BUILDING CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CONTENT MARKETING

Dinka Zlateva[1]

Abstract

Today, everything is content, and everything is connected to everything! Access to the audience is becoming more direct, but this is at the expense of increasing the efforts of companies to engage consumers. The digital environment has provided new business opportunities. The convergence of different industries forms a new type of market thinking based on the platform economy. Adapting business, especially in a pandemic, has emerged as a necessity for survival in a turbulent search for solutions to adapt to new realities. It is no coincidence that the marketing of content is gaining popularity, and this is evident from many published studies of institutions analyzing marketing trends. Shared content relevant to the interests of consumers and building relationships with them is an opportunity that should not be overlooked because anyone who underestimates the processes of digitalization is a thing of the past.

This article aims to present the benefits of content marketing that works in the service of the business. The search for a connection with the audience with the offered content is the basis of the gig economy and in response to the new market mechanisms, driven by the new habits of the consumers.

Introduction

Content marketing is gaining an increasing role in encouraging consumers to like the brand by seeking greater engagement and building trust with consumers. Creating valuable content related to the brand allows the user to communicate with it. Thus companies build good relationships with their target audience, create meaning and identification by encouraging desired behavior. Content marketing has a holistic nature. Its manifestation is not expressed in a specific form but in a compilation of such. Its main purpose is to create value for the customer. Content marketing is an important tool for raising consumer

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[1] Chief Assist. Prof, PhD, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Faculty of Economics, Department of Management and Marketing, e-mail: didi210@swu.bg, ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2227-7871

awareness. The concept is defined as "a management process for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the customer through digital content". (Rowley, 2008, p. 522) Content marketing focuses on raising the consumer rating of the brand by providing additional information that is relative to the interests of consumers. CM is considered a means of communication with consumers without a focus on sales. Its purpose is to attract attention, create commitment and, accordingly, create trust in customers.

Analysis and discussion

The IT sector has given a new direction for the development of the technology-oriented society that has a direct impact on every area of life. (Zlateva, Stavrova, & Vladov, 2017, p. 34) The new conditions require new approaches. It is no coincidence that as early as 1999, Kotler envisioned appealing to retailers that they needed to drastically rethink their strategies and create value for customers as a result of the process of digital business transformation. (Kotler, 1999, p. 206) „In order to make diversity and inclusion reality, companies must continue to adjust their marketing strategies to stay competitive and abreast of the latest trends and technologies." (Dimitrieska, Stamevska, & Stankovska, 2019, p. 118) Increasing importance is given to techniques that create value for the customer and the focus is not on sales themselves but on engaging the audience. Consumers like the brand only when they see the company's efforts subordinated to their interests. The energy of the brand shapes consumer preferences, but in order to generate this energy, the company must know its audience well in order to be able to channel its content properly. The buyer persona must be well profiled and this will help to optimize the company's resources. Working in this direction also requires distinguishing the content from that of competitors. It is important to prioritize topics that are relevant to both the company and its business goals. Therefore, it is necessary to find the painful points of the audience and which terms need to be used in the search. If in the beginning content marketing was understood as the approach applied by companies in creating and distributing educational and captivating content in various media formats in order to attract and retain customers, this definition has already been supplemented and emphasizes the strategic aspect of the concept. "Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive customer action." (Pulizzi & Handley, 2015, p. 8)

The benefits of content marketing for creating brand value are undeniable. As such can be mentioned - increasing traffic to the company's web-based resources, using the

power of viral marketing and linking users to the brand, increasing consumer loyalty, improving site optimization and more. (OnliSeO, 2013)

The advantage of content marketing is that it creates a more engaged audience with minimal marketing costs. Creating content is a challenge. According to Dennis Shio, linear thinking when deciding on content is usually based on assumptions and often leads to negative results. It offers circular thinking as a more appropriate model that works better in content marketing. (Shiao, 2020) (See Figure no.1) The model describes a situation in which if the company is not satisfied with the results achieved, it is necessary to return to the appropriate category. Looking at the perspective, assumptions and actions, it is possible to achieve better results. It does not matter if the company has good intentions if they lead to a bad user experience. The solution to this problem lies in providing the consumer journey with the content offered. Yes, this is possible if the general image of users is clear, and they would quickly find a solution and answer in the proposed content. When the buyer persona is complex, it is necessary to offer a card to the users, which will take them to the right place for them. That is why it is necessary not only to make assumptions but also to look in perspective and on the basis of this to send correct content. Building content is not a one-time act but requires time and adaptation to the results obtained. If they do not satisfy the company, it is necessary to define a new action, implement and compare the performance with the previous measurements. Testing is done in real-time, and the most appropriate content design is sought.

