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TECHNICAL MARKETING (PROMOTION) STRATEGIES FOR CONCRETE PAVERS AND MASONRY BLOCKS

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Summary

Despite today's world is centered on technology and fast track businesses, one cannot ignore that CONCRETE and CONCRETE PRODUCTS are one of the bases for the "construction of the human habitat", meaning the transformation of the earth´s resources into basic, environmentally friendly and economically profitable products. It seems that it will continue very much the same for many years to come, because none of the alternative products seems to offer so much for the same small cost of concrete products.

This "harsh and bulky" construction technology may appear to be incompatible with today´s technological, productive, fast, efficient and very commercially oriented world. However, one cannot forget the basic characteristics of precast concrete construction and its contribution to a better world. The core of it is to have heavy stone-like pieces, placed side by side or bound together, to create larger construction units and final works. However, these pieces sell neither as commodities nor as high-technology products. They are not even "final products". They are "components" of structural systems (pavers of a concrete block pavement, blocks of a masonry wall or structure). They do not respond to the marketing strategies or advertising the same way as the "massive consumer products". It is necessary to have a well-structured argumentation for each product, project and owner, intermediate buyers, final contractors and subcontractors. It generates an almost infinite number of combinations, but fulfill's the owner´s expectations.

This paper presents the reasoning behind the analysis of the variables involved in potential market segments for concrete masonry blocks and concrete pavers. It provides activities that each segment and its participants require, far beyond the conventional market strategies and activities. Here, "technical promotion" means the activities developed to provide all the participants in paving and construction of the required information and training to know, and accept concrete masonry blocks and concrete paving blocks. This kind of "technical marketing" departs from the definition of the manufactured product and goes up to the right argumentation to use for each client in order to have it approved and bought. The characteristics of the producer, the participants in the "chain of production" and the commercial structures that bind the several links of this chain, are very important parts of this analysis.

It is necessary to consider the right argumentation for each group in which the producers focus their promotional activities. Some examples of these groups are: academy, distributors, installers, contractors, researchers, writers of specks and standards, trade associations, city planning and public works offices, and the land and project developers, to mention just a few of them.

In order to make it clearer, the scope of this analysis covers from underdeveloped to well-developed environments and economies, with immense technological and economical differences.

1. INTRODUCTION

Concrete products are widespread throughout the whole world. Their manufacturing process has no great secrets, and many companies in all five continents supply equipment and knowledge. Production scale, number of products and their characteristics can be mastered for each type of the equipment if the producer put enough and sufficient dedication and the resources into his plant.

Once the products are ready to sell, what should be done? They have to reach the right people for the right amount of money, in due time, and in most of cases, the conventional marketing strategies and advertising are

not enough. Many people have to be presented with the real product and convinced, with the right arguments, of its technical characteristics, the differentiation from the competitor's products, the real benefits and the economies offered by the producer, with numbers, figures, codes and manuals, plus practical training in not a few occasions.

The producer will have to decide what else to do when:

- He, or he and his colleagues, have coped the demand for standard products in their natural markets.
- The regular uses of concrete units are satisfied enough and the competition for portions of the market is steady, rotating within the different producers.

The next step would be:

- To make something that the competitors do not make, in other words, to expand the offer of products.

Once one producer takes this step ahead, one or more of the competitors will follow him, and the cycle will start again. This will happen unless there is an explicit or implicit agreement about the segment of the production each producer is going to focus on (for example, some can dedicate to make generic, massively produced, products; and others to special ones (shapes, colors, finishes). This type of agreements could be illegal in many countries.

When the market has a good provision of products, and even before, if someone has the vision of a wider future:

- It is necessary to make the potential market to grow.

This is the departing point for the "technical promotion" of products. In order to do this:

- The focus has to change from the product to the needs of the potential buyers.

It doesn´t matter if the buyers are aware of these needs as long as the producer knows them. It means that the concrete products may have new variants or combinations that can offer additional benefits to the potential buyers. It doesn´t mean that the producer has to make great modifications or investments in the production process but in the way the products could work by themselves or together with other products, with or without the same origin.

This new approach to the growth of the market may have a conceptual burden not always understood by many producers:

- It may be necessary to buy additional raw materials or to incorporate other materials (metal, plastic, wood, combined, etc.) or manufactured products, in order to offer an improved product or a solution to the buyer´s needs.

Some producers see the need for other materials as a weakness, since they consider themselves producers of "all concrete" units. This feeling can get worse if the producers make their own aggregates, but have to buy some sands or special aggregates to produce what is necessary or they intend to sell to new markets.

