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## A STUDY ON CONTENT MARKETING AND HOW IT IS BEING USED TO TARGET CUSTOMERS

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### ABSTRACT

*Content marketing is the new age marketing tool for any company or organization. As today's economy has become, mostly digital driven and completely information driven, companies all over the world are focusing on more effective and efficient way of sharing the said information about the product. The real problem is that unlike customers of past, today people are more aware and informed, they know that not only can they decide what information they wish to receive, but also decide in which form they wish to receive it. People know which platform will provide them with what kind of information and how they can benefit from that information. This paper discuss how the concept of content marketing is being used in different business and what is the effect of content marketing on business process and outcome of some companies.*

### KEYWORDS

content marketing, information, platform, benefit.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As the time moves forward, evolution is eminent for survival. Be it may human beings, animals of the jungle, machines equipment and technology used by companies and organizations, or the way to communicate with media to present/promote and advertise your product. With the increase in competition in the market, need for innovative ways of marketing is becoming eminent. Now the survival of a firm is not only dependent on the type of product they are producing but also on the ways they promote their products and services. As the customers are becoming more demanding, one needs to stand out from this crowded competition to be more attractive to the customers. And thus it is necessary to give more information to the customers about products or services, that too in a proper way, through right channel, right details, and targeting right type of customers.

As most customers are able to access to internet using their computers, laptops and mobile phones, they are tuned in and connected to the digital world all day. And thus consumption of content online is becoming a common habit among online users. Besides, there are also audience who prefer other channels such as print media, television, radio, billboards and many more.

Though the concept of content marketing may seem new to most of us, in reality it was being used by few companies since late 1800s. In today's world there is a lot of confusion to people both businessmen and customers as to how content marketing actually works. And even though content marketing in today modern world may seem like a form of online marketing, it is totally not so. Content marketing maybe consist of few features of online marketing or online promotion, but it also has a broader scope. In this research an attempt has been made to understand how few famous companies are using and have been using the concept of content marketing. Along with that, with a survey conducted an attempt has been made to understand consumers perception of few methods being used by those companies way of promoting their product and services, by the use of content marketing. This paper is divided in 7 parts. First part is Introduction, second part consist of Literature Review, the third part is Objective, fourth part is Research Methodology, fifth part consist of Data Analysis and Interpretation, sixth part is of Findings and Discussions, and the last seventh part concludes the paper with Conclusion.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Pulizzi (2013), customer needs is crucial for content marketing. Therefore, all content created by a company should be based on the need of their customers.

As mentioned in "The role of content marketing in social media content communities" (Du Plessis, 2017):- Fewer studies focus on social media content communities whose main purpose is to share content in various formats among users (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Recently, social media content communities have become more prominent because of brands that use content marketing as a branding technique. Content marketing is a contemporary marketing paradigm with many long term benefits such as building brand loyalty by engaging with the target audience with valuable content without employing promotional techniques

In the article 'The Review of Content Marketing as a new Trend in Marketing Practices' Angel Wong An Kee pointed out:- It is important for marketers to alter the contents to a way that they are culturally relevant and at the same time ensuring contents to be appropriate and accurate to maintain a consistent brand image. There are three main components in managing global content, which are people, company processes and system. All branches in different countries have to make all three to work together in order to create a clear and uncluttered brand image in each foreign office. (Wong, 2015)

There is a definite reason for companies and organizations increased use of the content marketing. Consumers are becoming more aware of the options they have for every product. And thus the only way companies can attract customers is by educating them further. Since customers are so well informed about their bargaining power, the only way companies can survive in long range is by educating them further. This can be only done by giving them more information they can provide to the customers from whichever source and means necessary. This is where content marketing comes in. According to Mandloys Digital Agency, content marketing is: "The creation of content that is relevant, compelling, entertaining and valuable and the said content must be consistently provided to the customers to maintain or change the behavior of customers. Content marketing is an essential marketing activity that helps retain customers, as well as attracting new ones and helps companies to build a strong brand and brand image." (align.me, 2013)

That is the reason companies and businesses are using online media and also the traditional offline media to continuously promote their products and services. Companies have to continuously engage in more advanced and active promotional techniques to retain and attract customers.

Since there are lots of options for the customers, the like to move towards those products and services which feel more attractive to them, to which the can correlate in one way or other, and the most important factor being the products and services which provide them with accurate information.

