

## TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT WITH THE GROWTH OF E-COMMERCE IN THE INTERIOR OF CEARÁ

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### ABSTRACT

The growth of e-commerce in Brazil has transformed the retail sector, especially in regions far from large urban centers, such as the interior of Ceará. In the Baturité Massif, these changes impacted fashion companies, requiring adaptation to digital demands and the development of new skills. This study compares the strategies of two local fashion companies to build customer loyalty and expand their digital presence, considering the organizational changes and competencies needed to serve the online consumer. To analyze the transformations in the work environment and strategies for adapting to e-commerce in fashion companies in the Baturité Massif, comparing two companies with different audiences. Specifically, identify organizational and workplace changes; examine digital marketing strategies for customer loyalty; evaluate skills required of employees; and compare the impact of e-commerce on each company's business practices. The research is characterized as bibliographic and comparative, with participant observation of the digital practices of companies, using secondary data and a qualitative analysis of the approaches adopted for e-commerce. The analysis revealed that Company A adopts a hybrid model, combining physical and digital service, while Company B specializes in e-commerce, focusing on high-quality digital marketing and building a robust visual identity. Both use Instagram and WhatsApp for promotion, but Company B invests more in audiovisual content. The study indicates that, despite the different approaches, both companies manage to stand out in local e-commerce, highlighting the importance of digital adaptation and personalized strategy according to the target audience. Understanding these practices can inspire other companies looking to strengthen their performance in the digital market.

**Keywords:** Digital Adaptation, Skills, E-commerce, Digital Marketing, Retail.

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## INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, the growth of e-commerce has profoundly changed the work environment and the way companies operate, especially in regions outside large urban centers, such as the interior of Ceará. In the Baturité Massif, the advancement of digital technologies and the popularization of e-commerce have directly impacted the retail sector, especially in the fashion segment, where stores have adapted their strategies to meet the new demands of the market. These transformations go beyond simply increasing online sales; they imply organizational changes, the restructuring of functions and the development of new skills among employees (Krampe; Brambilla & Angnes, 2018)

The comparison between two fashion companies in the Baturité Massif – one aimed at the female audience and the other at the male audience – allows us to analyze how each one has adapted to e-commerce and developed different approaches to retain its audience and expand its operations in the digital environment. The study seeks to understand which adaptation and innovation strategies have been implemented, the professional skills required, and the impact of new digital practices on productivity and customer relationships.

In view of this rapid growth of e-commerce, some questions were raised that guide this study: what are the main changes and adaptations needed in fashion companies in the interior of Ceará to efficiently meet this new demand? What skills are essential for employees in this digital environment and how are companies structuring themselves to serve the digital consumer?

In this way, we have as a general objective to analyze the transformations in the work environment and the strategies of adaptation to e-commerce in fashion companies in the Baturité Massif, comparing two companies with different audiences. And as specific objectives, to identify the main changes in the organizational structure and work environment in the companies analyzed; examine the digital marketing strategies adopted by each company to build customer loyalty in e-commerce; evaluate the competencies and skills required of employees to work in e-commerce; and compare the impact of e-commerce on the commercial practices of the two companies, highlighting differences in approaches and strategies.

This study contributes to the understanding of how e-commerce has driven transformations in the work environment, especially in less industrialized regions, such as the interior of Ceará. Analyzing the strategies and adaptations of local companies allows not only to map effective practices in the sector, but also makes it possible to disseminate information so that other companies seek to improve their digital operations. This



knowledge can benefit companies that want to expand their e-commerce practices and adapt their business model to the new demands of the digital market.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This article is a comparative bibliographic research, complemented by observations and qualitative analysis of the strategies adopted by two fashion companies in the Baturité Massif. The analysis will be conducted based on secondary sources of literature on e-commerce and organizational behavior, as well as data collected by participant observation, which allowed to directly observe the practices and adaptations of companies in the digital environment. A literature review will be carried out to support the analysis of e-commerce practices, focusing on aspects of digital marketing, organization of the work environment and development of professional skills in e-commerce (Massukado, 2008).

Massukado (2008) brings different strategies of qualitative investigation, highlighting among them the action research characterized by the direct interaction between theory and practice, where the researcher acts to generate real changes and reflect on the process. It is especially useful for solving problems in social contexts and involves planning, action and evaluation cycles, aiming to contribute to both theoretical knowledge and practical interventions. Participant observation is another relevant methodology, especially in ethnographic studies. This method allows the researcher to integrate into the social context of the group studied, observing and, when possible, participating in their daily activities. Thus, he acquires a deeper understanding of the behavior of the participants in their natural environment. The author said that, while qualitative strategies differ in specific methods and objectives, they all share an interest in capturing and interpreting the meaning of complex social phenomena.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The expansion of e-commerce in Brazil is strongly associated with the introduction of broadband in 2003 and the popularization of smartphones with internet access, driven by the offer of 3G services in 2007. The increase in the number of internet users, especially via mobile devices, is significant; In 2014, 80% of connected households accessed the network mainly by cell phones, surpassing the use of computers. However, usability is still an issue often disregarded by designers, and this is intensified in the clothing trade, where the lack of physical contact and the impossibility of trying on the pieces discourage 84% of consumers from making online purchases. Despite this sensory barrier, the fashion and accessories segment led the volume of orders in e-commerce in 2016, showing the growth

