generate trust, in addition to defining the most effective type of publications to achieve engagement between both.

The information will be collected through content analysis of Instagram and TikTok, social networks most used by digital native generations with purchasing decision-making power and spending autonomy: millennials and centennials.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Redes sociales
Reputación
Hortofrutícolas
Comunicación
Notoriedad
Marcas
Consumidores

RESUMEN

Este artículo examina el impacto de la comunicación en las redes sociales como parte de la estrategia de marketing de las empresas hortofrutícolas españolas. El objetivo es examinar el tipo de contenido que comparten estas empresas, demostrar la necesidad de interacción entre marca y consumidor para generar confianza, además de definir el tipo de publicaciones más efectivas para lograr el engagement entre ambos.

Para ello, se recopilará información mediante el análisis de contenido de Instagram y TikTok, redes sociales más utilizadas por las generaciones nativas digitales con poder de decisión de compra y autonomía de gasto: millennials y centennials.

1. Introduction

The agri-food sector is undergoing a constant industrial revolution, particularly in its relationship with the end consumer, driven by market and social trends. This is in addition to the opportunities that digitalization processes offer the agri-food value chain and rural areas (Gallardo et al., 2024). This evolution has an immediate effect on the image of the sector and on companies' direct communication with their customers.

In this context, the importance of this sector to the Spanish and European economy must be taken into account: the food industry is the leading manufacturing activity, accounting for 14.3% of manufacturing (MAPA, 2023). In Spain, the agri-food industry is the leading manufacturing branch of the industrial sector, accounting for 24.2% of the industrial sector and 22.6% of its workforce, and representing 2.4% of Spain's GDP (MAPA, 2023). The sector comprises 28,335 companies, 17.9% of all manufacturing industry. Of these, 96.1% have fewer than 50 employees and 77.7% have fewer than 10 employees (DIRCE-INE, 2023).

Another key point is data on social behavior regarding internet use and online shopping. The use of social media is dominant among consumers belonging to the millennial (1984-1996) and centennial (1997-2010) generations: according to the INE (2023), internet use is practically universal among young people aged 16 to 24, at 99.9% for men and 99.7% for women. In the 25-34 age group the figures rise to 99.6% for men and 99.5% for women, and in the 35-44 age group they stand at 98.8% for men and 98.9% for women (INE, 2023). Along these lines, according to the IAB study (2023), 11% of social media users are aged between 18 and 24 and 27% are aged between 25 and 40. For this sample, the best-known networks are Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok and WhatsApp, in that order, although the networks most used by millennials (aged 26 to 39) are Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, while centennials (aged 16 to 24) prefer TikTok and Instagram (IAB, 2023). Instagram and TikTok are two of the social networks most intensively used by these two generations with spending autonomy, millennials and centennials; moreover, these networks stand out for their importance in the marketing and communication strategies of companies serving the end-consumer or B2C market.

Advertising on social media dates back almost to the creation of these networks, with brands seeking to make their messages go viral in non-traditional media. In this regard, Instagram was the first platform on which this marketing strategy was used, first through prescribers or influencers and then through companies' programmatic advertising via digital marketing and paid media strategies. This type of communication allows brands to measure their impact accurately, as they can determine their geographical reach through the number of impressions or clicks.

In the case of TikTok, companies that develop their communication strategy on this social network do so not only with influencers or promotional hashtags, as on Instagram, but also through challenges built around a product or brand (Han, 2020; Peng, 2021) or advertising linked to websites that capture user data (Tomas, 2020; Pérez Rey, 2020).

Another important aspect of this context is the support that government authorities provide to the sector. National and European regulations thus promote the digitalization of the agri-food sector, as public administrations have understood that the sector must digitalize if it is to survive and meet consumers' current needs. The digitalization of agriculture emerged with the aim of saving costs and improving the handling, management, parameterization and overall quality of life of farmers (Calvo, 2021). Along these lines, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (hereinafter MAPA) is committed to modernizing the sector through legislation on its digitalization. Royal Decree 113/2022 of 8 February, which establishes the regulatory bases for grants to promote knowledge and information transfer and the acquisition of digital skills, and for advisory, management and substitution services for the agri-food sector, is the main regulation currently underpinning the digitalization of the sector (R.D. 113/2022, MAPA). It was developed "with the aim of promoting the digital transition throughout the entire agri-food chain", linking this digitalization strategy to other national strategies such as the National Strategy for the Demographic Challenge and the Spanish Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation. The

digitalization strategy is necessary to eliminate or reduce existing barriers to digital transformation and aims to contribute to the leadership of a sustainable agri-food sector and the revitalization of rural areas (R.D. 113/2022, MAPA).

In addition, the Observatory for the Digitalization of the Agri-Food Sector sets out the following premises:ss

In the agri-food industry, 44.4% of companies with annual revenues of more than 50 million euros sell their products online.

