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Content marketing elements and their influence on search advertisement effectiveness: theoretical background and practical insights

Nowadays when internet marketing is on the wave, marketing experts recognize the importance of content; content marketing becomes a new field in marketing research. This paper provides a theoretical analysis, which ends up with a theoretical model of the content marketing influence on search system advertisement. Conclusions, practical insights and future development research directions are presented as well.

Keywords: content marketing, search advertisement, advertisement effect, content marketing elements.

Populiarėjant marketingui internete, specialistai pripažįsta vis didėjančią turinio svarbą, o turinio marketingas tapo nauja sritimi marketingo tyrimuose. Šiame darbe pateikiama teorinė analizė – sudarytas teorinis turinio marketingo elementų įtakos paieškos reklamos paveikumui modelis. Taip pat pateikiamos išvados, praktinės įžvalgos ir būsimų tyrimų galimybės.

Raktiniai žodžiai: turinio marketingas, reklama paieškos sistemose, reklamos poveikis, turinio marketingo elementai.

Introduction

A company working in modern market conditions, in order to improve its results, has to perform effective advertising policies, analyse competitors' actions and investigate the needs of consumers and consumption trends (Richardson et al., 2010; Išoraitė, 2013). A more thorough understanding of online consumers is a prerequisite for digital content that meet consumer expectations, and at the same time, forms a basis for competitive and sustainable business (Halttunen et al., 2010). Information becomes a dominant element in the marketing exchange (Rowley, 2008). It can be observed that interactivity and user involvement varies influenced by the quality of information.

Some authors (Rowley, 2008; Wulf et al., 2006; Ružkevičius, Guseva, 2006) focus on the content and information quality as one of the factors determining the attractiveness of websites or other virtual products to the consumer that afterwards can affect consumer confidence, satisfaction and

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loyalty. Unique and valuable content starts to be a priority task for enterprises (Gagnon, 2014; Creamer, 2012; Rose, 2014) that aim to attract the attention of consumers. The increasing importance of content quality created preconditions for content marketing to become a separate marketing discipline.

The use of valuable content in advertisement is one of the straightforward ways to get an advantage and successfully compete with other participants in the market. Moreover, it can help to improve the effectiveness of different advertisement forms. In the most popular internet advertisement form – search advertisement – content marketing or its separate elements may be used as well. For this reason, theoretical research on content marketing can help to improve practical applicability. Therefore, **the scientific problem** solved in the paper is presented in the question form – how does the use of content marketing elements influence the effectiveness of search advertisement?

Accordingly, **the object** of the research is the influence of content marketing elements on the effectiveness of search advertisement. **The aim** of this paper is to reveal the influence of content marketing elements on the effect of search advertisement.

Research methods. While achieving the aim of the paper, scholarly studies in the field of content marketing (Rowley, 2008; Gagnon, 2014; Kho, 2014; Rose, 2014) and the effect of search advertisement (Liao et al., 2011; Haan, Moraga-Gonzalez, 2009; Szabo, Huberman, 2010) were analysed. The general scientific research methods were applied – theoretical analysis, based on the results and conclusions of various scientific papers, a systematic analysis, evaluation, generalization, comparison, abstraction.

Content marketing concept

Despite the fact that content marketing is widely used in practice, it is still quite a new thing in the scientific research area. Only a few authors provide more comprehensive theoretical understanding of content marketing. Therefore, content marketing does not have an unambiguous and widely spread definition. The authors of the paper have chosen to start from the definition of content marketing provided by the Content Marketing Institute (2015), where content marketing is described as a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.

However, the authors of this paper believe that content marketing is even a broader field than the definition given above. Looking at the mentioned authors' research fields, it is seen that they understand the concept of content marketing wider and relate it to other forms of marketing such as online marketing, digital marketing, and information management. According to the authors of this article, this suggests that although the definition of content marketing is not mentioned, the primary space where the elements of content marketing are created and distributed is a virtual one and the main tool of content marketing is information that is valuable for consumers and its management.

