



# Social Marketing in the General Directorate of Traffic's Campaign Called "Caminantedigital"

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## Abstract

Faced with the problem of a high accident rate in Spain, the campaign called "Caminantedigital" is an important shift in the marketing strategies of the General Directorate of Traffic (Dirección General de Tráfico or DGT in Spanish). For the European Road Safety and the United Nations Global Road Safety Week, the DGT focusses on the target audience. In this case it focuses not only in drivers but also pedestrians, who have not been taken into consideration in past campaigns. The main goal is to raise awareness through a photographic competition of the high accident rate and to encourage walking as opposed to using motorized vehicles, as well as promoting the enjoyment of public spaces. An innovative factor is that this campaign has introduced a marketing strategy based on "Creative Gamification." One of the keys for its success is that the receiver of the information goes from being considered as a mere passive subject to being considered an active participant.

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### Learning Objectives

The current case study tries to achieve the next learning objectives:

- Identify what does the most creative social marketing campaign developed by the General Directorate of Traffic (DGT) consists of.
- Define who the target audience of this campaign is, meaning, to whom the behavioral change is directed.
- Analyze what the social problem is and what behavioral change do we want to achieve in the target audience.
- Study how innovative, creative, and highlight has the marketing mix been developed.
- Discover why and how creativity is especially valued.

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## Introduction

The General Directorate of Traffic—in Spanish called Dirección General de Tráfico (DGT)—founded in 1959, is an autonomous public organization dependent of the Ministry of Interior of Spain. The DGT is responsible for the execution of the current road safety policies, and among its powers are traffic and road safety enforcement (Núñez et al. 2014).

The target audience is divided into two large groups: on the one hand, the drivers and all items related to the security and awareness in the use of vehicles and, on the other hand, the pedestrian, for whom the DGT has started various specific campaigns.

Therefore, its objectives are multiple and diverse:

- Road safety and reduction of accidents: carrying out awareness actions to both drivers and pedestrians, as well as the improvement of the road infrastructure and the intervention for the improvement of accident blackspots
- Traffic information and management: so that citizens have better accessibility to public roads at all times
- Health: linked to issues that may affect driving, consumption of substances that reduce driving abilities, visual impairments that can substantially influence driving, etc. Undertake and develop specific research and articles and advice about the effects and consequences of these substances and impairments
- Sustainability of the environment: sustainable mobility, encouraging the use of public transportation and commuting by foot or bicycle as one of the measures that reduces the environmental impact that is related to the use of the private vehicle
- Research and development: issues related to the increase of safety in vehicles (researching child safety systems, etc.), on roads, urban areas, etc.

The annual budgets available to the DGT to achieve its objectives are around 840 million euros, of which it assigns 2% to road safety. This percentage is

distributed among three causes: education and dissemination, victims of traffic accidents, and research in road safety.

The promotional strategies carried out by the DGT encompass traditional channels and an increasing use of new ones based on information and communication technologies (ICT), such as those used in their latest campaigns highlighting the use of social networks. Among them, we can point out the following:

- A Website, from which the bulk of the information is managed, centralized, and disseminated and strategized
- Monthly digital magazine, digital broadcast channel with interactive content
- Publications and specific research works, related to road safety, to the use and improvement of elements of safety in vehicles, health, etc.
- Advertising campaigns, which not only broadcast and converged in traditional channels, such as television, radio, and press but also via the Internet to convey them in other digital ecosystems (e.g., YouTube)
- Conducting events, with public institutions (town halls, meetings between cities, etc.), and others
- Trainers and talks to raise awareness among the entire population and especially in children. In addition, the work done with victims of traffic accidents that incorporate them into their awareness strategy toward other groups through their collaboration
- Mobile application, launched in 2013 to help and provide the driver with traffic information and about your safety constantly
- Social networks, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. where it has its own Website

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## Case Development

*#Caminantedigital* is a different campaign led by the DGT where citizens' participation and involvement are essential.

