Content Marketing - Essence and Influence on Consumers

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Abstract— **The purpose of this article is to clarify the nature and importance of content marketing. To look at the platforms through which content marketing takes place and how it affects the consumer. In content marketing, it is especially important to analyze the audience that uses this channel before creating content. Content marketing is a particularly popular tool among Gen Z.**

Keywords: **Content marketing, Facebook, Instagram**

I. CONTENT MARKETING – ESSENCE AND IMPACT ON CONSUMERS

Content marketing is a marketing technique for creating and distributing engaging content to attract a target audience. The task of technology is to challenge users to targeted actions, to include it in their conversion scenario. Content marketing is information received by your potential buyer at the right time and place.

Content marketing can refer to any marketing concept mentioned above and serve as their unifier. The publication of the so-called static content on the web page, as well as dynamic content that engages the user, such as video, podcast, user-generated content, etc., gradually impose the concept of content marketing [1].

In an effort to generate interest and sharing from person to person, an important detail is often forgotten. By focusing on getting people to comment, many companies overlook the part that really matters: what people are talking about [6].

According to the Content Marketing Institute's definition, it is "a strategic marketing approach to creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and win over a specific audience with the goal of inducing profitable user action for the organization." [6].

The outstanding long-term success of content marketing and why it should not be underestimated is due to the fact that this type of marketing strategy shows the company's expertise in its field of operation and presents it to current and potential customers.

The potential of social networks is immeasurable, because each connection a user makes projects a new opportunity for online experience and sharing. Google, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, TikTok and all other social networks recommend people who would be a good fit to be connected to. The technology and algorithm are being improved daily and apart from people who share similar interests based on information and experience, it is up to the user to cultivate and define these connections themselves. Thus, by investing in meaningful and useful connections, the community is formed that filters the flows of attention and quality [3]. The diversity of digital channels makes it necessary for every organization to form a content strategy, which Dural says includes:

• value of the content to attract the audience;
• the medium through which the content will be delivered;
• unification of the content that is transmitted through different channels;
• opportunities to comment on the content;
• content access platforms and appropriate resolutions [6].

II. CONTENT SELECTION, CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The site and social networks as a marketing tool should be viewed from a holistic point of view and should be kept in mind that it is not a threat to other marketing channels. On the contrary, it has already been proven with data from the practice of companies that they reinforce and increase the effect by developing content on each company's web page and its social networks [9].

The site and social networks are spaces saturated with communities of people connected for some reason, most often by interests - professional, but also for free time, as well as because of preferences for companies and their brands. Any well-thought-out strategy for creating interaction through texts, video, photos, which does not sell directly, is the key to successful and effective communication with the customer. That is why companies' marketing strategies and campaigns should include the most popular social networks - Google, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and the video sharing site YouTube - as a communication channel. These are platforms and common spaces on the web, including activities related to social interaction, content, photos, comments and video clips.

Social networks create large social communities that share common ideas and interests; advertise products and/or services of the respective company to a large audience; build online image and trust for the companies they are involved with.

Social networks are online communities of people who share common interests and activities. They can provide a collection of different opportunities for marketing impact -

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from direct conversation with users to video calls, sharing links, images, video content, sharing opinion and provoking communication between users with common interests. Social networking makes it possible to reach a large number of potential users for a company. Each of these users use writing on their social network wall, for example Facebook, to express, like or reject an idea, product, service, event, etc. This has become part of the culture of modern man, dictated by the new possibilities of communication in the web space. Therefore, the participation of business in social networks becomes an integral part of its management and in an increasingly important part for promotion and salesэ[4].   .

The biggest advantage of social networks is interactivity ie. the possibility of exchanging opinions not only with one person, but simultaneously with many people [5]. Marketing through social networks is a form of Internet marketing, the goal of which is to achieve successful branding and more successful marketing communications through the company's participation in various social media.

Marketing through social networks is not a single action, but [6]:

- It has an integrated and holistic nature, as well as a cross-channel marketing strategy.

- It is necessary to know that individual social networks are different and have a different way of interaction.

- Social networks make it possible to go from single contacts and connections to long-term relationships with customers.

- Social networks require continuous effort and commitment to tell stories, build relationships and create additional value.

- Social networks enable cross-use of web-based channels.

In addition, social media marketing helps modern companies achieve the following goals:

- Increasing traffic and activating user behavior;
- Increasing brand recognition;
- Track user comments and sales;
- Building positive associations for the brand (PR goals);
- Displaying advertisements;
- Business development and achieving a larger mass of users, at the same time more focused, closer in interests;
- Strengthening the effect of the customer relationship management system.

