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Rethinking Public Marketing in the Digital Era: A Case Study from Morocco

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Abstract:

This article examines the implementation of a digital marketing strategy within a Moroccan public institution dedicated to promoting the artisanal sector. The main objective is to evaluate the impact of this initiative on organizational performance and stakeholder engagement. The study is based on an action research approach, in which one of the authors actively contributed to the design and deployment of the strategy. Data were collected through a strategic diagnostic analysis of the institution's digital presence, combined with the monitoring of key performance indicators before and after implementation. The findings corroborate prior research (e.g., Kannan & Li, 2016; Rogers, 2003) highlighting the importance of targeted communication, segmentation, and innovation adoption in achieving successful digital transformation. Results show a substantial improvement in the institution's digital visibility (+45% followers on social media), user experience (+100% average time spent on the website), and adoption of digital tools by stakeholders. These outcomes confirm the relevance of a well-structured digital strategy in enhancing transparency and efficiency in public service delivery. Nonetheless, the study highlights certain limitations, such as the absence of comparative benchmarking with similar institutions. The article concludes with practical recommendations to guide digital transformation in public organizations, emphasizing the need for continuous training and active involvement of internal stakeholders.

Keywords: Digital marketing, public institutions, organizational performance, artisanal sector, digital transformation.
JEL Classification: M31, M38, O33.
Paper type: Empirical research.

Résumé :

Cet article analyse la mise en œuvre d'une stratégie de marketing digital au sein d'une institution publique marocaine chargée de la promotion du secteur artisanal. L'objectif principal est d'évaluer l'impact de cette initiative sur la performance organisationnelle et l'engagement des parties prenantes. L'étude s'inscrit dans une démarche de recherche-action, l'un des auteurs ayant participé activement à la conception et au déploiement de la stratégie. La collecte de données repose sur un diagnostic stratégique de la présence digitale de l'institution, complété par le suivi d'indicateurs clés de performance avant et après la mise en œuvre. Les constats s'inscrivent en cohérence avec les travaux antérieurs (Kannan & Li, 2016 ; Rogers, 2003) qui soulignent l'importance de la communication ciblée, de la segmentation et de l'adoption d'innovations pour réussir une transformation digitale. Les résultats mettent en évidence une amélioration notable de la visibilité numérique (+45 % d'abonnés sur les réseaux sociaux), de l'expérience utilisateur (+100 % du temps moyen passé sur le site web) ainsi qu'une adoption accrue des outils numériques par les parties prenantes. Ces résultats confirment la pertinence d'une stratégie digitale bien structurée pour renforcer la transparence et l'efficacité des services publics. Toutefois, l'étude souligne certaines limites, notamment l'absence d'une analyse comparative avec des institutions similaires. L'article se conclut par des recommandations pratiques pour accompagner la transformation digitale des organisations publiques, en insistant sur l'importance de la formation continue et de l'implication active des acteurs internes.

Mots-clés : Marketing digital, institutions publiques, performance organisationnelle, artisanat, transformation digitale.
Classification JEL : M31, M38, O33.
Type de l'article : Recherche appliquée.

Introduction:

Across the last decade, digital transformation has altered the grammar of public administration, recasting how governments engage stakeholders, deliver services, and account for performance (Luna-Reyes & Gil-Garcia, 2023; Yang et al., 2024). In this shift, public bodies increasingly mobilize digital marketing to advance transparency, stimulate citizen participation, and widen access to services (Criado et al., 2021). Yet, unlike private firms that have long optimized market positioning through digital tools, public institutions must operate under tighter legal mandates, budget ceilings, and norms of neutrality that shape both message and medium (Bannister & Connolly, 2020). These constraints are particularly salient in developing economies, where the pace of digital adoption is uneven and capacity gaps persist (Alam & Noor, 2019).

This article examines a Moroccan public institution mandated to promote traditional handicrafts and investigates how a deliberately structured digital marketing strategy affected organizational performance. We address a focused research question: How does implementing a digital marketing strategy within a public institution influence organizational performance? The question is consonant with Digital Morocco 2030, a national agenda that prioritizes cross-sector digitalization, including core administrative functions (Ministry of Digital Transition and Administrative Reform, 2023). While scholarship on digital marketing remains dominated by private-sector analyses (Chaffey & Smith, 2022), comparatively fewer empirical studies trace its effects in public organizations or connect those effects to efficiency and engagement outcomes (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Our theoretical scaffolding integrates Public Value Theory, the Technology–Organization–Environment (TOE) framework, the Digital Government Transformation model, and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Public Value Theory posits that success hinges on value created for citizens rather than financial returns (Moore, 1995), a premise extended to digital contexts through work on accessibility, engagement, and transparency (Cordella & Paletti, 2019; Mergel et al., 2021). TOE explains digital adoption by the interplay of technological readiness, organizational capabilities, and environmental pressures (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990; Al-Rahmi et al., 2022). The Digital Government Transformation model situates change in evolving policy, inter-agency coordination, and technological innovation that together enable digital public ecosystems (Mergel et al., 2019; Chatfield & Reddick, 2020). Finally, TAM links adoption to perceived usefulness and ease of use, a relationship highly relevant to the uptake of marketing tools by public servants and partners (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008).

The institution under study is a suitable case precisely because it has acted early relative to peer agencies in digitizing outreach for cultural goods. Positioned at the interface between policy and economic development, it seeks to elevate the global visibility of Moroccan artisans. Its earlier and more structured turn to digital channels allows us to observe effects over a meaningful implementation window and to infer how strategy choices travel to performance (Janowski, 2015).

Methodologically, the study is framed as action research. One author participated in the design and roll-out of the strategy, enabling iterative cycles of diagnosis, intervention, and evaluation (Lewin, 1946; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Data collection combined a diagnostic analysis of the institution's digital presence with before/after tracking of key performance indicators, website usage, social-media engagement, and audience reach, so as to triangulate observed changes during implementation (Elden & Chisholm, 1993; Almutairi et al., 2018).

Opportunities notwithstanding, several challenges complicated delivery. Fixed budgets constrained investment in advanced tooling and specialist skills (Chaduteau, 2020); legal mandates on transparency and data protection narrowed the range of admissible tactics (Criado et al., 2021); internal resistance surfaced as routines met new platforms (Bannister & Connolly, 2020); and unequal connectivity raised accessibility concerns for remote users (Dwivedi et al., 2023). By documenting how a public body navigated these tensions, the study contributes to debates on digital government by linking marketing strategy to public value creation and by deriving practical guidance for policy makers and institutional leaders seeking to align tools, people, and processes in pursuit of better services (Janowski, 2015).