The target audience at which the campaign is directed to is primarily the pedestrian, due to the high accident rate in Spain. The global data reaches 89,519 accidents and 1680 annual fatalities (DGT 2018), high figures if we remind ourselves that pedestrians are the most seriously affected by traffic accidents in this environment because they represent half of the victims in urban areas.

The data shows that for each accident, there are at least two people injured and around ten are serious or fatal accidents in urban areas. To try to mitigate this, DGT has undertaken a specific strategy to involve society and local public institutions. In its "Road Safety Strategic Plan 2011–2020," there are two of its strategic priorities listed out, the protection of the most vulnerable users and the promotion of safe mobility in urban areas (Table 1). These are topics that are aimed at the urban space and the groups that coexist in it.

In the current dynamics, using the potential offered by the Internet and the new information and communication technologies (ICT), the DGT launches this

**Table 1** Road safety strategic plan 2011–2020

Strategies	Target	Aims
1. Protect most vulnerable users	Children	Provide safe environments and journeys when walking school
	Elderly	Provide safe mobility spaces
	Pedestrians	Promote commuting on foot as a way of economic and healthy mobility Provide safe mobility spaces Improve knowledge about pedestrian accidents and mobility
	Cyclists	Promote the use of bicycles as efficient means of transportation Improve training and attitudes of cyclists and other users Provide safe mobility spaces
2. Enhance mobility safety	Urban zone	Provide an urban public space and safe environments Promote discipline in urban areas

Source: DGT (2018)

campaign as completely new and different from the traditional or classic marketing strategies that they have been doing so far, in search for pedestrian involvement and collaboration, one of its main objectives. The hashtag for this campaign #Caminantedigital was born on May 2013.

This campaign is part of the actions framed within the “World Road Safety Week” of the United Nations and the “European Road Safety Day” of the European Union, held on the 6 May 2013. In the case of Spain, various events and actions carried out the following messages:

- Promote walking
- Provide safe mobility spaces for pedestrians
- Improve knowledge about pedestrian accident and mobility

Its slogan is “Let yourself be contagious and participate!”

#Caminantedigital developed through a photo contest that aims to raise awareness through photography to the pedestrian, and also encourages travelling on foot opposed to using motorized means of transportation, and promotes the enjoyment of urban public spaces.

The organization invited anyone who wanted to express their vision as a pedestrian by taking a picture that could be uploaded to the Instagram platform, the digital tool selected for that purpose, with the hashtag #Caminantedigital.

The campaign was launched on May 6 and it was in effect until the 26th of that month. Immediately, it had a large impact on social media and high participation. Nearly seven million people visited the Website and commented on different blogs, and approximately 15,000 pictures were submitted on Instagram by a multitude of participants.

In addition, PHotoEspaña, one of the main means of dissemination of photography and the visual arts of Spain, collaborated in the campaign by organizing a subsequent exhibition with selected and awarded pictures.

The use of mobile devices is key in the success and in such large amount of participation, because digital marketing is more specific and allows a quicker exchange of information with the user, thus, achieving a most direct communication.

Creativity is especially valued in every field (Núñez-Barriopedro and González del Valle Brena 2016; Núñez and Ravina 2017). Therefore, an interesting and innovative factor of this campaign in contrast to previous ones by the DGT is that it has introduced a marketing strategy based on “Creative Gamification,” which encourages the participation of people in the photographic contest, using the game and the subsequent social recognition (publishing all the pictures on the Website and displaying an exhibition of the winning ones) as the main element of “engagement” with the target audience.

The two previous events resulted in a high participation and citizen involvement, even when the duration of this campaign was only of 20 days, which helped make society more aware of these issues.

The judges of the contest were staff from the DGT and PHotoEspaña; they selected the 23 best pictures, which had in common the day-to-day representation of people who walked through the different cities, turning the streets into a space of more conviviality, safety, and kindness.

Furthermore, every picture sent by citizens was published in the specific “microsite” created by the DGT with direct access through its Website. The subsequent photographic exhibition, with the 23 winning photographs, was organized by PHotoEspaña and the private sector collaborated through *Fnac*, which participates in the initiative by lending its facilities located in Avenue Castellana in Madrid to host the exhibition free of charge.