When the producer get the new products right, it is necessary to go out to sell them. If they are "superior" products, it is common that the producer has to follow one of the following two routes:

- To demonstrate the lower cost/benefit relationship of the new product, compared with a cheaper one or:
- To have to teach the buyer the ABC of the new product: the why, the how and the what-for of it.

The first path is relatively easy to follow but the second one requires a lot of academic and promotional technical literature, that very often is too much for a single producer to finance. Here comes the great importance and benefits of having trade and professional associations, in order to unite resources and make possible, as a group, what would be impossible as single producers.

This scenario is even worst when the product is not an intermediate link of the "chain of production" but the final one of it, as a precast, one volume concrete bench or a bollard. If the product is inside the chain, it means it is not self-sufficient but has to work in conjunction with others to be useful to the buyers. This situation makes the

product to be "a component or a part of a system" of products, that is named after the basic concrete product or not.

2. MATERIALS, UNITS AND SYSTEMS

Producers of certain "raw materials" often envision their "chains of production", with a "before" but not with a "after". One can see limestone and clay, transformed into cement, as a first industrial product of one of those chains. However, cement itself only has two potential uses (as far as this author knows): to dry-out a surrounding humid environment (due to its hygroscopic nature) or to let it harden inside a bag or a storing silo, to make a hard mass.

Cement is useful only if it is a component of something else, be it a paste when it mixes with water, a mortar when added with sand, and a concrete when gravel is part of this mix; and the chain continues.

Concrete, if "wet" (plastic), is the material for structural members (columns, beams, slabs and more), and these members are components of many types of infrastructure, construction or buildings.

Concrete, if "dry" (with very little water), is the mass to cast bricks, blocks, curbs and many other precast units with. However, these units (as concrete itself) are not final products but components of a "construction system", the masonry, in which together with a mortar or a binder the units are just components of walls, arches and domes; again, components of several sorts of buildings and construction.

This is the description of one side of two "chains of production": one, from cement to a concrete building and two, from cement to a masonry building. Both chains, no matter the different results, follow the same steps: the cement producer provides his product to the "transformers" or intermediate industries, being them a concrete producer (ready-mix producer) or a block maker (precasting industry). Furthermore, both sell their product to a general contractor to make something else. For example, concrete to make concrete frames, and blocks to assemble masonry walls, as parts of buildings or constructions, separately or working together.

Paving blocks follow the same path as the masonry walls. They become a part of a pavement, built by a contractor, in some instances laid by a sub-contractor, but in all cases as a component of a street, a road, a driveway, a parking lot, a walking path or a public space. Therefore, one cannot think in precast units as final or unique products; they are just a part of something else. Dealing with concrete pavers, the concrete paver is the unit, that may have numerous variations. The concrete block pavement is a first type system, incorporated that works due to interlock, and the permeable concrete block pavement is a second type system, since it works as a pavement as well as a water management arrange (see Figure 1).

This rational analysis has two important conclusions: Each precast product has a "before" and, at least, one "after", a "past" and a "future"; and consequently, each precast product is a component of one or many possible construction arrangements or systems. With this in mind, and being conscious of the past, each of the futures have to be defined, explored and considered as an individual world, with its own morphology, physical, economic, social and aesthetic laws; and material as well as technological and economic limitations.

3. SELLING A PRODUCT OR A SYSTEM

It is clear though that blocks and pavers are in the middle of "chain of production" and that from there on, the scope of variations and applications widespread as much as it is possible by the development of the construction industry in the natural market of the producer or product (not necessarily the same). In addition, it is necessary to take into account the limitations that the markets can impose to products when there are dominant alternatives, strong architectural, engineering or building traditions, or even restrictions by laws, codes or singular specifications.

Just selling a product (block, paver, curb and more) or a family of them, limit the possibilities of the potential market to small or simple projects, or those without great demands on them (loads, traffic, aesthetical quality and more). However ¿what about large urban street or urban pedestrian space projects, heavily loaded industrial areas, ports and even airports? They require additional efforts by the producer despite the promoted system

has additional components to the precast units because none of the others have the same identification level as the concrete products. Think in a masonry wall. Nobody can identify who made the mortar, the reinforcement and who was the builder, but one can identify the source of the blocks. The same happens for pavers. Being the other components just generic products, blocks and pavers give their names to the structure like "a concrete block wall" or "a concrete block (paver) pavement". Therefore, if a producer wants and need to widen the market and to sell units beyond the vegetative market, he will have to make additional efforts through a coherent presentation of the characteristics and benefits of his products and the systems built with them. Then, the producers changes from being a kind of "dispatcher" to a "technical promoter", and needs the knowledge and expertise to undertake this complex task.

The complexity comes from the need to reach each potential client with the right information and arguments for him to prefer the offered option to solve his needs, and the resources required by this activity, both economic as well as human.

