

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Digital marketing plan proposal for promoting Umbral in Ecuador

Propuesta de plan de marketing digital para promocionar Umbral en Ecuador

Darío F. Guacho  • Alexandra M. Menéndez  • Esteban F. Naranjo 

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Abstract This project developed a digital marketing plan proposal to promote Umbral, a product recognized for its effectiveness in treating migraines and headaches. A thorough analysis of the Ecuadorian market revealed a significant increase in internet access, reaching 80% of the population, representing a key opportunity to promote the product through digital platforms. The strategy focuses on enhancing Umbral's visibility and recognition by emphasizing its quality and safety through educational content on social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, as well as collaborations with influencers and healthcare professionals. The diagnosis identified strengths, such as the variety of pharmaceutical presentations, and threats, including generic competition and strict regulations. Actions include digital content production, promotions, retailer training, and educational campaigns, aiming to position Umbral as a leader in the over-the-counter medication market in Ecuador, addressing the needs of an increasingly digitalized consumer.

Keywords pharmaceutical marketing, migraine treatment, pharmaceutical advertising.

Resumen El presente proyecto desarrolló una propuesta de plan de marketing digital para la promoción del medicamento Umbral, reconocido por su eficacia en el tratamiento de migrañas y dolores de cabeza. A través de un análisis exhaustivo del mercado ecuatoriano, se identificó un crecimiento significativo en el acceso a internet, alcanzando al 80% de la población, lo que representa una oportunidad clave para promover el producto mediante plataformas digitales. La estrategia se centra en mejorar la visibilidad y el reconocimiento de Umbral, enfatizando su calidad y seguridad a través de contenido educativo en redes sociales como Facebook, Instagram y TikTok, y colaboraciones con influencers y profesionales de la salud. El diagnóstico reveló fortalezas como la variedad de presentaciones farmacéuticas y amenazas como la competencia de genéricos y regulaciones estrictas. Las acciones incluyen producción de contenido digital, promociones, capacitación a minoristas y campañas educativas, buscando posicionar a Umbral como líder en el mercado de medicamentos de venta libre en Ecuador, respondiendo a las necesidades de un consumidor cada vez más digitalizado.

Palabras clave marketing farmacéutico, tratamiento de migrañas, publicidad farmacéutica.

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Alexandra M. Menéndez
alexandra.menendez5220@gmail.com

Master's Degree in Pharmaceutical Marketing, Faculty of Business and Communication, International University of La Rioja, Spain.

Introduction

Today, digital marketing has revolutionized the pharmaceutical sector by transforming the way companies interact with consumers. This transformation has driven more direct, personalized, and effective communication, allowing companies to reach specific audiences with messages tailored to their needs (Bonilla et al., 2020).

One of the products is Umbral, a drug formulated with a combination of sodium metamazole, caffeine, and ergotamine. This combination has been proven effective in treating migraines, headaches, and other types of pain, providing complementary analgesic and vasoconstrictive benefits (Fortes-González et al., 2023). The presence of this drug in the Ecuadorian market represents a strategic opportunity to strengthen its positioning through digital marketing strategies.

Promoting medicines through digital platforms entails specific challenges, including strict regulatory compliance and the need to promote rational product use. As the number of consumers seeking health solutions online grows, pharmaceutical companies have had to adapt their strategies to leverage these channels while maintaining high ethical and regulatory standards (Dominici, 2019; Chen, 2022). In this context, a digital marketing plan for Umbral in Ecuador can enhance its visibility, foster user trust, and establish it as a preferred option for migraine treatment.

The digital ecosystem in Ecuador has undergone rapid evolution. Traditional promotional strategies are being complemented and, in some cases, replaced by targeted digital campaigns that prioritize message personalization, the strategic use of social media, and a presence on specialized health platforms (Jill & Israeli, 2020). According to recent studies, a significant proportion of Ecuadorian consumers consult medical information online before purchasing pharmaceutical products, reflecting a shift in health consumption habits (Lozano-Torres et al., 2021). This trend presents a window of opportunity for brands that effectively connect with their audiences through accessible and relevant content (Marín & Lozano, 2018).

