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## **LOW-COST AIRLINES MARKETING STRATEGIES: RYANAIR**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	1
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1 PURPOSE AND MOTIVES.....	4
1.2 METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES.....	4
2. INDUSTRY'S OVERVIEW AND COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE.....	5
2.1 LOW-COST CARRIES MODEL.....	6
3. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF RYANAIR.....	8
3.1 RYANAIR IN NUMBERS.....	10
3.2 RYANAIR PORTER'S 5 FORCES ANALYSIS.....	12
3.3 RYANAIR PESTLE ANALYSIS.....	14
3.4 RYANAIR SWOT ANALYSIS.....	17
4. RYANAIR MARKETING STRATEGIES.....	20
4.1 MARKET SEGMENTATION AND POSITIONING.....	22
4.2 PRICING STRATEGIES.....	23
4.3 SALES AND PROMOTIONS.....	26
4.4 LOGO AND VISUAL ELEMENTS.....	27
4.5 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION.....	28
5.0 DIGITAL MARKETING AND ONLINE PRESENCE.....	31
5.1 RYANAIR'S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE PLATFORMS.....	35
6. FUTURE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY.....	38
7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN IMPROVED MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS.....	40
8. CONCLUSION.....	43
9. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	45

## **ABSTRACT**

In an increasingly digitised and competitive world, airlines try to use the most effective marketing techniques to attract customers and retain them, seeking to maximise profits. This final degree project tries to analyse the marketing strategies implemented by the low-cost airline Ryanair. To achieve this, a search for information about the airline industry, the functioning of low-cost airlines, the context in which Ryanair finds itself and the marketing strategies employed by the giant Irish airline has been carried out. The findings show that despite being involved in constant controversy and criticism due to its customer service or unusual marketing techniques, these are effective and Ryanair remains firmly at the forefront of the industry as Europe's largest airline. This study also aims to provide suggestions for the future, such as better SEO optimisation and the use of artificial intelligence, in order to enhance the effectiveness of Ryanair's marketing strategies.

*Keywords:* Ryanair, marketing, customer, airline, price.



## RESUMEN

En un mundo cada vez más digitalizado y competitivo las aerolíneas tratan de emplear las técnicas de marketing más efectivas para captar clientes y conseguir mantenerlos, buscando obtener los máximos beneficios. Este trabajo de fin de grado sirve como investigación para analizar qué estrategias de marketing pone en práctica la aerolínea low-cost Ryanair. Para lograrlo, se ha realizado una búsqueda de información acerca de la industria de las aerolíneas, el funcionamiento de las aerolíneas low-cost, el contexto en el que se encuentra Ryanair y las estrategias de marketing empleadas por la gigante aerolínea irlandesa. Los resultados nos muestran que, a pesar de estar envuelta en polémicas y críticas constantes debido a su atención al cliente o sus técnicas de marketing poco usuales, estas resultan efectivas y Ryanair se mantiene firme a la cabeza del sector como la mayor aerolínea de Europa. Este estudio también pretende aportar sugerencias para el futuro, como una mejor optimización SEO y el uso de la inteligencia artificial para mejorar la eficacia de las estrategias de marketing de Ryanair.

*Palabras clave:* Ryanair, marketing, cliente, aerolínea, precio.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the advance of new technologies, today we find new marketing techniques that were unimaginable a few years ago. Companies are becoming more and more competitive, which forces us to adapt to a world with more and more questions and uncertainty. Thanks to social networks, we have managed to maintain relationships and connect with more people in an extraordinary way. However, alongside them, we find a whole new digital world, which many companies are taking advantage of to maintain and attract customers. One such company is undoubtedly Ryanair. In this final degree project, I will try to analyse and interpret the marketing strategies used by Ryanair, seeking to justify its success in the world of aviation.

Firstly, research is carried out to understand its origins and to put into context the situation in which Ryanair finds itself within the airline industry, describing some of the most important decisions taken by the airline and studying the factors that directly affect the company, seeking to understand what type of model it follows.

Secondly, data about the airline is being presented in order to analyse it in more depth, such as: number of employees, where and how it operates and the composition of its fleet in the present and future. Research is being carried out to better understand external factors and the keys to recognising which marketing strategies should be pursued.

Furthermore, the main traditional marketing strategies carried out by Ryanair are described: its market segmentation and positioning, pricing and sales strategy, visual aspects and the company's approach to customer experience.

Moreover, a description of the airline's online and social media presence and the reasons why Ryanair stands out in this respect is being presented. Also, some of the possible future marketing trends used by airlines have been introduced.

Finally, a conclusion (also in Spanish) is being drawn in an attempt to describe in the best possible way what has been analysed throughout the final degree project.

## **1.1 PURPOSE AND MOTIVES**

The main reason I have chosen this topic is my passion for the world of aviation. Ever since I was a child I have found it fascinating how it was possible for aeroplanes to fly. Thanks to aeroplanes we have been able to connect in an incredible way with people who are far away from us and we have the possibility to travel thousands of kilometres in a few hours. I feel it is also important to understand a little more about how airlines work and the strategies they employ on a day-to-day basis to capture the attention of customers. Not so many decades ago flying was an exclusive thing that few people could afford. Fortunately, the industry has evolved and with the development of new technologies, flying has become a relatively affordable option. Part of my adventures abroad have been due to the existence of the aeroline with which I have flown the most, Ryanair.

I must also mention my uncle, who recently became a commercial pilot, and who instilled in me from an early age a passion for this interesting and entertaining world. He pursued his passion and after many years and a hard road, he managed to fulfil his dream. But more than that, he managed to awaken my passion for aeroplanes.

## **1.2 METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES**

In order to achieve the objectives of this final degree project, a search for information and data at a general level will be carried out to understand the context in which Ryanair finds itself in the aviation sector.

The main objective of this work is to analyse the marketing strategies carried out by Ryanair. To do so, an in-depth study will be made following these points:

- Industry's overview
- History and origins of the company
- How and where it operates
- Analyses of sales and pricing strategies
- Relations with customers
- Commercial campaigns, mainly on social networks
- Digital presence and social media

- Future and suggested marketing strategies

## **2. INDUSTRY'S OVERVIEW AND COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE**

Mobility is one of the fundamental pillars at the heart of our socio-economic fabric. It enables social connections to be maintained and facilitates access to goods and services such as health, education, commerce and work. The basis of mobility by air, land and sea is based on efficiency, speed, interconnectivity and accessibility (ICAO, n.d.). Today, the question of sustainability also arises. Aviation facilitates the movement of people and access to countries and cities, while keeping safety as one of its priorities.

In a little more than a century, the aviation industry has shifted its focus from learning how to fly, to flying faster and flying further. On any given day today, there are more than 100.000 commercial flights worldwide, representing more than 400 take-offs per hour (ICAO, n.d.). Aviation has become one of the safest and most reliable means of transporting people.

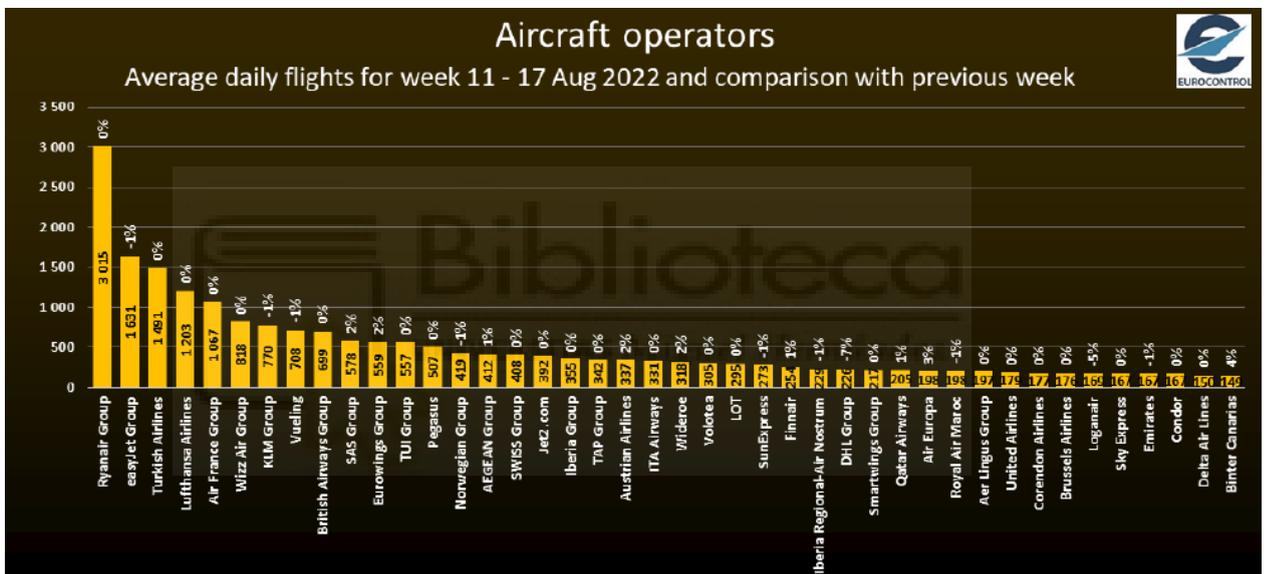
The aviation industry is expanding and the future looks bright. For instance, in 2017, airlines around the world carried 4.1 billion passengers on 37 million commercial flights. Every day, planes carry 10 million people. This gives an idea of the impact of aviation on the world economy. Aviation accounts for 3,5 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) and employs more than 65 million people. Thanks to aircrafts, the economy improves, jobs are created and international trade and tourism are facilitated (ICAO, n.d.).

