

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY**

**THE ROLE OF CONTENT MARKETING IN ENHANCING
ONLINE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

Master's Thesis

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ISTANBUL, 2019

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

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ABSTRACT

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Master of Business Administration

Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Özgür Çengel

June 2019, 157 pages

This master thesis explores the effect of content marketing in enhancing the online customer experience, customer experience is significantly important to content marketing as it aims to enhance the customer overall satisfaction, loyalty, building better relationships, and delivering added value, all which are related to content marketing main objectives and goals. Today's business world has changed a lot because of the introduction and heavy use of the internet, digital marketing, and globalization and therefore communication is more important than ever and building customer relations is the key for success as prices and products competition has become harder now and the main competitive advantage is becoming the customer experience. The purpose of this study was to examine and build an understanding on how content affects customer experience as it was split into factors that affect customer experience such as loyalty, satisfaction, design, personalization, experience, engagement and perception, and quantitative method was applied in the research with a structured questionnaire that tests online attitudes and purchase intentions. The results explain and clarify how to enhance customer experience by using content marketing and what content types and tools are favored and affects customers more, the results are interesting and useful and can be used as an outline for companies that wish to start content marketing or already use content marketing and wishes to develop it and to companies that wish to increase their customer experience, the results were analyzed and discussed using statistical software and methods. Based on the results and findings, clear guidelines were presented to better enhance content marketing to achieve better customer experience, and some recommendations for future and further research are introduced for continuous exploration and for the importance of this particular subject because after all customers are the key point and corner stone for the success and continuity of any company.

Keywords: Content Marketing, Digital Marketing, Customer Experience

ÖZET

ONLINE MÜŞTERİ DENEYİMİNİ GELİŞTİRMEDE İÇERİK PAZARLAMANIN ROLÜ

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İşletme Yüksek Lisans Program

Tez danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Özgür Çengel

Haziran 2019, 157 sayfalar

Bu yüksek lisans tezi, içerik pazarlamanın çevrimiçi müşteri deneyimini geliştirmedeki etkisini araştırıyor, müşteri deneyimi, içerik pazarlaması için çok önemlidir çünkü müşteri genel memnuniyetini artırır, bağlılık, daha iyi ilişkiler, ve katma değer sağlama. Günümüzün iş dünyası, internetin tanıtımı ve yoğun kullanımı nedeniyle çok değişti, Sayısal Pazarlama, ve küreselleşme. iletişim her zamankinden daha önemlidir ve fiyat ve ürün rekabeti artık zorlaştığı ve temel rekabet avantajı müşteri deneyimi haline geldiği için müşteri ilişkileri kurma başarısının anahtarıdır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, içeriğin müşteri deneyimini sadakat gibi müşteri deneyimini etkileyen faktörlere ayrılırken nasıl etkilediğiyle ilgili bir anlayışı incelemek ve oluşturmaktır, memnuniyet, tasarım, kişiselleştirme, deneyim, katılım ve algı. araştırmada çevrimiçi tutumları ve satın alma niyetlerini test eden yapılandırılmış bir anket ile nicel yöntem uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar, içerik pazarlamasını kullanarak müşteri deneyimini nasıl geliştireceğinizi ve hangi içerik türlerinin ve araçlarının tercih edildiğini ve müşterileri daha fazla etkilediğini açıklar ve netleştirir. Sonuçlar ilginç ve faydalıdır ve içerik pazarlamaya başlamak isteyen veya içerik pazarlamayı zaten kullanmak isteyen ve geliştirmek isteyenler ve müşteri deneyimini artırmak isteyen şirketlere bir taslak olarak kullanılabilir, Sonuçlar istatistiksel yazılım ve yöntemler kullanılarak analiz edildi ve tartışıldı. Sonuçlara ve bulgulara dayanarak, daha iyi müşteri deneyimi elde etmek için içerik pazarlamasını daha iyi hale getirmek için net kılavuzlar sunulmuştur. ve sürekli araştırma ve bu konunun önemi için gelecek ve ileri araştırmalar için bazı öneriler getirildi, çünkü müşteriler herhangi bir şirketin başarısının ve devamlılığının nedenidir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İçerik pazarlama, Sayısal Pazarlama, Müşteri deneyimi.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing is considered as the cornerstone for a business to excel and progress, it is one of the most subjects in business administration that has been renewed and discussed throughout many years starting from traditional marketing till the era of technologies and digital marketing buzz.

Marketing is defined by the American Marketing Association Board of Directors as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association, 2013).

(Kotler and Keller, 2015) defines marketing as the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services.”

The evolution of marketing started since the simple trade era and kept enhancing and improving till this day, with the new trend of social media and online shopping marketers had to cope with this change and therefor social media marketing and digital marketing has more attention than ever.

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO CONTENT MARKETING

“Content marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action “. (Content Marketing Institute, 2010).

Content Marketing isn't push marketing, in which messages are sprayed out at groups of consumers. Rather, it's a pull strategy- it's the marketing of attraction. It's being there when consumers need you and seek you out with relevant, educational, helpful, compelling, engaging, and sometimes entertaining information (Rebecca Lieb, 2011).

Content Marketing has been more famous several years ago due to the uprising of social networks use and the introduction of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Reddit and Instagram, it is more favorable because it brings together content and marketing together and creating this content online enhances the awareness of your company and brand, and once the awareness is settled, customers will be ready to address you ready to engage and finally you will become their seller they want to buy from or even recommend others to if asked but this happens mostly when you succeed to build trust and profitable friendship.

The internet has completely upended the lead generation and sales process. Prospects are not waiting to be sold to- they're proactively gathering information, soliciting peer recommendations, and making decisions about you and your competitors...before you realize anything is happening (Clark, 2012). This identifies the importance of content marketing nowadays, companies should be ready to produce high quality content to enhance their relationship with their current or perspective customers, they should a kind of relation that their customers would rather trust and seek them to get recommendation and help them on their buying decision. Not only this, they should be proactive, know their customers buying frame of mind and finally but most importantly, understand your business objectives and act accordingly.

Content drives your sales process, it starts as information tailored for your audiences and then it is organized and distributed through traditional and online channels, it is highly related to your branding as it defines what can you deliver and who you are, in order to start creating content you must first know your branding because you can't create content if you are not understanding who you are and therefor you will not know how to connect and communicate with your audiences.

Content marketing is all about creating content which gives information to educate your audience and become friends with them until the time they need your services they

engage with you by buying, sharing their experience with their friends and recommending to others.

Content marketing is part a of the digital marketing, it was discussed a lot by Joe Pulizzi who founded the content marketing institution presented the following problem: consumers have simply shut off the traditional world of marketing. They own a DVR to skip television advertising, often ignore magazine advertising, and now have become so adept at online surfing that they can take in online information without a care for banners or buttons (making them irrelevant). Smart marketers understand that traditional marketing is becoming less and less effective by the minute, and that there has to be a better way (Pulizzi, 2012).

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Content marketing terminology was originated by (Pulizzi, 2010) from the Content Marketing Institute (CMI), the definition of content marketing has been changing as the meaning change depending on the context factors. “Marketers are using content marketing to replace interruptive advertising and attract more attention to the brand (Du Plessis 2015; Zahay 2014). It also applies theories of marketing communications, integrated marketing communication and relationship marketing (Cronin, 2016). However, it’s not like promoting goods, content marketing is a branding technique in the process of creation and distribution relevant and quality content to connect and engage targeted audiences. Content creators create and share stories online to make the audience more familiar with the brand (Brieger, 2013). Content marketing is often seen as resembling publishing, native advertising, inbound marketing and storytelling (Du Plessis, 2015; Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

There are many definitions of content marketing, but it may be that the most popular one is for Pilizzi: the marketing and business process for creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action (Pulizzi 2012).

While Pulizzi argued that the main focus in content marketing is supported by authentic brand stories, many scholars like (Du Plessis, 2015) and (Pazeraite and Repoviene, 2016) focused more on the complexity of content marketing process and how it should be managed carefully.

Other studies also talked about content marketing from different perspective like, as business-to-business strategy (Holliman & Rowley, 2014), brand engagement (Vivero, 2016), company branding (Koljonen, 2016), its fundamentals (Du Plessis, 2015), practical performance (Arhammar, 2014), online marketing strategy (Augustini, 2014), as a new trend in marketing practice (Wong & Kee, 2015), customer satisfaction (Andaç, Akbiyik and Karkar, 2016), optimisation (Kose et al., 2016), digital channels (Banjo, 2013), opportunities and challenges (Salojärvi, 2016) and search advertisement effectiveness (Pazeraite and Repoviene, 2016).

2. DIGITAL CONTENT AND CONTENT MARKETING

In this section I will provide some information to better understand digital content and content marketing, starting with digital content and then moving forward to the content marketing, after that I will discuss some researches about digital marketing and content marketing showing some theoretical gaps that acts as a base for my research.

2.1 REVIEW OF DIGITAL CONTENT

There are many types of digital marketing like tutorials, e-books, webinars and white papers, etc. and because of this big variety of types, it is important to clearly understand what digital content is and what are its' characteristics. Digital content in a technical way is "bit-based objects distributed through electronic channels" (Koiso Kanttila, 2004), while (Econtent magazine, 2011) identifies digital content as the digital content refers to information available for download or distribution on electronic media. While (Amit and Zott, 2001) defines content to be the information and goods that are being exchanged. All these definitions refer to a positive relation between digital content and digital products, and to the digital information products which are the base for my thesis.

2.2 DIGITAL CONTENT AND DIGITAL PRODUCTS CHARACTERISTICS

Based on a literature by (Koiso Kantilla, 2004), the author used four dimensions to identify the proximity between digital content and digital products, this is very important for businesses if they use digital content in their communications strategy and business model.

First, digital content is regarded as an intangible based on the fact that it cannot be touched while (Koiso Kanttila, 2004) argues that when the content is presented that can be easily read and heard. Second is the degree of homogeneity and standardization (Koiso Kanttila, 2004), which related to the possibility to reproduce and multiply digital content in a way that identical copies are produced (Rowley, 2008b). Third, (Koiso Kantilla, 2004) argues that the content should be clearly separated from its consumption and this is a contrary to the basic characteristics of services and finally scholars review

the possibility to store and save the digital content which enables this information to be easily transferred and shared. (Rowley, 2008b) added another characteristic to digital content which is the contextual value.

The literature also reviews an important relation between content and information. People browse the internet to get some information and what they truly find is information products. (Rowley, 2008a) defined this as goods or services whose core is information or knowledge and therefore we can find different types of content categorized as electronic goods or digital information products more than under the name services. Digital content base is information as it is a fundamental part of digital content, which serves both as a product, subject of marketing exchange, and as means of marketing communications (Rowley, 2008a; Koiso Kanttila, 2004), and for that information is an integrated part of digital content marketing.

2.3 REVIEW OF CONTENT MARKETING

Despite the lack on the literature content on content marketing, (Rowley, 2008b) states that content marketing is fundamentally concerned with content as a product, subject of marketing exchange, and the implications that the usage of digital content has on marketing. Rowley also identified content marketing as identifying, anticipating, and satisfying customer requirements profitably in the context of digital content (Rowley, 2008b). However, there is an argue that this definition is only limited to making profit without reviewing other benefits for the business, it also doesn't specify the characteristics of content marketing and its extent.

There are other alternative definitions of content marketing provided by the (Content marketing association, 2014) Content marketing is the discipline of creating quality branded editorial content across all media channels and platforms to deliver engaging relationships, consumer value and measurable success for brands, and the (Content marketing institute, 2014) A technique of delivering information with the intention to educate the users without directly selling to them.

The definitions above refer to task-oriented search of information, they also refer that the content needs to valuable and relevant because users have more control over the

information they are exposed to and therefore they are more likely to filter the information that doesn't match their wants and needs. In addition to that, invaluable and unrelated content will be unnoticed and unseen.

Second, “engaging relationships reveal the power of content to attract and retain clearly defined audience” (Content Marketing Institute, 2014) and “mediate the ongoing conversation between the consumer and the brand” (Pulizzi, 2013). Third, delivering content “across media channels and platforms” (Content Marketing Institute, 2014) demonstrates the extent of this relationship. Furthermore, (Pulizzi, 2013) also focuses on the importance to consistently and repeatedly deliver content. This confirms that digital content must be an integrated part of the business brand marketing communication strategy and consistently and repeatedly delivering content will build long-term relationship with the audience and thus they will come back for more.

2.4 RESEARCHES ON DIGITAL CONTENT AND CONTENT MARKETING

In literature, digital content is highly related to products and seen as a value-added trait that boosts product offering (De Chernatony and Christodoulides, 2004; Koiso Kanttila, 2004; Rowley, 2008). (De Chernatony and Christodoulides, 2004) call it “differential reward”, which is content, corresponding to product offerings, that companies like Durex and Colgate deliver in to enlighten their audiences. (Rowley, 2004) grant equivalent example with Boots, delivering online health care advice, however, these authors researched content marketing, concluded that content should go further beyond this minor information about the product. In their study of 95 Fortune 500 companies, (Kierzkowski et al., 1996) resulted that most of the digital marketing activities delivered product or service information, however, less than a half of them only offered non-product related and interactive content. likewise, in a research on fashion web sites, (Rowley, 2008b) states that there is a lack of non-product related content. it is important to investigate digital content further its function to sell the product, but also to satisfy the interests and curiosity of online audiences. As said before, my thesis investigates business-generated digital content that is consistent, valuable and free for the end-consumer, but that requires remarkable resources from the supplier.

2.5 UNTOUCHED AREAS OF CONTENT MARKETING

The digitalization of products led many practitioners to the conclusion that content marketing is crucial for their business and companies are now readier to invest in digital content. Though, content marketing literature seems to be falling behind in supplying theoretical evidence and support for what online companies already put into use. Previous research on digital editorial content states that business strategy has gradually come into sight in the recent years but is still insufficient and there are some other vital areas yet remain unexplored.

First, researchers over two decades have been trying to pin point the main characteristics of digital content, though, a little amount of them indeed related to branding. A study by (Kierzkowski et al., 1996) explores that the digital consumers elevate the need for a new marketing approach to replace the old one, one-way communication, called “brochure ware” approach by de (De chernatony, 2001). Moreover, (Kierzkowski et al., 1996) suggests five important factors to determine success in digital marketing: attract, engage, retain, learn and relate. In this approach, content is considered as an important part for providing structure for audiences, making sure the ongoing contact, engagement and a cause for audiences to visit again the website (Kierzkowski et al., 1996). However, in the late 90s, digital content still has not been the main important or base correspondent for success in online marketing. Later, (Koiso Kanttila, 2004), recommended five components to build the essence of digital content: information recombination, accessibility, navigation interaction, speed, and essentially zero marginal cost.

Second, after some years, this complication has been discussed by researchers who researched the relation of digital content to online branding, brand equity online (Simmons, 2007) or Web equity (Page and Lepowska White, 2002), although their main focus was on website design, navigation and other functionality features that provide interactivity (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2004; Simmons, 2007; Simmons, Thomas and Truong, 2010) because the website is the virtual place where communication between the company and their audiences happens, its’ design, optimization and organizing of content are important for their online branding and

marketing. However, digital content should have a wider extent that goes further than the technical features of the website and put more interest on a content that is relevant and valuable and study how it will enhance business success. A study by (Kim, Oh and Shin, 2010) aimed to expand this perspective by investigating three sources of the value of digital content: design, scenario and structure. Researchers concluded that the value of the content is connected to the satisfaction if provided to the audiences needs and provided entertainment and collaboration in the structure and thus will give more value to the content. This research is important because it doesn't only focus on the technical and design part of the content but also on the content quality, unity and creativity (Kim, Oh and Shin, 2010).

Third, the digitalization of content shifted the businesses eyes to media providers and therefore, the focus in the literature of digital content marketing has been specially on music, newspaper and magazine industries (Amit and Zott, 2001; Clemons, Gu & Lang, 2002; Swatman, Krueger and van der Beek, 2006; Feng, Guo and Chiang, 2009; Oestreicher Singer and Zalmanson, 2013). However, there are some little amount of studies that went beyond these industries and identified the most important characteristics of digital content that is applicable in all digital content market (Rowley, 2008a).

To conclude, this part offered the relation between content and information, discussed some essentials to the distribution of information online and proposed that digital content can be the base to the creation of a distinctive competitive for businesses. Furthermore, it also showed some examples where digital content and content marketing strategy has enhanced some businesses performance not only as a sales tool but also as a communication method.

3. DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing, as known as, e-marketing is the practice of promoting company's products and services in digital channels. (Smith, 2011) Digital marketing is more concerned and highly related to marketing on social media channels, as for my thesis, content is my main purpose thus I will not dig into the digital marketing channels or properties.

Digital marketing communication refers to the use of new digital communication channels to create an integrated, targeted and measurable communication process that helps companies acquire and retain customers while building deeper relationships with them (Mulhern, 2009). This includes e-marketing, internet marketing and social media. (Karjaluoto, Mustonen and Ulkuniemi, 2015).

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing is one of the uprising techniques for every company to achieve more visibility, product awareness and attraction for new customers in this digitalized era and each company applies it in a different way. In my thesis I will illustrate the importance of digital marketing by describing the main steps of the digital marketing process and explain how the internet has changed our daily life and in particular how businesses work, how marketing has been updated and replaced by new and innovative models such as email marketing, search engine optimization, search engine marketing, social media, e-commerce and mobile display advertising. All of the above can serve a numerous amount of benefits to the business if applied in the right way and guidelines, therefore it's also important to study the advantages and threats of digital marketing to ensure a full comprehension of a well-structured digital strategy.

Evolution of internet economy

Marketing has been revolutionized and dramatically transformed in the past few years, it is becoming more digitalized due to the influence of internet, which is one of the most powerful communication channels.

It all started in 1990s where the first websites were introduced, the early use of online advertising was made, and the first search engines were developed. The main driver for this revolution is credited to Google which, by its innovative tools, improved how business do business, created new channels to enhance two-way communications and build better relationship between companies and their audiences. In fact, Google has enhanced and developed three vital activities that are implemented in almost every company strategy, e-marketing, e-commerce, and e-business (Vescovi, 2007).

- i. E-marketing is the place where traditional and online marketing cross, e-marketing has a great influence in strengthening the communication and relationship between the company and its' customers.
- ii. E-commerce is using this place for a selling reason, it was started in the US and China and involves companies to start selling their products online to customers.
- iii. E-business is the complete digitalization of a business, it combines e-marketing and e-commerce, by which the company should introduce and publish all its' activities and services online.

The technological development of internet and the interaction we make with it alongside to the economy has made these activities more possible. "Internet helps people to be connected whenever and wherever, nurturing and enlarging the online economy, where consumers' participation and experience are among the main elements" (Vescovi, 2007).

the introduction of Web 2.0 was the base and cornerstone for the development of digital marketing channels, it created a user friendly interactive and participatory platform which allowed users to better interact and made internet usage a part of everybody daily life which was later reinforced by the social networks and led to the development of the Internet economy (Faraldi, Tardito, and Vos, 2011). Therefore, Web 2.0 has had a significant effect on consumer behavior and on the economic growth which is translated in the growing number of internet users and how devices are designed to make surfing the web easier, all of this is also making digital marketing more difficult to monitor in such fast developing environment.

The increasing usage of internet has enabled the economy to present a consistent percentage of GDP and had a substantial effect on the economic growth by: 1- increasing the number of final customers who surf the internet for buying, selling or/ and getting information about their transactions. 2- companies that use internet for interacting with their customers and enlarging their markets. 3- governments that support and develop the digitalization process.

Internet economy offers a great advantage for companies, it allows SMEs to improve their marketing campaigns in order to achieve more returns on their investments and reduce their marketing expenditures, it can also help in increasing their customers and build a stronger relationship based on feedbacks to enhance and improve their products and services regarding to them and reduce costs related to delivery and payment deficiencies, this enhanced relationship serves a positive advantage in protecting products certification, developing more marketing tools, creating higher transparency and efficient sale services.(Faraldi, Tardito, and Vos, 2011).

Finally, there is no doubt for the dominance role of the internet economy to assure a positive future trend to exploit. Internet penetration is growing rapidly reaching all dimensions that were difficult to reach by creating high engagement for them and empowering them (MediaClub, 2014). There are three main priorities for the development and growth of the internet economy, first, exploitation of all the innovative tools offered to develop and enlarge business, second, enhancing and developing the collaboration between companies through the ecosystem apps, and finally the diffusion of digital education in companies (Faraldi, Tardito and Vos, 2011).

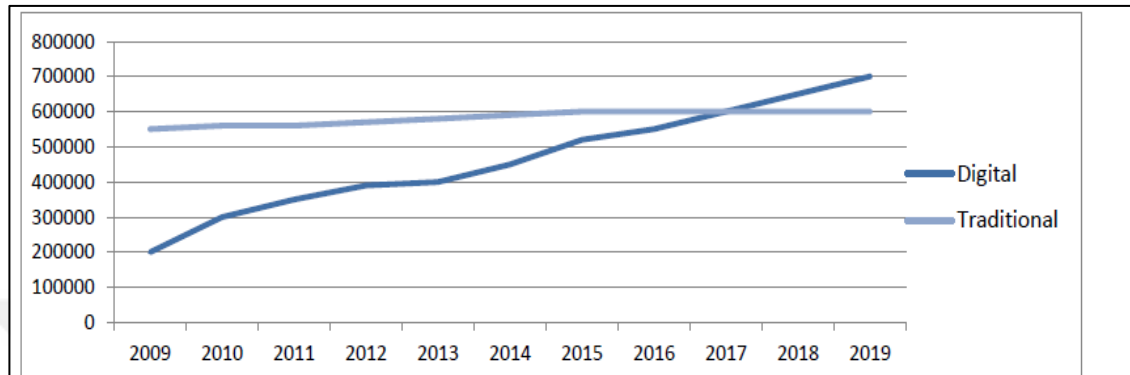
3.2 THE INFLUENCE ON INTERNET ON MEDIA

As discussed above, the media is changing rapidly due to the growing number of online customers, the development of mobiles, and elevated internet broadband which hence to an improved and new business media models.

Regarding figure 3.1, traditional components rose just 1% in 2014, on the other side, digital components rose 11.2% and had a 46.2% of the market value, projections also

assure that digital consumer spending will continue to be the main market driver in the following years too (McKinsey, 2015).

Figure 3.1: Comparison between digital and traditional consumer spending – expressed in US \$ millions - between 2009 and 2019



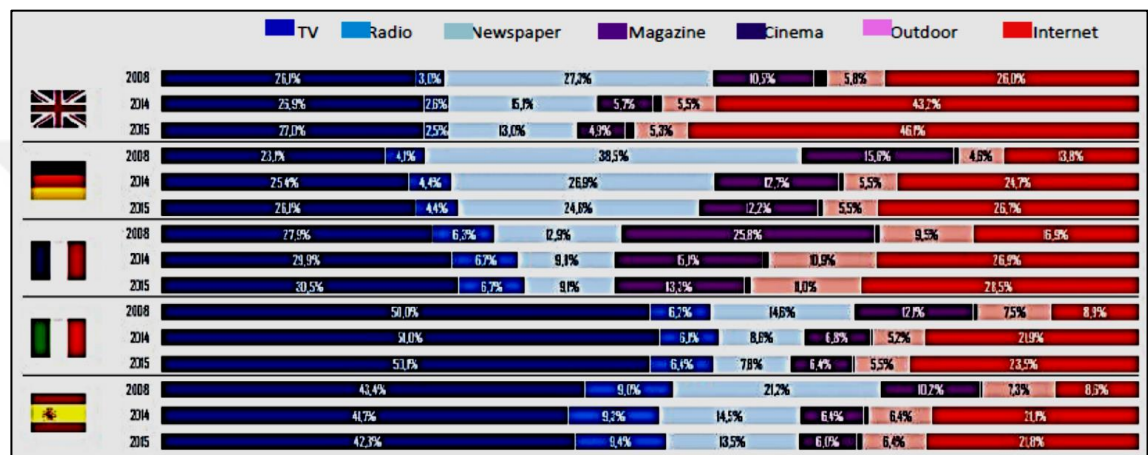
Source: Global Media Report (McKinsey, 2015).

