

Innovative Application of the Omnichannel Strategy through Digital App Marketing : A Case Study of Inditex

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Abstract: Rapid developments in mobile communication technologies and digital marketing have transformed sales and distribution management by enabling innovative business models that integrate physical and digital channels. In this context, this study examines the experience of Inditex in implementing the Omni-Channel strategy through its Integrated Online Platform (IOP), recognized as a leading model of digital marketing innovation. The study employs a descriptive-analytical approach based on the case study method. Data were gathered from the company's annual reports, official publications, and relevant academic literature. The findings reveal that Inditex's continuous investments in technological infrastructure and digital solutions have facilitated seamless integration between online and offline channels. This integration has significantly enhanced customer experience, improved interactions across multiple touchpoints, strengthened channel coordination, and accelerated the growth of online sales. The study concludes that the Omni-Channel strategy is a key driver of marketing innovation in the digital business environment, enabling firms to enhance their competitive advantage and marketing performance. Moreover, the Inditex case demonstrates how digital transformation can modernize distribution systems and create sustainable customer value, establishing the company as an international benchmark in omnichannel retailing.

Keywords: Innovative Strategy; Distribution Strategies; Digital Applications; Omni-Channel; Digital Marketing.

1. Introduction

Organizations operate within a dynamic and rapidly evolving environment that necessitates continuous innovation to ensure sustainability and long-term growth. Marketing innovation represents one of the most critical sources of competitive differentiation, particularly in a technology-driven economy. With accelerated scientific progress, the expansion of the information revolution, and intensifying market competition, innovation in marketing strategies—especially through digital integration—has become increasingly vital for achieving and sustaining competitive advantage.

Within this context, innovative marketing in distribution strategies has attracted significant scholarly and managerial attention, particularly with the emergence of multi-channel approaches and their implications for both firms and consumers. Whereas traditional and digital channels were initially managed in isolation, the advent of the Omni-Channel strategy has introduced a more integrated and innovative paradigm, enabling consumers to experience a seamless and unified shopping journey across both physical and digital touchpoints.

1.1. Research Problematic:

How can organizations maximize the benefits of digital application marketing within the innovative Omni-Channel strategy? Furthermore, what is the current state of its implementation in the case of Inditex through its (IOP) platform?

1.2. Research Aims:

This study aims to:

- Explain the transformation of distribution channels from traditional to digital models;
- Identify the innovative dimensions of adopting multi-channel strategies;
- Examine the benefits for managers and practitioners operating in multi-channel retail environments;
- Analyze the innovative implementation of the Omni-Channel strategy by Inditex through its (IOP) platform;
- Assess its impact on online sales performance;
- Explore the innovative updates of the digital application of ZARA.

1.3. Research Significance:

The significance of this study lies in the following aspects:

- It highlights the transformation of distribution channels from traditional to digital formats;
- It underscores the growing role of marketing innovation in achieving sustainable competitive advantage;
- It emphasizes the importance of multi-channel and Omni-Channel strategies in enhancing customer experience;
- It provides practical insights through the analysis of a real-world case;
- It supports managers and marketing practitioners in better understanding digital integration within distribution systems

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2. Theoretical Framework of the Study

2.1. Innovative Marketing Strategies:

Innovative marketing, focused on renewing the marketing mix, has become essential for organizations to attract and retain customers, create new opportunities, and gain a competitive edge through superior value. Innovative marketing can be viewed as a customer-oriented organizational philosophy designed to achieve competitive advantage over other firms by relying on new ideas and translating them into practice through a renewed vision of products or working methods. This may result in the development of a new product, major modifications, or service improvements, all of which provide the firm with temporary monopoly power. (Alkahtani, Darun, Al-Sharafi, & Tiong, 2021). According to **Lueck Katy**, innovative marketing is defined as “*the design and implementation of a set of creative and unconventional ideas and their transformation into practical applications in one of the fields of the marketing mix*” (Rajapathirana & Hui, Y, 2018).

Similarly, it can be stated that “*innovative marketing is any new idea in the field of marketing activities that leads to positive change and is successfully implemented in a way that makes the marketing organization pioneering and ahead of competing firms*” (Matviiets & Krevnik, O, Innovative Marketing as a Driver of Organizational Creativity and Effectiveness, 2021).