**3. OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand how companies are using content marketing.
2. To find out which mode or type of content marketing attracts the consumers.

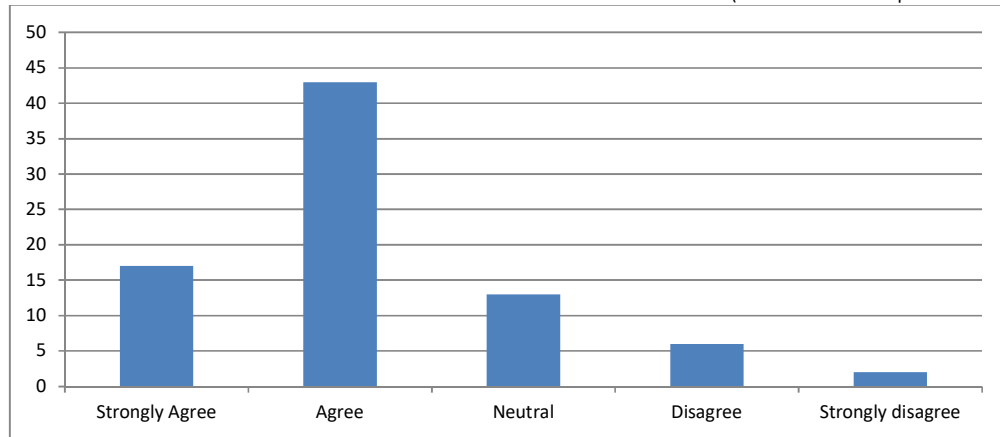
**4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The nature of this research is mostly qualitative and quantitative, with a desire to understand how content marketing is being used. Data used in this research are of primary as well as secondary type. The primary data was collected through survey conducted of few people, and the secondary data consist of information gathered from different sources and advertisements done by different companies. The research technique is Qualitative in nature backed by data collected through survey.

**5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

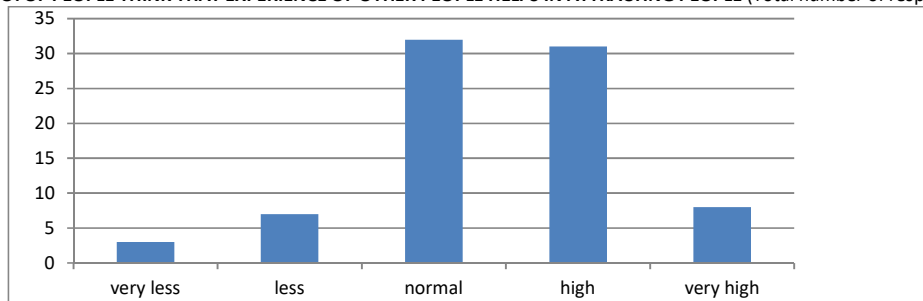
- I. More than 80% of the respondent felt that using humor in the advertisement helps on attracting the customers.

**TABLE 1: NO. OF PEOPLE FEEL THAT HUMOR IN ADS HELP IN ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS** (Total number of respondent is 80)



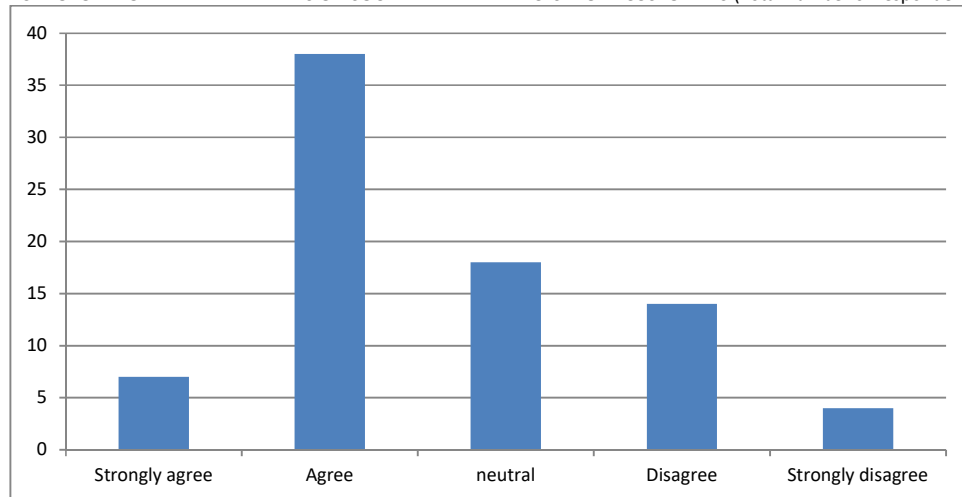
- II. Nearly 50% of the respondent felt that they feel highly motivated towards a product or service if they read about the experience of some other customers, and nearly 40% said they there will be average level of motivation.