New digital components are being accepted and highly valued for their validity and persuasiveness, experts assume that by the year 2019, digital expenditure will overtake more than 50% of the media spending, with credits to the broadband expansion; the digital share of total spending has increased from 27.5% in 2009 to 43.4% in 2015 and there are projections of an increase by 6.9% until 2019 when it will reach around 50.3%. in addition, mobile platforms are promised to become the main digital platforms, especially in smartphones and tablets, the mobile broadband penetration rose from 8.7% in 2009 to 32.7% in 2014, and this difference is nearly double the increase in fixed broadband which increased from 30.1% in 2009 to 43.6% in 2014. By the year 2019, mobile broadband is estimated to reach 58.3% winning over the fixed broadband penetration. Therefore, advertisers are resourcing and allocating to increase the shares of digital expenditure to mobile and therefore mobile advertising will become one of the largest advertising category, and so, marketing strategies will become more and more dependent on the use of the internet especially in some industries, and all of this is confirmed by the increase of digital advertising by 16.1% in 2014 instead of the traditional tools that are declining slowly and constantly (McKinsey, 2015).

Figure 3.2 shows an additional prove about the increasing of the internet share, in Europe, particularly in the UK, Germany, France, Italy and Spain; internet share nearly

tripled in 2015 when compared to 2008, it gained more than 20% share in all countries while the UK outstand all other countries with 48% of advertisement expenditure on the Web; UK internet advertising raised from 26.0% in 2008 to 50.2% in 2015. In Spain and Italy TV remains the most preferred market but the use of internet advertising has replaced magazines and newspapers with an increase in internet advertising from 8.9% in 2008 to 23.5% in 2015 (GroupM, 2015).

Figure 3.2: European advertising composition and evolution from 2008 to 2015



Source: Advertising expenditure trend & forecast (Nielsen for GroupM, 2015).

To conclude, media digitalization is an important corner stone to become and remain successful in the business life these days, internet is the source for creativity, innovation and interaction which are the most important factors when taking about marketing and advertising, internet has also made tracking and measuring consumers interest and interactions easier and more possible, with credits to the internet, marketing is becoming more digital. Although this huge praise for the benefits the internet offers, companies should be cautious and watchful to avoid negative circumstances, so they are advised and ought to carefully and efficiently design and plan strategies because this digitalization has cleared some boundaries in communication channels connecting them and creating synergies among them within common agreed upon and clear strategy (MediaClub, 2014).,

3.3 DIGITAL MARKETING MAIN TOOLS

As discussed above, digitalization has hit everyone in their everyday life, beginning with how they communicate and connect with each other to their buying and choosing habits in terms of deciding to buy a new product or service. This digitalization has affected digital marketing and made it a must for every business that wish to compete and stand in the future. For example, present markets are expanding to globalization, so their digital channels must be introduced and discussed in their marketing mix, as they are necessary for any type of business (Ryan and Jones, 2009).

Digital marketing is using the new media for marketing and promoting products, services, brand and an organization in the scope of marketing techniques, therefore, a business should first identify and define qualitative and attractive content, as known as, content marketing which is the most important aspect of digital marketing, content is crucial as it is the media where conversations and interaction takes place, it is the place where customers get attracted, help to teach audiences the product or service main features, content should also be innovative and eye catching, they should be designed well and monitored and updated continuously, the company's website should also be efficiently designed because it is the place where the audiences get their first impression, it should help strengthen the company's brand image and awareness in order to bypass the old traditional marketing tools like print media and to reach a bigger amount of targeted segments efficiently (Comunicare sul web, 2018).

Content marketing is a type of indirect marketing tool and it must be supported, because it is important to search for a way to make the content visible and attainable.

In order to achieve that, companies should identify and analyze which digital marketing tool is being used to support content marketing. Most of these tools are pieces of online advertising strategies and are types of direct marketing (Evans, 2009). Online advertising is a way of advertising where a company uses internet to market and promote messages to their customers, it is valued in Europe in more than 30.7 billion euros and its' expenditure has doubled in the past five years, during 2014, Western Europe expenditure on online advertising overtook all other media and this led to a growth in the online advertising marketing nearly as with the television which is

assumed to be one of the most important media tool with a value of 33.5 billion euro (IAB, 2014). There are five main section to online advertising than can be combined all or few in a strategy, while the most important aspect is to create synergy and interaction among each one of these sections in order to help strengthen and improve the brand awareness to help make the company more powerful and recognizable in the digital world and for the reasonable purpose of internet and digital world that implies that everything should be connected.

Those five sections are as follows: email marketing, S.E.M (Search Engine Marketing) and S.E.O (Search Engine Optimization), social media marketing, display advertising and mobile advertising. The most important drivers for these sections are: increased interaction between supply and demand, systematic transactions and data infrastructure, increased mobile internet penetration, usage and positive effects in mobile and video initiatives, while there are also a few growth barriers like online fraud and some measurement and control issues (IAB, 2014).

Email marketing

Email marketing is a way and tool for direct marketing which uses emails to communicate and deliver informational and promotional messages to attract new potential customers and help keep the relationship with old ones, it is one of the most used and admired tool in digital marketing worldwide, email marketing was started in the US market and gradually grow in Europe and other emerging countries, email marketing is used by 82% of business to business and business to customers companies, and as stated in “ The 2015 state of marketing report” email marketing is crucial to 73% marketers’ business while online 20% says that email marketing represent their main business revenue sources and the rest only acknowledge it as an important enabler for their products and services sales (Hanington, 2015).

Email marketing has a high credit to companies, it is one of the most important communication method to reach wider audience target, it is also not expensive and assures a high R.O.I (return on investment), it is a direct way for communication, enables marketers to personalize messages and to test them to make them more attractive and impressive, email marketing is also more trackable; there are some email

marketing platforms that enables marketers to track how many emails have been opened, deliver feedbacks, sales achieved through email marketing web bug, bounce messages through just a click. All the above proves the positiveness and usefulness of email marketing as long as this process and tool is efficiently and effectively designed, therefore, companies should give high attention to the quality and quantity of the content in their emails that should introduce the benefits for customers in a simple understandable short way, they should also identify their personas and their customers characteristics and their right level of engagement to correctly address them to better match their interests and offer the desired solutions and help, marketers should also identify their customers satisfaction and engagement to assure the marketing campaign effectiveness and reach the desired goal. All of the above should be connected and communicated in accordance with the customer relationship management, social media activities and the website traffic numbers, only in that way email marketing tool will play its' correct role efficiently and effectively through a well-designed strategy to transform these activities into a better and enhanced business relationship and achieve the desired goals and start to obtain revenues (Farabegoli, 2014).

S.E.O and S.E.M

S.E.O and S.E.M are specially designed and made for search engines, particularly for Google's search engine, because of the growing popularity and importance of search engines in our everyday life, these two techniques were developed to improve web marketing strategy, they work by the theory and assumption that what is important is not being accessed on the internet but being visible, S.E.O and S.E.M importance is growing lately and many companies are now focusing more on these tools in order to catch more potential customers and start a relationship with them, therefore, the main purpose for this tool is to help the company become more visible and increase its' awareness on the internet.

S.E.O (search engine optimization) imply all activities made to search engines to improve the websites positioning among others in accordance of organic results, relying on some digitalized strategic keywords. The total of the results shown in the search engine page is called S.E.R.P (search engine results page). As for S.E.O experts, the statistics about how people surf the web is important and crucial and they work with the

“on-site” positioning factors that are related to the website design and content optimization, for example, they work with keywords, texts, URLs definition, tags, images, and contents optimization (Maltraversi, 2014).

While, S.E.M (search engine marketing) is concerned with the web marketing actions related to search engines specifically made to enhance websites awareness and visibility, its’ main purpose is to improve a strategy that is parallel to the company goals while measuring the return of each action made through the search engine by using web analytics systems, S.E.M generates quantified and qualified traffic to the website, it’s a more efficient way to only show the interested audiences the website that will help them the most and give the most relevant information, it’s not a generic tool as companies pay if they want to apply S.E.M as their way of web marketing strategy, marketers expert use this method to better position their website with off-site factors with a direct influence on it. The off-site factors consist of: link building and link popularity regarding Google search engine page ranking, therefore, digital marketers should clearly identify the company activities and relate them to generate an efficient well-designed strategy, digital marketers’ main goal are usually to increase the company’s website benchmarking, online branding, monitoring branding, building database, enhance online customer support, developing e-commerce and lead generation (Maltraversi, 2014).

S.E.O and S.E.M complete each other, they are both able to be tracked and monitored by many analytical tools such as indexing which is the number of pages the audience get when they search for something on any search engine, the websites’ link popularity and its’ backlink to identify and trace the URLs referring to the website, impression which is measured by the C.T.R (click through rate) to know the visualization of the website, and finally, the conversion rate that is the percentage of online visitors who entered the website. S.E.O and S.E.M are common in monitoring actions and visitors landing pages, as known as, page rank, which signals the quality of the website pages, it is done by Google analytics and allows internet experts to rank websites. For my research, S.E.M and S.E.O plays a great role in measuring the R.O.I (return on investment) to monitor and evaluate revenues gained from the internet, there are many ways to measure this R.O.I such as: CPO (cost per order) and CPA (cost per action) which are used mostly to measure the e-commerce costs and subscriptions, while CPM(

cost per mile) is the cost the company endures for one thousand view, EPC (earning per click) is an interesting tool to measure the revenue gained from this digital marketing tool and it also gives a forecast for potential future clicks and website visits. In addition to that, S.E.O and S.E.M are efficient tools to monitor and track the company's performance by using the KPI (key performance indicators), and finally, PPC (pay per click) which is the cost the company endures for a single click on their link, all of the above are considered only in S.E.M and are elements of the S.E.A (search engine advertising).

S.E.A is an element of S.E.M and it introduces and explains the paid monitoring activities of this way of digital marketing, it includes the links to paid promotions and the advertisements that are shown in the top when using search engines. Google AdWords is an example of S.E.A which is a tool offered by Google for their search engine to advertise through PPC (pay per click) (Maltraversi, 2014).

Another important element for S.E.O that supports S.E.M actions is the S.M.O (social media optimization), it entails systems that are used to enhance and coordinate social media websites to generate awareness and knowledge of the brand, increase traffic to the website, elevate its' popularity and reputation. S.M.O is becoming more popular lately because of the huge acceptance and love for social media by everyone, therefore many search engines are offering an extended help and tricks to attract social media networks users (Enge, 2010).

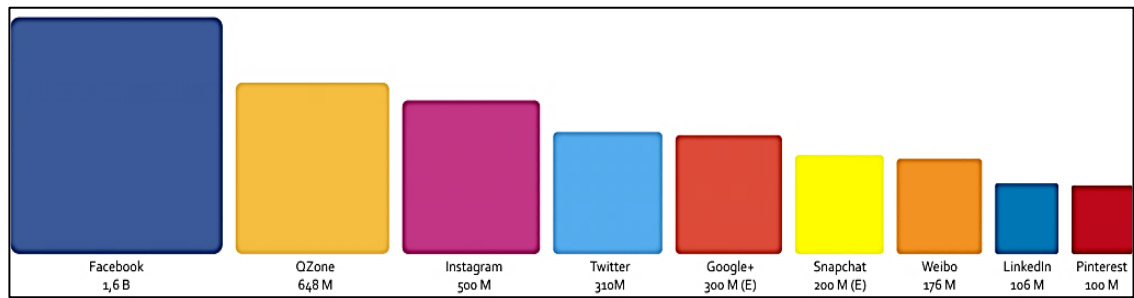
Social media marketing

Social media is one of the most important tools of connecting nowadays, its' influence and popularity has been continuing to rise for the past few years, it's a platform where people get the chance to express everything with everybody and to speak freely, for that, companies have also noticed the need to be present in social media with a well-designed strategy to seize the opportunity in social media as a tool and a channel for marketing (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Statistics shows that over 90% and rising of companies use social media for marketing purposes (Stelzner, 2011). This importance and influence for social media rose because the significant amount of people joining social media and being active users, in 2015 only, 167 new million user become active on social media and 2.206 billion of 3.175 are already active users with one active social media account

at least (Regan, 2015). According to IBM research social media network networks are now one the most important metrics to be considered alongside with R.O.I, customer experience, conversion rates, global and marketing influenced sales, and new clients are used to control and evaluate marketing campaigns success (Cosezna, 2012). Social media marketing has been proved to significantly help companies in their journey to achieve goals, it eases the communication between customers, building trust and loyalty to enhance marketing and sales process, build better brands and improve equity. It can also create awareness and improve ratings especially when combined with strategic business partnership. Moreover, it is a great solution to decrease marketing costs because using social media doesn't cost as other traditional marketing tools, on the other side, companies should also know how to react and use social media in order to catch it fruits, they should acknowledge that social media is a two-way communication channel, and this can make some people turn against companies or work for their destruction, as we all see nowadays, many users protest and strike companies and lead to damage the company's brand image, therefore, social media marketing requires a bigger and more efficient effort with keen eye for details and special care in order to make it work for their advantage (Stelzner, 2011).

Social media doesn't only compose of Facebook or Twitter, it is a bigger platform like: blogs which is a place where companies can connect with potential or old customers in an informal way, media-sharing sites, that offers informational content that are available for everyone like Youtube or Flickr, social bookmarking and voting sites, that is a new trend websites to organize and classify websites and links through tags and hashtags and have the ability to write their personal review about anything they want, and lastly and most importantly, social networks which are familiar with almost everybody nowadays like Facebook with has almost 1.6 billion active users each month and the number grows about 0.5 million each day. There are many other social networks that have similar importance and is beginning to rise and grow like Instagram (about 70 million of shared content), Twitter (about 500 million tweets daily) and Snapchat, in figure 2.3 all important social networks are addressed with numbers of active users monthly as of June 2016 (Cosenza, 2016).

Figure 3.3: Social networks' classification according to monthly active users.



Source: Social media statistics. (Cosenza, 2016).

As discussed and researched above, social media implies a great influence on the whole world nowadays, while the most important influence focuses on companies, therefore, social media has opened a tool for businesses to market their products or services for a certain amount of money, for example Instagram has three marketing tools that are offered to companies, corporate profiles that contains some extra features especially designed for companies, insights where a company can evaluate and know it's numbers regarding the amount of people reached in a given time, impression which is some information and visualization, followers more personal information and demographics, and finally some post promotions for the most loyal customers who visit the company profile heavily and regularly, all this information can be highly valuable for companies when analyzed and put in a well-studied strategy (Cosezna, 2016).

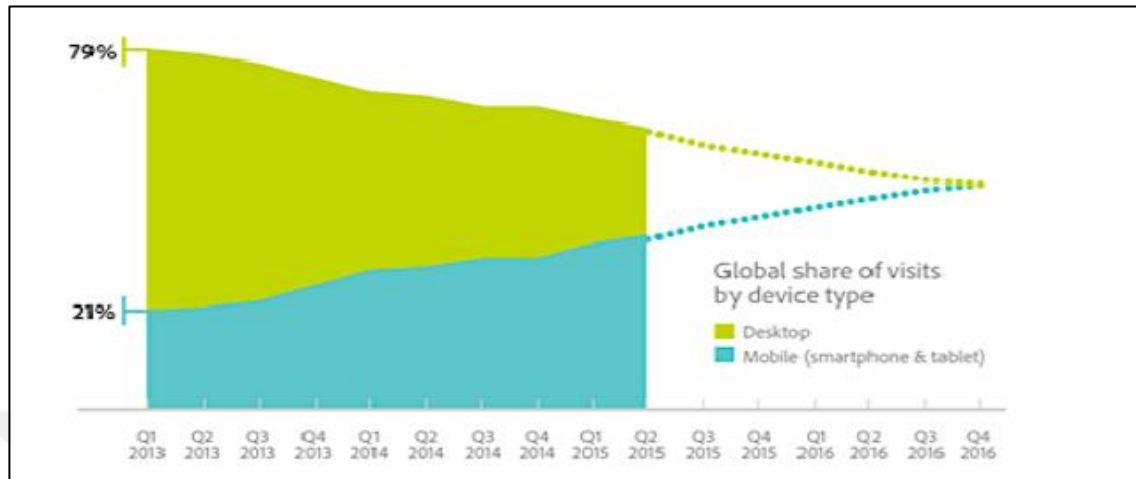
It is also important to observe the way users are using their social media accounts, the way they interact and the devices they choose to use for surfing those social media accounts, therefore, below we will talk about mobile advertising as 3,7 bullion users are surfing social media networks through their smartphones and tablets, and as researchers point, 75% of Facebook revenue is generated from mobile advertising and this assures the importance of mobile advertising as a marketing tool (Bullas, 2016).

Mobile advertising

Mobile marketing is the bigger part of mobile advertising, and this sector is vastly growing in our digitalized world as of 2015, mobile advertising had a portion of 30% of digital advertising income due to the popularity of smartphones and mobiles that almost

everyone has one or even more that little by little diminished the use of personal computers or laptops to surf the web as shown in figure 3.4 (Dogtiev, 2016).

Figure 3.4: Global share of websites' visits by device type.



Source: Mobile advertising statistics roundup (Dogtiev, 2016).

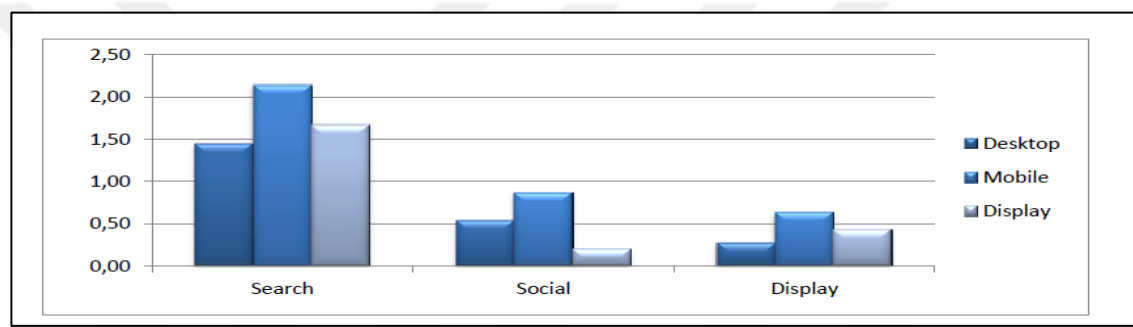
Mobile advertising is controlled and managed by Google and other leading social media networks, as we are talking of mobiles, two main operating systems are discussed, Google Android and Apple IOS, in 2015 Android has achieved a traffic of 65,39% with 44.39% of revenue from mobile advertising, while IOS has achieved 28.93% traffic with 52.05% of revenues. Mobile advertising comes in several ways, it can be applied and used in mobile apps, mobile web like QR codes, robots, or other innovative ways, and messaging like SMS and MMS advertising, the main goal for mobile advertising is usually to increase brand awareness and brand response by creating a personal engagement, as the present numbers shows, mobile advertising is one of the most promising ways that have the chance to dominate and grow in the near future (Lapenniemi and Karjaluo, 2008).

Display advertising

Display advertising is highly related and connected to mobiles, smartphones and tablets, it is also an important digital marketing tools and little bit older than social media advertising, it is simply advertising on websites through banner, buttons, pop-up, pop-under, interstitial, or rich media that is connected to a link that leads to other website, all of the above require an action from the user, he needs to click in order to go for the

advertisers website and therefore is measured by CR (click rate) which is a percentage between interest and good impression with the total number of clicks made, it is also important to well-design the display advertising to know how and where to place it in a way that is relevant and has a high chance of delivering its' purpose (Chaffey, 2016). CTR (click through rate) is an indicator that is used in Google services and is used as an indicator for efficiency and effectiveness for every digital marketing tool, as shown in figure 3.5 the highest CTR percentages are the ones with the use of mobiles which again assures and re-confirms the importance of mobiles and other smart gadgets nowadays (Chaffey, 2016).

Figure 3.5: CTR's weight in different digital marketing tools in 2015.



Source: Digital marketing trends (Chaffey, 2015).

As for this figure, it can clearly show the digital marketing trends with content marketing being on top for its' importance as it consisted of 29.6% while automation and personalization marketing activities consisted only of 12.8%, and for mobile advertising and social media marketing they consisted of 11% and 8.9%. these percentages show and confirms the effect of new innovative tools and platforms as all of the above support and enhance each other, for example, the content curation tool helped marketers in making future online videos, there are also some new innovative recommendations and tricks to make content more personalized, re-targeted and support the audience connection, another advantage is the variable distribution services that's job is to channel and deliver information and content about the company product or service through all and every social media and digital channel available, furthermore, there are a growing number of tools to use S.E.O and social media marketing management for checking, reviewing and enhancing backlinks that are constantly

developed (Chaffey, 2015). To sum up, digital marketing tools are continuously growing and developing to become more and more personalized and specific.

3.4 DIGITAL MARKETING BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Benefits

As discussed in the figure above, digital marketing offers a great advantage in tracking and levitating traffic, awareness and visibility for the company website, digital marketing has made any company regardless of its' size or industry to compete with bigger and dominating rivals by applying the right tools in its' digital marketing campaign, on the web every company has the same abilities and opportunities and the one which succeeds are the one with the most righteous and well-designed strategy with the appropriate tools being used. Digital marketing offers another great advantage when it comes to measuring and controlling, it offers a real time numbers that can be constantly tracked and monitored unlike traditional tools which are hard to measure in the short run, and this presents on time feedback for reviewing strategy, deciding the next step or making a corrective action, these measures are the most important features that makes digital marketing and online marketing campaigns the most preferred option to companies by delivering the chance and ability to measure traffic, identify visitors and their numbers, analytics about the increase or decrease in subscribers, conversion rates and a lot of other useful information, on the other hand digital marketing can work in several types so if a company decides to start small on the web only by emails for example, they also get the chance to monitor the actions of people they sent their mails to, their habits of reading and what really interests them, to sum up, all digital marketing tools and software are designed for the sake of improving the company and help succeed their marketing campaign, they all tend to enhance customer experience and service in order to take corrective action needed to ensure their audiences attention and reach the company objective, digital marketing is one of the most used method in order to enhance their brand name and develop it, another benefit is the direct communication and contact between customers and companies which is rising significantly with credits to the increasing number of mobile usage which in return increases the conversion rates.

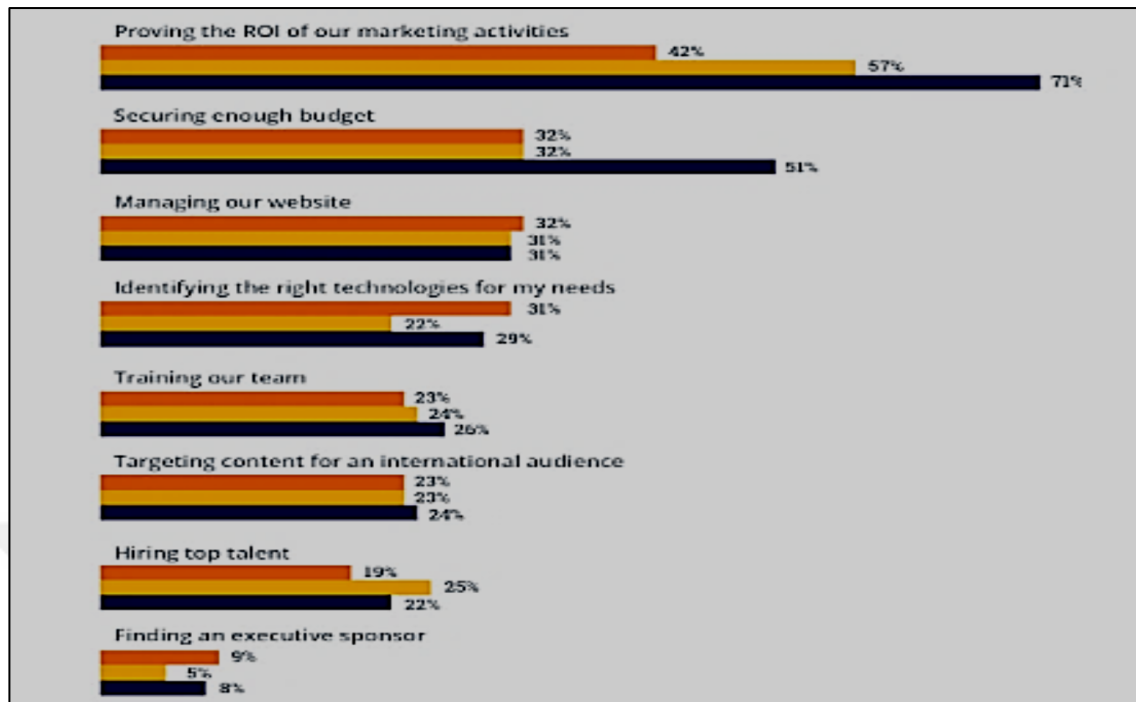
Digital marketing and online marketing campaigns are simple and more connected with other marketing tools which master reaching bigger segmented targets, they are fast, requires low effort and provide immediate actions and response, they are fast and quick to be implemented or stopped. The process of digital marketing offers more are for storytelling, which one of the most successful ways to interest and impress audiences, it is also more affordable and cost controllable.