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1. Public Marketing Theories

Public marketing has emerged as a distinctive scholarly and managerial domain that adapts marketing logics to public purposes, with the aim of improving service delivery and deepening citizen engagement (Kotler & Lee, 2006). In contrast to commercial marketing's emphasis on profit, the public variant is explicitly oriented toward the production of citizen value through communication that is transparent, equitable, and readily accessible (Osborne et al., 2015). A central theoretical anchor is Public Value Theory, which conceives institutional success in terms of societal outcomes rather than financial returns and thereby redefines what counts as effectiveness in the public realm (Moore, 1995). Read through this lens, digital marketing becomes a policy instrument that can help cultivate trust, broaden participation, and lower access barriers to services by aligning messages, channels, and processes with citizen needs (Cordella & Paletti, 2019).

Recent contributions further underline the importance of co-creation in public marketing, showing how digital platforms open spaces where citizens and administrations jointly shape services and narratives (Voorberg et al., 2015). This co-productive turn is tightly coupled with the rise of digital governance, which requires continuous feedback loops and data-informed iteration to recalibrate communication strategies and institutional touchpoints over time (Mergel et al., 2021). Within Morocco, these dynamics intersect with a national push to modernize the public sector: the Digital Morocco 2030 agenda situates the adoption of digital marketing within a broader reform trajectory that seeks both efficiency gains and stronger engagement with users of public services (Digital Morocco 2030, 2023).

1.2. Digital Marketing Theories

Scholarship on the digital turn in marketing has frequently drawn on adoption models to explain why some tools diffuse while others stall. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) remains a cornerstone in this literature, positing that users' intentions are largely shaped by their perceptions of usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989). In public-sector contexts, where both employees and citizens must engage with institutional platforms, TAM helps clarify how interface design, task fit, and perceived service benefits translate into actual uptake and continued use (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). By foregrounding user cognition and experience, the model links micro-level perceptions to macro-level outcomes such as engagement and service reach in digital marketing initiatives.

At an organizational scale, the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework provides a complementary lens by situating adoption within a triad of enabling (or constraining) conditions: the maturity of technological infrastructure, the readiness and capabilities embedded in organizational routines, and the pressures or incentives emanating from the external policy and market environment (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990). Applied to public institutions, TOE underscores that the success of digital marketing is contingent not only on the tools themselves but also on governance arrangements, resource allocation, and regulatory alignment (Al-Rahmi et al., 2022). Empirical studies echo this systems view, showing that institutional sponsorship, coherent policy frameworks, and adequate digital literacy among staff are critical drivers of effective strategy implementation and citizen-facing outcomes (Criado et al., 2021).

1.3. General Theories of Organizational Performance

Management research has long treated organizational performance as a multidimensional construct, best understood through frameworks that move beyond single-criterion efficiency. The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) formalized this view by integrating four interlocking perspectives, financial, customer, internal processes, and learning and growth, so that strategy can be translated into a coherent set of lagging and leading indicators (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). Although conceived for corporate settings, subsequent adaptations have shown the BSC's relevance for government and nonprofit agencies, where mission realization and stakeholder value take precedence over profit. In public-sector digital initiatives, the BSC lenses map naturally onto evaluation needs: citizen-facing outcomes and satisfaction within the "customer" perspective; transaction speed, channel integration, and service reliability under "internal processes"; and capability building, data literacy, and continuous improvement within "learning and growth." These adaptations provide a structured way to track the contribution of digital marketing to public value creation (Niven, 2008).

A second stream, New Public Management (NPM), argued for importing private-sector managerial logics into public administration, emphasizing performance targets, accountability, and user orientation (Hood, 1991). Digital marketing aligns with these premises by institutionalizing audience segmentation, service-centric communication, and metric-driven oversight. At the same time, the evolution toward "digital-era governance" has qualified classic NPM by stressing integration, co-production, and data-enabled redesign of public services (Dunleavy et al., 2006). Evaluating digital marketing within this trajectory requires tying communication and engagement metrics to organizational processes and learning mechanisms, ensuring that gains in reach and participation translate into durable improvements in service design and delivery. In this sense, performance frameworks become instruments for linking strategy to outcomes across the digital government lifecycle, from initial adoption to embedded transformation (Janowski, 2015).

1.4. Theories of Public Sector Performance

Debates on public sector performance increasingly foreground outcomes such as institutional legitimacy, citizen trust, and equitable access to services, rather than narrow measures of efficiency alone (Osborne et al., 2015). Institutional theory helps explain why. Organizations in the public realm tend to align with external expectations such as, legal mandates, professional norms, and fieldwide models, in order to sustain legitimacy, a process DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe through coercive, normative, and mimetic isomorphism. Digital transformation within government is thus seldom a purely technical upgrade; it is also a response to regulatory pressures for transparency, professional standards around data stewardship, and emulation of perceived best practices across jurisdictions (Bannister & Connolly, 2020).

Complementing this lens, the Digital Government Transformation perspective conceptualizes digitalization as a socio-technical reconfiguration in which technology, policy instruments, and organizational culture evolve together (Mergel et al., 2019). Progress depends on inter-agency coordination, adaptive governance, and structured engagement with stakeholders who co-produce value along redesigned service journeys (Chatfield & Reddick, 2020). In practice, these conditions determine whether digital initiatives move beyond communication upgrades to deliver durable improvements in service accessibility and public trust.

The Moroccan policy agenda Digital Morocco 2030 operationalizes these principles by promoting the systematic integration of digital tools into administrative processes to widen access, streamline delivery, and strengthen accountability (Ministry of Digital Transition and

Administrative Reform, 2023). Against this backdrop, the present study examines how a deliberately crafted digital marketing strategy can act as a lever for performance like linking legitimacy, citizen interaction, and accessibility, thereby extending public sector performance theory from abstract claims to observed organizational effects within a concrete institutional setting.

