Content Marketing Strategy
For a Highly Specialized B2B Niche Company

Case company: EFLA Oy

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to establish a marketing strategy for a highly specialized B2B niche company. The case company is EFLA Oy located in Porvoo, Finland. The thesis consists of four main parts including theoretical framework, research, analysis and recommendations.

The theoretical part deals with the concept of SOSTAC model and content marketing. Based on those theories, the researcher studied and compared various theories to explore the strategy framework and content marketing concept.

There are two research methods applied in this research. Firstly, the qualitative research was conducted by the author by interviewing four members of EFLA’s Sales & Marketing Team. They were asked a set of questions which supports the author to complete her analysis and deeply understand the company situation. The second method is quantitative research. The data was collected from the company’s internal system and analysed in several sections of the thesis.

By following the SOSTAC model and the concept of content marketing, this research is aimed to contribute to EFLA’s development in marketing and building a good reputation in an international environment. The thesis could not only benefit its stakeholders, but it also could give future researchers and other SMEs which have similar characteristics an example of a content marketing strategy for B2B companies.

Keywords  Content Marketing, Digital Marketing, International Marketing

Pages  55 pages including appendices 56 pages
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2B: Business-to-Business
SEO: Search engine optimization
AGL: Airfield Ground Lighting
SME: Small and Medium-sized enterprise
KPI: Key performance indicator
E.g.: For example
CTA: Call-to-action
Fig.: Figure
RFI: Request for information
1 INTRODUCTION

Content marketing is an essential component for more meaningful and highly involving marketing campaigns. A content marketing strategy can be adjusted for a range of business models; thus, its flexibility can help most firms to figure out their paths to customers’ hearts by providing appealing content. However, it is crucial for all companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) who have modest budgets compared to others, to break through the clutter of any potential marketing campaigns from rivals (Mediaplanet, 2018). The best strategy regarding this matter will be explored at the end of the thesis after a process of testing, analyzing and executing the strategy and action plan.

The chosen company is where the thesis writer worked as a marketing intern for 4 months from February 2019 to June 2019. The idea of the thesis topic was proposed after a discussion between the author and the marketing team of the firm based on the current problem they were facing.

This thesis will focus on an issue regarding the visibility of the case company on the Internet. As it was founded prior to the existence of online networks, the company relied purely on offline campaigns and direct sales. Today, however, the rapid growth of technology together with the development of the company have made digital marketing, especially content marketing, among the highest priorities.

As a result, the objective of this thesis is to establish a clear strategy and a feasible action plan of an online marketing campaign for the firm with the aim of increasing brand awareness of different stakeholders of the company.

1.1 Company Description

The case company is **EFLA Oy** located in Porvoo, Finland. The business started operating under the name of Ensto in 1985. EFLA Oy was officially founded in 2003, separated from the parent company, specializing in Airfield Ground Lighting (AGL) circuit components. **EFLA Oy** now belongs to EM Group.

**EFLA Oy** has over 40 employees in Porvoo, Finland, with the revenue of exceeding 10 million euros in 2018. In addition, **EFLA Oy** also established a joint venture with Jiangsu Xinghua Airport Facilities Co. LTD in China, which brought the turnover of approximately 3 million euros in 2018 (EFLA, 2018).
EFLA Oy now manufactures and sells five product lines: transformers, primary connectors, secondary connectors, prefabricated leads and lightning protection. Currently, the main groups of customers are AGL circuit manufacturers, installation companies and airports. EFLA’s products have been installed in most international airports all around the world such as Singapore, Delhi, Helsinki, Istanbul, Beijing and so on.

1.2 Research Questions

The thesis topic is suggested by the case company based on its current situation. It is aimed to find out the solution to the main question:

*What type of content marketing strategy should a highly specialized B2B niche company apply to improve its visibility on the Internet and the visitor-to-lead conversion rate?*

To achieve the aim of the thesis, these are the sub-questions needed to be answered:

1. How could the company develop its content marketing to increase the number of visitors to their webpages?
2. How could they improve the visitor-to-lead conversion rate?

1.3 Research Objectives and Methods

At the end of the process, the author aims to achieve these following objectives:

- To analyze the current situation of the industry and the company itself.
- To gain more understanding of content marketing for a niche manufacturing business.
- To differentiate the marketing techniques for a niche company from the others.
- To find out a cost-efficient solution for reaching the target audience.
- To formulate a clear strategy for the company to adopt an effective campaign of content marketing.

There are two research methods applied to this thesis including qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative research is implemented by interviewing the sales and marketing team of EFLA Oy to explore the opportunities and challenges they are facing. Meanwhile, quantitative research is conducted through a survey whose respondents are all frequent contacts of the firm. In addition, all the data needed to analyze
the virtual presence of EFLA Oy is collected from web-based software and the marketing team of the company.

1.4 Thesis Structure

The thesis consists of six main sections, which are: Introduction, Theoretical Framework, Research, Analysis, Recommendations, and Conclusion.

Following the introduction of the company, the thesis questions and objectives, the author will study about a variety of terminologies used in the thesis, the concept of content marketing, and the model applied to form the strategy in the Theoretical Framework.

In the Research section, the author will collect data by interviewing the Sales and Marketing team of EFLA Oy, conducting the questionnaire of customer satisfaction and statistical insight data from the website traffic.

Afterward, an analysis of the collected data will be devised and then the author will give suggestions based on the evaluated information. Lastly, the conclusion is presented to summarize the entire work of the thesis.

1.5 Limitations

Content marketing is a broad field, however, in this thesis, the author will focus mainly on the digital channels because it is more suitable for international SMEs like EFLA Oy.

Regarding social media channels, as EFLA Oy is a B2B company, all social media platforms that are more likely to reach out to consumers rather than businesses and organizations will be excluded, for example Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. EFLA Oy will pay attention to Twitter and LinkedIn to approach experts, decision-makers, and companies within the field. On top of that, as a B2B company, target customers are businesses so all literature review will concentrate on customers as a business instead of as a consumer.

This thesis is limited to AGL business field only, therefore, it may not be applied to other industries due to the unique characteristic of this niche market.
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, the author will discuss two primary topics which are SOSTAC Model and Content Marketing Concept. These two theories will be the premise for the analysis in the later chapter. In detail, the SOSTAC Model is used for defining the process of creating and controlling marketing campaigns, while, Content Marketing Concept will be the guideline for what types of content and how content should be created.

2.1 SOSTAC Model

The model was introduced by Paul R. Smith in 1990s and was rated as one of the top three favorite models of marketers. SOSTAC stands for six sections of a marketing plan: Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control. As it is logical and relevant for the process of creating a marketing plan, the framework is commonly applied to various scales of businesses worldwide (SmartInsights, 2018).