In numbers, digital marketing has been proven to be more cost efficient with an uprising numbers of leads, it achieved 2.8 times better revenue growth for companies and therefore delivered higher R.O.I (return on interest), digital marketing requires an action from audiences so it improves the customers engagement and encourage audience to take action which turns the audiences into active ones, this process is done when a visitor enters the company website to read about its' products, give feedback, rate or buy from them, which in return works for the companies interest in promoting its' products for free (Faulkner, 2013).

Challenges

As constantly reminded above, having a well-designed and efficient strategy is the main factor of success in digital marketing for the amount of delicacy when handling with online customers; the creation of active audiences can play a harmful role for the company when the feedback and response is negative because in that case it will lead to damage the company brand and cause some terrible consequences, for the digital world is amplified (Das and Sahoo, 2011). "the state of inbound report 2015" recognized 8 major challenges for digital market as they are discussed in figure 3.6 below.

Figure 3.6: Top digital marketing challenges' classification by company size.



Source: The 2015 State of Inbound Report, HubSpot, 2015).

One of the most challenging criteria for digital marketing is clearly knowing and defining the R.O.I (return on investment) which is vital and important to measure the true effectiveness of digital marketing, while tracking and monitoring remains easy most of the time, there can also be times when tracking single activities and actions vague especially when there is a missing connection in the two-way communication method, determining a budget for digital marketing can also be a challenge for it is hard to measure R.O.I (return on investment) and therefore a constant and continuing measurement of R.O.I should applied and quick corrective action should be put in order to lower this threat of disadvantage, website can be also hard and difficult to manage especially when unprofessional team are in place, page optimization and communication manners are the criteria when evaluating the website team crew, another related disadvantage is identifying the right tools that needs to be installed and used and link them to the company goals and objectives to come with alternatives than can be put and after that ranking them to choose the best out of them, team training, experts recruitment and clear understanding is also important to be able to reach an international audience (Kolowich, 2015).

To conclude, digital marketing is the main wheel for growing an organization, despite its' advantages and disadvantages for its highly significant potential for growth and the extensive enhancement for brands and customer relationship management, while the most important advice regarding digital marketing remains designing a well-structured strategy that is applicable, challenging, attainable, smart, effective and efficient to completely benefit from the merits of digital marketing and overtake any obstacles that may appear.



4. CONTENT MARKETING

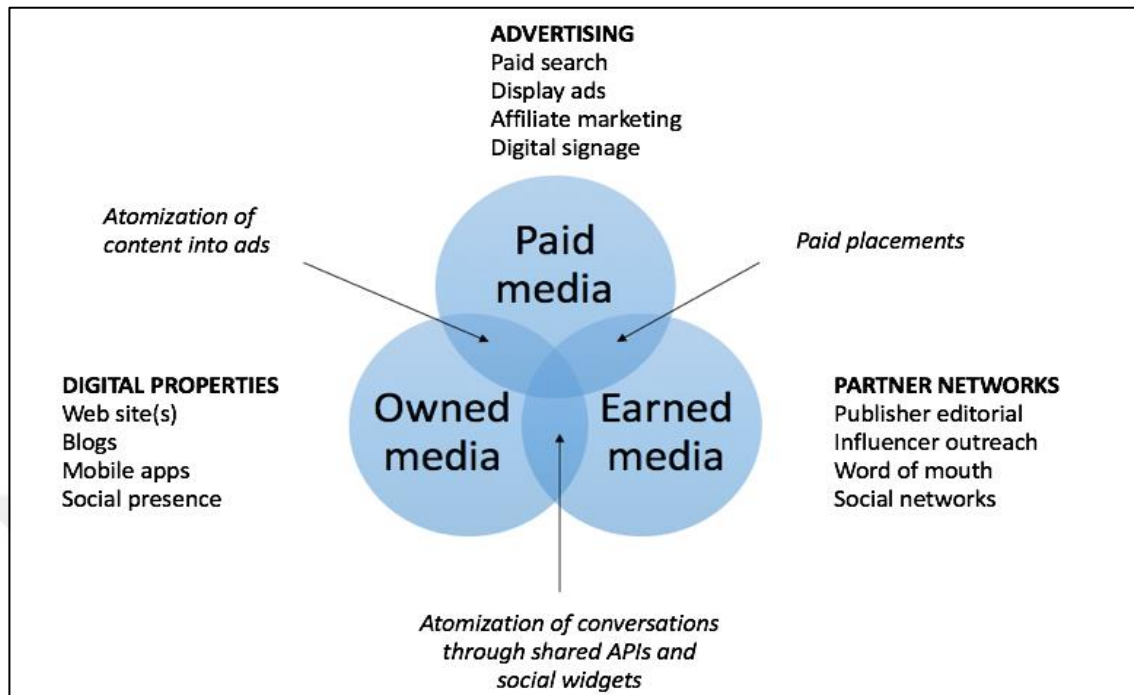
4.1 INTRODUCTION

(Pulizzi, 2012) defined content marketing as “the creation of valuable, relevant and compelling content by the brand itself on a consistent basis”, while (Steimle, 2014) stated the main attribute that differs content marketing from other marketing activities which is the value that it creates to the customer, therefore traditional marketing can only be considered as content marketing only if the customer finds it valuable.

(Pulizzi, 2012) states three barriers for successful content marketing that are now gone in result to the prosperity of content marketing, first, acceptance; consumers now believe, trust and engage in the content posted by unfamiliar sources more than normal publications and they are seen as credible source for reliable information. Second, talent; professional writers and creators are now quitting their jobs in media publication and moving to different brands because it doesn't harm them anymore. Third, technology; advanced technology has allowed almost anyone to publish content on the internet for a little investment (Pulizzi, 2012).

Although it is sometimes hard to differentiate between traditional marketing and content marketing, there is one feature that can help which is the publishing medium, content marketing relies on owning the publishing medium instead of using others' medium (CMI, 2016). As described in the figure below, owned media ranges from web sites, mobile apps, social networks and sites and this is the place where content marketing is focused on.

Figure 4.7: Categories of media: paid owned and earned.



Source: Categories of media: paid owned and earned (Chaffey & Smith, 2008).

(Chaffey and Ellis Chadwick, 2012) argues about some of the weaknesses of content marketing which are summarized as follows, content marketing marketers have lower control on results when compared to traditional marketing in which channels and targeted groups can be better and more accurately planned. This weakness can also happen in social media marketing but in another way; in social media platforms, anyone can say whatever they want to say and, in that context happens this lack of control and this lack of controls is also seen in the unavailability to identify who can see the content.

4.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF CONTENT MARKETING

4.2.1 Goals of Content Marketing

The main goal of content marketing is brand awareness, lead conversation, customer service, passionate subscribers, customer conversion and customer upsell. (Rose and Pulizzi, 2011). (Hall, 2013) added another important goal, which is educating customers and enhancing the organization image. Although the goals of content marketing have a

lot of similarities with other marketing means, the weight is the differential key; most other marketing means main purpose to increase their companies' short-term sales, while content marketing aims at increasing sales alongside with satisfied customers and better relationship for long-term.

Another important goal is engagement which is defined by (Bowden, 2009) as : “a psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers and the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers” and is considered as the fire of passion for subscribers, (Holliman and Rowley, 2014) stated that content marketing stimulates brands and companies for a better customer-focused actions and generate higher levels of loyalty and trust from people who seek it, and this in particular, is the main cause for enhancing customer engagement for existing and potential customers. (Van Doorn et al., 2010) stated that the effect of positive customer engagement is more, better and more frequent engagement behavior and this helps build better social identity for customers, positive customer engagement also aids in improving reputation and financial matters, while negative engagement does the opposite.

4.2.2 Objectives of Content Marketing

As already discussed, content marketing is a technique that relies on efficient use of experience and knowledge of the business for promoting their products, content marketing techniques contains a several number of tools that will be discussed further on but it's important to note some of the objectives of the most used tool of content marketing. First; increase traffic on both company's social media page and website. Second; ensure consistency and quality. Third; ensure a broad and complete view over the marketing strategy applied. Fourth; give feedback and answer customer questions to strengthen customer relationship. Fifth; manage and control content. Sixth; create, collect and spread content. Finally, every company should understand the positive relationship between content quality and the visibility of their products.

4.3 IMPORTANCE OF CONTENT MARKETING

Using content marketing in social media has proven to give better results in terms of increasing customer engagement and expanding the reach circle to reach desirable scales, and this is the main importance and reason why many companies are now more interested in and making content marketing.

There are some other reasons why companies are more interested and using content marketing and applying it in their marketing strategy as figure 4.2 below by Demand Metric (2013) shows.

Figure 4.8: Why companies are using content marketing.



Source: A guide to marketing genius: Content Marketing (Demand Metric, 2013).

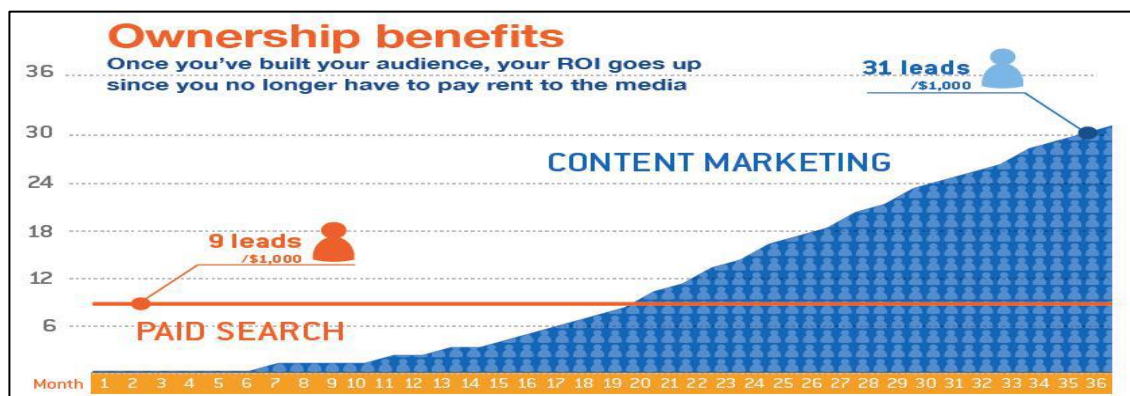
Furthermore, (Pulizzi and Barret, 2009) have discussed more about the importance and reasons why business is becoming more interested in content marketing as follows; First, the change in buyers' attitudes in response to the credibility of content that makes them more insightful, more knowledgeable and smarter; Second, using content marketing in social media provides more data and information to customers than the traditional tools. Third; media publishers are downsizing and becoming less reliable in terms of quality and content and this gives a great opportunity for companies to fulfill that role and absorb information seekers. Fourth; the marketing world has changed a lot and it's becoming more demanding and communication centered which facilitates the customer business engagement. Fifth; content marketing is easy, cheap and fast so there

is no more need for media publisher as the technology has become more attainable and friendlier, and this has allowed businesses to obtain relevant data about current and potential customers. Finally, nobody can know better about the product or industry more than the company itself, and thus helps the company to better understand the new trends in their field and better engage with customers regarding their most intense interests to better attract customers by publishing the most helpful and wanted content.

(Bizzuka Blog, 2013) has also discussed four reasons why business should better use content marketing as follows: First; content is the key to be found on the internet and particularly on search engines and therefor attract some potential interested customers. Second; creating viral content allows your business to become more popular when customers share the content and lead it to success, for the more share your content gets, the more success you can get in your business. Third; content created by the company itself is more trusted and reviewed by customers than other content published from media publishers, and this trust is converted into trust in your business and its' products. Fourth; content creates traffic to your website and enables you to lead, therefor content marketing enables you to increase customer awareness and attract new potential customers.

The graph below proves that content marketing can produce 3 times more leads per dollar, as (Kapost, 2012) compared the cumulative numbers of leads generated per 1000 dollars spent on content marketing versus paid search engine campaign.

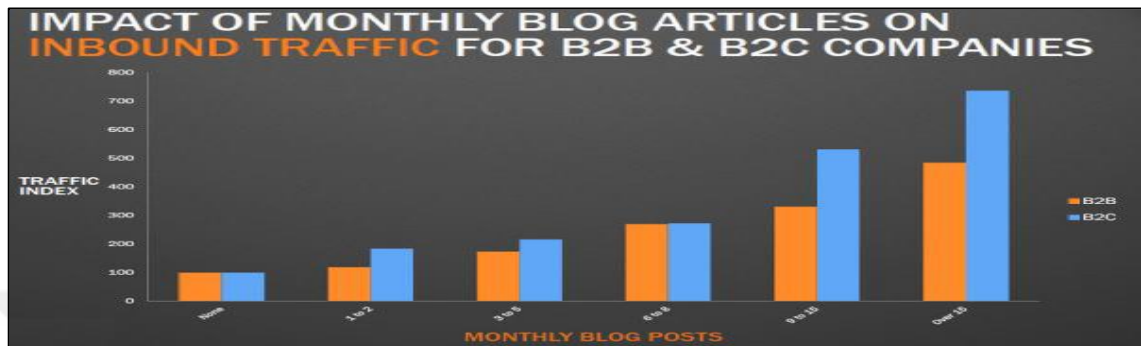
Figure 4.9: Ownership Benefits of Content Marketing.



Source: Content Marketing ROI (Kapost, 2012).

(Hubspot, 2012) also proved that business that create fifteen blogs or more per month have 5x more traffic than other companies with no blogs.

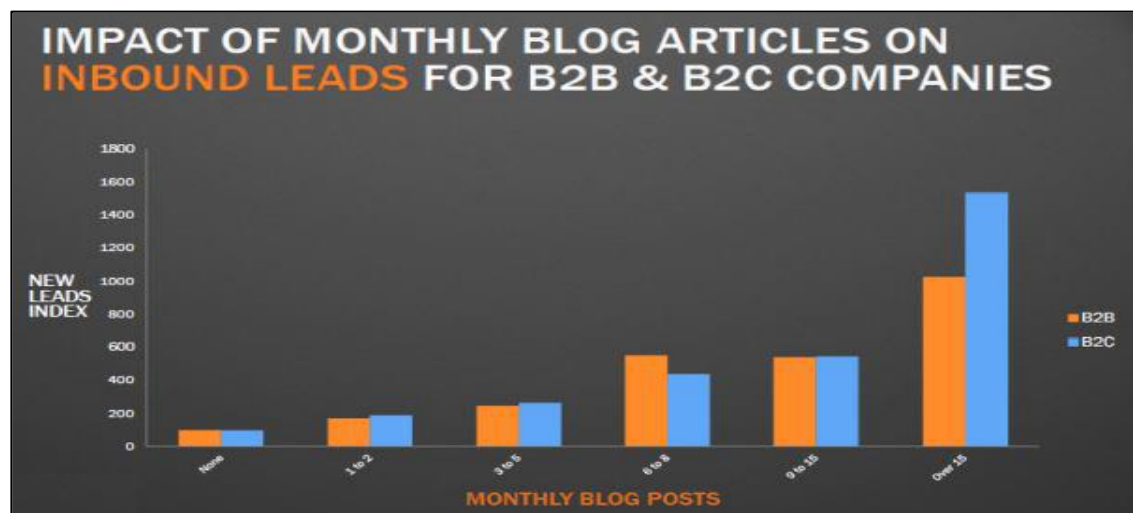
Figure 4.10: Impact of monthly blog articles on Inbound traffic for B2B&B2C companies



Source: 12 Revealing Charts to Help You Benchmark Your Business Blogging Performance (HubSpot, 2012).

(Hubspot, 2012) also proves that business who increases its' blog from three to five times per month to six to eight times can double their leads.

Figure 4.11: Impact of Monthly blog articles on Inbound Leads for B2B&B2C companies.



Source: 12 Revealing Charts to Help You Benchmark Your Business Blogging Performance (HubSpot, 2012).

(Hahn, 2013) has discussed some of the advantages of using content marketing:

- i. Help search engines and SEO
- ii. Build value and credibility
- iii. Build better relationship with audience
- iv. Reduce relying on external resources
- v. Strengthen control on businesses messages
- vi. Introduce your company as an expert on a specific field or topic
- vii. Creating a more proficient marketing strategy in terms of planning, creation, distribution and measurement.

(Hahn, 2013) also recommends businesses to integrate their content marketing strategy with their existing marketing strategy and not to only rely on content marketing because content marketing alone won't be enough as it is only fruitful in terms of generating leads and traffic to their website which leads to the discussed above benefits.

Why to Use Content Marketing?

As discussed above, there are significant amount of benefits and opportunities content marketing can deliver to business besides their size, industry or location.

For content marketing, its' objective is similar to any other marketing objective which is attracting new customers and maintaining existing ones in order to increase sales but what priorities content marketing is its' attractive features discussed above (easy, cheap, fast, etc.).

While for content marketing there are some major objectives and whys business and marketers agree to start using content marketing: First and most importantly; increase brand awareness. Second; Lead generation. Third; convert leads into customer. Fourth; become the industry and field leader. Fifth; create better customer engagement. Sixth; enhance customer retention. Seventh; draw more website traffic. And finally, and more logically increase revenues which is resulted by increasing sales.

All of the objectives above can vary depending on the company's marketing approach, for that, the objectives can be introduced and defined more specifically, while other business define their content marketing objectives on a broader word as follows; more sales, increased customer loyalty, better brand recognition.

Basically, these objectives can be used in any marketing method a business choose, and this puts us into an important question. Why to use content marketing instead of other traditional marketing? Traditional marketing methods is becoming more and more less efficient and won't correlate with the real needs of the business, traditional marketing objectives regardless of the business and its industry, field or market size focus on selling and getting recognized in order to win customers but people nowadays are confronting these annoying messages by blocking advertisements whether these advertisements are on the internet or an outdoor advertisement, and the efficiency of this method is significantly lowering and losing attention. Customers also face other business-related broadcasts as known as spams, and nowadays it's a standard option in any mail service provider to organize these messages in the junk mail or block any prompted advertisement on the internet browser, this action is a result of the increased amount of annoying promotional messages sent by companies and is also a warning sign that this marketing method doesn't work anymore.

Traditional marketing method works by prompting an annoying messages and banners in our way, people see it as annoying because it blocks their way and force them to react to it, because of that, traditional marketing is thought to be ineffective and insufficient and can no longer work toward its' results and objectives properly.

Therefore, inbound marketing has arisen as an alternative, it assumes that in order to attract customers, businesses should create an interesting content so they our customers consider our offers, so this is a an opposite way, in inbound marketing, customers search for companies instead of companies searching for customers, this method is proven to be more efficient and fruitful especially when the content is highly relevant in what customers are searching for instead of manipulating them with annoying advertisement that might not be relevant to them.

4.4 CHALLENGES OF CONTENT MARKETING

Content marketing starts can be a very big challenge for business, although it's easy, cost-efficient, and fruitful in terms of financials and recognition, it also requires a big amount of dedicated hours with no actual numerical response, content marketing is a

long-term strategy and thus its' objectives should be met regarding to that because in content marketing businesses are waiting for customers to find them and not vice versa, content marketing also needs a team that is familiar and experienced in terms of the new trends of the internet technology like SEO and SEM in particular, for that, most companies decide to hire a new person to join the marketing team as this strategy needs a dedicated person to frequently update, create, contribute and engage with the content, there is a common mistake that managers ought to see the results in the short term or use content marketing on the side while performing other marketing actions from the same person at the same time.

Other companies choose to outsource content marketing work from marketing agencies, it can offer companies with more skilled and professional people and make sure that their content marketing strategy is being taken care of, but still, company may lose control over their content as they outsource and they only deal with the outcomes and numbers, another drawback may be the quality of content and the determination of the marketing agency which may affect the content quality frequency and dedication.

Further companies choose to keep this responsibility to the project manager with the ability to outsource specific actions to a freelancer, this option is usually fairly good because, in this case, company keeps control to itself and can lower the costs when compared to the above alternatives but also requires more work from the companies' side in terms of budgets, contingency planning, preparing plans and managing campaigns.

In conclusion, the companies' decision is based on their resources, abilities and the most cost-efficient way with the most outcome, content marketing needs a lot of personal effort, designing, creating content and in the early stages turn out to be unprofitable. Most companies choose to outsource especially in the content marketing early stages because they are afraid that employees may lose motivation especially for the employees who are not connected directly to the campaign, lack of expertise in creating a high-quality content that may lead to success and virality, so outsourcing is considered better as it may be cheaper, faster, safer and more customer relevant, it is also important to note that this recommendation cannot be applied to all companies and thus this decision should be based through professional analyzing and planning.

4.5 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CONTENT MARKETING

When talking about content marketing, the first and foremost benefit to discuss is inbound marketing, inbound marketing is the jewel that lies in content marketing, it is the place where a company can create a loyal number of potential customers that are expected to buy the product, as discussed above, inbound marketing is a long path especially because the company is waiting for the customers to find it and attract their attention, but as soon as inbound marketing starts to prosper, the company starts to be considered as the experts of their working industry, customers will be willing to pay more as they see the company as a professional one, selling become easier and the business image and recognition will raise high.

Audiences who are interested in the content are called engaged customers, their interest is a great advantage and benefit for the company's marketing team even if they're not paying customers yet, engaged customers are better than e-mail recipients or unwillingly subscribers, those engaged customers are interested in the company content, they read it with full attention, they see the company as the innovator and professionalism and therefore they will definitely recommend the company to their friends, family or acquaintances and they become the company ambassadors without even knowing that.

Content marketing can also be the key to better search engine optimization (SEO), SEO works with robots that doesn't know the relevant, quality or interest of the content but rather analyses keywords, metadata, written codes and the number of forwards for the content link. SEO is really important for companies so that they can appear to more audiences and catch them before anybody else does especially in this high heated competition in almost every sector nowadays, therefore content marketing has allowed all companies regardless to their size, industry, market to create a quality content that is interesting to allow it to compete by generating index and being displayed in the first results and even in top of the paid advertisements in some cases.

Content marketing emphasizes the culture of knowledge, and since the creation of the internet, knowledge and learning has become not only related to schools or universities, or trainings. We are living in a learning society and the internet has become one of the

most important learning mediums in almost every field, so for businesses, in content marketing, they are spreading knowledge and useful information and companies are becoming the creators for a better more insightful future and what can be better than buying products from our teachers that we perceive as our experts and roles.

Content marketing allows companies to better use their resources and re-allocate them, companies create data and present them in meetings, for planning or in any managerial situation, these data are often neglected afterwards and they do have a lot of information and importance that may serve to give a high quality content, for a company that uses content marketing these information may be re purposed and re allocated to be presented and created as content published by the company regarding the industry for example, this content will be less costly, allows companies to discover new areas beyond the in-company area when properly processed and described.

Making better use of the business knowledge that they already have can result in lowering operating costs, making better content marketing effect and enhance the companies culture in thinking outside the box and milking their resources to get the best out of them and discover a completely new area.

