

Phygital

ANDREA AMADOR

Marketing Director at Haceb

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PANAMÁ

Phygital: The Hub
Where the World
Connects

**TRADE
MARKETING**

Becoming a Living Organism





It's not the channel,
it's the information
you have about it,



Deciding with data creates advantage.

EN TIEMPO REAL



The neighborhood store
remains the most
important channel
for FMCG companies.

The difference is not just being th

It's understanding
what's happening...



We transform DATA with IA

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Strategic
price
monitoring

We monitor prices in real stores so you can adjust margins based on data, not assumptions.

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Turn your questions into market insights. An AI-powered chatbot that organizes, analyzes, and projects your information like an expert.

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Phygi talks



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TRADE

Marketing



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ANDRES CARVAJAL

*Trade Marketing Director -
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"Time and timely information are the true assets of modern trade marketing"

I have had the privilege of developing my career for over 15 years in the field I am most passionate about: trade marketing. My experience began from a brand perspective, within one of the world's largest consumer goods companies, and was later consolidated in the role of strategic provider, designing and implementing solutions for companies across multiple industries and business realities.

Throughout this journey, most efforts have consistently revolved around three fundamental variables: "being present", ensuring effective coverage and a solid numerical distribution; "being good", ensuring an adequate portfolio, competitive prices and execution materials that maximize visibility at the point of sale; and "differentiating", providing that additional value that transforms a correct execution into a memorable experience.

Currently, in an environment where points of sale change week by week, consumers are increasingly volatile, and the competition reacts in real time, technological evolution, and especially AI, allows us to have powerful tools and enablers to manage and control two additional variables: time and timely information, which become an asset that generates a truly critical competitive advantage.

Timing in trade marketing isn't just an operational variable; it's a commercial one. Being late with an activation, restocking, or special display can mean:

- Losing sales during peak demand periods.
- Ceasing strategic shelf space to the competition.
- Wasting investment in materials or personnel.
- Damaging relationships with the channel.

Conversely, executing at the right time allows you to:

- Maximize the impact of above-the-line (ATL) and digital campaigns at the point of sale.
- Take advantage of traffic peaks and seasonality.
- Gain visibility when consumers are most ready to make a purchase.
- Turn planning into measurable results.

In trade marketing, a good idea poorly executed is a bad idea.

On the other hand, timely information makes all the difference between making decisions based on facts and not assumptions. It's no longer enough to simply arrive at a point of sale on time; you need to know what you're aiming for.

Timely information allows us to answer critical questions:

- Which stores truly need intervention?
- Which products are selling well and which are stagnant?

- Where are there stockouts?
- Which activations are working and which aren't?
- What is the competition doing today? When teams work with outdated or incomplete data, they make decisions based on intuition. When they work with real-time or near-real-time information, they make business-based decisions.

The difference translates into:

- Better budget allocation.
- Fewer rework processes.
- Greater effectiveness per touchpoint.
- Real ability to optimize during execution, not afterward.

Time + timely information = smart execution.

The brands that lead today in modern and traditional channels are not necessarily those that invest the most, but rather those that:

- Quickly detect changes.
- Quickly decide.
- Quickly execute.
- Quickly correct.

This requires clear processes, trained teams and, increasingly, technology: dashboards, field management tools, mobile reports, analytics and systems integrated with sales and logistics.

In increasingly competitive markets, time and timely information are not secondary resources: they are the heart of profitability in trade marketing.

Brands that understand this will stop reacting late and start anticipating. And in trade marketing, anticipation isn't just an advantage... it's the difference between growing and falling behind.



Jorge Mario Orozco Dussán
*Desserts and snacks group manager, Quala
Colombia*

Strategy First, AI Later

We've all been there: Just before the week ends, they burst into our office:

"The competition launched a new product that competes with our flagship product, and they're giving it away!"

Panic sets in immediately. The crisis committee is convened, and the conclusion is usually the same: "Respond with everything." Aggressive discounts are approved, the market is flooded with promotional materials, and the entire arsenal is used to confront the new threat. It's the tried-and-true tactic of "using a sledgehammer to crack a nut," where budget is burned through firing at everything that moves, hoping to hit something..

This is how things have operated for decades. We react with partial and often delayed information. This is where AI becomes interesting, because it allows us to move from a "shotgun blast" to "laser surgery," but the key is to continue focusing our efforts on the strategic goal. In the age of AI, it becomes crucial to have the tools that give us the clarity to optimize the necessary resources, to face contingencies along the way without losing sight of our focus.

The tool changes, the mission remains.

Before we talk about technology, let's be clear: the tool is secondary; strategy is the focus. Even with the boom in platforms, brand strategy is non-negotiable. If we don't have a clear objective and know how to translate it across different consumer touchpoints, AI will be nothing more than a pretty toy. Strategy will always guide the criteria teams use to make decisions and execute plans.

Thanks to advancements in information tools, we have made progress in monitoring the execution and measuring our actions in the market. However, despite living in a time of greater information availability, uncertainty has been a constant in our decisions: the biggest headache has not been the lack of data.

This is where AI brings one of its most tangible benefits. It can now structure the chaos of the market in real time, giving us a clearer picture of execution.

Even so, the abundance of tools again brings the danger of losing strategic direction; therefore, there is now a risk of getting lost in an ocean of irrelevant metrics.