The aviation sector continues to grow and this growth is not likely to stop. The latest estimates indicate that demand for air transport will increase by 4.3% per year over the next 20 years. If expectations are realised, by 2036 the aviation industry together with its effect on tourism will generate 97,8 million jobs and 5,7 trillion dollars in GDP. In 2030, no less than 200.000 flights per day are expected, twice as many as today. The demand for air transport comes with certain challenges that must be met to overcome this growth. More and more consumers from all walks of life are being attracted to the sector and competition between airlines is becoming increasingly fierce (ICAO, n.d.).

The airline industry is a highly competitive industry in which airlines are subject to many sources of competitive pressure such as airline competition, threat of new entrants high and supplier bargaining power. Liberalisation, deregulation and technological advances have reduced unit costs, and effective competition has allowed these benefits to be passed on to consumers in the form of lower prices.

While a healthy level of competition is important to maintain the best service at the lowest possible prices, competition does not always ensure the stability of an industry (Metz, 2019).

Figure 1: Aircraft Operators 2022 (11th-17th of August)



Source: Eurocontrol

## 2.1 LOW-COST CARRIERS MODEL

In recent times, low cost airlines have grown significantly. Also known as LCC (Low Cost Carriers), they seek to reduce costs in order to offer lower prices. These strategies include, for example: having only one aircraft model in the fleet, operating out of secondary airports, direct sales, keeping labour costs low and so on (Fedosova, 2016).

Thanks to these tactics, LCCs have been able to reduce unit costs compared to traditional airlines. Low-cost airlines also stimulate traffic because of their low fares. Ryanair focuses more on costs, not markets, which means that the airline targets people that have lower requirements and do not mind less quality of service for a cheaper price. It does not offer flights for customers looking for high quality and luxury service, for instance, there is no business or first class on Ryanair (StudySmarter, n.d.). It uses mainly secondary airports, which are more distant and less convenient for its customers, but which allow them to reduce costs and therefore offer low prices.

In order to compare costs between airlines, Cost per Available Seat Kilometre or CASK is used. This is the metric unit that allows us to compare different costs, like labour costs, fuel costs, maintenance and other expenses such as landing fees and also known as indirect or nonoperating costs, among which are ground expenses, ticketing, sales, promotion, passenger services and general administration costs.

Among all airlines we find some familiar low-cost airline names such as Eurowings, Norwegian, EasyJet, Jet2, Vueling, Wizzair or the one that will be analysed in detail in the final degree project, Ryanair.

Figure 2: Performance of Major Low-Cost Carriers 2022 (11th -17th of August)



Source: Eurocontrol

### **3. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF RYANAIR**

Founded in 1985 by the Ryan family, Ryanair is an Irish low-cost airline that entered the European aviation industry and sparked a real revolution. The first route operated by this Ryanair was with a 15-seat aircraft that flew from Waterford to London Gatwick. By the end of the first year, Ryanair had serviced 82.000 passengers with only two routes in operation (Blake et al., 2015). The airline became instantly successful, thanks to the ability of keeping its prices less than half of competitors fares. As a result, other companies started reducing prices in order to compete in the market, resulting in Europe's first price war.

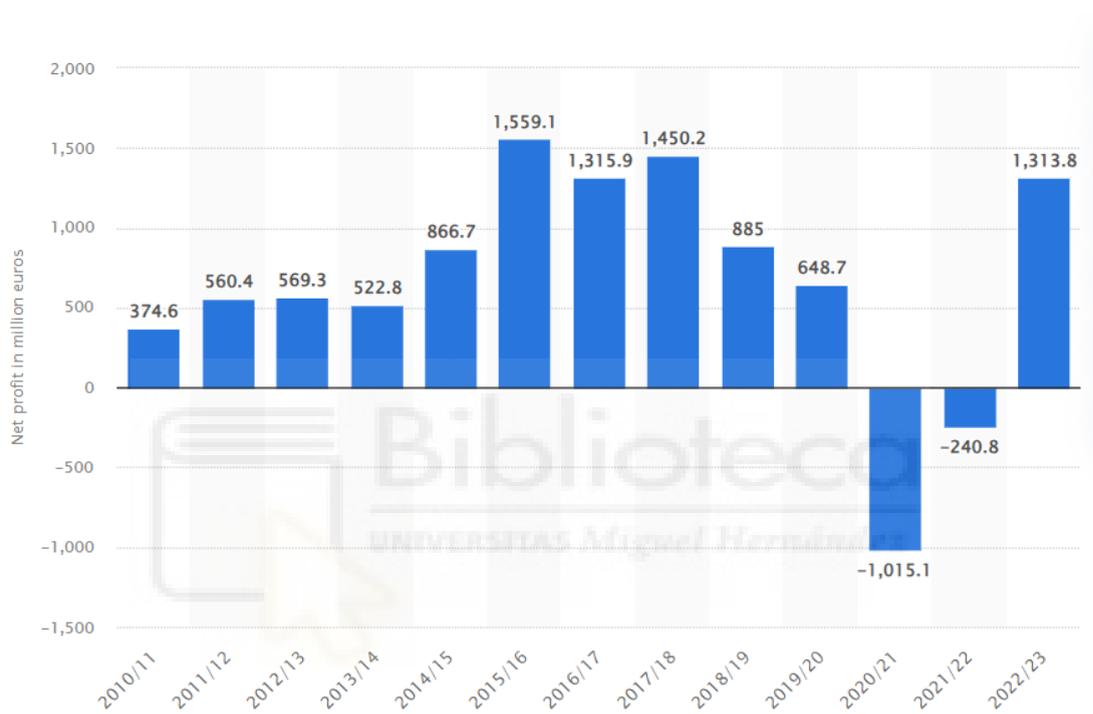
After some years of hard and intense competition, especially with Aer Lingus and British Airways, Ryanair ended 1990 with 20 million pounds in losses (Blake et al., 2015). It was at that time when the Ryan family decided to reinvent their business strategy in order to really compete in the European market. Highly influenced by Southwest Airlines in the United States, they rebranded themselves as Europe's first low-cost airline, getting rid of unnecessary expenses such as free inflight drinks and expensive meals on board. By cutting costs and hiring an entirely new management team, Ryanair was able to offer the same flight ticket for almost half the price that it was before, which led to customers lining up for many days in order to buy tickets at the lowest rate ever imagined.

Due to continued success, Ryanair has increased its fleet of Boeing 737-800 series aircraft and expanded its European routes. In 2000 the company launched their website [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com), which became Europe's largest booking site with more than 50,000 bookings per week (Blake et al., 2015).

The terrorist attacks that occurred in the United States on September 11, 2001 caused problems for Ryanair and other airlines. Rising oil prices and global terrorist activity made customers reluctant to travel by air. However, despite the fact that many airlines at the time faced extreme difficulties or even went bankrupt, Ryanair maintained its low-cost reputation and continued growing and opened more accessible routes across Europe.

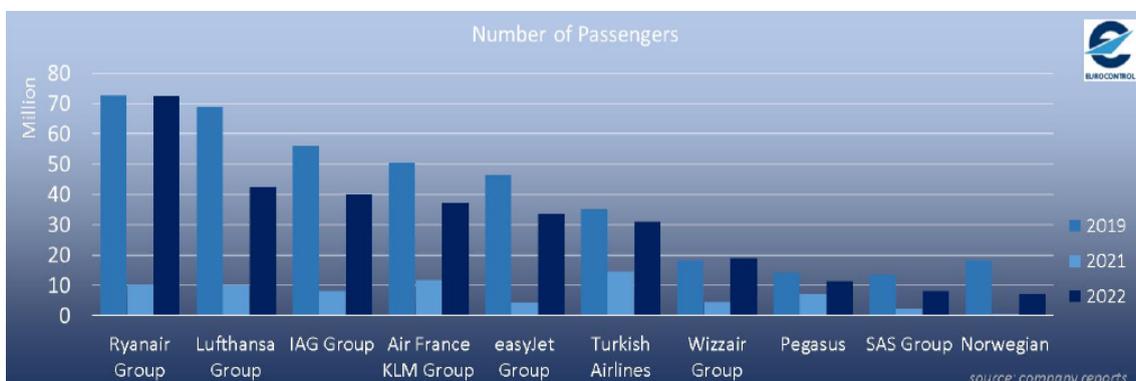
It is also worth noting the tough situation in the aviation world from 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This had a serious impact on the sector as airlines were unable to fly for a period of time and then only to a limited extent due to restrictions and passengers not willing to fly. This can be clearly seen in the graphs below, where we can see a clear change in Ryanair's profit and number of passengers, especially in 2020 and 2021.

