

Data-driven content marketing for rapidly growing online business.

Amna Suleiman



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Laurea University of Applied Sciences

Amna Suleiman
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Abstract

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Amna Suleiman

Data-Driven Content Marketing for Rapidly Growing Online Business

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A fundamental need for growing an online business is to drive traffic to the website through various sources. The online business needs to develop a content marketing strategy to drive organic traffic to the business website. This thesis explores cutting-edge tools and technologies for content marketing for online businesses.

The thesis is conducted with a SaaS company OneStream Live inc. and emphasizes the importance of digital content in the growth of any SaaS business. The information is gathered from various sources, mainly from google analytics, social media pages, competitors' analysis, and consumer interactions. Most of the data were collected through distribution channels and external blogposts. The analytics identified the importance of content marketing strategy in a rapidly growing SaaS business. Analyzing the source and amount of traffic coming through each source helped decide the need for having OneStream's blog domain. The blog domain is crucial to update and inform the users about the industry development, software updates, and new features.

This thesis proposes the need for extensively researched blog posts for content marketing. We explored google analytics for the quality and source of traffic, content creation needs, and the importance of distributing the content through advertisement. We determined that data-driven content marketing could boost the SEO score significantly after analyzing data from google analytics.

Keywords: content marketing, blog domain, google analytics, SaaS, ROI.

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1 Introduction

Live streaming has been one of the most rapidly growing industries worldwide. With the global pandemic accelerating the adaption of video communication at an exponential pace, businesses worldwide are going online to offer their products and services to their existing customers, however, now through digital platforms. The need for live streaming at scale was rapidly advancing even before the pandemic. Increasing travel times, space limitations, and the opportunity to experience, learn and conduct numerous remote activities made life easier for millions across the globe. Live streaming has, therefore, led businesses to do both a) provide services to existing customers as well as b) open up to new and previously untapped markets worldwide. Importantly, firms in both product and service spaces needed an innovative way to communicate their message to the local communities worldwide. Hence, many industries, especially education, sports, religious services, and e-commerce, moved towards social and digital media to offer and market their services.

The rapid transformation predicts that the live streaming industry will be worth \$247 billion in 2027 [1]. According to Daily eSport, the live streaming industry has grown by 99% between April 2019 and April 2020 [2]. 82% of consumers prefer to watch live videos rather than reading a blog or a post on social media, and 70% of those choose to watch streams on YouTube [3]. This is not the end; new platforms have emerged over the past few years, including Socio live, Trovo live, etc. LinkedIn also introduced video content streaming; although it is late into video content marketing, it gained quick momentum with live streaming. LinkedIn live stream fetches 24x more comments and 7x more reactions than native video broadcasts. 73% of the B2B marketers believe that LinkedIn live has a positive impact on their marketing ROI [4]. Live streaming is becoming a need for rapidly growing businesses, from education to religions and congregational services, from game streaming to the beauty industry.

Several end-to-end tools in the market make the live streaming experience easier and more scalable. These services allow multi-streaming on major digital platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Twitch, and OTT (Over the Top) services like Roku TV and HULU. With several emerging live streaming services available to the customers, the marketing race among the SaaS businesses became fierce. Before the pandemic, most live streaming providers had only a modest focus on marketing activities. However, in 2020, with the exponential adaption and demand of live streaming, the service providers realized the crucial need to invest in the digital marketing landscape, such as paid advertisements, blogs, SEO, and social media

presence. Live streaming created its spaces and impact on big and small online businesses, including the religious sector, when it came to social media. Hence, by 2020, the live streaming industry has grown by 99% in April 2019 and 2020. [3]

Content-based marketing helps in both customer retention and acquisition. Getting a new customer is generally more challenging and expensive than retaining an existing customer. Recent research has identified that 80% of people prefer to read an article over an advertisement, 70% of people agree that content marketing makes them feel closer to a product or business, while 60% credit content for helping them make better purchase decisions [3].

Content helps build trust and establish the brand's identity in the online market. For any SaaS business, organic traffic is more important than traffic through advertisements. SEO plays a vital role in organic traffic. Thus, content helps in generating traffic from search engines. Potential customers and lead generation are more accessible with the relevant content. When the relevant content appears on top of the page of the search engine, ROI (return of investment) also increases; thus, the audience sticks to the business, and hence the session time on the website also increases. The higher the session time, the higher the chances of the lead converting into a user.

