

competitiveness for industry, science and education

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Competitiveness in hospitality and its relationship with marketing innovation

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Abstract

The service sector, especially tourism, represents great importance for global economic growth and development. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the level of innovation in marketing in order to know the relationship to the competitiveness of the hotel industry in Guadalajara, Mexico. Having reviewed the theoretical contributions of several authors, a construct and a questionnaire, was properly applied to 5 starts and luxury category hotels. Once having gathered all of the information, statistical analysis for testing the hypotheses is carried out.

Keywords: marketing innovation, competitiveness, hotel industry.

1. Centro Universitario de Ciencias Economico Administrativas-Universidad de Guadalajara.

Introduction

Tourism has become one of the main players in international commerce, and it represents a major source of income for many developing countries. This growth goes hand increasing diversification and competition among destinations. We can say that innovation is a basic feature for evolution in several areas, it involves improving and / or changing the way of making processes for better results and become more competitive in the sector in which they perform. Nowadays, different companies face increasingly competitive markets by highly innovative companies that design products and sophisticated services, customers have become more aware when it comes down to purchasing a product or service.

Innovation has always been a fundamental basis for the development and competitiveness of enterprises, regions, nations and the whole world (Shepherd, 2012). Furthermore, it boosts changes in different areas in order to get different and better results.

The importance of innovation in industry and the service sector is widely recognized (Sorensen, Sundbo, & Mattsson, 2013), as both are key elements in a country's economy and in the specific case of the services sector due to increased mobilization of tourists worldwide.

The contribution of tourism to the economic well-being depends on the quality and revenue that tourism offers (Turismo, 2013) to users seeking to acquire and learn new destinations within a given territory.

That is why the importance of assessing the level of marketing innovations in the hotel industry in Guadalajara. By doing so, we learn the fundamentals of this concept and the impact that it is having at a competitiveness level, so companies satisfy the needs and desires of its customers.

Parra (2007) mentioned that countries that spend a greater amount of resources on research and development are the ones that experience better results in economic matters, while Latin American countries allocate a percentage much lower and sometimes insignificant, when it should be conversely, of course, if the objective was to increase levels of competitiveness.

Theoretical concepts

The service industry

It is necessary to recognize that in recent years the service sector has gained importance in the economy as a movement of transition in developing countries, especially since the nineties (Eichengreen & Gupta, 2009). Cruz (2004) argues that this sector has been the one that has generated the majority of jobs and requires highest demand on skilled labor. Services are economic activities that create value and provide benefits to customers in specific times and places and also produce a desired result in favor of the host (Lovellock, Reynoso, D'Andrea, & Huete, 2004) change.

Tourism

Tourism is considered the engine of social progress in many countries; it can reduce poverty and inequality by creating new businesses and jobs. In addition, it is considered a multidimensional activity that can extend opportunities for progress, income distribution and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources (OMT, 2004).

Among the tourist services there are: accommodation, restaurants, bars and nightclubs, theme parks, theaters, sporting attractions, tour operators, travel agencies and transport either by air, sea, road, etc. (Crown & Zarraga, 2014).

Nowadays, tourism is one of the most important businesses of the planet (Morillo, 2007). According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2006) at the dawn of the new millennium, tourism has become the main economic activity in many countries and the fastest growing sector in terms of foreign exchange earnings and job creation, a world exports generator and a major countries' payments balance factor.

The hotel industry

The hotel sector is the basis of tourism, the dynamics of large corporations is meant due to the profitability promised the shareholders than to the search for consumer satisfaction (the tourist). The nineteenth

century and early twentieth were characterized by European hotels. The second half of the last century was the American hotel and its forms that shaped clearly hospitality and tourism in the modern era (Ramírez & Guzmán, 2013).

The hotel industry in Mexico

The importance of tourism for the Mexican economy is unquestionable; their benefits are reflected not only for being an industry that generates jobs and triggers regional development, but also for spreading cultural and natural attractions (Sectur, 2013). The hosting service is one of the key components of tourism, along with recreational facilities, transport, communications and restoration (Álvarez, 2001).

The hotel industry in Jalisco

According to Sectur (2014) to the influx of domestic visitors amounted up to 20'491,064, while the foreign visitors' turnout was 3'623,335, representing an increase of 2.2 and 3.76% respectively compared to 2013.

