

## CASE STUDY

Described for the project: "The Hexagonal Leader"

### Name of the organization

UNIELECTRICA

### Website of the organization

WWW.UNIELECTRICA.COM

### Logotype of the organization



### Type of organization

- Business organization  
 Public administration  
 NGO's  
 Others (what kind?) .....

### Size of the organization

- Small  
 Medium  
 Large

### Economic sector

Energy

### Brief description of the organization

UniEléctrica presents itself as the alternative to traditional electricity companies, a dynamic and accessible company that supplies energy from renewable sources. "We put at your disposal an experienced team in the electricity sector to satisfy your energy needs with a close and quality service, maintaining our social commitment in the preservation of the environment and the fight against climate change", is said in the presentation of his web page, where the company points out that the main objectives are to offer its customers:

- Supply of electricity at competitive prices, with a bill that is easy to read and understand.
- Shielding the discounts offered, with the commitment to maintain them for at least 12 months.
- Active defence of its rights before the distribution companies in the event of an incident.
- Continuous advice on energy savings and better efficiency.
- Optimise and personalise their services for you with transparency and an immediate response time, without you having to wait long hours on the phone or in queues.

### Case study description (situation / the problem they are facing) [max 2000 characters]

The company was founded in 2014 thanks to the liberalisation of the market that had been taking place since 2005/2006, but was not completed until years later. Before, the market was structured as an oligopoly. It is in 2014 when the founding partners - who are also from Cordoba - realise that there is a need, especially in the sector of SMEs and large companies, to have alternatives that allow them to save on their electricity supply. Before, the supply was like a tax, which depending on your location was one or the other. Nowadays companies and individuals have more and more decision making capacity thanks to proposals like ours.

UniEléctrica is an energy marketer that was born in 2013 with two obstacles from its very starting point:

- the economic crisis that devastated Spain during the last decade.
- The entry into a business dominated by large companies that exercised a kind of monopoly in terms of energy marketing in the country.

In spite of everything, in such a short time, the company has become the leading company in the entirely Andalusian capital sector, after doubling its turnover year after year. UniEléctrica went from having 14,000 clients and a gross turnover of 84.51 million euros in 2015, to 130,000 contracts throughout Spain and an annual turnover of 440.1 million euros in 2019, slightly reduced in the latest trade balance sheet for 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic and the reduction in energy consumption.

### Suggested solutions (added pros and cons)

The genesis of the company may be one of the answers. In fact, Unieléctrica is a business created from the infrastructure of Fersoft, a company from Cordoba with 30 years of experience in computer services for companies, with distributors and implantation in all the national territory.

Diego Montes, general manager of the company, assures that the support of Fersoft not only allowed Unieléctrica to reach all of Spain but also took advantage of the company's know-how to refine its operations. The sales companies that operate in these markets buy energy every day at a determined price and to get the quantity right they must know the consumption of their clients very well, even with a view to the future. "The fact that we have a computer base has been very good for us," says Montes.

Their main services are the supply of light and gas, with a clear commitment to renewable energy as the electricity we sell comes exclusively from natural sources. The vast majority of their competitors are electrical companies that do not do this, so Unieléctrica wanted to differentiate itself in the product and especially in the personalization of the service. The light that reaches our homes and our companies is the same, but the company makes sure that the origin is renewable, that it has a lower cost and that we offer our clients and distributors a transparent, close and empathetic service.

In addition to light and gas, Unieléctrica offers all the energy efficiency solutions that are available on the market and provide savings to their customers. For example, they offer technological solutions such as submetering and telemetering which are software and hardware solutions to manage energy consumption in companies. Also self-consumption solutions, chargers for electric vehicles, installation of LED lights, etc. Basically any proposal that makes energy consumption, and with it the bill, decrease.

In addition, the company also wanted to differentiate themselves by offering the possibility of financing the initial outlay involved in these measures. Some companies cannot or do not want to assume this outlay, and we offer them to finance it through a technological leasing added to the electricity bill in terms that are personalised for each client.

### Chosen solution

The fact that it was initially small has enabled Unieléctrica to be more competitive, for one reason: "Energy costs the same for everyone but the costs are cheaper in our case, as we are smaller". Unieléctrica focuses only on companies and the self-employed and not on individuals. The reason is that,

although a natural person can be offered a "significant percentage" reduction in their bill in real terms, the savings do not exceed one or two euros, so it is not worth the effort.

In the case of companies, the reduction in price is more quantifiable, and Unielectrica makes two types of offer to attract them: on the one hand, a flat rate that guarantees the company that it will pay the same for a year and that this amount will be equal to or less than the average bill it paid up to that time; and on the other hand, a rate in which the customer pays a small fee in addition to the cost of the energy, a fee that would be the margin for Unieléctrica. It is a formula similar to that of the Euribor", explained Montes, "the customer pays according to the price of electricity on the market at that time with an added differential".

On the other hand, Unieléctrica has an indirect channel of energetic consultants who freely decide to work with us, because of the service, professionalism and technological tools we offer them. Our first client is the distributor, on whom we focus our efforts as it allows us to have a great capillarity in the market. They have a structure adapted within the company and specialised in different departments to give integral support to each distributor, and thus achieve quick, transparent and effective management.

