

CASE STUDIES & TEACHING CASES

The Ju Bochner case: born, raised, and globalized on Instagram

CLARICE KOGUT¹
LUÍZA NEVES MARQUES DA FONSECA^{2 3}
ANGELA DA ROCHA³

¹ PONTIFÍCIA UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA DO RIO DE JANEIRO (PUC-RIO) / IAG ESCOLA DE NEGÓCIOS, RIO DE JANEIRO – RJ, BRAZIL

² TECNOLÓGICO DE MONTERREY, CIDADE DO MÉXICO – CDMX, MEXICO

³ UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO DE JANEIRO (UFRJ) / INSTITUTO DE COPPEAD DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO, RIO DE JANEIRO – RJ, BRAZIL

INTRODUCTION

It was a lovely September morning in 2022, and Julia Bochner, a young jewelry designer and entrepreneur, was feeling confident and hopeful. Julia had founded her brand, Ju Bochner, less than four years before, and the brand had not only survived a pandemic that had lasted two years so far but had thrived and gone international in the meantime. Her pieces were being commercialized in two (soon to be three) physical locations in Portugal, and online via social media platform accounts and the company's own website. What is more, she had just found someone to represent her abroad: Gabi Lins¹, a super-connected rep who could take the brand to major international buyers in the industry.

As she was reading through her emails to start the day, she received a call from Ms. Lins:

– Hi Gabi, How are you?

– Great Julia, and super excited to start working with your brand! But listen, we need to make a few changes on your website and Instagram to reach a broader global public.

– What do you mean?

– I mean, all your Instagram posts and brand communications are in Portuguese; most of my clients only speak English [...] and they probably don't know most of the influencers you've been using. So we might want to internationalize that too.

Julia never thought that language would be a problem because she had always used lots of up-to-date photos, and some subtitles in both English and Portuguese, and she had named some of her pieces using English words. She thought she had already been employing a global form of communication and that the brand was already considered international. And regarding international promotion, her marketing campaigns have been very low budget so far. This year was the first time she had invested in a more professional campaign, using a good studio, a better photographer, models, influencers, etc. She was very happy with the result and hoped to use the same campaign globally. But now Gabi was telling her that she might need a campaign and marketing plan geared specifically for the international market. How much would that cost? Will she have to rethink pricing and the rest of her marketing mix as well? Would it be worth it? If not, which aspects should she focus on: language, local influencers, or designing another campaign [...]?

¹ Fictitious name for confidentiality reasons.

THE ENTREPRENEUR

Julia Bochner was an attractive Brazilian in her twenties. Like her brand and creations, she was fresh, and energetic, and added meaning to everything she did. She was very connected to nature and liked daytime activities, including surfing and yoga. She had a unique personality and style, clearly expressed in her authentic, delightful, and glittery jewelry.

Julia was the daughter of a well-positioned jewelry designer, which was very helpful in her formation and early years as an entrepreneur. First, she quickly developed a keen eye for design and gems. Before founding her own brand, she had studied abroad and had worked with her mother for over a year, whereby she was trained, gained experience in the industry, and fell in love with jewelry design. Second, she had access to wealthy, culturally and socially influential people, which helped her understand the desires of her future clients. Third, her new brand was often associated with her mother's brand's already positive image and reputation due to their family connection.

The decision to create her own company was prompted by the intent to make high-quality, affordable jewelry (targeting a younger crowd) that conveyed the unique lifestyle and tropical summer of her charming hometown, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

THE INDUSTRY

Worldwide

The global jewelry market size had reached almost USD 250 billion in 2021 and was expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 8.5% until 2030². From 2012 through 2021, online jewelry sales had increased by an average of 4% per annum.³ The Asia-Pacific region accounted for the largest revenue share in 2021: more than 60% of the total market, owing mainly to the large consumption of gold in China and India.

The market was characterized by intense competition, with the presence of some well-established players, as well as several other mid-sized and smaller players. As one of the fastest growing branches of the luxury segment, the jewelry market began to attract the traditional fashion houses, which debuted their jewelry collections in 2019. Even though they had not had much previous experience in the segment, their brand power around the world made up for it. In addition, competition was becoming tougher with the rise of independent niche brands around the world.

Among the most prominent global trends for the jewelry market were men's increasing acceptance of jewelry - especially cufflinks, gold chains, signet rings and various gender-neutral pieces – and the growth in spending on bridal jewelry, paralleling the rise of the amount being spent on weddings, receptions, etc. Diamonds continued to be the mainstay of jewelry pieces, owing to their perennial association with status and romantic occasions. Nevertheless, the Danish firm Pandora, one of the largest global jewelry producers, shocked the industry in 2021 when they announced that, due to sustainability and environmental concerns, they would work exclusively with lab-grown gems instead of mined diamonds. The increased consumer awareness regarding sustainability and ethical production also spiked tendencies such as the use of recycled gold and precious metals salvaged from waste, in addition to the use of technology to ensure the traceability of metals and gemstones.

In Brazil

Traditionally, Brazilian jewelry pieces were handcrafted by artisans, and were known for using various precious gemstones, which meant that they were generally more expensive. Brazilian jewelry designers were globally recognized for their ability to combine gemstones to create pieces that were colorful, yet sophisticated. This variety of craftsmanship had developed due to the abundance and assortment of world class gemstones available in the country.⁴

² Grand View Research. Retrieved from <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/jewelry-market>

³ Matter of Form. Retrieved from <https://www.matterofform.com/news/articles/jewellery-industry-trends>

⁴ Mordor Intelligence. Retrieved from <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/brazil-jewelry-market-industry>

Brazil's jewelry market was highly fragmented, comprised of many small brands and a vast amount of brandless products. For instance, one of the major national players, Jóias Vivara, held only 5% of the market share in 2018.⁵ The Brazilian market represented half of the entire Latin American jewelry market in 2017, although the region was second-to-last in terms of market size, with estimated sales around USD 7.5 billion.⁶ While the jewelry segment had faced a setback starting in 2016, it started to bounce back in 2021, pushed mainly by the increase in online retail sales. According to the Brazilian Institute for Gems and Precious Stones,⁷ this increase was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which not only stimulated the growth of e-commerce and online shopping in general, but also reduced travel and social get-togethers, thus decreasing consumer expenses. Nevertheless, the Brazilian jewelry market saw a 20% increase in revenue in 2021, reaching USD 4.5 billion. Export figures for the same year reached USD 146 million, with Germany and the United States as the primary destinations.