Hotel occupancy in Jalisco in 2014 had an average occupancy of 51.23%, with an economic impact of 36 billion 230 million 203 thousand pesos, and 1,647 establishments classified into different groups according to the conditions provided to users.

Innovation

The importance of innovation in such an industry and the service sector is widely recognized (Sorensen, Sundbo, & Mattsson, 2013). Over the past few years the concept has had several changes in its definition and implementation. An objective improvement in the performance of the product only, because definitions and concepts were adapted to be implemented only in the primary and secondary sectors (OECD, 1997).

Innovation can be defined as the ability of the organization to adopt and successfully implement new ideas, processes or products (Hurley & Hult, 1998). It is a source of progress and development. Companies and nations that fail to innovate continuously maintain

economic strength. So, it is not a coincidence that countries where the highest patent activity, or where there is a high intensity related to research and development investments, are leaders in the field of economic development worldwide (Shepherd, 2012).

A more complete definition is the one by the OECD (2005) through the Oslo Manual which states that innovation is the introduction of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), a process, a new method marketing or a new organizational method in the internal practices of the company, workplace organization or external relations.

Based on the above mentioned, it can be defined as a tool to take advantage of changes, developing new and improved goods from the inside and outside of a given organization.

Marketing innovations

Marketing innovation, refers to market research, the strategy of pricing, market segmentation, advertising promotions, sales channels retail and information systems marketing (Vorhies and Harker, 2000; Weerawardena, 2003).

Innovation is also given to reposition the perception of a product or process already established. The innovation consists of finding new ways of doing things and gain strategic advantages, so there will always be room for new ways to gain and maintain these advantages (Parra, Mesa, Corrales and Aguirre, 2007). The difference between marketing innovation and other marketing activities carried out in an organization is that the first one involves the implementation of previously used methods (Rivero and Asenjo, 2010).

In order to consider marketing innovation as such, it is not necessary that marketing activities remain original; chances are they are adaptations of concepts and practices exercised by the same company. Or on the other hand, they can also be marketing practices conducted by other companies including them in their marketing strategies (Medrano, 2011), no matter whether they come from another company, as long as they turn out to be new to the company that is implementing them.

From a theoretical level, Ren Xie & Krabbendam (2009) considered marketing innovation as an appropriate method for companies to achieve sustainable competitive advantage, commenting that some

managers are too blinded with technological innovations, which prevents them from getting competitive benefits through marketing innovation.

The increasing globalization of the economy requires an innovation's constant effort. Business innovation is a key factor in regional development element and it is one of the most important ones when it comes down to increasing productivity and competitiveness in the enterprise factors (Rodeiro & Lopez, 2007), since companies are exposed to rapid changes. Innovation used to be a competitive advantage, but things have changed, nowadays it is a prerequisite for survival (Guerrero and Molina, 2012).

Barriers to innovation

While innovation should be a constant thing, a well-defined process or methodology to generate the necessary changes in the various organizations, there will be barriers that depend on internal and external factors that reduce the capacity to implement strategies that were already set. However, some of the barriers could somehow let innovation take over, while others could pose adverse effects in the process (Saatcioglu, and Özmen, 2010). Some authors such as Laersen and Lewis (2007) classified the innovation barriers into: financial, marketing, management and personal characteristics among other obstacles. Other studies (Mohen & Roller, 2005; Baldwin & Lin, 2002) show that different innovation barriers are related to costs, institutional limitations, human resources, organizational culture, and information flow and government policy.

Destinations competitiveness

Destination competitiveness has considerable implications within the whole tourism industry, making it a target to public and private tourism stakeholders (Ritchie & Crouch. 2000). Over the past few years there have been numerous definitions regarding tourism competitiveness, for instance, d'Hauteserre, (2000) states that tourism

competitiveness is the ability of a destination to maintain its market position and share and / or improve it over time. Another definition is (Dwyer, 2003) defines tourism competitiveness as the relative ability of a destination to meet the needs of visitors to different aspects of the tourist experience or provide better products and services than other destinations in those areas where experience is considered quite important by tourists.

It is stated that the presence of hotels in a given territory, contributes to the generation of employment and it has an indirect effect on the environment around them; also it supports other tourist activities, improving the welfare of people in such areas and revitalizes a considerable number of economic activities that can disappear without the presence of a hotel (Carmona, 2012).