Thus, innovative marketing can be understood as the implementation of new marketing methods not previously used in one of the components of the marketing mix, creating change in product, promotion, distribution, or pricing in order to differentiate the organization from its competitors.

The fields of innovative marketing vary according to the elements of the marketing mix. It is based on the core idea that coordination and integration between mix elements

are essential to achieve organizational goals effectively. Hence, combining these elements enhances the ability to meet the desired objectives. Accordingly, marketing innovation can occur in the following areas and strategies. (Savitri, Hadi, S, & W, 2020)

2.1.1 Innovative Product Strategy:

Product innovation refers to the creation of a completely new product for the market in which the company operates, or the modification and improvement of existing products, with the aim of achieving market differentiation by responding more effectively to consumer needs and desires compared to competitors.

2.1.2 Innovative Pricing Strategy:

Price innovation represents one of the key approaches to achieving marketing distinction and gaining competitive advantage. It involves developing new, creative methods for pricing products and services that encourage consumer preference over competing offerings. Innovative pricing relies particularly on flexibility and adaptation. These methods are not strict rules but rather insights derived from successful pricing innovation models and practices.

2.1.3 Innovative Promotion Strategy:

This is reflected in creative and novel ways of direct and indirect communication with consumers through advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and product publicity. Innovative approaches may include placing brands on popular websites, adopting advanced negotiation and persuasion techniques in personal selling, or applying new methods in sales promotions such as organizing contests, offering gifts, and providing diverse incentives to boost sales turnover.

2.1.4 Innovative Distribution Strategy:

Innovation in distribution involves creating new marketing channels or improving logistical methods (transportation, storage, product delivery) to enhance efficiency. This may include new and unconventional ways of product distribution, innovative outlet designs, interior arrangements, or the surrounding environment, all of which significantly influence customer experience. Over the years, distribution management has witnessed several innovations, such as product display techniques on shelves, supermarket and hypermarket models, vending machines, home-party sales, TV shopping, and electronic retailing .

Innovations in distribution strategy continue to evolve and diversify. With the increasing reliance on modern technologies and artificial intelligence, firms are competing to innovate in marketing capabilities and transform traditional strategies into more innovative ones. This trend has led to one of the most significant creative transformations in distribution strategy, namely: the Omni-Channel distribution strategy.

2.2.The Transformation in Distribution Strategy: From Traditional Channels to Virtual Channels :

The rise of information and communication technologies has reshaped distribution strategies, pushing firms to adopt models that enrich consumer experience. Over time, distribution has evolved from the classical model (storage, transportation, and delivery) to virtual formats such as distance selling, e-commerce, and e-marketing. Today, channels increasingly rely on websites, mobile devices, apps, and social networks, managed electronically through systems that minimize costs and enable direct interaction with customers. (Laudon & Traver, C. G, 2021)

This digital shift has transformed both consumer behavior and firm–customer relationships. The Internet, smartphones, and social media now drive purchasing decisions: 70% of consumers consider the Internet a vital shopping tool, while 44% rely on social networks for product information. These platforms not only help customers compare offers but also allow firms to reach millions, strengthen brand awareness, and gather insights into

consumer needs. (Cioppi, Ilaria Curina , Barbara Francioni , & Elisabetta S, 2023) Technology-based distribution today takes multiple forms, including websites, downloading services, hybrid models, emails, interactive dialogues, smartphone sales, digital catalogues, and electronic intermediaries (Iwarue & Asanga J, 2025)

2.3."Omni Channel" Strategy: An Innovative Integrative Distribution Strategy

While in past years there was a clear distinction between traditional stores and online stores, the recent trend of channel integration has led to the intertwining of separate sales channels with one another. The term *multi-channel* first appeared in 2000, and was later replaced by the term *omni-channel*, which was first introduced in 2009. Academic literature on multi-channel retailing began to emerge in those years, and during 2015, the number of academic articles on multi-channel retailing accelerated. (Aiolfi & Edoardo, S, 2018) The omni-channel strategy is based on the idea that providing a seamless shopping experience in traditional stores through a variety of digital channels not only differentiates the company from its peers, but also gives it a competitive advantage over companies that rely solely on online distribution by leveraging store assets.