INSTAGRAM

According to Statista,⁸ in 2022 Instagram was the third most important social media platform for B2B and B2C marketers, just behind Facebook and LinkedIn. Over 1.2 billion people were active monthly users of the platform, accounting for over 28% of the world's internet users. Overall, Instagram benefited from energetic social interaction among its users and was one of the most popular mobile social apps worldwide, showing high levels of user engagement and time consumption – an average of 30 minutes per day. As of January 2023, India and the U.S. were the top two countries with the highest number of Instagram users; Brazil was third, with 113.5 million people.

Despite having started out as a platform for personal online photo-sharing, Instagram evolved into a “cultural hub and place for more than a billion people around the world to discover and connect with inspirational businesses.”⁹ It gave entrepreneurs the opportunity to start an online business by promoting their brands and products to a wide range of customers. The platform also provided companies with business accounts, where they could follow metrics on performance, insights into their followers, and opportunities for obtaining information and sharing links to their own websites. At least 44% of people used Instagram for weekly shopping, and 90% of users followed at least one business account. Due to the great potential of reaching potential customers, over 200 million business profiles were active in 2021, and Instagram's advertising revenue was around USD 26.46 billion.¹⁰

The relevance and potential reach of social media platforms transformed them into a “must be” place for brands' advertisement campaigns, as they had become the most popular and successful form of digital marketing. According to a global survey by Statista,¹¹ in 2022 90% of social media marketers used Facebook and 79% used Instagram to promote awareness of their business and to draw traffic to their website. Even though the massive customer base on Facebook was still unbeatable (2.8 billion users), marketers reported that Instagram, Youtube and even TikTok were starting to become more relevant in their advertisement budgets, and they expected to invest more in them in upcoming years. Being present on Instagram seemed to be extremely relevant, especially for fashion and luxury beauty brands because celebrities and other famous personalities were constantly using their networks to promote such brands to their countless followers.

⁵ Euromonitor. Retrieved from <https://www.euromonitor.com/article/panorama-setor-joalheiro-na-america-latina>

⁶ Overview of the Jewelry Sector in Latin America. Retrieved from <https://www.euromonitor.com/article/panorama-setor-joalheiro-na-america-latina>

⁷ Valor Economico. Retrieved from <https://valor.globo.com/impreso/noticia/2022/02/18/receita-do-setor-de-joias-cresce-20.ghtml>

⁸ Statista. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/topics/1882/instagram/>

⁹ Instagram Business. Retrieved from <https://business.instagram.com/>

¹⁰ Omnicore. Retrieved from <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/>

¹¹ Statista. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/259379/social-media-platforms-used-by-marketers-worldwide/>

THE COMPANY

Ju Bochner was a brand created and developed by women for women. When it was founded in 2018, the goal was to make long-lasting, timeless jewelry with a practical and adaptable design that was both suitable for everyday use and special occasions: “for every woman in every circumstance.” The primary target audience was 25-45-year-old women who were financially independent and bought their own jewelry to express their personalities.

The company’s competitive differentials lay in its “Brazilianess” (inspired by the tropical summer and unique lifestyle of Rio de Janeiro), affordability, and product diversity. As a result, the jewelry was considered authentic, fun, of high quality, and easy to wear. With the same elements in different shapes and models, Ju Bochner had weekly drops of new designs that could be layered and combined with earlier-model pieces, such that any woman could express her own style with the endless possibilities of mixing, matching and layering a variety of necklaces, hoops, rings, bracelets, earrings, and pendants. Julia added: “I make jewelry for it to be an extra layer of sparkle against the skin; a glittering detail that makes a real difference and illuminates and brightens the personality.”

History

The company began outsourcing its production process from the very beginning and had the scalability to serve both domestic and international markets. Julia started her venture using her mother’s business physical structure (office and storage spaces), as well as her connections in the jewelry industry to choose suppliers and goldsmiths that met Julia’s standards. Her initial plan was to launch the brand and the website together and to sell mostly online. However, she soon realized that it would be hard for her to manage all the company’s processes by herself, from designing, accompanying the products’ manufacturing and overseeing marketing decisions (campaign and catalog pictures, product promotion via social media, and website management), so some of the plans ended up being postponed. She explained: “My idea was to launch the brand and the website together, but before I could even take professional pictures of the products and upload them, I had already sold all my inventory!”

As the website was not possible at the time, the company focused on promoting and selling its products via social media, especially Instagram and WhatsApp. As the entrepreneur had a fairly large and targeted personal network, the newly launched brand had a good response rate. All sales were initiated on Instagram, but only forty percent were completed on that platform. The other sixty percent migrated to the WhatsApp number disclosed on the Instagram account and were completed with a salesperson and payment link provided by a digital bank. Julia commented:

The speed of Instagram is amazing, and it is something that a website doesn’t have. The jewelry piece arrives, you take a few nice pictures with your phone, and it is ready to sell [...]. The proximity that you get with your clients is also very positive because you get to talk to them personally and create a bond that would not be possible if it was just the website. Since I have a higher ticket product, this feature is very helpful.