It is important to stand out that nation competitiveness depends on the performance of their enterprises, wherein hotel industry is considered. This industry benefits from the growth and stability of tourist destinations and the development of communities. However, there are many other factors that determine such competitiveness: processes, outputs, outcomes, etc., (Tsai, Sonh, & Wong, 2009).

Factors of competitiveness

Competitiveness and financial performance

Competitive advantage is directly reflected in the capabilities of the company to get a better financial performance than its competitors (Arend, 2003) according to the area which performs its functions, as companies have different performance according to the evaluated period. We can say that maximizing profits is related to the managers who operate in different markets (Rodriguez, 2013), due to the fact that they are able to estimate value, even better than their competitors. This can actually provide a company with a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Halawi & McCarthy, 2005; Clulow and Gerstmann, 2007; Kraaijenbrink, Spender, & Groen, 2010).

Obtaining increased profitability by an organization has been given by the existence of internal resources and capabilities that promote a

better use of the opportunities offered by the environment (Vazquez, 2002).

Competitiveness and costs

In the current globalized world there is a huge competition, therefore, it is necessary to develop competitive strategies which include both price and quality. In order to do so, the only way is by optimizing costs without affecting the quality of the final product, or enhancing it (Gerencie, 2008), as this will depend on achieving high competitiveness. It does not only involve lower input costs, but maintains the quality level. The cost advantage is to achieve a cumulative cost of production per unit lower than that the ones given by other competitors, such as product specifications to conditions, without compromising quality itself (Mejía, 1999). Thus, competitiveness is defined as the ability to generate increased production at the lowest possible cost. Competitiveness is an attribute or quality of companies, not countries (Ahumada, Zarate, Plascencia, & Perusquia, 2012). Enterprises competitiveness is a concept that refers to their ability to produce goods and services efficiently, reducing costs and increasing quality, making attractive products both inside and outside the country. It is therefore necessary to achieve high levels of productivity that increase profitability and generate incremental revenue (IMCO, 2006).

Competitiveness and technology

There are some changes that have had a qualitative impact on the recent experienced changes within a capitalist society among which are: information technology and communications revolution (Guevara, 2013). With the advent of computers and networks a revolution in communication was generated, giving rise to the so-called knowledge economy, in which productivity increased (Dabat, Rivera, & Suárez, 2004). Several studies have shown a positive relationship between the technological level of the enterprise and competitiveness, they have also found that high technological levels companies, increase productivity and they are more likely to compete in more advanced environments (Koc & Bozdog, 2007; Baldwin & Sabourin, 2002).

Innovation and competitiveness

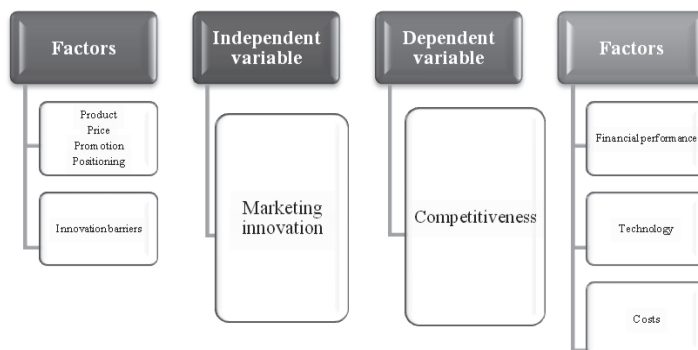
The concepts of competitiveness and innovation have become an interesting topic that needs to be analyzed (Jiménez, Domínguez and Martínez, 2009), and as they say (Solleiro & Castañón, 2005), the analysis of competitiveness has been given a common denominator from any perspective that is focused on “competitiveness depends on the ability to innovate.”

Corona (2008) argues that competition is a multifactorial variable that is related to business training, administrative, labor and productive skills, management, innovation and technological development. According to de Costos and Molina (2003) changes in the context in which companies interact have generated the need to design strategies that allow them to be competitive and, therefore, remain in the long term.