Situation Analysis

The first step of the framework is to analyze the current situation of the company in order to provide the marketer with a general review of the organization. Marketeers need to carry out four main analyses to collect enough information for the next stages:

- **Customer analysis**: who digital customers are, a description of their demographics, behaviors, needs, and goals. Their personas should be described clearly with the scenarios which lead them to interact with the brand online. The persona should define their company sizes location, the frequency of buying products, stages in the purchase cycle.
- **External and internal factor analysis**: SWOT analysis (a study of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) of the entire organization.
- **Competitor analysis**: a review of how competitors acquire their customers, what their competitive advantages are. The comparison should be made based on a list of measurements correlated with the research topic.
- **Digital channels landscape**: a range of possible channels to approach target audiences and its current impacts. (Swan, 2018)

Chaffey (2015) in the book “Digital Business and E-Commerce Management” established a comprehensive situation analysis which could fit any digital marketing purposes of any scales of businesses (Fig.1).
Figure 1. Situation Analysis Inputs (Chaffey, 2015, p.336)

- **Demand analysis**: to identify the needs of existing and potential customers for electronic service. After conducting the research, these are statistics that need to be concluded: proportions of customers using the Internet, customers visiting the website or any other online communication channels, customers being influenced easily by web-based marketing and the percentage of online purchasers.

- **Competitor analysis**: to review how competitors do digital marketing. Depending on different goals, benchmarks are set to match those purposes. According to Chaffey et al. (2009), there are seven main criteria:
  - Examination of inner capacities: resources, processes and online touchpoints of webpages
  - Fundamental brand proposition versus online value proposition: a comparison of the marketing mix and the addition of web services
  - Quantitative and qualitative research: data collected from customer questionnaire, independent audit (sales revenue, market share, conversion rates, etc.)
  - “In-sector and out-of-sector”: benchmarking against competitor within the industry and also other sites which attract similar target audience (i.e. online publisher, reviewing blogs, etc.)
- Financial and non-financial measurement: a consideration of both profits, tax submissions and other aspects of their capabilities
- User feedbacks versus expert assessment: a collection of opinions from customers and professionals

- **SWOT analysis**: Chaffey (2015) explained thoroughly in the following table (Table 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The organization</th>
<th>Strengths — S</th>
<th>Weaknesses — W</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Existing brand</td>
<td>1. Brand perception</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Existing customer base</td>
<td>2. Intermediate use</td>
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<td>3. Existing distribution</td>
<td>3. Technology/skill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities — O</td>
<td>SO strategies</td>
<td>WO strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Cross-selling</td>
<td>Leverage strengths to maximize opportunities = attacking strategy</td>
<td>Counter weaknesses through exploiting opportunities = build strengths for attacking strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. New markets</td>
<td>ST strategies</td>
<td>Counter weaknesses and threats = build strengths for defensive strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. New services</td>
<td>Leverage strengths to minimize threat = defensive strategy</td>
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<td>4. Alliance/co-branding</td>
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<td>Threats — T</td>
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<td>1. Customer choice</td>
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<td>4. Channel conflicts</td>
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<td>5. Social networks</td>
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### Table 1. SWOT analysis (Chaffey, 2015, p.337)

**Objectives**

Objectives should be **S.M.A.R.T** which is a list of criteria made by Doran (1981), in which:

- **S** stands for Specific, the goal should be well defined and easy to understand
- **M** stands for Measurable, which means that the results are possible to be evaluated whether they are achieved
- **A** stands for Assignable, the task is clearly assigned to someone. Later, it is popular that this criterion is adjusted to Achievable or Attainable, which indicates the possibility of achieving projected goals (Frey & Osterloh, p.234, 2002)
- **R** stands for Realistic, which is similar to Achievable, Frey and Osterloh (2002) modified it to Relevant, the objective must be challenging, related to the business they are doing and have the resources available to complete.
- **T** stands for Time-related, the results should be specified when it could be achieved

In addition, some authors have added several “letters”. Yemm (2013) expanded SMART goals to SMARTER, in which E and R stand for Evaluated and Reviewed. The goals that have been set need to be measured and
reflected afterward. Whilst, Mac (2017) interpreted as Exciting and Recorded.

Furthermore, the list of objectives should be categorized based on the length of the term. There should be three different durations: short term, medium term and long term (Smith & Chaffey, 2008, p.440).

**Strategy**

According to Chaffey (2015), Strategy should define two primary sections: target market strategy and content strategy.

**Figure 2. Stages in target market strategy development (Chaffey, 2015, p. 353)**

Regarding target market strategy, it is fourfold. The first step is to identify the market segmentation. Similar to the customer analysis mentioned in the Situation Analysis (Swan, 2018), this stage is about describing and developing customer personas to clearly define whom the company is serving and what they want to get from the organization. In particular, to target customers who are businesses, this requires information about the company size, their locations, markets, preferences, and attitudes. (Circle Research, 2018)

In terms of B2B market segmentation, as the buying process of organizations is different from consumers, the method to define market segments is distinct. According to Hague and Harrison (2013), segmentation could be defined in four ways categorized in the spectrum from “easy to do, easy to copy by the competition” on the left to “hard to
do, hard to copy by the competition” on the right (see fig. 3). There are four main variables including:

- Convenience: Geography and language
- Firmographics: Company size and selling products
- Behavior: Price sensitive, delivery sensitive and quality sensitive
- Needs: Security, power, and esteem

![Figure 3. The road to a need-based segmentation (Hague & Harrison, 2013)](image)

After identifying a variety of segments, the company needs to choose their most suitable targets, and position their products to match those targets, which means how the company wants their brand and products to be seen. Depending on business needs, the online value proposition should be appealing and persuasive to the audience. Lastly, it is necessary to plan the online marketing mix and resources to attain objectives (Chaffey, 2015, p. 353).

Meanwhile, it is apparent that to make the strategy work, there is a need for providing quality content. It is not only about the published content itself, but also about quality writers, a long-run editorial calendar and the levels of engagement of each content (Pulizzi, 2013). Ghost (1998) recommended that to attract customers, the company needs to create free digital value to become a “customer magnet”, which is later known as Content Marketing. The definition and concept of Content Marketing will be discussed comprehensively in the next chapter.

**Tactics**

Tactics are the specific tools which are used to reach the goals. Each tactic needs to be provided with a specific key performance indicator (KPI) to be measured in the later phase. When it comes to digital marketing, Boomers and Bitners (1981) suggested the 7Ps of the marketing mix and Chaffey (2015) adopted the model into the digital marketing world in figure 4.
Figure 4. The 7Ps of the marketing mix (Chaffey, 2015)

**Actions**

This stage covers how to execute the marketing plan, the responsibility of each team member, resources, and budget preparation. An action plan should also integrate a risk assessment, development process, and change management to adjust the plan to the situation. (Swan, 2018)

**Control**

The control plan allows the company to monitor and track their performance with a series of metrics. It could be achieved by conducting research, information from the intranet, website statistics, tracking software, etc. (Swan, 2018).

### 2.2 Content Marketing Concept

Content Marketing has been widely known and applied in the last few decades because of its effectiveness and competitive advantages it could bring to the organization. One of the most popular definition is from the Content Marketing Institute, written by Pulizzi (2013):

“Content marketing is 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.” (Pulizzi, 2013, p.5)

Robert Rose (2011) defined shortly but easy-to-understand as an elevator pitch of content marketing: “Traditional marketing and advertising is telling the world you are a rock star. Content marketing is showing the world that you are one.”
Meanwhile, content marketing strategy is identified by Chaffey (2015) as a process of choosing, sourcing, scheduling, and motivating audience to share and spread the relevant content types in order to achieve their business objectives.

