

Shahzaib Waheed

Content Marketing Strategy for a Digital Marketing Company X



Bachelor of Business Admin-
istration

International Business

Autumn 2022



**KAMK • University
of Applied Sciences**

Abstract

Author: Shahzaib Waheed

Title of the Publication: Content Marketing Strategy for a Digital Marketing Company X

Degree Title: e.g. Bachelor of Business Administration, International Business

Keywords: content marketing, digital marketing,

The purpose of this thesis was to find the optimal content marketing strategy that enhances client engagement and acquisition for a digital marketing agency. For this purpose, both primary and secondary research was conducted in the form of Interviews (focus groups) and a survey questionnaires. For the interviews, three groups were selected and for the survey a total of 98 responses were received. The findings suggest that the client's hire or purchase decision depends upon a useful and attractive website, social media posting, email marketing and YouTube and Instagram videos. Moreover, from the interview it can be seen that the clients only engage if they view content as informative and useful. This means that agencies should focus their content strategy primarily on these channels and they should create useful content. The overall quantitative model predicts approximately 75% variance in the client hire decision. Hence, there are also other factors that impact client decisions but they are not discussed in the study.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Company X Problem.....	2
1.3	Research Aim and Objectives.....	2
1.4	Research Questions.....	2
1.5	Research Hypothesis	3
2	Theoretical Background.....	4
2.1	Role of Content Marketing in Customers' Purchasing Decisions.....	4
2.2	Effective Tools of Content Marketing	5
2.3	The SOSTAC Model.....	7
2.4	Content Marketing for Sales and Revenues.....	8
2.5	Effectiveness of Content Marketing.....	9
2.6	The Ways of Content Improvement:.....	10
2.7	The Rise of Social Media	11
2.8	Measuring Content Effectiveness	12
3	Methodology	14
3.1	Research Design	14
3.2	Ethical Considerations.....	14
3.3	Data Collection Methods.....	15
3.3.1	Secondary Data Collection	15
3.3.2	Primary Data Collection	16
3.4	Sampling Technique and Focus Groups	16
3.5	Hypothesis Testing	17
4	Data Analysis:	18
4.1	Insights from the Interviews:	18
4.2	Correlation Analysis and Hypothesis Testing	19
4.3	Regression Analysis:	23
4.4	Discussion:.....	26
5	Conclusion:	28

5.1	Limitations:.....	28
5.2	Evaluation of the Project Research	28
6	References	30
7	Appendix.....	33
7.1	Gantt Chart.....	33
7.2	Survey and Interview Questionnaires	33
7.3	Survey Response form link	35

1 Introduction

Content marketing is one of the most traditional ways in marketing. When rightly implemented it is an effective way to identify and target specific audiences for a product or service. Modern tools and AI (Artificial Intelligence) technologies have made content writing much easier for brands worldwide. Since the marketing practices have been evolving during last ten years, companies and brands are moving towards online platforms by minimizing physical marketing activities. The increased presence of consumers on various online platforms such as Facebook, Google, Tiktok. is the main reason for this increased trend.

1.1 Background

Content marketing is a type of marketing in which content is created, published, and distributed online for a specific audience. (Pulizzi, et al., 2009) Businesses frequently utilize it to accomplish the following objectives: draw interest and generate leads, develop their client base, produce or boost online sales, raise brand awareness or credibility, and engage an online user community. (Le, D., 2013) By producing and disseminating worthwhile free material, content marketing draws in new clients. It assists businesses in building long-lasting brand loyalty, gives customers useful information, and encourages further product purchases from the business.

An opinion regarding marketing tools is well-established that content marketing is the future of brand marketing. The content would be the only applicable practice for targeting any particular group of audience for a certain product (Kuusisto, 2019). The development of content, hence, has been the main problem for content marketers. There are other considerations as well such as the selection of the online platform to advertise a certain product or to reach the targeted customers for a product. Although, the identification and segregation of the customers is given much importance, the creation of content type that pertains to a specific audience is the main hurdle for many brands.

According to the recent analysis and estimations in the researches, the content marketing costs less than 62% of the other outbound marketing practices. It has also been found effective for business and sales in small and medium sized enterprises (Bui, 2020). The main idea is that the content tools and strategies in a given online digital platform determine the quality of the results.

Application of all strategic perspectives of a digital content marketing campaign also determine the success of a campaign in a given situation (Bala & Verma, 2018).

1.2 Company X Problem

The Company X in this thesis is a digital marketing agency that needs an appropriate strategy to improve its business and attract clients for brand promotion. The company needs strategic options supported by research. Concerning the background of the company, the main offerings of the company are digital marketing plans and packages. By offering such services to the audience, the company focuses on providing support to families, individuals, and corporate entities in terms of finance, healthcare facilitation, and compensatory benefits.

Accordingly, the Company X has the following problem statement:

“What Content Marketing strategies and platforms should the Company X use that will deliver quality results in terms of increased client engagement and acquisition.”

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

The main objectives of the research are the following:

- To evaluate the impact of different content marketing strategies on the customer purchase behavior.
- To evaluate the customer connection created by the content marketing at each stage of consumer journey.
- To investigate the respective role of content marketing in the profitability and performance of products in the market in terms of sales and revenues

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions set specific goals for the direction of the results. It is however evident that the evaluation of the main problem statement of the research is required to check its alignment

with the objectives. The research questions below devise a route for the research to be conducted in order to achieve the defined research objectives. The research questions to direct the results of the research and to signify the importance of the research objectives and problem statement of the research are the following:

- How do content marketing tactics impact the customer buying behavior?
- What is the possible connection provided by the content marketing tactics to the stages of consumer purchase decision?
- What are the possible ways of indicating the integrated organizational benefits in terms of sales and revenues offered by the content marketing tactics?

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The research in the given mode of theories and the background data intends to modify the application methods of the content marketing. The impact of the content marketing strategy on the customer buying behavior. In this way, the research intends to answer a set of research questions which has been identified as the primary approach to reach the research results which contain the best possible tactics of applying content management strategy to two or more different types of situations related to market dynamics or according to the respective demands of the customers in the given market segment. The hypotheses to be checked in this research are:

H₀: Application of Content Marketing Strategy doesn't impact the client hire or purchase behavior.