Having access to everything doesn't mean understanding everything. That's why strategic clarity will always be paramount, allowing you to then determine the truly important tools and metrics for achieving your objectives. AI is an incredibly powerful answer-generating machine, but it's completely useless if the strategist doesn't know how to ask the right questions. AI processes data, but humans define the criteria. It's not about showing off endless dashboards full of charts, but about having the clarity to distinguish the signal from the noise and trusting your compass before making any moves.

The manager, using integrated AI tools, acts intelligently to diagnose the problem in depth. For example, by processing over a thousand geolocated photos, analyzed by a customized algorithm that understands the competitor's location at each point of sale, the type of display used, prices, and many other variables deemed relevant to the brand's strategy and necessary as input, cross-referenced with the company's internal sales data at the point of sale level, the manager can diagnose at a granular level and react according to the level of threat.

Before the Shot

Continuing with the previous example of the competitor's shot, in a moment of crisis due to an unexpected action by the competitor



"We have measured the market and the competition's initiative is only found in the A store cluster, not throughout the entire city. We see progress given that they manage to have their display in a related category that boosts their consumption and they achieve very low coding and development in the stores that carry our flagship product because when they enter they are located outside the important categories for its turnover."

An accurate diagnosis, supported by timely, high-quality information, will always lead to more assertive decision-making, enabling our sales teams to surgically address problems and achieve objectives.

Looking Ahead

Let's not get confused:

Technology is not strategy, and AI doesn't have all the answers. AI must receive human input on strategy and the right questions to deliver useful data. The real 'superpower' lies not primarily in the algorithm, but in the strategist who knows what questions to ask. The next time there's a crisis, we shouldn't burn our bridges. Using technology to understand reality and execute with sniper-like precision is the true revolution.



*Photo taken from freepik



CHALLENGE

To scale visibility and in-store execution, overcoming the physical limitations of the traditional sales force.

CONTEXT

A 5-year loyalty program deployed in two phases, reaching more than 38,000 points of sale nationwide.

INSIGHT

The shopkeeper is the best auditor of their own store. If we empower them with technology, we turn every counter into a perfect showcase.

SOLUTION (Executed through a Mobile App)

Development of the Don Máximo app for Coca-Cola: real-time monitoring, training, and reward system based on execution and sales performance.



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TRADE MARKETING 2026: FROM IN-STORE EXECUTION TO STRATEGIC PROFITABILITY IN A PHYGITAL WORLD

Trade marketing is dead. Or, rather, the old idea that it was simply about "getting the product on the shelf" and ensuring the point-of-purchase (POP) materials didn't look outdated or poorly displayed is dead. That operational vision fell short of what today's retail demands. What's emerging strongly around 2026 is a different kind of trade marketing: less obsessed with execution for execution's sake, and much more focused on profitability, data, technology, and a nuanced understanding of how people buy in each channel. The turning point is no longer "being present," but rather converting that presence into measurable results, without forgetting that business still happens between people, even as automation and robots begin to take up space at the point of sale.

On the East Coast of the United States, especially in New York, bodegas are a huge and undervalued channel. They are small, neighborhood stores, run by immigrant families, with intensive operations and a very close relationship with the community. For years, many large brands prioritized giant chains and treated bodegas as a secondary channel. By 2026, that will change.

Because there's a real opportunity there to connect with the Hispanic consumer and to gain volume with tactics that, interestingly, Latin America masters better than anyone. The key isn't arriving with complex structures, but rather replicating what works in the traditional Latin American channel: a direct relationship with the owner, trust built through consistent visits, and a practical approach to product movement. Displays don't have to be expensive or spectacular; they work best when they're simple, small, and designed for rapid turnover: compact displays, hanging displays, simple showcases, and direct-to-the-point merchandise. In this system, rapid replenishment is vital, because in a high-turnover store, stockouts mercilessly kill sales.

In the modern US retail channel, the game is different. Visibility is fought for in prime locations like endcaps, promotional islands, and high-traffic areas. The winner is the one who communicates the best price and offer, because shoppers compare everything and decide quickly.



HANGER



FABRIC ROLL



ACCESORIOS

TRADE MARKETING - OPTIMIZANDO CATEGORÍAS

SUGERENCIAS DE ESTILO / COMBINACIONES

LOOK 1:



LOOK 2:

Genie Katanendünyesek



*AI-generated image



*Photo taken from freepik

Meanwhile, even small businesses are digitizing, following a pattern very similar to that already seen in Latin America: adoption of digital payments, use of simple apps for operations, and solutions for ordering inventory with less friction. In New York warehouses, it's reasonable to expect more mobile platforms for ordering directly from suppliers, hyperlocal loyalty programs, basic digital inventory, and accessible payment options. This digitization isn't a "fad": it's what allows brands to reach customers more frequently, with better information, and with less operational waste.

Mexico enters 2026 with a different kind of pressure: in-store execution has become more expensive. Labor reforms, the ban on widespread outsourcing in 2021, the increase in the minimum wage, and the rise in formal obligations have increased the cost of having promoters, supervisors, and large teams in the field.

The result is obvious: if execution costs more, execution without a return becomes a luxury. Therefore, the focus shifts from "perfect execution" as an aesthetic ideal to "profitable execution" as a hard metric. Every visit, every meter of shelf space, and every hour of promotional work must be justified by a real impact on sales.