2.2.1 Audience Personas

To create relevant content types for the audience, it is obvious that it is not about the company itself. However, many organizations do this mistake so often without realizing it (Pulizzi, 2017). Pulizzi (2013) discussed that “If you are thinking and acting like a media company and publisher, everything you do with your content marketing will begin and end with your audience.” (Pulizzi, 2013, p.93)

The reason why thinking like a journalist makes content more compelling is that the focus is the audience instead of the product, the company needs to consider five main insights:

- **Priority initiatives**: What are top problems buyer personas spend their time, effort and budget to learn about?
- **Success factors**: Is there any visible measurements that audience associate it with success? (to drive profits, to cut costs, to be more productive, etc.)
- **Perceived barriers**: What problems can trigger audience personas to wonder how the organization could help he/she tackle those problems?
- **Buying process**: Which path do they follow to find out the answer to their perceived barriers?
- **Decision criteria**: Which factor are taken into consideration when the customer evaluates different options? (Pulizzi, 2013, p.97)

According to Up Close and Persona (2018), to paint the picture of a customer, there is a series of questions need to be answered:

1. What is their gender, race, and age range?
2. What titles this person could hold?
3. How many years do people hold that title on average?
4. Whom does this person answer to?
5. Is there potential for development?
6. What are their responsibilities with that position?
7. What goals must they achieve?
8. Which tasks and results relevant to the problem that the company can assist in?
9. What types of content is the buyer persona captivated?
10. What keywords does the persona use to find what they need?
11. Are they aware of the problem?
12. Have they started to solve the problem?
13. How are they dealing with the problem?
14. If they have been solving the problem, what is effective and what is not?
15. What is motivating them?
16. What are they trying to avoid?
17. What could hinder the deal?

2.2.2 The engagement cycle

Pulizzi (2013) defined the engagement cycle as “a combination of your internal sales process and how you have defined the customer’s buying cycle.” This method is developed by Pulizzi in the book “Epic Content Marketing”, 2013. In particular, the audience persona should be associated with the sale process, each business could have its own sales funnel process, however, in general, there are five main stages:

- **Contacts**: whom company representatives have contacted or have introduced to.
- **Leads**: who have indicated that they have interest in the company or product.
- **Qualified opportunities**: who are qualified leads that have intentions to buy the solution for their problems.
- **Finalists**: qualified opportunities with people who shorten their lists to 2 or 3 alternatives in which the company is one of those options.
- **Verbal agreement**: the company is chosen as the final decision and negotiating with the partner.

(Pulizzi, 2013, p.106)
Concerning the buying process, Rose and Pulizzi concluded in the following chart (fig. 6)

The process has six phases from when audiences are aware of the brand to when they are close to becoming a customer:

- **Awareness**: the person is having a problem and finds several options existing in the market to solve the problem.
- **Information search**: he/she is searching for more information about the product.
- **Request for pricing/vendor information**: he/she wants to know the price or the offer.
- **Purchase decision**: sometimes people decide not to purchase after doing research, but those who still want to purchase will continue seeking more options and compare them.
- **Competitive alternatives**: the person compare options they have; they may come back to the Awareness stage to learn more about the product.
- **Shortlist**: the contract is closely being made.

(Rose & Pulizzi, 2011)

After drafting the sales process and buying cycle, the company gains more understanding about their target audience and also about itself. The next step is to map out which content is suitable for which target group. It can be seen in the Content Segmentation Grid below that each type of content matches with each group, in some case, one type of content could target more than one group of audience (Rose & Pulizzi, 2011).
Table 2. Content segmentation grid (Rose & Pulizzi, 2011)

Creating content becomes the best tool for marketing when the company becomes the leading content creator in the field. It is not necessary and seems to be challenging to be a leading publisher in a broad topic, but it is possible to be the leader of a niche field which only shares a small number of audiences, but they are more active and involved with the content. This technique is called Niche Content, created by Pulizzi (2013).

2.2.3 Content Types

Figure 7. Content marketing matrix (Chaffey, 2018)

According to Chaffey (2018), content types could be categorized into four quadrants (Fig. 7) based on its functions, including Entertain, Inspire,
Educate and Convince. Thus, it can be seen from Fig. 6 that those content types in third and fourth quadrants are more appropriate for approaching businesses since it is more rational which is more essential to decisions in businesses. Depending on the purpose of each marketing campaign, different formats should be chosen. For example, if the marketer aims to persuade audiences to buy the product based, datasheets, price guides or case studies are recommended for the campaign (Chaffey, 2018).

Content Marketing Institute and Marketing Profs (2018) established a report about the content marketing strategy for B2B, which found out popular formats for B2B audiences. The most favorite type in North America is social media content (other than videos), followed by case studies. (Fig. 8)

![Types of Content marketing B2B marketers use for content marketing purposes](chart.png)

**Figure 8.** B2B content marketing tactic usage (Content Marketing Institute & MarketingProfs, 2018)

On the other hand, in the survey conducted by Clutch (2018), it is found that the top five digital content types which B2B audiences favor are Blogs/articles, Reviews, Product description, Video/webinars and Case study. (Fig. 9)
2.2.4 Content Distribution

In general, there are three categories of content distribution opportunities which are:

- **Paid media**: a paid placement a business pays to get more media exposure, e.g.: pay per click, social media ads, etc.

- **Owned media**: content assets that a business establishes and has full control over it, e.g.: company website, blogs, social media accounts

- **Earned media**: media a business gains through publicity, online word-of-mouth at no charge, e.g.: recommendations, retweets, mentions, etc.

(Machin, 2016)
As can be seen from fig. 10, the “sweet spot” of content marketing is a combination of all three options, each one reinforces and supplements the others, that helps marketers to establish an optimized strategy (Machin, 2016).

In B2B Content Marketing Report 2018, Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs found that the five most popular channels consist of Emails, Social Media Platforms, Blogs, In-person Events and Virtual Events (Fig. 11). However, Harris (2018) suggested that there are four factors need to be considered before making any decisions of choosing distribution channels.

- **Audience characteristics**: based on what has been found in the Audience Personas, chosen channels should align with those elements.
- **Rules of engagement**: would lengthy meaningful articles or short eye-catching content appeal to the target audience?
- **Communication style**: what types of voices, tones should be applied when creating contents? Are there any kinds of voices need to be avoided?
- **Brand resources and capability**: which resources need to be prepared to start the conversation with audiences? (Harris, 2018)
2.2.5 Essential distribution tools for B2B digital marketing

**Website**

This is considered as a showcase of all product lines from the business, it provides audiences with all the information they need and contact details for future communication. It is categorized as Owned Media because of the control over it. Moreover, a website could establish many formats of content such as videos, blogs, e-books, etc. (Pullizi, 2013).

**Emails**

Emails are very popular for staying in touch with clients and subscribers. Emails allow a business to deliver customized information to audiences. Common email campaigns could be e-newsletters, product update or announcements (Hussain, 2016).

