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Conceptual Review of Digital Content Marketing and Recommendations for Practitioners: An examination through the Lens of Social Media

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Abstract

The emergence and growth of digital content marketing has become a crucial and significant undertaking within the realm of digital marketing agencies. The significance of academic recommendations regarding effective content marketing practises cannot be overstated for practitioners. However, there exists a lack of comprehensive knowledge in this area, particularly in terms of scientific research that examines the effectiveness and appropriate utilisation of these practises across various touch points within the digital customer journey. Content marketing has emerged as a crucial strategy for businesses to engage in order to provide guidance to practitioners in the field. The objective is to explore how content marketing can be utilised as a strategic approach to recognise customers' need and interest and foster personalisation. This paper aims to provide recommendations for digital marketers regarding content marketing management strategy, based on a comprehensive theoretical review of the topic. By synthesising existing literature and research, this study offers insights and suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of content marketing efforts in the digital realm. The following sections will outline the key findings and propose actionable recommendations for digital marketers to optimise their content marketing strategies. This research paper aims to consolidate existing academic knowledge on the topic of content marketing within the realm of digital media. It also provides valuable insights and recommendations for developing a strategic plan for inbound marketing.

Keywords: *Digital Content Marketing, Digital Society, Buying Touch Points*

Introduction

In order to initiate a comprehensive content marketing strategy, it is imperative to undergo a paradigm shift in the approach to the communication process. In contemporary marketing practises, organisations have shifted their focus from traditional advertising methods to embrace a more customer-centric approach known as inbound marketing. This approach entails creating and disseminating content that is both relevant and engaging, thereby attracting customers who actively seek out the brand. The underlying principle is to provide customers with educational and entertaining content that not only captures their attention but also enhances their overall brand experience (Halligan & Shah, 2010; Holliman & Rowley, 2014). In the realm of interpersonal communication, the initial interactions between individuals have evolved to encompass various modes of communication, such as telephone conversations, email exchanges, and other forms of pseudo-personal communication.

This shift in communication methods has been observed and discussed by scholars, including Cortez and Johnston (2020. By engaging in these alternative forms of interaction, individuals are

able to continue nurturing the social exchange that is fundamental to establishing and maintaining relationships. In the present investigation, the scope of our review was established to encompass a substantial and continuously growing body of literature (Atewologun et al., 2017). Our aim was to identify a specific collection of studies that investigate broad and overarching aspects of the subject matter. The authors Dillon et al. (2016) and Petrescu and Krishen (2020) have emphasized the significant role played by certain technologies in enhancing the supply chain process and customer relationship management. This importance is further magnified during times of crisis. The concept of a contingency plan has been extensively discussed in the literature. Duvnjak (2018) has provided valuable insights into this topic. A contingency plan refers to a predetermined course of action that is designed to be. Managing Emotional Responses during a Crisis: An Analysis of Anger and Anxiety in Society and the Business Environment Introduction: During times of crisis, individuals often experience heightened emotional responses, with anger and anxiety being two dominant emotions that emerge both in society and the business environment (Kim and Niederdeppe, 2013).

Understanding and effectively managing these emotional responses is crucial for individuals and organizations to navigate through challenging times. The impact of digital platforms on individuals is influenced by various factors. According to Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) and Kim and Jung (2016), the extent of these effects is directly related to the level of engagement individuals have with the platform. This paper aims to explore the impact of preparatory information on stress reduction and its implications for managing stress effectively (Inzana et al., 1996; Checchi, 2017). In order to effectively cater to the informational requirements of business customers, it is imperative for B2B firms to ensure the adequacy of their e-commerce platforms (Rancati and Gordini, 2014; Neusser, 2021).