*Figure 3: Ryanair's Net Profit 2010-2023*



Source: Statista

*Figure 4: Number of Passengers 2019-2022*

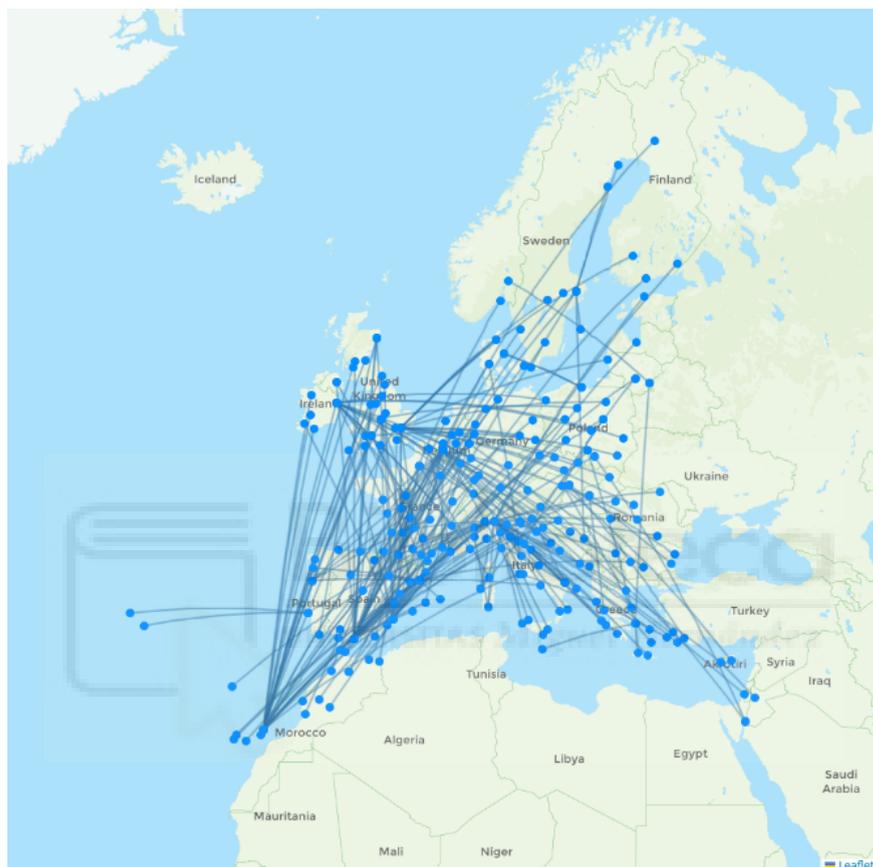


Source: Eurocontrol

### 3.1 RYANAIR IN NUMBERS

Ryanair currently operates in more than 40 countries, with operations in 240 airports and around 3,000 daily flights (Ryanair, n.d.). Impressive numbers for this low-cost giant that has enabled many travellers to fly at a very low cost.

*Figure 5: Ryanair Route Map*



*Source: Flight Routes*

As can be seen in the image below, in week 11 of 2022, Ryanair operated 3015 flights on average per day. This makes it the airline with the most flights operated in Europe. It also managed to report 15% more than in the same week in 2019 (Eurocontrol, 2022).

Figure 6: Top 10 Aircraft Operators 2022 (11th-17th of August)



Source: Eurocontrol

According to Ryanair officials, they are in pole position as they claim to be the cleanest and greenest airline in Europe. They have invested 22 billion dollars in 210 Boeing 737-8200 'Gamechanger' aircraft. By 2034 they will receive a further 300 new Boeing 737- MAX 10 aircraft deliveries which not only carry 21% more guests, but burn 20% less fuel and are 50% quieter than their current Boeing 737-NG fleet (Ryanair, n.d.).

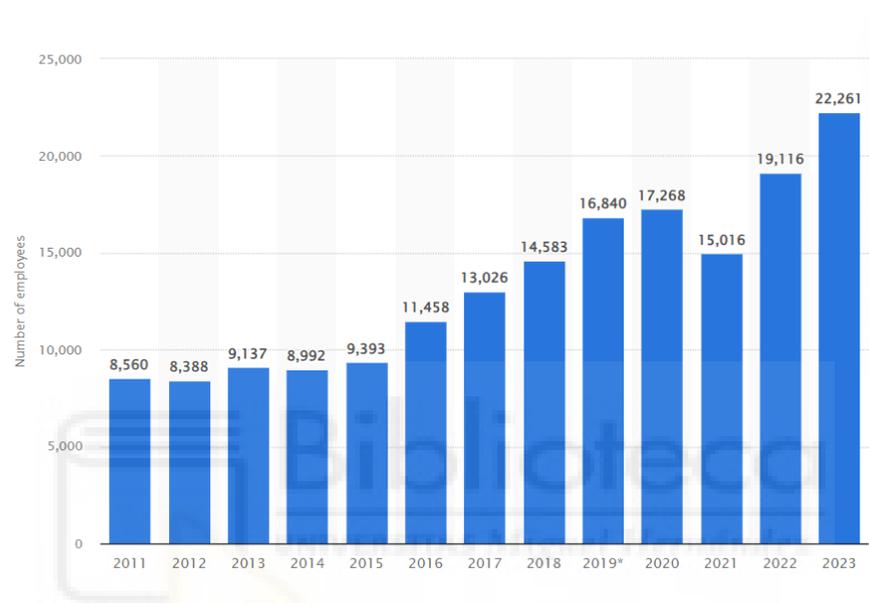
Figure 7: Ryanair Group's Fleet



Source: Ryanair

The Ryanair team consists of more than 22,000 people of 70 different nationalities. They have more than 5,000 pilots on staff, who train in simulators at their facilities in Ireland, the UK, Germany and Italy. Around 11,000 cabin crew work for the airline to ensure passenger safety. In addition, they have more than 2,000 people working in their offices in Ireland, the UK, Spain, Malta and Poland (Ryanair, n.d.).

*Figure 8: Ryanair's Number of Employees 2011-2023*



*Source: Statista*

### **3.2 RYANAIR PORTER'S 5 FORCES ANALYSIS**

One of the best ways to analyse whether Ryanair's strategy is sustainable in the future is to see how the different forces influence the company. Porter's 5 forces allow us to describe how strong Ryanair is and to identify the attractiveness of the Low Cost Carrier (LCC) industry.

#### **First Force: Threats of New Entrants**

To enter the aviation industry, in particular the Low Cost Carrier (LCC) sector, it is necessary to have high capital and new entrants will face immediate competition and difficulty in finding airports in which to operate feasibly.

However, globalisation and privatisation have given total freedom of entry to new airlines.

### **Second Force: Bargaining Power of Suppliers**

In the aviation market there are two main aircraft suppliers, Boeing (USA) and Airbus (EU). As mentioned above, the aircraft model on which Ryanair bases its fleet is the Boeing 737. Boeing is Ryanair's only supplier, which gives it a lot of bargaining power. If Ryanair decided to change suppliers and order aircraft from Airbus, this would result in extremely high costs for the company as it would require new training for mechanics, pilots and cabin crew. Apart from these suppliers, Ryanair also has to deal with the airports. The airports where Ryanair normally operates (secondary) are small and dependent on the airlines, but the big airports, which Ryanair avoids, have more bargaining power as many airlines want to be based there. Fuel suppliers can also have an important impact on Ryanair's development.

### **Third Force: Bargaining Power of Customers**

Ryanair customers can easily switch to another airline at any time as they are very price sensitive. When choosing between different low-cost carriers, there is hardly any loyalty to any airline when people are looking for the best possible price. Important factors that improve loyalty and that customers are concerned about are customer service, punctuality, lost luggage and possible cancellations. Improving crew friendliness is another element that can help Ryanair retain customers (Kumar, 2019).

### **Fourth Force: Threat of substitutes**

Ryanair operates short-haul flights so customers may also choose to use other means of transport such as trains, boats, cars or buses. The supply of substitutes makes demand more elastic. The higher the number of substitute alternatives, the more elastic demand becomes (Kumar, 2019).

### **Fifth Force: Industry Rivalry**

As discussed previously, the market in which Ryanair operates is highly competitive. Strategies can be easily and quickly copied by competitors. At present, it could be said that Ryanair has a main rival (EasyJet) constantly

fighting for market presence. Both airlines are trying to avoid direct competition by choosing different routes than the other competitors. Ryanair tries to maintain its market position by buying smaller airlines that may become competitors in the future. For example, Ryanair has already made bids to buy Aer Lingus, but the Irish government has rejected them.

### **3.3 RYANAIR PESTLE ANALYSIS**

PESTLE is an analytical report used to understand the impact of external factors affecting Ryanair. This external analysis allows us to analyse and understand how these external factors affect the business case, growth trajectory and market strategy. It is also used to launch a new project, product or service.

#### **Political**

Ryanair must follow international treaties such as Warsaw Convention, the Hague Convention, and the Vienna Protocol. The leading Irish company must also follow travel, aviation and customs regulations imposed by each country. For example, these were recently intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to health recommendations, countries around the world had to adopt travel and tourism restrictions to try to contain the spread of the virus. This resulted in many countries closing their borders and those that did not, only allowing essential travel, causing a crisis in the tourism industry. Ryanair must follow the rules and directives of each country at all times to avoid delays in its operations or losses. Italy's civil aviation authority (ENAC), which almost issued a notice of suspension of operations in the country, accused Ryanair of not complying with passenger safety measures and protocols, which Ryanair denied.

#### **Economic**

Restrictions in recent years due to COVID-19 have caused a significant drop in passenger numbers, resulting in significant losses for all airlines. Ryanair in particular, suffered a 99% drop in passengers in 2020, which forced the company to take drastic measures such as laying off 3.000 employees, or reducing salaries by 20% to reduce losses (Ryanair PESTLE Analysis, 2020). After the end of the restrictions, Ryanair has now resumed operations and is

flying normally to the destinations it used to fly to and the latest report indicates that they have made a profit of 1.43 billion euros thanks to the strong recovery in traffic and favourable oil hedges (Ryanair, n.d.).