This thesis is conducted with <u>OneStream Live</u>, a live streaming services provider headquartered in Espoo, Finland. OneStream Live started digital advertising on social media on a small scale in early 2020. However, it rapidly pivoted and refocused the business strategy to expand marketing activities like other live streaming providers.

Given the nascent nature of the service, OneStream Live had limited online presence and marketing activities. The company's digital presence was from newly created online social media accounts. The website has a good SEO score; however, it was comparable to its 'younger' competitors, primarily lacking online content. For example, the company owned a blogging profile on Medium. However, it had only a few blogs. The Medium blog profile helped drive the initial traffic, but the traffic was reduced due to a lack of updated content. It was identified that a refocus on content-driven marketing could help boost the website significantly in terms of domain ranking, website SEO score, and customer acquisition.

The rest of the thesis is organized as follows. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the OneStream Live as a service and platform. Chapter 3 explains Content Marketing, its use, and its strategies. Chapter 4 delves into applying data-driven content marketing tools and techniques for OneStream Live and forms the main section of the thesis. Finally, chapter 5 concludes with a summary and findings.

2 Company's Introduction

OneStream Live is a web application and cloud-based service that allows companies and individuals involved in marketing and live streaming to schedule pre-recorded videos to Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitch, and other 40+ social media channels or Custom RTMP live streaming destinations. It is cloud-based, so it needs no installation or any technical setup. OneStream allows all major video formats and qualities. It transcodes the video to the required specs and streams it to the destination platform.

Since its establishment in 2014, OneStream Live has been providing live streaming recorded videos solutions to marketers and other users worldwide. Figure 1. The company's main objective is videos processing, transcoding, and live streaming pre-recorded videos.

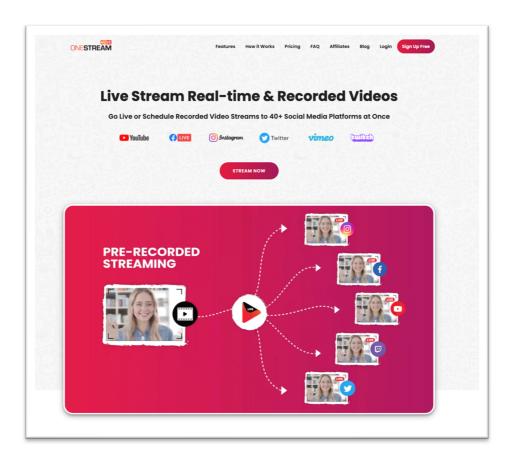


Figure 1 OneStream Live website

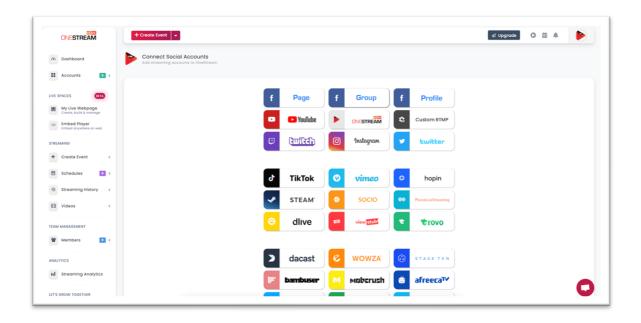


Figure 2 Webapp dashboard

OneStream tool does not require any setup and installation. It is a cloud-based tool designed especially for marketing business though anyone can use it. As shown in Figure 3, Users select their videos files for up to 50GB from cloud space such as Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, Frame.io, Webex, Box storage or Pcloud. Schedule the time and day of the video for live stream on one or multiple platforms, and OneStream will broadcast the videos on all selected social media platforms simultaneously.

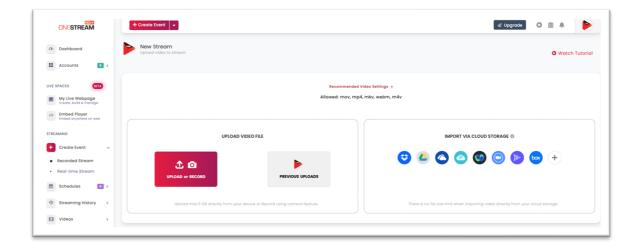


Figure 3 cloud storage

OneStream Live allows all the major video formats and qualities, and one can upload video as large as 5GB on various social media networks for live streaming. OneStream Live's server

transcodes the videos to the required specs for live streaming to the destination platform. Webapp was designed earlier for businesses involved in marketing and live streaming. Although now it is for anyone who wants to live stream their content on social media.