Likewise, e-commerce has been adopted by up to 29.8% of the agri-food industry, with the Autonomous Community of Navarre being the most proactive territory in Spain in selling agri-food products through the online channel, at 42.1%.

Most agri-food companies use traditional channels, which they complement with modern retail and, to a lesser extent, with their own or contracted e-commerce (Observatorio para la Digitalización del Sector Agroalimentario, 2023).

Another key point of this study is the context of online brand reputation indicators. Online reputation, understood as the prestige a brand enjoys in its online activity, is the most important asset for companies and organizations because it guarantees the trust of their publics (Vegas-García & Paniagua, 2023). The relationship between brands and consumers has changed over the last decade owing to globalization, the internet and the emergence of online social media (Casado et al., 2013). This new scenario requires companies to rethink their communication management (López & Cuesta, 2012). It is therefore necessary to measure brand reputation through indicators of online popularity—namely, customer opinions or reviews, social media engagement and brand image—in order to assess the presence of companies in the sector on social media and the need for such an online presence.

Along these lines, customer reviews are a central indicator. As Del Fresno (2011) states, "online reputation can be identified, extracted, classified and analyzed on the basis of the opinions that users disseminate" (Del Fresno, 2011). This indicator is essential in consumers' purchasing decisions because the company is no longer the sole source of information about itself, and the communication process will therefore never again be one-way (Aced, 2013). In other words, organizations have lost control over their public discourse (Losada, 2019).

The European Communication Monitor (2023), which identifies the most important strategic issues for communication management, reveals that two strategic issues are uppermost in communicators' minds: building and maintaining trust, and linking corporate and communication strategies. Communicators prioritize building and maintaining audience trust over many other values, confirming that consumer trust is essential for organizations (Ramos, 2024). For this reason, engagement, as applied to the digital relationship between producers and customers of fruit and vegetable companies, is another important indicator. According to Barreiro's study of Spanish food trends, online commerce in this sector contributes to successful engagement with the selected target audience, and 23% of people use food and cooking apps (Barreiro, 2018). The study shows that millennials and centennials are the generations that buy the most food online; specifically, almost 5% of millennials and 6.2% of centennials buy directly from producers (Barreiro, 2018).

Regarding consumers' sentiment toward the brand, which in this case will be enhanced through the use of social media, Llorente (2019) explains that the immediacy afforded by digital technology, together with the ubiquity of social media, makes commercial positioning and brand reputation valuable assets that must be managed using the digital tools that make this possible (Llorente, 2019, p. 96). The author highlights the importance of the relationship between reputation and companies' digital presence, and the need for vertical integration in the value chain so that communication with customers supports a positive brand reputation, including the factor of differentiation in the brand's behavior in order to create a memorable experience. The same author adds that price-channel digital strategies have displaced undifferentiated advertising in

favor of the personal shopping experience, linked to the distribution variable, in which factors such as the role of social media and the figure of the influencer as a digital prescriber may be decisive (Llorente, 2019). In addition, various studies by experts in digital communication on the importance of social media in companies' commercial strategies state that social media users make a cognitive effort, associated with the interaction between viewing and reading the information that interests them, which generates a positive perception of what the social network offers and thus reinforces their behavior (Guiñez-Cabrera et al., 2020; Sánchez Romero & López Berlanga, 2020).

2. Methodology

The methodology chosen for this study is based on a content analysis of the accounts of three fruit and vegetable companies present on two of the social networks most used by millennial and centennial audiences, namely TikTok and Instagram. These accounts were chosen according to criteria based on the design of a qualitative research study, within which this social media content analysis was conducted.

To carry out this analysis, a series of tables was designed with variables intended to measure the presence of fruit and vegetable companies on social media and in digital environments, the level of interaction between these brands and consumers, and the type of content used to convey their brand image on their Instagram and TikTok profiles. Data were collected manually by observing and counting the relevant data, related to the chosen variables, on the official profiles of each selected fruit and vegetable company.

The objectives of this research and the main hypothesis to be tested in this study are set out below. The main objectives are:

- To determine whether fruit and vegetable companies have a presence on social media.
- To find out what the social media presence of fruit and vegetable companies is like.
- To determine whether millennial and centennial consumers interact with fruit and vegetable SMEs on their social media profiles.
- To demonstrate the need for interaction between brand and consumer to generate trust.
- To define the most effective types of posts for achieving engagement between the two.

The hypothesis on which this study is based is stated as follows: agri-food companies that have a presence on social media enhance their brand reputation, as they are more present in consumers' minds than those with no social media activity.