4.6 CONTENT MARKETING TYPES

There are several amount of content marketing tools that will be discussed in this chapter among side with their function, benefits and some tips for their perfect outcomes, Content Marketing Institute (CMI) has made a research about the efficiency and effect for these tools and tactics. 91% of B2B businesses use content marketing; An average of 12 content marketing tactics is used by B2B marketers while only 11% of them use over 20 different tactics, on the other side 18 tactics are used by companies with more than 10,000 employees and 28% of B2B business use 5 to 10 content marketing tactics.

Blogs

Blogs is a shortcut for the word “weblog”, they are simply websites that are used for a numerous reason from sharing information to content marketing for the businesses, it is a common way to present frequent information web content, it can be easily made by

simple technologies with the ability for comments and likes. Blogs are considered to be the center of social media system that integrate SEO strategies and community campaigns (Pulizzi, 2014).

Blogs usually have an individualized character, they present the authors point of view, his/her opinions, recommendations and observations. The most important services for blogs are “Wordpress” and “Blogger” (Pulizzi, 2014).

Blogs can be a little bit hard to start because a lot of people are not familiar on how to start, so in order to start and create a good blog you will need to encourage conversations, engage in other blogs that are not your own, chill out a little bit, define your primary subscribers that you want to attract, prepare what are you willing to write, understand your audience needs and concerns, address your audience in the platform they like most, comment on similar topics that refers to your blog, use keywords so that you can appear on SEO, blog consistently, define your goal and relate it to the overall company goals, how to market the blog and link with your existing marketing means (Pulizzi, 2014).

Blogs has many advantages and disadvantages, some of its advantages are as follows: Low cost; creates brand awareness; less costly than other online campaigns; attractive and easy to use; educates audiences about the company; not limited to a specific time or place. As for the disadvantages, they can be summarized as follows: blogs can be a place for unpolite actions and comments; needs a lot of time and frequent updates; results appear in the long term, and people are likely to lose passion after a period and this harms them more than never starting at all (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Blogs impact can be measured through: page shares; visitors’ number; comments number and the page rank, and in order to achieve high numbers on that you should: use interesting eye catching title, focus on the problem, make blogs short and easily understood, add a call to action buttons(subscribe button, like us on Facebook, Twitter, Join our e-newsletter etc.,), make content packages(each blog idea may have more pieces of content and information in it), invite guest post and share the love, promote key influencers and most importantly measure your blog metrics(views, signups,

inbound links and search rankings) and check them regularly, do influencer Q&A sessions, and outsource your content (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Newsletter

A newsletter is a way of advertising, it consists of company publication, events, promotions or newest developments in a form of text or some links that refer to text that is sent in a periodic time and is usually send by email for subscribers who wishes to receive it, newsletters are often free, but it can also be sold for money. Newsletters are used by companies to communicate, advertise, promote, or send information to their readers (Pulizzi, 2014).

Newsletter advantages can be summarized in enhancing the communication and keeping subscribers up to date with the latest information about a certain topic, build a long lasting relationship with the company subscriber audiences, it has a low cost, it can be delivered easily throughout email messages, it can be used as a channel for special promotions and advertisements especially for new upcoming products, and it is considered as a way to keep a good relationship with subscribers who already expressed their interest for the company products. As for the disadvantages, newsletters are getting some blockings with the new junk mail options; it is getting harder to reach subscribers and to allow them to read the newsletters, it is also hard to win new customers email addresses to join the newsletter service, it is also hard to get noticed because of the huge amount of email being sent daily to users, it is easy to loose subscribers especially when newsletter are send too much, and finally it's hard to know the right balance for each subscriber for frequency and content needed (Pulizzi, 2014).

Newsletters success can be measured by the number of newsletters sent, number of newsletters opened and clicked through, and the increase in subscriptions. In order to get to this success a company should ask for permission to send the newsletter and add an opt-out button for every newsletter they send, it should also be reviewed constantly, newsletters can be also used to promote the company content by adding them to the newsletters, as for the newsletter itself; it should be colorful and have some sample pictures that are relevant, contain the advantages of newsletter to encourage people to sign up, contain some categories and fields that subscribers are interested in, create a

privacy statement, link to a sample newsletter, get rid of any distractions on the newsletters signing up page and out the sign up button on the top and offer some awards and testimonials, and finally, the company should apply this extra effort in making newsletter in order to build audience and create channels relying on the audiences' email not their social media accounts because they are not considered as a business asset because social media belongs to other parties and not to the company itself (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

White papers

A white paper is usually between 8 to 12 pages long, it is something like a report or a brochure, the main objective for white paper is to enlighten readers about a specific subject that needs a lot explanation in order to promote and increase selling, realize the benefits of the product, solve a problem or make a decision. White paper is also known as conference papers, research reports, or technical briefs and they are considered as an excellent way to discuss issues that are important for the buyer. White papers work in accordance with the marketing department and impact potential customers who registers for it (Pulizzi, 2014).

White paper main advantage is to strengthen and enhance the competitive position for the company, increase sales and revenue, generate more customers, create better effective marketing and increase the business credibility. While, on the other side, white papers require an enormous amount of time, can be boring because it's long and also hard to get people to read it, it hard to write one and a single mistake in a white paper can destroy the credibility (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

White paper success can be measured by the number of leads, social media shares and number of downloads. Last important thing to note in whitepapers that they should be in different formats and printable (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Articles

An article is a more flexible type of content marketing in terms of format and length, it allows the business talk about issues, concerns, trends, or interests to their audiences. Articles should be an ongoing process to attract audiences and for the business to become its' leader in the industry (Pulizzi, 2014).

A good article should discuss the subject from the editors' angle, be an interest for its readers, placed in a various channel over the internet or in print media, and should be updated regularly to create a series of articles to attract interest and create impact. Articles don't necessarily need to deliver a point of view but rather have information that interest readers like FAQ (Frequently asked questions) (Content marketing handbook, 2014)

Articles success can be measured by the views, time spent on website, click-throughs, shares, number of comments, in-bound links, and conversion funnel. Articles advantages can be summed in being a better way for marketing rather than advertising and other traditional sorts of marketing, containing links that refer to the business products, better chance to reach new potential customers, more appealing and more visits to the business website throughout links provided in the article. On the other side, articles can also be costly, more difficult to measure its' effects, and people may not have the time to read it especially when its' a sponsored article (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

E-Books

E-books are books in an electronic digital format that are displayed either on a computer or a smart device, they are usually between 12 to +40 pages long containing text, images, audio, video and animations, they are considered as more attractive than books, more user friendly with an informative and entertaining style. E-books can be free or paid for and are offered in different formats (Pulizzi, 2014).

E-books advantages are much more than normal books specially in terms of flexibility, ease to use, multimedia effects, linkable and searchable text, lower possibility of lost or damage and space saving. On the other side, they also require a device to read them on which should have electricity and internet in some cases, have some limits, some readers find no joy in reading them as they're attached to books and some piracy concerns (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

E-books success can be measured by the number of downloads, rates, social media shares and amount of leads, and in order to achieve this success a business should carefully plan and decide how to distribute the book, how to design the book especially

in the visuals as it's a digital one, and include a call for action like recommend other books to read and links for additional information on a particular subject (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Case Studies

Case study is a document that is not long, usually between one to two pages, based on a referred real-life scenario that attract the reader and create credibility and trust. Case studies are an important way to build trust worthy relationship and play the leader role in the industry and market (Pulizzi, 2014).

Case studies has many advantages among building a credible proof from a business party, enhance the business awareness and reputations, confirm its' effective and efficient solutions and it also low cost. On the other side, case studies require a lot of time and an approval from clients.

Case studies success can be measured by the increase in the number of sales, increase in subscription rate, ROI (return on investment) and clickthrough's. in order to achieve this success business are advised to make the case study simple and follow the three-stage format (Challenge, Solution and results), share them on multiple channels, and use client's quotations to make the case touchier and result oriented (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Testimonials

Testimonials are somehow close to customer review or feedback, it is also close to world of mouth marketing, testimonials is when a person, usually a customer, talks about the company product and quote it, testimonials are most effective when the customer is a public figure or a trustworthy person with a significant amount of affected followers, testimonials help strengthen trust and rumors and lowers hesitation and comparing alternatives in the purchasing stage. In order to success in testimonials business should design and help customers to talk out and share their experience, request it from customers, specify what do they want to listen from customers and spread testimonials all over the company website and not limit it to the testimonial's category (Pullizi, 2014).

Webinars/ Webcasts

Webinar/Webcast is a form of a visual informational presentation, webinar is a presentation that consists of slides and audio while webcasts consist of slides, audio and video. Webinar/Webcast is delivered online, on demand or live, it can include links, social media feeds, audio, video, images and documents to attract the interest of viewers. There are three types of webinars/webcasts as follows; online slide decks (Microsoft power point presentations), Narrated audio presentations (presentations with audio), and interactive video presentations (presentations with video story telling or facial expressions) (Pulizzi, 2014).

Webinars/Webcasts have many advantages such as, ease of use, availability, low cost, use on demand, easily edited revised and uploaded and a new better way of communication. On the other side they are time consuming, need an internet connection, reduced amount of information because it is arranged in slides format, audio and video formats may not be supported in the customers' device, and can sometimes be distracting when using a lot of animations (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Webinars/Webcasts success can be measured by the number of views, click-throughs, social media shares, number of comments and inbound links. In order to achieve this success a business is recommended to plan and apply a carefully studied promotion strategy, include a call to action, and engage people to participate in upcoming events in order to double the benefit from their already done webinar/webcast (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Videos

Videos are visual multimedia material that due to the technology are nowadays simpler and easier than ever, YouTube and Vimeo are considered the top two places for sharing and uploading a video, they also provide option for sharing your content on social media which in many cases leads them to become viral, they also give you the opportunity to upload videos to your current website. Videos allow companies to address audiences that prepare to watch than read, videos may be made either by the company or users of the products (Pulizzi, 2014).

Videos are challenging, due to content buzz, videos are now difficult to be visible, so the company should spend its' time in repeatedly uploading new videos and share them, videos have many advantages like embedding them on different platforms and websites, have no place or time restrictions, can be downloaded and used offline and they are repeatable. On the other side, videos are considered to be difficult to made and need experienced stuff for editing and processing (Pulizzi, 2014).

Video success can be measured by the number of followers on video platforms, number of shares, comments number, video viewers, and inbound links, in order to achieve this success video should contain information that is out of the box, build interest especially from the customers' perspective, and focusing on the audio quality (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

News Releases

News release is a press publication in a written or recorded form that is addressed to the audience by a news media that doesn't belong to the company or by the company with the public relations services, news releases are considered to be an effective way to contact with and attract audiences and not limited to press (Pulizzi, 2014).

In order to create a successful news releases a business should constantly post new news and find a reason to, it should also change the context and type of their news release by adding story telling techniques for example, and finally, news releases should contain call for action in order to give the chance for readers to react to your publication (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Magazines

In content marketing, all businesses become publishers, and in order to excel in this domain, businesses should consider creating a magazine either a print or digital one, magazines are usually sponsored, produces and issued by the company and they contain interesting bound of articles, news, trends, and stories about a specific subject that relates to the business main market and industry, magazines should be issued continuously quarterly or more often, it is also important to note that not starting a magazine at all is better than starting one and stope after a short while. The business should carefully choose between print magazine or digital magazine depending their

targeted audience, print magazines are usually more costly, harder to distribute, and not so visually attractive compared to the digital magazines that may contain podcast, videos, small games and more, digital magazines are also limitless and easy to access and obtain, they can also include call to action, inbound links, and their success can be measured more efficiently by the number of downloads of links click through. Even though, there is no one better than the other as the industry and targeted audience are the main criteria to choose which method is better and sometimes the financial status plays a role in the decision too (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

E-learning

E-learning is another tool that a business can use, it is bringing education online through companies' website, or by sponsoring some online learning platforms, e-learning is one of the best tools that is rarely used due to its' complexity, cost and requiring constant control. E-learning can be in audio forms like podcast, video, presentation, webinars and much more. E-learning tool allows the company to introduce itself as the leader and reference for expertise, e-learning also enlarges the company insight and force it to stay up to date with all new trends in the industry, it also allows the company to host some top niche of the field and increase its' reputation and acceptance when deciding to go globally, e-learning should be carefully designed to fit different needs of audience and their level of purchasing action (current customer, potential customer, comparing alternatives, etc.,), e-learning should also contain some fun, stories, examples, and illustrations to attract learners, and finally in order to reach the most amount of targeted audiences, the company should use the most popular and used learning platforms (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Mobile applications

Mobile applications are software internet-based programs that are specially designed for smart devices such as smartphone, tablets, and wearables, mobile applications have two forms, they can come in an application for certain devices operating systems, or as internet web pages that can run on any device connected to the internet. Mobile applications main objective is to increase customer engagement by providing quality content to targeted audiences and acquire the potential ones, mobile applications are

usually designed with various options to suit different customers' needs, mobile applications are easy to install, be found and updated, they can be paid for or used for free, mobile applications, as known as, apps can be normally found in operating platforms such as App Store, Google Play, Windows Phone Store or BlackBerry App World (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Mobile applications are best for smartphones with specific ratio screens, can benefit from the mobile specifications like camera, microphone, GPS and more, easier to access, and serves as a better marketing tool. On the other side, mobile applications require a significant amount of money to create and maintain, a lot of updates are usually needed, users need to download the application in some cases in order to start benefiting from its' services, they also take some space from the smart device storage and because they depend heavily on using the internet they may also cost the audiences money when using the mobile data, they also need to have several designs to cope with the different platforms available in the market and finally their outcome may need some time to appear especially when the mobile application is not marketed in an efficient way (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Mobile application success can be measured by the number of comments and their context, number of downloads, rating and time spend using them, it is also important to note that when creating an application, a company should design it to deliver the best utility for audiences, be easy and mobile friendly, content should be easily shareable especially on the social media platforms and website, a survey should be popped out to enhance customer experience and deliver a higher level of satisfaction, the application should be also tested several times to ensure best user experience, be distributed and downloadable in beta to gain some loyal customers, and finally intelligent software should be used to collect information and give recommendations for next application or for updating the current one. It is also important to note that innovation and newness is one of the most important keys for the application to go viral (Pulizzi, 2014).

Podcasts

Podcasts are audio files that are nowadays getting more popular, they can be listened on nearly any device with speakers or headphones, they are offered via RSS or iTunes,

podcasts length varies depending the publisher from 5 to +30 minutes longs, podcasts can be downloaded or streamed. In order to success in podcasting, a company should identify its' podcast theme and stick to it, create a schedule for their podcast that may be weekly, monthly, biweekly and so on, podcasts also need to be consistent as other tools mentioned above, and finally podcasts content should be highly relatable and integrated with other content marketing tools like blogs to gain more listeners (Pulizzi, 2014).

Executive roundtable

An executive roundtable is grouping the business industry experienced executives that have the prospect to pull in your power, executive roundtables are some presentations, discussions and interactions between participated executives and allows your company to position itself as the leader of the market (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Executive roundtables success relies on looking for the ideal participants, hosting guest blog posts to support the topic ideas, and most importantly, make a summary report whether in a white paper form, report or book and include video, audio and transcripts in order to milk the most benefits out of this meeting (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Industry ranking system

Everybody loves rankings and lists, industry ranking system is also applicable here, it consists of making a list regarding a topic by examining some criteria, it gives the audiences a list that ranks some available alternatives in a specific object, industry ranking system is like listicles (best-of or top ten) bullet ins, industry ranking system allows the company to position itself as the industry and market expert and present itself as the most helpful reference for audiences. Industry ranking system is a very effective tool in order to appear on top of the search engine tools results as the system recognize them as a big help for researcher (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Industry ranking system success may depend on ranking on some criteria or measurable objectives, constantly updating the ranking system via social media platforms, press releases, etc., and by creating some benefits from the links that are listed in the ranking system (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Printed books

Despite the technology break through and the introduction of new e-books era, printed books are still an inevitable choice for the company to make, a full-length book creates authority, enhance responsibility and increase awareness for the company, a full-length book can be self-published or published by a publishing company. Printed book can ensure your business a significant amount of exposure, expert look and think, and speaking invitations that enhance your on-going core (Pulizzi, 2014).

Printed books need a lot time and money, they need to be carefully planned, but the content can be more easily collected when there is already a content marketing strategy in store, a good strategy for creating a printed book can be by simply re using your blog content, media publication through public relation department and by the community pages the company already created (Pulizzi, 2014).

Audiobooks

Audiobooks are same as printed books in terms of length and content, the only difference is that they are listenable, they often come in a CD or downloaded as an audio file, audiobooks are more flexible and easier to finish, audiobooks are the podcasts alternative despite the length of the audio. Audiobooks can work best when the reader is busy doing another thing and cannot keep the eyes on a printed book. Audiobooks can also attract more attention than printed books when using a talented reader with an attractive voice, when adding some background music to the readers' voice, and by giving some free sample for the audiobook to collect more customers and drive them to listen to the full audiobook (Pulizzi, 2014).

Events

Events consists of trade shows, workshops, and conferences all of which create big advantage for the company, they are different and broad as some of them may require internet connects like virtual trade shows and others require an astonishing planning like events and conferences, events are considered one of the top effective marketing technique for its' results in increasing the number of sales and attract potential customers and educate them about the products, drive revenue, improve

communications, increase participation, increase brand awareness and becoming the leader of the industry with a real contact with the participants. Events success mainly depends on the place, the number of participants, catering services, and speakers. Events can help the company in promotions areas, communicating and reaching more potential customers, informing and introducing products, receive feedback and polish the companies' position as the leader. On the other side, events are costly, participants may not always be the targeted or event addressed ones, failure and not showing risks, and finally the event might not do its' job in increasing profits and it might fail, and the investment is lost (Pulizzi, 2014).

Events success can be measure by, the number of participants and their engagement, their opinions and reviews, social media shares and posts and increase in sales (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Comic books

Comic books are books that are rich with pictures and illustrations, they are fun, entertaining and memorable. Comic books can be addressed to all ages and, depending the company market and industry, they can deliver rich content while keeping readers entertained and having fun. Comic books can create a buzz, they should also be constant and have a timetable (weekly, biweekly, monthly, etc.), and they should contain a tactic to attract potential customers, thanks to the technological development, comic books can now be made and delivered online with less cost and better visual quality and more interactions (Pulizzi, 2014).

Road shows

Road shows are tours and mini-conferences made by the company that last for a day or two and made in cities with high targeted audience population. Roadshows success relies on defining the outcome for the attendees, efficiently designing and planning the event and catering it, choosing experienced trained speakers to attract the participants' interest (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Online games

Online games can also be an effective way of content marketing type, everybody loves to play a game to loosen up the stress or just kill the time, online games can be simple, amusing and addicting for some audiences, depending on the companies industry and market the company should study the effectiveness of using this tool, for example, toy manufacturing company can create a great profit out of an online game and build a lifelong loyalty with its' customers by launching an online game. Online games are complex to create, require some special experienced employees, costly, needs frequent updates but on the other hand they can increase brand awareness and loyalty and in return increase sales and profits. In order to success in online game, the company should make the game be able to run smoothly on several different platforms and browsers, the game should be light in size and not take a large space on the RAM (random access memory), and finally the game experience should support the company's brand experience (Pulizzi, 2014).

Infographics

Infographics are visual presentation of assembled data presented in an attractive and understandable way, infographics presents information in form of graphs, charts, histogram, statistics, sequence maps, data maps, illustration or all combined together, infographics are simplified version of information formed in an interesting way, infographics objective is to be shared to a big amount of people, they consist of visuals, content and insights, infographics are tools for informing, spreading knowledge, and building brand awareness. Human-being brains are more effected and focused when visual functions are used and that's why infographics are considered to be more effective. Infographics also has the advantage to create and illustrate connections between pieces of information presenting insights and not only raw data (Pulizzi, 2014).

Infographics advantages can be summed by the following, they are more likely to be understood and read than articles, they educate and inform attractively, they are less expensive, increases SEO (search engine optimization), collects a significant amount of information in a small page, and builds brand awareness. On the other side, infographics may distract people, may look naïve, distort data, may be interpreted on the readers

perspective and data numbers may be sometimes overwhelming (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Infographics success can be measured by the inbound links, page views, shares, and time spent on the website, and in order to achieve this success infographics should be easy to share to gain most reach and engagement, have a guiding sample image to present your idea more easily and providing understandable and clear value especially when talking about a complex topic (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Online survey research project

An online survey research project is simply a poll for customer, visitors, colleagues and audiences, surveys can be free or paid and can be hosted on the company website or hosted on other websites like the popular one SurveyMonkey (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

Online survey research projects allow the company to identify peoples' orientations to better upgrade or enhance their products or services provided, they can also be used for future planning and forecasts, and most importantly they give the audience the feel that the company listens and cares for them and help build trust and loyalty among customers (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

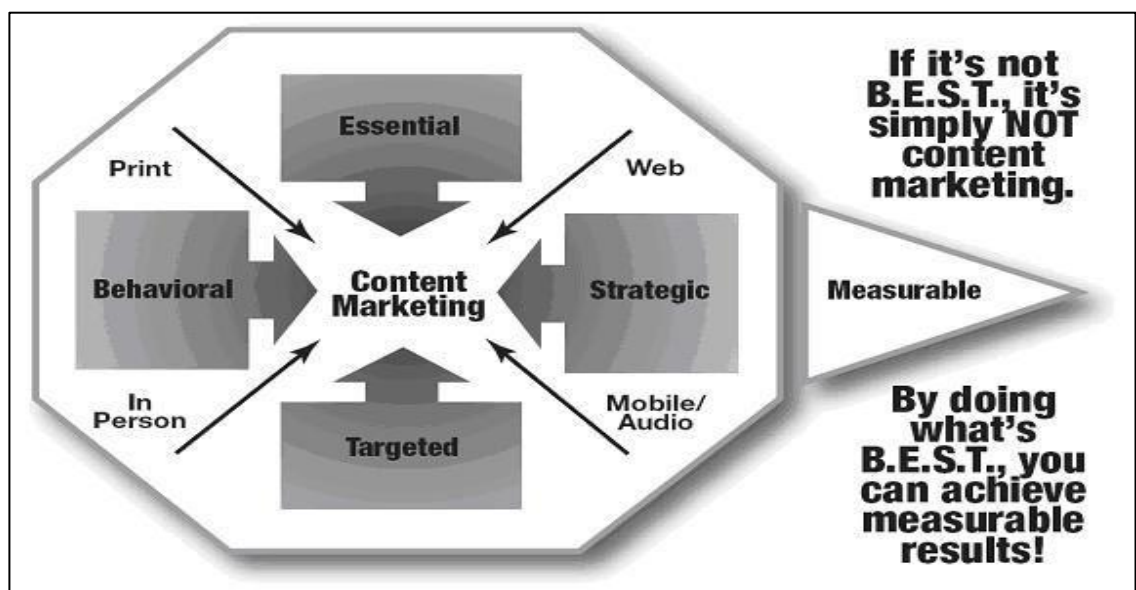
Online surveys audiences may include social media followers, events participants, subscribers, and blog readers. For that, online surveys are considered as a big collection of information from multiple people from multiple channels and types. Online surveys shouldn't be long to not lose attention and create boredom, and questions should be addressed in a way to get the most information out of audiences, the survey main aim should focus on getting to know what and how audiences are thinking, and not to push the survey for customers, it is also important to note and briefly discuss the new survey platforms that are offering some awards on participating in surveys like SurveyMonkey or Google surveys (Content marketing handbook, 2014).

4.7 CONTENT MARKETING THEORIES

4.7.1 The B.E.S.T. Formula Theory

B.E.S.T. formula was made by (Pulizzi and Barret,2009). for creating a roadmap for content marketing, their purpose was to ease the transformation for creating valuable and relevant content for targeted audiences, it also explained the importance of creating and carefully planning a content marketing strategy before starting a content marketing campaign. B.E.S.T. formula is applicable in nearly almost any media or channel such as online, print or in-person. B.E.S.T. formula main objective is to simplify the process of marketing and create a marketing strategy that would have the following specifications. B is for behavioral; understanding, having a clear goal and reason is essential for each communication the business make. E is for essential; communicating information that is relevant, needed, useful and leads to success for targeted audiences. S is for Strategic; the content marketing strategy should be a supporting and integrated part of the whole business strategy in order to succeed. T is for targeted; content published and created should exactly fit the need and the characteristics of targeted audiences to make it precious and valuable.