H_a: Application of Content Marketing Strategy impacts the client hire or purchase behavior.

2 Theoretical Background

Given the rapid intervention of globalization in the business practices, the fundamental practices of the organizations have also transformed to be conducted through digital modes.

With reference to the trends and demands of digital marketing measures in the contemporary arena of business, Alkharabsheh and Zhen (2021) have structured a descriptive study comparing three main approaches of digital marketing. Considering the purchase intent and final decisions of the buyer to be crucial in terms of the marketing strategies applied, the researchers have distinctively analyzed three digital indicators of digital marketing viz., Content Marketing, Social Media Marketing, and Online Convenience. The methodology of the study indicates a descriptive theory-based design in which the collected data has been reviewed for a verdict in the light of theory. The primary findings of the study reveal that all three variables with particular foregrounding of Content Marketing in digital marketing tend to have a positive influence on the customers' buying decisions (Alkharabsheh & Zhen, 2021). The discussions and content of the research makes it possible to understand that marketing through the lens of content such as that on websites with potentials of emotionally moving the customers is more likely to influence their decision of buying. This idea was presented in comparison to the notion of celebrity-led marketing on the social media.

2.1 Role of Content Marketing in Customers' Purchasing Decisions

Said et al (2020) in a quantitative study have precisely provided the impact of content marketing on the purchasing decisions of customers with reference to big data. Extending the research in the Indonesian perspective, data was collected from 134 respondents applying the online questionnaire method to obtain narratives. Through a descriptive method of analyzing the results, the variables leading to the positive impact of content marketing strategy on buying behaviors of customers has been conducted as indicated from the regression test results (Said, et al., 2020). According to the findings, content marketing of a certain product on the frequently used online platforms tends to affect the customers by building perceptions about the product. This shows

that content marketing links with the cognition, persuasion, connection, and decision-making capacities of the audience hence drives their buying decisions. The key learning from this study is that the variables associated with the content marketing strategy concerning the purchase intent of customers is significant and can readily drive their agreeability to buying a certain product.

Applying the knowledge model of persuasion, Pektas and Hassan (2020) have studied the impact of marketing through digital content taking the context of tourist inclination for instance. According to the researchers, digital media is frequently accessed by the tourist community and hence marketing through such platforms can add value for driving the purchase intention of the tourists. Applying the purpose sampling technique, responses were taken from 105 participants to the study with ethical considerations and due consent. The findings of the study indicated a positive relationship between the online content marketing strategy and the purchase intent of the researched tourists. The systematic results depicted content marketing to be associated with reliability whereby a negative correlation of suspicion dimensions and persuasion of the targeted audience was worked out (Pektas & Hassan, 2020). The study enables to find how the online word of mouth to market certain products and services ought to readily drive the inclination of the tourists. Hence the role of content marketing strategy in shaping the mindset of tourists as target customers can be explained referring to this study.

Hence, the above literature clearly highlights that content marketing impacts customer buying behavior positively. It provides the customers with the information they need to decide on whether they want to purchase a certain product or not. Further more it creates an engagement which also positively impacts the customer purchase decision.

2.2 Effective Tools of Content Marketing

Since content marketing tends to deal directly with the consumers regarding the offerings and information of certain products and services, one tool of content creation to market the offerings ought to be storytelling. According to Dinka Zlaveta (2020) storytelling is one of the most emerging tools of content creation concerning the digital marketing practices (Zlateva, 2020). The author has foregrounded the significance of storytelling as an effective tool of content marketing with maximized engagement of the customers. According to the findings of this study, mental

and emotional connections can be made with the customers through story-based content which can mark value in the positioning of the brand for a longer term. The target market eventually has a seamless user experience as they get emotionally and perceptually attached to the brand offers. By creating cognitive connections between the customer and the brand, a certain amount of trust is established, which facilitates effective communication. It has also been determined that excellent customer-company communication promoted by storytelling can assist brands in developing business-enhancing strategies that take into account the attitude of the target market.

In a study by Sadchenko et al (2020) a holistic review of the different marketing tools. The researcher of this study claims the marketing tools as the major source of integrating innovation in the functionality. In terms of content marketing, the researchers have provided a detailed account of the significance of the marketing strategy on digital mediums and the different tools that accompany and regulate it. They discovered in their research content marketing is an effective measure of developing a credible brand image, engaging the customers and establishing trusted relations with them through convincing marketing content. In addition, the different tools of content marketing as inferred through the study include website content, SEO optimization, blogs, infographics, courses and webinars, and e-books. Out of all the different tools mentioned, website content has been evaluated as the most convincing, since it provides a better representation of the brand offerings. Moreover, it also helps the brand to obtain more reach of audience increasing the expectancy of engagement. An important element of the online web content is SEO with its multiple metrics that ensures the identification and attraction of customers towards the brand websites for persuasion (Sadchenko, et al., 2020).

Webinars have been found to be one of the most effective tools of content marketing which if effectively created, can help the brands maximize the engagement of their targeted audience. A research-based report by Steve Benett (2022) provides a detailed inferential account of the concept of webinars, the working, and the benefits that they are likely to serve. The research by the author provides that webinars referring to online seminars or discussion platforms are an effective and holistic approach to inclusively engage with customers. There are different segments of a webinar according to the findings such as presentations, cross-questioning, and sessions which are explanatory to a certain offering by the companies. Webinars come with different online features including text and voice chats, recordings, screen-sharing, and surveys which can facilitate

the customers to engage with the offerings more effectively. Being a wholesome marketing strategy, demonstrating about products becomes more efficient (Bennett, 2022). The features of the medium allow better relation-building with the customers and enables interaction with them to receive their feedback and function accordingly. Hence, maximum reach and expectancy of purchase inclination can be obtained through this mode of content marketing.

Website content, blogs, emails, recordings, videos and social media posts etc., all seem to play a significant role in consumer purchase decision. From the secondary research it is clear that these factors are positively related with the independent variable of this thesis, i.e. customer purchase decision.

2.3 The SOSTAC Model

SOSTAC Model is a Marketing Plan Model Developed by PR Smith in the 1990s. The model was later formalized in his book called Marketing Communications in 1998. Marketers have used the SOSTAC model in a number of different product and service companies for generating plans and strategies for their target audience. The model simply solves a problem using six logical steps: (Steve & Paul, 2018)

Situation: A detailed view of the current state of Business. The challenges it is facing and the room for opportunities. It takes help from SWOT analysis to get a better understanding of the company's affairs.