Instagram made it possible for Ju Bochner to start selling even without a physical or online proprietary channel, and for the brand to start growing organically, reaching a targeted audience that very willingly started following the company’s profile. In the beginning, the company did not use paid advertisements or influencers to promote its account, and the content was created by Julia herself. She remarked: “Instagram promoted my business to reach places that I would have not imagined reaching so quickly, and most of it is free, or nearly free.” Later, she started to invest in push strategies to reach more people, paying the platform for the content. More recently, due to changes in Instagram, she had to invest more money to keep traffic flowing and to hire a marketing consultant specialized in social media and media allocation.

Internationalization

The firm's internationalization began shortly after the brand was launched, as Brazilians living abroad started following the posts on Instagram and demanding its products. Julia soon learned how to ship small orders abroad by mail, thus becoming an exporter. After a while, she realized there were a lot of ex-pat Brazilians who were buying jewelry from Ju Bochner. Those customers lived mainly in Europe and Miami and were "walking displays" of her pieces, attracting other customers. So, even though Julia had not planned to internationalize, the brand soon became international. And when she realized the potential benefits – avoiding the risk of having all the company's clients in Brazil, not losing customers that were moving abroad, increasing her customer base, and sporting a positive brand image – she was convinced that internationalization was a good strategy for the brand.

Her mother, also a jewelry designer, had followed the internationalization path a few years earlier and was living in Portugal. Hence, Julia's first decision was to send a few pieces to her mother's store in Cascais to "test the waters. It was a resounding success. Local sales proved what unsolicited Instagram orders were already showing: the Ju Bochner brand had international appeal. Consequently, a second physical point of sale was opened in Lisbon within another of her mother's stores. In addition to the benefits of sharing logistics costs with her mother's business in Portugal, the country was home to a substantial number of Brazilian immigrants, a situation that made the brand's entry smoother, given the company's limited resources at the time and the use of Brazilian Portuguese in all its promotional efforts. A third store-in-store was expected to open in Marina de Cascais, Portugal in 2023, confirming Portugal's acceptance of the Ju Bochner brand and the entrepreneur's belief in the brand's international potential.

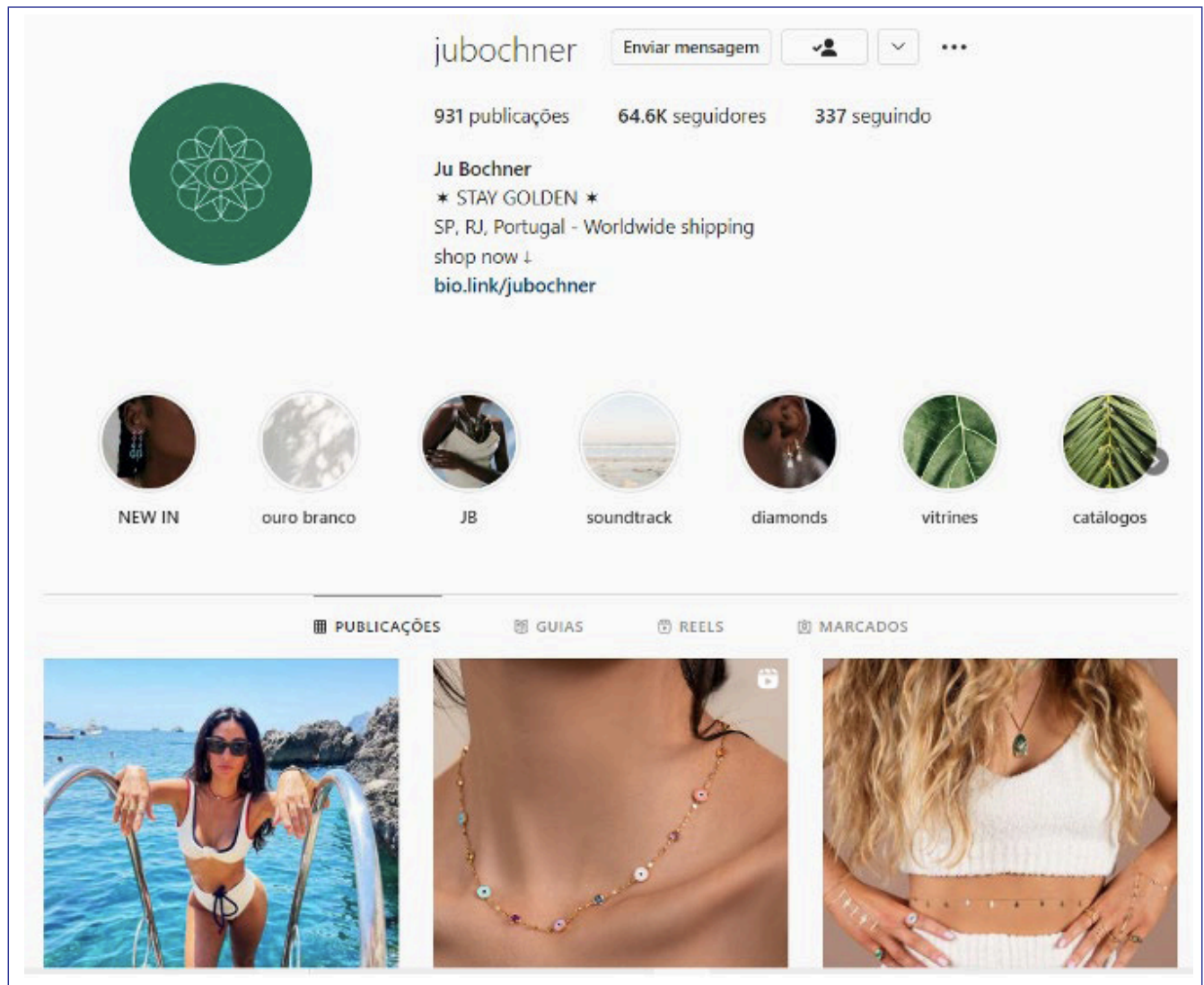
In 2022, a company interested in representing the brand abroad approached Julia. The company, headed by Gabi Lins, represented Brazilian jewelry designers that had "unique, recognizable traces in their creations' DNA," meaning that they were authentic and had distinctive "Brazilianess" in their design. The company's function was to introduce the brand to the most prestigious department stores around the world, thereby creating opportunities for jewelry "Made in Brazil." Gabi's connections included leading international luxury e-commerce and department stores in major capitals in the U.S. and Europe. Gabi's services also included global marketing consultancy and, for an additional fee, helping clients with the bureaucratic export process.