1.5. Empirical Literature Review

Empirical work on digital marketing within public administration consistently points to gains in transparency, stakeholder engagement, and the operational efficiency of service delivery (Dwivedi et al., 2023). In one frequently cited study, Criado et al. (2021) show that the institutional adoption of social media shortens communication cycles with citizens and can, under appropriate governance arrangements, strengthen trust in public agencies. Complementary evidence from Alam and Noor (2019) indicates that targeted digital outreach is associated with higher participation in policy consultations and greater uptake of public services, suggesting that communication tactics and channel choice matter for observable behavioral outcomes.

Synthesis efforts reach similar conclusions. Chaduteau's (2020) meta-analytic review reports that agencies which maintain continuous, two-way interaction with their audiences through online platforms tend to record higher satisfaction levels among users. At the same time, studies situated in developing contexts caution that these benefits are unevenly realized: budgetary ceilings, skills gaps, and regulatory constraints often slow or fragment adoption trajectories (Bannister & Connolly, 2020).

Against this international backdrop, the Moroccan case remains under-documented, particularly with respect to direct links between digital marketing initiatives and measurable dimensions of public-sector performance. By examining a public institution mandated to promote traditional handicrafts, the present study contributes evidence from a context where digital transformation is advancing but institutional capacities and constraints differ from those typically reported in high-income settings. In doing so, it helps specify the conditions under which digital marketing supports governance objectives and where implementation challenges persist.

1.6. Comparative Summary of Empirical Studies on Digital Marketing in Public Institutions

To anchor the present investigation in prior evidence, it is necessary to move beyond conceptual discussion and take stock of empirical work that has examined how public organizations deploy digital marketing. The aim here is not merely to catalogue studies, but to read them across one another so that their methodological choices, institutional settings and reported outcomes can be understood as part of a cumulative conversation. In doing so, this section complements the theoretical scaffolding developed earlier with a synthesis of what has actually been observed in practice.

Adopting a comparative vantage point serves two ends. On the one hand, it reveals regularities that cut across jurisdictions, recurring success factors such as leadership commitment, audience segmentation, and analytics-driven iteration as well as the constraints that frequently reappear, including legal limits, skills gaps and funding ceilings. On the other hand, it brings to light where the record remains thin, either because certain types of institutions or regions are under-represented, or because outcome measures vary so widely that findings are difficult to align. By mapping these convergences and omissions, the review clarifies where the present study fits within the wider empirical landscape and where it can extend that landscape.

Because the public sector is heterogeneous, the synthesis spans cases from municipal departments to central agencies and covers settings with markedly different administrative traditions and levels of digital maturity. Read together, these studies trace how digital marketing influences citizen engagement, shapes the tempo and reliability of service delivery, and interacts with transparency and accountability mechanisms. They also show where practices in public organizations converge with private-sector principles, targeting, content personalization, performance tracking and where they necessarily diverge due to public mandates and legitimacy concerns. The table below summarizes the previous research studying the implementation of digital marketing in public institutions:

Table 1: Empirical Review of Digital Marketing in Public Institutions

Authors	Year	Country	Methodology	Key Findings	Limitations / Suggestions
Criado et al.	2021	Spain	Quantitative (Social media data analysis)	Government social media use increased citizen trust and reduced misinformation.	Focused on short-term social media interactions.
Alam & Noor	2019	Malaysia	Quantitative (Survey analysis)	Targeted digital campaigns enhanced citizen participation in policy-making.	Limited to urban populations.
Cohen & Karatzimas	2017	Greece	Case study (Local governments)	Digital marketing enhanced transparency and financial accountability.	Data from a limited number of municipalities.
Oostveen & Van den Besselaar	2004	Netherlands	Mixed methods (Surveys and interviews)	Digital platforms fostered inclusive decision-making through e-participation.	Technological literacy affected participation levels.
Khan & Krishnan	2020	India	Quantitative (Digital engagement metrics)	Online feedback mechanisms improved service delivery responsiveness.	Did not account for institutional capacity differences.

Source: Authors' production

2. Methodology: An Action Research Approach

This investigation is anchored in an action research design in which one of the authors served as a practitioner-scholar directly involved in conceiving and deploying the digital strategy within the focal public institution. In the sense articulated by Reason and Bradbury (2008), action research is a participatory and iterative mode of inquiry aimed simultaneously at producing situated change and generating transferable knowledge. Framed this way, the study unfolded through linked cycles of diagnosis, intervention, and evaluation, with reflexive adjustments made as evidence accumulated and contextual constraints became visible (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). This tight coupling between practice and inquiry ensured that strategic choices were empirically grounded rather than merely programmatic.

Evidence was developed through integrated qualitative and quantitative streams designed to capture both the content of change and its measurable effects (Almutairi et al., 2018). On the qualitative side, a diagnostic assessment of the institution's digital presence was conducted through participant observation and a systematic review of internal materials, including activity reports and communication assets, to reconstruct routines, content practices, and channel usage. On the quantitative side, the study tracked objective performance indicators before and after implementation, website usage patterns, social-media engagement metrics, and audience reach, using consistent operational definitions across periods to support meaningful comparison.

For transparency and reproducibility, the methodological trajectory is presented as two consecutive phases that map onto the action research cycle: an initial diagnostic phase that established the empirical baseline and informed design choices, followed by a strategy implementation and monitoring phase in which interventions were executed and their effects assessed over time. The detailed procedures, data sources, and analytical steps for each phase are reported in the sections that follow.:

2.1. Phase 1: Strategic Diagnosis

The first phase sought to reconstruct, as exhaustively as possible, the institution's starting point in terms of digital communication and marketing practice. The work began with a systematic review of internal documentation. Annual activity reports, market studies, satisfaction surveys, and digital performance extracts from web analytics (Google Analytics) and native social media dashboards (Facebook Insights, Instagram Analytics, and comparable tools) were collated, read in full, and normalized. Each document was then imported into Excel, where a coding scheme was applied to classify items by theme, channel, and time period. This structure made it possible to compare like with like across reporting windows and to identify recurrent patterns rather than isolated signals.

In parallel, publicly available sources on the artisanal sector were examined to situate the institution within its policy and market environment. National statistics, ministerial publications, and reports issued by international organizations such as UNESCO and the World Bank were subjected to a thematic reading geared toward detecting sectoral opportunities and threats that bear on the institution's mandate. The external scan prevented the diagnosis from becoming inward looking and supplied a set of contextual priors for interpreting digital metrics.