Objectives: It is a set of goals or missions that the company wants to achieve for its business in the future.

Strategy: The strategy part addresses how a particular goal or objective is to be achieved over the course of time.

Tactics: Tactics are the detailed set of actions or plans that are governed by a strategy to achieve the objective.

Control: Control is a measure of how well the strategy is implemented to achieve desired results and objectives. (Kurth, 2011)

2.4 Content Marketing for Sales and Revenues

A study by Ahmad Tabiat (2022) lays emphasis on the virtues of digital marketing strategies for the enhancement of sales and revenues taking the pharmaceutical industry for instance. According to the author, the strategies of demonstrating about products and services through online platforms contributes extensively in achieving the goals of engaging with customers, driving their preference to purchase, and ensuring company's profitability in the return. Based on a cross-sectional survey of 100 respondents to the study on the subject matter, marketing content on Facebook has been found to be the most engaging and value-adding for the pharmaceutical companies particularly framing Lebanon. The published content and the formation of social communities on the mentioned digital medium helps ensure the customer inclination thus improving the sales in the industry (Tabiat, 2022).

In a North Sumatran context, a study by Sembiring and fellow researcher (2022) foregrounds how content marketing strategies tend to contribute in improving sales for the SMEs. According to the inferences of this study, a major emphasis has been laid on the need of transformation of the marketing strategies of SMEs towards digitalization and adapt to the approach of content marketing. This is as the content marketing technique involves a definite plan of convincing the targeted audience and plan distribution of products and services accordingly (Sembiring, et al., 2022). A gap of success in marketing measures of SMEs has been assessed through the study which can be filled effectively by adhering to the strategy of content marketing directly binding with the customers to drive their inclination.

The B2B approach of business orientation is believed to be the main driver of financial success and profitability for companies based on their effective plans of marketing. Considering the rituals of digital marketing strategies, Yaghtin et al (2020) have found content marketing as a fundamental tool to drive B2B audience, persuading them in the best interests of the both the businesses and driving profitable outcomes. Based on a quantitative survey of the 4 best-ranked corporations from three different industrial sectors, the researchers have evaluated the digital content marketing (DCM) as the most viable and effective strategy to lead conversations on B2B grounds and ensure persuasion for maximum value-creation impacting the sales and overall outcomes of both the businesses (Yaghtin, et al., 2020).

It can be seen that Effective Content Marketing is not only important for B2C business as was discussed in the previous literature, it is also vital for any B2B Business to generate sales and revenue for the business.

2.5 Effectiveness of Content Marketing

The phrase "content is king" is frequently used these days in the context of marketing and digitalization. Consumers probably come into contact with content marketing daily. Businesses can engage customers and build long-lasting relationships with the help of content marketing. An effective content marketing plan makes it easier for buyers to locate the business before they even need a product or service. When a firm begins out with the interests of the customer, the customer will come back to the company. Kose and Sert (2017) stated that the skill to provide valuable content involves not just having an in-depth knowledge of what would attract the audience, but also the ability to connect with them, which is a characteristic of artificial and emotional intelligence. Content Marketing Institute defines content marketing as the technique of offering content that the customer appreciates, which calls for a stronger emotional bond with the target market (Kose & Sert, 2017).

Joe Pulizzi, the founder of the content marketing institute, defines content marketing as a strategic marketing method that focuses on producing and delivering useful, relevant, and consistent content to attract and maintain a clearly defined target audience and, eventually, to motivate potential consumers to act. According to Baltes, marketing strategies evolved from one-way to two-way communication, linked with the evolution of content marketing and digital marketing. Content marketing kinds don't urge its audience to purchase a certain thing and often doesn't even bring up the advertised good or service. However, taken as a whole, content marketing aim to influence the audience to make a purchase; in other words, they advertise without real advertising. Content marketing may be used to promote brand recognition, identify solutions for low consumption figures, and foster customer satisfaction, participation, and trustworthiness. Turning potential consumers into buyers and current customers into loyal customers is one of the goals of content marketing. A genuine interaction between the customer and the business will result through ongoing content marketing, providing a mechanism for two-way collaboration as opposed to information being pushed one way from the business to the consumer (Baltes, 2017).

In a nutshell, content marketing can be used for several purposes like brand awareness, fostering customer satisfaction and creating customer engagement. It does not ask customers to purchase a certain thing directly rather it nurtures them in their journey and brings them closer to make a purchase decision.

2.6 The Ways of Content Improvement:

Companies can achieve their marketing objectives by producing and sharing the finest useful content in the world for a specific niche, rather than primarily on irrelevant media. Although content marketing has been around for a while, few businesses used it at the time. However, because of modern changes in customer behavior and technology developments, it is emerging as the next trend in marketing. Now customers are conscious of the importance of information and how it may influence their choice of products. As a result, people start to ask for additional details. Modern consumers are becoming increasingly intelligent, leaving marketers with little alternative but to provide amazing and reliable content because, in today's digital environment, information manipulation is ineffective. The most effective business websites are created with complete awareness of the tastes, requirements, and desires of the customers. Content, visual design, administration, and accessibility should all function smoothly together for users to access information quickly and browse a website without becoming bored. Consumer experiences are more rational, attentive, and enjoyable when the information context is clear. As explained by Heinze and fellows in 2017 using the phrase "information architecture," which refers to how businesses design and arrange their websites (Heinze, et al., 2016).

Heinze and co researchers stated that content marketing is a cyclical process integrating the four stages influenced by marketing management strategies. As per the, planning is the first, most crucial, and fundamental step in developing a content marketing strategy. Determining the aim of content marketing should be considered in developing a strategy for it. Setting a definite aim is important to take whether the objective is to aware people, enhance brand recognition, increase website visibility, or generate leads for the sales department. After that, the target audience is defined and segmented. The strategy includes managing resources, including staff and financial budgets. A concise timeline and operational schedule are created at the end. The action stage covers everything from collecting images and videos to writing blog posts on social media.