The omni-channel strategy is: a mix of all physical and digital channels to create an innovative and unified customer experience . (Sealey D. , 2014) . Its application implies that the customer must be provided with the same services both in the physical store and on the website. Since he needs information—regardless of the distribution channel—the process of offering products must be identical, and there should be no difference between the prices displayed across different channels. Moreover, the customer should be able to choose the payment method and the location of delivery of the purchased goods (at home, in-store, etc.). (Mihaela & Marinouiu, A.-M, 2014) . The comprehensive integration of distribution channels can be illustrated through the following figure:

Figure No. (01): Integrated Distribution Channels



Source : (Sealey, 2014)

Adopting an omnichannel strategy requires integrating all channels—physical and digital—into a unified customer experience. Technology underpins this model by supporting CRM, payments, marketing campaigns, and in-store digital tools that enhance service and customer interaction. Field studies reveal that while only 7% of customers shop exclusively online and 20% in-store, the majority (73%) use multiple channels, combining smartphones, websites, and physical outlets. These “omnichannel customers” move seamlessly between channels—buying online and collecting in-store, or purchasing in-store and requesting home delivery

Ultimately, the omnichannel approach blends physical and digital touchpoints into a single, integrated system, enhancing value creation and improving the overall shopping experience.

2.4. Leveraging Digital Application Marketing in the Context of an Integrated Distribution Strategy :

The increasing spread of mobile devices has led to a major change in consumer behavior, significantly influencing decision-making processes and purchasing behaviors. In the retail environment, consumers use mobile phones for various purposes such as: finding information on the web, pre-shopping planning, creating shopping lists, comparing prices, purchasing goods and services, and engaging in post-purchase activities. Previous studies have confirmed that mobile technologies are considered a resource that helps consumers make better decisions, particularly in terms of reducing search costs and improving the quality of consumer choices. (E, Sheikh , Hassan Hosseini , & Sana , 2021).

A successful omni-channel strategy enables both customers and firms to interact across multiple channels, including mobile applications, social media, retailer websites, online stores, e-coupons, gaming consoles, and even smart TVs. This has encouraged companies to focus on managing smartphone channels and social media, while adding innovative elements to their traditional online and physical channels. They have also worked on developing more mobile-friendly websites and advanced mobile applications to meet the diverse needs of their customers . (Brynjolfsson, HU, Y. J, & Rahman, M. S, 2013)

Companies consider mobile applications to be a valuable promotional channel, as apps hold great potential by providing customers with the ability to blend online and offline purchasing in an innovative way: making instant price comparisons, reading customer reviews, and assessing non-digital elements in physical stores. (Brown, Oliver Johnson , & George Wilson , 2024) . Based on the above, the adoption of digital marketing in the context of integrated channel strategies has been extensively studied in marketing literature, due to its numerous potential impacts on customer behavior and loyalty, as well as on sales, distribution, pricing, and communication options that companies need to adopt in order to maximize the benefits of the digital channel (Verhoef, Kannan, P. K, & Inman, J. J, 2015) . Companies adopting an integrated distribution channel strategy can achieve the following benefits:

2.4.1 Maintaining Customer Loyalty:

The focus on the *omni-channel* strategy is largely associated with the need for companies to cope with changes in customer behavior due to technological development and digitalization. An increasing number of more digitally savvy and connected consumers exploit multiple shopping channels to obtain the product they want at the right price. This leads companies to integrate physical stores with e-commerce as part of an “integrated multi-channel system” to engage and maintain customer loyalty, where it becomes essential to communicate and continuously interact with customers by simultaneously leveraging the various available touchpoints—both digital and physical—in a way that optimizes customer experience and cross-channel performance

2.4.2 Increasing Sales:

Companies derive a large number of benefits due to the development of e-marketing and the *omni-channel* strategy. Many studies have confirmed that such strategies make it possible to reach different types of customers more easily, while also increasing market coverage and sales volume. (Jocevski, 2020)

2.4.3 Enhancing Personalized Customer Experience:

Effective e-marketing within integrated channel management enables firms to meet customer needs throughout the purchasing journey. Customers frequently use mobile devices to search, compare, and process information before and during store visits, seeking a personalized and seamless experience. Achieving this requires integrating online and

offline channels—digital stores, websites, mobile apps, and social media—into a unified system that delivers consistent value. The main challenge lies in managing these channels as one entity to provide individualized experiences.. (Belvedere, Martinelli, E. M, & Tunisini, A, 2021)