4. MARKET SEGMENTATION

The segments of the market that identified for precast concrete units can be very much the same for a lot of products and for many places or environments, but the arguments to give and the potential size of the demand of each segment change a lot from one product to another.

The economic or technical conditions of the market, to not modify the segmentation as a methodology but make some segments to be more important or urgent than others, and the rest identified as possibly delayed for further development and growth stages.

Some of the segments have to be "translated" to the denominations and working methods followed in each location, but in their essence are very much the same, individually or grouped (see Figure 2 and Table 1).

4.1 FOR BLOCKS AND PAVERS

Academy (professors + students + laboratories): The academy covers all the formal and informal teaching of professions such as architecture, engineering, construction and other related topics. The programs are regularly offered at different levels (vocational, technical, professional and graduate), but the alternatives in concrete or precast units, are not always considered in the curricula. Promoters and producers need to join efforts to get the alternatives included and to provide a set of class materials and written guides in order to surpass the excuse of having to generate them, made by many of the instructors.

General Contractors (Architectural, structural, landscape, urban space and pavements): Are those that will build the projects. They are permanently interested in knowing about new products and methods, technologies, and ways to improve their works and income.

Regulatory Offices (Laws, standards, specifications, technical materials): The products marketed must have a solid position in the set of regulations on materials, systems and procedures. It means that if a product cannot accommodate in any of these regulations, it is required for the producer to follow the procedures to generate the required standards, technical specs and positions inside the codes or laws (national, regional or local). This is the way to make a product to exist, as a citizenship card or a passport makes a person to have an identity among the anonymous population, according with the legal establishment.

Social work (poverty, low-income housing, self-construction, house improvement, equal opportunities): Concrete units can play a role, even with no modifications, at all social and economic levels. More than any other family of products can be adapted to the lower step of technology and costs of the construction of a living environment, as long as the ones in charge put intention, intelligence and skills into it.

Health and care for the disabled (sight or mobility disabilities): The benefits of a durable, low maintenance and stable construction material, the concrete, make that all products made with it to be safe. In addition, due to its plasticity and dominant position in today's outside urban construction for its low cost, concrete products are the best friends when building the environments for the mobility disabled (ramps, surfaces, pathways, sidewalks,

etc.) and for the blind (outer tactile guidance systems). These properties of concrete units must be stressed and need to be thought when trying to promote and sell them.

New construction types (lean, clean, etc.): In most of the occasions, concrete products have a good making in the methodologies followed to evaluate construction to be lean, clean, environmentally protective, with a low carbon fingerprint, etc. Recyclability, durability and easy and low maintenance costs are crucial for the good ranking of concrete among today´s available construction materials. However, those rankings do not appear form heaven. They are explored, investigated, argued and disseminated among those in charge of such evaluation procedures.

Subcontractors (Specific procedures): The interest of general contractors to split many general activities in subcontracts with third parties, specialized in precise activities, seems to be the actual trend. Many times the general contractor ask for pavers or masonry to be sold by installed area (cost of installed concrete block pavement surface (sand, pavers, jointing, adjusting, cleaning) or cost of the complete pavement, including the construction of the base and infrastructure). Some producers do it, but most of the times they end subcontracting the laying of the pavers with subcontractors, supposedly specialized or certified in this activity. The training of this type of subcontractors is something crucial for the success of the concrete paving blocks as a pavement surface material. Something analogous happens with concrete masonry.

Developers (Financial managers and developers of construction projects): These are the ones making possible that an idea transforms into a finished construction project. They are interested in performance, economy, good appearance and all sort of selling arguments. Any new or technically supported material or system like concrete masonry, concrete block pavements and all sorts of precast infrastructure and public space elements (such as curbs, gullies, drainage systems, furniture and more) will appeal to them.

Quality control (laboratories, inspectors, owner representatives): The activities, especially those consuming a lot of labor, have to be a permanent search, if not for perfection, for achieving the expected status for each aspect of each activity. The inspectors must be trained to control activities involving the assembly of pavers and block and not to only concentrate on laboratory tests. These are checked for their proficiency in practical aspects, not only in filling-out the reports and forms for quality systems.

4.2 FOR BLOCKS

Structural Designers (Engineers or architects designing the supporting structures of the projects): Structural designers are the professionals that approve the structural systems for buildings, bridges and other constructions. If the designer is interested in masonry, the producer should provide him with all the technical information and tools for him to gain confidence in the new system and to know it in detail, including the direct experience with similar constructions in other places.

4.3 FOR PAVERS

Designers (Design groups + consultants): In areas such as architecture, landscape, urban space and more, related with the formal design of the environment.