**Social media**

Social media is another way to approach audiences more conversationally. There are a variety of channels for different purposes in which the company will choose suitable channels to build a brand image for their organization and deepen their relationships with clients (Thewriterfinder, 2019).

**Search engine optimizations (SEO)**

SEO is the process of attracting more visitors to the website from organic, free search result lists generated by web search engines such as Google search, Bing, Baidu, etc. The higher the page rank is, the more likely that visitor will click on the webpage to get more information (Ortiz-Cordova & Jansen, 2012).

2.2.6 Building an editorial calendar

An editorial calendar is not only a schedule for publishing content but also a tool to draft all the content creation process including the audience personas, the engagement cycle and media formats (Pulizzi, 2013, p.132).

The editorial calendar will help the organization to organize and categorize all content creation and publishing, define content distribution channels which fit each audience persona, assign people to be responsible for, make sure that the created content aligned with the content strategy, and evaluate the capability and resources to take actions (Eng, 2018).
According to Pulizzi (2013), there are a plenty of editorial calendar styles that could be chosen depending on the organization’s preferences, however, the essential elements should be:

- Content title
- Content type
- Audience persona
- Writer
- Editor
- Distribution channels
- Publication date
- Status
- Call to action
- Notes
- KPI

Table 3. An example of editorial calendar (Pulizzi, 2013, p.134)

Content details could also be included in the editorial calendar or separate in another document. In addition, the tone and voice when “telling stories” should be congruent and follow the brand guideline (Pulizzi, 2013, p.136).

Eng (2018) discussed another version of the editorial calendars which still mentions the essential elements that Pulizzi (2013) suggested but under different names. For example, the Content pillar is equivalent to the Topic, while the Funnel stage is similar to the engagement cycle of Audience persona.

Table 4. Sample editorial calendar (Eng, 2018)
2.2.7 Measuring the effectiveness

According to Rose & Pulizzi (2011), in order to measure the performance of a content marketing strategy, there is a range of metrics that need tracking and is categorized into three levels:

- **Primary indicators**: the measurements which the highest executives prefer to know (sales revenue, acquisition cost, etc.)
- **Secondary indicators**: the measurements which are necessary for reporting those primary indicators. These are concerned by managers of marketing departments.
- **User indicators**: in order to examine those secondary indicators, content marketers need to track those metrics.

Each ultimate goal should have its analytics pyramid to measure its results. The goal could be to raise brand awareness, to create more engagement, to generate leads, to upsell or cross-sell, to retain customers or increase the conversion rate. The figure below is an example of increasing leads (fig. 12) (Rose & Pulizzi, 2011).

![Content Marketing Pyramid](image)

**Figure 12.** Content Marketing Pyramid (Rose & Pulizzi, 2011)
2.3 Terminologies and Definitions

In addition to all basic concepts explained in the first two sections of chapter two, there are some terms used within chapter four: Analysis. All terms are defined briefly below:

**Call-to-action (CTA):** An image or a short line of text attached which is compelling enough to provoke audiences to click on and do some actions immediately depending on the goal that CTA (Eisenberg & Eisenberg, 2006).

**Delivery rate:** the ratio of emails delivered successfully to recipients to the total number of emails sent (Vaughan, 2011).

**Open rate:** the proportion of recipients opened the email to the total number of emails sent (Vaughan, 2011).

**Click-through rate:** the percentage of viewers clicked on the CTA button or links to view another page (Lin, 2016).

**Impression:** refers to a view or a time when a page is loaded, the number of impressions is the number of views made by audiences (Brickmarketing.com, 2014)

**Referral traffic:** refers to website visitors coming from other sources except for search engine list (Bashara, 2012).

**Website metatag:** an HTML element of a website which informs audiences briefly about the website content appears in the search result when they search for a specific phrase on the search engine. There are three types of tags including title tag, description tag and keywords tag (Moz.com, 2019).

**Datasheet:** a document which states briefly about product features and technical details. It allows readers to understand the product’s characteristics.

**White paper:** a report which educates and explains clearly a complicated issue to its readers in order to promote a particular product or service (Graham).

**Webinar:** a live online conference which an individual or many individuals in different locations can host a seminar online. It could be viewed from all over the world.
3 RESEARCH

3.1 Case study background

Content marketing is considered as a reliable source for B2B marketing. In a newly released report by Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs (2018), it is shown that 93 percent of the top B2B content marketers claim that their organizations are devoted to content marketing and 96 percent of them agree that thanks to content marketing, their companies are perceived as trust-worthy sources by audiences (Content Marketing Institute & MarketingProfs, 2018).

About seven out of ten B2B purchasers read blog content during their buying cycle and they are willing to share more information to receive content (Demand Gen, 2018). B2B content marketers ranked blog content as the most engaging formats during the awareness stage, whitepapers during consideration and case studies when audiences make decisions (Content Marketing Institute & MarketingProfs, 2018).

Since January 2018, EFLA started to improve its marketing activities by implementing HubSpot Marketing, Sales and Service software. In particular, this software allows the team to manage content, track statistics of online marketing campaigns, and understand audience behaviors. During 2018, EFLA successfully established its new website interface and visual look, defined their audience personas. In 2019, EFLA marketing team expected to structure the content creation process and marketing evaluation.

As the author of this thesis and the company discussed, the purpose of this paper is to research and analyze to establish a n in-depth content marketing plan by studying the concepts and how they could be applied to the company situation.

3.2 Data collection

The data for this research was collected from 20th of March 2019 to 15th of April 2019. There are two pieces of research which are planned to be conducted including qualitative and quantitative researches.

The qualitative research "refers to the meanings, concepts definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things" and not to measure or calculate any numerical data (Berg & Lune, 2012). Meanwhile, the quantitative research is about statistics and their implications (Given, 2008).

Regarding the qualitative research, the author interviewed four members from the Sales and Marketing team of the case company to get an
overview of the current situation of the organization. All interviews are face-to-face interviews and completed in English. The duration of each interview varies from 15 minutes to 30 minutes. Those interviews are designed to be semi-structured, which has a set of prepared questions but is open for further explanation or new questions to be raised (Myers, 2013, p.121). Each two interviewees are asked to answer the same set of questions. There are two sets of questions including Audience Personas and SWOT analysis. All questions can be found in Appendix 1. The interview data will be utilized in those following sections: Audience Personas and SWOT Analysis.

The quantitative research is conducted by using all data collected from the automated system of the company which is HubSpot. This software provides statistics about the website traffic, email and social media insights, that will assist the author in collecting real-time and reliable statistics. All data from this method will be used in various sections which need statistical data from all digital channels.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 Situation analysis

The situation analysis consists of four parts including various analyses of customer groups, internal and external impacts on the company, competitors and online visibility of EFLA.

4.1.1 Audience Analysis

Audience Description

In the first two interviews #1 and #2, they discussed who their customers are and who is involved in the decision-making process when purchasing products for various airport projects. It is identified that there are four groups of audiences including lighting manufacturers, airport operations, consulting firms, and installation companies.

Lighting manufacturers produce a complete airfield light package which consists of many components. Some of those components are outsourced. In particular, lighting manufacturers have been main business partners of EFLA for many years, they are direct suppliers for airport construction projects and EFLA is a subcontractor for them by providing lighting manufacturers with transformers, connectors, and other electric components.