This research forms part of a broader study, so what is presented in this article is only a small part of the full research. Accordingly**,** this content analysis is structured as follows:

2.1. Social media content analysis

This section analyzes the type of content shared on social media by a selection of fruit and vegetable companies, following an initial segmentation based on their presence on the following selected networks:

a. **INSTAGRAM:** A social network launched in 2010 for sharing audiovisual content through images or videos, which has gone on to create new communication formats such as reels and Instagram Stories, short videos exclusive to Instagram. It currently belongs to the Meta group and is where prescribers or influencers promote brands or products in order to encourage consumption. Its users span several generations; although, given the year it was created, millennials were the first generation to use it, centennials soon followed.

b. **TIKTOK:** This social network of Chinese origin targets a young audience, mainly belonging to the centennial generation (Patiño, 2020a; Suárez-Álvarez & García-Jiménez, 2021). It

is an app based on sharing short videos that encourage users to publish content (Zuo & Wang, 2019). The network thus encourages users to create content, using #HashtagChallenges to increase virality (Peralta, n.d.; Cervi, 2021), which in turn reveals a high level of loyalty toward the accounts of greatest interest (Ma et al., 2019) and expressions of satisfaction toward the brands that use these strategies (Ariantara, 2021).

Having defined the networks used for the initial segmentation, the remaining criteria for selecting the fruit and vegetable companies used in the analysis are set out below. The second criterion is the presence of the selected fruit and vegetable companies across the digital context as a whole, not only on social media. The segmentation is carried out in this order because a company's presence on social networks with professional profiles need not be linked to a presence in other areas of the digital context. Instagram and TikTok act as a communication medium and a window of contact with the customer, in some cases replacing the corporate website, which tends to fall out of use in the first customer-company contact, given the tools these networks offer for greater closeness and for conveying brand values, thereby fostering the much-desired engagement and positively enhancing brand reputation. Furthermore, if a fruit and vegetable SME already sells its products physically and is known locally but not in digital environments, the brand may choose to start communicating its mission and values through these mass social networks as a test, in order to gauge the impact, generate interest and determine whether it would be profitable to open a new commercial channel—such as building a website focused on e-commerce or online sales—before making such a significant investment. The criteria at this second level of segmentation therefore describe the following attributes of the company's presence in the digital environment:

Table 1. Segmentation criteria based on presence in the digital environment

	Objective
I. Corporate website	• To verify the existence, quality and functionality of the corporate website in order to strengthen the brand image. • To show the market the company's philosophy, values, related content, type of activity and communication with the market, providing its contact details and networks
II. Online store	To check that the company has a portal that allows customers to buy the products it sells online, offering delivery options either to their home or to established collection points.
III. Social networks other than those selected	To determine whether the companies have a presence on other social networks, such as Facebook, X, Pinterest and LinkedIn, in addition to those already selected To assess their level of exposure and potential to be recognized in consumers' minds. Possibility of expanding their reach and visibility across different market segments

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Third, the central part of the analysis is evaluated in order to segment the fruit and vegetable companies according to their presence on the chosen social networks, Instagram and TikTok. This is in turn subdivided according to a series of variables. The first is the number of followers of these fruit and vegetable brands' account profiles on the two social networks, in order to determine the impact and awareness of these companies on Instagram and TikTok in consumers' minds and activity. The second variable measures the style of interactions of the fruit and vegetable companies on the selected social networks, in order to determine whether they are effective in generating customer engagement. Finally, the third variable measures the seniority or experience of the fruit and vegetable companies on TikTok and Instagram, based on the number of years the brand's profile has been present on these networks, in order to obtain relevant information on the relationship between length of presence and the level of customer awareness, recall or identification with the fruit and vegetable brand.

Table 2. Segmentation by companies' track record on social networks

Criterion	Subcategory	Parameters
I. Number of followers	Mass	More than 500,000 followers
	Recognized	Between 2,000 and 500,000 followers
	Unknown	Fewer than 2,000 followers
II. Interactions with their own followers	Passive	Do not interact; only post content
	Interactive	Engage in two-way communication with their followers
III. Length of presence on social networks	Pioneers	Posting content for between 10 and 5 years
	Exploiters/Capitalizers	Posting content since 2020
	Followers	Posting content for 12 months or less

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Having described the segmentation criteria and variables used to select the companies as a representative sample, the following analysis presents the data collected for the three companies that serve as examples of how the analysis is applied to fruit and vegetable companies. They were selected mainly on the basis of the number-of-followers criterion within the total sample, since each belongs to one of the segments designed according to this number of loyal viewers. This makes comparison with other variables affecting these companies more visible, using a criterion that serves as a fixed pivot for the comparison, and makes it possible to understand whether each company's strategy is effective or not. The selected companies are:

Table 3. Companies selected for the analysis

	Business model	Main activity	Differentiation Strategy
Europagricultproduct	Company acting as an intermediary between agricultural producers and customers, eliminating commercial middlemen.	Facilitates the direct sale of high-quality fruit and vegetable products.	Visibility for agri-food producers Support for the sector Reduced agency costs Lower prices Mutually beneficial relationship
La caja saludable	Fruit and vegetable company backed by agricultural producers' cooperatives	Creation of mixed fruit and vegetable boxes, with Spanish-grown products from various cooperatives.	Food safety Sustainable packaging.
Weeko	Online retailer of fruit and vegetable products	Offers customized 10 kg boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables, allowing customers to choose 10 products from more than 50 available options.	Option of a weekly subscription or one-off purchase Builds customer loyalty with subscription discounts.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

To improve understanding of this study, a set of tables was designed as a data-collection model to evaluate the presence of these companies on Instagram and TikTok. These tables evaluate the variables used to analyze the impact of the selected companies' content on these social networks, measuring the company's presence in digital environments in general and how it presents itself to consumers from a corporate standpoint on social media. In addition, the style of content in the brands' storyline on social media is analyzed, both generically at profile level and through a specific observation of the brand's activity at a given moment. December 2024 was chosen because it was close to the time this study was conducted and is a favorable promotional period for brands, given the proximity of the Christmas season, which is of great commercial importance in Spain.

3. Results

This section presents the results collected through the tables and their subsequent interpretation.

3.1. Analysis of the impact of company content on social media

Below are the companies' fact sheets, which provide a better understanding of their presence in this study. These first tables offer an initial snapshot of the selected companies' situation on the two social networks most followed by the chosen consumer population, millennials and centennials. Table 4 presents the classification of the selected fruit and vegetable companies according to their presence on Instagram:

Table 4. Fact sheet of the selected companies on Instagram

	Number of followers on Instagram		**Interactions with followers**	**Length of presence on Instagram**	
Europagricultproduct	393,000	Mass	Interactive	2 years and 2 months	Capitalizer
La caja saludable	21,800	Recognized	Interactive	5 years and 1 month	Pioneer
Weeko	1,595	Unknown	Passive	6 months	Follower

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Table 4 shows the variables used to classify the three selected accounts as applied to Instagram. Here, the companies occupy different positions in terms of followers. EAP has the largest number of followers but is not the company that has been on the network the longest, which may speak well of the brand's communication strategy, since its popularity has grown very rapidly in less time than that of its competitors. As the data collected on the network's content will show, this growth is closely related to the style of posts chosen by the company. La Caja Saludable has made slower progress, considering the length of its presence on the network and the number of followers it has accumulated. Weeko is the least followed of the three selected companies, although it is true that it has been present on social media for the shortest time.

Table 5 shows the same variables, this time applying the analysis to TikTok. Given the nature of this social network, an additional variable specific to account profiles has been added—the number of positive reactions to the account from users—in order to gauge the company's acceptance in consumers' minds through TikTok.

Table 5. Fact sheet of the selected companies on TikTok

	Number of followers on TikTok	**Interactions with their own followers**	**Length of presence on TikTok**	**No. of positive reactions "LIKES"**

EAP	117,300	Mass	Interactive	11 months	Follower	1,000,000
La Caja Saludable	154	Unknown	Passive	5 months	Follower	635
Weeko	8	Unknown	Passive	5 months	Follower	191

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Here, some differences can be observed with respect to Table 4. The main one is the length of presence on the network: although TikTok is a newer social network than Instagram, the selected companies have been on it for a shorter time, none of them for more than a year. This is again noteworthy in the case of EAP, which has been on the network for 11 months but has one million likes and 117,300 followers, demonstrating the strength of the company's social media presence compared with the others, whose activity on TikTok is less significant. Bearing in mind that this is the natural social media space for centennial viewers, it can be seen that EAP's content is reaching this population segment effectively, whereas the other two companies, whose activity is more notable on Instagram, are not achieving as much success on TikTok. This may also be due to the type of interactions EAP engages in compared with the other two companies, EAP being more active and interactive with consumers than La Caja Saludable or Weeko, which do not interact with their followers at all.

To reinforce this view of the companies' presence both on social media and in the rest of the digital environment, the following tables show the information collected on each company in terms of digital presence:

Table 6. Digital presence of the selected companies

		EAP		**LA CAJA SALUDABLE**		**WEEKO**	
Company name		Europagricultproduct (EAP)		La Caja Saludable		Weeko	
Province		Valencia		Almería		Alicante	
Username		@europagricultproduct		@la_caja_saludable		TIKTOK: @_weeko_ Instagram:@weeko.es	
Presence on other social networks		Facebook, YouTube and X		Facebook		Facebook	
	POSSIBLE VALUES	**ANSWERS**		**ANSWERS**		**ANSWERS**	
Has a corporate website	1 - Yes 2 – No	1		1		1	
Has an online store		1		1		1	
Has a blog on its website		1		1		2	
Social network	**POSSIBLE VALUES**	**TIKTOK**	**INSTAGRAM**	**TIKTOK**	**INSTAGRAM**	**TIKTOK**	**INSTAGRAM**
	1 - Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1
	2 - No						
ANALYSIS VARIABLES	**POSSIBLE VALUES**	**TIKTOK**	**INSTAGRAM**	**TIKTOK**	**INSTAGRAM**	**TIKTOK**	**INSTAGRAM**
Link on the	1 - Yes	1	1	2	1	1	1