**TABLE 2: NO. OF PEOPLE THINK THAT EXPERIENCE OF OTHER PEOPLE HELPS IN ATTRACTING PEOPLE** (Total number of respondent is 80)



- III. Nearly 56% of the respondents believe that products and services being promoted on social media attract more customers. Though 22% of the respondents have neutral opinion regarding the statement, only 20% think that the statement is wrong.

**TABLE 3: NO. OF PEOPLE THINK THAT ADS ON SOCIAL MEDIA ATTRACTS MORE CUSTOMERS** (Total number of respondent is 80)



## 6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Use of the concept of content marketing has increased in the last few decades. Concept of content marketing is not confined to any particular type of industry. If it is being used in automobile sector for example VOLVO, it is also being used in FMCG sector AMUL. If it is being used to sell tangible products like OREO, it is also being used by companies providing services such as ZOMATO.

There are many examples of companies and organizations using content marketing to promote their product and services. Few may be using traditional ways such as billboards or television ads, and few may be using modern sources such as electronic media. But all of them center around one core concept of content marketing, providing more relevant, compelling, entertaining and valuable information to the customers.

### Catchy ads of ZOMATO

Zomato is an Indian restaurant search and discovery service founded in 2008 by Deepinder Goyal and Pankaj Chaddah. It currently operates in 24 countries. It provides information and reviews on restaurants, including images of menus where the restaurant does not have its own website.

Zomato's is not the only food delivery service in India. In almost every part of India, if Zomato is there one can and will also find Swiggy. Now even though Swiggy has been in the market longer than Zomato, Zomato has covered the gap and now running neck to neck with Swiggy. Zomato has been able to do this by not charging a big commission to the restaurants, and by their catchy ads.

Their catchy ads are enough to attract the attention of the customers. Their ads have humor in it. Along with that they sometimes also take political stands to convey some kind of message to public but in the process they also advertise their products in such a way that their outdoor ads on dark red billboards are hard to ignore.

What Zomato is doing is that they are trying to explain the main thing about their service in a creative way, which is timely delivery of any kind of food anywhere. Their habit of confirming the order 2-3 times is also very impressive. And instead of charging for the extra delivery charge they ask the customers if they want to tip the delivery boy.

*"The mantras of success for them are producing great content in an optimum number, and promote them well on social networks."* (TechShu 360' Digital Marketing, 2015)

### Some catchy ads used by Zomato

- "oonchi hai building? Lift teri band hai? We'll still deliver in time". (Ramnath, 2017)
- I am great in bed- Breakfast. (Ramnath, 2017)
- Mera pizza ghar aaya (Ramnath, 2017)
- Rajni can't. We can. (Ramnath, 2017)

These catchy ads helped Zomato in attracting customers, very much. Table 1, in Data interpretation section also confirms that adding humor in ads helps in attracting customers.

### PROMOTIONAL ADS USED BY AMUL

*Amul understood the mantra for reaching mass's heart like no other did.* (TechShu 360' Digital Marketing, 2015)

"Utterly buttery delicious...Amul" leaves us all nostalgic. They have mastered the art of content marketing with their unique ads that focuses on puns and jokes on all type of social issues and sometimes political issues. They address trending news through their caricatures. The Amul girl has become one of the most famous faces as a mascot, easily recognizable anywhere.

**It reflects the Indian heritage which the brand carries with it, typified by the tag line "Taste of India",** that helps an Indian consumer connect with the brand.

Same as Zomato their way of adding humor and jokes in their ads has helped them a lot.

### Shaadi.Com

In Indian culture weddings are a serious business. Everything needs to be perfect. Shadi.com always tries to resonate with their audience. The videos they upload on YouTube and their website always tell some kind of story for the listeners. And this is what separates Shaadi.com from other matrimony sites.