Figure 4.12: The B.E.S.T. formula.



Source: Get content, get customers. Florida: Voyager Media (Pulizzi & Barret, 2009).

(Pulizzi and Barret, 2009) argue that the first step should be to clearly identify and understand customers, both current and potential ones, and later on business shall be understood, they also provide some questions to help enhance companies in developing B.E.S.T formula in their company. Behavioral; companies should define their behavioral goals and how to measure their behavior, identify how do they want their customers to feel, what actions and effects to take and how to push them to buy the company's' product. Essential; companies should clearly identify their audience's knowledge needs, how to provide it most efficiently and how to get the best attraction out of it, they should also identify what media, types, channels and tools to use plus the critical elements for their marketing campaign. Strategic; companies should ask and double check how the content marketing strategy is helping the whole company strategy in achieving its' goals and how it's doing that. Targeted; companies should define the prospects they wish to target, understand their motives, professional roles, their perception to our products and their characteristics and lifestyle.

B.E.S.T formula allows the company to gain the required information to start creating strategic marketing communication that is fruitful and can be measured by success and increase in numbers.

4.7.2 Four Pillars Theory

Four Pillars Theory was crease by (Tim Tucker, 2013) on Smart Insights Blog and this theory aims to make successful content by using content strategy.

Figure: 4.13: The four pillars of successful content.



Source: A framework for content marketing strategy: Defining the four pillars of successful content (Tucker,2013).

B.E.S.T theory and Four Pillars theory have the first three sections in common but only in the change of the terminologies, Essential is the same as Reader’s Goal, Behavioral is as same as Your Objectives and Targeted is same as Content Topic, and the Strategic part in B.E.S.T formula is also as same as Your Objectives in the Four Pillars theory. For that, the only difference lies in the “Tone of Voice” part and thus it will be discussed further.

(Leibtag, 2013) argues that the tone of voice is crucial and important for content strategy because digital content may be free of tone and flat, and for that, the company should carefully design and reach its’ unique tone of voice that should be consistent and same across all types and forms of marketing communications, companies should also develop and stick to a way in saying things, adopt a style and maintain it and not constantly changing it.

(Demers, 2012) has also discussed some important points that may be missing in the above theories and joined them together in a list of questions to evaluate if a content distribution channel is worth investing in. Demers suggests each company to identify its’ current customers, who’s showing the will to use the internet in the future, are those audiences’ potential customers or may influence potential customers, what are your audience passionate about, like, and share, how do your content get exposed and shared on other people webpages, do your company have the ability and resources to create

new content types to leverage social networks, can you measure your ROI (return on investment), and how costly it is in terms of time and resources required.

4.7.3 S.A.V.E Framework

(Richard Ettenson, Eduardo Conrado, and Jonathan Knowles, 2013) have introduced the S.A.V.E framework in Harvard Business Reviews, 2013. The researchers mentioned above argues that there is a better model than the 4P's model and that the 4P's model is not applicable anymore due to the development and upgrade in marketing, thus 4P's model needs to reinterpret.

Table 4.1: Comparison of traditional 4P's model and the S.A.V.E. framework

Traditional 4P's Model	The S.A.V.E. framework
Products	Solutions
Place	Access
Price	Value
Promotion	Education

Source: Rethinking the 4 P's, Harvard Business Reviews (Ettenson R., Conrado E. and Knowles J., 2013).

Furthermore, (Nenad Senic, 2013) further discussed the S.A.V.E framework and argued that this framework plays as the centerpiece for customer-centric content marketing strategy.

Solution as an alternative for Product

“Define offerings by the needs they meet, not by their features, functions, or technological superiority” (Ettenson et al. 2013).

(Senic, 2013) argues that content strategy should be customer centric because its' purpose is to offer solutions to customers and not making the buy without knowing the reasons which results in the purpose of sales of products. Helpful, relevant and attractive content should work as the handbook for customers to understand the value, benefits, and advantages of the product offerings. And therefore, customers will be able

to purchase the product with complete knowledge of their value and how it satisfies their needs better than competitors' products and increase loyalty.

Access as an alternative for Place

“Develop an integrated cross-channel presence that considers customers' entire purchasing journey” (Ettenson et al., 2013).

(Senic, 2013) discusses the importance of distributing in the place where companies' audiences and customers are and what are they doing in that place. The key point here is to develop a content distribution plan that is efficient and effective. Companies should also compare the alternative communication methods and choose the most relevant ones to create a better distribution and conquer bigger space. Every company should have presence on the internet to be more accessible but not everyone should have social media presence especially when it's not relevant to their customers, access should be met in accordance to the importance, relevant and usefulness for customers' side, only when this method has taken place, a company can better think what content to create and publish and forecast the level of engagement on different various channels.

Value as an alternative for Price

“Articulate the benefits relative to price, rather than stressing how price relates to production costs, profit margins, or competitors' prices” (Ettenson et al.2013).

(Tanton, 2013) has discussed some valuable content specifications; in order for the content to create value it should be helpful and answer questions, fun and encourage reactions, genuine, original and authentic, relevant and created especially for targeted audiences in mind, created and shared when needed most.

Pricing can be one of the most difficult companies' decisions, most companies fail at that stage especially when it comes to selling price, they concentrate on price tags and washout when converting the price to the value they offer. Effective, knowledge building content can replace constantly talking about price and salesmen job, it helps the company talk more about the products' value, technology, and benefits offered to customers and therefore customers would concentrate more on the value offered and disregard price difference. Valuable content outcome can also be as effective as a whole sales team effort.

Education as an alternative for Promotion

“Provide information relevant to customers’ specific needs at each point in the purchase cycle, rather than relying on advertising, public relation...” (Ettenson et al., 2013).

This matter has been identified and discussed in the content marketing frameworks (creating distribution channel that are relevant and accessible, create a quality content that is helpful, educational, relevant and timely, and educate the audience instead of focusing on sales), audiences and customers, whether potential or existing, needs informative, helpful, relevant and timely content to help them in their purchasing decision and build trust to visit your content again. Educational reach content is shared more than other content which results in more exposure and more reach specially to targeted audience.

4.8 CONTENT CREATION

They key point for effective and efficient development of content marketing strategy is content creation and how to use to it to engage customers (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). The essence of content creation is delivering what the audiences wants and needs even if the content doesn’t offer information related to companies’ products (Davis, 2012).

(Holliman and Rowley, 2014) states that in order to create a successful content, companies should include dynamic rich media like videos, podcasts, user-generated content, and product selectors in addition to static content forming webpages. (Budikova, 2014) argues that digital content marketing strategy will continue to focus on reinforcing brand awareness through various formats like micro videos, videos, white papers, articles, studies, e-books, e-newsletter, live presentations and blogs.

In order to create an effective content, companies should master story telling techniques, (Woodside, 2010) discusses that the best way to persuade and convince audience is by creating a capitative story. (Mangold and Faulds, 2009) also support Woodside by adding and further discussing the importance of compelling stories in content marketing communications in response to the memorable effect they make to audiences mind especially when re-read on social media platforms or word of mouth.

According to (Olenski, 2015) stories also have an emotional effect on readers and make them tightly attached and desire to come back for more.

As discussed above, creating stories is one of the best options in content marketing to excel in it, companies don't need to create fictional stories as every company normally have plenty of stories to write already, real stories from CEO, employees, founders, leaders, partners and even customers are considered stronger and create a better impact on consumers and readers, stories about the company creation, products or milestones are also loved and customers get attached to them. (Fog, 2010)

According to (Budikova, 2014), involving customers in creating content is a very important step a company should consider especially when creating stories, in the past few years, costumers are becoming content creators and increasing their influence and credibility by creating videos, writing reviews, social media posts, mashups and much more, this is a proof that customers are becoming more involved in the company and are starting to become content creators without even realizing that. (Budikova, 2014) also suggests that companies should increase the co-creation of content with customers in order to build better individual relationships with them, UGC (user-generated content) has many benefits for they entail low cost, offer more ideas from a various talented people, turns customers into brand advocates, creates better impact and influence than other traditional marketing tools written and offered by the company itself (Liu Thompkins and Rogerson, 2012).

Finally, it is important to note than content should be created with audiences and customers in mind, content should be unique to each type and platform but act as one piece that is connected and integrated (Murphy, 2013).

4.9 CONTENT MARKETING CHANNELS

Content marketing can be delivered in various different channels, those different channels play different roles in the content marketing strategy and they emphasize creating stability in multi-channel existence in our constant changing digital environment where channels are not stable and rise and fall frequently (CMI, 2016).

Websites are usually considered to be the main hub for content marketing, creating an attractive web design and graphics are important for the website in order to survive more on the internet, too much information doesn't serve well but creating a website that only presents the valuable needed information in a simple and user-friendly way is better, for that, companies should create the right content and publish it on the website with an effective web design (Rosen and Purinton, 2004).

Websites and its' content should be available and easy to be found by everyone, companies should also increase the opportunity for the content to be found when its' published on their website, in this regard the main accelerator drive for success is SEO(search engine optimization) and SEM(search engine marketing) discussed above, SEM is the paid version of SEO while SEO is the most trusted as it is an organic ranking, therefore, companies should work more towards creating a better SEO since they are more trusted than advertised links and companies should design their content and add some special keywords to increase the SEO optimization(Sharp, 2014). (Berman and Katona, 2013) discusses two ways for increasing your chance in SEO, the first is called "white hat"; white hat is a terminology express a company that works to really improve the content to increase content relevance and customer satisfaction, while "black hat" means when a company improves its' ranking by unethical ways like adding deceive data and hacking in order to manipulate the search engine process and let the content appear like it's more relevant and useful while in fact it's not, black hat actions can be caught and the website may be banned for that and in result cause a serious damage for the whole company (Malaga, 2008).

Blogs are also an important channel for content marketing, it was discussed in the previous chapter. According to (Singh et al., 2008) blogs are seen more authentic, messages appear to be more connected to targeted audiences and create a long relationship with the author, blogs are also an attaching and effective platforms when used to share experiences and knowledge with the audience, educational information and creating insightful knowledge for the audience is one the main goals for content marketing and therefore blogs are an efficient and effective channel for publishing content and creating engagement, blogs are also easier to be optimized for better SEO

results and rankings as they consist of a significant amount of keywords without filling the website with complexity as discussed above by (Rosen and Purinton, 2004).

Podcasts are another channel for content marketing, in recent years they have become more popular, podcasts consist of audible files that are shared through the internet and listened with smart devices (Jham, Duraes, Strassler and Sensi, 2008). Podcasts are perceived by listeners and audiences as educational form of files more than commercial channel, for this reason podcasts are predicted to increase, grow and achieve better results in the following years.

Mobile applications are also a forgotten part in content marketing channels, they are software designed for smart devices in order to increase brand awareness and deliver benefits for customers and create a sort of engagement. Using branded applications showed a positive reflection and increased the interest for the brand without considering the product category but rather considering the content offered (Bellman, Potter, Treleaven Hassard, Robinson and Varan, 2011). Unlike direct mobile marketing, mobile application generates an interest in the content and services offered and therefore customers don't feel pushed or forced with the advertisements, they also increase purchase from potential customers by creating a personal connection and becoming influenced by the brand.

Social media are often understood as a company website rather than a channel and that is a common mistake, social media is a content platform that should be used to increase visits the main company hub which is usually the companies' website, it is a channel that is used to promote content and advertise it, this case is also applicable with e-newsletters and other video platforms like Vimeo and YouTube, they are an attractive, highly populated platforms but owned by a third party which the company has no control over, and therefor they should be mainly used to spread the content, catch new potential audiences, address customers from different backgrounds and internet habits, and increase traffic to the hub.

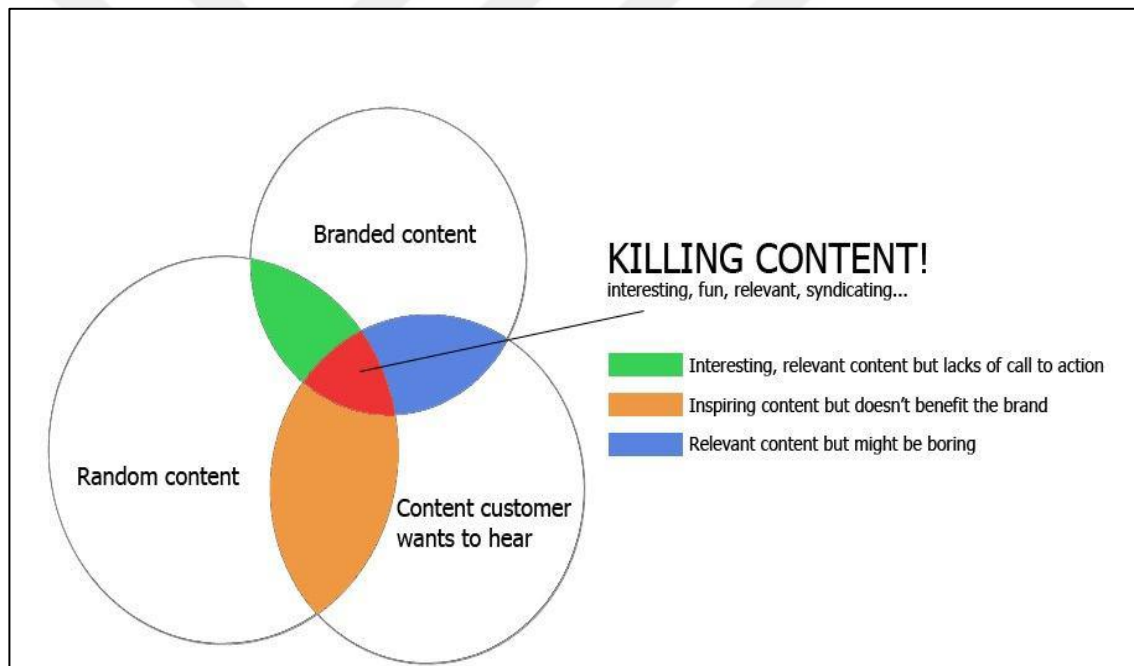
Finally, it is important to discuss the cruciality of adapting all media channels to run smoothly on all different types of smart devices and other technological devices,

(Budikova, 2014) suggests that mobile responsive design will be a top requirement in the coming few years. (Google Inside AdWords, 2015) results shows that mobile devices are used more when search with google search engine, as discussed above, it is vital nowadays for companies to have a mobile version of their website that is user friendly and easy to use and share in order to gain a bigger portion of visitors.

4.10 EFFECTIVE CONTENT MARKETING

The illustration below is made by (Nguyen Binh, 2013) to discuss the most effective types of content to be used in content marketing.

Figure 4.14: How to make the best out of content marketing



Source: Content marketing: How to make best of content (Nguyen Quoc Binh, 2013).

The illustration above classifies content into three types; Random content, a content that could be anything and not memorable like entertaining news or shocking ones. Branded content, a content that is relevant for the business and its' industry and can get audiences bored in some cases, and finally, Content customer wants to hear, this is the best type of content that every company should try to make, it is the content that listens to customer and offer them solution to problems they face whether they are business and

industry related or not, and for this content to be created authors should build a content that is interesting, relevant, educational and solve customers' problem and any missing characteristic in the content may lead to losing a prospect converting to purchase (Albee, 2013).

The illustration above describes how the content drive readers to certain actions, for example, if the content is in area A and B, the green area, readers will entertain by reading the content, but they will not make a purchase or an action because the content lacks a call of action or a reason to buy, while on the other side, if the content is between are B and C, the blue area, the content will considered boring by readers and therefore it won't be shared and won't get the required amount of attraction, and finally, if the content lies in the areas A and C, the brown area, the content will be best fit to audiences and will benefit the readers and even competitors as the content doesn't convey a branded message, and in that case there might be a risk that customers may purchase from other brands or competitors since they're not aware of the company brand creator from the first.

(Nguyen, 2013), offers the following strategy in order to create the right efficient content to strengthen and build up successful content strategy, first, companies should assort the A-B-C types above and categorize the audience followingly in order for better segmentation and as a result for better delivery of content according each segment. Second, companies should classify recommended topics for content creation in each segment. Third, companies should also map all various topics together. Fourth, companies should establish KPIs (key performance indicators) and implementation strategy regarding schedules to gain tight control and achieve desired goals, and finally, companies should constantly measure, report and control the content to ensure being on the right way and get noticed quickly when something is wrong to fix it before it's too late and go back to the first step if so.

Viral content

The superior goal for content marketing is creating a viral content, there is a positive relationship between viral content and the people who consume it as stated by the figures in the former chapters, and as result it leads to a more powerful marketing

campaign. (Berger and Milkman, 2012) and (Bowles, 2013), have discussed the characteristics of online viral content and what makes them, first of all, in order for the content to become viral it should be a surprising content, the surprising content factor plays its' best when the author creates connection between disconnected ideas and makes the readers' mind blows away. The second factor is for the content to be interesting, interesting content can increase the number of readers, the number of clicks, the numbers of shares and customer engagement, marketers and creators main dilemma in this factor is how to make the subject look interesting especially in this content buzz that is rising constantly, (Bowles, 2013) has suggested creators and marketers for the content to be more interesting to include the answers of the five W's (Who, What, When, Where, How, and why. The third factor is intensity and positivity, for the content to become viral, it should aim for triggering readers emotions, the intensity and positivity of the content is the factor for creating a viral accelerating content, and to achieve that content should be fun and entertaining; topics that are told and written in a humor interesting way tend to be more positive, intense, and likes than others, curators and marketers should also be able to convert ideas into stories; as discussed above, stories are more liked by readers as they rise attention and readers' emotions, writers should also use active sentences than passive one because when using active voice text is perceived more engaging, content can also be exaggerated in order to get more intense but writers should be aware what terminologies to choose and not get too extreme, anger can also be added to content to get readers become more intense about the content, fear may also be present but in a light way and in distance times as it may create some negativity when used excessively, for better intensity, creators and writers are advised to add some suspense in the content to keep readers attached to the content, build curiosity, and wait for the next content patiently, content should also be cute to increase positivity and breathtaking and awe inspiring to give readers higher motive to share the content without giving a second choice. And finally, the fourth factor is the action factor, the content should content an action that can be made by the readers like offering solution to one of their problems, clear a misunderstanding, and create a guideline how to use this information and practice it in real life, the action factor is important because most shareable content is the one that contains the action faction whether it is on a professional or personal ground.

4.11 MEASURING CONTENT MARKETING

As discussed above, content marketing effect can only be measured in the long run, but still, many companies have some ambiguity when it comes to measuring content marketing effectiveness, in this chapter I will provide some useful information and discuss more about how to measure content marketing.

Measuring indicates a warning sign for adjustments when necessary and conclusions, it is important for every marketing department to measure the effort of their marketing campaign and how its' going so far, when measuring companies consider KPIs (key performance indicators) and ROI (return on investment) as the main drivers for measuring success or failure.

Content marketing can be measure qualitatively and quantitatively, (Barker et al., 2013) discusses some ways to measure the effort of content marketing on social media called as Attitudes and Measurability which one of the most used quantitative measurements used by social media marketers, those measures are designed to measure the amount of attractions, while there are some other measures that use qualitative methods that main driver is the impact effect on customer relationships on the social media platform activities.

4.11.1 Key Performance Indicators

(Mandloys, 2013) listed some important KPIs (key performance indicators) to measure content marketing efforts as follows, submission rates, qualified leads, click-through rates, pipeline values, number of opens and clicks, funnel conversion, closed deals and the amount number of meetings met with sales opportunities.

There is a vast amount of indicators to measure content marketing, some of them are broad and others are more detailed and specific, in the above section some broad indicators have been mentioned and their terminologies can be found in the terminologies page at the end of the thesis while the specific detailed indicators can include number of page views, amount of traffic that content brings to the site, spent average time on the site, number of pages viewed by the same reader, actions made like clicks and share buttons, page rank by search engines, number of downloads, subscribe,

follow, like, share, favorite, retweets or re blogs, tags, and fans (Mandloys, 2013). (Barkers et al., 2013) also mentioned some qualitative indicators to look for also like the Sentiment Analysis and (NPS) Net Promoter Score. Because of the big number of indicators, companies are advised to choose the indicators that serves their goals best, In the following section, I will discuss the most used, useful and important indicators that mainly have direct results on social media in relation with some common company objectives as they are the biggest platforms with highest population and top average spent time over the internet.

One of the most common company objectives may be to improve, enhance and strengthen customer relationship and communication, for content marketing, this goal can be measured by the share of voice, audience engagement, and conversation reach. The second suggested goal may be to improve engagement and impact, develop and boost the expression of reviews, concerns and feedback, this goal may be measure with the number of active users, number of influencers, and the amount of impact. The third suggested goal is to empower, facilitate and improve support, this goal can be measured with the resolve rate, resolve time, and the satisfaction score. The fourth objective is to stimulate and increase innovation, this goal may be measured by the outcome number of the trendy topics, idea influence, and the emotional ratios. Measurement indicators were derived from (Altimeter Group,2010).

The first objective is strengthening customer relationship and communication can be met by motivate audience to start conversations and propose topics to talk about and let the conversation flows and develops. This concept and methodology offer freedom in the conversation and allows it to pass through numerous networks and platforms which in return enhances loyalty, engagement, activity, and eligibility. This objective allows the company to better understand their audience and can be measured by the increase of people involved in the conversation, their engagement and audience reach.

The first indicator for this goal is the share of voice; it is the percentage of mentioned brands in social media platforms in a competitive combination, share of voice is a percentage that is calculated over an amount of time compared with some historical

information, share of voice works better when segmented into channels to define which channel gives the most impact.

The second indicator is the audience engagement indicator; it is an indicator that measures the number of page viewers who take role in a marketing way by influencing other audiences in comments, shares, or linking back. The volume of engagement is often measured by the number of followers when considering social media platforms, thus, this allows companies to take some adjusting actions on advertising, promotional habits and search efforts. It is also important to constantly track audience engagement to better identify the normal amount and intensity of conversations in a particular channel.

The third indicator is the conversation reach; it is the number of page viewers who are active and enroll in discussions and conversations about the brand, issues, and topics through one or multiple channels and platforms, reach depends on the content topic virality and how it's addressed as discussed in the previous chapter, companies should keep former reach benchmarks in order to compare it with current one to identify the audiences' interests and develop new method to increase the reach.

Conversation reach can also be measured in volume and in location across multiple channels, it is an important indicator and serves well for companies that wish to improve and increase the number of influencers and active users.

The second proposed objective is to improve and boost engagement, this objective aims at building up more attached and engaged users in which the company wishes to convert them into representatives for the brand, products or the whole company with no official strings attached, creating ambassadors helps the company to increase its' reach and expose itself hard to touch areas by using the customers word of mouth marketing, virality, liveliness and their influence upon other people.

The first indicator for this objective to be achieved is to measure the number of active users, the company should be careful when considering the number of active users as it should only count the users that made an effect whether it is emotional or any other type within a period of time, active users should be checked frequently in order to find the right average amount.

The second indicator is the number of influencers, influencers are often active users but in a more advanced way, as the word suggests, influencers are the users who have control over and help motivate others in their purchasing procedure, influencers are also trusted and inspire a bigger amount of people, influencers may be active on one or multiple channels and platforms and can help other users get aware about new products, events, issues or trends in the whole market and industry. Influencers are the best gift the company can get as they help you strengthen brand awareness, identify channels and communities, and discover a new channel for the company to better make use of.

The third indicator is the amount of impact, the impact here is usually created by the endorsement of the active users and influencers described above, the measure of impact is difficult because it changes constantly and includes various conversions and this builds some sort of proportion difficulties.

The third suggested company objective is to improve and facilitate support, this objective importance has been uprising due to the digitalization and increasing usage of social media platforms, companies can now rely on customers to support and help each other, to discuss issues, or to address the company to inform it about a certain subject. I would like to call this objective the social support goal, despite the benefits it offers in helping and supporting customers, this goal can also increase engagement, communities, conversations and loyalty. Social support cannot replace the traditional support channels but can also help in lifting some of the pressure on that department which leads to faster and more efficient support in the company.