The establishment of a strong connection between the content and the essence of the brand has been found to significantly impact consumer engagement and foster a favourable brand-consumer relationship (Nosrati et al., 2013). This, in turn, increases the likelihood of consumers making purchases from the brand (Nosrati et al., 2013). Moreover, such a connection enables the facilitation of interaction, collaboration, and ultimately, the development of brand loyalty (Guadalupe, 2015). The purpose of this research paper is to explore the conceptual foundation of content marketing and provide practical recommendations for digital marketing practitioners based on empirical research. The objective is to assist these practitioners in developing an effective content marketing strategy. The present study conducted a thorough analysis of the existing literature, employing the methodology outlined (Centobelli et al., 2020; Rasool et. al., 2021). The subject interest involves the strategic creation and dissemination of pertinent and valuable content in order to captivate, obtain, and establish connections with a clearly defined and comprehended target audience. The ultimate objective of this approach is to generate financial gains for the organisation and foster a sense of engagement and loyalty between customers and the brand (Lou & Xie, 2021). The aforementioned definition places significant emphasis on the criticality of generating and disseminating pertinent, captivating, and valuable content, while also allowing for potential user engagement. The primary objective of this strategic approach is to establish a mutually beneficial and enduring association between the involved parties, rather than solely concentrating on immediate sales growth (Pulizzi, 2014).

Literature Review

Digital Content Marketing

The concept of content marketing has gained significant attention in the field of marketing. It refers to a marketing format that revolves around the creation and dissemination of content with the primary objective of attracting and acquiring customers (Nosrati et al., 2013). This approach involves the strategic development and distribution of valuable and relevant content to engage

and captivate the target audience, ultimately driving customer acquisition and retention. The utilisation of social media platforms emerged as a means to disseminate information pertaining to a particular brand and facilitate the establishment of its reputation. Several early examples of content marketing practises can be found in various industries. One such example is John Deere's The Furrow magazine, which was first published in 1895. This publication aimed to provide farmers with valuable information on how to enhance their profitability by utilising the brand's farm tractors (Nosrati et al., 2013). Another notable instance is Michelin, a tyre brand that introduced Michelin guides in 1900. These guides offered drivers essential details regarding travel tips. The aforementioned examples serve as illustrations of how content marketing can function as a strategic instrument for the purpose of aligning organisational objectives with the demands and desires of customers, while simultaneously fostering active involvement, confidence, and enduring connections with customers (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019).

Social Media

The utilisation of social media platforms by marketers has become increasingly prevalent in contemporary marketing strategies. This approach aims to effectively promote brand names through communication channels, thereby enhancing brand awareness and fostering customer loyalty (Swani et al., 2017). In order to achieve these objectives, managers and marketers employ a range of persuasive techniques to encourage audience engagement with their social media posts, ultimately leading to heightened popularity and brand recognition. The significance of social media stems from its role in the information search process, product and offer comparison, and establishment of relationships between consumers and sellers. The utilisation of social media platforms for the purpose of providing consistent and timely information to consumers during the sales process is a topic of considerable importance.

In order to enhance the overall consumer experience and facilitate informed decision-making, it is imperative that businesses leverage social media as a means of communication and engagement. This paper aims to explore the significance of utilising social media for continuous consumer information dissemination throughout the sales process. Furthermore, it has been observed that the implementation of certain strategies can significantly augment the capabilities of the sales team in providing assistance to customers. This exchange of information has been found to have a direct impact on the level of satisfaction experienced by the customer (Agnihotri et al., 2016). In this scholarly work, the authors have undertaken the task of identifying a comprehensive list of social media practises that can be utilised by professionals. The authors have further organised these practises into distinct categories based on the specific relationship-building functions they serve viz sharing, like, engagement, display, e-w-o-m, feedback.

User Generated Content

The efficacy of promotion of content through social media has been widely acknowledged in the marketing literature. In this context, the utilisation of brand ambassadors has emerged as a promising strategy to enhance electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and subsequently foster greater engagement with the brand. The concept of a content community encompasses a platform that facilitates the sharing of narratives by both users and brands. This arrangement allows for the dissemination of stories and experiences, thereby fostering a sense of engagement and connection among participants. By leveraging this interactive space, individuals and organisations can effectively communicate their messages and establish a meaningful presence within the community. In order to establish a strong connection with its target audience, a company has the ability to generate content that imbues it with a sense of humanity.