Figure no.1 Circular thinking

Source: Shiao, D. (2020) Why Circular Thinking Works Better in Content Marketing, https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2020/10/circular-thinking-content-marketing/

Content marketing is based on a genuine desire to add value to the user, which makes it easier to attract and retain customers. (Taylor, 2012) CM can be used to increase brand awareness, commitment and trust, which will not only turn leads into customers but also turn them into brand ambassadors at a later stage. Ultimately, content is what has led the user of the site to read, learn, see ,or experience, thus the brand touches the heart and mind of prospectuses, leads and customers. (Wuebben, 2011, p. 5) Understanding the benefits of content marketing is a crucial step in building an approach to consumers. The focus is on three areas of application: 1) brand-related objectives, 2) goals related to consumers, and 3) goals related to communication. (Maintz & Zaumseil, 2019, p. 171) For the purposes of the article, attention is focused on the impact of content marketing on increasing the brand value as a result of creating value for consumers through communication. These goals are connected and help create a total value that will generate financial benefits to the company. Offering content in the form of text, images, infographics, brand storytelling, etc., the company aims to capture and retain the attention of its audience with the intention of long-term engagement, building trust and relationships. The importance of the content and the benefits that the user receives is the first reason for him to engage in content marketing. (Holliman & Rowley, 2014) The communication that takes place is understood as interaction with the brand as a result of interaction with the marketing of the content. The contact is the result of the client's psychological connections with the brand. Engagement is characterized by cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses that trigger the consumer journey. According to van Doorn et al., the concept of engagement is often seen as engagement behavior, consumption of content or creation of online content by the customer. (Van Doorn, et al., 2010) Communication with the brand can also be done through invisible communicative elements, which are judged by the behavior of customers and their relationship with brands.

Achieving utility is the desired result of sharing knowledge and using it to solve problems. When building engagement, this content must include topics that trigger continuous information and customer search. Usually, users look for information outside the company's corporate website. They are informed about novelties, tendencies in the respective branch, I am looking for solutions to problems, etc. The modern consumer makes informed decisions. He usually looks for information on sites to compare the parameters of products and considers the feedback of users who already have experience with the product or participate in specialized forums concerning product groups. Creating brand value supports their choices and guides them in their consumer journey. (Figure no. 2)

*Figure no. 2 Dual roles of a branding digital content marketing helpfulness*
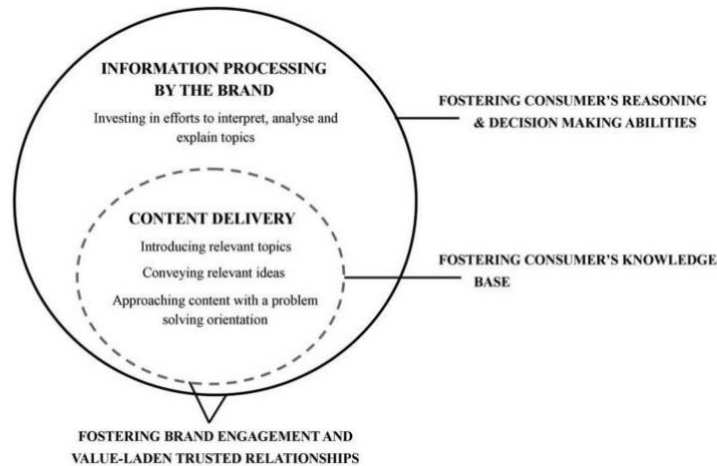
Content marketing work involves a number of information processing costs - interpreting, analyzing and reviewing topics to determine the perceived usefulness of the content. Making good decisions about the content is directly related to customer feedback and seeking optimality in the process. Knowledge sharing is highly valued by consumers and reflects the company's efforts to deliver value to customers. The search for utility and the formation of a system that creates this utility is essential and lead to constant monitoring. The system monitors and predicts the dynamics of the total environment of the organization and its impact on relationships. It combines "rational response to problems, as well as strategic planning and programming." (Filipov, 2020, p. 6) (Pacheva, 2009, p. 25)

The creation of utility for the consumer is directly related to the creation of value for the brand due to content marketing. Product promotion is important and should be involved in building and enhancing brand value. That is the process of building a value chain. Technologies, including search engines with their algorithms, are constantly changing, which must be reflected in the digital strategies of companies. According to a study by the Content Marketing Institute, 89% of B2B and 86% of B2C use content marketing to improve the brand in an online environment. (DigitalMarketingGroup, 2018) Statistics show that content marketing is a mandatory element for brand promotion. Figure 3 shows the scheme for building brand value. It is obvious that the value of the brand affects the financial results of the company. (Chatterjee, 2019) The components, are tied and

companies need to reinvest further in brand promotion and value building, which will generate more revenue for the company.