### **Technology**

Despite the difficult times of the last few years, Ryanair has prepared itself thoroughly to bounce back in a big way and as mentioned earlier, has ordered Boeing 737-Max 10 to renew and increase its fleet and become a much more efficient and modern airline with state-of-the-art aircraft. We can also take into account that the airline bases its sales and after-sales service on digital platforms, considerably reducing its costs.

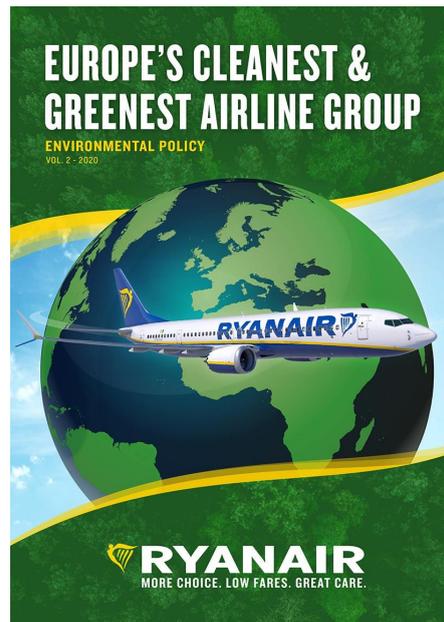
### **Legal**

Ryanair has been involved in many legal problems with different governments, hence part of its reputation as a controversial airline. Before the pandemic, it already faced court actions in 2018 and 2019 due to labour complaints (Ryanair PESTLE Analysis, 2020). Pilots and cabin crew based in Spain, Ireland and Portugal made proposals and went on strike to denounce the precarious employment, poor working conditions and low wages paid to them by the airline. After a period of instability, doubts and uncertainty, Ryanair reached an agreement with its employees to improve their conditions.

### **Environmental**

There is no doubt that the transport business ranks first in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Around 28% of total greenhouse gas emissions are due to transport (Ryanair PESTLE Analysis, 2020). This is mainly caused by the burning of fossil fuels by trucks, cars, buses, trains and planes. Because of this, the aviation industry has been heavily criticised for emitting a constant and massive carbon footprint. The Advertising Standards Agency denied that Ryanair was the greenest airline with the lowest carbon footprint, as Ryanair claims in its advertisements. For this, the Irish airline was severely criticised, as it did not provide clear evidence to support its claims.

Figure 9: Ryanair Claiming to be Europe's Cleanest and Greenest Airline Group



Source: Ryanair

In response, Ryanair has decided to commit to reducing carbon emissions through its Carbon Offset initiative (Ryanair PESTLE Analysis, 2020). This means that customers who wish to do so will be able to pay a small amount to help reduce the carbon impact of their flight. With the proceeds, Ryanair pledges to invest in environmental projects such as reforestation or reducing non-recyclable plastics on its own flights over the next few years. They intend to use wooden cutlery and encourage passengers to bring their own cups on board, to avoid unnecessary and excessive use of non-recyclable plastics.

Despite Ryanair's efforts to reduce pollution, many people remain dissatisfied with the measures taken by the Irish airline and consider them insufficient.

Figure 10: Environmental Activists Throw Cake at Ryanair's CEO Michael O'Leary in Brussels



Source: Business Post

### 3.4 RYANAIR SWOT ANALYSIS

#### Strengths

- **Cost leadership:** As we will see in detail below, Ryanair is the benchmark in the sector as it offers the lowest prices in the market thanks to the fact that they operate with a single type of aircraft, fly to secondary airports and maximise the use of their aircraft.
- **Strong Brand Recognition:** It is well known that Ryanair is in everybody's mind when we talk about airlines. This is because the company is known worldwide and this allows it to attract a large number of customers, which has helped to increase the company's growth.
- **High load factors:** Ryanair has managed to sell the vast majority of seats on its flights, so the vast majority of its flights reach maximum occupancy. This is critical to maintaining efficiency and profit generation in the industry.
- **Resilient financial performance:** The airline's history is notable for remaining stable and efficient even through the most adverse economic

conditions and industry downturns. As a result, the company has been able to maintain its competitive edge.

- **Experienced team:** The people who work at Ryanair are employees with extensive experience in the industry, which has ensured that most of the decisions made by the company's management have been the right ones and that the many difficult challenges faced by the Irish giant have so far been overcome.

## **Weaknesses**

- **Customer service perception:** Ryanair does not stand out for having customer service that is highly valued by its customers. In particular, it is associated with poor service quality. Word-of-mouth does not help in this case as many people who have not yet flown with the company decide not to do so because of its poor reputation in this respect. Many of them decide to buy tickets with another company and this leads to negative publicity, which affects its overall reputation and also customer loyalty.
- **Labour relations:** As we have seen in the PESTLE analysis, Ryanair has been involved in numerous disagreements with its employees about their conditions, salary or benefits. This obviously damages the company's image, which can be associated as a clear weakness.
- **Single fleet type:** So far, basing its entire fleet on one type of aircraft (Boeing 737) has allowed Ryanair to reduce costs both in maintenance and training. However, this may be a disadvantage in the long term as if any safety or mechanical problems were to occur with this aircraft model, Ryanair's entire fleet could be impacted.

## **Opportunities**

- **Expansion into new markets:** There is a clear opportunity for Ryanair to expand its route network further by entering new markets such as Eastern Europe, the Middle East and African markets, where low-cost airlines are still developing.
- **Focus on customer experience:** With the right approach, customer service and travel experience could be improved. Ryanair could enhance

its reputation and attract more customers, including those who prioritise comfort and service over price.

- **Sustainable practices and initiatives:** As discussed above, the aviation industry is under constant pressure to reduce its environmental impact. Through research and investment in new technologies, Ryanair can position itself as an even more responsible company and meet the demands of more environmentally conscious customers.

## Threats

- **Economic downturns:** Recessions or downturns in the economy will lead to a drop in people's purchasing power, causing many people to be reluctant to travel, which will have a direct impact on passenger numbers and company profits.
- **Fluctuating fuel prices:** Considering that fuel is one of the main expenses of the airlines, if fuel prices rise, it could negatively affect the development of the company and therefore it could lose its leading position. This is a variable that cannot be controlled.
- **Political events:** Political instability such as international conflicts like the war between Russia and Ukraine or Brexit can completely transform the aviation landscape and lead to uncertainty affecting demand, currency exchange rates or operations between different countries.
- **Public health crisis:** There is no greater example than that seen in the aftermath of the COVID19 pandemic. Such events can have a devastating impact on the industry due to potential restrictions, which can lead to a significant drop in demand. Possible situations in the future as in the past pandemic could occur, which would again have a very negative impact on Ryanair.
- **Technological alternatives:** As the days go by, there are new technologies around the corner that threaten Ryanair's perseverance in the sector. For example, electric planes or alternatives such as high-speed rail could challenge Ryanair in the long term.
- **Intense competition:** As described above, the commercial aviation market is extremely competitive. Companies such as EasyJet, Wizz Air, Vueling or Norwegian are always on the lookout for any kind of

opportunity to damage Ryanair. This forces the company to constantly innovate and try to maintain its position in the market.

A SWOT is an extremely helpful analysis and planning tool that allows an in-depth assessment of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in any type of business, project or individual. It allows us to develop a strategic plan and obtain key information that, among other things, allows us to address the marketing strategies to be developed.

#### **4. RYANAIR MARKETING STRATEGIES**

Ryanair's marketing strategies are unique to say the least. In recent years we have seen a much more informal and daring approach from the company, especially on social media. Thanks to its marketing strategy among other things, Ryanair has dominated the market in recent years. Specifically in 2021, it carried 74.1 million passengers compared to its closest competitor, German carrier Lufthansa, which had around 50 million (Statista, 2022). The average price of a Ryanair flight ticket is around 27 euros (Statista, 2022), which is comical considering that prices are getting higher and higher in all aspects. For example, taking a cab 15 minutes to the airport can cost the same as the flight ticket itself. Of the profits that Ryanair makes, only 55% comes from the flight ticket itself (Ryanair, n.d.). The rest comes from auxiliary products or services they offer in addition, such as priority boarding, reserved seating, baggage fees, and onboard food and beverages (Singh, 2023). Within Ryanair's marketing strategy, we find ads full of humorous content and using viral elements such as "memes", which are used to promote the airline's products. Ryanair also practises a strategy of self-defamation on their channels, mocking their poor service. This strategy allows its customers to identify with the brand, creating brand awareness and thus avoiding unwanted customers. Their simple, imperfect and sometimes even disrespectful content allows customers to lower their expectations and show transparency about the services they offer. This approach has allowed Ryanair to boost its brand image, conveying to passengers a picture of convenience, speed and low prices.

When buying an airline ticket, the main factors when choosing an airline are price, convenience, comfort and loyalty (Veaux, 2023). These all depend on the

duration of the trip. Ryanair's cheap, affordable, point-to-point flights appeal to all kinds of people but especially young people, who do not care so much about comfort during short trips and who prefer to save money on their travels. Ryanair makes flights more affordable and allows people from all walks of life to afford to travel at very low prices.