2.4.4. Achieving Integrated Channel Synergy:

An effective *omni-channel* strategy can also allow the company to achieve integrated channel synergy, thereby striving to increase efficiency through the elimination of duplications and overlaps, and achieving a better balance between fixed and variable costs, economies of scale, and economies of scope. (Mirsch, C Lehrer, & R Jung, 2016)

2.4.5. Direct and Rapid Integration of Customer, Price, and Inventory Data Across All Channels:

One of the key advantages lies in the ability to enable data flow between different channels, sharing this data, resources, and information received at various touchpoints between the company's marketing and sales functions, as well as retailers (indirect channels). This can improve demand forecasting. Moreover, data enables obtaining customer insights and providing a personalized consumer experience in the channel environment. Improved learning regarding the customer also allows greater awareness, trust, and control over them, which may lead to customized promotional offers targeting specific customers. (Quarterly, D, Veit, & Tan, 2020)

3. The Empirical Framework of the Study:

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In this research paper, we will address the aspect of marketing innovation at **Inditex** through its adoption of the **omnichannel strategy** via its **IOP platform** and digital applications.

3.1. Inditex: From a Small Shop to a Reference in Online Marketing:

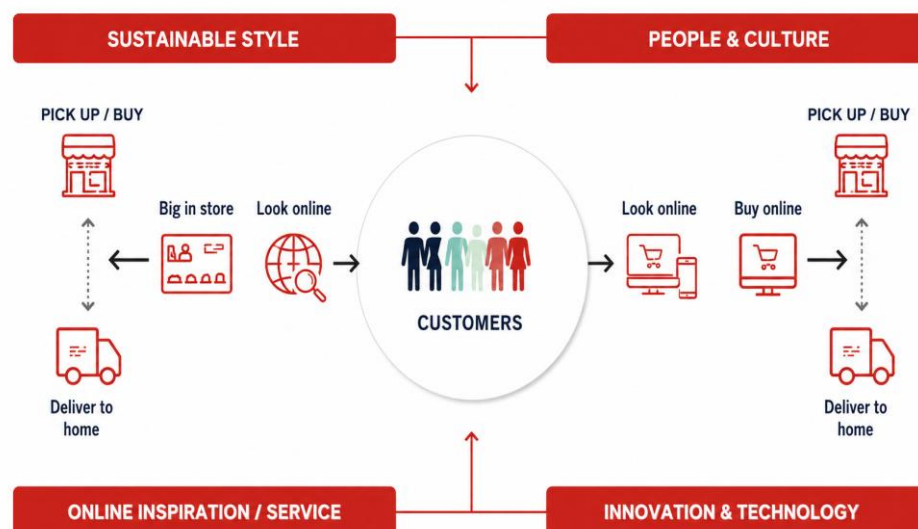
Inditex is currently one of the largest global fashion distributors and retailers, comprising **eight brands**: *Zara*, *Pull&Bear*, *Massimo Dutti*, *Bershka*, *Stradivarius*, *Oysho*, *Zara Home*, and *Uterque*. The company was founded in 1963 as a small family business producing women's clothing in La Coruña, Galicia, northern Spain. In 1975, **Amancio Ortega** launched the first brand *Zara*, marking the beginning of Inditex. Expansion began in 1988 with the opening in Porto (Portugal), followed by New York and Paris in 1990. A year later, *Pull&Bear*, *Massimo Dutti*, *Bershka*, and *Stradivarius* joined the company. Between **2007 and 2017**, the company underwent a major shift towards online marketing, becoming a worldwide reference . (INDITEX., 2022,) . Below are some insights and data about the company, extracted from its official website and its 2021 annual report (INDITEX, 2021):

- ✓ The company operated **2,015 stores worldwide** in 2021.
- ✓ Total sales reached €27,716 million, with 25.5% generated online.
- ✓ **Net profit** reached **3,243 million euros**.
- ✓ The company employs **over 165,000 people** from **177 nationalities**, with an **average age of 29.3 years**.
- ✓ **91% of production** relies on renewable energy from diverse sources.
- ✓ Social investment programs amounted to **36 million euros**, benefiting **2 million people**.
- ✓ The company's production chains include **8,7 factories** and **1,7 suppliers**.
- ✓ Inditex is ranked among the world's **top 100 sustainable companies**.