A benchmarking strand complemented these two bodies of evidence. Through targeted searches of academic databases and institutional websites, a corpus of case studies was assembled that documented how peer organizations in cultural and artisanal promotion have approached digital outreach. Each case was read against a common template that recorded strategic objectives, the mix of digital tools deployed, and reported outcomes. The comparison surfaced practices that appeared transferable as well as approaches that were context bound.

Once these inputs were consolidated, the current state of the institution was synthesized using a SWOT logic. Strengths and weaknesses were coded in Excel with attention to both frequency and thematic salience, while opportunities and threats were inferred from the sector review and the benchmarking results. Particular scrutiny was given to the institution's digital footprint. Website usability and basic SEO signals were reviewed against accepted heuristics, social media engagement was examined with platform-native metrics, and cross channel content consistency was assessed to gauge editorial coherence. Communication materials and message framing were also evaluated for alignment with brand objectives and for their adaptation to digital formats. Taken together, this diagnostic work provided the empirical foundation for the design choices that structured the subsequent strategy phase.

2.2. Phase 2: Strategy Development and Implementation

The second phase converted the diagnostic insights into an operational digital marketing program articulated around explicit objectives, clear responsibilities, and traceable indicators. The work opened with the formulation of SMART objectives, defined as specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound, in four domains that followed directly from the gaps identified in Phase 1. The first domain concerned visibility, with targets set for reach and impressions across priority platforms. The second covered web traffic, with goals tied to sessions, new users, and depth of visit. The third focused on social engagement, operationalized through interaction rates and meaningful actions such as shares, comments, and saves. The fourth related to economic intent where applicable, with proxy metrics for sales stimulation and referral conversions.

Audience segmentation was constructed by cross-referencing demographic and behavioural evidence from digital analytics with the stakeholder typology established during the diagnosis. The resulting segments distinguished domestic and international consumers, professional artisans, institutional partners, and the general public. For each segment, the team specified information needs, likely journeys, and preferred touchpoints so that messages, formats, and cadence could be adapted rather than broadcast uniformly.

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Tool selection followed from the benchmarking evidence and the performance gaps observed earlier. Priority was assigned to platforms that maximized relevance for each segment. Facebook and Instagram were chosen for broad awareness and community building, LinkedIn for institutional networking and partnership communication, and YouTube for long-form narrative and craft demonstration. The institutional website remained the central hub to which platform activity pointed, and its roadmap incorporated content restructuring, accessibility checks, and technical improvements required for indexing and user experience.

An action plan was assembled in Excel to ensure traceability and coordination. Each activity was listed with a start date, end date, owner, required skills, estimated cost, and the performance indicator to be monitored. The plan mapped content production workflows from ideation to publication and archiving, defined community-management routines with response targets, scheduled search-engine optimization tasks including keyword mapping, internal linking, and metadata clean-up, and calendared paid-media flights with audience definitions, creative variants, and spend caps. Versioning and a simple change log were maintained so that adjustments could be tracked over time.

Implementation combined content creation, community management, site optimization, and paid activation. Multimedia assets were produced in families of formats so that a single narrative could live across channels without duplication. Accounts were moderated daily, with attention to fostering dialogue rather than one-way messaging. On the website, the team pursued on-page improvements that aligned titles, headings, and alt text with the keyword map, refined internal navigation to shorten paths to priority content, and corrected usability frictions that had surfaced in analytics. Paid campaigns were launched on social platforms and search engines using audience definitions refined from observed behaviors. Creative and copy variants were tested against clearly stated hypotheses, and low-performing combinations were retired promptly.

Monitoring and adaptation were organized around a lightweight data pipeline. Google Analytics, Facebook Business Manager, and native platform dashboards supplied the raw indicators, which were exported on a fixed cadence and consolidated in Excel workbooks that mirrored the objectives tree. Baseline values from the pre-implementation window were preserved to enable before-after comparison, and simple quality checks were applied to guard against tracking breaks. A monthly review translated indicator movements into operational decisions such as reallocating spend, revising content themes, or adjusting publication times. This closed-loop approach ensured that the strategy remained evidence-based and adaptive while staying aligned with the institution's mission to promote Moroccan craftsmanship and with the broader principles of digital transformation in the public sector.

3. Results and Analysis:

3.1. Preliminary Results

The initial step produced a structured baseline via a SWOT focused on the institution's digital communication and marketing. By separating internal strengths and weaknesses from external opportunities and threats linked to digital transformation, the analysis offered a clear view of what could be leveraged and what required remediation. Drawn from internal records, performance traces, and sectoral information, the matrix guided the selection of strategic priorities. The detailed SWOT is reported in the table 2 below and underpins the interpretation of subsequent outcomes.

The SWOT made something clear: the institution has really cultural and institutional capital, yet its digital footprint and marketing routines lag behind. Shortcomings in website usability, brand articulation, and day-to-day content practice curb its capacity to capture the openings created by the digital economy and to turn attention into tangible outcomes.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis of the Public Institution's Digital Marketing Context

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Established institutional legitimacy and national recognition.	Outdated website design and limited user interactivity.	Growing international demand for authentic Moroccan artisanal products.	Intense competition from global e-commerce platforms.
Rich heritage and cultural value of promoted products.	Limited integration of digital marketing tools in promotional activities.	Expansion of e-commerce and digital marketplaces.	Risk of brand dilution due to counterfeit products.
Skilled and experienced artisan network.	Fragmented communication strategy lacking consistency across channels.	Rising interest in cultural tourism and artisanal experiences.	Economic instability affecting purchasing power in target markets.

Source: Authors' production

Building on that diagnosis, and staying within an action-research logic, four strategic pillars were formulated to steer the digital shift. Their purpose is to sharpen strategic positioning and lift digital maturity so the promotion of Moroccan artisanal products becomes more effective. The pillars are presented in the following sections:

- ***Strengthening Online Presence***

Consolidating the institution's digital footprint is a central lever for better user journeys, wider reach, and stronger visibility for Moroccan craftsmanship at home and abroad. The aim is not to multiply channels for their own sake, but to bring every point of contact, site, app, social presences, up to a standard where they are reliable, accessible, and genuinely engaging. In practical terms, the objective is to assemble an integrated, interactive ecosystem that delivers high-value content, supports transactions when appropriate, and encourages repeat visitation through coherent navigation and consistent editorial cues.