Since a low price is more than enough reason to buy a flight, the marketing strategy employed by Ryanair on social media is focused on showing the convenience of its service, being aware of the controversy generated by its brand, famous worldwide for offering a service that is not up to the mark due to its lack of comfort.

Its social media team is divided into two segments that are in charge of content creation (Veaux, 2023):

- **"React and Community"**, which are in charge of winning over the community and making noise. This specific approach enhances brand awareness by using human-to-human (H2H) marketing strategies that leverage service-oriented thinking to get the message across. In doing so, it seeks to achieve emotional and rational relationships with customers through interactive content that encourages dialogue and engagement, making consumers feel represented by the brand and involved in the brand's content creation process. This is achieved because the content is designed from the consumer's perspective. Customers associate Ryanair with a brand that aligns with their thoughts, attitude or mindset.
- **"Always on"**, educates and reduces customer friction. Customer friction can be defined as any negative experience that a customer has with the brand. In other words, it is anything that gets in the way of a customer making a purchase.

Another vital aspect of Ryanair's marketing strategies is the creation of conversations. This has enabled many customers to build a relationship with the brand by having realistic expectations about their travel experiences. It has allowed them to build a loyal community which, together with keeping prices low, has made Ryanair the company to beat in the airline market.

## 4.1 MARKET SEGMENTATION AND POSITIONING

Analysis of Ryanair's target audiences:

- **Budget travellers:** Ryanair tries to keep prices as low as possible, providing charging for checked baggage, seat selection and food and beverage on board. This is one of the main selling points for budget travellers, allowing them to visit locations for less than they would pay if they bought their ticket with another airline.
- **Leisure travellers:** Ryanair has a proposition for holidaymakers as it has holiday destinations around Europe such as Alicante-Elche airport. These types of destinations attract all types of tourists who wish to enjoy a few days' holiday.
- **Travellers on business:** This type of customers who need to pay little money for their tickets as they fly frequently, find Ryanair's low fares and flight frequency appealing. Also if they are looking to travel with little luggage for a short stay. However, some business travellers may find Ryanair's offer less attractive, as they prefer to place their trust in airlines that they may find more reliable.
- **Students:** For students, Ryanair's prices which include exclusive discounts, add extra value. Ryanair offers even cheaper prices for students, which means that young people who do not have as much money can afford to travel with the airline. Ryanair offers special fares for students who register on the ESN (Erasmus Student Network) platform, where in addition to receiving weekly offers for Erasmus students, they get a 10% discount on 4 one-way flights or 2 return flights, including a checked bag of up to 20kg for students who have to travel abroad or return home after their studies in another country (ESN, n.d.).
- **Families:** Ryanair also thinks about families who want to travel together and not spend so much money buying so many tickets. They may also find their choice of seat and boarding preference options interesting, giving them more peace of mind.
- **Short-haul travellers:** Ryanair's proposal for short-haul journeys is a great incentive for tourists looking to reach their destination quickly and without spending a lot of money.

- **Adventurers:** Ryanair also has some destinations that are not so well known and far away from the typical tourist destinations, allowing travellers who are looking for different emotions and explore territories that they could not with other companies.

*Figure 11: Ryanair Supports Erasmus Students*



Source: ESN

## 4.2 PRICING STRATEGIES

In addition to offering the cheapest possible fares, one of Ryanair's comparative advantages in the airline industry is to offer different prices to its passengers depending on their needs, starting from the simplest ticket to more expensive fares that offer certain advantages such as: free cancellation, free luggage, free seat, flexibility to make a change, free return etc. In other words, instead of offering a single price for all segments, Ryanair offers different fares for customers with different value perceptions. Ryanair linked price with value to achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency and customer satisfaction. Value is part of the basis of the pricing strategy. Thanks to this value-based pricing and unbundling strategy, Ryanair nowadays provides 5 different fares that customers can choose from (Ryanair, n.d.):

- **Basic fare:** This is the cheapest fare which includes 1 Small Cabin Bag (40x20x25cm), which must fit under the front seat. Ryanair does not allow additional baggage and check-in opens 24 hours before the official

departure time of the flight. In addition, seating will be randomly assigned, so customers will not know their seat until they get their boarding pass.

- **Regular fare:** Customers who opt for this fare will get a standard seat, priority boarding, which means that they can enter the aircraft first and in addition to the 1 Small Cabin Bag (40x20x25cm), they can take with them a 10kg suitcase with dimensions (55x40x20cm) to be stored in the overhead locker.
- **Plus:** This fare includes a standard seat and allows one Small Cabin Bag (40x20x25cm) and one 20kg checked bag.
- **Family Plus:** This fare allows one Small Cabin Bag (40x20x25cm) and one 10kg suitcase per member, free seats for children under 12, and one 20kg suitcase.
- **Flexi Plus:** Includes priority boarding and 2 cabin bags (1 Small Cabin Bag (40x20x25cm) and one 10kg suitcase), seat reservation at any location, Airport Security Fast Track that allows passengers to access a specific security corridor and pass through the security checkpoint to quickly reach the boarding lounge. Thus, passengers with time constraints, elderly customers, people travelling with infants and/or disabled passengers with special needs might be willing to pay for the Fast Track service to speed up long waiting processes at airports. However, Ryanair states that the Fast Track service is only available for a list of airports and that the conditions differ slightly at each airport. and free Airport Check-in. With this fare you can also change your booking on the day of your flight, free of charge, to another flight on the same route (if seats are available). If a change is made to another flight to another destination, there is no penalty but customers will have to pay the difference in price, if any.

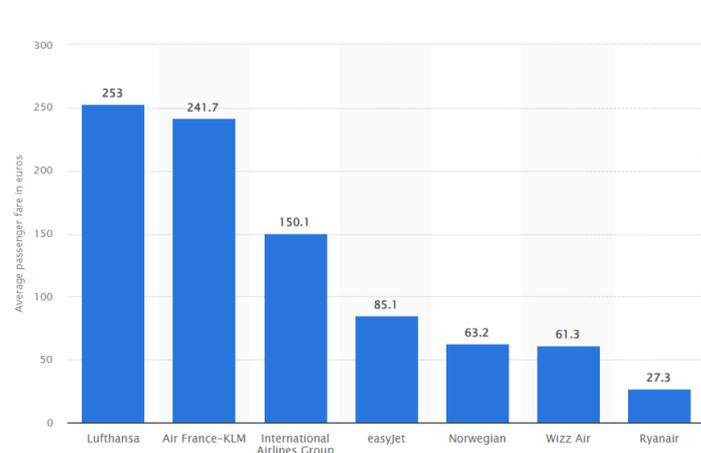
The possibility of having bags on the plane with any fare, regardless of the price, allows travellers to use their belongings during the flight (books, laptops, tablets etc.). Ryanair also allows its passengers to bring food and drinks (except hot and alcoholic drinks) on board, instead of paying for the menu they offer themselves and having to pay more.

Customers must print their boarding pass before the flight, if they wish to avoid the extra fee that must be paid at the airport. The Ryanair app is also available, so getting the boarding pass on electronic devices is a very good option for customers.

Although consumer demand is one of the most important factors in setting price rates in general, marketing strategies carried out by companies lead to price increases or decreases. This can be clearly seen in the airline industry settings, where airlines change prices at will in order to increase their profits. On each flight, Ryanair offers what are known as reduced-price seats, and once these are sold, the fares go up. This is not always the case, as often when buying a plane ticket, we can always find the best prices at the last minute. Prices may vary depending on the season, the moment of purchase, the time of departure, airport taxes, oil prices or competition.

Ryanair's sales are based on yield management. This strategy means that the company tries to sell a specific level of fixed inventory to the right prospects at the right price and time (Saud, 2021). Ryanair has a limited number of seats available on each flight, this means that if the airline does not sell a single seat, it is losing the possibility of making profit. Therefore, yield management seeks to sell all seats at the best possible price, offering discounts where necessary to attract more customers to fill the aircraft. Sometimes even more tickets are sold than there are seats on the plane in case of no-shows or cancellations (Saud, 2021).

*Figure 12: Ryanair's Average Price per Ticket 2021*



Source: Statista

### 4.3 SALES AND PROMOTIONS

Ryanair continuously launches new promotional campaigns to attract as many customers as possible. The airline is known for its frequent discounts and promotions, offering cheap fares during specific periods of time. This creates a sense of urgency among customers to book flights and helps attract price-sensitive travellers.

These campaigns include offers that consumers might find appealing, such as 2-for-1 ticket offers, Black Friday or Cyber Week sales, limited-time discounts or even £5 flights (Ryanair, n.d.). But the reality is that many of these offers do not correspond to reality. For example, 2 for 1 flights are sometimes half the price they were at the time of the offer the day before, so customers are actually paying the same price buying during the period in which the offer is active as if they were buying without the offer.

It can also be seen that Ryanair promotes these offers using a very aggressive marketing as they try to persuade potential customers quickly and forcefully, when in reality it can be seen that these so-called "bargains" are not so much, since on the Ryanair website people can find this type of advertisements practically every day.

Figure 13: Ryanair's Seat Sale



Source: Ryanair

Figure 14: Ryanair's 48h Flash Sale



Source: Ryanair

To find the best deals and promotions, Ryanair recommends checking their main website, subscribing to their newsletter or following them on their social media platforms where they regularly advertise and promote their deals. It is also possible to find deals through travel agencies and deal comparison websites such as Skyscanner or Kayak, which also show Ryanair promotions and discounts. It should be noted that Ryanair offers and promotions usually have certain terms and conditions, such as travel dates, booking periods or restrictions, so it is important that customers read these carefully before making a booking.