3.2. Inditex's Omni-Channel Strategy:

In June 2020, Inditex invested 3 billion dollars in its technological Omni-Channel strategy, including equipment and software, with the aim of facilitating the shopping experience for customers in its online stores while integrating them with its physical stores across the world. This investment resulted in a 50% increase in sales during that period and a growth rate of 95% in the following year . (Bilińska, Katarzyna , & Opitek, 2021)

Figure (2) illustrates the company's Omni-Channel model.



Source : (Bilińska, Katarzyna , & Opitek, 2021)

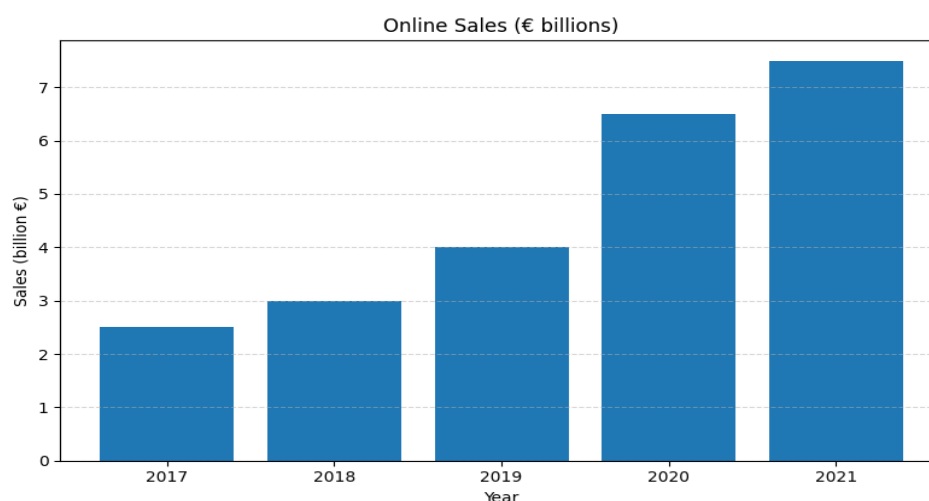
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The IOP platform is an IT innovation that enhances flexibility and integration in purchasing, distribution, and ordering. It enables customers to interact seamlessly across physical and online stores, allowing them to buy, pay, and collect products from both environments.

3.3. The Impact of Inditex's Adoption of the Omnichannel Strategy on Online Sales

The evolution of the company's sales can be illustrated through the following figure:
Figure (3): Chart Showing the Volume of Online Sales (in billion euros) for the Period 2017–2021



https://static.inditex.com/annual_report_2021/documents/annual_report_2021.

Inditex's online sales rose steadily from 2017 to 2021, with modest growth until 2019,

then a sharp jump from €4 to €7 billion in 2019–2020 due to the IOP platform, omnichannel strategy, and COVID-19 lockdowns. In 2021, sales reached €7.5 billion, up 14%, driven by innovative digital customer experiences.

Table (1): Percentage of Online Sales from Total Sales of Inditex for the Period (2018–2021)

	2021	2020	2019	2018
Turnover (millions of euros)				
Net sales	27,716	20,402	28,286	26,145
Online sales ⁽²⁾	25.5%	32%	14%	12%

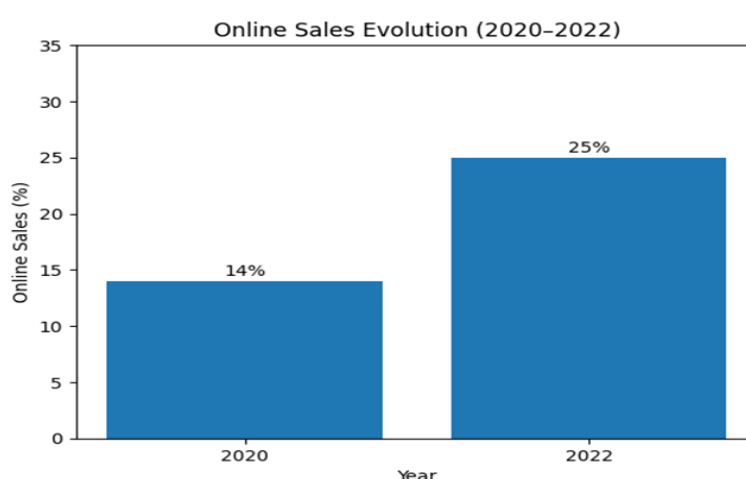
https://static.inditex.com/annual_report_2021/en/documents/annual_report_2021.pdf