Airport operations are responsible for ensuring that airports run smoothly, safely and efficiently. They involve in many fields, not only aircraft
operations but also security checks, customer service, etc. Regarding airfield, they work with consulting firms and installation companies to construct and maintain airfields.

Consulting firms are groups of professionals in the airport operations industry. They give airport construction projects advice, recommendations for constructing the most efficient airports.

Installation companies are in charge of installing all products on the airfield, they are who install and maintain EFLA’s products. They have technical knowledge and experience in installing products.

**Audience Personas**

The interviewees #1 and #2 are asked a set of questions about audience personas. The interviewee #1 is responsible for Southern Europe, Asia and America, meanwhile, the interviewee #2 is in charge of Europe, the Middle East, and India in particular.

There are three audience personas made based on answers of the two interviewees.

**Persona #1: Lighting manufacturers**

- 40 years old, male
- Sales manager
- Works at Lighting Manufacturer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top problems</th>
<th>Pricing of the product, terms and conditions of the contract, reputation of the product, and quality of the product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>Purchasing components for the company’s product package.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content preferences</td>
<td>Price-oriented information, product compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to purchase EFLA’s products</td>
<td>Having good experience with EFLA’s products before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Persona #2: Consultant companies and airports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top problems</th>
<th>Managing airport project-related challenges, limiting the number of mistakes of the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>Delivering the right solution to the airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content preferences</td>
<td>How to overcome a specific condition on the airfield, product types for special environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to purchase EFLA’s products</td>
<td>Having good experience with EFLA’s products before by their own, being suggested by their business partners, friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for not purchasing from EFLA</td>
<td>Facing some issues with EFLA’s products; they want to support local companies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Persona #3: Installation companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top problems</th>
<th>Updates of new techniques, new products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>Installing products on the airfield, doing maintenance tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content preferences</td>
<td>Easy-to-read general product technical information, technical compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to purchase EFLA’s products</td>
<td>Having good experience with EFLA’s products before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Audience Personas
### 4.1.2 SWOT analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strengths</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • EFLA is the leader in the market of airfield lighting installation. EFLA is the subcontractor of most of leading Western lighting manufacturers.  
• EFLA has local sales partners around the world.  
• EFLA presents a superior website compared to its competitors. | • Current, EFLA does not have a separate marketing strategy but the whole company strategy.  
• There are several local markets secured by local regulations, so EFLA is difficult to join.  
• EFLA is mainly focusing on their direct customers: lighting manufacturers.  
• The content schedule is not consistent. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Opportunities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Threats</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • EFLA can provide training to their customers via webinars, corporate with local partners to promote the brand by publishing blogs, videos, etc.  
• EFLA can approach other groups of audiences who do not directly purchase from EFLA but are parts of decision-making process.  
• EFLA can sell different values to those indirect audiences and build their brand image.  
• EFLA can expand their markets to United States and Oceania. | • Those lighting manufacturers who are EFLA’s main sale channel, are also in partnership with EFLA’s competitors because they want to have a variety of offers. Therefore, it is difficult to persuade customers.  
• The growth in digital service could hinder the close relationships with customers as everything is handled online. |

Table 6. SWOT Analysis
4.1.3 Competitor analysis

According to interview #1, EFLA considers that they have two main competitors from America including Amerace and Integro.

The author researched on all three websites of these companies to explore online activities competitors are currently doing compared to EFLA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>EFLA</th>
<th>Amerace</th>
<th>Integro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core message</td>
<td>Seamless connectivity in airfield lighting</td>
<td>The world's leading specialist in the design and manufacture of isolating transformers and related connectors for airfield lighting</td>
<td>Made in USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product information</td>
<td>A datasheet including product pictures, technical information, dimensions, suggested specifications and application; an installation manual.</td>
<td>Short introduction with outline picture.</td>
<td>Product picture, application, references, certification, technical information, available dimensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product catalogue</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other publications</td>
<td>White paper, blogs, installation guide videos</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Blogs (news), installation guide video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media accounts</td>
<td>LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information</td>
<td>Contact form, telephone, address, email address of sales personnel</td>
<td>Telephone, fax number, address and customer service email</td>
<td>Contact form, address, telephone and fax number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website’s mobile friendliness</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website title</td>
<td>EFLA - Seamless connectivity in Airfield Ground Lighting</td>
<td>Amerace - World's leading specialist in airfield lighting products</td>
<td>Airfield Lighting Equipment, Underground Power Distribution, Runways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website description</td>
<td>EFLA develops, manufactures and</td>
<td>Amerace is the world's leading specialist in</td>
<td>Integro is a manufacturer of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
sells series isolation transformers, connector kits and prefabricated leads for airfield ground lighting circuit.

the design and manufacture of isolating transformers and related connectors for airfield lighting.

airfield lighting equipment, rubber-molded underground power distribution for airport runways. American made, made in the USA

| Keywords | no keyword founded | Amerace, Amerace.com, airfield lighting, airport lighting, isolating transformers, series transformers, transformers, connector kits, cable assemblies, pigtails, fixture leads, airport, airfield, lighting, AGL, AFL, approach lighting, runway lighting, taxiway lighting, aerodrome, aerodrome lighting, aeronautical ground lighting, ESNA | airfield, lighting, equipment, underground, power distribution, airport, runways, manufucaturer, products, manufact urers, rubber, mold ed, usa |

Table 7. Competitor analysis

4.1.4 Website, social media and digital marketing analysis

**Website analysis**

According to Google Analytics, there are 1 400 website visitors per month on average and 357 per week from January 2019 to April 2019 (see figure 12). In particular, nearly 35 percent of all visitors are from the United States, followed by Finland and Germany (see fig. 13 & 14).
According to Google Analytics, nearly a half of all traffic came from direct channels, which means that audiences have already known about EFLA and its website address. Meanwhile, 46.4% of audiences use search engine to find out about EFLA. There were 109 users visiting EFLA’s website by clicking on the referral links on other websites. A minor percentage of visitors is from email and social channels (see fig. 15).
Figure 15. Acquisition overview (01/2019 - 04/2019)

Even though social media has the least website traffic, it has the highest conversion rate. According to HubSpot system of EFLA, approximately one-fifth of all users from social media source registered to be in EFLA’s contact list, that is ten times as much as the conversion rate of the traffic from organic search (see fig. 16).

![Figure 15. Acquisition overview (01/2019 - 04/2019)](image)

In term of device usage, in the last one month (03/2019 – 04/2019), 87.4% of users access the website via desktop, while about 11% of them use mobile devices and under 2% use tablets. Even though the majority of audiences use desktops for browsing, it is better to have the website mobile friendly to increase the conversion rate.

![Figure 16. Hubspot traffic analytics (01/2019 – 04/2019)](image)

According to Google’s mobile-friendly test, the webpages are mobile friendly. However, there is an issue with the page loading, where some pages could not load. On the other hand, when comparing the desktop version to the mobile one, there is an apparent difference in the layouts between the two. The mobile version seems to be not as clean and balanced as the desktop one.
Top 10 webpages which receive most visits are indicated in fig. 16 below. In details, the homepage has the greatest number of views followed by the contact page and product pages.