The first indicator for this goal is the resolve rate, as the name suggests, this indicator measures the percentage of customer support inquiries resolved with satisfaction using social media or online channels, in order to better understand the results, companies are advised to compare this percentage with the traditional support channels one in order to predict its' future performance and offer better quality indicator.

The second indicator is the resolve time, it is the amount the support service took to offer solutions whether was it from customer to customer or from customer to the company itself, this indicator is similar to the resolve rate but in this case the main criteria is time and not the amount, it is also recommended for companies to compare

this percentage to the traditional support channel time in order to better predict its' trends, it is also important to note that resolve time on the internet webpages channels like social media are much accurate and precise since it's a real time support service, response time should be measured in minutes or hours to help improve the service and should be constantly reviewed and benchmarked with competitors.

The third indicator for this objective is to measure the satisfaction score, the satisfaction score is a number that reflects the level of satisfaction towards customers, it is important to note that this indicator is for measuring webpages and social media platforms satisfaction and don't replace other methods of measuring satisfaction like surveys or in person customer feedback.

The satisfaction score is an important indicator nowadays because internet users are now getting more interested in user reviews, their feedback, satisfactory level, and it's perceived as more honest and trusted than information posted by the company itself.

The fourth and final objective suggested was to stimulate innovation, every company should be constantly looking for innovation and improving in order to stay in the market and become a leader in the industry, innovative companies are perceived as the honest, trusted and most developed ones. Innovation also helps the company in terms of brand awareness, increased exposure and tighter customer engagement, companies that frequently publish innovative ideas, products, procedures, brands and content push audience to higher level of social marketing and promoting activities.

The first indicator for this objective is to measure the number of trendy topics published by the company, trendy topics should include the company brand, product, service, market and should be understandable that it was published by the company in order to gain the engagement and exposure in the online internet channels and social media. Being fast is the key point for succeeding high scores in this indicator; audiences love companies and content that reach fast to negative and positive trends whether it's related or unrelated to their main product line and market, but it should most importantly be related to their audience and need this information, companies that are still beginner in content marketing should carefully and excessively concentrate on this indicator and how to improve it in order to gain big portion of audience. It is also

important to mention that customer comments, reviews, and ideas for innovation and trendy topics should be cared for and answered as soon as possible.

The second indicator is the emotional ratio, it consists of readers and audiences emotional reaction whether it be positive, negative, or neutral about content, issues, or products in a period of time. Emotional ratios should also be frequently measured since they are quickly changeable and here come the companies' work where it should rapidly take action accordingly and clearly recognize audiences emotional state in order to escalate the company's ability for innovation.

The third and last indicator is the idea influence, it is simply described as the rate of interaction, positive emotions, and engagements derived from content, idea, topic, or a product. Idea influence gives the company a perception of future products, how to address audience and what content or topics to further discuss, what characteristics do the audience have and how to better enhance the relationship and the conversations towards them, idea influence is an early indicator for success in companies and serves the prediction role for future innovation efforts.

Finally and to sum up, it is important to note that there is a various big number of KPIs (key performance indicators) and the ones I used was for illustration, further discussion and better understanding only, companies' indicators differs from one to another due to the usefulness, outcome and their implementation and application may differ regarding to the company and its' objectives whether they are marketing objectives or overall ones, the resources available, their social and internet digitalized based efforts, and their investment in content marketing.

4.11.2 Return on Investment

Measuring the return on investment can be hard and difficult for companies, return on investment can be measured only after a period of time, it is simply described as measuring the amount of money spent on an activity whether it is marketing activity or other type of organizational investment and comparing it with the financial results, in order for the return on investment to be feasible, it should be more than the money

spent, otherwise it will be non-feasible and seen as a loss and inefficient activity (Barker et al.,2013).

Return on investment difficulty lies first and foremostly from the company itself, most companies fail at identifying what needs to be measured and how to effectively measure it in the correct way, return on investment and key performance indicators share this common misunderstanding like investing in improving brand awareness which is tricky and difficult to measure. The next difficulty lies in not investing enough money to get a feasible outcome, this case is mostly found in content marketing as it needs a lot of investments in the early stages while the return and outcome is only visible in the long term (Barker et al., 2013).

There are some cases where companies invest in advertising in social media platforms, this type of investment can be easily measured and tracked with the social media system and analytical software, on the other side, this type is considered as a costly method and can't be used for long term as it loses its' effect after a period of time (Snow, 2011).

Although its' difficult to measure return on investment, it still not impossible to know the outcome, companies can still link sales increases from certain channels and compare it on the money they spent on it. Reach and Frequency are also used by companies in order to ease the process of measuring the return on investment, others claim that in order to clearly identify and know the exact effect of social media and internet marketing the reach and frequency is more important than the return on investment ratio especially in the early beginning stages, other companies claim that return on investment on social media platforms and other online channels cannot be measured or considered as an investment for the company only until they start to generate leads and create sales and action linked to the company transactions (Barker et al 2013).

A producer at Comcast.com called Sam Slaughter introduced another way of measuring the return on investment by tracking content users, he explains that this tracking is done by observing the content reader or audience behavior and if it leads to buying a product or generating sales then the content gets the value and credit for this transaction. Slaughter adds that although it is hard to almost impossible to track those specific actions in real time and directly, it is also offering a great advantage as it hints the company for the good money generating content that can also be used to attract new audiences that can become buying customers later (Snow, 2011).

Other content marketing experts and researches have also introduced other ways for measuring ROI (return on investment), (Severson, 2015) offered an approach to calculate it by calculating the organic traffic for a period of time and comparing it to the cost it would generated from search engine marketing, this method is considered as the simplest one to measure the return when investing in content marketing and actually do its' job fair enough.

(Hoffman, 2010) offered another solution to measure the return on social media marketing investment by also measuring the investment from the customers perspective in terms of engagement and what did they get from their investment besides the traditional measure with the amount of money spent and the reflect of that in terms of sales, revenue, and company transactions.

Finally, it is important to clarify that building brand awareness, increasing customer perception and loyalty, and improving customer engagement and enhancing the customer organizational relationship certainly creates a long-term effect in keeping old customers and attracting new potential ones and eventually, translates into increase in sales and increase in the return on investment (Barker et al, 2013).

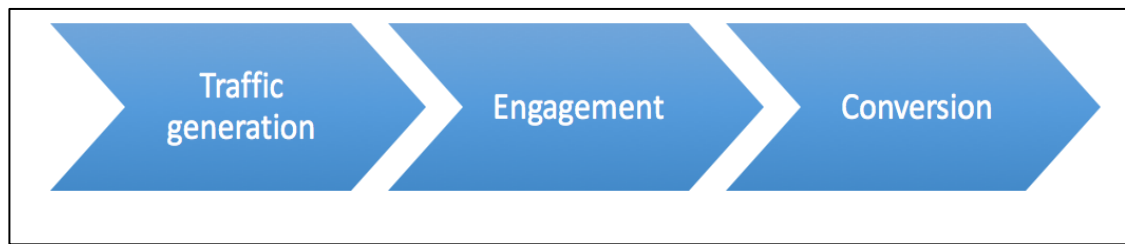
Summary

To sum up, B.E.S.T formula (Pulizzi and Barret, 2009) and the Four Pillar Theory (Tucker, 2013) introduces how to plan a content marketing strategy as the first step in the content marketing strategy creation, it is done by identifying content marketing goals, the importance of integrating understanding the connection between the content marketing goal and the overall existing company objective and marketing department goal, segmenting the audience and targeting them based on their characteristics, demographics and interests, characteristics are important in order to know what content types and context to include and aim to attract them, demographics aim to perfectly fit the content in the place and time the audience use and like most and interests aims to offering an attracting content to increase customer engagement. The next step is to evaluate, measure and analyze marketing channels and choose the best one that is

suitable, feasible and fits bets with the targeted audience, every single type of content is a channel by its own, each one have its' advantages and disadvantages as discussed above and therefore each type should be measured, evaluated and handled separately, content is divided into three categories as discussed by (Nguyen, 2013) and they should be helpful, entertaining, authentic, relevant, timely, branded, surprising, positive, actionable and intense as discussed by (Tanton, Albee, Senic, and Bowles, 2013). After that, content should be adaptable, flexible and user-friendly to run smoothly and easily on the agreed upon channel, companies should understand that each channel has its' own environment, characteristics and audiences. Afterwards, it is the time to execute the content marketing strategy and use the most feasible and fruitful tactics, it is important to note that multiple tactics can be used and its' better to use multiple ones in order to get better outcome. Finally, companies should keep an eye on tracking, measuring and controlling by the KPIs (key performance indicators) discussed above with the illustration in order to stay on the right track and quickly resolve any issue, (Barker et al, 2013) and (Snow, 2011) also explained how to measure the return on investment, its' importance and when to expect it.

Measurement and analytics options in normal marketing and digital marketing, especially content marketing differ a lot, (Chatterjee, Hoffman and Novak, 2003) suggests that measuring consumer reactions are easily tracked and shaped. While (Deshpande, 2014) argues that there is no common ground and agreed upon measurement for digital and content marketing and this makes it a hard to do job, the measurement and analytical framework often shares a common metrics to be measured like consumption, retention, sharing, engagement, marketing impacts, sales impact, and other metrics bound to cost and production, The (Digital Marketing Institute, 2016) has suggested some metrics for measuring and analytics regarding consumption and rates, while (Saleh, 2016) illustrated the simplest understandable framework for measuring which consists of three parts; Traffic generation, Engagement, and Conversion and it will be discussed below.

Figure 4.15: Framework for measuring content



Source: 13 content marketing metrics to track for optimum conversions (Saleh, 2016).

This framework is relying upon the content life-cycle which makes it more applicable to companies which are new to content marketing, at first there won't be any traffic numbers to rely on getting results and therefore it's significant to concentrate on generating traffic and after that on engagement which will eventually lead into conversion.

In order to excel in traffic generation and fetch new audience to the site, it is important to bring and attract unique visitors, page views, backlinks and source of traffic (Saleh, 2016). The larger the number of visitors creates the better and most appealing metrics, on the other side, it is critical to understand the importance of this measurement but not to over exaggerate its' importance which often leads to bad decisions for page views is influenced by many variables and therefore the number might be deceitful (Saleh, 2016).

(Thelwall, 2001) identified backlinks as a link for a specific website, backlinks are similar to SEO (search engine optimization) and they are considered as a way to increase the possibility in showing your website when using search engines, backlinks can be reported when misused or lead to unrelatable content.

Traffic resource is also an important way to learn audiences' characteristics, personality and habits from different various channels in order to better fit your content to become more effective and stand out.

After that, when traffic generation starts to increase, it is important to measure their engagement and try to convert viewers and visitors into readers that are interested in the content or the company regularly. Engagement measurement ways are; bounce rates, time spent on the website, total number of new and returning visitors, comments and shares (Saleh, 2016).

According to (Google Analytics, 2016) bounce rates are the percentage of a single-webpage session, in other words, it means the amount of time the visitor visits the website and leaves it without further actions or checking, bounce rate is important in deciding the quality and usefulness of the content, for example, high bounce rate means that the content is not so interesting and therefore visitors leave the website fast so content should be improved, while a high number of returning visitor indicates that the companies' content is interesting, valuable, meets the audiences' needs and doing the right job, finally, it is important to constantly keep evaluating this metric as it serves as an indicator for good content and creates an insight for future content (Saleh,2016).

Another metric suggested by (Holliman and Rowley, 2014) is shareability, when the readers view the content and share it, it means that the content have the virality potential, number of shares is an important indicator for successful content, the motivation for sharing content relies on four motivations discussed by (Ho and Dempsey,2010); need for belonging, need for being individualistic, need for personal growth and need for feeling selfless. (Saleh, 2016) adds, sharing is the measurement of emotional move and action in readers mind, but commenting is more important as he considers it as a bigger show of engagement impact and leads to starting a conversation or a discussion.

The last step illustrates how to turn readers and viewers into customers, (Saleh,2016) discussed four measurement techniques in order to measure this step; opt-in rates, number of leads, ROI (return on investment), and CTR (click through rate), opt-in is a choice that a company offers to the readers while reading the content like an option to subscribe to the companies' newsletter or signing up to get some additional information relating to content the readers are viewing, while CTR(click through rate) is an action button usually used in display advertising and considered as a content marketing

measurement tool, there are many example on CTRs like the buy button or read more, CTR is important because it measure the amount of interests generated by readers and is a sign for the content quality, and finally the number of leads is the number of readers that are in the conversion phase and gives the company a chance to track their amount and their quality (Saleh, 2016).

Below there are some additional metrics and measurement that can be used to measure the content marketing goals for each objective decided by the company.

Brand awareness could be measured with; SocialMention.com website, press controlling and monitoring services and the offline and online measure of brand awareness, while becoming a content leader could be measured by the linkbacks, number of subscribers, comments, amount of engagement, publications, quotations and presentations in events and conferences. Customer acquisition could be measured with the number of new registers in the emailing list, newsletters subscribers, new clients generated by customer relationship management. Website traffic could be measure by the number of clicks, unique users, repeat visitors, feeds, trackbacks, comments, and time spend on the website. Engagement could be measure by the time spend on the website, participation in conferences and events, and customer feedbacks. Loyalty could be measured by the percentage of returning customers, time spent on the website, repeating visits, and customers ranking. Lead generation could be measure by the number of leads, their quality, sales, velocity, cost per lead, and cost per sale. And finally, sales could be measured by the amount of monthly income in general and from products, weekly income, amount of transactions made in a period of time, and the exact amount of sales made through leads.

5. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

5.1 REVIEW OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Customer experience is a feeling that creates a sentiment on the customers' mind that lasts for a significant amount of time and creates an effect on the customer's company relationship, emotions are the key point here and is considered as one of the most important factors for creating a profitable effective customer experience.

(Soudagar et al., 2012) have defined customer experience as the sum of meetings, visions and feelings that customers form from the company's operations. Customer experience is usually derived from an interaction done between a customer and an organization, it is the accumulated mix of the business performance, emotions and sentiments measured against the customer expectation in the time of contact (Shaw and Ivens, 2002). Customer experience is also defined as a qualitative aspect of the interaction between an individual and a business or a product or a service at any time (Watkinson, 2013). While, in my opinion the broad definition of customer experience is discussed by (Gentile, Spiller and Noci, 2007) "the customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provokes a reaction. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels. Its' evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer's expectations and the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points" (Gentile, Spiller and Noci, 2007).

This definition conceive the multidimensional characteristic of customer experience which are but not limited to, relational components, effective, sensory, cognitive and physical (Gentile, Spiller and Noci, 2007), it also emphasis the importance of emotional and rational features of customer experience, furthermore, it mentions the moments of contact or touch-points that are used and in every stage of customer experience like pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase experiences (Davis and Dunn, 2002). Finally, this definition enlightens the importance of measuring customer experience by comparing it

with prior customer expectation alongside with their actual experience in diverse touch-points.

Other definitions stated above also included some important terms to be discussed such as experience that is characterized as a subjective and internal to the customer, enlarging scope of touch-points by stating the direct and indirect contacts and it is important to note that all touch-points are important to deliver an ultimate customer experience because the brand can impact or be impacted by direct and indirect touch-points, therefore, it is crucial for companies to identify the critical key touch-points and their act accordingly.

Context is also an important part to deliver satisfactory customer experience, (Pullman and Gross, 2004) defined context as an experience that occurs when a customer has any sensation or knowledge created by a service provider”. In this definition, context appears to be the main drive for physical and relationships where customers interact and interpret their sentiments of the physical environment and service facilitators. Therefore, context design is also important in order to stir emotion to increase customer engagement in a unique, meaningful and memorable way (Pine and Gilmore,1999).

In order to deliver an effective and profitable customer experience, companies should personalize their products, services and experiences to satisfy customers (Anderson et al., 2003). Companies should also calculate the return on investing in customer experience in terms of feasibility, innovations, the resources available and the increase in satisfaction brought to customers (Bosjwik et al., 2012). As (Shaw, 2007) discussed, customer experience is the sum of experience of activities of the company. Therefore, it can be described as the sum of interpretations and perception people are feeling and not a rational action, customers experience are affected by their motions, sentiments and subconscious mind and here comes the dilemma for companies in forecasting and predicting the customer experience in advance while on the other side, they may still have control over the experiences since they are their creators and proffers (Soudagar et al., 2012).

Customer experience can also be a very successful way to create competitive advantage for companies, in our days, many companies are giving more attention to marketing,

customer service, training personnel, distribution and production lines. While when it comes to customer experience, it is almost totally forgotten and is only identified as a customer value (Shaw, 2007). When it comes to customer experience as a strategy, companies need to focus on the efficient use of foundational and disruptive technologies alongside with having a well-structured strategy, skilled human resources, leadership support and organizational chain of command (Soudagar et al,2012). When those elements are being considered and well applied it can gain the company a competitive advantage and allow them to better forecast their results, outperform their competitors, and increase revenue (Shaw, 2007). While, on the other side, (Soudagar, 2012) argued that using the right technological tools and infrastructure, being constant, and sustain it is the key for excelling in customer experience. As for (Shaw & Ivens, 2002), the most important factor in customer experience is the customers' perception about the companies' offerings, as in his defense, the main influencing quality service for the customer is his past experience and what they hear regarding it, (Shaw & Ivens, 2002) also adds some other ways in which a company can better influence such as the operational quality related to companies' functions like their attitude towards workers, company culture and environment, the service minded behavior, and the physical quality which is regarded as a technical solution

The challenging part of customer experience is knowing and identifying what the customer is really feeling, therefore a company should plan and design the experience it wishes to give the customer and how it wants to make him feel, furthermore, it is important to deliver the same experience constantly than just focusing on delivering a one-time great customer experience (Soudagar et al., 2012).

As discussed above, emotions, feelings and sentiments are the main driving factors for customer experience, therefore, it is important to study the structure of customer experience, (Shaw et al., 2010) has studied the structure and discussed three main parts of customer experience structure, the first part is stimulus which is seen as the total customer experience. The second part is the response which is the result of the experience the stimuli has offered whether it be subconscious, emotional or rational, and the final part is the effect which is the outcome the company wishes to gain through the

customer experience they have created like increasing customer satisfaction, trust, increasing the levels of spend and attitude (Shaw et al., 2010). The researchers concluded a relation between the emotional and subconscious experience with the value whether it increases it or destroys it, they also discussed the possibility to point out the specific elements of personal physical experience affected and related emotions, therefore their research resulted in a possibility of identifying the experience gap which is the difference between what the company is offering and what do customers really want (Shaw et al., 2010).

The experience gap was further discussed by (Shaw and Ivens, 2002) for the importance it entails, the researchers argued that experiences, expectations and corporate image are the main base for delivering a high-quality service, as the figure below further explains, outstanding customer experience is delivered by frequently surpassing customers' expectations whether it be physical or emotional.

5.2 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE EMOTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

The experience is an instant, tightly linked to an event with a various complex emotion that creates and leaves an impression and symbolize and represent a value for the person within the context of a situation (Boswijk et al., 2012). While emotions are a way for processing information (Boswijk et al., 2012) and passing feelings (Shaw, 2007), they are the power behind building trust and bound people together (Coughter, 2012).

Emotions were further discussed by (Watkinson, 2013) as a key point and a corner stone for building better customer experience and listed the most common emotions that may take place during the customer experience as discussed below in the table below.

Table 5.2: Negative emotions and principles at work

Negative Emotions	Principles at work
Anger	Caused by the loss of control, incorrect expectation and blocked pursuit of a goal
Annoyance	Caused by a hold pursuit of a goal or a overwhelming excessive effort task, similar to anger but in a lower level
Anxiety	Tightly related to stress
Apprehension	Related to the stress factors, uncertainty may be caused by redundancy of alternatives and choices, and competence
Boredom	Related to functions of efforts, happens when there is a delay and holds in stimulation and progress and caused by the time on task
Disappointment	A part and a component of stress
Distraction	A part and a component of stress
Doubt	Related to stress factors and unpredicted expectations like feedback
Embarrassment	Related to competence and caused by an invasion of social pleasure
Frustration	Caused by errors in results, and blocked progress to a goal
Neglect	A violation of social pleasure
Regret	Failing to meet expectations

Source: The Ten Principles behind Great Customer Experiences (Watkinson, 2013).

Table 5.3: Positive emotions and principles at work

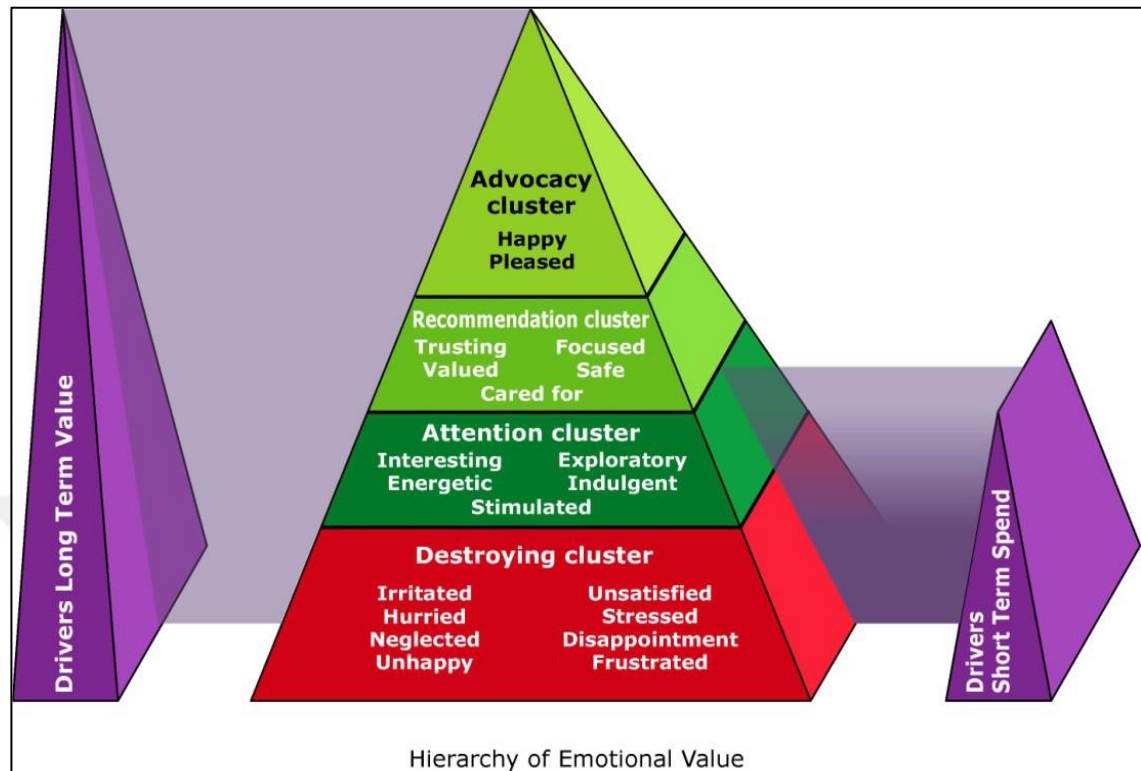
Positive Emotions	Principles at work
Acceptance	Happens when expectations are accurate
Calmness	The Absence of stress
Delight	Happens when expectations are exceeding the perception, highly related to pleasure
Excitement	Highly related to expectations, highly stimulation situation,
Interest	A source of pleasure, things that help achieve goals
Pride	Strongly related to social, status, and feeling in control
Relaxation	The absence of stress
Satisfaction	An outcome of the results of achieving goals
Positive Surprise	Occurred when expectations are exceeded
Trust	Permanently meeting expectations

Source: The Ten Principles behind Great Customer Experiences (Watkinson, 2013).

The positive and Negative emotions and principles at work is important when planning how workers receive information and knowledge about customer experience, they are also important in facilitating the recognition of emotions that may occur in various situations, the tables above serve as a road map to strengthening customer experience, better controlling it, and efficiently analyzed (Soudagar et al., 2012) argues that in order to better strengthen and control a good customer experience, companies should also provide positive memory traces measurements and workers should recognize them.