NEXT STEPS

With the Ju Bochner brand increasing its presence abroad, Julia knew that she needed to invest more outside her Brazilian Portuguese comfort zone. But how could she do that? Should she hire global influencers, or local ones for each market she would target? Could she have just one Instagram account? Could she change just her communication strategy or would that imply having completely different marketing mixes for Brazilians and foreigners? She decided to schedule a meeting with Gabi Lins and her Brazilian marketing advisor (a third-party consultant) the following day to discuss those issues before making a decision.

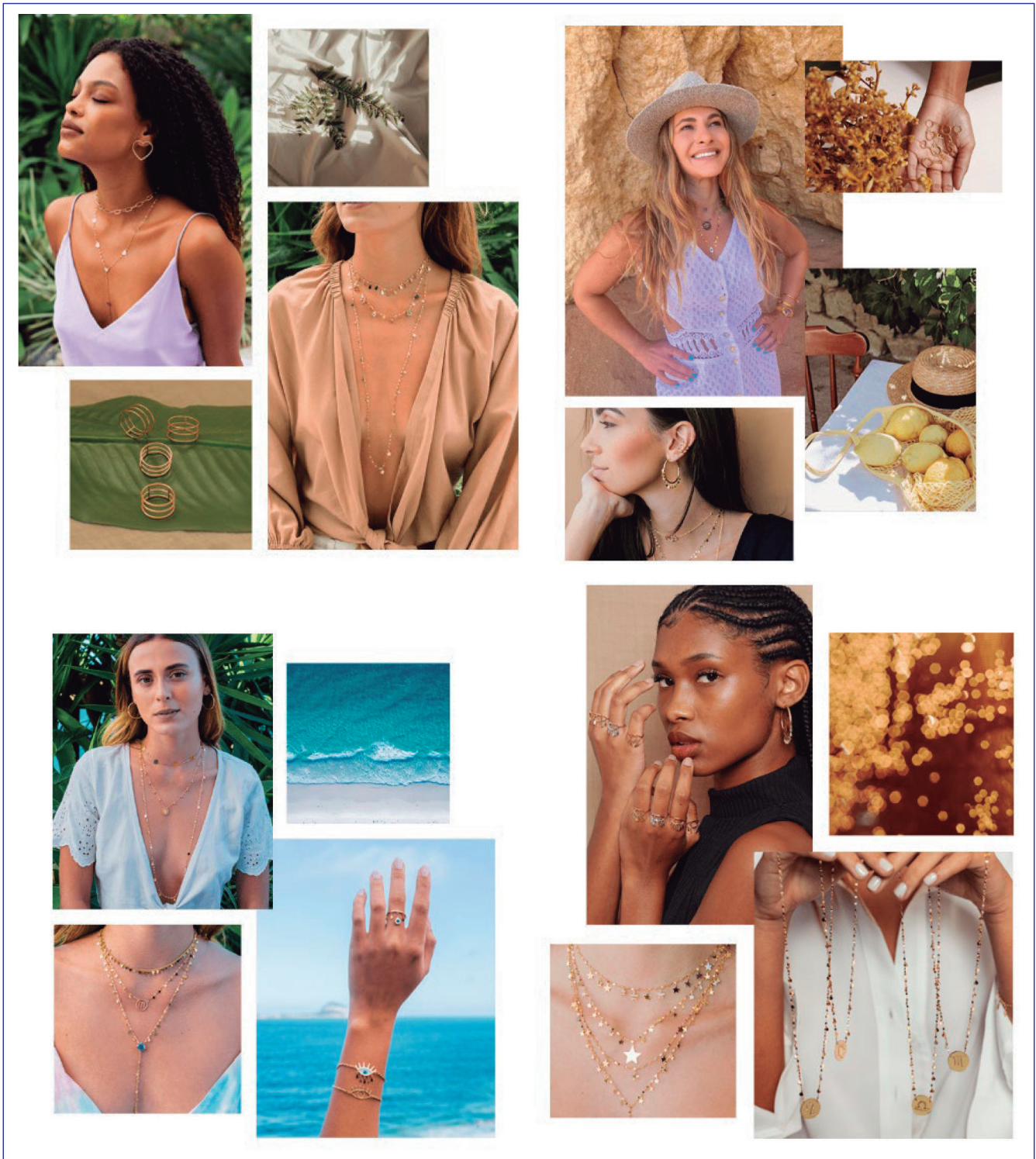
APPENDIX

Figure 1
Brand's Instagram posts in 2022



Source: Ju Bochner Instagram.

Figure 2
Brand's inspirational images



Source: Ju Bochner Website.