According to the marketing mix used by this campaign, the following could be summarized:

- Given that the main aim of the campaign was to try to make pedestrians aware of the importance of road safety for protection, the product in this case is an intangible idea.
- The use of ICT and social media was the channel chosen by the DGT for its rapid distribution, due to its easy accessibility through mobile devices.
- The promotion of this campaign was initiated by the DGT together with PHotoEspaña, which launched it on social media, blogs, etc. and traditional media, such as the written press, radio, or television. This made references to it multiplying its repercussion.
- The time and effort expended constituted to the price that, in these types of strategies, tends to be very high because it involves many people, both in the design and implementation of the campaign, as in the subsequent participation phase.

## Conclusions

The reorientation that the DGT has made of its marketing strategies in the face of a problem that had not been previously addressed with enough attention (high number of accidents and victims in urban areas) has been an advancement, both in the strategy itself and in the target audience. The DGT, with this campaign, adopts a position that moves away from the traditional, with a search for greater involvement and participation of the pedestrian.

This qualitative leap started with these new marketing actions; they have been very positive and have managed to engage pedestrians in the initiative “Caminantedigital,” establishing an emotional link with them through which messages are shared, that being the main objective of the campaign. Listening to the target audience is, currently, one of the keys to the new marketing strategies, trying to solve problems or needs that arise using the media technologies available as the main channel of communication.

The use of new technological tools (ICTs) and participation in social media are fundamental in the DGT’s new strategy, providing new and more rapid dissemination channels appropriate to marketing actions (Santesmases 2009, 2012). The speed and immediacy of interaction provided by mobile devices to users is today’s key tool for receiving and transmitting information, because it is the ideal channel in which they can be heard by companies or entities.

Along with the abovementioned strategy, the use of a “Creative Gamification” marketing approach to the target, the pedestrian, has been very effective and has become a decisive factor in this campaign.

The fact that the receiver of the information goes from being considered as a mere passive subject to being considered an active participant, with the ability to provide information, to feel heard by the institution, etc., is a breakthrough.

The implication of the user is immediate, because of the feeling of being part of a game (since people like to play and compete in these type of contests), being part of something collective (with the publication of the participants’ photographs on a webpage accessible to everyone), and receiving recognition or a prize (through selection and participation in a photo exhibition sponsored by PHotoEspaña). These actions foster participation. Alongside, this enables the creators of the campaign to have the perfect vehicle to promote the slogan or message on what they want to raise awareness, which is the main objective sought.

The sum of both has produced a viral spread in the media and in social networks, considerably multiplying the impact of the campaign, both in traditional media (press, radio, television, etc.) and in specialized pages and online media (blogs, Facebook, etc.). It is a good example that with a small investment and an attractive campaign, a powerful message can be achieved (Goel and Goldstein 2014).

This first step or experience has served to verify that these types of strategies can contribute to a public institution like the DGT, and it is a train of thought that would be convenient to continue advancing and innovating with new similar actions. These types of actions allow channeling different messages in a more direct and effective way toward the target audience.

The high participation and repercussion achieved in social media should be taken advantage of by gathering more information, problems, etc. provided by the pedestrian, in order for it to be used as support to the DGT. Other objectives and actions should be considered when dealing with problems, like looking for solutions or improvements on the urban road network or pedestrian public spaces or even raising awareness focusing on the driver and the pedestrian, leading to a decrease in the accident rate in these areas.

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## Discussion Questions

1. Considering the repercussion of the campaign, have the objectives been achieved?
2. Until now, the DGT has led to a shift in the marketing strategy used with the target audience, that is, from a consumer receiving information to a consumer that can be heard. What changes have this marketing strategy introduced with respect to those that have been made previously?
3. May have the use of new technological resources available to everyone been the key to success?
4. Has the full potential of this type of strategies and tools been exploited?
5. What could be the future line of action and the new marketing strategies from the DGT?

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