A digital marketing plan for Umbral should encompass both positioning strategies and educational initiatives designed to promote the responsible use of the medication. The use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and WhatsApp enables not only the promotion of the product's therapeutic properties but also the raising of awareness about the risks of self-medication and the importance of adhering to medical instructions. In this way, the company strives to strike a balance between promotion and corporate

social responsibility.

To design this plan, it is essential to analyze Ecuadorian consumer behavior. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Census (2023), internet access exceeds 80% of the population, which facilitates the implementation of effective digital campaigns. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the digitalization of healthcare services and e-commerce, consolidating digital marketing as an indispensable tool for the pharmaceutical sector (Rodríguez et al., 2020). However, preferences vary by age and region. For example, young adults (18–35 years old) are the most active in searching for medical information online, while those over 50 years old tend to trust direct recommendations from healthcare professionals (Nerio, 2021).

One of the primary objectives of Umbral's digital marketing plan is to enhance its visibility and foster user engagement through educational content, including infographics, explanatory videos, and real-life testimonials. This approach helps clarify frequently asked questions about the medication's dosage, side effects, and contraindications. Social media will be a key channel. With more than 13 million Facebook users in Ecuador (Pruvost, 2015), targeted campaigns can be designed for migraine sufferers. Instagram is also a useful platform thanks to its visual approach, which allows audiences to be captured through attractive graphics and re-directed to purchase or consultation sites.

In terms of price, Umbral is positioned in the mid-range of the Ecuadorian analgesic market, giving it a competitive advantage by offering a favorable cost-benefit ratio. This pricing strategy responds to three main factors: production costs, which include high-quality raw materials; demand, associated with the frequent use of analgesics to relieve pain and fever; and competition with generic and brand-name drugs available on the local market.

In Ecuador, legislation establishes that medicines must be sold exclusively through authorized distributors. Therefore, the distribution structure most commonly used by the industry includes wholesale intermediaries who handle logistics and storage, and retailers (pharmacies and pharmacy chains) who sell directly to the end consumer. This structure enables reaching both large chains and independent pharmacies through direct negotiations or specialized logistics distributors.

In this scenario, Umbral is available in pharmacies and retail chains nationwide. To strengthen its presence, digital strategies are being considered to facilitate online purchasing, improve product accessibility, and reinforce its market

positioning. However, drug promotion is subject to strict regulations that seek to prevent irresponsible self-medication. Only over-the-counter medications can be promoted directly to the end consumer, while those requiring a prescription must focus on professional communication (Pruvost, 2015).

Umbral's promotional efforts have aligned with these guidelines, including informational campaigns on social media, the production of educational materials such as infographics and videos, the distribution of free samples in select pharmacies, and collaborations with healthcare professionals who provide testimonials and recommendations.

From a technical perspective, Umbral is an acetaminophen (paracetamol)-based medication with analgesic and antipyretic properties, indicated for the relief of mild to moderate pain, such as headaches, muscle aches, toothaches, and fever. The various formulations (tablets, capsules, syrup, and drops) allow for dosages tailored to the needs of various population groups, including children and adults.

Umbral's production process begins with the acquisition of high-quality raw materials, such as acetaminophen, from certified suppliers who comply with international regulations. Once approved, the raw materials undergo weighing and dosing processes according to the established formulation. The components are mixed to obtain a homogeneous preparation and, depending on the presentation, undergo granulation, drying, compression, or encapsulation. For liquid presentations, such as syrups or drops, the solution is prepared and packaged under aseptic conditions. Physical, chemical, and microbiological quality controls are applied at all stages to ensure the product's safety and efficacy.

Finished products are stored under conditions that ensure their stability and are distributed through specialized channels, both nationally and internationally. The laboratory administration ensures that logistics meet efficiency and safety standards.