TEACHING NOTES

The Ju Bochner case: born, raised, and globalized on Instagram

Abstract

This teaching case presents the dilemmas of a small jewelry brand, Ju Bochner, in its efforts to expand internationally. The brand was born, grew, and became international on a digital platform ecosystem (DPE) – Instagram, but now aims to expand further. To achieve this goal, the company will leverage everything the platform offers, but it will also have to make some choices and invest some money. Will the company need different means of communication to target international clients? What changes will be necessary? Will it be worth it? This is a real case, based on primary and secondary data sources. Its purpose is to put students in the protagonist's shoes to actively teach them about the concepts of (1) the internationalization of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), (2) DPEs, (3) the benefits and limitations of a country's diaspora, and (4) adaptation versus standardization in promotion and marketing strategies.

Keywords: Internationalization. SMEs. DPEs. International entrepreneurship. Diaspora. Adaptation strategy.

O caso Ju Bochner: nascida, criada e globalizada no Instagram

Resumo

Este caso de ensino apresenta os dilemas enfrentados por uma pequena marca de joias – Ju Bochner – para crescer internacionalmente. Nascida, “criada” e internacionalizada em um ecossistema de plataforma digital (DPE) – o Instagram – a marca agora quer expandir mais. Para isso, explorará tudo o que a plataforma oferece, mas também terá que fazer algumas escolhas e investir algum dinheiro. Será preciso uma comunicação diferente para atingir clientes internacionais? Que mudanças são necessárias? Vale a pena? Trata-se de um caso real, baseado em fontes primárias e secundárias de dados, que visa colocar os alunos no lugar do protagonista para aprender ativamente os conceitos de (1) Internacionalização das Pequenas e Médias Empresas (PME); (2) DPEs, (3) benefícios e limitações de uma diáspora nacional e (4) adaptação x padronização na estratégia de promoção e marketing.

Palavras-chave: Internacionalização. PME. Ecossistemas de plataforma digital. Empreendedorismo internacional. Diáspora. Estratégia de adaptação.

El caso Ju Bochner: nacida, criada y globalizada en Instagram

Resumen

Este caso de enseñanza presenta los dilemas de una pequeña marca de joyería, Ju Bochner, en su crecimiento internacional. Nacida, crecida e internacionalizada en un ecosistema de plataforma digital (DPE) – Instagram – la marca ahora quiere expandirse aún más. Para ello, explotará todo lo que ofrece la plataforma, pero también tendrá que tomar algunas decisiones e invertir algo de dinero: ¿necesitará una comunicación diferente para llegar a los clientes internacionales? ¿Qué cambios son necesarios? ¿Vale la pena? Se trata de un caso real, basado en fuentes primarias y secundarias de datos, que pretende poner a los estudiantes en el lugar del protagonista para aprender activamente los conceptos de (1) Internacionalización de las pequeñas y medianas empresas (PYME); (2) DPE, (3) beneficios y limitaciones de una diáspora nacional, y (4) adaptación vs. estandarización de la estrategia de promoción y marketing.

Palabras clave: Internacionalización. PYME. Ecosistema de plataforma digital. Emprendimiento internacional. Diáspora. Estrategia de adaptación.

CASE DESCRIPTION

This teaching case presents the dilemmas of a small jewelry brand – Ju Bochner – in its efforts to grow internationally. Born, grown, and internationalized in a digital platform ecosystem – Instagram – the brand now wants to grow beyond the environs of its original clients. To do so, it plans to exploit everything the platform offers but it will also have to make some choices and invest some money; hence the following questions: Will the brand need different communication content to target international clients? What will have to be changed? Are such changes necessary and worth it?

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this teaching case is to use the method of active learning in order to help students understand the concepts of

- The internationalization of SMEs.
- Digital platform ecosystems.
- Diaspora (benefits and limitations in terms of business opportunities).
- Adaptation vs. standardization strategies.

Target audience & equipment needed

The case was designed for students of undergraduate and graduate/MBA courses in International Business, International Marketing, and/ or International Entrepreneurship. Only a projector and a computer are needed to present the case.

Sources of information

This is a real case, written based on both primary (in-person interviews with the protagonist) and secondary (Instagram and website) sources.

SUGGESTED TEACHING PLAN

A teaching plan is as follows:

- Opening: 10 minutes.
- Small-group discussion: 20-30 minutes.
- Introduction: 10 minutes.
- Discussion: 60-120 minutes.
- Closure: 10-20 minutes.

If the instructor is pressed for time, some of the following assignment questions may be skipped (the instructor may choose which concepts to explore) or the case may be extended to a double session.

Assignment questions

- How did Ju Bochner decide to internationalize?
- Do you think the company's size is sufficient for it to operate internationally?
- How do you think Instagram has influenced the internationalization of companies like Ju Bochner?
- Can Ju Bochner be a global company with a social media account in Portuguese only?
- Should Ju Bochner have just one social media account (one language) or more than one (in different languages)?
- Which alternative would you recommend to the entrepreneur?

Introduction

The instructor can start the class by asking students how many were familiar with the Ju Bochner brand before reading the case (and of those who were familiar with it, how many were Brazilian or Continental Portuguese speakers). Alternatively, the instructor might ask: “And how many of you know of or buy from small brands that ship internationally, like Ju Bochner?”

Transition/Assignment question (Q)1: How did Ju Bochner decide to internationalize?

The intention is to show that Julia did not make a formal future strategic plan to internationalize the brand, it was a natural move due to the entrepreneur’s history, personality, values, and context. Also, by virtue of being on a digital platform with global reach since inception, it was already international (born-global).

The instructor can highlight some of the quotes from the case:

“Ju Bochner’s internationalization began shortly after the brand’s launch, as some Brazilians living outside the country would start following her posts on Instagram and ask for her pieces.”

“So, Julia’s first decision was to send a few pieces to her mother’s store in Cascais to “test the waters.” It was a resounding success.”