The company always recommends booking flights from the official website to avoid any kind of scam or future problems when it comes to customer service, like receiving any kind of compensation.

#### 4.4 LOGO AND VISUAL ELEMENTS

If we look closely at the Ryanair current logo displayed in a picture below, we can see that it is a somewhat minimalist design that presents flight and freedom through its wings and also the silhouette of a person representing height, striving towards the sky. Combined, they form the Irish national symbol, the harp. The Ryanair logo is directly based on the geographical location of the company, as well as its business. For the design of the logo, the designers

proposed different fonts that have always maintained their italic appearance. However, we can appreciate a change in this tendency since the letters for the last logo have become flat, vertical and smooth (Logos-world, n.d.).

Figure 15: Ryanair's Logo Evolution 1984-2023



Source: Logos-world

#### 4.5 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION

Despite Ryanair's claims of high customer satisfaction, the reality is that it has been ranked as one of the worst airlines in terms of customer satisfaction. According to the BBC, the airline scored just 45% satisfaction in 2019, marking the sixth consecutive year in which it has come last (BBC, 2019). Ryanair was described as "arrogant and greedy" by some of their customers.

However, Ryanair states on its website, as can be seen in the image below, that the lowest CSAT score (Customer Satisfaction Score) during 2022 was in June with 79% (Ryanair, n.d.). This data comes as a bit of a shock, since as mentioned previously, Ryanair does not have the best reputation among the general public. To understand this data a little better, we can take a closer look at the concept of customer experience.

*Figure 16: Customer Satisfaction 2022*

December 2022	87%
November 2022	88%
October 2022	83%
September 2022	82%
August 2022	82%
July 2022	81%
June 2022	79%
May 2022	86%
April 2022	85%
March 2022	91%
February 2022	90%
January 2022	91%

*Source: Ryanair*



*Figure 17: Customer Satisfaction in Detail 2022*

<b>95%</b>	Overall trip rating	<b>89%</b>	Reliability
<b>90%</b>	Inflight experience	<b>92%</b>	Punctuality
<b>92%</b>	Crew friendliness	<b>97%</b>	Realism
<b>95%</b>	Customer service	<b>5/5</b>	Website rating

*Source: Ryanair*

Ryanair understood perfectly where their strength lies and which consumers they should focus on, and that price is the most important element on which to pivot their strategy.

The managers of the Irish company know that even if other aspects of their product or service are of lower quality than other companies, if they manage to focus their efforts on offering the best prices, their loyal customers will continue

to travel with them. Because customers are able to travel at reduced prices, the customer experience is satisfactory, which allows them to maintain high repeat purchase rates and strong word of mouth.

There is no denying that Ryanair is an incredibly unique organisation. They understand perfectly what is important to their customers and they know that this is what will make them successful. They are also aware that there are elements that will make them thrive even more. Apart from factors such as price or punctuality, they cannot neglect aspects such as the interaction with customers by their staff. A bad experience in this regard can have a significant negative impact on customer trust in the airline.

Ryanair appears to be in an increasingly favourable position when it comes to customer experience, reporting a Customer Satisfaction Score of over 85% with a crew friendliness of over 90% in 2023, according to official sources from their website (Ryanair, n.d.). The reality is that many companies focus on highlighting their strengths at the expense of detriment to others. Ryanair may not be the company that people like the most, but its focus on bringing value to the elements that matter to its customers is exceptional.

*Figure 18: Ryanair's Customer Growth 2020-2022 and Prediction for 2023-2026*



*Source: Ryanair*

## **5.0 DIGITAL MARKETING AND ONLINE PRESENCE**

While the vast majority of airlines continue to maintain a serious and polished corporate image on social media, Ryanair has in recent years sought to make a drastic change to its social media approach. The Irish airline has been able to win over the public with its social media marketing strategies, which at first were not very well received, but over time have given it a fresh and innovative look. Often even close to going over the edge, they have gained a lot of popularity and have made people talk about them, share their posts and keep up with their social media activity.

Ryanair first had to surround itself with a team full of talent and social media experts to tackle this new digital approach. The creation of the so-called "Ryanair Labs" allowed the company to significantly improve its digital presence as they were able to gain a much more accurate and precise view of the digital possibilities they had (Gleeson, 2015).

By 2015, Ryanair was already attracting more than 40 million visitors to its website, even with some digital limitations and little activity on key channels (Gleeson, 2015). In November 2023, Ryanair had 73 million visits to its website (Semrush, 2023). This demonstrates the importance of digital presence and the great potential it holds if done right. With an increased focus on engagement, personalisation, value and segmentation, Ryanair has managed to improve its digital presence nowadays.

### **Online Advertising**

Ryanair's traditional advertising policy was based on owned and earned media, mainly free public relations. But this trend has changed in recent times as they have relied more on advertising platforms and marketing tools, from retargeting applications to programmatic marketing advertising solutions (Gleeson, 2015).

One of the advantages of digital marketing is the ease of managing and monitoring metrics. It also allows the company to analyse campaigns at a reduced cost. Targeted advertising allows them to fully focus on each type of target audience and deliver personalised ads in order to beat other airlines in the race.

## Ryanair's Website

When it was launched, Ryanair's website (www.ryanair.com) was unintuitive and users got lost through it like a maze. It also had a rather sloppy visual appearance. You could say it was a blip in the past. Understanding that it was launched in 2000, technology has changed a lot since then.

Thanks to the aforementioned Ryanair Labs, the company managed to improve this aspect by investing much more in research to significantly improve the UX (User Experience).

All the improvements implemented on the website have always been designed to facilitate the booking process for passengers, trying to reduce the number of clicks needed to book a flight. Also noteworthy is the introduction of My Ryanair, a section where customers can log in and securely store their details and documents, check their wallet or even add travel companions to make bookings even faster. The focus towards relationship marketing is increasingly evident.

Figure 19: Ryanair's Website 2011

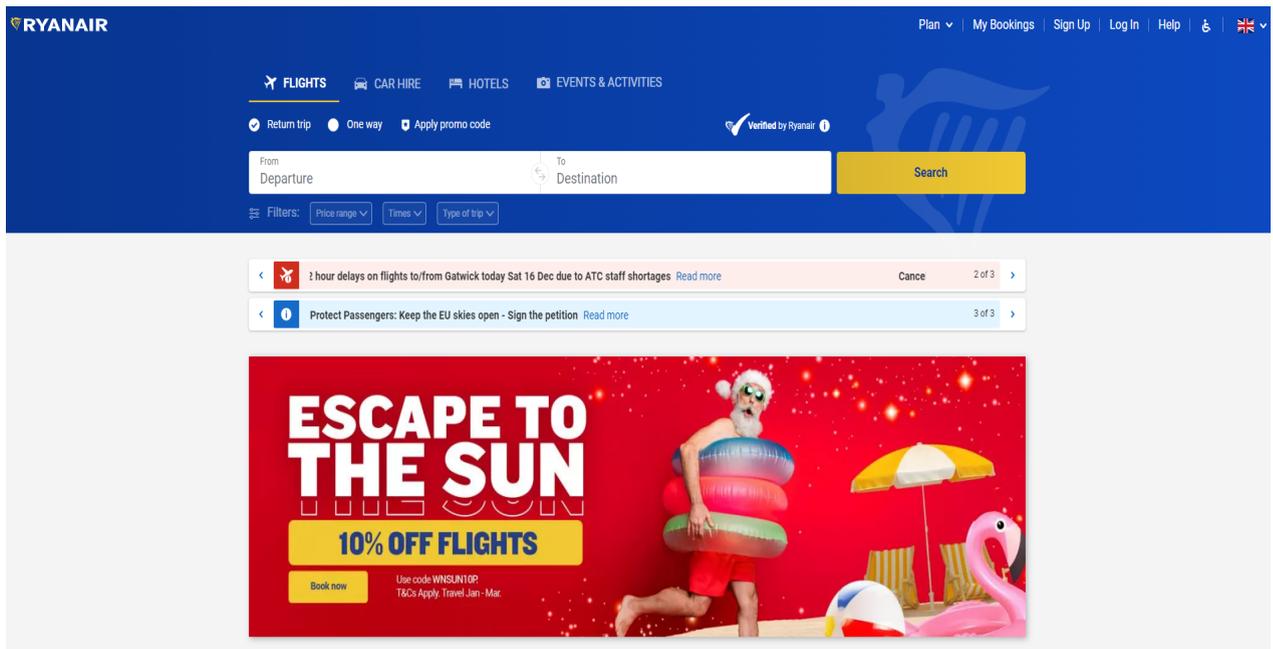
The screenshot shows the Ryanair website interface from 2011. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, CHEAP CAR HIRE, TRAVEL INSURANCE, CHEAP HOTELS UP TO 75% OFF, AIRPORT TRANSFER, CREDIT CARD, GIFT VOUCHERS, HOSTELS & B&B'S, CRUISE HOLIDAYS, FREE ROAMING SIM CARD, VILLAS & APARTMENTS, and CAMPSITE HOLIDAYS. Below this is a search bar and a 'Route Map' section. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Flights:** A booking form with fields for 'Departing from', 'Going to', 'Depart Date', and 'Return Date'. It also includes a 'Number of Passengers' section for Adults, Children (under 16 years), and Infants (under 2 years).
- Travel Feb-Mar:** A promotional banner for winter travel, including a 'BOOK UNTIL MIDNIGHT THURSDAY!' offer and a list of destinations from Birmingham with prices.
- Hostels B&B's:** A section advertising 'beats from £6'.
- WIN CASH!** A promotional banner.
- Peace of mind on your Holiday:** A section with a plane icon.
- CHEAP TRAVEL BARGAINS:** A section with two sub-sections: 'CHEAP HOTELS' (offering up to 50% off and a best price guarantee) and 'CHEAP CAR HIRE' (offering up to 25% off).
- Private Transfers:** A section advertising transfers from the airport to the hotel for £7.
- Stansted Train:** A section advertising a 24% discount on Stansted Express services.