A full website redesign sits at the core of this effort. The current estate should evolve toward a responsive platform with clear wayfinding, fast load times, and rich multimedia that does more than decorate the page. Where feasible, immersive features such as augmented reality for three-dimensional product viewing can deepen engagement and convey the materiality of craft in ways static images cannot (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In parallel, a dedicated mobile application would extend access into everyday contexts, offering concise information layers, artisan geolocation, narrative micro-formats, and booking flows for workshop visits, features that align with the habits of a growing mobile-first audience and embed the institution more naturally in users' routines (Shankar et al., 2016).

Table 3 : Current and Future Paid–Owned–Earned Digital Assets of the Institution

Category	Current Assets	Future Developments
Paid Media	YouTube Channel Ads, Google Ads, Facebook Ads	Expansion of targeted advertising campaigns on emerging platforms (e.g., Instagram Ads, TikTok Ads)
Owned Media	Official website, Instagram page, Facebook page, YouTube channel, communication campaigns launched by the institution, press releases published on the website	Creation of a newsletter for email marketing, development of a thematic blog, advanced search engine optimization (SEO) initiatives
Earned Media	Communication campaigns launched by e-commerce platform partners, press articles on events organized by the institution	Collaborations with foreign influencers, recruitment of ambassadors for Moroccan craftsmanship, user-generated content campaigns

Source: Authors' adaptation based on institutional data and digital marketing literature.

Commercial enablement also matters. A secure e-commerce capability integrated rather than bolted on, should allow artisans to sell directly, accommodate international payments, interface with shipping partners for cross-border fulfillment, and respect prevailing data-protection rules. These elements turn visibility into action and give stakeholders a clear path from discovery to purchase.

To steer effort and evaluate trade-offs, the institution can map current and planned assets within a Paid–Owned–Earned media logic as shown in the table 3, using it as a planning grid for budget allocation, content cadence, and performance tracking across channels (Stephen & Galak, 2012). This discipline helps keep attention on what each channel is for, how it is supplied with content, and how it contributes, individually and together, to the broader mission of promoting Moroccan craftsmanship.

- ***Humanizing and Positioning the Brand***

To strengthen the institution's identity and build durable ties with its audiences, brand work must do more than signal ownership of channels. It should present the institution as a distinctive presence with emotional resonance. In the field of Moroccan craftsmanship, this implies bringing to the fore the people, practices, and traditions that give products their meaning, while at the same time articulating a clear position that distinguishes the institution from cultural venues and commercial retailers.

A first step is to stabilize the brand's visual grammar so that recognition becomes effortless. A refreshed logo, a disciplined approach to typography, and a coherent color system should be deployed across every touchpoint, from the website and the application to event materials and social content. Visual consistency on its own is not sufficient. The brand also needs an explicit value stance that speaks to authenticity, creativity, and the safeguarding of heritage, which are core expectations for audiences seeking cultural substance rather than generic lifestyle cues (Kapferer, 2012).

Narrative work is the second pillar. Storytelling turns abstract positioning into tangible encounters by tracing artisans' skills, personal trajectories, and contributions to local communities. Short video portraits, photo essays, and carefully edited testimonials can translate workshop expertise into accessible stories. The same narrative can live in multiple forms if it is edited for the constraints and audiences of each channel, then circulated through owned media and amplified when external outlets decide it is worth sharing.

Emotional digital communication reinforces this narrative layer. Systematic use of high-quality visuals, immersive video sequences, and first-person accounts can invite trust, admiration, and a feeling of belonging among target publics. These affective responses are not decorative. They predict attachment to the brand and increase the likelihood of organic diffusion through recommendations and media pickup, thereby strengthening earned exposure over time (Hudson et al., 2015).

Taken together, these elements move the brand from simple institutional signaling to a human centered presence that represents the richness of Moroccan craftsmanship. The result is an identity that promotes products and practices while positioning the institution as a credible cultural ambassador and a visible actor in the creative economy.

- ***Improving Digital Communication***

Strengthening the institution's digital communication is a priority if outreach, engagement, and community building around Moroccan craftsmanship are to be sustained over time. The task is to construct a coherent, multi-channel system in which messages are consistent, formats are adapted to the affordances of each platform, and interactions are cultivated rather than treated as one-off campaigns. The resulting architecture should help the institution speak with a steady voice to distinct audience segments while maintaining enough flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities and feedback.

At the core of this effort sits a deliberate content strategy oriented toward quality, variety, and audience fit. Long-form articles can situate craft practices within their cultural lineages; explanatory infographics can break down techniques and materials; short behind-the-scenes videos can translate the workshop into an accessible experience; and high-resolution photography can render the textures and finishes that define product aesthetics. When these pieces are planned with clear intents and then edited for the conventions of each channel, relevance and user engagement increase markedly (Pulizzi, 2014). Editorial calendars should coordinate themes across channels while allowing for timely inserts tied to events, exhibitions, or artisan milestones.

A social media plan gives this content a predictable rhythm and a recognizable brand signature. Publication schedules must be regular without becoming mechanical, and they should respect the strengths of each platform. Instagram lends itself to visual storytelling and serial formats such as Stories and Reels; Facebook remains useful for event promotion and community updates; YouTube is the natural home for documentary-style videos that show processes and narratives in depth. Interaction is part of the work rather than an afterthought. Prompt replies, targeted prompts to elicit comments, and occasional live sessions encourage dialogue and help convert casual viewers into a durable community.

Partnerships with creators can expand reach efficiently when they are anchored in shared values and clear expectations. Influencers active in cultural tourism, lifestyle, or fashion can introduce Moroccan craftsmanship to audiences the institution would otherwise struggle to access. Selection should prioritize credibility and alignment over raw follower counts, and collaboration should be designed as co-created storytelling rather than simple endorsement so that messages remain authentic and brand-consistent.

Implemented systematically, these measures raise the institution’s visibility, create repeated opportunities for meaningful contact with stakeholders, and present a digital presence that is both dynamic and culturally grounded. In doing so, they lay the communicative foundation for the broader goals of public value creation that the institution pursues.

- ***Developing a High-Performance Digital Marketing Strategy***

Reaching the institution’s goals for visibility, reputation, and online sales calls for a marketing approach that treats evidence as the starting point and results as the test of every choice. The idea is to assemble a toolkit that does not waste effort: each instrument is selected for what it can add to impact and for how well it fits available resources. Strategy, in this sense, is less a catalogue of tactics than a disciplined way to decide where attention and budget will matter most.