Extra (optional): If desired, the instructor can read and briefly share with students regarding entrepreneurial cognition and how it influences business inception and growth. Some interesting references are:

- Bird, B. (1988). Implementing entrepreneurial ideas: the case for intention. *Academy of management Review*, 13(3), 442-453. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258091>
- Mitchell, R. K., Busenitz, L. W., Bird, B., Marie Gaglio, C., McMullen, J. S., Morse, E. A., & Smith, J. B. (2007). The central question in entrepreneurial cognition research 2007. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 31(1), 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2007.00161.x>
- Mitchell, R. K., Busenitz, L. W., Lant, T., McDougall, P. P., Morse, E. A., & Smith, J. B. (2002). Toward a theory of entrepreneurial cognition: rethinking the people side of entrepreneurship research. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 27(2), 93-104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-8520.00001>

Discussion plan

Concept 1: the SME internationalization process

Q2: Do you think the company’s size is sufficient for it to operate internationally?

Following the discussion about the company’s decision to export and its international trajectory, the instructor could guide students to think about how a company’s small size could be a liability to its global expansion, and how traditional multinationals usually follow other paths (domestic market growth up to a certain size prior to internationalization). The instructor may cite some internationalization path-dependency theories such as the Uppsala Model if it fits the course curriculum.

Students will also probably start citing examples of small entrepreneurial companies that have internationalized. To make these examples case relevant, the instructor may ask questions about how these companies’ internationalization processes developed. Students might remember cases of service or software companies (many of which are born global) that internationalized with the help of a partner. If the instructor has already covered any of these topics (for example, network theory) elsewhere in the discipline or in a related course, they could be addressed only briefly.

The discussion should lead to the understanding that the widespread use of the Internet made global connectivity more accessible, enabling firms to leverage their information-processing capabilities (Sinkovics et al., 2013) and to perform a variety of international marketing functions online. Digital technologies can make it easier to interact with suppliers, business partners, users, and potential customers, regardless of their location (Dagnino & Resciniti, 2021; Hervé et al., 2020). Digitalization has also been acknowledged to lower the costs of doing business abroad and to accelerate the speed and increase the scope of firms’ internationalization by facilitating knowledge acquisition and business coordination (Bergamaschi et al., 2021), thus reducing distance between the domestic and the international market. Particularly in countries where information and communication technology capabilities are less advanced, possessing them seems to have an influence on small firms’ export decision and intensity (Hagsten & Kotnik, 2017). Having an online presence and interacting with customers from other countries could

lower managerial perceptions of psychic distance, thus reducing export barriers (Yamin & Sinkovics, 2006). Digital platforms such as Instagram have enhanced firms' online presence even more, thereby impacting internationalization decisions as well. The next question addresses this potential effect:

Q3: How do you think Instagram and other social media platforms have influenced the internationalization of companies like Ju Bochner?

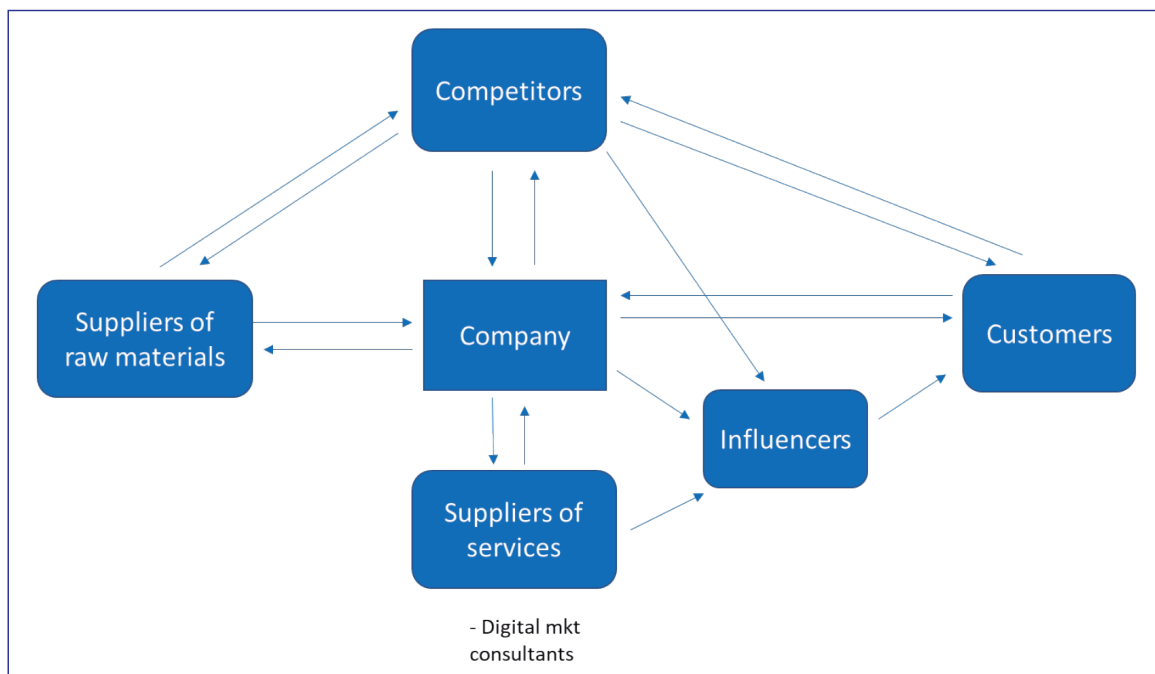
Answers should be related to how the DPE can help small entrepreneurial firms reach a global base of customers, use mechanisms to close sales, conduct monetary transactions, and regulate customer relationships (Mannyika & Lund, 2016), thus making their internationalization possible.