At the bottom, there are links for 'MANAGE MY BOOKING', 'ONLINE CHECK-IN', 'BUDGET BEDS', and 'PLAY GOLF!'.

Source: Diggintravel

Figure 20: Ryanair's Website



Source: Ryanair

## Ryanair's App

The launch of the mobile app in 2014 was a success for the company. This allowed customers to have their boarding pass on their device without the need to print it out or have to take it out at the check-in desk before each flight. This was a marked improvement, and by 2017 the app had been downloaded by more than 20 million people (MacDonald, 2017). Basically every commercial airline has their own app, however, Ryanair has continued to make improvements to the app over the last few years based on customer feedback and experience. Among the latest enhancements introduced in 2021 is a new, redesigned digital self-service hub where customers can do the following without having to contact the customer service team:

- Change their flight
- Change the name entered at the time of booking
- Update contact details
- Add baggage
- Choose seats
- Chat with customer service online

- Consult the FAQs
- Watch how-to videos

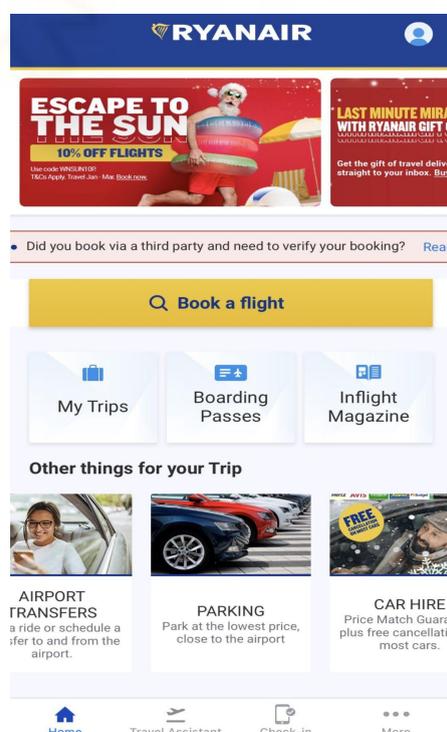
A travel assistant has also been added which allows customers to obtain information 48 hours before the trip and in real time to facilitate the journey through the airport, indicating the boarding gate, check-in desk number and take-off time.

Real-time video footage recorded from Ryanair's operations centre can also be viewed from the app to keep travellers informed of the reasons or measures Ryanair is currently taking to deal with each flight delay.

In case of flight cancellations, Ryanair states that refund requests will be processed within 24 hours and will be deposited in the Ryanair wallet, from where the money can be withdrawn to the payment method used and will be credited within 5 days or the card balance can be used to book new flights.

The Ryanair app is available for Android and Apple devices, and can be found in the Apple App Store, and in Google Play.

Figure 21: Ryanair's App



Source: Ryanair

## 5.1 RYANAIR'S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE PLATFORMS

Ryanair ranked ninth in the top 15 most popular social networks worldwide in January (Statista, 2022). Ryanair has managed to reach a lot of people through its posts on platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, Youtube or TikTok. This has allowed the company to have a memorable online presence. Their social media team is known for their quick responses and interactions and for basing their content on jokes and viral content. This rejuvenating spirit has allowed them to connect with their younger audience and differentiate themselves from other social media accounts that often feel impersonal. Ryanair has taken risks and people have appreciated it.

One of the most important and standout parts of Ryanair's social media proposition is its ability to find the perfect balance between entertainment and information. Their posts not only provide relevant information about their promotions, destinations or services, but also entertain. Therefore, they not only generate interest in their offers, but also create an online community.

Along with promotional content, they share more relatable content such as behind-the-scenes, travel tips or stories about their customers. This approach allows Ryanair to give a true and attentive image, which enhances the connection with their target audience. Thanks to the intention to show the more human side of the company highlighting the experiences of its passengers, they awaken a sense of belonging among their followers.

Ryanair started its social media presence in 2009 (Bikales, 2022), somewhat later than its main competitors. When the company decided to join these social networks, they did not follow any particular strategy, but were simply content with the fact that any publicity is good publicity.

However, this has now changed substantially as they have incorporated that humorous touch and kept their main account for marketing, while at the same time creating another account to deal with customer queries, called "AskRyanair". The current strategy is to split the work into planned marketing campaigns and reactive content. The Ryanair team has few limitations in this respect and is free to get involved in the most controversial topics, which will make them draw the attention of the most curious users. Ryanair focuses on

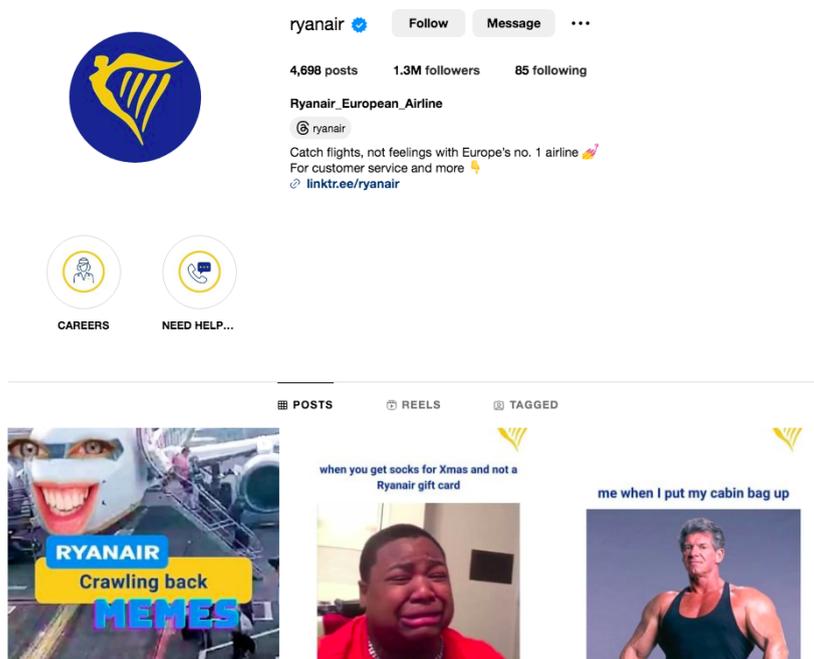
joking about its competitors or passengers who have complaints about the service they have received, and also attacks some public figures or famous people who have nothing to do with the world of aviation. It could be perceived that instead of taking into consideration the feedback and criticism of their customers, Ryanair chooses to create social media content out of it, not actually meaning to change anything in their service.

Figure 22: Ryanair's X Account



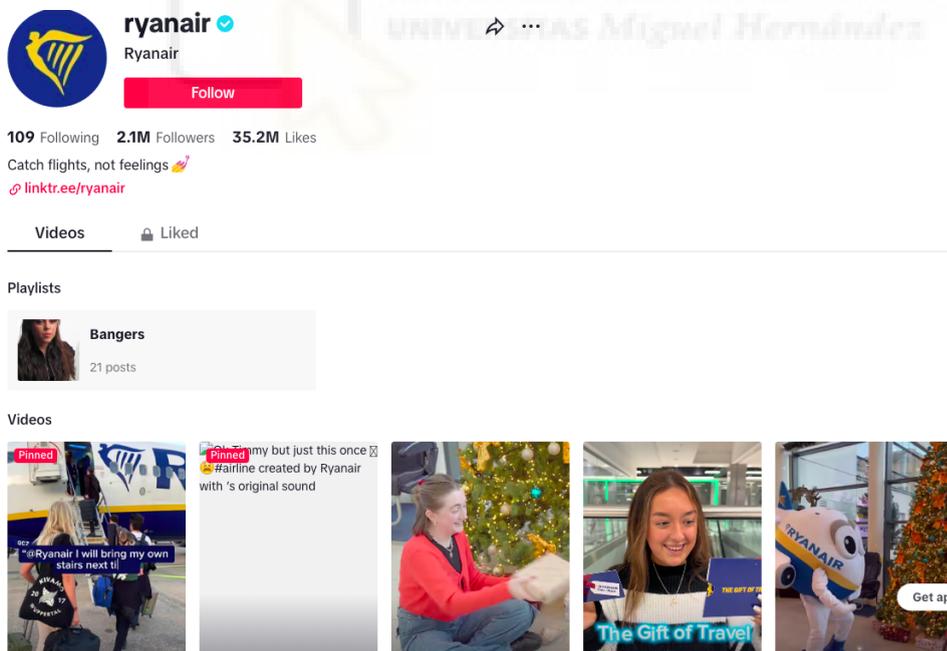
Source: X

Figure 23: Ryanair's Instagram Account



Source: Instagram

Figure 24: Ryanair's TikTok Account



Source: TikTok

## **6. FUTURE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

In an increasingly digitised world, trends are constantly changing and customers have increasingly specific and personalised tastes that they expect airlines to be aware of. As we look to the future, many questions arise as to what the industry trends will be and how companies will adapt to them. The way travellers plan, book and experience travel has been radically transformed by digital marketing (Diaz, 2023).