OneStream Live is a private startup company based in Finland established in 2014 and has over 20 employees. The company has employees from all over the world, and they are working in different time zones giving support and services to the users 24/7. Over 45,000 businesses are using Live Streaming solutions for their content.

Live Streaming technology lets the users create, share and watch the video content in real-time. Live Stream is an excellent tool for real-time engagement and creating more interaction. The algorithm on social networking sites works so that the live streaming content gets more powerful and quick attention than the standard uploaded videos. Live Stream content is rated highest on social media. OneStream Live lets the businesses respond to their viewers in real-time without worrying about the streaming video, power glitch, or bloopers during the broadcast. According to Hootsuite, live videos earn 3x more watch time on Facebook than a regularly uploaded video [5].

3 Content Marketing

Content marketing comes under the umbrella of digital marketing. Creating content like social media posts, blog articles, videos, and podcasts is relevant to the target audience. After researching the keywords, learning to write for SEO, and creating backlinks to the website and hashtags on social media, this content needs to be made.

3.1 What is content marketing?

Content marketing is creating and distributing the content over the digital landscape, covering strategies and techniques to complete the business goals. Often, it is considered a "pull strategy" that attracts the customers and educates the users creating potential leads. This makes content marketing very important for any business. Especially in the case of SaaS business, user-oriented content is a must-have for the online presence and a searchable digital footprint.

Creating a strategy to develop and distribute content over the internet increases the search engine ranking and generates potential users' interest. The Funnel shown in Figure 4 elaborates the role of content in attracting the likely user and then converting him into the user and retaining it for extended periods. Customer retention is significant in any business and comes in as a critical side-advantage of content marketing in the marketing world. It is commonly known that attracting a new customer is more expensive than retaining one. It is

always beneficial if the hands-on information and solutions to possible problems are available and the customer knows where to look.

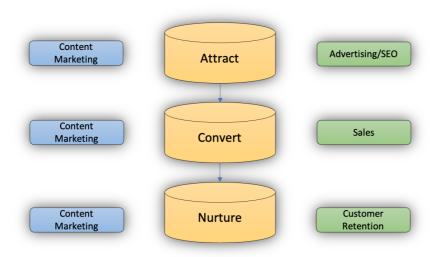


Figure 4 Customer Journey through content marketing

Figure 4 shows the customer journey through content marketing. When a user searches for the information or the right tool for his business growth, he finds marketing content in the attract stage. Content marketing encompasses well-designed keyword research related to the industry and custom content based on the study. This combination of thorough and relevant keyword research with custom content creation makes it possible to serve the right content to the interested user. The user then lands on the URLs and spends time on the business website. The more time a user spends on the custom content, the more likely they will reach the second stage - Convert. Once a user comes to the conversion stage and becomes a customer, appropriately crafted and data-driven content marketing will help retain him for the business. For retention, a fundamental principle is that companies innovate and evolve, and content marketing keeps the customers informed and educated about business innovations.

3.2 Why content marketing is needed

The importance of the SERP (search engine result page) score for any online service is widely known and well-studied for SEO. When a user searches for any information using keywords or key-phrase on google, the search engine crawls for the most relevant information and surfaces it on top of the search engine result page (SERP). Here, the website's content helps

the crawlers fetch the data supporting the ranking algorithms to rank the page towards the search results.

The marketing team invests in creating a blog site to put industry-related news, tips & tricks, and information for the users by looking into this research. When the relevant keyword is searched, the business creates a digital footprint.

3.3 Content marketing strategy

Content is not just limited to texts; it can be images, videos, infographics, SlideShare, social media, or any material that helps the user get the desired information. However, in this thesis, the textual part of the content will be discussed, which are blogs. It will be elaborated on how much a blog site can help increase the website traffic, and not investing in proper keyword research while making the content can also decrease the traffic.

While making a content marketing strategy, it is essential to consider distribution channels. The distribution channels are social media platforms or inbound channels like newsletters and email.