social network to the specific website	2 - No						
Link on the social network to the online store	1 - Yes 2 - No	1	1	2	1	1	1
Appropriate and relevant photos/videos used for the profile/cover	1 - Yes 2 - No	1	1	1	1	1	1
Company logo in the profile picture	1 - Yes 2 - No	1	1	1	1	1	1
Company logo in posts	1 - Yes 2 - No	1	1	1	1	1	1
Online customer community within the company	1 - Yes 2 - No	2	1[1]	2 [2]	2	2	2

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Table 6 shows that the three selected companies are actively present on both TikTok and Instagram, which indicates a communication strategy focused on networks with high visual interaction with the audience and an effort to reach a young target audience.

- EAP has the broadest reach, as it is highly diversified across all available social networks and has a strong overall digital presence, with both a website and an online store. It has active links on its social networks and makes effective use of branding strategies, for example through its corporate blog, to generate educational and promotional content.

- La Caja Saludable and WEEKO have a smaller social media presence, limited to Facebook in addition to TikTok and Instagram. La Caja Saludable shows some inconsistencies in its TikTok strategy, where it includes no links to its website or online store, although it uses a newsletter as an additional channel of communication with customers. It also has a complete digital platform, with a website, online store and blog, and a consistent branding strategy across posts and profile. Turning to WEEKO, it should be noted that it lacks a blog and an active digital community.

- Both La Caja Saludable and WEEKO therefore have room for improvement, particularly in increasing engagement by creating customer communities and using links consistently on social media to bring their digital business closer to their target customers.

3.2. Analysis of the image projected by the companies on the selected social networks: Instagram and TikTok

[1] There is a members' channel that followers can choose to join, shown on the profile

[2] There is a newsletter

In this section, the data measure the image that each of the selected fruit and vegetable companies projects on each of the chosen social networks, as a calling card for users of these networks with a view to gaining loyal followers. The variables used focus on the link between the company and its corporate profile on the relevant social network: whether the company's values, philosophy and activity are conveyed, and whether this tool is kept active as one more element of the company's communication with consumers or is merely complementary to its strategy. To provide a better understanding of this view, this information was collected and the results are shown below:

Table 7. Analysis of the brands' image on Instagram and TikTok

		EAP		LA CAJA SALUDABLE		WEEKO	
ANALYSIS VARIABLES	**POSSIBLE VALUES**	**TIK TOK**	**INSTAG RAM**	**TIK TOK**	**INSTAG RAM**	**TIK TOK**	**INSTAGR AM**
Is there general information about the company on the profile?	1. Yes 2. No	1	1	1	1[3]	1[4]	1[5]
Is the company's mission stated on the profile?	1. Yes 2. No, but they can be inferred 3. No	1[6]	1	1	1	1	1
Are the company's values stated on the profile?	1. Yes 2. No, but they can be inferred 3. No	2	2	2	2[7]	3	2
Are the main attributes and characteristics that define the brand's personality clear?	1. Yes 2. No, but they can be inferred 3. No	2	2	2	2	3	2
Which dimension of brand personality stands out? (Aaker, 1997)	1. Competence 2. Ruggedness 3. Sincerity 4. Sophisticatio n 5. Excitement	3	5	5	5	1	3
How often does the	1. Daily 2. Weekly	1	1	1	1	2	2

[3] The bio on both social networks states that they do the shopping for you, sourcing products directly from farmers with no intermediaries in the process

[4] Only mentions that they sell fruit and vegetables online

[5] Explains that they sell fruit and vegetables and how they sell them, in 10 kg packs

[6] The bio makes clear that they aim to defend European farmers

[7] The videos clearly show that this company advocates organic and environmentally friendly products

company post?							
How often does the company post stories?	1. 1 story a day 2. Twice a day 3. Twice a week 4. Once a week	3	4	4	1	3	3
Which of the following features are active on the profile and contain information?							
Stories	X	X	X	X	X		X
Story highlights	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	X	N/A	X
Photo posts	X	X			X	X	X
Reel posts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tagged posts	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	X	N/A	X
Is there a story highlight featuring the main services offered?	1. Yes 2. No	N/A	N/A	N/A	1[8]	1	1[9]

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

This table provides a comparative assessment of how the companies use Instagram and TikTok to communicate all their corporate information—the company's values, mission and vision, as well as its brand personality—together with the frequency and type of activity in terms of posts and the characteristics of the brand's profiles.