By demonstrating a genuine understanding of the needs and challenges faced by its audience, the company can effectively foster a bond with them. Concurrently, users themselves possess the power to contribute to the creation of a narra-

tive that bolsters the positive perception of the brand. Fostering mutually beneficial relationships and the cultivation of an online community. The phenomenon of user-generated content has become increasingly prevalent in the realm of consumer-brand interactions. Consumers now possess the ability to generate their own digital stuff, subsequently spread the word with others. Simultaneously, companies themselves have the capacity to create and distribute content. This symbiotic relationship between consumers and brands has significant implications for the field of marketing and warrants further investigation.

Inbound Marketing

The discipline of inbound marketing, as described by Toledano and Begoña (2015), pertains to the realm of digital marketing and is primarily concerned with the process of attracting new customers through organic means. The genesis of this concept emerged as a direct reaction to the contemporary public's inclination towards social media platforms, where they actively seek out meaningful and valuable content. Simultaneously, brands and companies find themselves in a predicament, as they struggle to establish a sense of trust and rapport with their prospective customers through conventional marketing communication channels, such as television. In the realm of marketing, the concept of inbound marketing has emerged as a comprehensive approach that seeks to transform the dynamics between brands and their target audience. This transformation is achieved by altering the interpretation and significance of marketing messages through the utilisation of various tools, including Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), content marketing, and active engagement in social sites. These pillars serve as the core principles that underpin the practise of inbound marketing.

According to Patrutiu-Baltes (2016), inbound marketing offers several advantages. Firstly, it facilitates a direct and long-term relationship with the customer. This means that businesses can establish a more personalised and ongoing connection with their target audience. Secondly, inbound marketing enables the swift and accurate definition of the customer persona. By understanding the characteristics and preferences of their ideal customers, companies can tailor their marketing efforts more effectively. Thirdly, inbound marketing proves to be more cost-effective compared to traditional marketing methods, yielding better results in terms of cost/benefit ratio. Lastly, inbound marketing allows for the development of a content strategy that focuses on specific topics or keywords identified through search engine optimisation and Google Ads. By targeting topics that genuinely interest potential customers, businesses can attract and engage prospects more effectively.

Digital Content Marketing and Inbound Marketing

The idea of content marketing is closely linked to the idea of inbound marketing. Content marketing has been singled out as an integral part of the inbound marketing framework by Järvinen and Taiminen (2016). However, Pulizzi (2014) argues that the core tenants of inbound marketing may be included into a content marketing approach. In a study conducted by Holliman and Rowley (2014), it was observed that a similar state of confusion was encountered during interviews conducted in the context of digital content marketing in the business-to-business domain. The significance of inbound marketing was emphasized by a majority of the interviewees, who expressed a growing recognition of its importance. Furthermore, it was noted that the two aforementioned concepts, inbound marketing and the subject under discussion, are inherently interconnected, to the extent that they can be considered almost synonymous.

To avoid annoying or otherwise disrupting customers in their daily lives, inbound marketers utilize a variety of non-intrusive communication strategies to get their attention (Castelló-Martnez, 2013). When done correctly, inbound marketing may bring in clients before they've even shown an interest in buying from you (Nedaei et al., 2018). Crucial element of this approach is the utilization of content, which plays a pivotal role in marketing strategies by fostering cus-

tomer engagement (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Inbound marketing, as posited by Halligan and Shah (2010) and Opreana and Vinerean (2015), revolves around the creation of impactful and memorable content. This kind of advertising uses a variety of distribution methods to spread the word. According to Patrutiu-Baltes's (2016) study, inbound marketing stresses the need of producing and disseminating content that caters to the interests and demands of the target audience. The research conducted for this study emphasizes the significance of understanding customer preferences and tailoring content accordingly.