Regarding its microstructural factors, Umbral is characterized by a formulation that guarantees the uniformity of the active ingredient in each unit. The tablet coating, for example, contributes to its stability against environmental factors. Furthermore, rigorous testing ensures that each batch meets strict pharmacological specifications. In summary, the purpose of this study was to design a digital marketing plan to position Umbral in the Ecuadorian market, taking into account both the product's technical aspects and current health consumer trends.

Methodology

The research presents a contextual analysis of the Ecuadorian

pharmaceutical market to establish a digital marketing plan aimed at promoting Umbral. Using the PESTEL model, factors such as restrictive regulations on pharmaceutical advertising, economic conditions that influence consumer purchasing power, and increasing internet access, which has transformed the way people search for health information, are identified. These variables shape both the opportunities and challenges of digital marketing in the sector.

Consumer behavior has also changed. Social media and digital platforms have become key sources of health information, although medical advice remains essential in the purchasing decision. In this context, it is considered essential that campaigns include professional support and educational content. Furthermore, it is recognized that technological advances, such as the use of artificial intelligence for audience segmentation, have expanded the possibilities of pharmaceutical marketing. However, they require investment and adaptation by companies.

From a strategic perspective, Umbral is well-positioned in terms of product quality and variety of presentations, but faces weaknesses related to its limited visibility in digital media and low brand recognition. The SWOT and CAME analysis allow us to draw a roadmap that proposes investing in digital marketing, collaborating with healthcare professionals and influencers, and reinforcing the message about product safety and efficacy. Sustainability is also seen as a competitive advantage in a context where consumers value environmentally responsible practices.

The digital environment presents a significant opportunity for Umbral, provided responsible communication strategies are implemented, technology is leveraged effectively, and modern consumer preferences are effectively addressed. The key lies in combining promotion, education, and accessibility, strengthening public confidence in a medication that seeks to position itself as a safe and effective option for pain relief in Ecuador.

Results and discussion

Figure 1 shows a balanced gender distribution among the study participants, with a slight majority of men (52%) versus women (48%). This difference is not statistically significant, suggesting equal representation between the sexes, which enhances the validity of the results by allowing for gender-neutral comparisons.

Regarding age groups, the highest concentration of participants was observed in the 25-34 age group (30%), followed by the 18-24 and 45 and older age groups, both with 25%. In contrast, the 35-44 age group is the least represented, with

only 20% of the total. This distribution indicates a greater participation of young people and young adults, which may be related to the type of study, the data collection method, or the interest of certain age groups in the topic addressed.

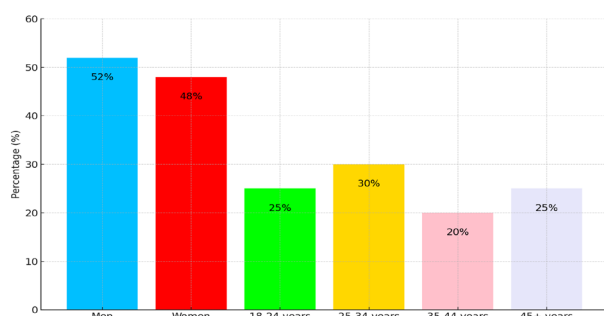


Figure 1. Distribution of participants by sex and age.

The lower representation of middle-aged adults could suggest access barriers, lack of interest, or less availability of time in this population segment, which should be considered when interpreting the overall results and in future sampling strategies. The significant presence of the 45 and older age group is also noteworthy, as it partially offsets the youthful concentration and allows for greater diversity of perspectives.

The PESTEL analysis (Figure 2) revealed that political and technological factors had the most significant impact on the viability of the marketing plan for Umbral in Ecuador, highlighting the strict regulations and digital advances. Social and ecological aspects offer opportunities, while the economic and legal factors present challenges related to costs and regulations.