### **Artificial Intelligence**

The entry of artificial intelligence is one of the major game changers in the world and in the airline sector. Its ability to analyse vast amounts of data in seconds and deliver a personalised experience to travellers is transforming the aviation landscape. The ability to collect, analyse and leverage data will allow leaders to differentiate themselves from the rest. From chatbots offering personalised instant assistance to recommendation engines suggesting the best itinerary, artificial intelligence is undoubtedly improving consumer experience and satisfaction. Airlines are employing artificial intelligence to predict flight delays and proactively notify their passengers, seeking to reduce frustration and improve the travel experience.

### **Omnichannel Marketing**

Omnichannel Marketing allows companies to be consistent across multiple channels simultaneously and deliver a rewarding experience. Businesses will increasingly succeed by integrating online and offline channels to guide customers through the entire process. This allows for smooth transitions and customer satisfaction at all times. When travelling, not having the possibility to talk to a person or find a channel to solve problems can cause a high level of stress, which has a negative impact on the customer experience (Sookdeo, 2023). Managing just one channel or directing customers to a total self-service option is no longer an option for a satisfactory traveller experience. An organisation needs to have different channels available for customers to communicate with the company. People usually reject answering machines or robocalls that provide the same standard response to everyone. It is not enough

to just offer customer service from the website, app, social media, email or SMS. Customers respond positively when their problem is solved in a personalised way and when they feel that they really connect with the person who is trying to solve their problem, for example at the check-in desk or on the phone.

### **Conversational Marketing**

Conversational marketing will make it easier through voice assistants and chatbots for airlines to establish real-time conversations with their customers, opening doors to provide personalised recommendations and immediate customer support.

### **User-Generated Content and Influencer Marketing**

User-Generated Content (UGC) will be a powerful tool to enhance authenticity and build trust (Diaz, 2023). Travellers rely on the opinions, reviews, photos, videos and previous experiences of others when making their decisions. One way to reach younger audiences, especially, is to collaborate with influencers or celebrities. If these influencers or even normal customers show destinations, experiences or products through photos or videos on social media, this will help to amplify brand authenticity. Collaborating with famous influencers who are known for their honest reviews can be a good and inexpensive way to increase the customer base.

For airlines that want to stay on the cutting edge and not lose customers, keeping up with the latest marketing strategy is not an option, but a must (Diaz, 2023). By staying on top of the latest trends, they will be able to keep up with the changing expectations of travellers and also gain a foothold in a crowded and competitive market. In the future, airlines will seek an even more digitised and contactless customer-centric experience. Future trends include the elimination of check-in, facial recognition boarding, simplified purchasing and ticket exchange processes, and the use of virtual reality for customer service and in-flight entertainment.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN IMPROVED MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS**

Although the marketing strategies pursued by Ryanair appear to be effective, in this section I will propose some suggestions that may improve Ryanair's marketing performance.

### **Search Engine Optimization**

Thanks to Ryanair's reputation, they did not need to direct traffic as they have a very strong brand name. However, it may be necessary for them to appear at the top of the search results and not to give space to intermediaries such as the flight comparison site Skyscanner or, even worse, to competitors. By following an effective SEO strategy, optimising the website for a higher rank, companies like Ryanair can improve visibility and attract new customers.

### **Create Loyalty Programmes**

Ryanair has only created one loyalty programme called Ryanair Choice, priced at 199 euros per year. This membership programme included throughout the year and for all flights operated by the company: priority boarding, fast track through security (at available airports), standard seat selection and a 10kg bag. This programme was clearly aimed at business travellers, as if they were not going to make more than 4 trips with the company per year, the subscription was not profitable. It was not really successful since the company has not decided to launch another loyalty program after that.

My suggestion would be to add more frequent flyer programmes, for example, by number of flights per year. Other companies, such as: Iberia, British Airways, Aer Lingus and Vueling (International Airlines Group) have common loyalty programmes based on points called "avios", which allow you to redeem for flights or even reduce the cost of flights when you use them (Avios, n.d.).

Another option could be to offer exclusive airport lounges for loyal customers who have made a certain number of flights with the company, as the airports where Ryanair operates are usually quite inconvenient.

## **Offer Free Wi-Fi**

Some airlines are already including this type of service on board and this could be a problem for Ryanair. As discussed earlier in this final degree project, the world of technology is changing faster and faster and Ryanair must adapt. Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary commented in an interview to The Sunday Business Post in 2019, that this service was not feasible for the company as they would have to install satellites on the planes and that this would result in a 4% loss in fuel and higher costs for the company (Lomholt, 2019). However, this approach might have changed in present times and we could see Ryanair's Wi-Fi on board in the future. Today's population increasingly relies on the internet to be able to, for example, work while travelling, which would be a competitive advantage over other airlines that do not yet offer this service that business travellers would take advantage of.

## **Airline Alliances**

Another possible marketing strategy that would enhance Ryanair's public image and customer experience would be to improve its partnerships. Currently, Ryanair relies on three other companies that are part of the Ryanair Group: Buzz (Poland), Laudamotion (Germany) and Malta Air (Malta). However, being part of one of the three major airline alliances would increase Ryanair's potential.

When we talk about an alliance, we must understand that an airline commits to share resources with other companies to improve the passenger experience. Thanks to these alliances, it allows them to compete more effectively against other airlines. Alliances make it possible to offer connections between airlines with a single ticket and from a single website. As mentioned above, it can also be interesting to form a reward and loyalty system, but this is common between airlines. Extra baggage, free seat selection or even free in-flight meals are some of the rewards offered by alliances when customers reach a certain number of points when flying with the member airlines.

Figure 25: The Three Big Airline Alliances 2019



Source: FlightsFrom

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## **8. CONCLUSION**

To conclude and after analysing all the information described in this final degree project, it can be stated that the marketing strategies carried out by Ryanair are as unusual as they are effective. Thanks to them, and despite being constantly involved in controversy (which has helped to gain repercussions), Ryanair has managed to show the world that more personal and casual side that is sometimes lacking when buying a product or hiring a service. Using customer reviews and complaints on social media for marketing purposes is simply masterful. Thanks to this, the community has felt represented and understands that Ryanair is much more than just cheap tickets. Their clients and themselves accept and recognise that what they offer is not a premium service, but they try to make the most of it and they are undoubtedly succeeding, which has a lot of merit. With the advance of new technologies, it seems that the human side that people need so much has been somewhat forgotten.

It is clear that the airline seeks to reduce costs as much as possible and despite being exposed to multiple challenges and threats, Ryanair remains strong and continues to be a leader and benchmark in the commercial aviation market. The company's results and economic forecasts are favourable, the airline continues to grow and has been able to quickly overcome very hard blows such as the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus. The Irish airline has improved a lot in recent years in order to achieve customer satisfaction and this is key for the future of the company. It should seek in the long term to maintain its policy of low prices but without neglecting customer service, which together with a combination of current and innovative marketing strategies will keep it at the top of the industry. What is clear is that with technology constantly changing, no one knows for sure what the future of marketing will hold and whether airlines will be able to make the most of it.

## CONCLUSIÓN

Para concluir y tras analizar toda la información descrita en este trabajo de fin de grado, se puede afirmar que las estrategias de marketing llevadas a cabo por Ryanair son tan inusuales como efectivas. Gracias a ellas, y a pesar de verse envuelta en polémicas constantemente (lo que le ha ayudado a ganar repercusión), Ryanair ha conseguido mostrar al mundo ese lado más personal y desenfadado que a veces se echa tanto de menos cuando compras un producto o contratas un servicio. El hecho de utilizar las críticas y quejas de sus clientes en redes sociales para hacer marketing es simplemente magistral. Gracias a eso, la comunidad se ha visto representada y siente que Ryanair es mucho más que simples billetes baratos. Ellos mismos aceptan y reconocen que lo que ofrecen no es un servicio premium, pero intentan sacarle el máximo partido y sin duda lo están consiguiendo, lo que tiene mucho mérito. Y es que con el avance de las nuevas tecnologías, parece que se ha perdido un poco ese lado humano que tanto nos hace falta.

Está claro que la aerolínea busca reducir los costes al máximo y a pesar de verse expuesta a múltiples retos y amenazas Ryanair se mantiene fuerte y sigue siendo líder y referente en el mercado de la aviación comercial. Los resultados y las previsiones económicas de la compañía son favorables, la aerolínea no para de crecer y ha sido capaz de superarse rápidamente de golpes muy duros como la pandemia provocada por el virus COVID-19. La aerolínea irlandesa ha mejorado mucho en los últimos años buscando alcanzar la satisfacción de sus clientes y eso es clave para el futuro de la compañía. Deberá buscar en el largo plazo mantener su política de precios bajos pero sin descuidar la atención al cliente, lo que junto con una combinación de estrategias de marketing innovadoras y efectivas como las empleadas en la actualidad, le hará mantenerse en lo más alto del sector. Lo que está claro es que debido a los constantes cambios tecnológicos, nadie sabe con certeza qué nos deparará el futuro del marketing y si las aerolíneas serán capaces de sacarle el máximo partido.

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