Their videos which come under the category of #MeriShaadiKarwao are mostly hilarious to the core. Similarly, there are other campaigns like "Love, arranged by Shaadi.com" or "Amazing proposals", which resonate perfectly with their target audience. (TechShu 360' Digital Marketing, 2015)

Along with these types of videos and ads, they also use and show the experience of their other customers on their website. The experience shared by previous customers also helps in attracting new customers. Though this technique is not unique and is being used by many companies in matrimony industry as well in other industries.

Table 2, in Data interpretation section also confirms that people feel more motivated towards a product if they read about the experience of other customers.

### John Deere- the accidental creator of content marketing

Anyone anywhere who is associated with the term content marketing knows about John Deere and their famous magazine THE FURROW, ironically it is considered as the first example of content marketing. Ironic because the word content marketing was not defined at that time.

First published by John Deere in 1895, they aimed to help the company's customers with the issues they faced. They didn't advertise any of their ads in the magazine. The whole of the book was focused on the experience of other customers of the company and different ways in which farmers can improve their business. In a way the magazine looked like that it was a book of some agriculture type, not that of John Deere. (Hall, 2018)

There are countless other examples where companies use experience and stories of other customers to attract other customers. They use their own website's chat room. In some cases, they even create a separate blog for this purpose.

### INVOLVEMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

#### Volvo- Super Bowl 2015

Sometimes using your own content is not necessary; this was proved to be true from the sheer stroke of genius shown by Volvo in 2015 Super Bowl. While other car companies did spend nearly 60 million USD combined, Volvo played a trick by simply using the fact that people like to participate in games and contests, and they like to be on social media.

The marketing team of Volvo simply asked people to tweet name of a person they would like to have a brand new Volvo for free followed by #VolvoContest whenever they say any ads of any car in the commercials. The result was that there were 2,000 #VolvoContest-tweets per minute every time other car manufacturers' commercials aired. Other companies got a 30 second air time and Volvo without spending huge money was top of mind the entire game.

This incident also proves that if your content is good enough and resonates with the mentality and requirements of the consumers then you can be very successful. Table 3, in Data interpretation section also confirms shows that customers feel more attracted towards products or services which are frequently promoted on social media.

#### Oreo India

When Oreo entered the Indian market, it faced the biggest problem any company can have due to external factors. And that was trying to compete in a market where your competitors already have a strong foothold of the market. Since the products of the Oreo were not so different from that of Britannia and Parle, they need a new way to promote their product. Since other companies were focusing on 'What you are eating?' and tried to give information about the products regarding its composition and what it is made of, Oreo decided to focus on 'How you should eat?'. For this they started brand awareness campaign "#DailyDunk". In it with the help of celebrity endorsement they started telling how we should eat our product. This not only did attract kids and teenagers but also attracted grownup customers.

## 7. CONCLUSION

It is clear that most of the companies are working very successfully with the help of content marketing. Either willingly or unwillingly, either knowingly or unknowingly companies or organizations in one form or other use the concept of content marketing. Not only this but the mentality of consumer is also transforming in such a way that the companies are now in a way being forced to be content oriented.

- Companies are taking help of online media as well as traditional media to convey their message to the customers.
- Moreover, instead of trying to engage all the types of customers at once, they are trying to target specific customers at a time. Zomato also does ads to attract normal foodies from their ads like “Rajani Cant, We Can”, and along with that they are trying to attract the pizza lovers from one message, and roll lovers from another message.  
Instead of promoting their product in general way, they are now becoming content oriented or information oriented.
- Targeting different type of customers through different ads is a thing not only being followed by Zomato and Shadi.com but by many other companies.
- Explain very ordinary stuffs about your product or services in a creative and interesting way did helped Oreo in making a stand in the Indian market.
- Customers also agree to some extent that humor does helps in attracting new customers and in keeping old ones.
- While it may not be possible in all the cases, but one should always use the experience of other customers for their profit as it helps in building trust and confidence among customers and/or consumers.

The way the population is moving from traditional marketing practices to social media marketing or online media marketing, there is less scope for a company who will not become content oriented and follow the rules of content marketing.

Even though only few examples were taken in this research, if one looks all around themselves, there will hardly be any sector or industry which does not has more than few companies and firms already following the concept of content marketing. And if even one company in a sector or industry starts using content marketing, it becomes essential for their competitors to start doing that too.

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