The success of the content can be measured after it has been distributed across the web through various metrics. The most important metric is website traffic, organic or paid. The source of the traffic, a session on the website, impression on social media posts, and engagement.

3.4 Data-driven marketing

When doing marketing, the data is critical. Data shows the success of marketing campaigns over time and helps strategize future action plans. It drives marketing decisions and improves performance. Thanks to the various tools such as Google Analytics, and social media's channel's inbuilt insights, marketing is quantifiable.

Data-driven marketing is an approach of marketers to access customer data, either behavioral or contact informational data. Marketers analyze the data of customers and predict their needs. Plan the future goals and their implementations.

4 Data-driven content marketing for OneStream Live

In this section, the thesis discusses the application of content marketing for OneStream Live. The thesis discusses proposals, implementation, and results from a data-driven perspective.

4.1 Blogging

Blogging means creating text-based content for a blog post. A blog should be precise, to the point, and shorter than an article. "The totality of weblogs or blog-related websites is usually called **the blogosphere**. When a large amount of activity, information, and opinion erupts around a particular topic or controversy in the blogosphere, it is commonly called a blog storm or swarm." [6]

Blogs should be SEO-friendly. Important and trending keywords need to be researched before creating a blog. The need for the content can be searched with keyword research. Many tools help content creators to do keyword research. Commonly used is the Google Ads keyword planner. Figure 5 Apart from Google's keyword planner, many reliable tools can be bought on a monthly subscription plan. E.g., Semrush, Ubersuggest, Ahref, etc.

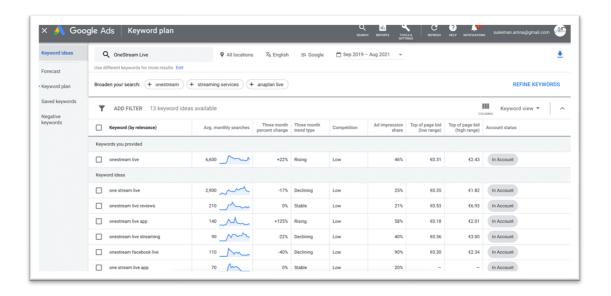


Figure 5 Google Keyword Planner

4.2 SaaS directories

Online reviews, comparisons, and feedback shape buying decisions. Online SaaS directories allow SaaS businesses to get reviews from customers. Companies put complete information about their product/services on these directories and provide a backlink that directs the potential users to the landing page. OneStream has its profile and reviews on over 50 SaaS directories, Including, SaaShub, Capterra, SaaSworthy, Bigmongolian, and G2. These directories help traffic to the website, and OneStream has to keep updating these directories with the latest updates and features. The reason for submitting the SaaS product on these directories is to get the reviews, so the website receives the backlinks, which helps in the SERP of the webpage. As mentioned above, consumers always rely on reviews and

comparisons in the decision-making process of the purchase path. SEO-friendly content helps the web page discover, and directories and reviews help decision-making.

Here are a few popular SaaS directories.

- 1. https://www.capterra.com/p/203123/OneStream/
- 2. https://www.g2.com/products/onestream-live/reviews
- 3. https://www.trustpilot.com/review/onestream.live
- 4. https://www.saasworthy.com/product/onestream

4.3 Distribution channels

Creating a content distributing strategy across various platforms is as essential as making the content. Content distribution strategy is a plan to promote the latest blog, eBook, white paper, etc., among the existing and potential customers through various channels, e.g., social media, emails, and newsletters.

For OneStream Live, social media platforms, emails, and monthly newsletters work as blog distribution channels. Organic following on social media helps bring the traffic to the blog posts and hence the landing on the main webpage where purchasing can be done.

Leading social media platforms OneStream is currently using:

- 1. Twitter
- 2. Facebook
- 3. Instagram
- 4. LinkedIn

Upcoming platforms:

- 1. Pinterest
- 2. Snapchat
- 3. Reddit
- 4. Tumblr
- 5. TikTok

4.4 Creating the in-house blog post

OneStream has outsourced the blogs on Medium and has quite a good number of followings. The analytics of Medium [Figure 6] showed that there was quite a good response with a low bounce rate. However, the traffic from those blogs was not coming to the main website

[Figure 7]. The reason was that there were not many call-to-actions that could lead the reader to the main website.