Another measurement tool or methodology was introduced by (Shaw et al., 2010) called as the Emotional Signature®, its' main purpose is to give direction and provide better customer experience, the Emotional Signature® was tested on customer experience and concluded that emotions may drive or destroy the value and brand image as discussed below.

Figure 5.16: The hierarchy of an emotional value



Source: Customer Experience, Future Trends and Insights (Shaw, C., Dibeehi, Q. & Walden, S., 2010).

The hierarchy of emotional values presented by (Shaw et al, 2010) have four parts, the first part is the negative emotions that demolish values, the second part is the attention emotions that plays role in making something interesting and appealing, the third part is the recommendation emotions that plays the on the side of the touch and feel experiences, and the last part is the advocacy emotions that leads and highly related to the complete satisfaction (Shaw et al., 2010).

The operational and physical qualities which are sub-parts of the expectations, corporate image and expectations are the corner stone to providing the quality of service as demonstrated above. Outstanding customer experiences are made by regularly exceeding the customers' emotional and physical expectations (Shaw and Ivens, 2002).

Satisfaction is achieved when quality exceeds customers' expectations, it also helps maintaining profitable relationships and create new ones, for this part to be achieved companies should build a positive brand awareness (Timm, 2008).

As for expectations, (Shaw and Ivens, 2002) argues that every consumer has a different expectation and therefore companies shouldn't condone customer experience, the researchers add that it's not necessary to add additional costs to make better customer experience, as they explain that a smile or a greeting for customers are workable and feasible to create better customer experience.

As discussed above, the values, quality and expectations are important to create and enhance customer experience, to better understand customers, and offer a better experience, therefore the companies should execute and plan an efficient and effective customer experience management strategy and be aware of the importance of the emotions and feeling the customers may go through, this can be achieved by the customer journey introduced by (Arussy, 2010) where he discussed a comprehensive view for the customer experience, this map includes three main parts to help any company create and build a better customer experience and help in the process of planning and executing customer experience management strategy. The first part is the Assessment part which is evaluating the priorities and quality of the experience, it includes the physical attributes which is the importance versus the satisfaction and the emotional attributes which are the knowledge, engagement and willingness. The second part is the alignment which is evaluating and knowing how these experiences are fitting in the consumers' lives, it consists of the brand promise which are the value and promise fulfilment and the lifestyle fit which are the difference between the consumer values and the companies' values. The third and last part is the action which is evaluating the results of the experience, it consists of personal loyalty which can be measured by the repeat consumers and the expansion of the business, and the network loyalty which is the motivation and willingness to comment (Arussy, 2010).

In order to excel and master those points, companies alongside with their employees should know and understand the emotional relationship with their costumers, they should also acknowledge that this relationship should be consistent to forecast future actions and measure the success of it, the customer experience should be regularly evaluated and corrected when needed to motivate positive actions (Arussy, 2010). (Olenius, 2012) has also discussed the importance of customer experience on increasing the companies' reliability when using activities and stories behind the customer experience practices and creating a synergy between them.

5.3 ONLINE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Because my thesis is mainly about content marketing, it is therefore important to discuss the online customer experience, its' related literature, definition and dimensions to better understand how customer experience is fitted in the digital marketing sector and especially in the content marketing tools which are used online like blogs, online videos, e-newsletter, etc...

First of all, it is important to discuss the difference between online and offline customer experience in order to better understand the concept. (Rose, Hair and Clark, 2011) have identified some of the major difference between offline and online customer experience and argued that the main difference are mainly regarding the level of personal contact which they argue is higher in offline context while lower in online context, the informative provision which is more intense in offline context while being more intensive in the online context, brand presentation which is a various different tangible devices and elements in offline context like staff and presentations while in the online context it mainly relies on presented audio and visuals, and finally, the period time of interaction which is controlled by the company in the offline context while it's not controlled in the online context and can be created through interaction by anyone anywhere.

The main driver for the online customer experience is the internet as it is the most powerful channel for information access, social interaction and exchange of products (Chong, 2004). (Shobeiri, Mazaheri and Laroche, 2018) have argued a positive relationship between an exceptional online experience and the customer online behavior with the company.

One of the most important and early online customer experience researchers were (Hoffman and Novak, 1996), they presented a proposal on the concept of understanding customer behavior on the web for the purpose of understanding the online experience nature and their proposal composed of some of the most discussed papers, (Hoffman and Novak, 1996) discussed some characteristics of the online network navigation which are; characterized by a sequence of responses by machine interactivity, having a decreased self-consciousness and reinforcement, and being enjoyable (Hoffman and

Novak, 1996). On the other side, (McLean and Wilson, 2016) argued that consumers do care about the time period as a result from a research they did and concluded that the perceived time spent on the internet creates an influence on the customers' online experience.

(Hair et al., 2009) defined Online Customer Experience as the consumers' impression which is developed and comes from the online customer-organization interactions. Those interactions are significant various activities like searching for information about a product, subscribing to e-newsletter or informational services, and buying products or using online services. These activities are the way to create interactions that leads to forming perceptions of the overall online customer experience (Hair et al., 2009).

(Rose, Clark, et al., 2012) described the online customer experience as a psychological state created during and after using the website, they also noted the importance of identifying the environment, antecedents, consequences, and the result of online customer experience in order to create an efficient full online experience. As for (Chaffey, 2016) they imposed the quality of online customer experience as a quality that relies on a set of emotional and rational factors formed when using the company's website and service which in return influence the customer perception towards an online brand. Moreover, (Shobeiri et al., 2018) discussed the importance of the culture and its' effect to be in mind when creating an online customer experience, and for (McLean, 2017), the researcher imposed the importance of using and applying the best suited aesthetics, user friendly ease of use, customization, interactivity actions, enjoyment and flow to make it more affective and appealing to the customer and create a better online customer experience.

According to (Hair et al., 2011), there are three main driving factors for online experience that explains and summarize how customers interact on the web across some various range of activities, the first driving factor is the website quality which can be mastered through identifying various factors that affect the website performance positively, the second is the online customer behavior which is tightly linked to the online search activities, search engine optimizations and online purchases, and finally the online service experience which is the key to delivering a significant amount of

online services like online banking, travel bookings, distance and e-learning programs, and news services. It is important to note that these factors are not the only factors that may affect the online customer experience and there are significant other factors and components that may influence the online customer experience (McLean, 2017).

The online shopping experience (OSE) was identified by (Trevinal and Stenger, 2014) as a complex experience that customers go through their online shopping phase in online and offline contexts like the place, time, companion presence, etc., it is also a subjective and holistic process that results from the interaction between consumers and the shopping practices like the tools and routines, and the online environment like the website, customer reviews and social media. While (Klaus, 2013) has presented a similar framework of the online customer service experience (OCSE) which discussed the customer in the purchasing and online context, (Klaus, 2013) has identified the online customer service experience as dimensions and stages of the experience in different levels of the customers' journey and the mental perception of the consumer created by the interaction with the online company's website and some other functional and psychological dimensions factors. The functional dimension is mainly linked to the technical performance of the website like the ease of use, communication, usability, interactivity and the product presence, while the psychological dimension factor is like the trust, value, context familiarity and often valued and measured by being compared to the offline channels.

Finally, and due to the technological development and advancement, the online customer experience doesn't only consist of the online purchasing session and action, online customer experience stretches further to entail the reviews of the customers, using information and searching services, as (Cho and Park, 2004) explained that online customers are also seen as users of information utilized and derived from an online environment as a medium for searching for information. Other researchers have followed this methodology like (McLean and Wilson, 2016) by adding the importance of the diverse dimensions of the online services and online shopping in creating the online customer experience, therefore online customer experience entails a larger scale than only online shopping but also adds the online customer experience in using the online

services, online information and information search that in return creates impressions and perceptions to the customer and leads to an efficient and effective online customer experience.

5.4 ONLINE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DIMENSIONS

The online customer experience is built from various online environments from activities like the online shopping and the online services usage, these dimensions are listed in regard to the online experience research made by (Trevinal and Stenger, 2014) that consist of the physical, pragmatics, ideological and social dimensions, while the attributes are derived from the research of (Klaus, 2013) that plays as roles for enhancing or decreasing the online activities.

The first dimension is the physical dimension which implies the aspects and features perceived by sense, the physical dimensions are created therefor by the feelings and sensations of the online context like the aesthetics, ease to use, visual design and ergonomics (Trevinal and Stenger, 2014). Physical dimensions occur from the customers evaluations and perceptions from their online experience when engaging with a company's website and provider resource (Lemke, Clark, and Wilson, 2011). The physical dimension main key success point is done by matching the needs and expectations of the consumer with an efficient useful, usable and desirable design to deliver a positive fruitful online customer experience.

The physical dimension functions as a part of the online service experience that is linked to the technical performance in an efficient way to deliver the needs and wants for the customers in the best way (Klaus, 2013), he adds, the physical dimensions attributes and parts are mainly concerned with the functionality and usability which are the key for making the customers feeling comfortable surfing the website, product presence which helps the consumer in assessing the products in a virtual environment and help the purchase process and intentions, social presence which mirror the virtual engagement and interaction with other online customers, interactivity which clarify the communication among the consumer and the company by the medium under examination and communications which lowers the potential risks of e-commerce.

Another important aspect in the physical dimension is the time, which is the perception the consumer had by the time spent in the online experience, the time aspect implicates the notion of the distorted time which is the uncontrolled feeling of losing time when being online, and the time management which means here the will to control the online experience time period (Trevinal and Stenger, 2014).

It is important to also discuss the flow on the web concept in the physical dimension as it as the main driver for an effective and positive online experience that mainly consists and can be achieved by having and creating a high level of control, skills, challenge and focused attention as described by (Novak et al., 2000).

The second dimension is the ideological dimension which consists of the values and the symbolic significations as a part of the online customer experience (Trevinal and Stenger, 2014), therefore the ideological dimension consists of three parts that are the orientation, rituals and values.

The ideological dimension entails the consumer orientations that are the values that are translated into feelings and sentiments which are also the functional, as known as the hedonic principles, and sensible principles as known as the utilitarian principles, (Poyry, Parvinen and Malmivaara, 2013) defined the utilitarian principle as the behavior that is goal-oriented and rational and firmly linked and connected to effectiveness and pragmatic value, while the hedonic principle as the behavior for fun, enjoyment, play and experiences. Hedonic principles are most visual and seen in the social media platforms and they don't require a buying action, while the utilitarian principle is more solid in terms of buying and are mostly seen in the community pages and blogs and therefor results in a buying action from the company.

The next part in the ideological dimension is the values which may include but not limited to trust and privacy, (Rose et al., 2011) highlighted that trust is low in the online environment because of the little personal contact and anonymity of the internet, therefore, this also creates a risk regarding the buying decision. Trust is a psychological

value that affects the consumers and relates to the experiences and expectation if the website will act efficiently, be open and fair to the customer (Klaus, 2013).

The last part of the ideological dimension is the rituals, they are identified by (Trevinal and Stenger, 2014) as the actions and interactions that are described as a successive process that is repeated regularly, regarding online environments, rituals are like surfing the web online from home for various purposes or doing multiple things while online, rituals are related to consumers' culture and perceptions that are socially accepted and can be frequent or irregular (Trevinal and Stenger, 2014).

The third dimension is the pragmatic dimension, this dimension mainly consists of two parts that are related to the routines and the online tools, the pragmatic dimension is a practice base dimension and contemplate the use of online tools and the online shopping practice that after a while becomes and creates a routine, these routine may consist of some of the shopping routine habits in terms of search or purchase decisions and are organic for enhancing the creation of the online consumer experience.

The pragmatic dimension is a reflection of the annexation of the online environment by the supported routine like using different ways of surfing the website like using bookmarks, using search engines or other users reviews and comments about a specific product from multiple online resources (Trevinal and Stenger, 2014). Furthermore, (Klaus, 2013) has discussed further the online social media effect on the online customer experience from the interaction between users and shoppers through reviews or comments, this tool has helped the customers to bypass the risks, uncertainties and lack of physical presence and strengthened trust and lead to better experience.

The last dimension is the social dimension which is composed of making decisions and being affected by the total online experience of other consumers, the social dimension is mainly about the decision a consumer make in effect of the interaction from online social networks with friends or users, the decision made here is influenced by relying on other user review, comment or rating. The social dimension can also be offline when getting reviews from family or friends in everyday life (Trevinal and Stenger, 2014).

While, on the other side, (Klaus, 2013) regards the social dimension as a dimension that only considers friends and family of the consumers and doesn't include any other anonymous users' opinion.

The table below is a sum of the four dimensions that creates and affects the online customer experience adapted from (Trevinal and Stenger, 2014) explained above.

Table 5.4: Conceptual Framework of the Online Customer Experience

Dimensions	Components	Characteristics
Physical Dimension	Time	Time Management Time Distortion
	Senses	Ergonomics Esthetics
Ideological Dimension	Orientation	Hedonic / Utilitarian
	Rituals	Frame of the Experience
	Values	Trust & Privacy Issues
Pragmatic Dimension	Patronage Routines	Ways to Browse
	Online Tools	Practices in use of the Tools
Social Dimension	Socialization	Interaction in Networks Offline Presence
	Decision Aid	Online Reviews & Ratings Offline Aid

Source: Toward a conceptualization of the online shopping experience (Trevinal & Stenger, 2014).

6. RESEARCH PART

This chapter represents the methodology of this study. In addition, presents the research instrument which is adopted to collect the data required to answer the research questions. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the data analysis approach followed.

6.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

This research mainly aims to examine the effect of content marketing in improving online customer experience, in addition this research aims also to find the effect of content marketing on customer perception, loyalty, and satisfaction.

6.2 RESEARCH APPROACH AND STRATEGY

This research uses the analytical descriptive approach to examine the role of content marketing on the factors of; customer loyalty, satisfaction, design, personalization, experience, engagement, and perception.

There are two parts for this approach, the first one is data descriptive through frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The second part is finding the relationships between different variables and reach to results that answer the research questions.

The main strategy to answer the research questions is quantitative survey based on a questionnaire distributed to customers.

6.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

This paper depends mainly on a questionnaire as main instrument to answer the research question. The questionnaire divided into three sections, the first one is for demographic information's, and the second section contain questions about the content marketing, while the third question used Likert scale questions to measure a quantitative score for

the seven factors; customer loyalty, satisfaction, design, personalization, experience, engagement, and perception.

6.4 DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND SAMPLING

This research mainly depends on a primary data which collected through a questionnaire that distributed on 80 individuals in Palestine.

The sample of this study was selected by the method of simple random sample, where the questionnaire distributed on 80 individuals in Palestine.

6.5 FINDINGS

The characteristic of the study sample is as following:

The table 6.5 below shows that about 38% of the sample are students, while 34% of them are workers, and the rest (29%) has other professions (mainly unemployed).

Table 6.5: The distribution of sample according to profession

	Frequency	Percent
student	30	37.5
Worker	27	33.8
Other	23	28.8
Total	80	100.0

The table 6.6 below shows that the majority of the sample (91%) was buying online or influencing by an online content in the past year.

Table 6.6: buying anything online or influencing by an online content in the past year

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	73	91.3
No	7	8.8
Total	80	100.0

The table 6.7 below shows that the distribution of sample according to gender for those who bought anything online or influenced by an online content in the past year is about 53% males and 47% females.

Table 6.7: The Distribution of sample according to Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	39	53.4
Female	34	46.6
Total	73	100.0

The table 6.8 below shows that the distribution of sample according to age for those who bought anything online or influenced by an online content in the past year is that 34% are from 18 to 25 years old, 34% are from 26 to 35 years old, 19% are from 36 to 45 years old, and 14% are more than 45 years old. In addition, there was 8 individuals from (73) don't answer the question of the age.

Table 6.8: The Distribution of sample according to Age

	Frequency	Percent
18- 25 years old	22	33.8
26-35 years old	22	33.8
36-45 years old	12	18.5
More than 45 years old	9	13.8
Total	65	100.0

The table 6.9 below shows that the distribution of sample according to family status for those who bought anything online or influenced by an online content in the past year is that 39% are living with a partner, 45% are living with a parent(s), and 16% are living alone. In addition there was 2 individuals from (73) don't answer the question of the family status.

Table 6.9: The Distribution of sample according to family status

	Frequency	Percent
Living alone	11	15.5
Living with a partner	28	39.4
Living with parent(s)	32	45.1
Total	71	100.0

The table 6.10 below shows that the distribution of sample according to monthly income for those who bought anything online or influenced by an online content in the past year is that 38% have a monthly income form (0) to (\$ 200), 19% have a monthly income form (\$ 801) to (\$ 1000), 14% have a monthly income form (\$ 1001) to (\$ 2000), 11% have a monthly income more than (\$ 2000), 10% have a monthly income form (\$ 501) to (\$ 800), and 8% have a monthly income form (\$ 201) to (\$ 500), I addition there was 10 individuals from (73) don't answer the question of the monthly income.

Table 6.10: The Distribution of sample according to the total monthly income

	Frequency	Percent
0 – 200 USD	24	38.1
201- 500 USD	5	7.9
501 – 800 USD	6	9.5
801 – 1000 USD	12	19.0
1001 – 2000 USD	9	14.3
2001 USD or more	7	11.1
Total	63	100.0

6.6 QUESTIONNAIRE MEASUREMENT CRITERIA

The measurement of the main factors of the study mainly depend on a statement in the form of Likert scale questions, which taking the following responses:

Table 6.11: Likert scale responses.

Response	Scale
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Slightly disagree	3
Neutral	4
Slightly agree	5
Agree	6
Strongly Agree	7

In the evaluate of responses, the study will depend on the following correction key that divide the mean of responses into 5 divisions as table 6.12 below:

Table 6.12: Correction key results.

Mean	Result (Degree)
5.9 – 7.0	Very high
4.8– 5.8	High
3.6 – 4.7	Medium
2.5 - 3.5	Low
1.0 – 2.4	Very low

6.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The study depends on the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the questionnaire data, and to perform the following statistical statistics:

- i. Frequencies, percentages, and means for descriptive analysis.
- ii. Correlation between main factors and their corresponding statements for validity test.
- iii. Cronbach Alpha test for reliability.
- iv. ANOVA test to examine the relationship between marketing content and customer experience variables.

- v. Multiple regression analysis to test the effect of marketing content on customer experience with taking into consideration the demographic variables.

6.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

6.8.1 Validity Test

The validity test for the instrument was performed to examine the extent to which the scores from a measure represent the variable they are intended to. This research tests the validity through two methods, the first one was through show the questionnaire for specialist judges in the study scope and taking their notes into consideration for final draft of the questionnaire.

The second method for the validity test is statistical; by estimate the correlation between each factor that was measured by the questionnaire and each statement that was used to estimate that factor. I all correlations are statistically significant, then this will be as an indicator for the validity of research instrument. The following tables are the validity tests for the seven factors of loyalty, satisfaction, design, personalization, experience, engagement, and perception.

A. Validity test for measurement of the loyalty factor

According to table 6.13 below, all correlation between statements and loyalty factor are relatively high and significantly at 1% level of significance since all p-values are less than 1%. So, we can conclude that there is a validity in the loyalty measurement.

Table 6.13: Pearson correlation between loyalty factor and corresponding statements

Statement	Pearson correlation	sig (p-value)
The company website content effected my loyalty in their products	.812**	0.000
I visit the company's website sometimes only because of the content they provide	.774**	0.000
I consider myself loyal to this company	.619**	0.000
I say positive things about this website to other People	.760**	0.000
I recommend this website to someone who seeks my advice about similar topic	.624**	0.000
I definitely consider this company as my first choice to shop for similar products/services	.745**	0.000

B. Validity test for measurement of the satisfaction factor

According to table 6.14 below, all correlation between statements and satisfaction factor are relatively high and significantly at 1% level of significance since all p-values are less than 1%. So, we can conclude that there is a validity in the satisfaction measurement.

Table 6.14: Pearson correlation between satisfaction factor and corresponding statements

Statement	Pearson correlation	sig (p-value)
The website provided interesting information	.785**	0.000
Content Marketing tools increased my satisfaction	.686**	0.000
I find the information I was looking for in the company's website	.695**	0.000
It was fun to surf this website	.658**	0.000
I was satisfied with my experience with this website	.525**	0.000
I encourage my friends and relatives to visit this website	.696**	0.000
I think I did the right decision to surf this website	.536**	0.000
I feel bad about my decision to surf this website	.639**	0.000
If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't buy anything from this company	.721**	0.000

C. Validity test for measurement of the design factor

According to table 6.15 below, all correlation between statements and design factor are relatively high and significantly at 1% level of significance since all p-values are less than 1%. So, we can conclude that there is a validity in the design measurement.

Table 6.15: Pearson correlation between design factor and corresponding statements

Statement	Pearson correlation	sig (p-value)
It was easy to navigate through the website	.646**	0.000
The website was visually appealing	.628**	0.000
The website appearance was professional	.753**	0.000
It was easy to find what I need on the website	.812**	0.000
The information on the website is structured well	.884**	0.000

D. Validity test for measurement of the personalization factor

According to table 6.16 below, all correlation between statements and personalization factor are relatively high and significantly at 1% level of significance since all p-values are less than 1%. So, we can conclude that there is a validity in the personalization measurement.

Table 6.16: Pearson correlation between personalization factor and corresponding statements

Statement	Pearson correlation	sig (p-value)
The Content was personalized and customized for my experience	.810**	0.000
The website offers publications about topics I'm interested about	.796**	0.000
The website allowed customization services according to my preference	.705**	0.000
The website stored my preferences and offered content and information based on my preferences	.839**	0.000

E. Validity test for measurement of the experience factor

According to table 6.17 below, all correlation between statements and experience factor are relatively high and significantly at 1% level of significance since all p-values are less than 1%. So, we can conclude that there is a validity in the experience measurement.

Table 6.17: Pearson correlation between experience factor and corresponding statements

Statement	Pearson correlation	sig (p-value)
The website was convenient to use	.561**	0.000
The website provided good customer support service	.746**	0.000
The website content enriched my experience	.875**	0.000
Company website has useful interactive features (like being able to view the product from all angles, building the product I want, or trying on items virtually).	.869**	0.000
I get emotionally touched by the content published on the company's website	.863**	0.000
The website was fast	.654**	0.000

F. Validity test for measurement of the engagement factor

According to table 6.18 below, all correlation between statements and engagement factor are relatively high and significantly at 1% level of significance since all p-values are less than 1%. So, we can conclude that there is a validity in the engagement measurement.

Table 6.18: Pearson correlation between engagement factor and corresponding statements

Statement	Pearson correlation	sig (p-value)
The company website included a lot of content to read and engage with	.514**	0.000
The website provided an opportunity to read the reviews about the product from other customers	.613**	0.000
The website gives the opportunity to connect with other customers interested in the product via a blog or a community	.792**	0.000
I recommend people to visit this website for the useful information they provide	.652**	0.000
The website provided an opportunity to share information and my experience with the products with others using social networks such as Facebook or Twitter	.694**	0.000
I am regularly visiting this website	.750**	0.000
I choose to subscribe to the company's website publications	.751**	0.000

G. Validity test for measurement of the perception factor

According to table 6.19 below, all correlation between statements and perception factor are relatively high and significantly at 1% level of significance since all p-values are less than 1%. So, we can conclude that there is a validity in the perception measurement.

Table 6.19: Pearson correlation between perception factor and corresponding statements

Statement	Pearson correlation	sig (p-value)
Company website provided me with enough information to make a rational purchase decision	.483**	0.000
I don't care about the price tags as I consider myself attached to this company's content offerings	.738**	0.000
I consider the company as the market leader	.770**	0.000
I consider the company innovative	.732**	0.000
The company cares about enlightening the readers more than increasing their sales	.832**	0.000

6.8.2 Reliability Test

The Reliability test aims to examine the consistency of a measurement. This research depends on Cronbach alpha statistic to test the reliability, where the measure will be statistically reliable if the Cronbach alpha is great than 0.6.

According to table 6.20 below, we can conclude that all measures of study (the seven factors) are reliable, snice the Cronbach's Alpha for all of them is relatively high (more than 0.6).