![Top 10 most visited webpages of EFLA (03-04/2019)](image)

**Figure 18.** Top 10 most visited webpages of EFLA (03-04/2019)

**Social media analysis**

EFLA has two social media channels including LinkedIn and Twitter.

On LinkedIn, by 04/2019, EFLA has 195 followers mostly from Finland. Top three jobs held by those LinkedIn visitors are Sales, Operations, and Marketing. In addition, the rest of them work in different field but related to EFLA’s business.
Figure 19. Top job functions of EFLA’s LinkedIn’s visitors (01/2019 – 04/2019)

From 01/2019 to 04/2019, the below post was the most successful post on EFLA’s LinkedIn account, which received 1630 views and the engagement rate is 13.9% according to LinkedIn insights. The content of that post is about a guest visit to EFLA’s factory. The reason for the post popularity could be because of the guests’ presences and EFLA’s collaborations. This could be interested by people working in the same field or having connections with people in the photo.

Figure 20. The most popular post on EFLA’s LinkedIn account (04/2019)
On Twitter, EFLA has 64 followers as of 04/2019 and they are from all around the world.

Figure 21. Locations of EFLA’s followers on Twitter (04/2019)

More than a half of the followers have been on Twitter for over 5 years and have tweeted more than once in the past 3 months (see fig. 22 & 23)

Figure 22. Account ages of EFLA’s Twitter followers (04/2019)
Digital marketing analysis

In 04/2019, EFLA adopted three types of content marketing campaigns including email marketing, publication and customer stories.

a. Email Marketing

Regarding email marketing, EFLA had three email marketing campaigns which sent 1121 emails in total from 01/2019 to 04/2019.

The first email campaign is an invitation to an exhibition which EFLA joined as an exhibitor. The email was sent to 66 contacts who are located in Asia Pacific where the event was held (see fig. 24).
The second email campaign is the Customer Satisfaction Survey which is done twice a year. This email was sent to all contacts to evaluate their service performance.

The last email is a “Thank you” email to appreciate who have visited EFLA’s stand on the day of the event.

Overall, the delivery rate of those email is 98.75% which indicates that most of all contacts are valid and accept to receive emails from EFLA. While the open rate is nearly 35% and the click-through rate is approximately 8%.
b. Publication and customer stories

In the first quarter of 2019, EFLA published their first white paper which investigates in an issue that receives a considerable amount of concern in the industry. The white paper provides informative guidance for their audiences and suggests them a suitable solution for that specific issue.

![EFLA’s first white paper](image)

Figure 25. EFLA’s first white paper

In addition, EFLA aims to build a section on their website called Customer Stories in order to share the customers’ thoughts on products and their partnerships. Currently, one customer story from Finavia is available. They planned to interview more customers in the upcoming period.

4.2 Objectives

As discussed with the marketing team of EFLA, there are two ultimate objectives that should be fulfilled:

**Part A**: To increase the website traffic to 2000 unique visitors by February 2020

**Part B**: To increase the visitor-to-lead conversion rate from 1.6% (EFLA statistics, 2018) to 2% by February 2020

In order to achieve these two goals, the author will set short-term and medium-term objectives for each part in the following tables (Table 8 & 9)
A. To increase the website traffic to 2000 unique visitors by December 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-term objectives</th>
<th>A.1.1 LinkedIn &amp; Twitter: increase the average number of impressions per post by 20% by September 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.1.2 Website: increase the average session duration on website by 20% by September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.1.3 Website: increase the average number of active users per day by 20% by September 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium-term objectives</th>
<th>A.2.1 Website: increase the referral traffic by 20% by December 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.2.2 SEO: be referred by 5 websites with good reputation by December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.2.3 SEO: achieve a rank from 1 to 5 on Google for the following terms: “airfield lighting transformers” by December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.2.4 SEO: increase the organic traffic by 20% by December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.2.5 Twitter: reach 150 followers by December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.2.6 LinkedIn: reach 220 followers by December 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Short-term and medium-term objectives part A

B: To increase the visitor-to-lead conversion rate from 1.6% (EFLA statistics, 2018) to 2% by December 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-term objectives</th>
<th>B.1.1 Customer service: response to all inquiries within 24 hours for working days and 72 hours for weekends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B.1.2 Email: decrease the bounce rate by 70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium-term objectives</th>
<th>B.2.1 Email: increase the average click through rate by 20% by December 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B.2.2 Website: increase the number of people downloading product catalogue by 15% by December 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B.2.3 Website: increase the number of visits of contact information page by 20% by December 2019

B.2.4 Blog posts: increase the readership of blog section by 20% by December 2019

B.2.5 Publications: increase the number of publication downloads by 30% by December 2019

Table 9. Short-term and medium-term objectives part B

4.3 **Strategy**

4.3.1 **Segments and Target markets**

The current marketplaces which EFLA is operating in are Europe, Asia Pacific, the Middle East, and America. This market is a niche market in the AGL industry. All projects come from airport maintenance or new construction.

Segments could be divided based on 4 main variables: convenience, firmographics, behavior, and needs. According to those variables, target markets are established as follows:

- **Convenience: Geography and language**
  - Geography: Focus on Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and America
  - Language: English, Chinese, and Spanish

- **Firmographics:**
  - Company type: lighting manufacturers, consulting firms, installation company, and airport operations
  - Selling products: relevant to airfield facility

- **Behavior: Sensitive to product compliance, service quality, and pricing**

- **Needs:**
  - Buying products which fit the need of the project
  - Buying products which benefits most of the stakeholders
4.3.2 Customer Value Proposition

EFLA is positioned as a leading international subcontractor for airfield ground lighting projects. Products are complied with international standards and provided with good customer service. EFLA aims to be a hub with technical details of products and compliances, to help salespeople, technical engineers and other positions related to AGL projects to look for needed information.

4.4 Tactics

4.4.1 Content creation

**Content Types**

As a B2B business, the decision-making process belongs to a group of people instead of an individual. The content should be rational rather than emotional. Thus, types of content are chosen based on the content marketing matrix by Chaffey (2018) (see fig. 7) as follows:

- To “educate”: articles, guides, demo videos, reports, and white papers, demo videos
- To “convince”: product features, datasheets, interactive demos, webinars

**Content Segmentation Grid**

The grid with match each content type with its suitable persona at a particular stage in the buying cycle.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Contacts</th>
<th>Leads</th>
<th>Qualified</th>
<th>Finalist</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buying Cycle</td>
<td>Awareness &amp; Education</td>
<td>Information Search Vendor</td>
<td>RFI Vendor Information</td>
<td>Make the Purchase Decision</td>
<td>Alternative Searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persona #1 Sales manager</td>
<td>White paper, product specifications</td>
<td>Demo videos, product features</td>
<td>Email subscription</td>
<td>Interactive demo</td>
<td>Datasheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persona #2 Technical advisor</td>
<td>White paper, product specifications</td>
<td>Product features</td>
<td>Email subscription</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persona #3 Electrician</td>
<td>Guides (Installation manuals)</td>
<td>White paper, Demo videos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 26. Content Segmentation Grid
4.4.2 Search engine optimizations

**Keyword Planning**

The author inserted some keywords about EFLA’s selling products to see EFLA’s rankings on Google search engine.