Students are expected to cite Ju Bochner's case: being on Instagram enabled Ju Bochner to reach customers from all over the world and to receive orders from customers living abroad, enabling the entrepreneur to realize that there was an opportunity to serve other markets as well through an online presence (Sigfusson & Chetty, 2013; Song & Wu, 2021). Additionally, the company was contacted on Instagram by several other companies that were interested in acting as intermediaries, agents, representatives, or suppliers of the brand abroad. Although Julia did not envision her company's growth happening via a sudden expansion through retailers, she was open to this alternative and decided that Gabi Lin was the best choice for the company's internationalization to happen in a controlled manner. Gabi's experience and capabilities were complementary of Ju Bochner's. All the connections were made through the platform ecosystem, making it possible for Ju Bochner to overcome liabilities connected to smallness, newness, and foreignness (Fraccastoro et al., 2021), and consequently to accelerate its internationalization process.

Concept 2: DPE

The previous discussion will make the introduction of the next topic easier. The instructor can draw on the board all the connection of the brand with other players, made possible through Instagram. He/she can do that right after the discussion and during the previous discussion. A final schematic representation of this discussion should be something like Figure 3:

Figure 3
Ju Bochner's connections in the platform ecosystem



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Students will be able to visualize the fact that social media platforms such as Instagram are one type of DPE (Alaimo et al., 2020). Interestingly, social media platforms started as tools for networking and community building, but later evolved to facilitate business exchanges by connecting a varied group of actors (Alaimo et al., 2020; Stallkamp & Schotter, 2021). Nevertheless, social media platforms still share some characteristics with DPEs in general, including co-creation of value among users and multiple network effects. However, it is the ability to connect actors on a worldwide scale that has changed the logic of how a small company internationalizes (Zahra & Nambisan, 2011).

Instructors can ask students provocative questions regarding the location of suppliers and clients, proposing the debate of if geographic boundaries have lost their relevance, as proposed by De Reuver et al. (2018). Instructors can provoke students by arguing that there has been a significant change in the way of doing business related to the digital nature of interactions among players, but that it still has to be completed by the physical delivery of goods (Stallkamp & Schotter, 2021).

Q4: Can Ju Bochner be a global company with a social media account in Portuguese?

Concept 3: Diaspora

Some students will be inclined to argue that truly global companies need communication in a universal language such as English. Instructors should encourage debate and let students argue by asking questions such as: “But isn’t Ju Bochner already international?” “What defines a ‘global company’?” and “Is it the language it communicates in?” etc.

But in the end, students should inductively understand that by promoting its brand only in Brazilian Portuguese, Ju Bochner is limiting its geographic and demographic expansion to the Brazilian diaspora, or, at best, to other Portuguese-speaking communities. The instructor might take the opportunity to emphasize that there are many cases in which a company uses a certain nation/culture/language-speaking diaspora to determine its internationalization strategy, but to move beyond this ceiling, the brand might need to invest in new capabilities and/or partnerships. An interesting article to read to expand one’s understanding of this concept is (for instructor’s use, or to be used as suggested reading for students):

- Kumar, N., & Steenkamp, J. B. E. (2013). Diaspora marketing. *Harvard Business Review*, 91(10), 127. <https://hbr.org/2013/10/diaspora-marketing>

Q5: So, given the discussion on the growth ceiling, do you believe Ju Bochner should (i) have two separate social media accounts (one in Portuguese and one in English, for example) or (ii) just one (either in Portuguese, in English or a combination of the two)?

Concept 4: marketing strategy: standardization vs. adaptations of communication

This is a long-standing debate in International Marketing, with valid arguments in both directions. As students point out their arguments, the instructor should make notes on the board. At the end of the discussion, the bottom line is that a standardized, one-size-fits-all communication in English, Portuguese or a combination of the two would be easier and cheaper but might not reach all the consumers the brand intends to reach (less costs but also probably less revenues). A customized approach (two or more social media accounts / websites) might cost more (much more work and control) but might also bring in more revenues.

It is worth noting that communication is not the only issue up for discussion; similar discussions on standardizing or customizing strategies must be made simultaneously regarding the other 3Ps of the marketing mix (pricing, product, and place) as one might affect the other. If the instructor wishes to go further into this discussion with students or suggest additional readings, here are some seminal articles:

- Ghemawat, P. (2007). Managing differences: the central challenge of global strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(3), 58-68. <https://hbr.org/2007/03/managing-differences-the-central-challenge-of-global-strategy>
- Levitt, T. (1983). The globalization of markets. *Harvard Business Review*, 83(61), 92-102. <https://hbr.org/1983/05/the-globalization-of-markets>

Q6: What alternative would you recommend to the entrepreneur?

The student should consider the implications of each choice in terms of the brand's resources and strategic objectives. If the entrepreneur intends to keep her company small, it would probably make sense to continue targeting the Brazilian diaspora, and thus use a standardized marketing approach. If she is more ambitious and intends to become much larger, it appears that the best choice would be to target a broader audience and adapt the company's marketing mix to different markets and target audiences. In any case, the starting point is the answer to the question: What does the entrepreneur envisage for her company? Even if she intends to grow, perhaps she needs to consider different phases in her marketing strategy, starting with targeting only the Brazilian diaspora in various countries, and later developing a more complex approach with multiple target markets and customers. The diversification of customer targets to include a number of country or region segments will depend to a large extent on the resources available, particularly financial and human.

Closure

To end this case, the instructor can ask students: *Now that you know a little bit more about the brand and about DPES, would you buy jewelry from Ju Bochner?*

- If the instructor has time to continue the discussions, reasons why or why not might be explored, as some important concepts might come up, such as:
- Importance of physical stores/omnichannel strategy.
- Importance of digital influencers.
- Difference between high involvement and low involvement purchases.
- Physical and social distance (localness) and their impact on interactions.
- Ethical concerns related to the origin of the gems and raw materials.