By no means, content marketing development is a complex and dynamic pro-

cess. E. Gagnon (2014), A. Chasser and J. Wolfe (2010) highlight that the creation of a content-based marketing program is more than the creation of virtual promotional advertisement. Therefore, organizations need to find and create content that effectively adds to the selling of products. Furthermore, this content should position the company in the most exclusive way in order to engage potential customers. This process is perceived as a kind of dialogue that leads to sales and new business creation for a company. According to E. Gagnon (2014), content used in content-based marketing programs is defined as a base of substantive, reasonably objective information, developed by or for a company.

Content, which would be useful for the target audience, development should be a priority task in the advertising campaign planning process. Construction of the advertising message based on the useful content is the next generation of branding. A. Chasser and J. Wolf (2010) found that consumers are not only more responsive to the content-based ads, but also content marketing creates an opportunity for them to bypass traditional advertising.

Researchers (Ružkevičius, Guseva, 2006; Chasser, Wolfe, 2010; Gagnon, 2014; Abel, 2014; Creamer, 2012; Schuinanii et al., 2014) emphasize the importance of content quality, mentioning a variety of features, which the quality should possess in order to stimulate consumer interest and beneficial actions. These features can be understood as a separate content marketing element. The following seven characteristics should be included in high-quality digital content:

- Relevance
- Informative
- Reliability
- Value
- Uniqueness
- Emotions and
- Intelligence.

Relevance. As it was mentioned earlier in the definition of content marketing, it is visible that content has to be relevant. In literature the relevance of content is perceived as usefulness of information for a consumer (Lin et al., 2014; Chasser, Wolfe, 2010; Abel, 2014). In order to ensure brand management in virtual space, there is a constant need to provide new, relevant information, to maintain regular contact with the customer and to encourage this customer to become a part of a community trademark (Černikovaitė, Jucaitytė, 2012). Moreover, relevant information pursued through advertising will help to create communication between the company and the internet user.

Informative. Marketing research studies (Bertrand et al., 2010) have shown that non interpretable advertising content negatively affects the demand, and companies use random experiments to optimize their content strategy. Researchers (Boisvert, Caron, 2006; Gagnon, 2014) understand informative content as an opportunity to persuade and engage consumers. Content informs potential customers about the company's knowledge, skills and processes that are used to create products and services. Content and used linguistics influence the consumer decision-making process (Ludwig et al., 2012).

There are different ways to spread information about a company, but it requires considerable time and expenses. Best of these processes are controlled by those who skillfully, briefly and clearly provide their business information to customers in a reasonable and convenient way.

Reliability. Failure or lack of the marketing specialists' ability to ensure the reliability of information makes the informative content negligible. Reliability is one of the key elements of high quality content. In order to ensure reliability, companies should carefully evaluate data processing procedures and use appropriate techniques (Ružkevičius, Guseva, 2006). Information provided by a company must be reliable and adequate.

Reliability determines correctness of information whereas adequacy of information is determined by completeness (Chasser, Wolfe, 2010). H. Linet et al. (2014) support this opinion by saying that the reliability of content is also a significant factor in determining the value of communication. Furthermore, it makes influence on consumer attitudes and interests.

Value. Content creation should be implemented through the functional and emotional values. By implementing and succeeding in this goal, companies can achieve high conversion into sales rates (Limba, Jurkutė, 2013). According to E. Gagnon (2014), the quality of content is addressed to the needs of potential customers and shows them how a product proposed by a certain company can help in solving customers' problems.

Some Lithuanian authors (Ružkevičius, Guseva, 2006) perceive valuable content as an ability of the given content to comply with the consumer's aspirations, goals and interests. Therefore, this aspect is primarily dependent on the users' needs and interests which are constantly changing. However, the authors of this paper believe that the value of content should be independent from the chosen dissemination and regarded as one of the essential principles of content marketing.

Uniqueness. Another important element of content is uniqueness. First of all, companies using content exclusivity, can win the battle for consumer's attention in the competitive online space. According to E. Gagnon (2014) unique content could be foreseen as a positioning tool of the company in order to become a unique and desirable market participant in comparison to its competitors.