The action stage also includes the creation and deployment of content. Monitoring the effectiveness of a content marketing strategy entails keeping track of its performance and assessing its effectiveness. Reviewing the content is the reflection part (Heinze, et al., 2016).

Hence, for any effective content marketing strategy it is important to have a definite objective and goal. Once a goal is defined one must have a customer persona. Further, selection of a content channel is also crucial and depends on our target segment. All these factors, contribute to making an effective content strategy.

2.7 The Rise of Social Media

Social media platforms are becoming an engaging part of content marketing due to the importance of interpersonal connections and exchanges between clients and vendors. It makes it possible for marketers to interact with their customers more quickly and extensively. Improving the content's level of quality is crucial to promote content attraction and information retention. Content marketers should push the proper content that is based on what customers want and interacts with them on a personal level. The initial step should be to plan a content marketing campaign considering the implications for businesses. And at this phase, consumer insights and data should be based on more than just "what seems good." Additionally, many social media sites require various message appeals. There is not only one messy content for all platforms. Therefore, one business should put effort into producing various types of content for various channels. Additionally, proactive campaigns to create a specific business image as well as social representative shows on digital platforms may both, directly and indirectly, affect content. To carry the ideal brand image, staff should be taught content development, which should not be the sole responsibility of one department but rather a part of the entire company (Leung & Chan, 2017).

Companies may gain benefits from social media when users recommend it by posting favorable ratings and comments. In contrast, when customers are unhappy with a product or service they have gotten, they can also leave negative reviews and complaints. According to Champoux et al, responding in a way that makes the consumer feel that their concerns are taken seriously is the best course of action for businesses with negative feedback rather than deleting or ignoring it. Public and unfavorable commentary can harm a company's reputation, which is a problem for

businesses wanting to enhance their brand image or interact with their consumers (Champoux, et al., 2012).

In a nutshell social media is at the rise and people are increasingly using social media channels. Hence, one cannot exclude social media from his or her content strategy. People are increasingly using social media to inform themselves about the products and services they want to use. Hence, companies should leverage the strategies that foster trust and credibility through social media.

2.8 Measuring Content Effectiveness

The effects of content on business operations may be complicated with technical and strategic difficulties despite companies adopting content marketing strategies. There are only a few limited standards that accurately represent the influence of content on the business from a revenue, brand, or administrative viewpoint because content analytics is still in its development. When impact metrics are difficult to quantify or the necessary data or tools are not accessible, content marketers may struggle to identify the appropriate metrics and instead decide to evaluate numbers rather than influence. There are many different methods to evaluate how effective content marketing is like consuming, promoting, selling, and generating leads are the four key categories of content marketing. Site visits, video views, downloads, and social discussions are some examples of consumption metrics. Sharing indicators, such as likes, comments, tweets, and forwards, indicate if the content material is effective and worth spreading to other people. Metrics for lead generation show how frequently content consumption produces leads (Leung & Chan, 2017).

To create efficient content marketing, a few factors must be considered. The importance of message customization increases the likelihood of reaching the target audience. Due to regional differences and varying customer expectations, using a single content worldwide is unwise. Next, as consumers like individualism, it is best to have personalized content. They want to be treated with respect and made to feel unique. Customers are more likely to develop closer bonds with a company when the message is individualized and emotionally charged. It is better if the content is created using a variety of procedures, including communication, cooperation, and outsourcing. Different methods of message delivery might hold the audience's interest. Content can be made

interesting and reliable by the collaboration of marketers and consumers in the information generation process. Users are not compensated to promote certain products, but consumers assume that user-generated content is far more reliable. Finally, businesses must interact with the public honestly and ethically. The public strongly dislikes being lied to and used as a tool. To establish trust and retain customer retention, content marketers must ensure that the contents are authentic and open. In this regard, publishing is overtaking marketing as a result of the current marketing trend.

Using the findings of the study as a guide, companies can apply the content marketing aspect in social and digital media as well as content publication through e-commerce, and mobile media. It is advised to concentrate on assessing the content that is decided upon by the content marketing strategy to evaluate the effectiveness of the content marketing process. Sales and customer service are crucial to getting crucial consumer feedback since only analyzing online activity is insufficient to determine the influence of content on customer interface. Companies can also analyze customer content to determine customers' requirements and generate the right ideas. As a result, the process of product development will become more effective, and goals for market share and revenue will be met (Champoux, et al., 2012).

There are several tools that can be used to measure content effectiveness. As mentioned in the literature above, through various tools like google analytics etc., Facebook content calendar and ads manager, we can measure the site visits, video views, content engagement etc. This helps better understand what sort of content is resonating among the consumers and what is not.

3 Methodology

For the current study, on finding the implications of content marketing strategy, a mixed method of research has been selected for scrutinization. As the practices and strategic approaches of marketing tend to be a vast field in the contemporary arena of business, a mixed research methodology can be the most viable technique to unleash the unaddressed factors regarding the subject matter. Through a mixed approach of scrutinization, diverse perspectives related to the subject of the study can be inferred and a more effectively comprehended verdict can be drawn out (Mackey & Bryfonski, 2018). As the term suggests, mixed method is inclusive of findings based on both, qualitative as well as quantitative analysis of secondary and primary data to be obtained, respectively. An insight into the variables of content marketing has hence been taken and a fuller understanding of the subject matter is established.

3.1 Research Design

As the approach of the study suggests, the sources for data analysis to rest the final verdict of the current study are two-pronged i.e., both, secondary and primary data have been lined up to base the discussions on. An extensive review of literature witnessing the prior research on the subject matter has been conducted to get an insight into the existing narratives on the area of research. A gap of knowledge and its relevance to the current study has also been justified through the secondary data analysis. Primary data collection will be carried out to get exclusive viewpoint on the content marketing tactics and their influence on the business in various aspects. The analysis for the obtained data has been conducted both inferentially as well as systematically to precisely link between the prior and existing narratives about content marketing.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

As the study is designed to collect and process data from primary as well as secondary sources, deliberation of the moral proceedings of the research has been fully observed (Hasan, et al., 2017). To collect the secondary data, the literature review has been assured of comprising articles

from renowned publications with an authenticated list of contributors to corroborate the originality of the secondary data. Moreover, each of the articles being referred to in the study has been duly cited with the names of its contributors to add to the authenticity of the findings. A list of all the citations has also been generated on concluding the study to value and acknowledge the contributors as a moral gesture. For the primary data collection involving focus groups, the informed consent of every participant has been ensured. No force has been applied for collecting feedback and the analysis has been assured of avoiding manipulation, falsification, and misinformation regarding the data collected. Ethical considerations to each of data collection have been ensured to keep the credibility of the study intact.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Indicated by the design and approach of the current study, data collection has been carried out from primary as well as secondary sources in the light of the mixed methodology of research.