Figure 6 shows the number of views and reads of each blog. The most popular blog has over 3.5K views with 2K reads. But as we see in Figure 7 only 274 users reached the website.

Overview Stories	Learn more about using stats			
Date ↑	Views	Reads	Read ratio	Fans
How to live stream 360-degree video with O 3 min read · In onestreamlive · View story · Details	345	168	49%	4
How to use Custom RTMP streams for popul 3 min read · In onestreamlive · View story · Details	6.9K	2.1K	31%	8
Tips to schedule your video stream for great 3 min read · In onestreamlive · View story · Details	92	58	63%	3
Broadcast videos from Dropbox and Google 2 min read · In onestreamlive · View story · Details	1.92K	1.3K	68%	1
OneStream adds Facebook profile to its sup 2 min read · In onestreamlive · View story · Details	112	73	65%	3
Six ways to use pre-recorded live streaming 5 min read · In onestreamlive · View story · Details	271	161	59%	4
How to Live Stream pre-recorded video wit 4 min read · In onestreamlive · View story · Details	2.7K	1.4K	51%	7
Why Live Stream with Pre-Recorded Videos 5 min read · In onestreamlive · View story · Details	3.5K	2K	58%	11

Figure 6 Medium Stats

When OneStream, while using its distribution channels, shared the blogs on social media, a very positive response was received. OneStream constantly creates valuable content on the Medium space with constant feature updates. Still, with the low traffic from Medium's source, OneStream decided that this was the right time to integrate a CMS of its own to direct and keep our audience on the main landing page and increase the organic traffic to the website.



Figure 7 Google Analytics - Traffic from Medium

4.5 Ghost Domain

When the idea was presented to the developer team, we had two options: creating an HTML web page or getting an open-source domain. Due to limited human resources, the company decided to buy a ghost domain [7]. The templates needed customization, which the UI UX designer did. Hence, not much assistance was required from the developers. This gave the marketing team freedom and time to research the templates and themes before finalizing.

4.5.1 Theme selection

To decide on the theme, we had to look for the followings:

- 1. Ability to customize color and font.
- 2. User-friendly interface
- 3. Customizable header and footer
- 4. Subscription option

The theme we selected for the blog was Casper (v3.1.2). [Figure 8]. It fulfilled all the requirements we needed on the blog site. We could insert the navigation bar's header, just like on the website's main landing page.

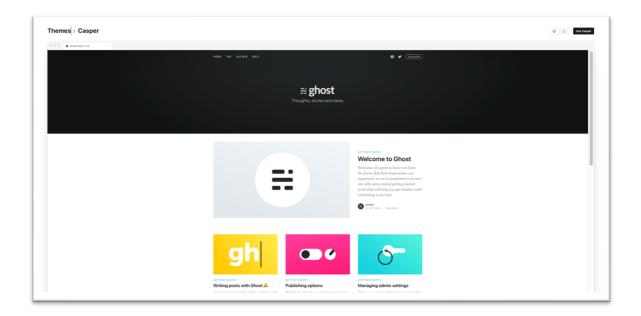


Figure 8 Ghost theme

Apart from the requirements mentioned above, we could integrate google analytics, Twitter, and Instagram. We can see the blog page data separately with google analytics instead of relying on UTMs and tags. [Figure 9]

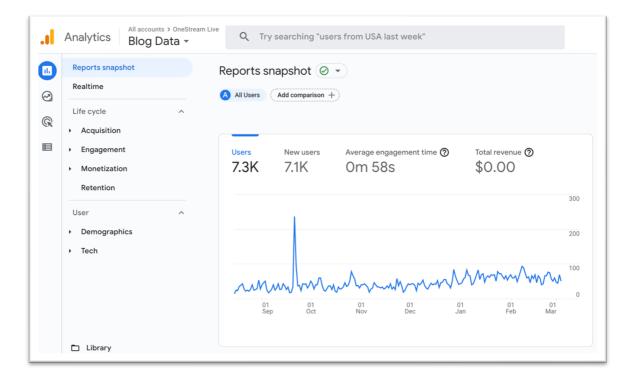


Figure 9 Blog data

4.5.2 Branding

We have placed navigations on the header to keep OneStream's landing page branding and branding guidelines in mind.