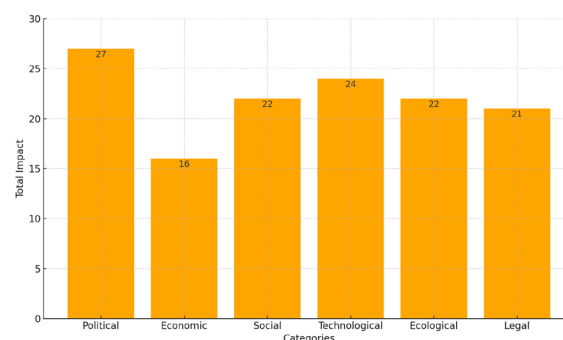


Figure 2. Results from the PESTEL analysis.

Table 1 facilitates a comparative analysis of the positioning of Bayer and GSK laboratories about a market threshold, considering variables such as price, quality, distribution channels, and promotional strategies.

In terms of pricing, Bayer positions itself at a low price point, suggesting a strategy of accessibility and market penetration. At the same time, GSK opts for a high price point, possibly aligned with a perception of added value or targeting higher-income audiences. The threshold is set at a mid-range price, placing the two brands at opposite ends of the price spectrum.

Both laboratories maintain high product quality, reinforcing their position as trusted brands within the pharmaceutical sector. However, GSK appears to have average quality, which could influence consumer perception if not accompanied by tangible additional benefits.

Regarding distribution channels, both laboratories utilize pharmacies; however, GSK expands its presence through digital platforms and hospitals, thereby increasing its reach.

Table 1. Analysis of benchmarking

| Presentation | Umbral | Laboratories Bayer | Laboratories GSK (GlaxoSmithKline) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Price | Half | Low | High |
| Quality of the product | High | Average | High |
| Channels of distribution | Pharmacies Platforms digital | Pharmacies | Pharmacies Hospitals |
| Presence in social networks | Low | Very low | High |
| Promotions | Limited | Coupons Discounts | Promotions directed |
| Recommendation of professionals | High | Average | High |
| Advertising in media | Social networks Content digital | TV Radio | TV Networks social And events |

and diversity of product access. By remaining solely in pharmacies, Bayer could limit its exposure to specific market segments, especially those seeking more immediate or digital solutions.

Social media presence is another differentiating factor: GSK is highly active in this area, which enables interaction with younger, digitally savvy consumers. Bayer, on the other hand, has a low presence, which may limit its ability to engage with new audiences. This difference is also reflected in their advertising strategies, where GSK combines traditional media, such as TV and radio, with social media and events, thereby diversifying its reach. In contrast, Bayer focuses almost exclusively on social media and digital content.

Regarding promotions, Bayer offers coupons and discounts, which is consistent with its low-price strategy. GSK, for its part, implements targeted promotions, suggesting a more selective and strategic approach. This can improve the effectiveness of its promotional campaigns, mainly if supported by consumer behavior analysis.

The recommendation from healthcare professionals is high in both cases, lending confidence to their products. However, the average recommendation in Bayer's case could reflect a lower level of direct interaction with the medical community or a lower perception of scientific support.

The comparison revealed that GSK is positioned as a high-value brand, with a comprehensive communications strategy, multiple distribution channels, and a strong digital presence. In contrast, Bayer focuses on affordability, supported by promotions and recognized quality, but with less dynamism in digital marketing and professional visibility. This information is crucial for understanding their distinct strategic approaches and the target market segments they serve.

Lack of product awareness is a barrier to market positioning. Faced with this situation, a marketing plan is proposed to address this limitation by strengthening campaigns aimed at increasing both brand visibility and recognition. To this end, we propose integrating digital communication strategies, with a special emphasis on social media, along with targeted promotional actions designed to attract consumer attention and facilitate a gradual process of product familiarity.

According to the results in Table 2, all respondents (100%) stated they were familiar with the Umbral product, suggesting a strong brand presence in the target market. This widespread awareness can be attributed to the effectiveness of current dissemination channels, particularly social media and medical advice, each accounting for 40% of the primary source of information. In comparison, traditional advertising

remains at 20%. The absence of responses in the "Other" category indicates a focus on established formal and digital media.