3.3.1 Secondary Data Collection

A comprehensive review of existing literature addressing the importance and tactics of content marketing to benefit business functionality in diverse ways has been carried out. A scrutinization of research articles, conceptual writings, peer journals, and term papers has been done to ensure the data is relevant to the questions of the research. For each of the aspects to be addressed, keyword-based bifurcation of the selected articles has been done and themes of the literature review have been created. Moreover, Google Scholar has been chosen as the platform to source the required secondary data for the literature review as the platform offers a wide range of scholarly articles in multiple niches as per the interests.

3.3.2 Primary Data Collection

Interviews of the sampled groups of participants and a close-ended survey have been carried out to obtain exclusive primary data encompassing their narratives on the content marketing effectiveness in day-to-day business practices. To conduct the interviews, a questionnaire was semi-structured with scenario-based questions common to each of the focus groups considered for the current study (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The questions of the interview foregrounded the knowledge of the buying behaviors and inclination driven by brand content, marketing campaigns and their convincing powers, and the expectations linked with the tactics of content marketing.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Focus Groups

The target groups or the focused participants intended to give feedback providing insights into the content marketing significance and tactics include three groups. The first focus group comprises business owners from SME sector who have a physical business or store (Not an online business) but have high dependency on marketing strategies for their businesses to function. The second group comprises entrepreneurs running online businesses only for which digital marketing particularly content marketing ought to be potent sources to ensure audience reach. The final focus group of the study comprises owners of business with expectations to obtain online presence with effective marketing to grow.

For collecting the primary data for the current study on content marketing and its peculiarities, a systematic sampling approach has been adopted to forficate the participants of the research (Mostafa & Ahmad, 2018). The approach has been selected to minimize the risk of falsification or manipulation to the data recorded and obtained through questionnaire-based interviews. The sampling basis on the specified limit of 98 participants (we have used a statistical formula $k = 50 + 8(n)$ to find out the ideal sample size in our case. Here n is the number of independent variables used in the study and K is the total number of respondents) chosen randomly from our selected audience for the questionnaire survey (see appendix for survey questions).

3.5 Research Hypothesis

From the literature, it can be observed that factors like website, social media content, emails, testimonials, video recordings, screen shares etc. does contribute towards making an effective content strategy. Hence, using some of these factors we came up with the following hypothesis to test using the primary data in the form of interviews and survey questionnaires.

H1: New clients look for an aesthetically built website when choosing a content marketing agency for their business.

H2: Posting relevant and regular content on social media favorably impacts client hire decision.

H3: Continuous nurturing of email lists with new content increases client retention and hire rate.

H4: A referral by a friend or acquaintance favorably impacts client's hiring decision.

H5: Detailed information on the subject matter in the form of blogs creates credibility when deciding on the digital or content marketing agency.

H6: Regular posting of YouTube videos is positively associated with client acquisition and retention.

4 Data Analysis:

In order to test the hypothesis, a qualitative analysis was done from the interviews. The findings from the interviews were then tested on a bigger sample size through questionnaire survey. The data collected from the survey was tested through correlation and regression analysis. The findings of both the methods are given below:

4.1 Insights from the Interviews:

Three interviews (focus groups) were conducted to find out how clients hire digital marketing agencies and whether a content marketing strategy impacts client hire or purchase decision. Each interview contained three participants. In the first focus group, only those business owners were interviewed who had physical presence but also relied on digital marketing. The second focus group constituted entrepreneurs who only had online presence and relied solely on digital marketing to operate their businesses. The last focus group constituted of businesses who were using content marketing with expectations to obtain just online presence. The interviewees were asked the same questions as were present in the research survey. Following were the insights that we got from the interviews:

Website:

When asked if they look at agency's website before hiring it, all of them said that they do look at the website. An agency with no website indicates lack of professionalism and creates a negative image.

Social Media Content Posting:

When asked if they find the content posted by several marketing agencies useful and engaging, the responses were mixed. Some said that it does help them if the posts are informative. Others did not frequently engaged with the posts.

Email Marketing:

We asked our respondents if they have subscribed to various Digital marketing agencies. Some of them didn't subscribe. For those who did most of them didn't open the email if it seemed

promotional. The general view was if the email was informative and seemed useful, rather than a spam or promotion, most of them did open and read them.

Referrals:

Almost all of the clients said that they prefer hiring a person based upon a referral from a trusted third party. However, if there is a referral from a person who is not associated with the field himself they look at it with an eye of scrutiny.

Blogs:

Most of the clients did not read the blogs posted by the marketing agency. When asked the reason, they said that it requires time and involves a bit of a technical jargon. They prefer simple content that is easy to digest.

YouTube and Instagram Videos:

When asked if they like watching YouTube and Instagram videos posted by the agency, the responses were again mixed. Some clients said that they have never watched while most of them said that they do watch if the video is short and is informative at the same time.

4.2 Correlation Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

In order to test for the correlation between client hire decision and all of our independent variables, we circulated a questionnaire survey and collected 98 responses. These 98 respondents had used content marketing before and had hired a digital marketing agency at least once. Following are the results that were obtained through Pearson correlation at a significance level of 0.05.

H1: New clients look for an aesthetically built website when choosing a content marketing agency for their business.

Table 1: Correlation between client hiring decision and website

Correlations		Client_hiring_decision	Website
Client_hiring_decision	Pearson Correlation	1	.819**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	98	98
Website	Pearson Correlation	.819**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	98	98

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The correlation coefficient was computed between the client hiring decision and the website of a digital marketing agency. The result was significant, $r = 0.819$, $p = 0.000$.

There is a positive and strong correlation between client hire decisions and website features. This means that a client is highly likely to hire an agency having a good website. Hence, we accept our hypothesis 1.

H2: Posting relevant and regular content on social media favorably impacts client hire decision.