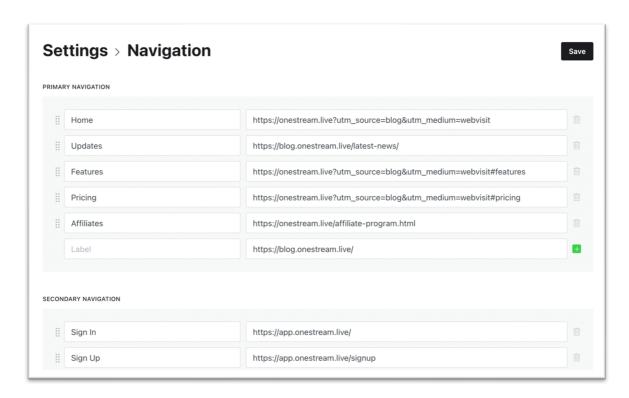


Figure 10 Navigation bar customization



The theme allowed us to customize the header and footer to look like the landing page. Ghost allowed us to inject code into the top and bottom of the theme without editing them. This allowed quick modifications to insert our Google Analytics tracking codes and meta tags.

Branding the blog site was very important, and hence we were able to customize the header, cover, icon, theme color, font, tagline, and logo.

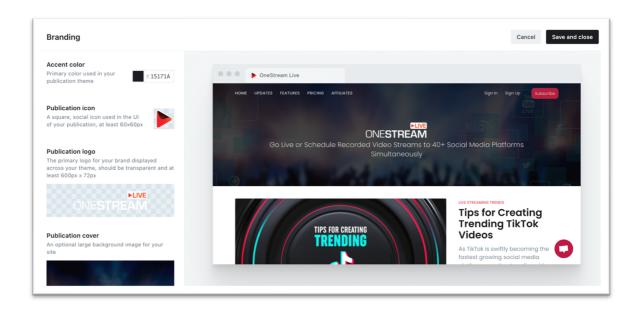


Figure 11 branding

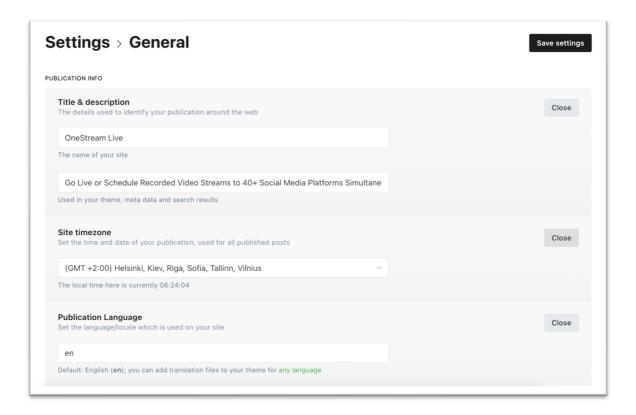


Figure 12 branding (2)

4.6 Blog Content

The blog topics are based on the live streaming industry, product features, and use cases. The blog was divided into the following categories or tags.

- 1. Affiliate marketing
- 2. Church live streaming
- 3. Copyright rules
- 4. Live Streaming trends
- 5. OneStream Live updates
- 6. Tips and tricks.

The categories/tags contain the articles helping readers navigate the relevant subject. As shown in Figure 13 Live Streaming trends have more blogs than the others. This tag includes industry-based blog posts.

Each blog post contains a cover photo and a short video briefly explaining the blog's content. The video was added to the blog posts because videos are more engaging and hold more advantages over text. If the textual content contains a video, it ranks higher on the search engine than plain text. Over 70% of marketers claim that video produces more conversion than any other content, and while focusing on video SEO, the content scores well on search engines. [8]

Each blog also contains an infographic summarizing the detailed article.