The development of online communications, the development of mobile communications have completely changed the understanding and practice of communicating with audiences and users, the success of social networks is due to two-way communication in real time, something that traditional media, which is characterized by a one-way form of communication [9].

Marketers prefer Facebook for the following reasons: Facebook currently has 3.5 billion users, of which 50% are active users on the web. Users spend 2 times more time on Facebook than on Google. Everyone has an average of 130 friends, 80% of whom are aged 18-40 [6]. On Facebook, there are daily over 350,000 status activations. Facebook users in Bulgaria exceeded 1 million, which is approximately one third of all Internet users in the country. In addition, the authenticity of content in digital media,

respectively, the freedom to publish in them, is an essential factor for companies to exert influence and achieve communication efficiency. Over the years, the platform has become much more than a space to share photos, links to music or a place for people to write their thoughts on their virtual wall. According to a recent study, 30% of adult Americans learn the news from this social network [7].

The development of digital media seems to have been able to show clearly enough that it has its influence precisely because of the authentic content that can be found in it - these are publications, posts, images and videos that are created by users. Or if they are not, they are direct, honest and open, without the corporate pathos typical of other channels and fully aligned with the company's communication messages. In other words, authentic content is that which is independently created, can be even less critical than honest, and corresponds as closely as possible to reality and the author's true views on a given issue - be it a political situation or an opinion on a given product. This is considered to be better perceived information by consumers, especially in an online environment, so advertising and PR professionals should strive to support it. Therefore, management representatives and communication specialists in the company need to undergo an important metamorphosis, if they have not already done so - to try to speak from the user's point of view and do it in the most credible way. In the corporate world, the principle that authenticity in terms of communicated content is one of the most important prerequisites for building trust and even for creating distinctive advantages is gaining more and more supporters [8].

Facebook has changed the landscape of online marketing in a big way. This platform "sees" its user and serves him targeted ads that are selected because of the data in his profile, i.e. online marketing here is individualized and very close to niche marketing. This helps product marketers get very targeted traffic, which means that that user is much more likely to buy from them than after a random user sees the product ad in another conventional medium - a newspaper or on television. In addition, the Facebook user himself also benefits, because he receives useful information while doing other work on the platform and without wasting special time to search.

Facebook has changed the way online advertising is done and set new benchmarks for modern marketers and the companies whose products they market and commercialize [11].

In second place in importance is Instagram - the place where a number of brands promote, present their products and communicate with their customers. Instagram is an online photo sharing platform, video sharing and social networking service that allows users to take photos and videos. A distinctive feature is that Instagram limits photos to a square shape similar to Polaroid images and applies digital filters [13].

Instagram is also a platform for brands to share their unique perspectives. Millions of people use Instagram as a source of inspiration, a creative outlet and find amazing images. Brands will have no problem reaching people who are open to new perspectives. This can be attributed to

Instagram's simple design, which always places visuals at the center of the app. Since each image or video fills the screen, there's no cluttering the experience.

Instagram provides a unique interactive ecosystem for brands and their users. As a result of the highly visual nature of the platform, Instagram allows marketers to communicate their brand story in a different way. Through the use of photos and videos, brands have the opportunity to engage their audience with media that are less hindered by language barriers. This means that branded content on Instagram resonates with users in a way that words rarely can, engaging users on an emotional level. This shift towards adopting a visual approach to marketing and the high use of mobile devices testifies to Instagram's key position in the brand's social strategy. Visual images are very memorable for viewers. As people spend more time online, sensory experiences also become that much more powerful[12].

Using attractive images can convey more information in a shorter period of time. With 44% of consumers more likely to engage with brands that use photos than those that don't, brands can create a stronger emotional connection with viewers through effective visual effects. Publishing content on a platform where your users are already immersed provides additional opportunities to engage with compelling and inspiring content [9].

Instagram is definitely a valuable tool for marketers looking to showcase their brand. All businesses, both small and large, can find value in creating and using Instagram. This platform can give customers a personal look at the company and can create a sense of community among followers. On Instagram, it's easy to share the company story and get a behind-the-scenes look at how the company is run.

Because Instagram is entirely visual, it allows brands to promote their products in a whole new way. Not only can marketers use Instagram to post photos and videos, but also to highlight what consumers are doing with their products. Followers on this social network also appreciate when their content is liked or commented on. Instagram demonstrates the trend towards visual storytelling and a shift away from sharing images rather than text.

Successful Instagram marketing is based on the fact that starting the relationship with customers online helps to create a loyal following and allows for constant word-of-mouth promotion to continue to grow the customer base. Instagram also allows companies to conduct free market research. By looking at what customers share, a company can learn what content is most interesting to their followers [10].