In this context, Mexico shows considerable technological adoption in trade marketing. Many companies already use digital tools to monitor execution, digitize planograms, guide field teams, and standardize quality. It is also increasingly common to integrate sales and inventory data to react in real time, prioritize stores, and decide where it is worthwhile to invest effort. The use of intelligent routing, store scoring, and ROI models per point of sale becomes a logical response to a more expensive operation. If you can't visit everything, you have to choose better.

And when you choose better, software stops being "an extra" and becomes the brain that decides which stores to service, when, with what objective, and what should be shown at the end of the visit.

Along the same lines, on-demand merchandising is emerging strongly: teams that are deployed only where there is a clear opportunity and at specific times, using mobile platforms and up-to-date data. This allows for real flexibility: moving resources in hours, not weeks. If a promotion isn't working in a chain or area, the team can be redirected to another area with greater potential, reducing the waste typical of rigid plans. Merchandising ceases to be a fixed "just in case" cost and becomes a tactical resource that is activated where it generates a return.

Panama has a very particular case: the "Chinese" channel, those corner stores operated by Chinese families that are everywhere, with extended hours and a daily connection to the neighborhood. Saying "I'm going to the Chinese store" is almost synonymous with "I'm going to the store." Therefore, integrating this channel into the strategy is not optional: it's central. The interesting thing about 2026 is that the greatest opportunity lies not only in selling more to them, but in digitizing them in a useful and culturally intelligent way. There is a real barrier: language. Many owners are more fluent in Mandarin or Cantonese, and this friction limits access to information, promotions, training, and tools.



*Photo taken from Adobe Stock

This is where a powerful differentiator emerges: B2B platforms in their language, allowing them to place orders, view promotions, understand suggested displays, and receive clear instructions, without the loss of translation due to improvisation. The region already has replicable lessons learned. In several markets, small stores adopted WhatsApp to order and coordinate restocking; fintechs promoted compact POS systems that digitize payments and generate data; and this improves control, inventory, and turnover. If Panama connects this learning with a linguistic and cultural approach, it can significantly accelerate the efficiency of the "Chinese" channel. Even remote training can be a huge leap forward: short videos in Mandarin showing how to display a product, how to manage a promotion, or how to avoid stockouts during key weeks. Some brands can even adapt bilingual point-of-purchase displays or send contextualized reminders for important seasons, such as specific cultural celebrations. It's not just a "nice" detail: it's a direct way to improve understanding, collaboration, and sales.

Colombia, in contrast, is a remarkably mature market, almost a regional laboratory. The diversity of channels is broad and demanding: hypermarkets, hard discounters like D1 and Ara, drugstores, traditional retail channels, wholesalers, and e-commerce with real weight. By 2026, Colombian trade marketing is expected to operate as an integrated system: omnichannel strategies, differentiated execution by channel, and a strong emphasis on measurement. The idea of applying the same formula to all channels simply doesn't work, and Colombia understands this.

Shoppers don't buy the same way in a hypermarket as they do in a neighborhood store, and if the behavior changes, the execution will too.

In neighborhood stores, the priority remains the relationship with the shopkeeper, the frequent supply of items that rotate, and small materials that do fit and are used.

In modern retail channels, the focus is on negotiating shelf space, creating the "perfect store," high-impact activations, and adhering to planograms. Where Colombia typically leads the way is in auditing and monitoring: by 2026, it will be nearly standard for brands to integrate metrics from different channels into a single view, combining sales, order, inventory, and digital performance data. This comprehensive view allows for the rapid detection of disruptions, opportunities, and problems. Omnichannel strategies are also becoming a daily practice: what consumers see on social media must match what they find on store shelves, and physical promotions must reflect what's happening in the digital world. Even on delivery platforms and marketplaces, the "digital shelf" is managed as part of the trade: highlighting products, maintaining visibility, and synchronizing messages and prices with the physical point of sale.

In parallel, visual merchandising is undergoing a profound transformation. The store of the future not only looks good: it adapts, responds, and seeks to create a coherent experience between the physical and digital worlds.

Sustainability is no longer an optional attribute; it's become a minimum requirement. Recycled materials, less waste, modular components, and local manufacturing are now part of the standard.



*Photo taken from Pinterest

Nearshoring and local production are gaining traction because they reduce time, costs, and environmental impact. By 2026, many display campaigns will feature a visible sustainable element, not as empty marketing, but because retailers and consumers are already demanding it.

Phygital is becoming commonplace: screens, sensors, electronic tags, QR codes with useful content, augmented reality experiences, and smart fitting rooms are becoming part of the landscape. What was once exclusive to huge budgets is becoming more affordable and accessible to a wider range of formats. Personalization is also scaling up: the same display kit can be adapted for different cities, seasons, or demographics by changing content, messages, or modules. And modularity is becoming a necessity because today's retail landscape doesn't allow for slow setups or rigid structures. A space must be able to transform quickly, with less waste and at a lower cost.

Furthermore, the store is establishing itself as an advertising medium with retail media: screens in aisles, shopping carts, refrigerators, and other high-traffic areas allow for targeted and measurable ads. This transforms the point of sale into a natural extension of digital campaigns, but within the most crucial moment: when the customer is about to make a purchase. And even with all this technology, the emotional connection doesn't disappear; on the contrary, it's amplified. Lighting, sound, sensory stimuli, Instagrammable spaces, and immersive designs become tools for creating lasting memories, because without emotion, there is no lasting differentiation.