In the case of EAP:

- It is present on both social networks and shows a clear intention and effort to present itself clearly to its users.

- The company's mission is stated explicitly on both social networks, reflecting an effort to communicate its main purpose, such as the defense of European farmers. By contrast, the company's values are not made explicit, although they can be inferred from the content it publishes. This suggests that presenting them more clearly could foster and strengthen the brand's identity.

- Brand personality is communicated indirectly. Based on Aaker's (1997) model, it can be argued that the dimension of sincerity stands out in the content shared by the company, indicating that its messages and content project authenticity and emotional connection.

- In terms of the pace and volume of posts, EAP posts stories and posts daily on both platforms, showing consistency and commitment to its followers and keeping its profiles up to date. On TikTok, stories are posted less frequently, twice a week, whereas on Instagram they are posted more often, one story a day. This reflects greater and better use of Instagram's tools for ephemeral content. To this end, it uses stories, photo posts, reels and tags on both platforms. On TikTok, by contrast, the absence of "story highlights" and tags limits its options for consolidating relevant

[8] A story highlight explains how it markets its product as a "healthy box", explaining the concept clearly and concisely

[9] A story highlight shows the products you can add to the pack when ordering

content.

- On TikTok no information on the services offered can be found, while on Instagram this feature is not enabled. This could be an area for improvement on both accounts, as story highlights make it possible to showcase key services.

In the case of La Caja Saludable:

- It includes general information about the company on both social networks, highlighting the reality of its activity, that is, that it buys directly from farmers, without middlemen. This projects the company's transparency and connects with consumers who are interested in its philosophy, aligning its value proposition with customers' expectations and making clear the message the brand wishes to convey.

- On both social networks, the company's mission is stated explicitly, allowing users to easily understand its main purpose, strengthening its corporate identity and reflecting a high level of consistency in communicating the company's objectives.

- The company's values are not stated explicitly, although its videos show that it promotes the purchase of organic and environmentally friendly products. Changing this approach and presenting its values more clearly would help project the brand's long-term strategy; it could also consolidate the perception of a company committed to sustainability and national production and thus further differentiate it from its competitors in the market.

- For La Caja Saludable, the brand personality dimension that stands out, according to Aaker's (1997) model, is excitement, reflecting a strong and close connection with consumers. This dimension projects warmth and authenticity, which is key in promoting fresh agri-food products.

- Posts on both platforms are daily, showing a high level of consistency and commitment to the audience, a frequency that is appropriate for maintaining brand relevance and engagement with followers.

- Activity on TikTok is less frequent than on Instagram. This difference in frequency may be due to the intrinsic characteristics of the platforms; increasing activity on TikTok could therefore balance the brand's presence, since it is on Instagram that the available tools are used most to reinforce the brand's presence. Only on Instagram does the company have a story highlight explaining its "healthy box" concept. On TikTok, there is no highlighted content related to its services.

Weeko shows a clearer difference than the other two selected companies in its activity on TikTok and Instagram.

- On TikTok, it merely mentions that it sells fruit and vegetables online, whereas on Instagram more details are provided, such as sales in 10 kg packs, showing a more informative approach on Instagram than on TikTok.

- The company's mission is clear on both profiles, whereas its values are not communicated as explicitly on TikTok, where it only shares satirical memes, in contrast to its content on Instagram, whose storyline is more serious and better reflects Weeko's brand image.

- The personality conveyed on social media, according to Aaker's (1997) model, differs between platforms: on Instagram it projects a personality with high levels of sincerity and a more serious tone in its posts, whereas on TikTok the personality conveyed by the company corresponds to the competence dimension, probably reflected in its ability to attract a younger audience through informal and satirical content.

- In terms of posting frequency and use of social media features, the company posts weekly and

publishes stories twice a week on both networks. However, such a limited strategy may reduce the brand's reach if the audience expects more frequent posts, especially on TikTok, where followers are younger.

- Photo posts and short videos stand out on both platforms, although on Instagram the company also uses story highlights to show the products available to add to its packs, enhancing the customer experience.

3.3. Content analysis of the companies on the selected social networks in December 2024

Table 8. Content analysis of the companies in December 2024

		EAP		LA CAJA SALUDABLE		WEEKO	
ANALYSIS VARIABLES	**POSSIBLE VALUES**	**TIKTOK**	**INSTAGRAM**	**TIKTOK**	**INSTAGRAM**	**TIKTOK**	**INSTAGRAM**
Format	1. Product photography 2. Infographic image 2. Music video 3. Talking video featuring people 4. Explainer video without people	3 [10]	3	3, 4, 5	3,4, 5	1,2[11]	2,3 ,4[12]
Type of content	1 - Advertising content 2 - Content - blog link 3 - Informative content 4 - Expert content	2, 4 5 [13]	2, 4 and 5	2, 4, 5	2,4, 5	2[14]	2
Origin of content	1 - Own content 2 - Consumer-generated content 3 - Content generated by other entities 4 - Content curation	1	1	1	1	1	1, 2
Content topic	1. Corporate 2. Product information 3. Health 4. Food and recipes 5. Contests or promotions 6. Environmental 7. Innovation	1, 2, 10[15]	1,2, 10	1, 2, 3, 4, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 6	1, 10	1[16], 2, 3, 4, 5