Castro & Delgado (1999) consider that in search for competitiveness, innovation plays an important role, provided that it is established in close relation to the strategy. In this sense, innovation is a variable that has acquired an important relevance in recent years, as companies are able to continuously improve products, processes, services, etc., achieve greater competitiveness, as it allows them to cope with changing customer needs and a globalized environment (Tushman & Nadler, 1986; Porter, 1990; Porter, 1991; Grant, 1996; Velasquez & Macias, 2001; Peña, O'Brien, & Farias, 2003; Arbussá, Bikfalvi, & Valls, 2004; Haour, 2005; Aragon & Rubio, 2005).

Considering all of the concepts discussed in the literature review, the following construct where the independent variable is Innovation and determinants are product, price, promotion, positioning and barriers to innovation is developed; the dependent variable is competitiveness which is determined by three factors: financial performance, technology and costs.

Figure 1
Research construct



Source: own elaboration.

General objective

To analyze the relationship between marketing innovation and competitiveness in the hotel industry in Guadalajara.

Specific objectives

1. To check the main contributions to knowledge about marketing innovations and their relationship to competitiveness.
2. To know the level of innovation in marketing of hotel companies in Guadalajara.
3. To identify barriers to innovation that inhibits innovative activities in marketing in the hotel industry in Guadalajara.
4. To analyze factors influencing variables in marketing innovation and competitiveness.

Methodology

A questionnaire designed based on the elements of the construct research was designed, it was divided into four sections with a total

of 46 items and applied in 5 star and luxury category hotels in the Guadalajara, Mexico, within a period of time which went from November 2014 to March 2015.

Analyzing the data obtained through an exploratory factor analysis and the development of a model of causal relationships between selected by Pearson correlation and linear regression variables.

General hypothesis

The higher marketing innovation, the higher competitiveness level.

Specific hypotheses

- The higher marketing innovation, the higher competitiveness in the hotel sector companies in Guadalajara.
- The higher technological development, the higher competitiveness level of in the hotel sector companies in Guadalajara.
- The more barriers to innovation, the lower competitiveness level in the hotel sector in Guadalajara.

Results

In order to establish whether a factorial analysis can be carried out, the correlation between two variables must be analyzed by the time the others' effect has already been discontinued. There is a couple of methods for analyzing the functional model, the first one is the Bartlett test of sphericity and the second one KMO index calculation (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) adequacy of the sample, both are shown in the following table.

Table 1
KMO and Bartlett Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Adequacy simple measurement.		.546
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approximated Chi-square	530.783
	GI	231
	Sig.	.000

Source: Own elaboration.

The KMO test is a correlation coefficient that measures the correlation between two variables, a statistic that varies between 0 and 1, the closer to one; the more suitable will be the data. Thus, less than 0.5 turns out to be a poor indicator data for factor analysis (Hasan, 2008). As for this investigation the KMO is quite acceptable because it depicts a 0.546 value with a significance of .000, which means that the factorial analysis is a useful technique to apply.

Table 2 shows the values and percentages of the total explained variance, which aims to ensure the significance of the results of the factor analysis.

As for table 2, there are six components wherein component 1 explains 22.6% while component 2 explains 20.33%, followed by component 3 with 12.61%, component 4 with 10.82%, component 5 with 6.79% and finally component 6 with 6.59%.

Due to the fact that the last component explains a little less than the fifth component and fine-tuning for the present investigation it can actually be disregarded, leaving a total variance explained of 73.17% which is still an excellent rate for the current study. Therefore, these five components become appointed as follows: No. 1 component corresponds to the barriers to innovation, component No 2 corresponds to technological development, component No. 3 corresponds to financial performance, component No. 4 corresponds to production and finally the component No. 5 corresponds to innovative activity.

Table 2
Total explained variance

Component	Initial autovalues			Sum of squared loadings extraction			Sum of squared loadings of rotation		
	Total	Variance %	Accumulated %	Total	Variance %	Accumulated %	Total	Variance %	Accumulated %
1	4.972	22.600	22.600	4.972	22.600	22.600	4.331	19.687	19.687
2	4.473	20.334	42.934	4.473	20.334	42.934	3.675	16.705	36.392
3	2.776	12.617	55.551	2.776	12.617	55.551	2.975	13.521	49.912
4	2.381	10.823	66.374	2.381	10.823	66.374	2.801	12.731	62.643
5	1.495	6.797	73.171	1.495	6.797	73.171	2.198	9.990	72.633
6	1.452	6.598	79.769	1.452	6.598	79.769	1.570	7.136	79.769
7	.916	4.162	83.931						
8	.798	3.626	87.557						
9	.575	2.614	90.171						
10	.488	2.219	92.391						
11	.387	1.759	94.150						
12	.285	1.295	95.444						
13	.231	1.049	96.494						
14	.215	.979	97.473						
15	.166	.756	98.229						
16	.114	.520	98.749						
17	.071	.323	99.072						
18	.060	.272	99.344						
19	.057	.259	99.603						
20	.049	.224	99.827						
21	.024	.109	99.935						
22	.014	.065	100.000						