Table 2: Correlation between client hiring decision and Social Media

Correlations		Client_hiring_decision	Social_media_content
Client_hiring_decision	Pearson Correlation	1	.670**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	98	98
Social_media_content	Pearson Correlation	.670**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	98	98

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The correlation coefficient was computed between the client hiring decision and social media content posting by a digital marketing agency. The result was significant, $r = 0.670$, $p = 0.000$.

There is a positive and strong correlation between client hire decisions and social media content posting by a marketing agency. This means that a client is highly likely to hire an agency that

posts content on its social media regularly and engages with its clients. Hence, we accept our hypothesis 2.

H3: Continuous nurturing of email lists with new content increases client retention and hire rate.

Table 3: Correlation between client hiring decision and email

Correlations		Client_hiring_decision	Email_marketing
Client_hiring_decision	Pearson Correlation	1	.629**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	98	98
Email_marketing	Pearson Correlation	.629**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	98	98

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The correlation coefficient was computed between the client hiring decision and Email Marketing by a digital marketing agency. The result was significant, $r = 0.629$, $p = 0.000$.

There is a positive and strong correlation between client hire decisions and email marketing. This means that a client is highly likely to hire an agency that sends regular emails to its relevant target audience and engages with them. Hence, we accept our hypothesis 3.

H4: A referral by a friend or acquaintance favorably impacts client's hiring decision.

Table 4: Correlation between client hiring decision and referrals

Correlations		Client_hiring_decision	Referrals
Client_hiring_decision	Pearson Correlation	1	.598**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	98	98
Referrals	Pearson Correlation	.598**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	98	98

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The correlation coefficient was computed between the client hiring decision and referrals by friends. The result was significant, $r = 0.598$, $p = 0.000$.

There is a positive and moderate correlation between client hire decisions and referrals. This means that a client is likely to hire an agency based on referrals from a friend or an acquaintance.

H5: Detailed information on the subject matter in the form of blogs creates credibility when deciding on the digital or content marketing agency.

Table 5: Correlation between client hiring decision and Blogs

Correlations		Client_hiring_decision	Blogs
Client_hiring_decision	Pearson Correlation	1	.130
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.102
	N	98	98
Blogs	Pearson Correlation	.130	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.102	
	N	98	98

The correlation coefficient was computed between the client hiring decision and blogs. The result was insignificant, $r = 0.130$, $p = 0.102$.

There is not a significant correlation between client hire decision and blogs. Hence, we reject our hypothesis 5.

H6: Regular posting of YouTube videos is positively associated with client acquisition and retention.

Table 6: Correlation between client hiring decision and YouTube and Instagram Videos

Correlations		Client_hiring_decision	Youtube_Instagra_videos
Client_hiring_decision	Pearson Correlation	1	.601**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	98	98
Youtube_Instagram_videos	Pearson Correlation	.601**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	98	98

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The correlation coefficient was computed between the client hiring decision, YouTube, and Instagram videos uploaded by a digital marketing agency. The result was significant, $r = 0.601$, $p = 0.000$.

There is a positive and strong correlation between client hire decisions and YouTube and Instagram videos. This means that a client is highly likely to hire an agency if it posts regular YouTube and Instagram videos and spreads informational content related to its services. Hence, we accept our hypothesis 6.

The scatter plot showing the relationship between our dependent variable and each of independent variable is shown in the appendix.

4.3 Regression Analysis:

Multiple linear regression was conducted to predict client hire decision by website features, social media content, email marketing, referrals, blogs, and YouTube and Instagram videos. The descriptive statistics of the independent variables are as follows:

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Client_hiring_decision	3.684	1.1718	98
Website	3.643	1.1599	98
Social_media_content	3.510	1.0478	98
Email_marketing	3.806	1.3290	98
Referrals	4.020	1.0252	98
Blogs	2.582	.8843	98
Youtube_Instagram_videos	4.000	1.0254	98

The descriptive statistics show the mean value, standard dev and the total number of observations for each variable. The mean value for most of the variables is comparable. The observable values is 98 since our respondents were 98.

The multiple correlation coefficient (R) is 0.875, which indicates the strong relationship between observed values and predicted values. The R-squared value of 0.765 indicates that 76.5 % of the observed variability in client hire decision was explained by this model. The standard error of estimate (SEoE) was 0.5863.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.875 ^a	.765	.750	.5863	.765	49.407	6	91	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Youtube_Instagram_videos, Blogs, Social_media_content, Email_marketing, Referrals, Website

The overall model was found to be statistically significant ($F(6,98) = 49.407, 0.00$), indicating that this model with six predictors explained 75% of the variance in client hire decision.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1					
(Constant)	-.556	.339		-1.641	.104
Website	.460	.084	.456	5.490	.000
Social_media_content	.207	.081	.185	2.566	.012
Email_marketing	.188	.058	.214	3.259	.002
Referrals	.063	.077	.056	.824	.412
Blogs	.054	.071	.040	.758	.450
Youtube_Instagra_videos	.182	.072	.159	2.516	.014

a. Dependent Variable: Client_hiring_decision

Standardized coefficients are used since they allow to compare the relative magnitude of the effects of independent variables. In this way all of the independent variables have equal standard deviations.

The estimated slope of the website was 0.456, which was statistically significant ($t=5.490$, $p = 0.000$). The result indicated that there is an increase of 0.456 points in client hire decision with each point increase in website-related features after controlling for other independent variables.

The estimated slope of the social media content was 0.185, which was statistically significant ($t=2.566$, $p = 0.012$). The result indicated that there is an increase of 0.185 points in client hire decision with each point increase in social media content posting after controlling for other independent variables.

The estimated slope of the Email Marketing was 0.214, which was statistically significant ($t=3.259$, $p = 0.002$). The result indicated that there is an increase of 0.214 points in client hire decision with each point increase in Email marketing after controlling for other independent variables.

The estimated slope of the referrals was 0.056 which was not significant while controlling for other independent variables. This means that referrals do not play a significant role in client hiring decisions.

The estimated slope of the blogs was 0.040 which was not significant while controlling for other independent variables. This means that blogs posted by a digital marketing agency do not play a significant role in client hiring decisions.