Table 6.20: Cronbach's Alpha test for measures

Measure	Cronbach's Alpha	# of statements
Loyalty	0.813	6
Satisfaction	0.836	9
Design	0.800	5
Personalization	0.797	4
Experience	0.855	6
Engagement	0.798	7
Perception	0.754	5

7. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter of the study presents the present and discuss the main results, and mainly answer the main questions for this research through ANOVA test and multiple regression Analysis.

7.1 DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

The frequency use for online content marketing

Table 7.21 below shows that the majority (48%) of people who bought anything online or influenced by an online content depend on the internet for making shopping decisions several time a month, while 27% of them used it once a month, 19% used it once every other month, and only 6% used it once a year.

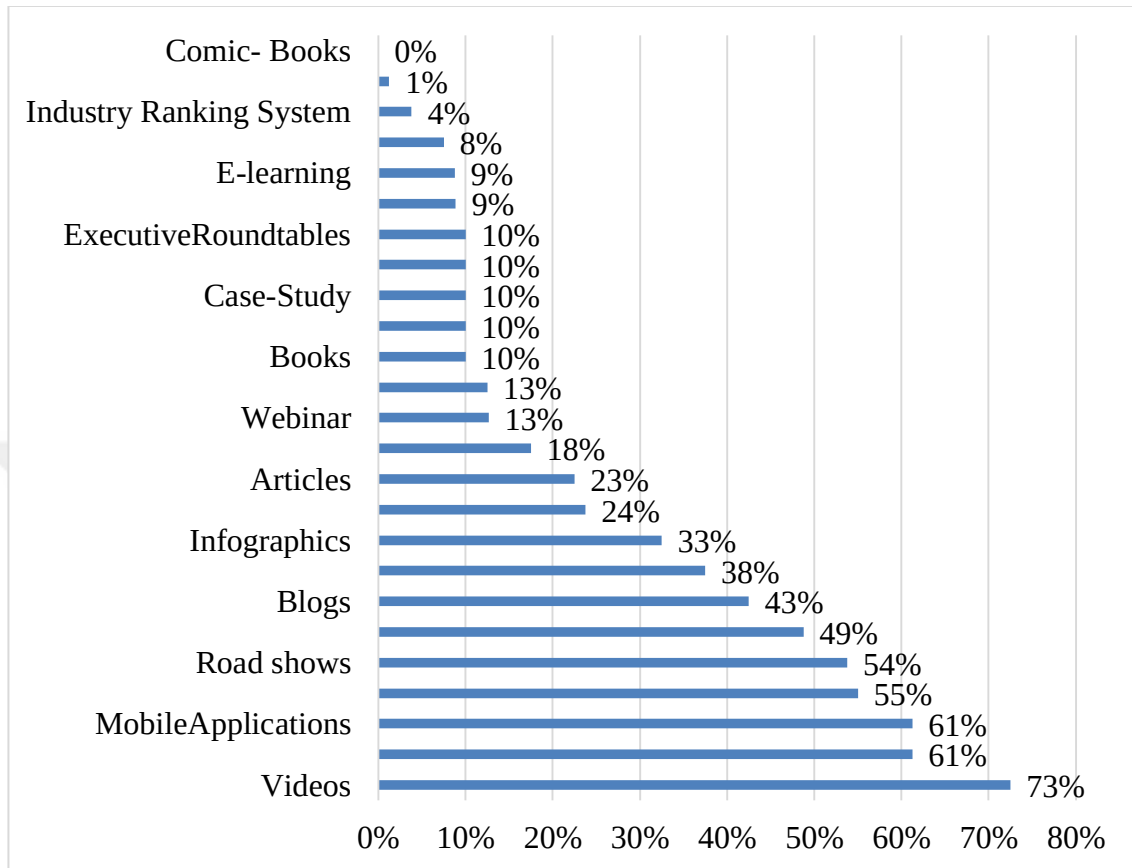
Table 7.21: Number of times that people used the internet for making shopping decisions.

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Several times a month	30	47.6
Once a month	17	27.0
Once every other month	12	19.0
Once a year	4	6.3
Total	63	100.0

Content Marketing tools

Figure 7.17 below shows that the Videos tool is the most important content marketing tool that affect people purchase decision where about 73% affected by this online tool. Other important content marketing tools are; magazines (61%), mobile applications (61%), press release (55%), road shows (54%), and events (49%).

Figure 7.17: most important content marketing tool that affect people purchase decision.



7.2 RESEARCH FACTORS MEASURE

Loyalty Measure

Table 7.22 below shows that the overall score for loyalty is about 5.21 which will be considered as high score. The highest score for the loyalty was to the statement of “The company website content effected my loyalty in their products” with a score of 5.42, while the lowest score was to the statement of “I say positive things about this website to other People” with a score of 5.

Table 7.22: Loyalty Measure

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The company website content effected my loyalty in their products	5.42	1.079
I visit the company's website sometimes only because of the content they provide	5.08	1.362
I consider myself loyal to this company	5.18	1.240
I say positive things about this website to other people	5.00	1.462
I recommend this website to someone who seeks my advice about similar topic	5.25	1.267
I definitely consider this company as my first choice to shop for similar products/services	5.36	1.295
Loyalty	5.21	0.927

Satisfaction Measure

Table 7.23 below shows that the overall score for satisfaction measure is about 5.31 which will be considered as high score. The highest score for the satisfaction was to the statement of "Content Marketing tools increased my satisfaction" with a score of 5.84, while the lowest score was to the statement of "It was fun to surf this website" with a score of 4.79.

Table 7.23: Satisfaction Measure

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The website provided interesting information	5.48	1.248
Content Marketing tools increased my satisfaction	5.84	1.028
I find the information I was looking for in the company's website	5.44	1.302
It was fun to surf this website	4.79	1.414
I was satisfied with my experience with this website	5.37	1.318
I encourage my friends and relatives to visit this website	4.90	1.335
I think I did the right decision to surf this website	5.40	1.164
I recommend this website to someone who seeks my advice about similar topic	5.25	1.267
I definitely consider this company as my first choice to shop for similar products/services	5.36	1.295
Satisfaction	5.31	0.857

Design Measure

Table 7.24 below shows that the overall score for design measure is about 5.62 which will be considered as high score. The highest score for the design was to the statement of "The website appearance was professional" with a score of 5.99, while the lowest score was to the statements of "It was easy to find what I need on the website" and "The information on the website is structured well" with a score of 5.22.

Table 7.24: Design Measure

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
It was easy to navigate through the website	5.66	1.250
The website was visually appealing	5.73	1.004
The website appearance was professional	5.99	0.993
It was easy to find what I need on the website	5.52	1.203
The information on the website is structured well	5.22	1.261
Design	5.62	0.855

Personalization Measure

Table 7.25 below shows that the overall score for personalization measure is about 4.63 which will be considered as medium score. The highest score for the personalization was to the statement of “The website offers publications about topics I’m interested about” with a score of 4.77, while the lowest score was to the statement of “The website stored my preferences and offered content and information based on my preferences” with a score of 4.37.

Table 7.25: Personalization Measure

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The Content was personalized and customized for my experience	4.67	1.616
The website offers publications about topics I’m interested about	4.77	1.448
The website allowed customization services according to my preference	4.73	1.228
The website stored my preferences and offered content and information based on my preferences	4.37	1.477
Personalization	4.63	1.142

Experience Measure

Table 7.26 below shows that the overall score for experience measure is about 5.28 which will be considered as high score. The highest score for the experience was to the statement of “The website was fast” with a score of 5.66, while the lowest score was to the statement of “The website provided good customer support service” with a score of 4.71.

Table 7.26: Experience Measure

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The website was convenient to use	5.58	1.353
The website provided good customer support service	4.71	1.671
The website content enriched my experience	5.40	1.139
Company website has useful interactive features (like being able to view the product from all angles, building the product I want, or trying on items virtually).	5.81	1.063
I get emotionally touched by the content published on the company's website	4.82	1.456
The website was fast	5.66	1.044
Experience	5.28	1.021

Engagement Measure

Table 7.27 below shows that the overall score for engagement measure is about 4.86 which will be considered as high score. The highest score for the engagement was to the statement of “The website provided an opportunity to share information and my experience with the products with others using social networks such as Facebook or Twitter” with a score of 5.59, while the lowest score was to the statement of “The company website included a lot of content to read and engage with” with a score of 4.34.

Table 7.27: Engagement Measure

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The company website included a lot of content to read and engage with	4.34	1.685
The website provided an opportunity to read the reviews about the product from other customers	4.40	1.614
The website gives the opportunity to connect with other customers interested in the product via a blog or a community	4.55	1.708
I recommend people to visit this website for the useful information they provide	5.27	1.261
The website provided an opportunity to share information and my experience with the products with others using social networks such as Facebook or Twitter	5.59	1.256
I am regularly visiting this website	5.27	1.239
I choose to subscribe to the company's website publications	4.62	1.638
Engagement	4.86	1.009

Perception Measure

Table 7.28 below shows that the overall score for Perception measure is about 4.96 which will be considered as high score. The highest score for the Perception was to the statement of “Company website provided me with enough information to make a rational purchase decision” with a score of 5.7, while the lowest score was to the statement of “The company cares about enlightening the readers more than increasing their sales” with a score of 4.38.

Table 7.28: Perception Measure

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Company website provided me with enough information to make a rational purchase decision	5.70	1.198
I don't care about the price tags as I consider myself attached to this company's content offerings	4.45	1.625
I consider the company as the market leader	5.25	1.128
I consider the company innovative	5.00	1.384
The company cares about enlightening the readers more than increasing their sales	4.38	1.371
Perception	4.96	0.960

7.3 RESEARCH FACTORS RELATIONSHIP

This section will examine if there are a relationship between marketing content (independent variable) and the seven factors of the study; customer loyalty, satisfaction, design, personalization, experience, engagement, and perception.

The independent variable (marketing content) will be how often do each individual use internet for making shopping decisions (whether shopping online or using online information and content to affirm your shopping decision).

The relationship between online content marketing and Loyalty

Tables 7.29 and 7.30, shows that there is a relationship between loyalty and content marketing usage since we reject the null hypothesis of there is no relationship between them (since p-value is less than 5%). According to table 6.9 below, we notice that content marketing usage once a year has the highest loyalty compared to others

Table 7.29: Loyalty Measure according to content marketing usage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Several times a month	30	5.16	.645
Once a month	17	5.06	.946
Once every other month	12	4.69	1.107
Once a year	4	6.25	1.101
Total	63	5.11	.906

Table 7.30: ANOVA test between Loyalty Measure and content marketing usage

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.393	3	2.464	3.339	.025
Within Groups	43.542	59	.738		
Total	50.935	62			

The relationship between online content marketing and Satisfaction

Tables 7.31 and 7.32, shows that there is no relationship between satisfaction and content marketing usage since we cannot reject the null hypothesis of there is no relationship between them (since p-value is more than 5%).

Table 7.31: Satisfaction Measure according to content marketing usage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Several times a month	30	5.33	.566
Once a month	17	5.10	.859
Once every other month	12	4.88	1.119
Once a year	4	5.92	1.105
Total	63	5.22	.828

Table 7.32: ANOVA test between satisfaction Measure and content marketing usage

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.970	3	1.323	2.027	.120
Within Groups	38.511	59	.653		
Total	42.481	62			

The relationship between online content marketing and Design

Tables 7.33 and 7.34, shows that there is a relationship between design and content marketing usage since we reject the null hypothesis of there is no relationship between them (since p-value is less than 5%). According to table 6.13 below, we notice that content marketing usage once a year has the highest design measure compared to others.

Table 7.33: Design Measure according to content marketing usage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Several times a month	30	5.63	.645
Once a month	17	5.45	.823
Once every other month	12	4.95	.954
Once a year	4	6.55	.772
Total	63	5.51	.835

Table 7.34: ANOVA test between design Measure and content marketing usage

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.565	3	2.855	4.854	.004
Within Groups	34.701	59	.588		
Total	43.266	62			

The relationship between online content marketing and Personalization

Tables 7.35 and 7.36, shows that there is a relationship between personalization and content marketing usage since we reject the null hypothesis of there is no relationship between them (since p-value is less than 5%). According to table 6.15 below, we notice that content marketing usage once a year has the highest personalization measure compared to others.

Table 7.35: Personalization Measure according to content marketing usage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Several times a month	30	4.84	.837
Once a month	17	4.25	1.317
Once every other month	12	3.88	1.259
Once a year	4	5.00	1.173
Total	63	4.51	1.135

Table 7.36: ANOVA test between personalization Measure and content marketing usage

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.248	3	3.416	2.895	.043
Within Groups	69.623	59	1.180		
Total	79.871	62			

The relationship between online content marketing and Experience

Tables 7.37 and 7.38, shows that there is a relationship between experience and content marketing usage since we reject the null hypothesis of there is no relationship between them (since p-value is less than 5%). According to table 6.17 below, we notice that content marketing usage once a year has the highest experience measure compared to others.

Table 7.37: Experience Measure according to content marketing usage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Several times a month	30	5.26	.964
Once a month	17	5.08	1.054
Once every other month	12	4.77	.979
Once a year	4	6.20	1.095
Total	63	5.18	1.027

Table 7.38: ANOVA test between experience Measure and content marketing usage

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.566	3	2.189	2.193	.098
Within Groups	58.883	59	.998		
Total	65.449	62			

The relationship between online content marketing and Engagement

Tables 7.39 and 7.40, shows that there is a relationship between engagement and content marketing usage since we reject the null hypothesis of there is no relationship between them (since p-value is less than 5%). According to table 6.19 below, we notice that content marketing usage once a year has the highest engagement measure compared to others.

Table 7.39: Engagement Measure according to content marketing usage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Several times a month	30	4.93	.522
Once a month	17	4.55	1.104
Once every other month	12	4.13	1.126
Once a year	4	5.68	1.505
Total	63	4.72	.965

Table 7.40: ANOVA test between engagement Measure and content marketing usage

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.608	3	3.203	3.925	.013
Within Groups	48.141	59	.816		
Total	57.750	62			

The relationship between online content marketing and perception

Tables 7.41 and 7.42, shows that there is a relationship between perception and content marketing usage since we reject the null hypothesis of there is no relationship between them (since p-value is less than 5%). According to table 6.21 below, we notice that content marketing usage once a year has the highest perception measure compared to others.

Table 7.41: Perception Measure according to content marketing usage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Several times a month	30	5.07	.840
Once a month	17	4.59	.966
Once every other month	12	4.45	.950
Once a year	4	5.65	.870
Total	63	4.86	.939

Table 7.42: ANOVA test between perception Measure and content marketing usage

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.134	3	2.378	2.950	.040
Within Groups	47.556	59	.806		
Total	54.691	62			

7.4 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

To answer the main question of the study, we will perform a multiple regression analysis as following:

Dependent variable: Customer experience

Independent variables: Marketing content usage, gender, and age.

The multiple regression model is significant at 5% level of significance since the p-value for F-test is less than 5%. In addition, the independent variables in this model explain about 31% from the variation in the dependent variable (value of R^2), which considered a good result for cross sectional data regression.

For Marketing content usage, we notice that (at 5% level of significance), the usage of content usage once a year yield to a higher customer experience compared to other usages.

In addition, Females have significantly higher customer experience than males. And individuals in the range of age (36-45) have significantly lower customer experience than other age groups. “see AppendixA.1, Table-1”

Diagnoses test (Heteroscedasticity test)

The Breusch-Pagan test for heteroscedasticity shows that there is no heteroscedasticity problem in model estimated, since we accept the null hypothesis of there is no heteroscedasticity problem in the model (the p-value is higher than 5%).

Table 7.43: Heteroscedasticity

Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity			
Ho: Constant variance			
Variables: fitted values of Experience			
chi2(1)	=	0.76	
Prob > chi2	=	0.3848	

7.5 CONCLUSION

- i. Content Marketing acts as a bridge by its' characteristics and techniques in improving loyalty, building trust, creating better communication and added value, which in return create a better online customer experience.
- ii. Building customer relationship, educating customers, offering them an entertaining fun time, attracting, engaging and not pushing them into buying or promotions and advertisements create long lasting feelings and experiences
- iii. Content Marketing types increase the possibilities for an increased word of mouth marketing by sharing reviews and experiences, recommending and giving feedback.

- iv. Content Marketing types help in creating returning readers and audiences to the brand website which creates attached and frequently visitors and customers and improve customer experience.
- v. Content Marketing positively affects the customers' perception, engagement, experience, satisfaction and loyalty.
- vi. Videos, Magazines, Events and Mobile Application are the most effective types that enhance customer experience.
- vii. Creating a user-friendly design and personalized and customized content help in increasing the online customer experience.

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Finally, as a result for my research and readings about content marketing and customer experience, I recommend further researchers and scholars to give more attention to this subject especially for content marketing is going more viral in the meantime and I predict it to become available in most of the companies' future marketing strategies, companies will also be eager and interested in better understanding what content marketing is and how to apply it efficiently and effectively to achieve better customer experience, results and goals.

As for my research my recommendations and predictions are the following; First, my prediction is that content quality will become more important than the content quantity especially because of the rise and huge usage of social media platforms and the two-way communications in our open networks and internet habits such as giving a quick look on the content before reading it all, quickly moving between content, being more interested in short and rich content and being more selective in choosing what to read, therefore, I recommend future researchers to study the effect of a single content quality to the overall result on the company. Second; content should contain and be visually appealing like including videos, images, infographics and most importantly story telling techniques and it should also be user friendly on the different types of smart devices and smart phones in particular; Third, companies should better organize and design their content marketing tools and platforms like social media and follow what the market uses more, not long before websites were the number one source for getting information and reading content but now, and because of the virality and popularity of social media

most people are searching and reading content that is available through the social media platforms and therefore social media is now effecting heavily on the content marketing availability and reach, and people's comments are touching other customers and effecting the overall customer experience. Fourth; Companies should also consider using the search engines like Google to increase their brand awareness and reach interested audiences, there should be therefore some researches about the effect of using software like Google Analytics in measuring and achieving the marketing goals. Fifth; content marketing will be more organized and get more budget than before, there will be the need of having a good content in order to market and compete in the new marketing world, experts will be needed and special writers like journalists and authors, because of the positive effect of content marketing, every company will see clearly how content marketing has benefited other companies and will start giving more effort to try to achieve the same. Sixth, companies will be more interested in finding an easy and clear way to measure content marketing and its' effectiveness and link it to the growth of their company and achieving goals like increasing brand awareness, customer engagement etc., especially because some companies only rely on measuring one or two metrics and this gives them misleading information and therefore I strongly recommend researchers to create a simple new calculations and software to better measure content marketing to make the companies accept content marketing and really understand how feasible and fruitful it is to their future staying, and its' benefits in competition alongside to its' merely advantages in marketing, sales, promotion and branding. And finally; researches should make studies and reaffirm the importance that the main goal of content marketing is to increase customer experience by strengthening trust, building better profitable relationships, and creating more engagement with and not to customers as it is a two-way communication, relationship, and engagement because content marketing cornerstone is built around this very special aspect.

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX A.1 TABLE 1: MULTIPLE REGRESSION RESULTS

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	63
				F(7, 55)	=	3.54
Model	20.3344604	7	2.90492291	Prob > F	=	0.0033
Residual	45.1144285	55	.820262337	R-squared	=	0.3107
				Adj R-squared	=	0.2230
Total	65.4488889	62	1.05562724	Root MSE	=	.90568

Experience	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Q77						
Once a month	.0002737	.2900084	0.00	0.999	-.5809162	.5814635
Once every other month	.0434218	.3405143	0.13	0.899	-.6389842	.7258278
Once a year	1.312932	.550051	2.39	0.020	.2106054	2.415259
Q323						
Female	.7164955	.2400183	2.99	0.004	.2354881	1.197503
Q44						
26-35 years old	.230746	.2863399	0.81	0.424	-.343092	.804584
36-45 years old	-.8997632	.3559953	-2.53	0.014	-1.613194	-.1863327
More than 45 years old	.2289811	.4110601	0.56	0.580	-.5948018	1.052764
_cons	4.761149	.2688098	17.71	0.000	4.222442	5.299856

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX A.2 SURVEY QUESTIONS

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Mohammad Ghosheh and I am a master student at Bahcesehir University doing my master's in business administration. I am making a thesis about "The role of content marketing in improving online customer experience" and this questionnaire is a part of my thesis. I am surveying diverse people in Palestine and kindly wish and ask for your help. It would take around 10-15 minutes to complete and your help will make a significant change for creating better marketing environment.

Thanks for your help

Sincerely,

Mohammad Ghosheh

MBA at Bahcesehir University

Tel : 0549440969

E-mail : Mufeed.ghosheh@stu.bahcesehir.edu.tr

1.What is your profession?

- ☐ Student
☐ Worker
☐ Other

2.Have you bought anything online or influenced by an online content in the past year?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No [Please end questionnaire here if your answer is No]

3.Please select your sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

4.Please select your age?

- ☐ 18- 25 years old
☐ 26-35 years old
☐ 36-45 years old
☐ More than 45 years old

5.What is your family status:

- ☐ Living alone ☐ Living with a partner ☐ Living with parent(s)

6. Which of the following best describes your total monthly income (including income from student support, loan and salary and etc.)?

- ☐ 0 – 200 USD
☐ 201- 500 USD
☐ 501 – 800 USD
☐ 801 – 1000 USD
☐ 1001 – 2000 USD
☐ 2001 USD or more

7. Approximately how often do you use internet for making shopping decisions (whether shopping online or using online information and content to affirm your shopping decision?)

☐ Several times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once every other month ☐ Once a year

For answering the following questions, please remember one of your most recent purchase made online or influenced by online content.

8. What kind of content marketing tool affected your purchase decision?

- ☐ Blogs
- ☐ Videos
- ☐ Podcasts
- ☐ Articles
- ☐ Newsletters
- ☐ Books
- ☐ E-Books
- ☐ Audio-books
- ☐ Comic- Books
- ☐ White-Papers
- ☐ E-learning
- ☐ Case-Study
- ☐ Testimonials
- ☐ Industry Ranking System
- ☐ Webinar
- ☐ Webcast
- ☐ News Release

- ☐ Magazines
- ☐ Mobile Applications
- ☐ Online Games
- ☐ Executive Roundtables
- ☐ Events
- ☐ Road shows
- ☐ Infographics
- ☐ Online survey research project

9. For this question I would like you to think of your recent online motivation for your purchase and answer the following statements in terms of that experience:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The website was convenient to use	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The website provided interesting information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The website included a lot of content to read and engage with	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It was easy to navigate through the website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The website provided good customer support service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The website was visually appealing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The website content enriched my experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Content Marketing tools increased my satisfaction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Content was personalized and customized for my experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The company website content effected my loyalty in their products	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The website provided an opportunity to read the reviews about the product from other customers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Company website provided me with enough information to make a rational purchase decision	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find the information I was looking for in the company's website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The website appearance was professional	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I visit the company's website sometimes only because of the content they provide	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Company website has useful interactive features (like being able to view the product from all angles, building the product I want, or trying on items virtually).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I get emotionally touched by the content published on the company's website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't care about the price tags as I consider myself attached to this company's content offerings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It was easy to find what I need on the website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I consider the company as the market leader	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I consider the company innovative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The company cares about enlightening the readers more than increasing their sales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I consider myself loyal to this company	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The website gives the opportunity to connect with other customers interested in the product via a blog or a community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The website offers publications about topics I'm interested about	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It was fun to surf this website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I recommend people to visit this website for the useful information they provide	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The website provided an opportunity to share information and my experience with the products with others using social networks such as Facebook or Twitter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The information on the website is structured well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The website allowed customization services according to my preference	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The website stored my preferences and offered content and information based on my preferences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The website was fast	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Please answer with your level of agreement for the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I was satisfied with my experience with this website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am regularly visiting this website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I choose to subscribe to the company's website publications	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I encourage my friends and relatives to visit this website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think I did the right decision to surf this website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I say positive things about this website to other People	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I recommend this website to someone who seeks my advice about similar topic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I definitely consider this company as my first choice to shop for similar products/services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel bad about my decision to surf this website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't buy anything from this company	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