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3
Correlations

	<i>Innovative Activity</i>	<i>Innovation Barriers</i>	<i>Financial performance</i>	<i>Production Costs</i>	<i>Technology</i>	
Innovative Activity	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (bilateral)					
	N	31				
Innovation Barriers	Pearson Correlation	-.139	1			
	Sig. (bilateral)	.457				
	N	31	31			
Financial Performance	Pearson Correlation	.281	.114	1		
	Sig. (bilateral)	.126	.540			
	N	31	31	31		
Production Costs	Pearson Correlation	.025	-.144	-.052	1	
	Sig. (bilateral)	.893	.438	.781		
	N	31	31	31	31	
Technology	Pearson Correlation	.375*	-.100	.215	.106	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.038	.594	.245	.572	
	N	31	31	31	31	31

*. The correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (bilateral).

Source: Own elaboration supported by SPSS.

As far as it goes to the correlation between innovative activity and financial performance, there is a Pearson correlation that goes up to .281, innovative activity and technological development depicts a Pearson correlation that goes up to .375 and finally innovation and cost production depicts a Pearson correlation that goes up to -.144.

After analyzing such correlations, a linear regression based on the identified components in the SPSS statistical program was carried out. It awarded the R-squared value which by the time is multiplied by 100 yielded the percentage that a variable explains to another and by doing so, it can provide with a suitable answer for the hypothesis previously stated at the beginning.

To sum up, it can be confirmed that came to test hypotheses through factor analysis and then with linear regression where the variables to perform the correlation and linear regression subsequently make the SPSS statistical program to know the impact that

resumed different variables may come to have in the hotel sector in Guadalajara and to compare the results with the hypotheses. The results of the linear regression and its relation to the hypotheses are shown in the following table.

Table 4
Hypotheses' test results

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Structural relation</i>	<i>Explanation percentage</i>	<i>Linear regression coefficient in the formula $Y=a+bX$</i>
H1: The higher marketing innovation, the higher competitiveness	Innovative activity Competitiveness	7.9%	a= 6.088E-18 b= .281
H2: The higher technological development, the higher competitiveness	Technological development Competitiveness	14.0%	a= 1.102E-16 b= 0.375
H3: The more barriers to innovation, the lower competitiveness	Innovation barriers Competitiveness	2.1%	a= -2.762E-17 b= -.144

Source: Own elaboration.

By giving a glance to the previous table, it is easy to realize that the linear regression confirms its existing relation to the above mentioned hypotheses. Such is the *H1* case indicates that innovative activity has a positive impact which goes up to 7.9% on competitiveness. As for *H2*, it indicates that the technological development has a positive impact on the competitiveness which goes up to 14.0%. Finally, *H3* reflected innovation barriers and depicted a negative effect which goes up to 2.1% on competitiveness. It is worth to mention that the *b* value has a (-) value, representing a cost on the company.

On the one hand, it is proven that the innovative activity variable has positive effects on competitiveness in terms of financial performance and technological development, being the last one the most significant of the study. On the other hand we can say that the existing innovation barriers within the hotel industry in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara have negative effects and certainly significance in production costs, an aspect that should be considered to counter these types of negative effects on companies.

Conclusions

The innovation should be a cornerstone in business life as it currently plays an important role for different sectors because it allows them to embrace changes that are generated in the market as a reason for new trends emergence. Besides, consumers are more informed and their decisions are analyzed in most cases even more thoroughly.