The estimated slope of the YouTube, and Instagram videos was 0.159, which was statistically significant ($t = 2.516$, $p = 0.014$). The result indicated that there is an increase of 0.159 points in client hire decision with each point increase in YouTube, Instagram videos after controlling for other independent variables.

Since referrals and blogs donot predict the behavior of client hire decision significantly, so we can remove these variables from our regression analysis. A linear regression analysis based on four independent variables is shown below:

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.873 ^a	.762	.752	.5840

a. Predictors: (Constant), Youtube_Instagra_videos, Social_media_content, Email_marketing, Website

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.336	.268		-1.255	.213
	Website	.491	.079	.486	6.235	.000
	Social_media_content	.220	.077	.197	2.852	.005
	Email_marketing	.190	.056	.215	3.418	.001
	Youtube_Instagra_videos	.184	.071	.161	2.578	.012

a. Dependent Variable: Client_hiring_decision

4.4 Discussion:

Hypothesis 1 turns out to be correct since the test supported the hypothesis. Therefore, a good website impacts client hire decision positively. Similarly, hypothesis 2 is also correct. This means

that creating client engagement by regularly posting on social media does help in client acquisition as it positively impacts client hire decision. Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 6 are also proven correct through regression analysis. Therefore, agencies should regularly engage clients through regular emails and YouTube and Instagram videos as this creates a positive impact on client hire decision. Hypothesis 4 and 5 turned out to be incorrect at a confidence level of 0.05. This means that clients do not read much blogs and are not engaged by them. Blogs posting do not create a significant impact on client hire decision. Similarly, referrals is also not significant at a confidence level of 0.05 when controlling for other independent variables. This is contrary to previous studies in the field where referrals did have an impact on customer buying behavior in B2B (Russell and Morgan, 2009). The reason for why customers are not much engaged with blogs may be because of the fact that it is challenging to read a blog provided increasingly short attention spans of customers on the internet. Similarly, watching is much easier than reading. That is why we observed that clients are more engaged when shown a YouTube and Instagram video rather than reading a blog post. Here, it is also important that the strategies are made keeping in view the SOSTAC model. The situation and objective must be kept in mind before the implementation of the strategy. The formulation of strategy varies from situation and objectives. Also once the strategy is formulated, a proper plan of action to implement that strategy and a proper control system must be in place to see the effectiveness of the strategy.

From the research, we can conclude that, the most important factors that drive client hire decision are website, social media content posting, email marketing and YouTube and Instagram videos. Hence, we can conclude from this that application of content marketing does in fact impact the client hire or purchase behavior. Hence, we reject the null research hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis, that is,

Ha: Application of Content Marketing Strategy does impact the client hire or purchase behavior.

The overall model explains about 75 % of variance in client hire decision. This means that there are other factors as well that predict client hire decision, but this model doesn't explain them.

5 Conclusion:

The case examined the leading factors that can impact the client hire decision. From the interview insights and the regression analysis, it can be seen that a client's hire decision is largely impacted if agencies have a useful and attractive website, create social media posts regularly, send useful and informative emails, and post engaging videos on YouTube or Instagram. Clients usually do not read blogs. With regards to the referrals, most clients see it with a scrutiny if the referral is not from a trusted source. Hence, the main areas of content strategy on which a digital marketing agency should focus on are website, social media, emails and videos.

5.1 Limitations:

As every other research, this research also has limitations where the findings and results may not hold. For example, there may be many factors that affect the client hire behavior but the author has not listed and tested all of them. Similarly, the data collection method was interviews and the use of a questionnaire, and the respondents might not have answered the questions accurately. There may be subjective and heuristic biases, which were not considered. The research output may also not be generalizable to other areas. The data was collected from a small demographic sample or group only and the results might not be accurate in other demographics. Lastly, the study is generally for all online B2B. They are not for a specific product line and some results may not hold for B2C.

5.2 Evaluation of the Project Research

Through the data obtained from the research and the case study conducted in the research, the main inference encompasses the essentiality and significance of content marketing for businesses. In the case of Company X, the main provisions are that being a digital marketing Company, it is vital for the business to adapt to a marketing strategy that ensures extensive reach and connection building with the target audience. The primary and secondary data acquired from reliable resources explain the pivotal role of content marketing in this regard. The main conclusion from

the study is that content marketing at its best tends to engage with the audience with their emotions, intentions, and preferences through better representation of the offerings. The research revealed the different tools and techniques of content marketing for digital platforms, that have more advantages than other marketing strategies.

6 References

- Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A., & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *Journal of the american college of clinical pharmacy*, 4(10), 1358-1367.
- Alkharabsheh, O. H., & Zhen, B. H. (2021). The Impact of Content Marketing, Social Media Marketing and Online Convenience on Consumer Buying Decision Process. *CoMBInES-Conference on Management, Business, Innovation, Education and Social Sciences*, 1(1), 1823-1834.
- Bala, M., & Verma, D. (2018). A Critical Review of Digital Marketing. *International Journal of Management, IT & Engineering*, 321-339.
- Baltes, L. P. (2017). Marketing technology (Martech)–the most important dimension of online marketing. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov. Economic Sciences. Series V*, 10(2), 43-48.
- Bennett, S. (2022). What is a Webinar? How to Create Effective Webinars-Wiki.
- Bui, T. T. (2020). Inbound Marketing Plan for Small & Medium-Sized Businesses.
- Champoux, V., Durgee, J., & McGlynn, L. (2012). Corporate Facebook pages: when “fans” attack. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 33(2), 22-30. Retrieved 2022
- Dhakal, K. (2022). NVivo. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 110(2), 270-272.
- Hasan, N., Rana, R. U., Chowdhury, S., Dola, A. J., & Rony, M. K. (2017). Ethical considerations in research. *Journal of Nursing Research, Patient Safety and Practise (JNRPSP)* 2799-1210, 1(01), 1-4.
- Heinze, A., Fletcher, G., Rashid, T., & Cruz, A. (2016). Digital and social media marketing. Abingdon: Routledge, 1(1), 1-10.
- Kose, U., & Sert, S. (2017). Improving content marketing processes with the approaches by artificial intelligence. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1704.02114.*, 1(1), 1-10.