*Photo taken from Freepik

Perhaps the most striking aspect of what's to come is the arrival of humanoid robots and robotic systems at the point of sale. What was once science fiction will be seen in pilot programs and controlled tests by 2026.

These robots appear as a complement to promotional tasks, customer interaction, or operational duties. Robots designed to actively encourage purchases, move through aisles, attract attention, and collect behavioral data have been observed. "Host" robots have also been used to welcome customers, inform them about promotions, or entertain them, generating surprise and conversation. In Latin America, some pilot programs with mobile robots for advertising and sampling demonstrate a key point: the great promise is not just "putting on a show," but precisely measuring every interaction, every impression, and every conversion.

On the operational side, quiet automation is also advancing: robots roaming aisles to detect missing items, pricing errors, or planogram issues. Although some programs have been paused at certain retailers, the general trend remains: automating repetitive tasks that consume human hours. And the next frontier points to humanoids with greater mobility and dexterity, capable of manipulating objects and performing more complex physical tasks. The value is clear: continuous operation, fatigue-free repetition, precision, and data collection. But its adoption will be gradual: first tasks outside of business hours, then specific customer-facing roles. The most realistic scenario in 2026 is not total replacement, but coexistence: human teams.

Supported by robots, each contributing what they do best. This whole journey leads to a clear conclusion: trade marketing has completed its transition. It has ceased to be an operational function and has become a strategic engine of profitable growth.

The brands that win in 2026 will be those that understand that each channel requires different tactics, that data must be the nervous system of operations, and that omnichannel is not a future project but a present reality. They will also be the ones that experiment fearlessly, but with control, using phygital visual merchandising and automation where it makes sense, without losing sight of what's essential.



**“Trade marketing
remains a people for
people business, even
when robots start
working alongside us.”**

*By: Liliana Casallas
Project Manager Inmov global
network*



*Photo taken from the official simberobotics website



Andrea Amador

Marketing Director HACEB

The alchemy of movement and the "turbo effect" in marketing

Some encounters aren't measured in minutes, but in volts. As marketing director of Inmov and host of Phygitalks, my job allows me to sit across from brilliant minds, but what I experienced talking with Andrea Amador was different.

It wasn't an interview; it was a collision with a force of nature that seems to operate on a different time frequency than the rest of mortals.

If modern marketing were a musical score, most people would try to play the notes correctly. Andrea, on the other hand, redefines the tempo. She describes herself as someone who not only leads marketing but accelerates it. In the C-level ecosystem, where caution sometimes masks paralysis, Andrea is a living reminder that strategy without speed is just wishful thinking.

Design as a Lens, Courage as a Driving Force

Andrea's story doesn't begin on a spreadsheet, but in an industrial designer's workshop. A graduate of Manizales, when Industrial Design was still uncharted territory, Andrea already demonstrated that "surgical intuition" that is now her signature.

She wasn't satisfied with the formalities; she hacked her own academic training by requesting permission to take courses in Business Economics. She wanted to understand not only what an object looks like, but how it moves in the market.

That audacity led her to found her own merchandising company, Dimensión Diseño, before she even had her diploma in hand. But this is where Andrea's story diverges from the common path: after the success of her award-winning thesis, she decided that the "real world" was too big a laboratory to ignore. She left her startup to learn how to manage giants.

The School of Resilience: 17 Years of Strength

Talking to Andrea is like taking a journey through the history of Colombia's most iconic brands. Her time at Casa Luker wasn't just a brief stint; it was a meteoric rise. From managing small brands to becoming Vice President of Sales, Andrea learned that leadership is, above all, a matter of character.

The unwavering resilience that Andrea applies today in the corporate world wasn't born in a classroom, but rather in the challenges life presented her. There's a quiet strength within her that manifests itself in every goal achieved; an independence forged in the ability to navigate uncertainty.



She learned that true audacity lies in balance: being the unconditional driving force of her family and, simultaneously, the strategist capable of transforming entire industries and accelerating the growth of iconic companies with surgical precision.

From "Sewing Minutes" to the Commodities Challenge

What impressed me most about our conversation was her ability to "ignite" any category.

After leaving Luker, Andrea launched herself into the fashion world with MIC, learning to sell "sewing minutes" and expanding retail to a massive scale. But the real turning point came with Manuelita.

In a commodity-driven environment like sugar and alcohol, an industrial designer specializing in mass consumer goods is redefining the strategic game: innovating from constraint, something she's passionate about. During the pandemic and national shutdowns, while global operations slowed, Andrea transformed uncertainty into opportunity, developing creative solutions for alcohol management and storage, even exploring logistical alternatives like maritime barges.

From this perspective, he spearheaded the creation of differentiated value propositions, such as Biorganic, a soil energizer that expands the portfolio towards sustainability, and led the evolution of Manuelita organic sugar, integrating sustainability criteria that extend even to its paper packaging. Demonstrating that even in commodities there is room for magic if one has the vision to contribute conscious and sustainable value.

The Present at Haceb: Rejuvenating a Legacy.