[10] (the vast majority are videos of farmers talking about their product)
[11] (as well as constant "meme"-style images to attract the attention of a younger audience)
[12] (Customers' own "unboxing" videos, as well as recipes using its products and videos with leading nutrition content creators such as "staynutri")
[13] (although most are videos of farmers themselves talking about their specific product, there is also advertising content comparing its products with those of supermarkets)
[14] (plus what is mentioned in the note above)
[15] The feed includes videos on the difficult situation of European—specifically Spanish—farmers, aimed at raising public awareness of this problem
[16] "Meme" posts predominate, for the reasons mentioned above

	8. Awards or recognition received						
	9. News						
	10. Other						

Source(s): Authors' own elaboration.

Looking at the format of the content shared by the companies, EAP uses talking videos featuring people on both social networks, with farmers as the central focus. La Caja Saludable uses a strategy of diversifying formats, combining talking videos, explainer videos and music content on both TikTok and Instagram. Finally, WEEKO shares satirical content, using memes on TikTok to attract a younger audience, while on Instagram it focuses on attractive visual content, such as unboxing videos and recipes, seeking to reach an audience more closely linked to buying agri-food products and healthy eating. It can therefore be argued that WEEKO changes its discourse on each social network, using humor on TikTok and influencers on Instagram, whereas EAP and La Caja Saludable are more consistent across both platforms, maintaining the same line of argument in their messaging.

With regard to the type and topic of the content shared, these companies have used different strategies. EAP combines informative and corporate advertising content with testimonials from farmers talking about their difficult situation, while La Caja Saludable focuses on offering recipes, health tips, environmental sustainability and promotional content on both platforms, positioning itself as the most educational. WEEKO, on the other hand, shares memes and blog content on TikTok, and on Instagram includes experts and influencers addressing recipes and consumption and health tips; it is the most varied, making use of consumer- and influencer-generated content and even covering promotions. This highlights that La Caja Saludable stands out for its thematic breadth, while EAP emphasizes agricultural storytelling and WEEKO balances humor and information.

Regarding the origin of the content published, EAP and La Caja Saludable mainly use and create their own content, emphasizing the work of farmers and the origin of the product, which reinforces their corporate image. WEEKO, while using its own content, complements it with consumer-generated content on Instagram—the only company to do so—drawing on consumer experience to strengthen trust in the brand and increase engagement with its followers.

As regards storytelling and content length, EAP uses stories of farmers and their challenges in short videos, seeking to connect emotionally with followers, while La Caja Saludable uses videos showing recipes and tips related to health and the environment, with content length varying by type, as educational videos are longer than advertising ones. WEEKO differentiates its strategy between TikTok and Instagram: on the former, storytelling is not evident and very short videos are used, while on Instagram it uses consumer experiences to tell stories, seeking to capitalize on the customer experience, with varying lengths depending on the type of post.

3.4. Discussion of results and proposals for improvement for the companies

Following the presentation of the results in the previous sections, the results are discussed below through proposals for improvement for each company, with the aim of improving the brands' situation in light of the analysis. From this perspective, all the brands should strive to devise a strategy to maintain a more consistent identity across TikTok and Instagram, without sacrificing the personalization these brands seek through content segmentation for each platform, in order to offer posts suited to each of the segments they target on each of these social networks.

3.4.1 Recommendations for EAP

Incorporate consumer-generated content and reinforce authenticity.

Strengthen engagement through actions that give consumers a leading role, humanizing the brand and strengthening storytelling.

Ask customers to share photos or videos using the brand's products, creating a story highlights section featuring consumer experiences.

Introduce recipes that include the products promoted by farmers.

Run contests on Instagram and TikTok that reward consumers who use EAP products in their dishes, encouraging interaction.

Create campaigns with corporate hashtags to generate viral content among consumers, such as #EAPdecerca, encouraging consumers to share stories related to their choice of local products.

Include testimonials from satisfied consumers to strengthen the brand-consumer relationship, while continuing to feature farmers.

Use micro-influencers who promote the values of sustainability and support for local agriculture.

Create mini-documentaries, 1 or 2 minutes long, that tell powerful stories about farmers, adapted to Instagram and TikTok formats.

Publish themed posts on the product's journey through the production and logistics chain, from harvest to table, to address traceability and increase consumer trust.

3.4.2 Recommendations for La Caja Saludable:

- Optimize the diversity of topics shared and personalize content, as well as strengthen audiovisual content through strategic collaborations with other brands and with influencers.