In the following lines are presented the factors on which the success of the modern organization's marketing through social networks depends:

First of all, the "channels" inside the social network must be chosen correctly, by first checking where the people we are interested in are located, i.e. potential and actual users. Some experts advise companies to find the communities/groups where the company's potential customers are active and spend some of their time.

The correct selection of the specialists who will make the company's campaign on social networks is also of great importance. It should be borne in mind that it is not necessary for the web designer who made the company's website to be able to do successful marketing in social networks. At the same time, it is not necessary for the advertising agency that did the company's advertising campaign in print media to know how to do social media marketing. Therefore, it is very important to make the right selection of a specialist/s who understands this special matter and has already managed to implement a good marketing campaign in some of the social networks.

There are different ways to categorize different types of social networks, but the most fundamental is according to the importance of a given piece of information to individual users and the opportunities these channels offer. Based on these things, they can be divided into two main groups:

• content-based social networks;
• social networks based on the connections between individual users.

That's not to say that links don't play a role in content-based social networks, or that media is not important to those who are based on relationships. In both cases, that is not the focus. The reason why a user joins a social network and what he sees in it is important.

It is very important to convince the team that marketing through social networks can be extremely useful and effective and that all approaches should be used in the best way, which will lead to an increase in revenue [11].

A. Digital interest grouping

It is possible to make a group of the people who work in the company and it is a closed type of group, and also to create a fan/follower group - for example for individual products in the organization. Often the fans themselves create such groups or even anti-groups. In these cases, it is good to know and delicately and with discretion to influence the opinion of the members in the group.

Creating a group takes really little effort. It is important to give an adequate and good name to the group, as well as graphics, which usually include attributes such as a logo and a link to the company's official website. The first step after that is to invite "fans"/"followers" or group members. This is the so-called seed, as in viral marketing, and from the good, ie. successful selection also depends on further deployment of the scale of the group. Later, relevant photos and videos can be added to the group, discussions can be held, links to relevant resources on other sites can be provided, and links can also be created to other tools in the social network. Groups are also suitable for researching consumer opinion because polls can be organized in them [12].

B. Events and Initiatives

The events are a virtual announcement of an online or offline event, which may be a corporate seminar or party, the opening of an exhibition or another act of corporate social responsibility, a virtual press conference, etc. similar.

Creating an event, like creating a group, takes time and effort and is relatively easy, while at the same time highly effective. Again, it has all the trappings of a group, but the difference is that it is positioned in time - from-to. Inviting

people to re-engage is important. Technology makes it easier for people to organize around common interests and goals. They connect quickly and easily, discover and share information among themselves, coordinate plans and future actions [13]. The power of the social network here is mainly expressed in the fact that everyone has the option to confirm their presence at the event and thus all their contacts also see this confirmation and can accordingly express their interest in the event in turn.

Events can be included, join groups. Again, taggable photos and tagging the people in them are a powerful tool for impact and promotion.

A. The engagement of interactive content

Interactive content is any online material that allows the user to actively engage with the particular organization. It can consist of interactive infographics, long-form articles, interactive videos, quizzes, surveys, and more. Quality interactive content usually requires design time and technical work time to include interactive functionality and moving elements. For example, a bank can create a mortgage calculator that is useful in providing quick advice to the buyer persona [1].

B. Posting Personal Statuses

Often users put a comment or link in their status box that they want to be seen by as many people as possible. It is a tool that can be successfully used by marketers. The status field, especially with personalities concentrating a wider circle of acquaintances, can well engage and promote a new site, new products and event.

C. The importance of sharing photos, videos and links

Information sharing of all types is a key element of Web 2.0. In the more common case, it is simply multiplication, generation, not so much creation. In this regard, social networks are no exception. Their main purpose is precisely sharing - mostly photos, videos and links. Online sharing refers to the exchange, distribution and receipt of content. Different kind of information can be shared like personal experiences, opinion, professional experience etc. Companies need to think about what kind of online sharing will contribute to having targeted conversations and building relationships.

A study by Zlatanova, G., Roussinov, D., Gaydarova, M., Paskalev, E., Abedinov, F., Krastev.P., cardiologists show that sharing photos on Facebook with negative content affects heart rhythm disorders in a negative direction [14].

Less time spent on social media leads to less heart disease [2].

III. CONCLUSION

In order for content marketing to have an impact on users, it is necessary to analyze the target group that uses the platform and direct the content to a certain platform with the relevant users. Without a thorough understanding of the users for whom content marketing is intended, it will not work well.

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