Paid activation is one lever. Carefully designed campaigns on social platforms and search engines can put the right message in front of the right audience at the right moment. Segmentation must be explicit, calls to action unambiguous, and objectives stated in measurable terms so that spend translates into traceable outcomes such as qualified traffic, meaningful engagement, or conversions that the organization actually values (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). When creative variants and audience definitions are tested rather than assumed, return on investment improves over successive flights.

Organic visibility is a second lever. Search engine optimization rests on two pillars: technical soundness and content that answers real queries. Website speed, mobile friendliness, clean metadata, and a logical internal link structure make pages discoverable. Editorial work that builds relevant, keyword informed content makes them worth finding. The result is not only better positions in search results but also a flow of visitors whose intent aligns with the institution’s mission and who are more likely to become partners, clients, or advocates.

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Direct communication completes the picture. A structured email program keeps contact personal and regular without being intrusive. Newsletters, targeted updates, and timely offers maintain interest between campaigns and sustain the community that forms around the brand. When lists are segmented and messages reflect actual preferences, email becomes a reliable channel for repeat engagement rather than a onetime touch.

All of this depends on measurement. A compact set of indicators should sit behind every action: traffic and bounce on the site, engagement on social presences, conversion rates across funnels, and where relevant the volume and value of online sales. Regular reads of these metrics allow the team to adjust quickly, dropping what does not work, scaling what does, and keeping every effort aligned with the strategy.

Tied back to the SWOT and the four strategic pillars, this approach provides a clear route forward. Weaknesses identified in the diagnosis are addressed through platform fixes and better content governance. Strengths are made visible through coherent storytelling and targeted reach. Opportunities in domestic and international markets become attainable because the institution can be found, understood, and trusted online. In this way, the strategy improves competitive positioning while building an online presence capable of sustaining the promotion of Moroccan craftsmanship over time.

3.2. Post-Implementation Outcomes: Positioning, Brand Identity, and Audience Profile

After rolling out the four strategic pillars strengthening online presence, humanizing and positioning the brand, improving digital communication, and deploying a performance-oriented marketing program a set of performance indicators and qualitative observations was assembled. Taken together, these materials validate the core choices made during design and help refine how the brand should be positioned relative to the audiences it seeks to serve. To give an integrated reading of these outcomes, the analysis mobilizes three complementary lenses the positioning matrix, Kapferer's brand identity prism, and a buyer persona profile, with detailed visuals reported in Appendices 1, 2, and 3.

- ***Quantitative Outcomes of the Strategy Implementation***

The quantitative record points to clear gains. Between January 2020 and December 2021, the institution's social presences expanded by forty-five percent, reaching a combined audience of twenty-nine thousand followers. This growth tracks with the introduction of targeted campaigns and with content that was crafted for predefined personas rather than for an undifferentiated public. Engagement quality improved as well. Average interaction rates on social publications rose by thirty percent, an effect associated with the systematic use of interactive formats such as short videos and stories. On the institutional website, average session duration doubled from one minute forty-five seconds to three minutes thirty seconds, a shift consistent with simplified navigation paths and a more legible content architecture. Email outreach performed above public-sector norms, with open rates at thirty-five percent, which aligns with finer audience segmentation and more personalized subject lines and messages.

Qualitative feedback corroborates these patterns. Internal teams reported greater fluency with digital tools following targeted training and ongoing support, and affiliated artisans indicated that their visibility improved in domestic and international markets. These accounts are consistent with the observed metrics and suggest that capability building and editorial discipline contributed to the measured effects.

- ***Positioning Matrix Analysis***

To interpret positioning, the study applies the classic positioning matrix used to locate a brand in the minds of users along two conceptual axes, typically contrasting rational and emotional

benefits and the nature of the promise offered (DiMingo, 1988; Maggard, 1976) see Appendix 1. The institution occupies a deliberately hybrid space. On the rational side, it champions unique, handcrafted products and contributes to skill development within the craft economy. On the emotional side, it carries narratives of cultural continuity, shared heritage, and the preservation of ancestral know-how. Read as a whole, the promise can be expressed succinctly as revitalized artisanal art within reach, which couples cultural authenticity with contemporary market accessibility and underlines the institution's dual role as guardian of heritage and as an active driver of socio-economic opportunity in the sector.
Subsequent subsections develop the brand identity prism and the buyer persona analysis and indicate how these two frames align with the positioning derived from the matrix, with full illustrations provided in Appendices 2 and 3.

- ***Brand Identity Prism***

To make the brand's DNA explicit, we applied Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism across its six interrelated facets (see Appendix 2). At the physical level, the institution is anchored in the tangible signs of Moroccan craftsmanship, a national emblem recognized for artisanal authenticity, meticulous detailing, and culturally rooted symbolism. In terms of personality, it presents itself as a distinctive, credible ambassador that blends continuity with adaptability and is perceived by stakeholders as both reliable and approachable. The cultural facet positions the institution as a custodian of heritage, placing authenticity and cultural continuity at the forefront while remaining open to global creative influences. The relationship facet highlights a commitment to trust-based, long-term collaboration with artisans, public authorities, and international market actors. Reflection concerns the outward image projected to audiences, namely that of a forward-looking institution that revitalizes tradition through contemporary market approaches. Finally, the self-image dimension captures how the organization sees itself, as a dedicated promoter of Moroccan craftsmanship that safeguards artistic values while encouraging innovation.

- ***Buyer Persona: "Brigitte"***

The buyer persona analysis identified "Brigitte" as a representative profile for a high-potential international segment (see Appendix 3). Brigitte is an American interior designer, aged approximately forty-five to sixty-five, situated in the upper-middle socioeconomic stratum, with annual income typically between forty and sixty thousand dollars. She maintains a strong interest in product design, travels to major design and decoration fairs to track emerging trends, and engages actively with digital platforms, particularly Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, for professional inspiration and networking. In her projects, she seeks to integrate distinctive artisanal elements that combine cultural depth with aesthetic refinement, which positions Moroccan craft as a natural source of differentiation. Because she works independently, she requires dependable partnerships with skilled artisans who can deliver certified, high-quality work that meets international standards and predictable timelines.