Secondly, the unique content cannot only draw the attention of consumers, but also spreads the word of mouth about the company's unique skills (Gagnon, 2014). The uniqueness of content is achieved through the detailed analysis of competitors, creativity and innovation. According to H. Berkley (2010), a company has only ten seconds to attract consumer attention with the offered content. Therefore, every possible way should be used to tell the client why he needs the company.

Emotions. Companies seeking to implement content-based marketing programs successfully should understand content wider and have to place emotional and entertaining elements that excite customers. A study prepared by J. Berger and K. Milkman (2012) showed that positive content has stronger viral effect than negative one. Nevertheless, a deeper analysis showed that the content, which has an emotional character (positive or negative) is more interesting to customers, than the neutral content.

A model composed by F. Leung and C. M. Cheung (quote from Lin et al., 2014) indicates that consumer attitude to digital and mobile advertising content is positive when it provides information and entertainment value to consumers. Seeking to increase the effect of advertisement, marketing professionals shouldn't avoid emotional calls that will strengthen their

relationship with customers, and encourage customers to be more interested.

Intelligence. S. Abel (2014) argues that content-based marketing programs need to embrace smart content. Smart content is not limited only to one goal, i.e. one technology and one output. Smart content can have an ability to be readable by humans and processed in machines and technology. Intelligence, properly integrated into content-based marketing programs, helps professionals to present content to potential customers, to draw their attention and encourage them to make actions that are useful for a company. Some authors (Creamer, 2012; Ludwig et al., 2012) believe that in order to make influence, content marketing should have accountability. Therefore, content quality can be measured by conversions.

Despite the mentioned features of quality content, there is no consensus about the matter that quality content should be based on. In the authors' opinion, content-based marketing elements are influenced not only by users and their perspective, but also by the development of technology. In other words, over the time elements may change and it will become easier and easier to evaluate their effect.

Content based marketing and advertisement in search systems

According to P. Danaher and J. Rossiter (2011), when evaluating internet technologies it is essential to consider the cons and pros of new and traditional channels that were created by the internet and to make those channels effective for the company marketing strategy to implement.

Today one cannot imagine the internet without search systems. Search systems diminish the complexity of websites, broaden the search horizons of the user and create a possibility for the needed information to be found. Some authors (Lamanauskas et al., 2012; Pan et al., 2011) admit that modern society gets a big part of information by using informational and communicational means. The possibilities and ways of searching for information are progressing rapidly and there are different ways to spread and transmit information on the internet. On the other hand, the quantity of information itself is increasing.

Search system is an information channel that has a mission to make information organized, regularized, useful and accessible for the user. Researchers (Guerini et al., 2010; Compton, 2011) highlighted, that the main idea of advertisement is that system which is used in search engines is to enable advertisement givers to show their advertisement only to the corresponding target audience by contextually targeting the audience through the keywords.

In the search system, the position of the search advertisement depends on a lot of various factors, the most important of which are click-through rate (CTR), history of the campaign and search system account, and the quality and logical links of the website that is addressed. Consequently it can be said, that the popularity of the search advertisement is affected by the fact that companies are interested in text advertisements that are linked to search inquiries while users are interested to find content that meets these inquiries.

Authors have an opinion, that search advertisement and content-based marketing complement each other. Advertisement

placed in search systems directs the connected flow to the company's website where it is placed the valuable content that stimulates the user to make an action that is valuable for the company. The authors of this paper, having in mind other researches made (Goodman, 2008; Pan et al., 2011; Kern, 2011), can suggest that a website is assigned to inform, convince and remind users about a company or its products and at the same time provides a possibility to connect with potential customers.

Visibility on the internet can be viewed from a perspective of the website attendance rate and as an intention to buy. There are various ways to popularize the website on the internet. However, one of the most efficient ways of promotion is to make marketing actions through search systems.

Looking broader, it can be noticed that search advertisement is not only a way to direct customer flow to company's website, but also an excellent tool in giving initial information. The message itself consists of a vocabulary, linguistic and grammar structure of sentences, writing and word usage style (Zimmerman, 2012; Compton, 2011). According to G. Felton (2013), the headline of an advertisement is very similar to news headings used in mass media. In order to draw the attention of a target audience, headings of advertisement are variously formulated and formed to meet the goals of a specific advertisement.