Today, Andrea leads the marketing team at Haceb, a brand with 85 years of history that she has decided to approach with the agility of a startup. Her mission is clear: double EBITDA, launch new products, and rejuvenate the brand in record time.

There's no room for complacency on her team; she seeks people who challenge her, who have a "hunger to get things done." Because for growth: Haceb.

For Andrea, innovation isn't necessarily a NASA invention; it's the ability to make people believe that something has changed, to present a different reality that captivates the consumer, makes them feel well understood, and above all, solves a real problem.

To do precision marketing where the interpretation of data, the street and the culture is the true differentiator and seeking to make Haceb the most loved brand not for what it says, but for what it does for the Colombian consumer.

The human being behind the "Turbo"

Beyond KPIs and Effie awards, there's a woman who finds her balance in her morning jog, playing padel, and connecting with her children. Andrea is a leader who doesn't need a fancy office, but rather a clear purpose. Her execution speaks volumes about results.

When I asked him about his legacy, he didn't mention a sales figure. He spoke of "igniting a spark of energy" in others. He wants people to find their passion because he knows that a passionate person is unstoppable.

Final Reflection: Marketing is a Stance

As Seth Godin says, "marketing is the generous act of helping someone solve a problem." Andrea Amador elevates this definition. Her generosity lies in its intensity. She doesn't ask you to follow her; she invites you to run alongside her. Listening to her is to understand that fear doesn't disappear, but it can be transformed into adrenaline, as she learned from her own life story. In this issue of Phygitalks, we are honored to present a woman who not only builds brands but also builds the future with surgical precision and a heart that beats to the rhythm of Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'."

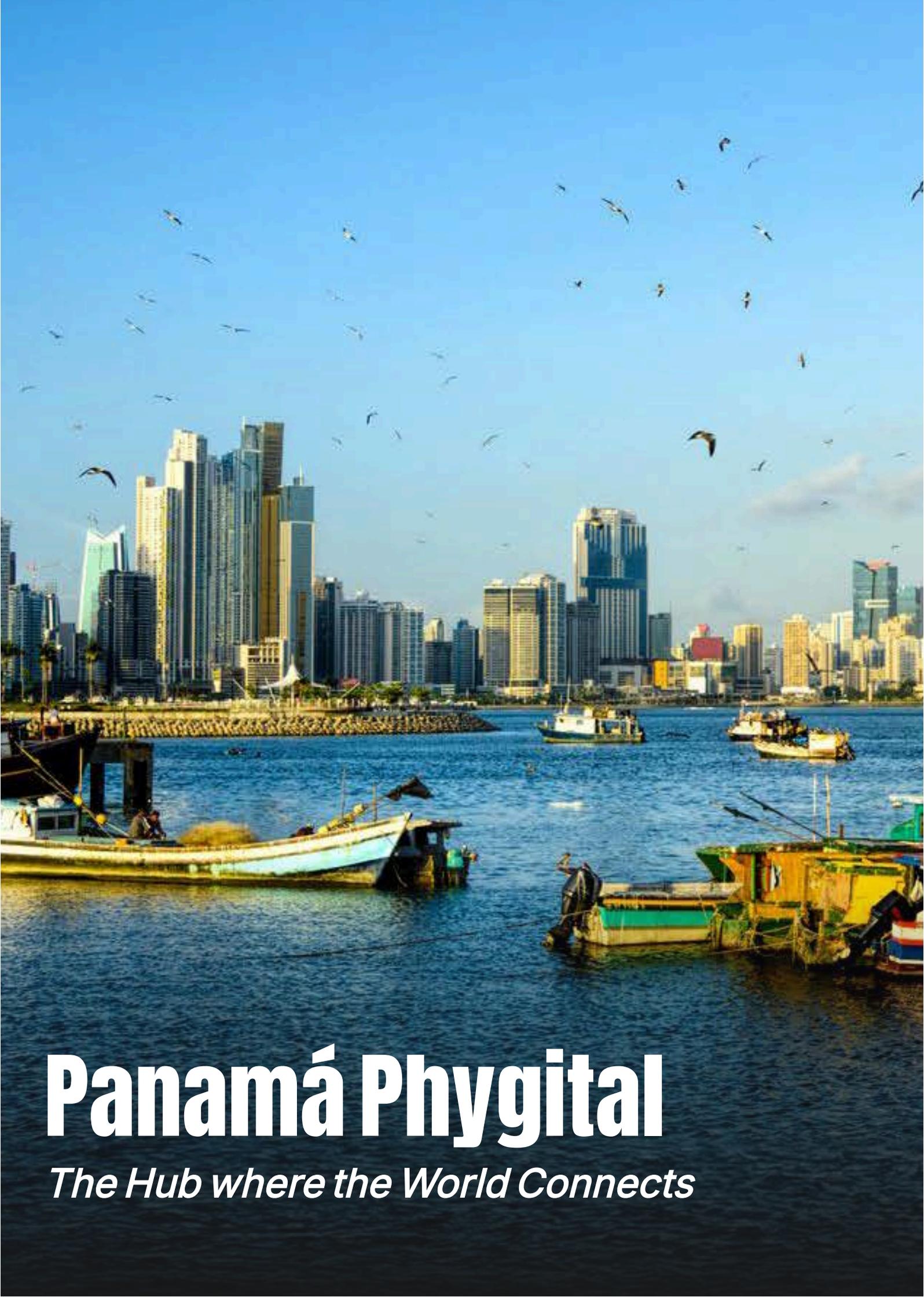
Andrea Amador is, without a doubt, the captain of the team of the impossible. And after talking with her for a while, you leave convinced that, indeed, if we act now, everything is possible.