Pavement Engineers (Designers + consultants): They work in the structural design of pavements for all pedestrian and vehicle pavements and surfaces, including the available alternatives (according with the availability of materials and technologies), the construction practices and the complete specifications.

Public Offices: Are those in charge of the physical aspects of the city. They may be city, state or national offices, and they can work for the design, construction, maintenance and administration of the streets, pedestrian areas, parks, public buildings, etc. The following are some of these offices:

- **Planning Office:** This office is due to determine the shape, density, use, growth and other parameters of the city or region. It has the possibility to choose technologies and to coordinate city needs and basic designs.
- **Works (Roads, public space, drainage, general infrastructure):** Since they are the administrators of the road infrastructure, they can technically and economically evaluate the existing and proposed technologies

(like impermeable or permeable concrete block pavements) to become a feasible option to other traditional pavements like concrete slabs or asphalt concrete. These can coexist with the old stone pavements.

- **Public or private services providers (water, sewage, energy, telecommunications, gas, etc.):** These companies intervene in the physical infrastructure, especially floors (pedestrian) and pavements (vehicular), along their buried lines. It is always a problem to have floors and pavements restored to its original state. Sometimes the works are left unfinished for the Public Works Office to finish them; in other occasions, they do it in a rough or fast way leaving a "scare" on the surface. They require the right information and training to learn how to handle the paver surfaces; in other ways, the image of this application will suffer since they are responsible for most of the interventions, except for the ones due to bad previous construction methods.

Table 1. Programs dedicated to each segment of the market for concrete pavers and blocks.

MARKET SEGMENTATION	SEGMENT PARTICIPANTS	PROGRAMS FOR PAVING BLOCKS	PROGRAMS FOR MASONRY BLOCKS
Developers	Developers, promoters, administrative and financial managers of land, construction and real estate projects.	- Short presentations about the technical and economic advantages of concrete block paving as pedestrian and vehicular surfaces, with the possibility of a great landscaping and aesthetic content. - Presentation of case studies projects similar to the one being developed. - Promotional technical visits, national or international, to outstanding projects in order to get a first-hand perception of the use of concrete block pavements, and the local perception of the system.	- Short presentations about the technical and economic advantages of structural or partition concrete masonry, as a complete and efficient system for the construction of all the structures of a certain project. - Presentation of case studies of projects similar to the one being developed, emphasizing the reduction of materials, the optimization of resources, the site organization, the speed of construction, etc. - Promotional technical visits, national or international, to outstanding projects in order to get a first-hand perception of the use of concrete block masonry, for structures and/or partitions, and the local perception of the system.
Regulatory organizations	Committees for codes, specifications, standards; national and international.	- Participation in the corresponding committees of the national or principal standardization institution, as an individual or associative member: General precast concrete, general pavements, concrete pavers and flags, landscaping, public space, mobility handicapped, sight handicapped, accessibility and the corresponding tests and construction procedures. - Participation in technical committees of the professional and trade associations, especially in those dealing with codes, standards and specifications, education and legislation on precast units, pavements and roads.	- Participation in the corresponding committees of the national or principal standardization institution, as an individual or associative member: General precast concrete, general construction, concrete blocks and bricks, masonry, landscaping, facades, building acoustics, thermal and acoustic isolation, the corresponding tests and construction procedures. - Participation in technical committees of the professional and trade associations, especially in those dealing with codes, standards and specifications, education and legislation on precast units, wall structures and masonry construction.
Academy	Professors, students, school laboratories.	- Incorporation of concrete block and flag pavements, impermeable and permeable, in the pavements and road engineering programs (undergraduate, diplomas, specializations and post-graduate studies) in each local professional education institution or through the state or national superior education bodies, controlling the curricula of these institutions. - Generation of the class material for the professors and the technical study references for the students, as a comprehensive and coordinated set, handed free to each lecturer and professor of these areas. - Provision of permanent information about the international, national or local academic, promotional and commercial events and exhibits, plus all sorts of informational resources to bring	- Incorporation of concrete block technology and concrete block masonry, as a partition as well as a structural system, in the structural design and building construction programs (undergraduate, diplomas, specializations and post-graduate studies) in each local professional education institution or through the state or national superior education bodies, controlling the curricula of these institutions. - Generation of the class material for the professors and the technical study references for the students, as a comprehensive and coordinated set, handed free to each lecturer and professor of these areas. - Provision of permanent information about the international, national or local academic, promotion and commercial events and exhibits,