Effective product use reveals a significant difference in awareness, as only 50% of respondents have used Umbral, highlighting a gap between knowledge and user experience. This finding highlights the need for conversion strategies that encourage product trial, such as promotions or content that reinforces the perception of safety and efficacy.

Regarding the source of information about medications, the internet and healthcare professionals (doctors and pharmacists) share the same level of preference (40% each), while recommendations from friends or family (20%) are in second place. This highlights the importance of maintaining an active presence on both digital platforms and professional contact points.

Regarding the use of digital platforms to search for information, TikTok is the most used (37%), followed by Instagram (25%) and Facebook (20%), which demonstrates the centrality of visual and short-form social media for the surveyed audience. YouTube and specialized websites are underrepresented (8% each), while alternative channels barely reach 2%, reinforcing the need to optimize communication strategies on dynamic social media.

The most influential factor in medication selection was medical advice (60%), followed by online reviews (20%) and price (11%), suggesting that professional validation remains key in decision-making. However, there is a growing openness to informal digital sources. This pattern is reinforced by the high preference for content generated by healthcare professionals (52%) as the most helpful format for learning about medications like Umbral, followed by user testimonials (25%).

Regarding the willingness to use social media to learn about pharmaceutical products, 80% of respondents are very or somewhat likely to do so, and a significant 80% expressed interest in receiving informative content about Umbral, especially focused on benefits and usage recommendations. This underscores the potential of social media as a channel for communication and health education.

Among the suggested improvements to product promotion, the most notable are the need for clearer information on benefits (35%) and greater transparency about side effects (45%). The suggestion to use influencers or well-known figures (5%) is not widely accepted, reinforcing the preference for scientific and professional content over celebrity-based approaches.

Table 2. Knowledge, use, and influence of digital channels on the perception and promotion of the Umbral product

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Are you familiar with the Umbral product? | | |
| Yes | 384 | 100 |
| No | 0 | 0 |
| How did you find out about Umbral? | | |
| Networks social (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) | 154 | 40 |
| Traditional advertising (TV, radio, magazines) | 77 | 20 |
| Recommendation medical | 154 | 40 |
| Other | 0 | 0 |
| Have you ever used Umbral to treat headaches or fever? | | |
| Yes | 192 | 50 |
| No | 154 | 40 |
| What is your primary source of information about medications? | | |
| Internet (blogs, websites of health, social networks) | 154 | 40 |
| Doctors or pharmacies | 154 | 40 |
| Recommendations of friends or relatives | 77 | 20 |
| Others | 0 | 0 |
| What digital platforms do you use to search for information about medications? | | |
| Facebook | 77 | 20 |
| Instagram | 96 | 25 |
| TikTok | 142 | 37 |
| YouTube | 31 | 8 |
| Pages web specialized | 31 | 8 |
| Others | 8 | 2 |
| What factors do you consider most important when choosing a medication like Umbral? | | |
| Price | 42 | 11 |
| Recommendation medical | 230 | 60 |
| Opinions on the Internet | 77 | 20 |
| Information about the security of the product | 27 | 7 |
| Other | 8 | 2 |
| How likely are you to use social media to learn more about pharmaceutical products and their benefits? | | |
| Very likely | 173 | 45 |
| Something likely | 134 | 35 |
| Bit likely | 58 | 15 |
| Nothing likely | 19 | 5 |
| Would you like to receive more informative content about Umbral through social media? | | |
| Yes, I would like to receive information about benefits and recommendations for use. | 307 | 80 |
| Yes, but I would rather receive only promotional information (discounts, offers). | 58 | 15 |
| No, prefer other forms of communication. | 19 | 5 |