*By: Oscar Parra - Marketing Director
of Inmov Global Network*



**Retail is no longer a
place.
It's a living system.**





Panamá Phygital

The Hub where the World Connects



*Photo taken from the official Kayak website

When we talk about expansion, connections, and the future in Latin America, all roads (and flights) lead to one place. Panama City has ceased to be merely the engineering marvel that connects two oceans, becoming instead the docking port for the continent's most innovative ideas.

To document this "Snapshot of an Evolving Capital," we decided to look inward and talk to someone who has a keen understanding of where investments and corporate talent are headed: Carolina Cuéllar, Business Director of Inmov Global Network. Through her expert perspective, we discovered how this metropolis is merging its physical might with digital cutting-edge technology to lead the Phygital era.

Panama: The Hub where things really happen

From her role leading businesses globally, Carolina clearly understands Panama City's competitive advantage. For her, Panama City's true value proposition today isn't just physical or logistical, but its capacity to be a major human meeting point. In her vision, the city offers a canvas of seamless connectivity where a North American corporation and a developer from the south can meet in a neutral, secure ecosystem designed to make things happen. Ultimately, it's the place for high-level networking where bureaucracy is left behind and agility takes the lead.



*Photo taken from Freepik



*Photo taken from Freepik

When discussing the Phygital era, Carolina points out that this fusion is intensely felt in real estate and commerce. The concept isn't theoretical; it's palpable in smart buildings in Costa del Este that optimize resources with AI, while on the street, citizens interact with their surroundings through integrated digital platforms, from mobility to daily payments.

This integration doesn't happen by accident; it's the result of an infrastructure designed so that technology isn't an obstacle, but rather a facilitator of daily life. It's a real transformation that has led Panama to evolve from a logistics hub to an Experience Hub. The city has learned that today's executive practices are leisure and, therefore, has developed a world-class hospitality infrastructure where you come to sign a contract, but stay for a gastronomic and luxury offering that rivals any European capital.

This creativity thrives in very specific areas that the Business Director of Inmov has well mapped. The Old Quarter functions as an ideal historical canvas for more relational networking; It's that place where a casual conversation on a terrace evolves into a strategic alliance. Meanwhile, San Francisco emerges as a major trendsetting hub, a neighborhood that breathes design and is the birthplace of indie concepts and dark kitchens that are revolutionizing local consumption. Finally, Costa del Este and Santa María solidify their position as the corporate heart, the "Silicon Valley" of Central America.

where major transactions are hatched and where multinationals find the perfect space to scale their regional operations.

Behind this ecosystem of glass and technology, Carolina highlights a crucial human factor: the mindset of Panamanian professionals. She describes this DNA as pragmatic, bilingual, and extremely agile. Panamanians don't think small; their vision is inherently global.

They aren't focused on selling only to the local market, but on how to project their businesses to the entire world. This cultural openness greatly facilitates business, eliminating the traditional barriers that sometimes hinder expansion into other markets in the region. For Carolina, working with local talent means finding an ally who already understands the language of international commerce naturally.

This responsiveness was demonstrated by the speed with which they digitized their services during critical moments. Carolina emphasizes that in Panama, they didn't wait to see what others did; they acted, creating e-commerce ecosystems and payment solutions in record time. Furthermore, she observes a genuine commitment to sustainability that goes beyond a green certification. The city understands that having imposing skyscrapers just minutes from a biodiverse reserve is a unique privilege. Therefore, urban development is aiming for LEED certifications and projects that respect the environment, recognizing that nature is its most valuable asset.



**CAROLINA
CUELLAR**

*Business Director, Inmov
Global Network*

**“The Canal
moves cargo.
The city stirs
emotions.”**



This cultural richness also extends to the negotiating table. The fusion of Afro-Panamanian, European, and Indigenous heritages has created an environment where diversity is not just rhetoric, but a practical reality. According to Carolina, when you sit down to negotiate in Panama, you're at a truly global table. This diversity of perspectives fuels creativity and compels brands to be more inclusive and disruptive. It's a market that demands you constantly stay one step ahead, because the competition isn't local; it's with the entire world passing through this hub of connections.

If Carolina had to convince an investor in just 24 hours, her agenda would be impeccable and direct, without wasting time on unnecessary details. She would start with a specialty Panamanian coffee at a high-tech coworking space in Costa del Este to review the hard numbers and return projections.

At midday, the meeting would take place on the Causeway, where the Pacific breeze and the skyline, intertwined with the ships waiting to cross the Canal, offer a glimpse into the true scale of global trade. Witnessing this operation firsthand is to understand why Panama is the engine of the region.

The day would conclude on a terrace in the Old Quarter. With the contrast of the historic city and the illuminated skyscrapers as a backdrop, the city itself takes care of the rest. For Carolina, this is the moment when human connection flows and the contract is signed that very evening. It is this blend of pragmatic efficiency during the day and relationships of trust at sunset that makes doing business in Panama unique. It's not just about transactions; it's about building long-term relationships in the most connected place in the region.