REFERENCES

- Alaimo, C., Kallinikos, J., & Valderrama, E. (2020). Platforms as service ecosystems: Lessons from social media. *Journal of Information Technology*, 35(1), 25-48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268396219881462>
- Dagnino, G. B., & Resciniti, R. (2021). Introduction to the special issue: "The age of digital internationalization – Strategic capabilities, cultural distance and customer value". *Journal of Management and Governance*, 25, 967-981. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10997-021-09603-8>
- De Reuver, M., Sorensen, C., & Basole, R. C. (2018). The digital platform: A research agenda. *Journal of Information Technology*, 33(2), 124-135. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41265-016-0033-3>
- Fraccastaro, S., Gabriellsson, M., & Chetty, S. (2021). Social media firm specific advantages as enablers of network embeddedness of international entrepreneurial ventures. *Journal of World Business*, 56(3), 101164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2020.101164>
- Ghemawat, P. (2007). Managing differences: The central challenge of global strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(3), 58-68. <https://hbr.org/2007/03/managing-differences-the-central-challenge-of-global-strategy>
- Hagsten, E., & Kotnik, P. (2017). ICT as facilitator of internationalisation in small-and medium-sized firms. *Small Business Economics*, 48(2), 431-446. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-016-9781-2>
- Hervé, A., Schmitt, C., & Baldegger, R. (2020). Internationalization and digitalization: Applying digital technologies to the internationalization process of small and medium-sized enterprises. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 10(7), 28-40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22215/timreview/1373>
- Kretschmer, T., Leiponen, A., Schilling, M., & Vasudeva, G. (2022). Platform ecosystems as meta-organizations: Implications for platform strategies. *Strategic Management Journal*, 43, 403-424. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.3250>
- Kumar, N., & Steenkamp, J.B.E. (2013). Diaspora marketing. *Harvard Business Review*, 91(10), 127. <https://hbr.org/2013/10/diaspora-marketing>
- Levitt, T. (1983). The globalization of markets. *Harvard Business Review*, 83(61), 92-102. <https://hbr.org/1983/05/the-globalization-of-markets>
- Li, J., Chen, L., Yi, J., Mao, J., & Liao, J. (2019). Ecosystem-specific advantages in international digital commerce. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 50, 1448-1463. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-019-00263-3>
- Manyika, J., & Lund, S. (2016). *Globalization for the little guy*. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/globalization-for-the-little-guy>
- Sigfusson, T., & Chetty, S. (2013). Building international entrepreneurial virtual networks in cyberspace. *Journal of World Business*, 48(2), 260-270. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2012.07.011>
- Song, D., & Wu, A. (2021). Pursuing international opportunities in a digitally enabled world. In M. Soltanifar, M. Hughes, & L. Göcke (Eds.), *Digital entrepreneurship: Future of business and finance*. Springer.
- Stallkamp, M., & Schotter, A. P. J. (2021). Platform without borders? The international strategies of digital platform firms. *Global Strategy Journal*, 11(1), 58-80. <https://doi.org/10.1002/gsj.1336>
- Yamin, M., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2006). Online internationalisation, psychic distance reduction and the virtuality trap. *International Business Review*, 15(4), 339-360. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2006.03.002>
- Zahra, S. A., & Nambisan, S. (2011). Entrepreneurship in global innovation ecosystems. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, 1(1), 4-17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13162-011-0004-3>

Clarice Kogut

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4760-654X>

Ph.D. in Management from the Coppead Graduate School of Business at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ); Post-doctoral studies from the IAG Business School at Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio); MBA from Columbia University; Professor of Strategy and International Business from the IAG Escola de Negócios at Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio). E-mail: clarice.kogut@coppead.ufrj.br

Luiza Neves Marques da Fonseca

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7370-8910>

Ph.D. and a MSc. in Business Administration from the IAG Business School at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio); Researcher from the Organizational Strategy Group at Tecnológico de Monterrey; Researcher from the Nupin Center of International Business Research at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio); Professor of International Business at Tecnológico de Monterrey. E-mail: luizaneves@phd.iag.puc-rio.br

Angela da Rocha

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6651-0933>

Ph.D. in Business Administration from the IESE Business School at University of Navarra; Leading researcher of the National Council for Scientific Research (CNPq); Member of the Consortium for International Marketing Research (CIMAR); Professor of Marketing and International Business from the Coppead Graduate School of Business at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). E-mail: angelarocha@iag.puc-rio.br

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Clarice Kogut: Project administration (Lead); Supervision (Supporting); Validation (Equal); Visualization (Equal); Writing - original draft (Leading); Writing - review & editing (Equal).

Luiza Neves Marques da Fonseca: Project administration (Supporting); Validation (Equal); Visualization (Equal); Writing - original draft (Supporting); Writing - review & editing (Equal).

Angela da Rocha: Project administration (Supporting); Supervision (Lead); Validation (Equal); Visualization (Equal); Writing - review & editing (Equal).

DATA AVAILABILITY

The dataset supporting the results of this study is not publicly available.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was funded by CAPES – Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (grant 88887.486047/2020-00) and CNPq – Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (grants 309410/2021-5 and 403842/2023-9).

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Hélio Arthur Reis Irigaray (Fundação Getulio Vargas, Rio de Janeiro / RJ – Brazil). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9580-7859>

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Fabrizio Stocker (Fundação Getulio Vargas, Rio de Janeiro / RJ – Brazil). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6340-9127>

REVIEWERS

Carlos Augusto Gonçalves de Castro (Fundação Getulio Vargas, Brasília / DF – Brazil). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6060-6651>

Elisabeth Regina Loliola (Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador / BA – Brazil). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3759-9048>

Two of the reviewers did not authorize the disclosure of their identities.

PEER REVIEW REPORT

The peer review report is available at this URL: <https://periodicos.fgv.br/cadernosebape/article/view/91019/85518>