		them the state of the art to their hands (including journals, periodicals, reports from professional and trade associations).	plus all sorts of information resources to bring them the state of the art to their hands (journals, periodicals, reports, etc.).
Architectural designers	Architecture, landscape, urban space, facades.	- Tailor-made presentations for large offices, about the possibilities offered by concrete block pavements as the material for urban space, landscaping, driveways, streets, renovation, parks, etc. Previous works made with the products of the producer or products if used in the design of future projects plus the permanent provision of full size samples of the units under production. - Lighter presentations for the general public, professional and trade associations, universities and other education institutions. - Regular research about the tendencies of local and foreign architecture and the products that designers would like to have (shapes, colors, finishes, etc.).	- Tailor made presentations for design offices, about the possibilities and advantages of concrete block structural masonry, especially for massive housing projects, from houses to low or high rise buildings, industrial, commercial and educational constructions. Outline the construction formats that can be built using standard and special units, made by or possible to be made by the producer, with various sizes, shapes, strengths, colors and finishes; plus the periodical provision of full size or cut samples of the units being produced. - Lighter presentations for the general public, professional and trade associations, and education institutions.
Structural designers	Engineers or architects designing the supporting structures of the projects.	No	- Participation as regular or informational members of the technical committees in charge of the codes and specifications for division and structural masonry, with special care for the conditions in which concrete masonry could compete with masonries made with other materials, other wall systems and frame systems. - Provision of technical and production information to research or verification organizations, in order to make the product "visible" to them, and gain in confidence of the system. - Reports to the structural design offices about the products made, especially when new ones appear plus a sporadic research about the products that the designers would like to have in order to improve the quality and competitiveness of concrete division, façade and structural masonry.
Pavement and floor engineers	Designers and consultants dealing with materials, thicknesses and construction procedures	- Participation as regular or informational members of the technical committees in charge of the codes and specifications for design and construction of concrete block pavements, with special care for the conditions in which concrete block paving could compete, first, with clay or stone block paving (if available) and, second, with concrete slabs and asphalt concrete pavements. - Taylor made presentations and information of case studies and papers about the possibilities offered by concrete block pavements as the material for heavy applications in ports, airports, parking areas, industrial maneuver and circulation spaces, dry ports, etc. - Provision of technical and production information to research or verification organizations, in order to make the product "visible" to them, and gain in confidence of this paving system. - Reports to the pavement designers about the products made, especially when new ones appear. - Guide to access the technical information on concrete block pavements, for every type of project, especially when it is possible to have a	No

		new or extended use of this pavement system.	
General contractors	Structural, architectural, landscape, urban space, pavements, roads.	- Different scale of presentations about concrete block paving, especially on construction, repairs and maintenance, basic structural design, pavers quality control and reception, block paving contracting, outputs, resources for materials, equipment, testing laboratories, subcontractors, consultants, and else. These presentations to be regularly offered for in-house technical reunions, periodical seminars, special events, exhibitions, shows and any occasion they are asked for.	- Different scale of presentations about concrete division (non-loadbearing) and structural (load bearing) concrete masonry, especially on construction, repairs and maintenance, basic structural design, blocks quality control and reception, block laying contracting, outputs, resources for materials, equipment, testing laboratories, subcontractors, consultants, and else. These presentations to be regularly offered for in-house technical reunions, periodical seminars, special events, exhibitions, shows and any occasion they are asked for.
Subcontractors	Specific procedures.	- Subcontractor are crucial to develop and maintain the image of concrete block pavements, since they are responsible for the final quality of the surface, if the quality control of the construction do not make a close supervision and final inspection of uniformity, irregularities of the surface, stepping or lipping between adjacent units, and may more details. It is fundamental to provide subcontractors and labor with training in theoretical and practical aspects of concrete block paving and, if possible, a certification procedure in order to improve the overall quality and to have a certain control of the market of subcontractors from the technical point of view. - Subcontractors should be taught and required about the legal aspects of the contracting of labor as well as the need to fulfill all the requirements in order to have a safe site and working practices.	- Subcontractor are crucial to develop and maintain the quality of concrete block masonry, since they are the ones responsible for the visible quality of it if the quality control of the construction do not make a close supervision and final inspection to check the irregularities of walls. It is fundamental to provide subcontractors and labor with training in theoretical and practical aspects of concrete masonry and, if possible, a certification procedure in order to improve the overall quality and to have a certain control of the market of subcontractors from the technical point of view. - Subcontractors should be thought and required about the legal aspects of the contracting of labor as well as the need to fulfill all the requirements in order to have a safe site and working practices.
Quality control	Laboratories, inspectors, owner representatives.	- One of the most fundamental points to stress in search for quality of a concrete block pavement is to agree on the standard the pavers will have to fulfill as well as the construction procedures. Most of it should be decided by the pavement and floor engineers, but the genera inspector or owner representative hast to corroborate it and bring up to the completion of the project. - When the concrete unit is in the middle of the chain of production and it is the most "visible" component, most of the times they are charged with the responsibilities for all the problems of the final product. As for ready-mix concrete, quality has to be seen as a continuous procedure starting in the plant and going up to the final acceptance by the owners. - It is very important to verify if laboratories, inspector and owner representatives are aware of the standards and testing procedures to sample and test the concrete pavers. The on-site inspectors must make a real-time control, to verify the construction procedures of each detail of the paving procedure to get a good result, instead of waiting for the pavement to be finished to control the surface parameters and to decide if the work can or cannot be accepted. - For it all, it is necessary to find out the previous experience each member of the quality	- One of the most fundamental points to stress in search for quality of a concrete masonry wall and construction is to agree on the standard the blockswill have to fulfill as well as the construction procedure that will be followed. Most of it should be decided by the structural engineer or architect, but the genera inspector or owner representative hast to corroborate it and bring up to the completion of the project. - When the concrete unit is in the middle of the chain of production and it is the most "visible" component, most of the times they are charged with the responsibilities for all the problems of the final product. As for ready-mix concrete, quality has to be seen as a continuous procedure starting in the plant and going up to the final acceptance by the owners. - It is very important to verify if laboratories, inspector and owner representatives are aware of the standards and testing procedures to sample and test the concrete blocks. The on-site inspectors must make a real-time control, to verify the construction procedures of each detail of the paving procedure to get a good result, instead of waiting for the walls to be finished to control the alignment parameters and to decide if they can or cannot be accepted. - For it all, it is necessary to find out the previous experience each member of the quality process has and provide the right information