*Photo taken from the official Getty Images website

Looking ahead to 2026...

Carolina Cuéllar has no doubts: Panama City will not only influence the region's business narrative, it will dictate it.

The consolidation of its physical infrastructure, coupled with its relentless digital adoption, makes it the ideal location for startups, venture capital firms, and multinationals seeking a safe haven for innovation. The era of Panama Phygital is already a reality, and according to Carolina's vision, this is just the beginning of a leadership that will transform how Latin America connects with the rest of the world. The message for those looking to grow is clear: the future is already happening in Panama, and it's time to be a part of it.





The Execution Factor: Winning the Battle in the "Last Meter" of Retail

In the world of retail and mass consumption, hours are often spent in boardrooms discussing brand strategy, positioning, and stock value. But if one thing is clear, it's that the customer doesn't buy the proposed strategy; the customer buys what they see on the shelf.

If the product isn't there, if the display is neglected, or if the message gets lost in the chaos of the store, the strategy is nothing more than an academic exercise. As marketing professionals, our job is to eliminate friction. Friction for the customer, but also friction for the ecosystem that makes the sale possible.

Today, on Phygitalks, I want to share a conversation with **Andrés Carvajal, Trade Marketing Director** at Inmov Global Network, in which we discuss two success stories that embody what we call "Scalable Operational Excellence." These are examples of how technology and smart logistics don't replace the human factor, but rather enhance it to win where it really matters: at the point of sale.

1. The Digital Shopkeeper: Empowerment over Inspection:

Traditionally, consumer goods companies have viewed execution as an exercise in surveillance. Sales teams are sent to visit 50 or 70 stores a day. Mathematically, that leaves windows of 5 to 10 minutes per customer. Is it possible to ensure the visibility of a global brand like Coca-Cola (Don Máximo) in 300 seconds?

The short answer is no. In that model, the salesperson is an order taker, not a brand manager.

Andrés explains that the challenge was critical: "23,000 stores linked simultaneously and an execution that was, literally, adrift. The solution wasn't to hire more people, but to change the mindset from inspection to empowerment."

This is how the Micro-Incentive Strategy was developed, a digital platform that transformed the shopkeeper into the main strategic ally. Instead of waiting for the visitor, the owner of the establishment took matters into his own hands by:

- **Two-Way Communication:** A direct and transparent channel between the brand and the point of sale.

- **Purposeful Tasks:** Clear and personalized visibility objectives for each local context.

- **Gamification of Excellence:** A micro-incentive system that rewards compliance with display standards.

The numbers don't lie. The program's effectiveness was measured using the ISE (Execution Index) indicator, a metric from 1 to 100 that evaluates visibility and brand presence variables at the point of sale.

- **Baseline:** The average regular customer rating was between 60 and 62 points.

- **Program Impact:** Points of sale active on the digital platform achieved an increase of between 10 and 11 additional points in their ISE rating compared to those that did not use the tool.

- **Conclusion:** The model not only optimized brand visibility but also proved to be a scalable and sustainable solution for improving sales performance without overloading the sales team's schedule. Carvajal emphasizes this point.

2. Precision Logistics: The Brand as One Voice

Let's turn now to the world of fashion and large retail chains. Here, the challenge is not just presence, but consistency. There is nothing more detrimental to a brand with national coverage than presenting an impeccable image in Bogotá and poor execution in a mid-sized city. Fragmentation is the enemy of identity.

The traditional model of hiring multiple local suppliers generates disparities in quality, administrative nightmares, and, most seriously, missed deadlines.

In modern retail, a delay in updating a seasonal window display is not a technical detail; it is a direct loss of sales and an additional operating cost in overtime.

Centralization for Agility: The solution was to move towards an integrated Visual Merchandising management model with a single strategic partner. This is not just a purchasing decision; it's a decision for competitive agility based on three pillars:

1. **National Uniformity:** A single finishing standard from the Coast to the West.

2. **Protocol Compliance:** Flawless permit management in shopping centers, eliminating the logistical frictions that often delay openings.



Por favor, ingresa tus datos

Número de cliente

2345678

Recuérdame

Ingresar



*AI-generated image

3. Speed of Reaction: The ability to "dress" 150 stores simultaneously.

The impact on agility was transformative. Andrés Carvajal recounts it in detail: "We managed to execute complete campaign changes in a record period of 8 to 10 days for more than 150 stores. But the most important thing is the maintenance guarantee: any damage or issue in a high-traffic area was now resolved in less than 24 hours.

We say that 'details build the business.' Having the ability to standardize the brand vision in every corner of the country ensures that the promise we make to the customer is fulfilled exactly the same way in the fitting room or at the end of the aisle.

Less PowerPoint, more execution. These two cases leave us with a fundamental lesson for all of us who make decisions in the region's market: Technology is only valuable if it simplifies the lives of those on the front lines.

Technology should have a direct and positive impact on the business.

Whether it's empowering a shopkeeper with an app or centralizing visual merchandising logistics to gain speed, the goal is the same: eliminate the obstacles between our product and the consumer.

As marketing and operations leaders, our mission doesn't end when the marketing plan is approved. Our mission ends when the customer finds what they're looking for, exactly as we envisioned it, at the precise moment.

That's what builds loyalty, and that's what generates sustainable results.