### Rationale of the decision taken

The company doubled the models implemented in its first years of life following the same parameters, although adjusted to its new size. Adjusting the margin to offer customers throughout Spain competitive rates, especially to freelancers and SMEs, previous studies to save sometimes up to 30%, plans to replace the points of light by LEDs without additional costs, eliminate penalties for reactive, and all this with renewable energy.

### Solution implemented in practice

From its origin, and based on constant and sustained growth during its first six years of existence, Unieléctrica soon understood that its development was linked not only to the company's initial approach and respect for its values, but also to a growth mentality that involved expanding beyond the main market on which it relied during its first steps.

In this line, and aligned with this growth strategy, another of the decisions taken was the integration with Audax, another of the big companies of distribution and generation of energy in Spain and with international presence in Portugal, France, Italy, Holland, Germany, Poland and Panama. In fact, thanks to the company's own generation and to the aforementioned broad experience of the teams of both

groups, the alliance allowed access to very competitive prices and to offer more competitive products, presenting itself as a solid alternative to traditional electricity companies.

The formalisation of this union made the resulting entity the seventh largest marketing group in Spain in certain rankings, in addition to significantly increasing the turnover of both groups.

Both energy groups stand out for being strongly positioned in the SME segment, although in recent months both Unieléctrica and Audax have also made a strong entry into the residential segment, and are pioneers in their parent companies in offering 100% renewable energies, with both economic and image advantages for users, in the eyes of public administrations and clients, and with respect to their social commitment.

As a result of this policy of strengthening the business, growth and development, the company has closed the financial year 2020 increasing its contracts by "26.5%", reaching "more than 164,000". All this despite the fact that its main customers (SMEs and the self-employed, in which the group's firms specialise) have suffered "the biggest setback of the social and health crisis" caused by the Covid 19 pandemic. In spite of everything, and in a year in which its business strategy has allowed it to maintain its figures, the Cordoba company has achieved a gross turnover of "almost 391 million euros".

Putting all its strategies into practice, Unieléctrica has barely noticed the effects of the global crisis and has endured the "downturn with only a 13.77% overall reduction in energy served in 2020". "What is important, however, is the future", said Unielectrica's Managing Director, Diego Montes, who added that "now more than ever we continue to support SMEs, the self-employed, the hotel and catering industry and local businesses", focusing "on their needs" because "together we can recover from this crisis".

In relation to this vision of the future, another of the measures implemented in recent months and aligned with its strategy and mentality of growth is the construction and forthcoming move to the new headquarters located in Cordoba. The new building, which will have 4,000 square metres, aims to be an example of sustainability, as it is being built using a structure that will give rise to an intelligent building, directly sustainable thanks to solar energy, as well as being safe in terms of health with biosecurity mechanisms. In addition, the new headquarters will be located in a development area of the city, which commits Unieléctrica to growth and provision of structures, so it aims to become a stimulus for urban planning, society and the economy of this new area of the city.

"Five years ago we made a similar effort with our current headquarters, but it does not weigh on us that our best dreams have become small in line with the growth of the company. Now we want to give a new boost to the city, pitching in when it is most needed", says the company.

## Lesson learned

We have a structure adapted within the company and specialized in different departments to give integral support to each distributor, and thus to achieve that the managements are fast, transparent and effective.

The company is proud of "not having many customers, but we do have very happy customers". The company focuses on having satisfied customers by customising the service they offer to each of them. They are proud to be focused on customer loyalty through service quality and savings.

Of course, this current situation with COVID "has taught us a lot", says the company. Thus, at this difficult time for many of its customers, UniEléctrica has set up a battery of measures, in addition to launching the first solidarity electricity tariff. "We wanted to value and put into first place the social awareness that we saw many customers were showing to help disadvantaged groups. We tried to get close to the customer and our distributors at a crucial time for them, with quality calls and taking an interest in their problems, always trying to solve them with the greatest benefit for them", says Germán Morales, head of Marketing and Communication at UniEléctrica.

Another of the lessons the company has learned over these years is that its growth mentality had to be linked to increasing its workforce, pointing out the importance of the human team. To this end, and from a solid programme of personnel selection and internal training, the company tries to inculcate its culture and values in all the employees who join its adventure. In this training policy, in addition to purely technical aspects, the company also includes coaching sessions, interpersonal and internal communication within the company, emotional management and the establishment of nourishing relationships within the work environment.

Thus, from the initial 10 that began when the company was a small start up to the current 140, the inclusion of young talent is a constant in its human resources policy. Furthermore, one of its main characteristics is that it has a staff of 50% men and 50% women. "We form a multi-generational group that favours learning, integration and teamwork", they point out from the company, which also highlights the fact that "another element that defines our philosophy is that positions of responsibility are equally held by men and women".

### Connection to the six skills depicted in the project

The case study is closely connected with some of the six basic skills depicted in The Hexagonal Leader project. Here are some of the most relevant ones.

- **Decision making.** The strategic decisions taken by the various managers of the company have always been aligned with values of contribution to society and constant growth, diversifying its production, expanding its audience, seeking new markets and accepting challenges that represent the commercial and human development of the company.



- Unieléctrica is a clear example of **Growth mindset**. From their beginnings, they have tried new things, experimented, made mistakes and corrected them along the way. The company has always gone a step further, making decisions aligned with its development and avoiding the temptation to get stuck in success. Despite the fact that the results have been proved right year after year, the spirit of the company has always been in the development and growth, both in numbers and in personnel and structure.