It can be observed that there was a 2% increase in the percentage of online sales in 2019 compared to 2018, corresponding to a growth in sales volume of €2,141 million. However, in 2020, the percentage of online sales more than doubled compared to the previous year (2019), reaching 32%. At the same time, the company's total sales for 2020 decreased to €20,402 million, equivalent to a decline of 27.8%, due to the global recession caused by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This also reflects the customers' shift toward online platforms during that period, coinciding with the launch of the company's IOP platform.

As for 2021, sales value began to recover following the revival of economies after the pandemic, while the percentage of online sales dropped by 9% compared to 2020. This decline is attributed to customers' purchasing behavior, shifting back to in-store shopping.

Despite the decrease in the percentage of online sales in 2021, it remains a positive indicator, as there was still an increase of 11.5% compared to 2019—a significantly high rate. This highlights a positive trend in customers' adoption of the innovative IOP platform, which integrates both virtual and physical shopping experiences alike.

Figure (4): A Chart of INDITEX's Forecast of the Percentage of Online Sales from Total Sales in 2022 Compared to 2019



SOURCE: INADITEX Annual Report 2021

It can be observed from the chart that INDITEX expects a continued increase in the share of online sales from total sales during 2022, which may reach 39% of total sales — an increase of 13.5% compared to 2021. This represents the highest margin since the company

launched the (IOP) platform and adopted the OMNICHANNEL strategy. This is due to several reasons, including the achievement of a 100% digital integration rate of the (IOP) platform across all its units worldwide, compared to 90% according to the first-quarter report of 2021. (INDITEX, 2021) The following table was compiled using the data included in Appendix 1

Table showing the evolution of INDITEX online sales over four years

Table (2): Table showing the evolution of INDITEX online sales over four years

Year	Number of Contacts	Service Level (%)	Number of Services Provided
2018	27,374,204	94	95,281,406
2019	95,285,406	95	300,093,564
2020	504,399,747	81	105,634
2021	608,978	89	51,609,795
Growth Rate (2018–2021)	---	---	---

https://static.inditex.com/annual_report_2021/en/documents/annual_report_2021.pdf

The table highlights the sharp growth of INDITEX's customer interactions and responses between 2018–2021, peaking in 2020 due to the adoption of the Omnichannel strategy that supported remote shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic. allowing the company to optimally exploit technology and seize marketing opportunities in an unstable environment marked by global lockdowns.

In 2021, INDITEX successfully reached 288 million followers across its digital platforms, a 30% increase compared to 2020, when the total number of followers was 199 million. In contrast, the number of followers in 2018 and 2019 was 143 million and 175 million, respectively.

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3.4. Marketing Innovation of ZARA in Digital Applications:

The innovative aspect of ZARA's product marketing through digital applications is reflected in enabling customers to explore the various products currently available across all its stores worldwide, along with detailed information related to clothing characteristics, the materials used, the available colors, and recommendations on how to care for each product individually. In addition, the application allows customers to view different colors of the same design available in the store, as well as complementary accessories for the same design, which are displayed in the form of product-matching recommendations visible to the browser.

The ZARA application also enables customers to directly access the (IOP) platform, allowing them to know precisely where and when a product is available, with the option of home delivery or delivery to one of its sales outlets. Moreover, the in-store shopping experience combined with the use of the digital application is considered unique, as it merges both digital and physical shopping. Instead of customers needing to consult store staff for further information about product specifications, sizes, or payment, they can simply find answers to all their inquiries through the digital application while being physically present inside the store.

3.5. Innovative Features through Updates to ZARA's Mobile Application:

- **Fast Sint Feature:** Enables customers to identify nearby stores and view all available products, allowing them to purchase and schedule in-store pickup.
- **Click and Try Feature:** Allows customers to book a specific time slot for fitting rooms to try on clothes. Long queues often hinder customers from trying products,

which in turn may negatively affect their purchase decisions, especially during peak periods.