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| What type of digital content do you find most helpful in learning about medications like Umbral? | | |
| Videos explaining the use and benefits | 50 | 13 |
| Testimonials of users | 96 | 25 |
| Publications informative (articles, infographics) | 38 | 10 |
| Content of professionals in the health field | 200 | 52 |
| Other | 0 | 0 |
| What would you improve about the way Umbral is promoted in digital media? | | |
| Elderly presence in social networks | 27 | 7 |
| Advertising further clarifies their benefits | 134 | 35 |
| Detailed information about the secondary effects | 173 | 45 |
| Use of influencers or known figures for promoting the product | 19 | 5 |
| Other | 31 | 8 |

Table 3 presents the SWOT analysis of the pharmaceutical product Umbral, identifying its internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as its environmental opportunities and threats. This diagnosis provides a basis for decision-making regarding the design and execution of marketing, positioning, and digital communication strategies for the product, in the context of the growing use of online platforms and evolving consumer behavior in Ecuador.

Among the strengths highlighted were the product's quality and proven effectiveness, supported by medical recommendations and a positive perception among users who have tried it. These characteristics represent a key competitive advantage, especially compared to similar products. Additionally, the existence of formal distribution channels and a satisfied user base lays the foundation for sustained growth, provided brand recognition and communication are strengthened.

The digital environment offers a significant set of opportunities for Umbral. First, the sustained growth of internet access in Ecuador, coupled with consumer preference for health-related content on social media, creates a favorable

environment for developing effective digital marketing strategies. Likewise, there are opportunities to establish strategic alliances with healthcare professionals and influencers, which could expand the brand's reach and build trust among new users. Collaboration with retailers also represents a means to achieve broader distribution, facilitating access to the product in different parts of the country.

However, the internal analysis reveals significant weaknesses that must be addressed. One of the most significant is the company's limited digital presence, which restricts Umbral's visibility in a highly competitive and digitalized environment. Additionally, the company's low brand recognition may influence purchasing decisions, particularly among users who have no prior experience with the product. Furthermore, the limited promotional offering limits the product's ability to attract new users through trial or repurchase incentives.

In the external environment, significant threats are identified, such as intense competition from generic products, which tend to have lower prices and a consolidated presence. Strict regulations on drug promotion in digital media repre-

Table 3. SWOT matrix

| | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Opportunities | Growth of access to the Internet in Ecuador | Limited digital presence |
| | Preferences of consumers for the content of health in networks | Low recognition of the brand |
| | Alliances with professionals in the health and influencers | Limited offer of promotions |
| | Collaboration with retailers for massive distribution | |
| Threats | Competence of product generics | Regulations are strict about advertising |
| | Regulations are strict in the promotion of medications | Possible distrust of self-medication |

sent another challenge, as they limit communication possibilities and require a strategy based on educational content rather than advertising. Finally, potential distrust in self-medication can negatively impact product perception, especially if its medical backing and safety profile are not adequately communicated.

Table 4 presents a set of strategic actions aligned with the SWOT analysis previously conducted for Umbral. Each action aims to tactically address the product's internal and external challenges, establishing a comprehensive intervention framework that guides the development of its marketing plan.

Strategies aimed at overcoming internal weaknesses primarily focus on enhancing the product's digital presence through social media campaigns and influencer partnerships. These measures aim to reduce the previously limited visibility and increase reach among young, digitally active audiences. Similarly, increasing brand awareness through promotions and discounts is a key tactic for encouraging product trial and facilitating the conversion of knowledge into practical use.

Retailer training is another important measure, as it strengthens the physical distribution channel and increases the likelihood of direct recommendations at the point of sale. This action also contributes to reducing the gap between product knowledge and effective use, identified in previous analyses.

To respond to external threats, such as generic competition and distrust in self-medication, partnerships with pharmacies and healthcare professionals are proposed, strengthening the product's legitimacy with consumers. Likewise, the importance of responsible communication, focused on the safety of using Umbral, is emphasized, allowing consumer education without violating regulatory standards. Collaboration with retailers, in addition to ensuring product availability, strengthens its competitive positioning compared to other brands, particularly in areas with high competition or limited pharmaceutical supply.