		process has and provide the right information or training if necessary.	or training if necessary.
New construction types	Lean, clean, sustainable.	- A very important concept for the competitiveness of concrete block pavements is how it adjusts to the requirements of the new construction types or evaluation procedures such as lean, clean, and sustainable construction. The markings are generally above average and outstanding in many instances. These figures can be determined in advance for the pavers and the pavement itself, be it impermeable or permeable, can be used when getting the general rating for the construction project and as a powerful marketing tool if these ratings are already being used in the city, state or country. - A relatively new field of application for concrete block pavements is in the construction of permeable concrete block pavements, the opposite to the traditional impermeable concrete block pavements. However, this new system goes beyond a pavement, providing a permeable surface to a water management system that could let the rainfall to permeate the underground, to be stored shortly to reduce the rain peaks or to be a long-standing water reservoir that could be used for irrigation and many other purposes. This use of concrete pavers has a much higher grade in the new construction qualification systems. Permeable concrete block pavements are one of the technologies that could be signaled in the environmental chapters of the development plans for a city or a region, and are of the greatest interest for the water and sewage companies in charge of these services in urban areas.	- - A very important concept for the competitiveness of concrete block masonry is how it adjusts to the requirements of the new construction types or evaluation procedures such as lean, clean, and sustainable construction. The markings are generally above average and outstanding in many instances. These figures can be determined in advance for the masonry blocks and the masonry wall or building itself, can be used when getting the general rating for the construction project and used as a powerful marketing tool if these ratings are already being used in the city, region or country.
Public Offices - Planning	Urban regulations, densities, uses, parks, services, education.	- City or regional planning not always goes up to determining the construction methods to be used, but it is important to check if the city, state or country codes include concrete block pavements, at least, in equal conditions compared with concrete slabs or asphalt concrete pavements.	- Construction or structural codes determine the materials and structural systems that can be used in a city or region, according to the construction methods to be used, but it is important to check if the city, state or country codes include concrete masonry, at least, in equal conditions compared with the other structural systems.
Public Offices - Works	Roads, streets, public space, drainage, general infrastructure.	- Despite the fact that concrete block pavements are accepted by planning office, the transport departments and/or public works offices (in charge of the construction of the city streets) must have a positive attitude toward this type of pavement. They will need to set-up a parallel structure to those created for asphalt concrete or concrete slab pavements to administer the new one, including a maintenance group or office, with the right training, materials and equipment, no matter if the maintenance requirement for concrete block pavements are very little or nil. It means they will require some to work with the administration in the structuring of this office or division and the training of inspectors and labor.	No
Public/Private services providers	Water, sewage, electricity, lighting, telecommunications, garbage, re-	- For this portion of the market, the activities would be very much the same as for the Public Offices - Works. It is good to stress them the need for a responsible attitude toward the city	No

