

INFLUENCING POWER OF CONTENT MARKETING

Dr. Leena Sharma

Assistant Professor, St. Xavier's College, Jaipur



Abstract

In this digital age where the platforms are getting crowded with too much content, marketing relevant content is what will distinguish one brand from another in the future. Content marketing is a popular term coined by today's marketers with an intention to reach well target consumers. With the advent of infrastructure and data availability, the attitude of both the marketers and consumers are positive towards branded content. Consumers value and trust their purchases if they have gone through right content about their product/services/brand.

Content marketing is becoming a powerful tool to influence brand awareness and boosting clear and transparent conversations with potential and future customers. Content marketing uses a variety of media formats and can be read on a variety of devices. It is distributed through various social media platforms. Content marketing thus is able to provide measurable results by driving profitable customer actions like calls-to-action and promotional codes. Content is going to be huge in the future.

This paper is an attempt to understand the relevance and future scope of content marketing with reference to Indian companies and Indian market. The challenges and opportunities are also discussed. The paper tries to explore the number of innovative ways the companies are using content marketing to woo their customers. The paper also analyses few of the response of customer action against content marketing efforts.

Keywords: *content marketing, brand awareness, call to action, media format*

Introduction

Traditional view of marketing define it as a way to attract customers, make them aware and arousing need of products. But with technological advancements, the new definition of marketing is technology oriented, as it may be defined as a way to spread knowledge to already informed market and make connection with product and customers, so as to reach marketing goal. Thus it is becoming a challenging task to add value in the market of target audience. Moreover customers not know where to put filters on bombardment of too much advertising or emails. Thus the new media outlets like facebook, youtube, or twitter are proper channels of publishing of online content. This content is imparting knowledge, the sharing of which is leading to profit generation. To prove that why a marketing advertiser is a rockstar, they must have great contents (Solomon, 2013). Marketing trend is evolving in a way that publishing is replacing marketing (Gagnon, 2014). Thus the increasing importance of demand of quality content is directing the marketers to treat it as a preconditions for separate discipline.

Content marketing is defined as "the creation of content that is relevant, compelling, entertaining and valuable and this content must be consistently provided to maintain or change the behavior of customers. Content marketing is an essential marketing activity that helps, retain, acquire new ones and helps companies to build a strong brand."(Mandloys Digital Agency, 2013).

As defined by content marketing institute "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"

Review of Literature

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines digital content (as a growth industry) as “a medium that increases user participation and interaction through the digitization of text, data, sound, and video” (Kim, Oh, & Shin, 2010). Digital content is defined as information and experiences that provide value for users. This content can be understood as a combination of original design and scenario associated with such structural elements as text, sound, music, images, and videos, which can be accessed by consumers through both wired and wireless digital media. Digital content can be used for both marketing and as a specific end product. With the bifurcation of even the online media as paid media, earned media and owned media, the relevance of content marketing has become an interesting buzz. Being new in its form, content marketing is still a relatively unexplored area for academic research. Pulizzi (2013) defines content marketing as “the marketing and business process for creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience with the objective of driving profitable customer action”. In digital environments, it is as easy to become media as it is to buy media. Content marketing is not based on a push strategy but a pull marketing strategy. (Lieb, 2011). Flanagin & Metzger (2000) paper provides useful referential frameworks to analyze content marketing, such as users’ perception of credibility in relation to source, media forms and specific messages. Hilligoss and Rieh (2008) conducted studies to identify a framework with common aspects of credibility assessment regardless of media, type of information, and environment of information use. Their theoretical frameworks and research methods for testing trust or credibility of traditional media or non-media settings, could be extended to examine content marketing.

Objective of the Study

The current study aims:

- To understand the relevance and challenges with future scope of content marketing with reference to Indian market.
- To explore the innovative ways the companies are using for content marketing.
- To study the response of internet users who are target for content marketers

Methodology

The methodology used for data collection includes use of secondary data such as various articles, journals, books, websites, etc. and all the data included in this article has been given the reference wherever necessary. The secondary information have been collected from different scholars and researcher’s published books, articles published in different journals, periodicals, conference paper, working paper and websites. The prepared paper is a descriptive study in nature. Though the secondary data and information have been analyzed for preparing the paper extensively but for primary data response of 100 respondents are taken via convenience sampling technique.

Content Marketing in India

With increasing internet penetration in developing countries, content marketing with new media options is though in nascent stage but is highly in demand. Rise of smartphones is becoming

a key opportunity for content marketing in India but reach of internet and speed compatibility of internet are still big constraints for India Market. Digital buyer penetration worldwide has risen from 58.3 % to 65 % 2021. while the Contribution of Indian Internet users which is expected to increase from 27 % internet users to 47 % by 2021 (emarketer.com), the content marketing in India is set to evolve and expand. Indian digital market is facing following challenges:

- Pressure of integrating social media and content.
- Choosing right platform and media channels
- Choosing the right appeal of content
- Difficulty to measure result of content marketing campaigns.
- Lack of professionalism in content writing jobs.
- Converting customers' feedback, comments, and content into profitable action for future.
- Dominance of user generated content on corporate funded content.
- Overflow of data storage requires long term investment.
- Frequent content updation is required with a faster pace.