- ***Recommended Institutional Actions:***

Converting a profile such as Brigitte into a loyal advocate requires a structured response to her decision journey. First, active listening mechanisms should be instituted so that evolving needs are captured, interpreted, and routed to the relevant teams. This can involve periodic feedback prompts, short diagnostic calls for complex projects, and close monitoring of content interactions that signal interest. Second, curated guidance is essential. The institution can offer expert recommendations and a matchmaking service that connects Brigitte to vetted master artisans whose materials, techniques, and capacity fit the brief, with quality assurance procedures that reduce project risk. Third, trend immersion should be facilitated through regular

updates on Moroccan design innovations, using carefully edited content, virtual showcases, and invitations to selected events where emerging work is presented. Fourth, an up-to-date artisan directory should be maintained and shared, organized by craft, style, price tier, export readiness, and location, so that discovery turns into concrete collaboration without unnecessary friction. Taken together, these actions position the institution as a trustworthy intermediary that lowers search costs, raises quality certainty, and shortens time to execution.
Viewed in combination, the positioning matrix, the brand identity prism, and the buyer persona offer a multidimensional perspective on post-implementation positioning. The matrix clarifies where the institution stands in the minds of users; the prism translates that stance into a coherent identity system; the persona converts identity into concrete audience requirements. This alignment not only sharpens market differentiation but also operationalizes the institution's mission to promote Moroccan craftsmanship within a global creative economy, while providing a practical blueprint for content, partnerships, and service design.

4. Discussion of Results

The roll-out of the digital strategy produced visible gains, but it unfolded under real constraints. At the outset, staffing and technical capacity were tight, which slowed delivery and narrowed the scope of several planned actions. A second hurdle was the lack of a unified measurement framework. Without common definitions and dashboards, real-time assessment proved difficult and the team had to rely on stopgap adjustments while instruments were being built. Some internal stakeholders were hesitant to change established routines, a pattern well documented in change management, which confirmed the need for sustained internal communication and targeted capability building.
Even so, the evidence points to a positive effect of a carefully designed, context-aware strategy on institutional performance. Audience reaches grew, engagement improved, and the uptake of digital tools increased. These movements echo the mechanisms identified by Kannan and Li (2016): targeted campaigns, clear segmentation, and content that speaks to user value. Behavioral shifts among employees and artisans are also consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model, where perceived usefulness and ease of use shape adoption decisions (Davis, 1989).
Read against prior work, the results are not an outlier. Studies of public-sector digitalization report similar patterns when engagement with internal and external stakeholders is continuous and structured (Criado et al., 2018; Mergel et al., 2019). The improved market visibility and commercial opportunities reported by artisans align with a value co-creation view in which public institutions act as facilitators, enabling stakeholders to realize value through interaction and collaboration (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).
Several limits remain. The study does not compare multiple institutions, which restricts claims about broader determinants of success or failure. The observation window is short to medium term, so durability is not yet established, a concern often raised in longitudinal analyses of public-sector digital programs (Janssen & van der Voort, 2020). Future work should therefore adopt comparative designs across varied contexts, pair them with longitudinal monitoring to test sustainability over time, and examine more closely how institutional branding, stakeholder engagement, and technology adoption interact to produce impact in public organizations.

5. Conclusion:

The evidence assembled in this study indicates that a carefully specified digital marketing program can recalibrate how a public institution performs, is seen, and engages its stakeholders. Gains in audience reach, higher interaction rates, and wider uptake of digital tools point to effects that are not merely cosmetic but operational. This trajectory accords with the mechanisms discussed by Kannan and Li (2016), for whom segmentation and content personalization act as the practical levers that convert attention into measurable performance. The favorable responses reported by artisans move in the same direction and fit a value co-creation reading in which institutional platforms enable stakeholders to realize mutual benefit through use and interaction (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Brand work contributed to these outcomes. The use of Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism to stabilize identity, together with the development of a buyer persona, reflects established findings on the strategic role of branding in cultural and creative fields (Kapferer, 2012; Baker & Cameron, 2008; Bendixen et al., 2004). Emphasis on narrative and the human face of the institution echoes Revella's (2015) argument that personas help align messages with the motivations and aspirations of defined audiences. In short, branding tools did not sit alongside the digital strategy; they structured it by anchoring content, tone, and channel choices.

These results should be read with caution. The analysis rests on a single case without a formal comparative frame, which limits generalization. As Rowley (2011) notes, benchmarking against comparable organizations is necessary to separate context-bound practices from patterns that travel. Moreover, the observation window is limited. Whether current gains endure over time is an open question, a concern that has surfaced repeatedly in longitudinal examinations of digital strategy implementation (Westerman et al., 2014).

Even with these caveats, the study adds to the literature by offering empirical support for a digitally driven approach to branding and communication in the public sector, specifically within cultural-heritage promotion. Its distinctive feature lies in the action-research design, which allowed iterative adjustment of interventions while remaining embedded in the institution's routines. Future inquiries would benefit from multi-site comparisons across administrative and cultural settings, longer panels to test durability, and designs that explicitly link branding choices, stakeholder engagement, and technology adoption. Such work would refine both theory and practice for digital transformation in public and cultural organizations.

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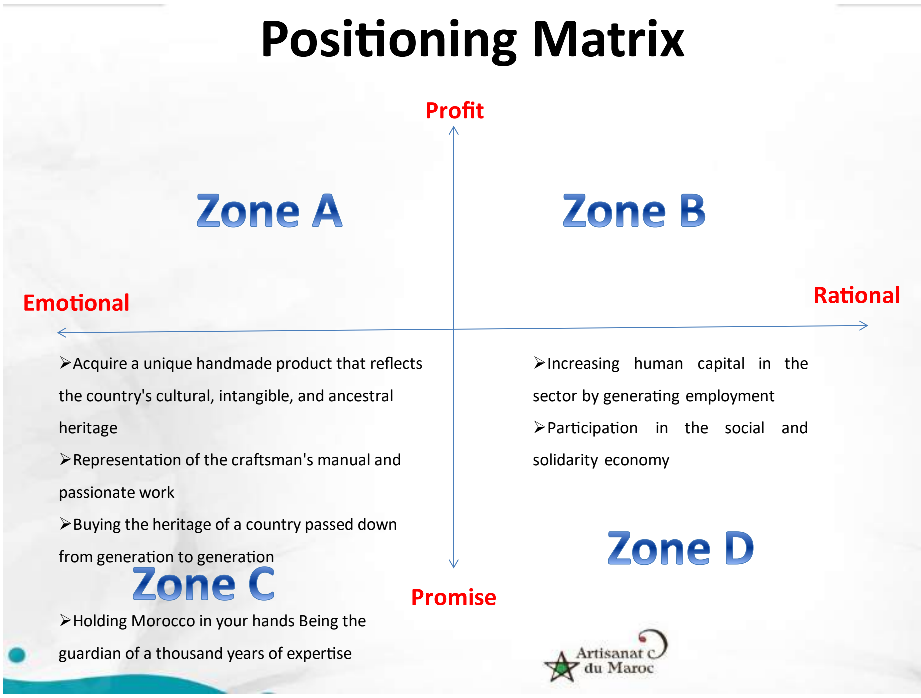
Appendices