	cycling.	itself and to sign a basic understanding agreement with the Works office or those in charge of the maintenance of certain areas of the city or project, in order to clarify who will do what in terms of refurbishing the surfaces after repair or new interventions are done. - It is important to go over what was expressed in New Construction Types about permeable concrete block pavements, due to the immense possibilities offered by this pavement system for water management in urban areas.	
Social work	Poverty, low-income housing, self-construction, house improvement, equal opportunities.	- Most of the immense amount of socially oriented activities deal with the improvement of housing conditions, being it accessibility, new housing, house improvement, communal spaces, schools, churches and many more. Communities can provide labor and in some times some money to make the projects feasible. The optimum would be to have industrially produced pavers, but some countries have managed to set-up programs for inner production of pavers inside small communities or townships, using small-scale machines. The risk of this last approach is that it is indispensable to count with an institution or a company besides the community of the project to direct it permanently and to solve all the quality and marketing problems appearing with a production process. - Despite the options for the production of units, it is indispensable to train the participants of the projects in the technical and logistics activities of the construction process, including a narrow inspection of the costs, production and construction rate, in order to leave the local labor trained enough to become a part of a Subcontractor company or to set-up their own, be it concrete block paving or concrete masonry.	
Health and care for the disabled	Public health, sight and mobility disabilities.	- Concrete block paving is one of the easiest surface construction methods to provide solutions for all the requirements of mobility for the handicapped, including wheel chairs, and for the inclusion of the floor tactile systems for guiding the sight disable population.	No

5. CONCLUSION

The perspective of what the promotion and marketing strategies for a precast concrete unit should be, depends very much of the previous experiences a person has had inside the world where such unit is conceived, developed, made and used.

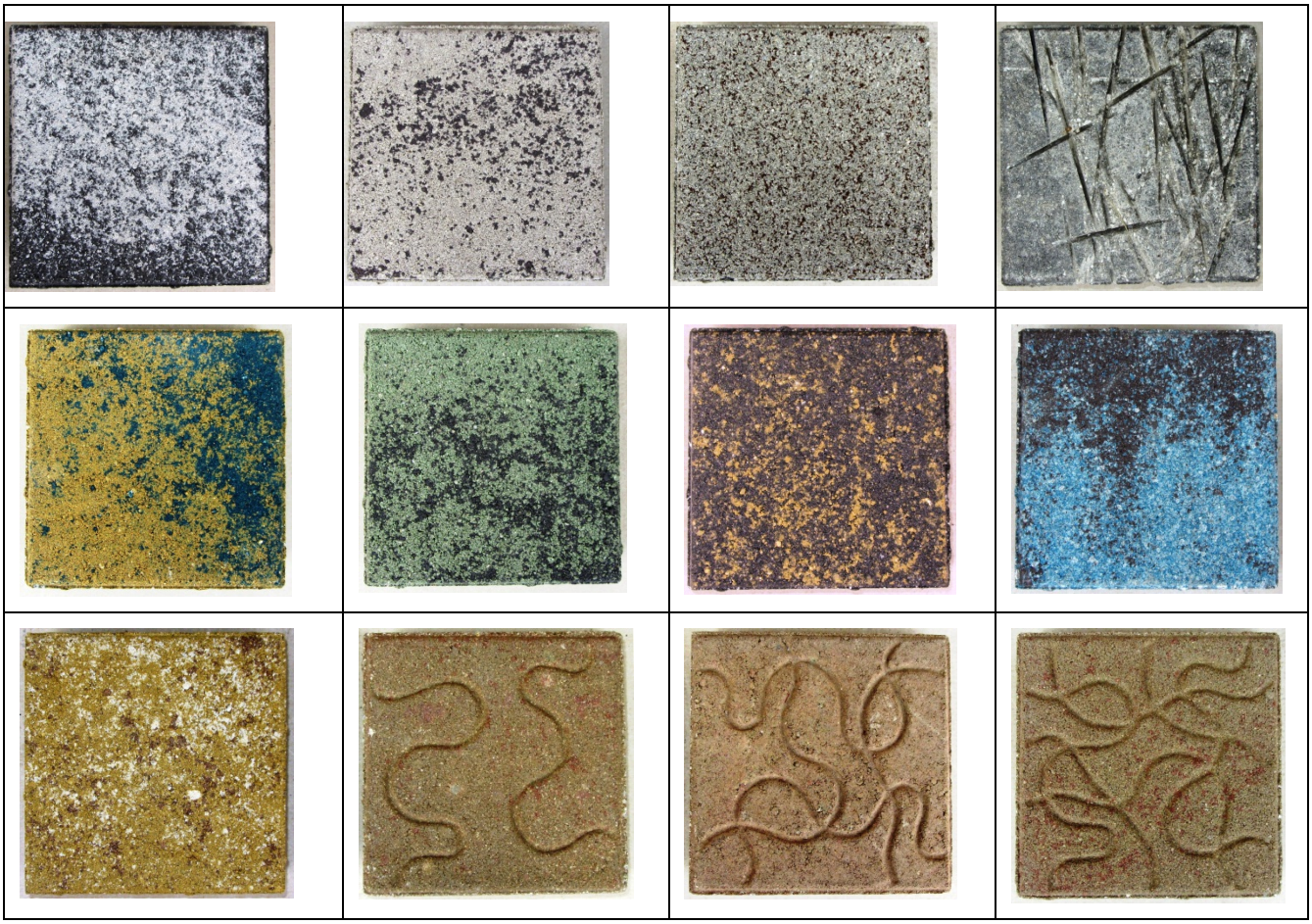
Since the regular marketing strategies are not enough to sell these units, it is necessary to undertake technical promotion activities to reach the right persons with the right arguments, products and commercial practices. Moreover, for this purpose, the segmentation of the market is a crucial activity for each geographic, economic, technic, aesthetic and other characteristics of a market.