The results of the statistical analysis (factorial and regression) served to corroborate the statements of different authors while replying to raised questions in the current research as well as the hypotheses which mentioned that greater innovation in marketing would enhance the financial performance to some extent by creating a direct relationship between these important variables, as well as innovative activities that have a positive and significant effect on the technological development of the sector. That is why they are closely related, showing their wide importance of being able to apply for an increase in their competitiveness. In the case of the last hypothesis it could also be proven because it depicted that barriers to existing innovation caused some disadvantage to these companies according to the statistical analysis. Their effect reverberated directly in the production costs. However, it is not a problem but it must be seen as an area that should be taken into account so that it does not experience a negative impact on costs that could potentially generate for the organization.

Given this scenario, companies must have a high capacity to identify and embrace generated changes in the market and they should also try to be the first ones on products in order to take advantage of every benefit, anticipating to whatever competitors in the sector do.

The fact that companies strive to offer a unique atmosphere in their stores makes customers perceive it as a place to spend pleasant moments either alone or in company. The atmosphere is directly perceived by senses, which altogether creates an acceptance or rejection of it.

The tourism sector, which is immersed in the hotel sector, is a sector where the client usually does not acquire physical things but intangible, they depend on the physical environment where they are possibly provided, so the environment can easily become a key element to new customer purchases. They are not just services that assess the physical aspect. That is why the statistical analysis resumes such

relevance; they must make changes and improvements in the services. Relevant data is changing and improving promotion channels such as newspapers magazines, radio or television to name a few. They are making improvements in services offered but if they are not appropriately communicated it turns out to be pointless since they should keep up with the strategies and target.

Companies should be aware about the fact that a product has a life cycle that goes through different phases; from its inception until its death with the creation of new and better substitute products that fully meet customers' needs. They should be aware of trends, or even better, they should anticipate everything with optimal studies of consumer behavior and be open to trying new products.

This research serves as a snapshot of what is happening regarding marketing innovation and its impact on competitiveness in the hotel sector of the metropolitan area of Guadalajara. However, there is a lot to be done in the sector to improve and increase its performance, since 42% of the hotels surveyed are between 12 and 22 years old in Guadalajara. They are relatively young establishments and still under consolidation. It is worth to mention that most of the staff who helped out with the survey were people whose ages went from 24 to 30 years. As for an educational degree, 84% were graduated (bachelor's degree), meaning they have prepared human capital and youth can consolidate the optimal performance of companies through setting goals for the development of appropriate strategies.

Recommendations

It is highly recommended to keep track of these studies by extending the category of the hotel sector. It can actually be performed in some other sectors where marketing is one of the main lines and could also be applied to other important trading states or geographic regions for a future comparative study within the same so they can be properly compared. By doing so, innovation and competitiveness will be easier to understand since the emergence of new companies cannot be stopped. It is a fundamental task to continue achieving success in the market that makes customers to stick to their preference. Future studies on the same axis could provide important information to establish

primary axes in marketing innovation to increase competitiveness within some other sectors and adapt appropriate strategies.

Opportunities

All of the questionnaire items that were not included in the study by the scarcity of its impact on both the variable innovation and competitiveness in the hospitality sector of the metropolitan area of Guadalajara turn out to be suitable opportunity areas. Just to mention a couple of them they are stated as follows: change or improvement in rooms, change or improvement in reception, change or improvement in rates of service accommodation, change or improvement in the methods of promotion (gifts, discounts, loyalty cards), change or improved sales channels used, perceived risk in innovation, innovation costs, economic turmoil, lack of market information, our earnings have been good in the past three years, our debt has decreased significantly, they have acquired credits to cover current expenses, the costs of our services affect our competitiveness, although supplies are cheap, the quality is high, our costs do not exceed the prices of our services and increased productivity through technology.

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This book try to integrate different work papers, considering key elements of science applied to industry and education, and how these affect the competitiveness.

Research includes areas where competitiveness makes a big difference to the current economic growth were collected.

Each chapter in this book ranges from marketing tools, strategies for the internationalization of SMEs, innovation in the chemical industry; fields of knowledge such as the improvement in the assessment of higher education without neglecting the importance of the tourism industry, information technology and communication and logistical capacity in the pharmaceutical business.

It concludes with the presentation of research where two factors are major players presently, marketing and social responsibility.

The main objective of this work is to present the last findings about the market advantage, key factor in Marketing, Innovation, Social Network, Business Internationalization, and their impact on competitiveness.



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