Appendix 1: Positioning Matrix Analysis



Source : Authors' production

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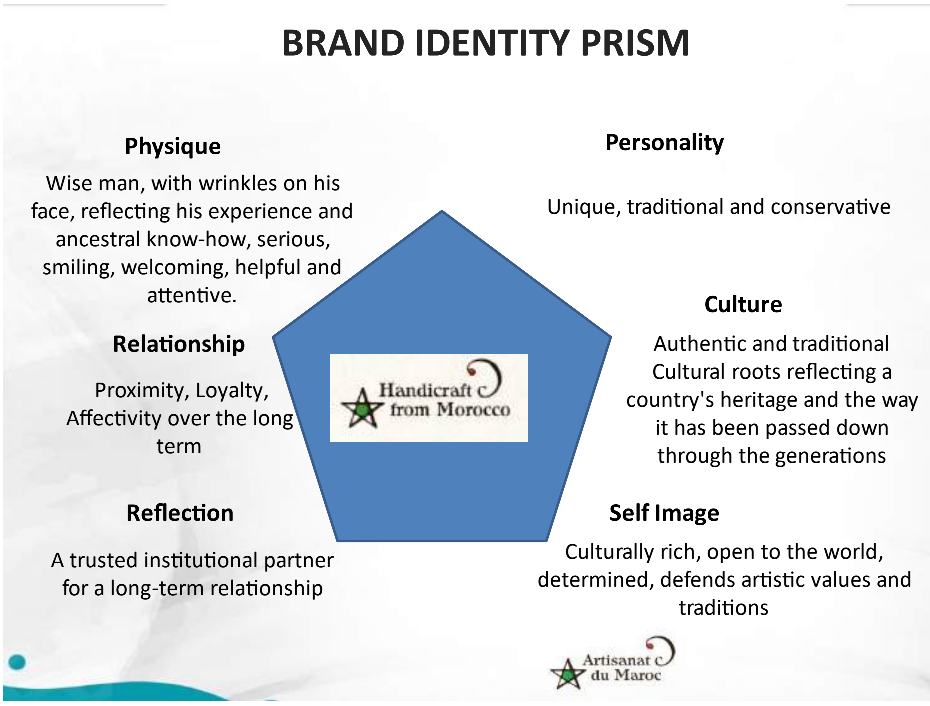
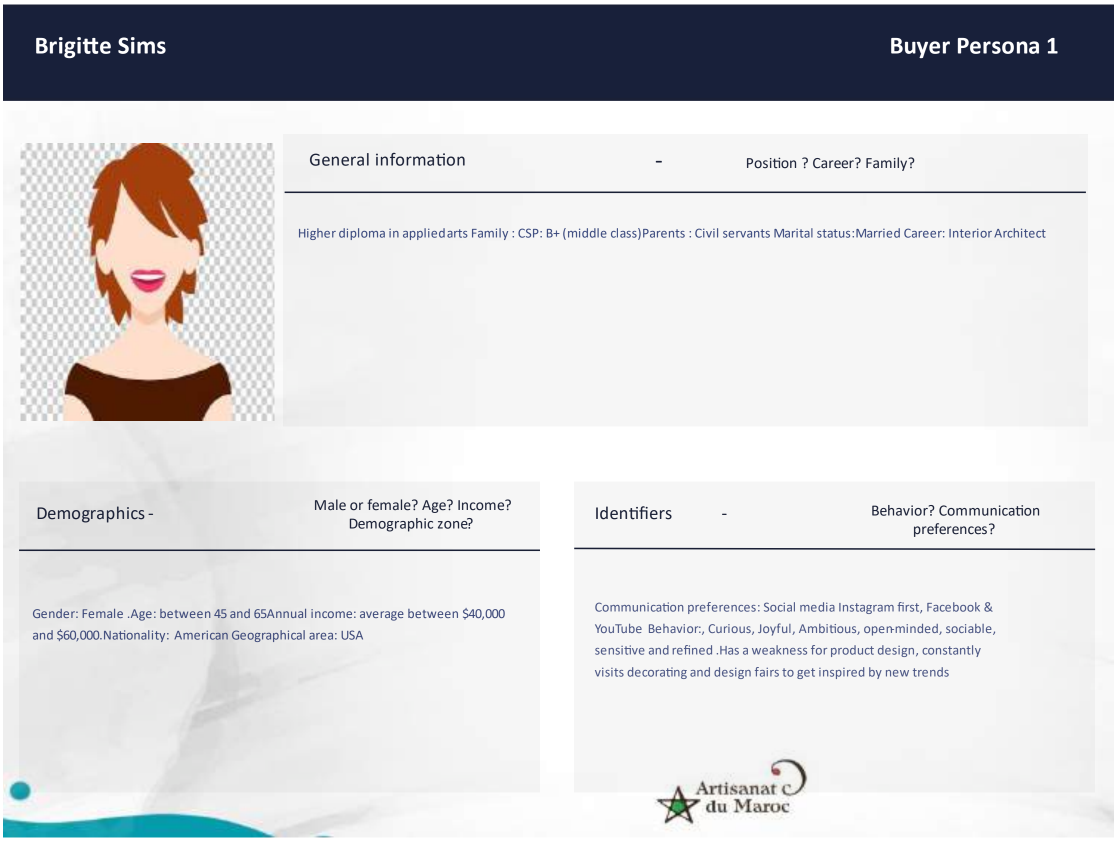
Appendix 2 : Brand Identity Prism



Source: Authors' production

Appendix 3 : Buyer Persona: "Brigitte"



Source: Authors' production