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potential of this market and its benefits for the Brazilian economy and industry (Bozzi & Mont'Alvão, 2017)

In the second half of 2024, two fashion companies located in Maciço de Baturité were visited, through the visits it was possible to obtain some perceptions, which we made the following comparative analysis, considering some points:

About the "Operation Structure and Experience with E-commerce":

Company A started with a hybrid model, operating in both physical and online formats. This strategy was key to strengthening the brand's presence and increasing reach, especially in the digital market. Thoughtful service, both online and physical, was one of the company's strengths, reflecting a commitment to customer experience and ensuring loyalty.

Company B, on the other hand, initially focused exclusively on e-commerce, and only later expanded to a physical store. After a successful experience with the physical store, the company returned to operating only online. Company B's adaptation to the virtual environment is remarkable, as it was possible to build a robust visual identity, combined with the creation of high-quality audiovisual content. This exclusive focus on digital has allowed for better adaptation to the demands and trends of e-commerce.

About "Marketing and Outreach Approaches":

Both companies mainly use Instagram and WhatsApp for promotion, taking advantage of the high engagement and the ability to interact directly that these platforms provide. However, Company A presents a more generic approach, focusing on digital presence to strengthen the relationship with the female audience. The company's employees use modern mobile devices to assist in dissemination and service, emphasizing the importance of direct and accessible marketing.

Company B goes further, with a more elaborate digital marketing strategy. Content creation is done with attention to audiovisual quality, such as well-crafted, creative photos and videos that highlight the products in an attractive and professional way. The focus on building a strong visual identity and creating its own clothing line, in addition to B2B sales, contribute to the brand having a solid and recognized presence in the online market.

Finally, an analysis of "Customer Service and Relationship":

At Company A, the customer experience is central, and the service is carefully thought out to be welcoming and personalized both in-store and online. Management involves transparent communication about the company's values and mission, which contributes to a positive work environment that is aligned with the strategic vision. For Santos, Hamza & Nogami (2015) trust and familiarity on the internet play important roles,



with online experience increasing skill and control, while less experienced consumers tend to be more cautious.

Company B adopts a completely digital service and is mainly conducted by the founder himself, who personally takes care of order management and communication with customers. This model allows for greater control over interactions and proximity to the public, even without a robust team. This autonomy is also reflected in the creation and maintenance of a strong identity brand, which generates trust and loyalty among customers. Corroborating Santos, Hamza & Nogami (2015) who state that online purchase intention is influenced by factors such as gender and previous shopping experience, and consumers without online experience perceive more risks than those already familiar.

From these points analyzed, we can say that, in short, Company A stands out for the combination of physical and digital service, with special attention to personalized service, while Company B stands out for its quality and creativity in digital marketing and a strong visual identity in e-commerce. Both approaches reflect the impact and importance of e-commerce on consumer behavior and the need for companies to adapt.

While Company A bets on consolidating its brand through close and reliable service, Company B uses differentiated marketing to stand out, with a focus on innovation and a striking visual identity. These practices demonstrate how different strategies can be effective depending on the target audience and the goals of each company, being a valuable learning for businesses that want to grow in e-commerce, for Santos, Hamza & Nogami (2015) the internet has as a fundamental factor to provide a wide range of marketing information, such as sponsored links, banners, price comparisons and user opinions, in addition to hyperlinks that direct directly to store pages, expanding consumers' exposure to products and driving potential impulse purchases.

## CONCLUSION

The growth of e-commerce in the interior of Ceará, specifically in the Baturité Massif, has brought profound impacts to local companies, requiring significant strategic and operational adaptations. The comparative analysis between two fashion companies revealed how different strategies can meet the demands of an ever-evolving digital market.

Company A balances physical and digital presence, prioritizing a welcoming and personalized service to retain the female audience, while Company B focuses exclusively on e-commerce, with investments in strong visual identity and high-quality audiovisual content. Both use social networks such as Instagram and WhatsApp, but with different approaches: Company A adopts a more generic and accessible communication, standing



out for direct contact and building a positive work environment, while Company B applies more creative and sophisticated strategies, adopting a lean model, in which the founder himself manages interactions with customers, strengthening your brand and maintaining proximity to consumers.

Thus, we conclude that e-commerce not only expands the exposure of consumers to products, increasing the possibilities of purchase, but also requires a restructuring of business practices to face the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of the digital environment. Thus, it is evident that innovative and adaptive practices are essential for companies that want to compete in this market. Therefore, this study contributes to the understanding of the transformative role of e-commerce in local retail, highlighting the need for personalized and flexible strategies to meet the specific demands of each consumer profile.



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