![Google keyword ranks](image)

**Figure 27. Google keyword ranks**

The author used Google Keyword Planner to conduct a research about which keywords are relevant to the industry EFLA is working in. After inserting EFLA’s website address and some popular keywords about airfield lighting, Google Keyword Planner produced a list of suggested keywords (see fig. 28).
The keyword list was analyzed and evaluated to conclude some most popular keywords which are relevant to EFLA:

- aerodrome lighting
- aerodrome lighting system
- aeronautical ground lighting
- airfield equipment
- airfield ground lighting
- airfield ground lighting system
- airfield lighting suppliers
- airfield lighting system
- airplane runway lights
- airport approach lighting systems
- airport lighting
- airport navigation aids
- airport taxiway lights
- airport taxiway lights
- aviation light supplier in UAE
- isolation transformer
- lighting transformer purpose
- lightning arrester protection
- primary connector kits
- secondary connector kits
- taxiway centerline lights
- airfield lighting isolation transformer
- transformer installation in series
- transformer lightning arrester

One of the factors which leads to a high page rank on Google search engine is utilizing relevant keyword in all content published on the website. Furthermore, those keywords need to be used naturally on the webpages to get a good level of website trustworthiness.

**Website metatags**

By the time of research, EFLA’s website missed its metatags and keywords for its homepage. The author recommended that all pages belonging to the company domain should have clear titles and descriptions.

EFLA’s homepage is used as an example for clear metatags:

**Title:** EFLA | Seamless Connectivity in Airfield Ground Lighting

**Description:** *EFLA develops, manufactures and sells series isolation transformers, connector kits and prefabricated leads for airfield ground lighting circuit.*

**Keywords:** airfield ground lighting, aerodrome ground lighting, primary connector kits, secondary connector kits, airfield isolation transformer, prefabricated leads, lightning arrester

4.4.3 Social Media

**Social media platforms:** currently, EFLA is utilizing mainly LinkedIn and Twitter, they also have their own YouTube channel where they upload product videos.

**Responsibility:** marketing team

**Key demographics:** mainly males from 30 to 50, working in the airfield industry.

**Key regions:** Europe, the Middle East, and Asia

**How to respond to negative feedbacks/ comments:** reply as soon as possible, identify the problem and acknowledge the contribution of audiences. If it is a more serious issue, a private message should be sent after the public apology to take care of the customer better, finally, do not try to hide any negative comments.
Publishing content on LinkedIn and Twitter:

The topic of interest: new technologies relevant to the airfield industries, trade show & exhibition updates, company news, behind-the-scene content with employees, featuring partners.

The format of content: hyperlinks, photos and videos, sharing posts from others.

The frequency of posting content:
- LinkedIn: at least once per two weeks
- Twitter: once per week

Uploading videos on YouTube:

EFLA has already got a YouTube channel with 5 uploaded videos. However, the level of engagement with the audience in this channel is very low. There are only 7 subscribers and the highest number of views per video is 488 views in 06/2019.

Types of content: demo videos, installation guides, commercials, customer testimonials, brand story videos, event recaps.

To promote the channel, there are lots of actions need to be taken:

1. Video titles should be informative and based on the keyword planner, so people can easily find videos on search engines.

2. Video thumbnails are like book covers, they need to be attractive and capture the points of the video, sometimes, people click on the video based on its thumbnail instead of titles.

3. Playlists should be created with a compelling title to get the audience consuming more contents, it also appears when users search on YouTube.

4. YouTube videos should be shared on other channels to reach more people.

5. The latest video also can be included in the newsletter to notify the subscribers

(Baird, 2018)
4.4.4 Email Marketing

The email list is from EFLA’s HubSpot system.

To avoid the spam filters, the title and subtitle of the email should be clear, avoid spam trigger words such as free, earn, credit, join, buy, etc. In order to keep the email list clean and maintain the reputation with email service providers, the content should be compelling, all inactive subscribers should be sent a reminder and deleted from the list if there are no interactions afterward.

Email format: including text and images, but all images need to have alt texts

Frequency: once per 2 months

The audience should be sorted out based on their interests and stage in the buying process.

All emails sent should have a clear call-to-action and an A/B testing must be run beforehand to pick the most effective email design.

The emails should be scheduled to be sent during the morning (from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.) to achieve higher open rates. The timing should be adjusted after a period to suit the audience.

Types of email marketing campaigns

Depending on the stage of that audience in the buying cycle, suitable emails should be sent to increase the open rate and click-through rate. These following email marketing types are some suggestions for EFLA’s marketing strategy:

- **Lead nurturing emails**: emails sent after the prospect takes some previous actions such as joining webinars, downloading a piece of content from the company website, clicking a link in the promotional email, etc. This type of emails is already adopted in the marketing strategy of EFLA.

- **Newsletters**: emails which update all the latest news from the company. This email should be sent regularly (every 2 months or 3 months) and provide helpful information to audiences. Newsletters are delivered to all subscribers registering to receive newsletters.

- **Survey emails**: emails, sent to all customers annually, is to research and develop the service and products. This type of emails is already existed in the marketing strategy of EFLA.
### 4.5 Action

#### Part A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A.1.1     | - Create an editorial calendar for social media for one month beforehand.  
            - Create a list of hashtags to use in both channels.  
            - Post questions or topics which could raise a discussion.  
            - Like and reply to all comments.  
            - Interact with other users on Twitter, retweet relevant tweets.  
            - Share good content from other accounts on LinkedIn. | 09/2019  | Posts are reached by more audiences.                                        |
| A.1.2     | - Ensure that all webpages are working and have consistent structures.  
            - Frequently check and update to ensure all webpages are working.  
            - Publish more relevant and appealing news.                         | 09/2019  | Visitors spend longer time in products’ pages and company news.            |
| A.1.3     | - All sections are well categorized, and the navigation menu should be clear  
            - All webpages are established with suitable CTAs.  
            - Useful content around all webpages could be curated and published into a list of valuable resources. | 09/2019  | More active users engage with the website daily.                             |
| A.2.1 | - Collaborate with business partners to mention about EFLA on their websites.  
- EFLA could provide useful information for business partners or do guest blogging for their website. | 12/2019 | More traffic comes from referral sources. |
| A.2.2 | - Create official marketing materials.  
- Register the business on directory sites (Fonecta, Globalair.com, etc.).  
- Be mentioned on business partners’ social media or websites. | 12/2019 | EFLA’s website is referred by other websites with good reputation. |
| A.2.3 | - All articles should adopt clear structures by using bullets points, keywords, numbering, etc.  
- Keywords are using naturally within every post. | 12/2019 | EFLA’s website got found on Google in the top 5 results when users search for “airfield lighting transformers”. |
| A.2.4 | - Encourage clients, business partners, employees to mention about the website on social media to create more incoming links.  
- Make sure that all webpages have metatags and keywords. | 12/2019 | The website gets found by particular keywords being searched on search engines. |
| A.2.5 | - Tweet and retweet high quality content on a regular basis.  
- Try to mention other Twitter account when tweeting something.  
- Write a professional bio and use hashtags.  
- Frequently tweet especially at some | 12/2019 | More people follow EFLA’s Twitter account. |
occasions (exhibitions, trade shows, etc.).