This paper presented the author's vision of this process, starting with the philosophical consideration to give a concrete unit its identity and its surrounding environment that complement its nature. Each person can use this information to create his own rationale and method to segment every individual market and define the technical promotion practices that must accompany the conventional marketing strategies defined for each concrete product. The exchange of comments, experiences and results is welcomed.

Figure 1. Successive steps after a 200 x 200 mm concrete paver or concrete paving block.



A. The unit: Gray, plane. (www.adoquinar.com)





B. The variations: Colors, textures and finishes.**(www.adoquinar.com)**

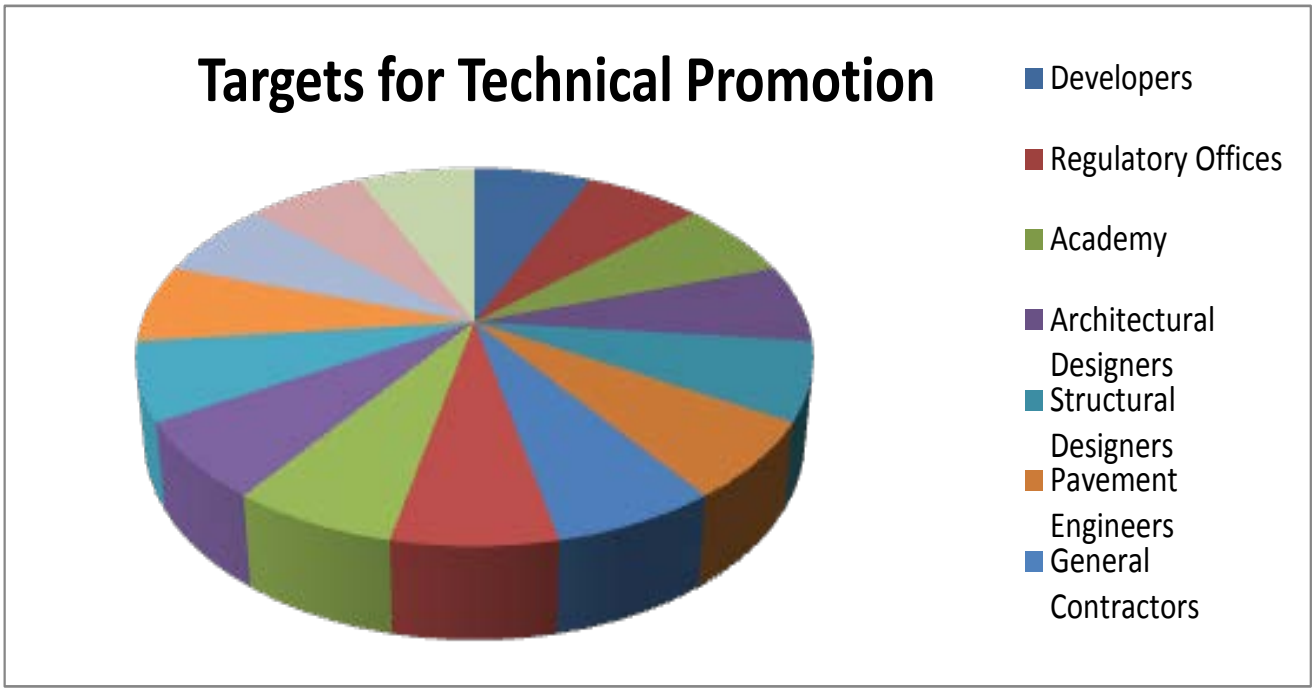


C. A First Type System: An impermeable concrete block pavement.**(www.cegment.co)**



D. A Second Type System: A permeable concrete block pavement.**(www.icpi.org)**

Figure 2.Non-dimensioned segmentation of the targets for technical promotion as a marketing strategy.


Targets for Technical Promotion
Developers
Regulatory Offices
Academy
Architectural Designers
Structural Designers
Pavement Engineers
General Contractors