- **QR Feature:** This feature allows customers to scan the unique code of each product while shopping in stores to access detailed information about it, instead of relying on traditional methods such as searching by serial numbers or lengthy product names.
- **Click and Go Feature:** Provides customers with notifications about order readiness, order tracking, and available pickup points either inside the store or through multiple distribution centers.

4. Conclusion :

Our study strongly supports the rationale of traditional marketers in adopting the **Omni-channel strategy** and using it as a differentiating factor to counter the surge of online distribution. We arrived at the following conclusions:

- Multi-channel capabilities enhance core shoppers' engagement with the retail brand and ultimately drive them to the physical store.
- Multi-channel retailing is primarily driven by technology, which enables deeper integration of sales channels. Innovative technologies reduce costs, provide greater access to information and big data, and ultimately empower retailers to develop more effective and targeted promotions.
- Traditional retailers with physical stores perform better not only by leveraging the power of the online world, but also by synchronizing the physical and digital environments to provide shoppers with a seamless and multi-channel experience that pure online offers cannot match.
- The emergence of the online channel from a service-dominant perspective has created opportunities for integrating online and physical channels. Online retailing allows companies to create greater customer value in terms of additional services as well as major touchpoints with the company through offering various services across different channels.
- The online channel can create more potential markets for existing companies thanks to its capabilities and indirect effects that lead to increased purchases in offline channels. The factor that motivated retailers to develop an integrated strategy is the power of mobile devices and the use of digital applications.
- **ZARA's mobile application** provides customers with a unique shopping opportunity by blending real-world stores with the virtual world, making it a benchmark in digital transformation by achieving remarkable revenues in a short time.
- The integrated distribution strategy enabled the company to achieve synergy between all its distribution branches and its communication side with customers efficiently, granting it a strong capacity to keep pace with changing customer needs.
- The integrated distribution strategy allowed the company to achieve a competitive advantage and an edge in expanding into new markets, particularly in Asian countries, due to their advanced digital commercial transactions and the purchasing behavior of the targeted segments, which aligns with the implementation of this marketing strategy.

The shift from multi-channel to omni-channel strategy requires organizational adjustments, supply chain adaptations, and major technological investments. By integrating innovative in-store technologies and seamless digital tools, retailers can enhance customer experience. Ultimately, this leads to greater responsiveness, higher satisfaction and loyalty, improved efficiency, and significant sales growth.

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Appendix No. 1.

	2021			2020			2019			2018		
	No. of contacts	Service Level	No. of services provided	No. of contacts	Service Level	No. of services provided	No. of contacts	Service Level	No. of services provided	No. of contacts	Service Level	No. of services provided
ZARA	37,188,449	98%	36,433,559	40,009,841	92%	36,948,936	21,559,476	97%	20,912,691	19,320,000	96%	18,547,200
ZARA HOME	2,544,199	97%	2,477,226	2,856,719	98%	2,800,376	1,368,310	93%	1,278,275	935,907	92%	833,434
PULL&BEAR	3,079,063	96%	2,956,030	3,724,755	72%	2,666,292	1,820,713	86%	1,565,813	3,033,792	94%	2,851,784
Mussumu Dotti	2,595,172	98%	2,548,597	2,902,437 ¹	93% ¹	2,707,888 ¹	2,030,181	93%	1,669,468	1,566,782	89%	1,216,436
Bershka	2,656,660	98%	2,601,534	2,551,062	84%	2,150,189	1,161,875	92%	1,068,925	1,074,696	85%	1,593,492
STADIUMNINE	2,266,446	98%	2,234,808	2,241,811	83%	1,860,808	1,212,346	71%	860,766	1,511,405	97%	1,466,063
OYSHO	1,062,508	99%	1,046,787	1,393,302	93%	1,299,341	889,846	99%	881,214	922,297	80%	737,638
UTERQUE	217,298	98%	212,990	129,951	81%	105,644	90,635	85%	76,904	97,864	93%	91,034
Total	51,609,795	98%	50,491,331	55,809,878 ¹	90%	50,439,474 ¹	30,100,931	95%	28,514,056	29,032,743	94%	27,337,340

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