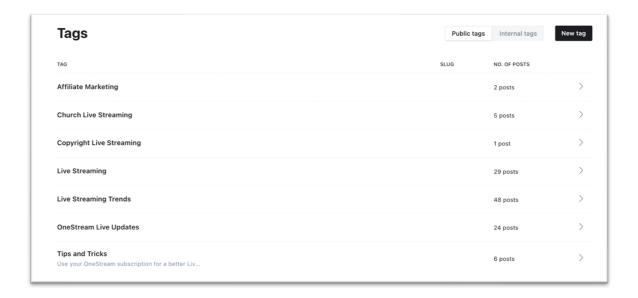


Figure 13 Blog categories/Tags

4.7 Website Traffic

OneStream Live monitors the website traffic through Google Analytics. The company is monitoring two types of traffic. Figure 14

- 1. Traffic comes to the main Landing Page from the blog page. [Figure 14]
- 2. Traffic coming to the Blog page. [Figure 9]

OneStream relies on website traffic data and the traffic source as a SaaS business. Figure 9 shows that over 7K users landed on the blog page, and 600 users landed on the website from the blog page. However, the session time is over 1k. The average session time on the website is 4 minutes and 40 seconds. Whereas Figure 7 shows the average time on the website in 2 minutes.

The number of users and average session increase showed that creating the blog for the company was the right decision.

Due to the company's policy, the number of transactions cannot be shown.

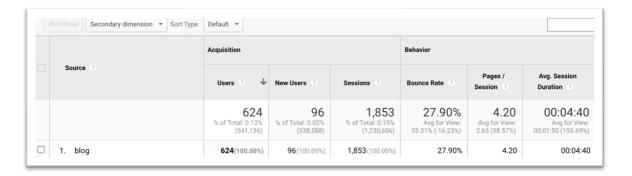


Figure 14 Traffic on the main website from the blogsite

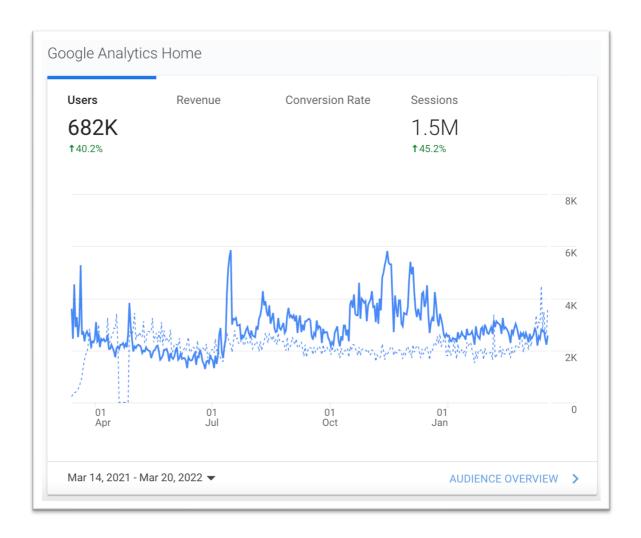


Figure 15 Website traffic increased by 40%

4.8 Driving traffic to a website through content

We have established that content drives traffic to the website organically. The more relevant and up-to-date the content is, the higher the traffic. It is a misconception that the traffic will increase instantly as soon as you generate content. However, this is not the case. ROI (return of investment) takes days and sometimes weeks. "To rank websites, Google uses web crawlers that scan and index pages. Every page gets rated according to Google's opinion of its authority and usefulness to the end-user" [9]. Google regularly changes the criteria for ranking the content. These are called Algorithmic updates.

The key to ranking on any search engine is to research keywords and key phrases using various tools [Figure 5]. These tools tell the trending topics and what users are searching for. In the case of OneStream Live, we have developed the strategy to search for research for keywords related to the live streaming industry, social media, and OneStream Live. We also researched the keyword related to competitors' domains. E.g., Restream and Streamyard are OneStream Live's biggest competitors. We kept an eye on their content by using Google Keyword

Planner. We also analyze what kind of information people are searching for related to their software.

5 Conclusion

A good content marketing strategy can boost website traffic significantly. In this thesis project, I have focused on developing a page that sets the company's content to help increase traffic. Any marketing does not give immediate results, but search engines start to rank the websites based on updated content over time. Google, a leading search engine processes approximately 63,000 search queries every second. A website's SEO plays a crucial role in ranking the content on the first page of a google search. That is why it is essential to generate new content and update old content from time to time.

This thesis shows that the content and call-to-action drive more traffic and generate leads by ranking the website on the first page of the search engine. As per internal company data, website traffic has increased by 40.2% in one year (Figure 15). This increase depends on the various marketing campaigns, primarily advertisements, and organic traffic coming from Facebook, Google, YouTube, etc.

Hence, developing content and having a content marketing strategy for an online business is as important as developing and updating the product. The content increased the traffic, but it also helped generate more leads and conversions.

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