- Kuusisto, S. S. (2019). Identifying the Level and Effectiveness of Content Marketing: Case Company X.
- Lacey, Russell, and Robert M. Morgan. "Customer advocacy and the impact of B2B loyalty programs." *Journal of business & industrial marketing* (2009).
- Leung, C. H., & Chan, W. T. (2017). Using emoji effectively in marketing: An empirical study. *Journal of Digital & Social Media Marketing*, 5(1), 76-95.
- Li, Y. L., & Wang, L. (2021). Crowd behavior simulation model based on information-gap theory. 2021 6th International Conference on Intelligent Computing and Signal Processing (ICSP), 590-594.
- Mackey, A., & Bryfonski, L. (2018). Mixed methodology. *The Palgrave handbook of applied linguistics research methodology*, 103-121.
- Mostafa, S. A., & Ahmad, I. A. (2018). Recent developments in systematic sampling: a review. *Journal of Statistical Theory and Practice*, 12(2), 290-310.
- Paoletta, M. S. (2018). *Linear models and time-series analysis: regression, ANOVA, ARMA and GARCH*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Pektas, S. Y., & Hassan, A. (2020). The effect of digital content marketing on tourists' purchase intention. *Journal of Tourismology*, 6(1), 79-98.
- Powers, T. (2018). *The Effects of Social Proof Through Social Media on Perceptions of Responsibility*.
- Sadchenko, O., Lagodiienko, V., Novykova, I., Feshchenko, O., Ruzhynska, N., & Bogdanov, O. (2020). Marketing tools in stimulating innovative activity of enterprises. *International journal of management*.
- Said, S., Kamase, J., Ella, H., Rachman, A., & Dunggio, T. (2020). Big data and content marketing on purchase decisions online in Indonesia. *American Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 3(1), 168-177.

Sembiring, B. K., Rini, E. S., & Yuliaty, T. (2022). Content Marketing Strategies to Maximize Product Sales SMEs in North Sumatra. *Modeling Economic Growth in Contemporary Indonesia* , 69-79.

Tabiat, A. (2022). The Impact of Digital Marketing on Sales Performance: The Case of Lebanese Pharmaceutical Companies. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 7(4), 349-355.

Yaghtin, S., Safarzadeh, H., & Zand, M. K. (2020). Planning a goal-oriented B2B content marketing strategy. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 38(7), 1007-1020.

Zlateva, D. (2020). Some aspects of storytelling as a part of content marketing. *Икономика и управление*, 117-123.

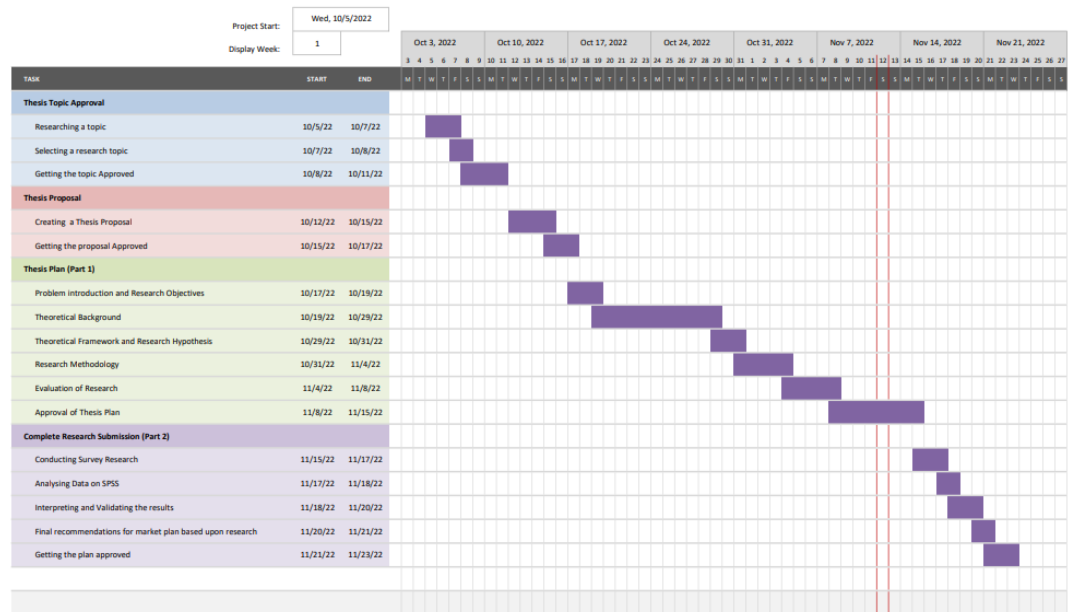
Bax, S., & Woodhouse, P. (2013). *Cambridge Marketing Handbook: Communications*. Kogan Page Publishers.

Kurth, S. (2011). Molson Coors to launch “clear beer for women”: Campaign Planning and Development Individual Assignment. GRIN Verlag.

Pulizzi, J., & Barrett, N. (2009). Get content get customers-Turn Prospects into buyers with content marketing. *Saxena NSB Management Review*, 2(2), 98-100.

7 Appendix

7.1 Gantt Chart



7.2 Survey and Interview Questionnaires

Qualifiers

1. Have you done digital marketing to bring traffic to your business?

a) Yes

b) No

2. Have you hired a digital content marketing agency for your brand?

a) Yes

b) No

Questionnaires:

In the following questionnaires, the respondent will answer questions based upon a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being least likely and 5 being most likely.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you depend on content marketing to grow your business?
2. On a scale of 1 to 5 how likely, are you to look at the website of the marketing agency before you hire them?
3. On a scale of 1 to 5 how regularly, do you engage with the content posted by digital marketing agencies that you follow on social media?
4. On a scale of 1 to 5 how regularly, do you open and read emails from various marketing agencies you have subscribed to?
5. How likely are you to hire an agency based on a referral from your friend or connection?
6. How often do you read the blogs of various marketing agencies you have previously worked with? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5?
7. A good blog on the website creates a sense of credibility that the agency has knowledge in the field. How likely do you agree with this statement on a scale of 1 to 5.
8. How likely are you to hire an agency by seeing their YouTube or Instagram videos?

7.3 Survey Response form link

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdEDMUcIL-mu-jM2Oh4lgjQPP7bVPxy02EyfNGjd6-VhgMV8g/viewform?usp=sf_link

7.4 Correlation plots