| A.2.6 | - Encourage employees to add the company page in the work experience section and engage with the page.  
- Participate in LinkedIn groups which are relevant to the industry and join discussions. | 12/2019 | More people follow EFLA’s LinkedIn account. |

Part B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| B.1.1     | - Check all channels frequently to identify new inquiries.  
- Reply politely and act as soon as possible. | 09/2019 | All inquiries are replied and taken care of. |
| B.1.2     | - Verify that HubSpot removes a contact after failing to send an email for a certain number of times.  
- Update and clean the contact list. All contacts which are not active for more than 2 years should be removed.  
- The email should be personally customized to increase the engagement with recipients. | 09/2019 | All emails are sent successfully to recipients. |
| B.2.1     | - The email list needs to be segmented.  
- Email language should avoid spam trigger words.  
- Set a schedule to send emails, emails should be sent regularly to engage with recipients, but they should not be sent too frequently. | 12/2019 | More people open marketing emails (newsletters, invitations, etc.) |
| B.2.2 | Product Catalogue updates should be announced on digital communication channels when it is available. - Ensure that the call-to-action button on the website works with all types of devices. - A pop-up on the website could be established when the new version of Product Catalogue is published. | 12/2019 | More people register to download the product catalogue on the website. |
| B.2.3 | The CTA button need to be clear and consistent on all over the site. - “Contact us” page should be customized to be optimal for mobiles. | 12/2019 | More people visit “Contact us” page. |
| B.2.4 | Blog featured pictures should be high quality, relevant and appealing. - Blog posts should be posted more regularly on a monthly basis. - Pay attention to on-page SEO (keywords, meta tags, structures, etc.) | 12/2019 | Blog posts get more visits. |
| B.2.5 | Introduce new publications during exhibition, trade shows, virtual events. - Marketing emails about new publications are sent to a suitable list of contact. - A blog post about the new publication should be published. - Another blog post which curates all | 12/2019 | More people register to download publications. |
existing publications should also be made.

4.6 Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Item measured</th>
<th>Measuring tool</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.1.1</td>
<td>The number of impressions on LinkedIn and Twitter</td>
<td>LinkedIn &amp; Twitter insights</td>
<td>Every month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1.2</td>
<td>The average session duration</td>
<td>Google Analytics</td>
<td>Every month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1.3</td>
<td>The average number of daily active users</td>
<td>Google Analytics</td>
<td>Every month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.1</td>
<td>The proportion of website traffic generated by referrals</td>
<td>Google Analytics</td>
<td>Every month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.2</td>
<td>The number of referrals</td>
<td>Google Analytics</td>
<td>Every months 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.3</td>
<td>Sources of referrals</td>
<td>Google Analytics</td>
<td>Every months 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.4</td>
<td>The number of organic searches</td>
<td>Google Analytics</td>
<td>Every months 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.5</td>
<td>The number of followers on Twitter</td>
<td>Twitter account</td>
<td>Every months 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.6</td>
<td>The number of followers on LinkedIn account</td>
<td>LinkedIn account</td>
<td>Every months 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.1.1</td>
<td>The number of unanswered inquiries</td>
<td>Outlook</td>
<td>Every day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.1.2</td>
<td>Bounce rates</td>
<td>HubSpot content management system</td>
<td>Every month 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.1</td>
<td>CTRs</td>
<td>HubSpot content management system</td>
<td>Every month 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.2</td>
<td>The number of downloads</td>
<td>HubSpot content management system</td>
<td>Every month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.3</td>
<td>The number of inquiries</td>
<td>HubSpot content management system</td>
<td>Every month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.4</td>
<td>The number of page views</td>
<td>HubSpot content</td>
<td>Every month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary of results

This study discovered the answer to the main question at the beginning of this paper:

*What type of content marketing strategy should a highly specialized B2B niche company apply to improve its visibility on the Internet and the visitor-to-lead conversion rate?*

Regarding the theoretical framework, the author identified the concept of Content Marketing as well as SOSTAC model – a model for a well-established strategy. The marketing strategy for EFLA was created according to the model by going through all steps: defining the situation, setting objectives, clarifying strategy and tactics, establishing an action and metrics to control all activities. On the other hand, the content marketing strategy for B2B company has a lot of unique characteristics and different ways to approach depending on company sizes, budgets, and market factors. Thus, all content marketing alternatives need to be taken into consideration to identify the best fit for EFLA.

The study was executed by applying both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data was collected from semi-structured interviews with 4 members of EFLA’s Sales & Marketing Team and the company’s website and social media analytics. All data was used to analyze the current situation of EFLA from the marketing perspective. By following the SOSTAC model, an in-depth marketing strategy is established. This marketing plan is the answer to the two sub-questions in the first section:

1. How could the company develop its content marketing to increase the number of visitors to their webpages?

2. How could they improve the visitor-to-lead conversion rate?
5.2 **Suggestions for further research**

It is evidenced that EFLA has a lot of opportunities to develop its international business online through multiple digital communication channels. Due to the limitations of this study, EFLA also needs to consider the contribution of offline marketing which plays an important role in its business development for the last 30 years. Offline marketing channels for EFLA include regional exhibitions and tradeshow, networking with local partners, clients, and printed product catalogues.

The content marketing strategy is a continuous process which requires frequent updates based on the current situation and new trends in marketing technology. As a result, it is necessary to implement and improve the action plan at the same time.

In addition, the above action plan is an overall list of actions only. In order to achieve those goals, EFLA needs to utilize editorial calendars as well as other tools to be more specific and feasible.

As a future research, it could be a further analysis of content marketing or the next step in the development of business digitalization: e-commerce, buying or selling products over the Internet to shorten the process of purchasing.
REFERENCES


INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Set #1:

1. What area are you in charge of?
2. Who are your customers?
3. How old are they on average?
4. What are top problems lighting manufacturers and consultants spend their time, effort and budget to learn about in this industry?
5. What goals must they achieve?
6. Which tasks and results relevant to the problem that EFLA can assist in?
7. What types of content are lighting manufacturers and consultants captivated?
8. Why do they want to choose EFLA over other competitors?
9. Why do they not choose EFLA?
10. Which factor are taken into consideration when the customer evaluates different options?

Set #2:

1. How is the current distribution and customer base of EFLA’s products? (Reference)
2. What are the company’s weaknesses in maintaining its online marketing communications?
3. What are future opportunities of successful online marketing communication?
4. Are there any potential markets possibly reached by online marketing?
5. Are there any additional services could be provided via online channels?
6. Are there any opportunities for cooperate with partners?
7. Are there any competitive products in the market?
8. Are there any risks if the company grows stronger online?
9. Are there any conflicts within communicational channels?

The interview data is confidential and only being used for the thesis purpose.