Strategies aimed at preserving strengths focus on reaffirming the product's quality and compliance with international regulations, aspects that enhance medical confidence and consumer perceptions of safety. Furthermore, the company aims to communicate the product's convenience, positioning Umbral as a practical solution for the rapid relief of common

Table 4. CAME matrix

| Action | Strategy |
|-----------------------|--|
| Correct weaknesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the digital presence through campaigns on social networks and collaborations with influencers. Increase the recognition of the brand with promotions, attractive discounts, and special offers. Train retailers who know the benefits of Umbral and can recommend it to consumers. Establish alliances with pharmacies and professionals in the health field to strengthen the trust of the consumer. |
| Facing threats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate in a manner that is responsible about the use of medicine to reduce distrust in self-medication. Strengthen the collaboration with retailers to ensure the availability of the product. Stand out the high quality of the product and he compliance with international regulations in the marketing, ensuring that the consumers understand the security and effectiveness of Umbral. |
| Maintain strengths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize the convenience of carrying the Umbral in the pocket for the relief of unexpected pains. Leverage the growth of access to the Internet to intensify the digital campaigns and make alliances with influencers and professionals in health to improve the credibility and visibility of the product. |
| Exploit opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use videos of professionals in the health field on social networks to educate the youth about the benefits of Umbral. |

symptoms, such as headaches or fever, reinforcing its everyday usefulness.

Regarding opportunities, the plan highlights leveraging growing internet access and the preference for health content on social media. The creation of digital campaigns featuring testimonials from healthcare professionals aims to capitalize on this context, thereby enhancing the product's credibility and visibility. In particular, the plan proposes the use of educational videos on social media, adapted to the language and dynamics of young audiences, which fosters engagement and understanding of the product's therapeutic benefits.

The articulation of these strategies constitutes a comprehensive action plan, based on a strategic marketing approach and empirical evidence, that enables a response to environmental and market challenges with concrete measures. The combination of digital tactics, strengthening of in-person channels, consumer education, and professional support offers a solid foundation for repositioning and consolidating Umbral as a reliable, safe, and visible alternative in the Ecuadorian pharmaceutical market.

The strategic analysis identified the main internal and external factors that influenced the development of Umbral's marketing plan in Ecuador. The national environment offered significant opportunities, particularly the sustained growth in internet access and increased consumer interest in health-related digital content. These conditions created a favorable environment for implementing digital communication and brand positioning strategies.

Significant weaknesses were identified, such as the product's limited digital presence, low consumer recognition, and regulatory restrictions on drug promotion. These factors necessitated the development of a strategy aimed at strengthening the brand's identity through educational and promotional campaigns, as well as strategic collaborations with healthcare professionals and influencers.

In this regard, the plan was structured based on the product's strengths, including its proven quality, compliance with international regulations, and variety of presentations (tablets, capsules, syrups, and drops), which allowed it to respond to the specific needs of different consumer segments. However, the brand's limited positioning was an obstacle to market penetration, so it was proposed to intensify investment in digital marketing and strengthen its presence in strategic points of sale.

External threats, particularly competition from generic products and distrust of self-medication, were addressed through responsible communication proposals and the support of medical professionals, to reinforce the product's

credibility and ensure its appropriate prescription. The active participation of retailers and pharmacies, supported by training programs, was proposed as a means to enhance the product's visibility and nationwide availability.

In the digital realm, the growing use of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok by consumers aged 18 to 55 has provided a favorable environment for the development of targeted campaigns. The use of educational and visually compelling content featuring healthcare professionals was identified as an effective tool for capturing audience attention, raising awareness of the product, and promoting responsible use.

From a logistical perspective, the importance of establishing agreements with distribution chains and retailers to expand the product's geographic reach was recognized. Likewise, the use of e-commerce platforms was proposed to facilitate access to the medication in areas with limited physical availability.