The main text of an advertisement typically is descriptive and prepared as a monologue or a dialogue. Typically advertisement text ends with a promotion and stimulation of a user to make a specific action. However a research made by M. Bertrand et al. (2010) shows that it's not always the most effective way. In authors' opinion, text advertisement is a good decision especially for initial application of content elements as it can have informative, attractive and representative functions.

Search system advertisement doesn't only direct customer flow to the website, but also brings statistics that can help improve the quality of the content and make it more efficient (Guerini et al., 2010). Search advertisement can be used to develop various marketing and also content-based marketing experiments, because results, based on the indicators, can be easily and automatically evaluated.

It should be noticed, that analysis of search system advertisement and content-based marketing revealed a lot of interconnections between them: useful information, digital content, virtual environment, user initiative and absence of user irritation and bothering. Therefore it can be assumed, that proper combination of these methods can help companies to reach positive results. However, this kind of advertisement is used to reach different goals and has a different effect on the user. That is why the effect of this advertisement channel should be analyzed before combining content-based marketing and search advertisement.

Theoretical model of content marketing elements' influence on search advertisement effectiveness

Given a high prevalence of internet advertising, companies face some problems: consumer exposure and performance assessment. Advertisers have to know how to reach their target audience. Therefore, each stage of reaching the target audience

is associated with the user's interest and intention to buy. Some authors (Clow, Baack, 2013; Szabo, Huberman, 2010) suggest to choose an advertising message strategy according to the desired effect on the consumer. Looking into features of search advertising and advertisement message limitations, it can be assumed that this type of advertising should be focused on consumer acquaintance with product: cognitive message strategy should be selected or, in AIDA model case, a strategy focused on attention and interest stages.

Promotional message has to cause the interest of a target customer and encourage this customer to act. Without limiting the desire to create a personal message, advertisers seek tangible, measurable results, as involved customers and some kind of help to attract new ones. Intersection of message development and creativity is a crucial part in advertisement creation process (Clow, Baack, 2013).

Some authors (Sheth et al., 2001; Zigmond, Stipp, 2010) agree that the objectives set for advertising are an inseparable factor in assessment of advertising effectiveness. Seeking to achieve the objective and to win the competition on the internet, the ad format should be exploited as efficiently as possible.

The authors believe, that AIDA model is preferable for the selected advertising channel, i.e. search advertisement. Moreover, in case of a particular channel, advertisement effectiveness should be understood as the ability to draw consumer attention and stimulate interest. Deeper cognition happens, when the user clicks on the ad and visits website of a certain company.

Easy digital content creation, development and distribution face the problem of attracting customer **attention**. Customer pays less attention to promotional information if the main browsing content requires higher concentration (Szabo, Huberman, 2010). Therefore, different types of information affect the attraction of user attention differently. Loss of attention could be explained through the theories of addiction and inertia of attention. Addiction and adaptability are common phenomenon. Customers are less responsive when the information becomes known (Liao, 2011).

Empirical marketing research (Haan, Moraga-Gonzalez, 2009; Szabo, Huberman, 2010) focuses on the fact that the main problem of advertising is attracting customer attention. Studies have shown that customers use brand based searches, although before they used general keywords for their searches (Ghose, Yang, 2009). This shows that achieving customers' attention and visibility is valuable for enterprises, even if the customer still doesn't feel the need for the proposed product.

Despite the importance of attracting attention, A. Goldfarb and C. Tucker, S-h. Liao et al., M. Belch and G. Belch emphasize that noticeable advertisement forces the customer to wonder why advertisers chose such tactics. Giving the fact that in virtual space it is easier to manipulate customers, customer awareness grows as well. For this reason, the company should seek customer attention in a smart and delicate way.

It becomes visible, that attention is distributed unevenly: most of the content is sometimes revised, but only a small percentage of information gets more **interest** (Szabo, Huberman, 2010). Therefore, there is a challenge for advertisers – they need not only to attract customer attention, but also to engage the

customer. This could be reached by offering valuable information. Company, using the search advertisement, pays for the advertising only if the user clicks on the ad, which means that the costs are incurred only when users are interested in advertising (Blake et al., 2014).