Formats for Content Marketing

Blogging: Blogging are user- friendly, inexpensive, self-publication of content for a potentially vast audience. It is a simple way to publishing process. It is a platform for multiple author at low cost to reach professional knowledge distribution. For marketer, they can view its impact through inbound links, number of views, time spent on websites and click throughs. Consumers rely on blogs and reviews on blogs before making purchase decisions.

Social Media: Most informal communication tool to spread content through social media channels like facebook, twitter, youtube, linked in. The impact of this tool of content marketing can be measured by number of followers, shares, posts, comments and page views.

Whitepaper: a tool to generate leads, inform potential clients and helps readers to understand the issues, realize benefits of purchasing a specific product, solving problems and make decisions. Its impact can be measured by number of downloads, number of leads and social media shares.

E book: a book in electronic format containing a large amount of content in text, images in pdf, pda etc.

Case studies: They are good to use, they show potential customers exactly how other consumers are using your products.

Testimonials: A true report from loyal customers is a critical part of content marketing. Companies ask customers to share testimonial in their respective network as it reaches far faster to build good rapport in the market, thus prove to be a valuable content to build company image.

Mobile App: With the rise of android phone, apps markets is on rise and companies are making their own mobile application for specific user's need.

Analysis and Inferences on Content Marketing

The performance and future expectation of market about the content marketing is studied from various available data sources. According to which, for business to business marketing, the marketing professional execute the further marketing strategies based on write content.As per the

report on performance metrics data if put through right media channels, 86 % are converting into sales, of which 80 % are able to generate leads for potential customers. Importance of content is realized with the fact that only 8 % are left only which are not up to the mark of quality lead. Half of the businesses which are putting content through their website are of this view that content is able to increase their website traffic considerably. However search engine optimization (SEO) requires good keywords in the content for search engines to index. Content marketing is significant in creating brand awareness and cost saving of the companies (Refer table 1)

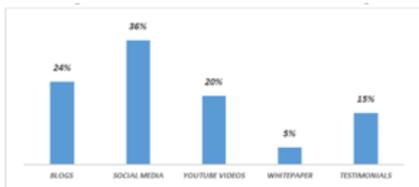
Table 1 Performance Metrics Used by Marketing Professionals

Conversion into sales	86%
Lead generation	80%
Quality of leads	72%
Cost saving	46%
Website traffic increase	52%
Brand awareness	33%
SEO ranking	29%
Source: emarketer.com	

The respondents chosen for the survey are youth aged 20 – 25 years, with smartphones and with 24 hours of internet connectivity. The respondents are conversant in reading, and understanding English as a content language. The most popular medium of reading content is social media (facebook, twitter, instagram, whatsapp and snapchat) where all the links related to content are easily shared and opened to view. The blogs related to particular interest areas are also catching attention of respondents. With its interactive audio-visual

approach you tube videos are catching the attention of 20 % of respondents. Still the medium of testimonials and whitepaper are less popular, and only viewed if it for some specific project or purpose. (Figure 1)

Figure 1 Source for Content Marketing



Source: Responses collected

The content if written diligently and backed by proper facts and data, is read by 80 % of the respondents and still 20 % leave in between while reading the content from various source. (table 2).

Table 2 Content Read

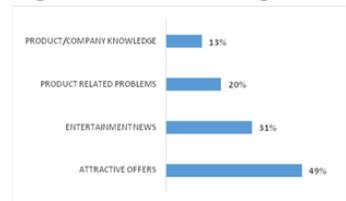
Content Read	Response in %
Complete	80
Incomplete	20
Source: Response collection	

The most prominent reason for clicking the content are the attractive offers, followed by any shocking, funny or

entertaining news. 20 % respondents clicked the content source when they faced any problem related to use of product or to know the functionality of the product. 13 % feel that they click to view content in detail only when they want to test the credibility of the either the product or the company. (Figure 2)

It is of concern to the marketer to check about the post behavior after watching content. Most of them just view and leave, but few of them also share to their network if they feel it to be noticed

Figure 2 Reasons for Viewing Content



Source: Response collection

as write content. Content credibility can be checked by the number of comments it encounters whether positive or negative.(table 3)

Table 3 Reaction on Viewing Content

Reaction on Viewing Content	Response in %
Share	34
View only	41
Comment	25
Source: Response collection	

Conclusion

Content marketing companies must ensure that they are using this tools so as to achieve their strategic goals. The content marketing strategies must start to understand what their customers want, and what action do we want them to take when they view content. Execution of a sound content marketing campaign cannot start before having a well-planned content strategy as it will help them to differentiate as an expert on a certain topic. In recent times of technological advancements content marketing helps to build credibility and value and building a long lasting relationship. From the customer's point of view interest in content marketing is high and the knowledge of it is growing. Moreover there is a need of specific content marketing tools which can serve different purpose like content creation, promotion, licensing, distribution and measurement of content's effectiveness.

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