The plan incorporated data analysis technology tools to monitor and optimize marketing strategies. Key performance indicators (KPIs) were established to evaluate variables such as brand awareness, digital engagement, promotional campaign conversion, and point-of-sale coverage. This structure enabled dynamic and adaptive management of the strategy, aligning with the brand's growth and positioning objectives in the Ecuadorian market.

Figure 3 presents the Gantt chart corresponding to the execution schedule of the main activities of Umbral's marketing plan, scheduled between January and November 2025. This visual resource allows observing the temporal sequence, duration, and overlap of the strategic tasks that make up the campaign.

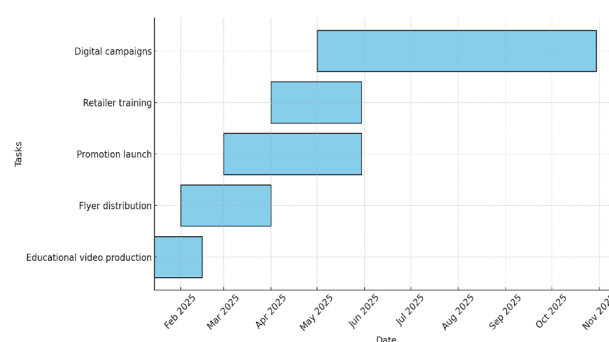


Figure 3. Diagram of Gantt chart for Umbral's marketing plan.

Initial activities include the production of educational videos, scheduled for January and February 2025, followed by

flyer distribution, which will extend from February to April. Both tasks were viewed as key preparatory steps for creating content and promotional materials designed to capture the target audience's attention.

The launch of promotions begins in March and continues until the end of May. This phase partially coincided with retailer training, which started in April and ended in June. This allowed us to leverage the synergies between direct-to-consumer promotion and the strengthening of the distribution network through the involvement of pharmacies and points of sale.

The implementation of digital campaigns, considered the plan's core strategy, was projected to run from May to October 2025, spanning six months. This long-range initiative aims to consolidate Umbral's digital presence through educational content and targeted promotional activities.

The partial overlap of activities demonstrates comprehensive and coordinated planning, which sought to optimize the brand message's impact at each stage. Furthermore, the progression from preparatory tasks (production and distribution) to action (promotions and training), and finally to digital consolidation, demonstrates a phased strategy consistent with the proposed objectives.

This timeline is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of the marketing plan, enabling the accurate measurement of progress throughout the year and making adjustments to actions based on the results observed through key performance indicators.

Conclusions

Umbral's product positioning can be strengthened through a strategic marketing plan that combines digital actions, institutional partnerships, and responsible communication. The identification of strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities enabled the establishment of a concrete roadmap focused on enhancing brand visibility, improving consumer confidence, and ensuring product availability in the retail channel. The proposed strategies, including social media campaigns, collaboration with influencers and healthcare professionals, and reinforcing the message about the drug's quality and safety, address both market trends and the needs of the target audience. The Gantt chart presented summarizes and organizes these actions over time, facilitating their orderly and effective implementation.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Author contributions

Conceptualization: Darío F. Guacho, Alexandra M. Menéndez, Esteban F. Naranjo. **Data curation:** Alexandra M. Menéndez, Esteban F. Naranjo. **Formal analysis:** Darío F. Guacho, Alexandra M. Menéndez. **Research:** Darío F. Guacho, Alexandra M. Menéndez, Esteban F. Naranjo. **Methodology:** Darío F. Guacho, Esteban F. Naranjo. **Visuali-**

zation: Darío F. Guacho, Alexandra M. Menéndez, Esteban F. Naranjo. **Writing the original draft:** Darío F. Guacho, Alexandra M. Menéndez, Esteban F. Naranjo. **Writing, review and editing:** Darío F. Guacho, Alexandra M. Menéndez, Esteban F. Naranjo.

Data availability statement

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Statement on the use of AI

The authors acknowledge the use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies to improve the readability and clarity of the article.

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