K. Jerat et al. scientist study (2013) showed that consumers click on the links only 1.19 times while they are searching for information. This leads to the assumption that the number of visited websites is very limited and that competition between enterprises is huge. Moreover, in this case internet user is looking for information himself, in contrast to other media, where it is accepted passively.

When the user is interested, he clicks on the ad and enters the advertised website, where more information about the product can be received. Customers can learn more about the product and it poses a trust on the website (Keeney, 1999). The lack of information in traditional advertising does not promote user interest in products because only a small part of uninformative content is included.

The authors of the paper believe that the main strength of search advertisement is an ability to offer content users are looking for. Among the factors which influence response to online advertising, balance between advertisement content, page where the ad is placed and website
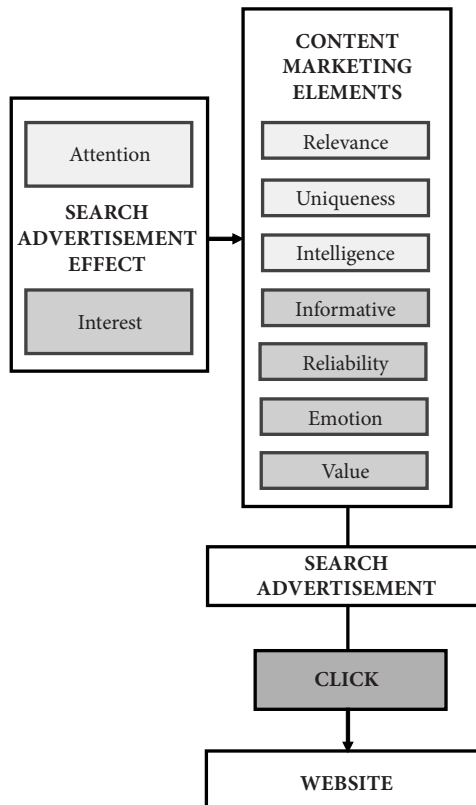
1 Fig. **Theoretical model of content marketing elements' influence on search advertisement effect**

of a company is important factor in the perception of advertising (Pečiulis, 2014). Summing up, it can be said that search advertisement effectiveness includes attracting of consumers' attention and interest.

Advertisement effectiveness can be measured with action performed by the user, i.e. click. As mentioned earlier, content marketing is characterized by more than one feature, but the most important is the fact, that it's based on the relevance and value for a customer. Consequently, using content marketing in search advertisement may enhance the impact on consumer and increase the effectiveness of advertising.

After the systematic analysis of the concept of content-based marketing, search advertisement features and its effectiveness, it can be seen, that there are interconnections between these three components. This fact allows presuming that interaction between mentioned components can be an effective marketing approach. Therefore, the authors of this article provide theoretical model of content marketing elements influence on the effectiveness of search advertisement (Figure 1).

The authors believe that achieving the effectiveness of search advertisement – the click – such elements like relevance, uniqueness, intelligence, informative once, reliability, emotions, and value should be applied and used in practice. Moreover, it leads the customer to company's website where high-quality content is/should be provided.

Of course, this model is still a theoretical one. Seeking to prepare the model for the practical applications, it is necessary to expand the field of research. The authors have an ambition to verify the theoretical model in order to prepare for the first stage of the practical development. Afterwards, it would be very useful to perform some case analysis using and changing real time online content according to the future research purposes. It should provide sufficient data not only to proper verification but for the further development of the model and add to research directions as well.

Conclusions

- Nowadays internet marketing is one of the most popular ways to spread the message about organization to consumers. Through the passage of time, the internet marketing transforms and evolves various forms. One of them is content based marketing. Even though marketing experts recognize quality content and information importance, content marketing is a new field in marketing research.
- Comprehensive theoretical analysis has shown that content marketing is based on high-quality content, which includes seven separate elements: relevance, value, emotions, intelligence, informative once, reliability and uniqueness. Some of them, content relevance, uniqueness and intelligence, are more suitable to attract user attention, while the other four elements are suitable for the further stage – interest of the customer.
- One of the content distribution channels is search advertisement. This type of advertisement and content marketing complement each other. Advertisement brings valuable user traffic to the company's website where the

primary content is hosted. The effect of search advertisement includes two first stages of AIDA model: attention and interest. This effect can be enhanced by using content marketing elements. Attraction of user attention and interest encourages the user to click on the advertisement.