Figure no. 3 The value of brand
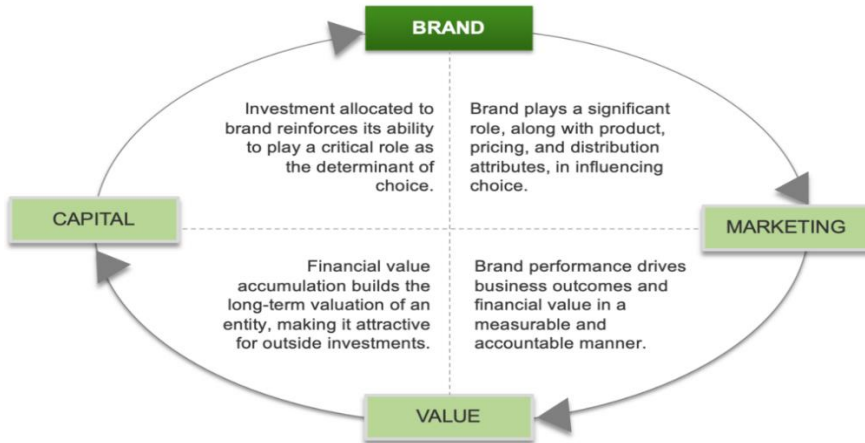
Source: Chatterjee, D. (2019). A Pragmatic Guide To Brand Value. Retrieved 21 March, 2021, from https://go.forrester.com/blogs/a-pragmatic-guide-to-brand-value/

Brand value and brand equity are concepts that define the same problem. The value of the brand determines brand equity. Brand equity is everything that reflects the attitude of people to the company's products. The more they like the brand, the higher the brand equity, respectively its value. (Dholakiya, 2019) The concept is associated with others, such as consumer loyalty and consumer advocacy. Creating loyalty motivates consumers to recommend a particular brand. In order to engage consumers, compelling content is needed, which translates into increasing the experience with the brand and this helps the successful positioning of the product. It is no coincidence that the consumer is king, and this is because consumers build brands. And for this to happen, the content needs to be customer-oriented. Involving consumers in the company's strategy by offering content that is relevant to them makes them empathize with the history of the brand. Dholakiya offers three ways to build brand value: 1) share the brand history in an appropriate and creative way and share the company's mission and values; 2) gaining trust and building loyalty through content - here come to the aid of blogs, in which site owners must invest effort and time to provide free and useful information to users - video tutorials, infographics, provoking social media posts networks, etc. Creating content that benefits customers are important for creating sympathy for them. This step provides conditions for turning the relationship with the client into a long-term project. 3) Establishing in leadership the thought, building the publisher of

content in authority on relevant topics and areas concerning consumers. Originality and creativity support this process. It is not important to detect the pain of consumers, but also how they are offered solutions.

Content creation is about creating a company identity. To this end, it is necessary to know customers' problems well and create meaningful content that customers will recognize as valuable and compelling.

Conclusion

Content marketing is an effective technique for promoting and promoting products, services or ideas. The search for new approaches to accessing customers and offering relative content to their interests is an ongoing process. That is evident from the increasingly sophisticated web analytics tools that allow companies to measure the effectiveness of content marketing and its impact on increasing brand value. Engaging content is what people want to read and view. For this purpose, the company must look through the eyes of the consumer. Focusing the customer on the product is not a good strategy. The company should stop talking about its brand and start thinking about what it wants to hear and read its audience. Sponsored posts, branded content, and traditional forms of advertising are no longer effective. Offering free content relative to the audience's interests is a good way to attract and retain customers. This approach gains trust and gradually anticipates the consumer in his consumer journey, creating a pleasant and, why not an exciting user experience. And as Bill Gates wrote in 1996 in his essay "Content is King" "Content is where I expect a lot of real money will be made on the Internet, just as it was in broadcasting." (Evans, 2017)

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