In this edition of Phygitaltalks, I invite you to look at your own operations. Are you inspecting or empowering? Are they fragmented or integrated? The answer to those questions will determine who wins next season.

***By: Oscar Parra - Marketing Director
of Inmov Global Network***



TRADE MARKETING FOR NON-MARKETERS

I went from the quiet halls of museums and a love for culture to the creative chaos of Inmov.

And although I have my specialization in Strategic Marketing under my belt, the first few days I felt like asking for subtitles.

My transition from the cultural world to the Inmov family was like an intergalactic journey where everyday terms sounded like Mandarin Chinese to me (or worse: like advanced marketing).

Watching my colleagues, some truly brilliant experts, master concepts with such ease made me a little dizzy, but I soon discovered that marketing, when explained beautifully, is for everyone and that its universal language is an everyday thing.

After a couple of anxiety attacks and Googling definitions as they spoke, I gradually learned and fell in love with everything they said and how they said it.



*AI-generated image

I didn't really need my RAE dictionaries that much...

That's why, in this installment of Phygitalks, "Marketing for Non-Marketers," I decided to be the voice of curiosity. I was asked to write about Trade Marketing, a topic that the agency's experts have mastered, and I accepted the challenge with my honest naiveté. I'm not a technical expert, but I'm eager to translate this concept for those who, like me, want to understand it all without dying in the attempt. I hope I succeed!

WHAT IS IT AND WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?

Definition of Trade Marketing:
CHANNEL MARKETING. Trade Marketing is, in essence, the art of

"winning over" the customer at the exact point where they decide to buy, whether it's in a physical point of sale or in an online store.

Example: "If traditional marketing makes someone want a soda while they're on their couch, trade marketing ensures that when that person arrives at the store, the soda is cold, readily available, and at a good price."

In short: It's marketing applied to the sales channel to influence the buyer's decision, focusing on the brand.

What Trade Marketing aims for:
Expand market share (see trade marketing dictionary). Explore all possible ways to make an impact in the channel to gain points of sale.



HOW IS A GOOD TRADE EXECUTED? (THE 3Ds):

To ensure the buyer chooses our product, we rely on the "Rules of the 3Ds":

- **Be (Availability):** Define the right portfolio in the right place at the right price.
- **Be Well (Distinction):** It's not enough to simply be there; the product must be well-displayed, with supporting materials that make it stand out.
- **Surprise (Desirability):** Use novelty and experience to make the customer want to choose us over any other. Here, marketing and communication play a crucial role.

WHERE:

Primarily at the Point of Sale (POS). Here, the relationship with the shopkeeper or retailer is vital.

Relationship with the shopkeeper:

- A good inventory turnover wins over the shopkeeper, because it increases profits and prevents inventory from sitting unsold.
- It is very important that the shopkeeper be an ally, that they are motivated, trained, and knowledgeable about all the product's attributes and benefits. They should be willing to recommend the product.
- Loyalty and loyalty programs should always be in place for shopkeepers.
- The profit margin we offer the store must be better than the competition's.

FOR WHOM AND WITH WHOM:

The concept of "Shopper" vs. "Consumer"

Example: A mother buys colorful cereal (she is the Shopper), but her son is the one who feeds it to her.

(He is the Consumer). The Trade representative speaks to the mother in the supermarket aisle.

However, trade marketing must extend beyond the shopper and the consumer; it must also include the brand's customer, the shopkeeper, the sales team, and the salesperson.

It is very important to consider the people who manage the inventory, since the connection between sales and the channel is crucial: if the product is not in stock or properly displayed, communication and advertising are useless!

The Invisible Pillars of Trade: People and Time. Trade is done by people.

- Execution: This is carried out by the sales and field teams.
- Efficiency: Time is key. Maximizing the budget means optimizing the team's routes and giving them "specific missions" to solve unique problems at each point of sale.
- Metrics: Everything that happens in the store (store fixture activation, return campaigns, etc.) should serve to improve the brand's key performance indicators.

IMPACT OF TRADE MARKETING ON DAILY LIFE

Jaime Torres, president of Inmov Global Network, explains that every consumer and/or user is constantly exposed to trade marketing, as it is the point of contact at the time of acquisition and transaction. He highlights the "phygital" (physical and digital) nature of the channel and the current purchasing process, where people explore digitally before making a physical purchase. The brand must be present across all channels, as it is common to review the product in one channel.

and buy it elsewhere, and trade marketing must apply its disciplines (correct pricing, inventory, communication) in both environments to positively impact the brand.

SOME EXAMPLES OF WHAT NOT TO HAPPEN.

Trade Marketing Nightmares

- The product is hidden under a box.
- The "Sale" sign is on the wrong product.
- The brand's refrigerator is full of competitor beers.
- The "Find us here" arrow points to the competitor's shelf.
- The premium product is on the bottom shelf, at floor level.
- The sale barcode won't scan at the checkout.
- The star product is stored in the back while the shelf is empty.
- The promotional coupon expired three months ago and is still stuck to the packaging.
- The store employee uses the brand's counter to take orders.

By: Carolina Castillo

President's Assistant, Inmov Global Network





I N M O V

Global Network

WE ARE A PHYGITAL MARKETING AGENCY CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF CREATING VALUE FOR YOUR BRANDS, HUMANIZING YOUR CONNECTIONS AND AMPLIFYING YOUR RESULTS.



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