- After the systematic analysis of the concept of content-based marketing, search advertisement features and its effectiveness, it can be seen, that there are interconnections between these three components. Taking this into account but not limiting to it, a theoretical model of content marketing el-

ements' influence on the effectiveness of search advertisement is provided.

- Limitations of this study offer opportunities for further research. Having in mind that this theoretical analysis has focused on content marketing elements' influence on the effect of search advertisement, for proper practical development it is necessary to expand the field of research and verify the theoretical model. The performance of some case analysis using and changing real time online content according to the future research purposes could also add value to the further research and model development.

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Aušra PAŽĖRAITĖ, Rūta REPOVIENĖ

TURINIO MARKETINGO ELEMENTAI IR JŲ ĮTAKA PAIEŠKOS REKLAMOS PAVEIKUMUI: TEORINIS PAGRINDIMAS IR PRAKTINĖS ĮŽVALGOS

Santrauka

Kintanti verslo aplinka sudaro sąlygas marketingo plėtrai. Šiomis dienomis marketingas internete yra vienas iš populiariausių būdų vartotojams skleisti žinią apie organizaciją. Bėgant laikui skaitmeninis marketingas transformuojasi ir keičia savo formą. Nors marketingo ekspertai ir pripažįsta turinio ir informacijos kokybės svarbą, turinio marketingas yra nauja bei mažai ištyrinėta mokslo sritis. Atliekant gilesnius tyrimus turinio marketingo srityje gaunamos vertingos žinios, kurias pritaikius galima pastebimai pagerinti marketingo veiksmų efektyvumą prisitaikant prie naujausių marketingo tendencijų.

Turinio marketingo elementų naudojimas reklamoje yra vienas iš geriausių būdų sėkmingai konkuruoti su kitais rinkos dalyviais. Be to, tai gali padėti pagerinti skirtingų reklamos formų poveikį vartotojui. Nors įmonės ir išleidžia nemažas sumas turinio kokybei gerinti, nėra ištirta, kokia įtaką tai daro reklamos paveikumui. Šiame darbe pateikiama teorinė analizė, kuria siekiama suprasti, kaip turinio marketingo elementai veikia paieškos reklamos paveikumą.

Pirmoje straipsnio dalyje apžvelgiama turinio marketingo koncepcija: apibrėžimas, santykis su kitomis marketingo rūšimis, specifiniai aspektai ir elementai bei turinio marketingo sklaidos kanalai. Išsami teorinė analizė atskleidė, jog turinio marketingas yra paremtas kokybiška informacija, kuri apima septynis skirtingus elementus: aktualumą, in-

formatyvumą, vertingumą, sumanumą, unikalumą, patikimumą bei emocingumą. Vieni iš šių elementų labiau tinkami vartotojo dėmesiui pritraukti, kiti – susidomėjimui skatinti.

Tolimesnė darbo dalis buvo skirta reklamos paieškos, kaip vieno iš turinio marketingo sklaidos kanalų, apžvalgai. Išanalizuoti pagrindiniai paieškos reklamos privalumai ir trūkumai, lyginant su kitomis reklamos formomis, poveikis vartotojui bei šios reklamos pritaikomumas turinio marketingo sklaidai. Atlikta teorinė analizė leido įžvelgti ryšį tarp turinio marketingo, paieškos reklamos bei jos poveikio vartotojui.

Galiausiai buvo sudarytas teorinis turinio marketingo elementų įtakos paieškos reklamos paveikumui modelis. Modelis apibendrina analizės metu gautą informaciją bei atskleidžia galimą turinio marketingo elementų įtaką paieškos reklamos paveikumui. Darbo pabaigoje pateikiamos išvados, praktinės įžvalgos ir ateities tyrimų galimybės.