Digital Content Marketing and Buying Touch-Points

Understanding the customer's journey and the factors that influence their purchasing decisions is widely recognized as a crucial aspect in comprehending the impact of content on their buying behavior. By gaining insights into the various stages of the customer's journey, businesses can effectively identify the specific touch-points where content can play a significant role in shaping their purchasing decisions. The online customer journey encompasses a series of distinct phases that customers go through when interacting with a company's website. These steps include of navigating to the site, looking for and exploring items, presenting the product of choice, handling the cart on the site, and finally, checking out and paying for the item(s) purchased. Several elements (Mangiaracina et al., 2010) influence the user experience and the number of conversions at each stage. The idea of a client's journey in modern business practices is quite similar to that of the purchasing touch-points concept. The buying touch-points, a sequential framework, elucidates the various stages through which a customer progresses in their decision-making process, commencing from the initial recognition of a need and culminating in the acquisition of a product or service to fulfill said need. The buying touch-points is a commonly discussed concept in marketing literature, with various sources offering slightly different interpretations. However, a general consensus can be reached regarding the four distinct phases that comprise the buying touch-points.

Practical Implications and Recommendation for Practitioners

The process of content creation is best carried out by an individual possessing extensive knowledge about the company in question, along with a strong connection to its essence. This connection can be established through a deep understanding of the company's values, mission, and overall identity. By aligning their work with the company's core principles, the content creator can effectively convey the soul of the organization to its intended audience. Additionally, it is crucial for the content creator to establish a tangible link between the content and the company, ensuring that the messaging accurately reflects the company's unique attributes and resonates with its target audience. The present study examines the proposition that freelancers should be hired on a permanent basis. By analyzing existing literature and considering various perspectives, this paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding the employment.

The dissemination of content plays a crucial role in the digital landscape, particularly for companies seeking to establish a strong online presence. In order to effectively reach and engage with their target audience, it is imperative for organizations to strategically distribute their content across various platforms. This research paper aims to explore the optimal channels for content dissemination, paying close attention to the company's Facebook and Instagram pages along with its blog and website. First and foremost, the company's blog and website serve as fundamental platforms for sharing content. These channels provide a centralized hub where the organization can showcase its expertise, products, and services. By regularly posting high-quality and informative content on the blog, the company can establish itself as a thought leader in its industry, attracting and retaining a loyal readership. Additionally, the website serves the dissemination of content in various formats is a crucial aspect of modern marketing strategies.

Outcomes of the Recommendation

When implemented proficiently, digital content marketing has the potential to provide diverse outcomes for enterprises and organisations. Digital content marketing has been shown to provide some significant effects and advantages. *Analytics and data insights:* play a crucial role in content marketing as they enable the collection of valuable information pertaining to user behaviour, engagement, and preferences. *Customer retention:* it has the potential to enhance customer retention via the provision of continuous value, updates, and incentives to maintain active involvement with your business. *Cost-effectiveness:* content marketing in comparison to conventional marketing lies in its ability to generate long-term value via the creation of assets, as opposed to paid advertisements that provide limited exposure. *Social media amplification:* effectively enhance the dissemination of material to a wider audience, hence facilitating the generation of social proof. *Search engine optimisation (SEO):* consistently refreshed and optimised material has the potential to enhance the search engine ranking of your website.

Conclusion

The significance of digital content marketing has grown considerably within the realm of digital marketing agencies. Its goal is to increase repeat business and attract new customers by engaging them in a positive brand experience across digital channels. The significance of effective content marketing practices in the digital customer journey is widely recognised by practitioners. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research on academic recommendations regarding the effectiveness and appropriate utilization of these practices across various touch points. This paper aims to address this gap in knowledge and provide an overview of the current state of research in this field. Content marketing has emerged as a crucial strategy for businesses to engage with their target audience in the digital era. Despite its significance, academic studies that seek to provide evidence-based advice for efficient content marketing practises are few and far between. This lack of scholarly attention hinders practitioners from making informed decisions about their content marketing strategies. The digital customer journey encompasses various touch points, including awareness, consideration, purchase, and post-purchase stages. Each of these touch points requires tailored content marketing approaches to effectively engage and influence customers.

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