- Create recurring themes to build anticipation and customer loyalty toward posts and to foster engagement:

  - **"Healthy Monday"**: health tips and easy recipes.

  - **"Green Wednesday"**: environmental tips related to conscious consumption.

  - **"Giveaway Friday"**: promotions and contests.

  - Create a more active digital community, complementing the newsletter with interactive spaces.

- Introduce a blog with short explainer videos on nutrition and sustainability, linked to Instagram and TikTok, with professional narration to improve the impact of educational messages.

- On TikTok, incorporate trending music and trends to increase the attention and retention of the centennial audience, including more emotional storytelling based on the experiences of its consumers or farmers.

- Collaborate with nutrition experts who are influencers or well-known chefs on social media to generate collaborative content.

- Form partnerships with brands of complementary products, such as kitchenware or other sustainable food brands (e.g., meat producers or farms), to create cross-content.

- Consolidate the integration of links to the online store on TikTok to facilitate conversion.

3.4.3 *Recommendations for Weeko:*

Establish a consistent brand identity message across all the social networks on which it is present, using humor strategically and optimizing its influencer presence strategy.

Boost engagement through content generated by its followers and users to increase interactivity and trust between brand and followers.

Add a blog to strengthen its educational content strategy and SEO positioning in order to attract customers and followers to the company. Along these lines, take the opportunity to create an active digital community using Instagram's broadcast channel tool to foster customer loyalty and engagement, and explore a presence on more platforms and social networks to diversify its reach across different customer segments.

Balance humor on TikTok with more serious or emotional informative content to attract a more diverse audience. To this end, it should focus on content topics linked to sustainability, nutrition and fitness to reinforce its credibility. And, while it may continue to use the humorous meme style, it should begin to link memes to issues of awareness and social interest—for example, by creating humorous content that presents common mistakes in buying or consuming fruit and vegetables and how WEEKO solves them.

Standardize the corporate image in terms of design, content and visual style across both social networks so that its message and appearance are more consistent, and incorporate elements such as colors and fonts that reinforce its identity and improve its brand image.

Create campaigns using hashtags that consumers can make go viral and share—for example, one such as #UnboxingWeeko, encouraging consumers to share short videos unboxing the products they have bought from the online store—and incorporate these customer experiences into a story highlights section on its Instagram profile.

3.5 CONCLUSION

For fruit and vegetable companies, developing a digitalization strategy is essential in the agri-food sector, as it is necessary for this industry to improve its economic performance, both in terms of presence in consumers' minds and brand reputation and in terms of reducing intermediaries, taking advantage of the benefits of e-commerce—all driven by the need to adapt to an increasingly digital consumer.

Furthermore, the use of social media as a channel for brands' communication activities is essential to the marketing and loyalty strategies of fruit and vegetable companies seeking to attract millennial and centennial consumers. Instagram and TikTok are the social networks most used by this type of company, enabling brand development and creation strategies, influencer marketing and customer engagement.

Moreover, the content that companies share on social media has a decisive impact on consumers' perception of the brand and therefore on its digital reputation and positioning. Equally important is the interaction between brands and customers and the way it is conducted in digital environments, which strengthens customers' trust in the brand and the brand's engagement with consumers, using an approach designed to improve the customer experience.

All of this will help generate opportunities to improve digital strategies and give rise to new communication strategies in the sector, such as the use of influencers and collaborations with other brands and related products to generate quality content and improve brand reputation.

This situation would not be possible without the impetus provided by government regulations, at both national and European level, which seek to help agri-food producers digitalize their businesses—for example, Royal Decree 113/2022, which sets out rules to modernize the sector through digitalization and represents an opportunity for fruit and vegetable companies to optimize their presence in the digital environment and improve their competitiveness.

In short, this article seeks to demonstrate the importance of social media and their intrinsic

elements, such as direct and indirect communication between fruit and vegetable SMEs and their customers, since corporate communication once offered information and now offers dialogue (Vegas-García & Paniagua, 2023). This makes it possible to identify the communication strategies used by companies in this sector on these platforms. The results indicate that social media posts enhance and contribute to the positioning of these brands, improve their reputation and strengthen their relationship with consumers. In addition, the key characteristics for developing brand personality and its impact on the market are identified.

4. Acknowledgements

This study forms part of a doctoral thesis on the digital presence of fruit and vegetable companies, entitled "La comunicación digital en el sector agroalimentario: el uso de las redes sociales como medio para crear reputación de las pymes hortofrutícolas comercializadoras en el consumidor millennial y centennial" [Digital communication in the agri-food sector: the use of social media as a means of building the reputation of fruit and vegetable marketing SMEs among millennial and centennial consumers]. This article focuses on the initial stage of the content analysis, which will be examined in depth in the thesis.

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