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Master's in International Marketing Management

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**DIGITAL CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY FOR  
B2B INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURING COMPANY TO  
GENERATE MARKETING LEADS**

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## ABSTRACT

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The goal of this thesis is to generate digital content marketing strategy with designed customer journeys for B2B industrial manufacturer businesses. The result is customer journeys with various industry personas and adapted content types.

Theoretical background uses concepts and definitions from previous research, in order to provide knowledge and insight about the research objectives.

The empirical section of the thesis is conducted as a single-case study strategy, with both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative method is organized as semi-structured thematic interview approach with commissioner company's current partners. Quantitative method uses data from online presence of the commissioner company, such as website, social media channels.

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

Digitalization has been a strong alliance to marketing for decades. B2B industrial manufacturer businesses are not exceptional. It does not only help businesses to expand their brand, reaching more customers, but also for companies to understand their customers better. Especially with the current situation of Covid-19, this industry is facing a big challenge and opportunity of rebranding themselves, taking more advantages of digitalization in marketing. Companies with original tradeshows, exhibition plans, now must shift to digital campaigns, virtual tradeshows. Taking more advantage of online space and social medias is more crucial than ever. However, the digital channels' usage is still very limited in industrial manufacturer businesses for professional purposes (Keinänen, 2015). Therefore, it is important to investigate the exact current digital marketing and digital content marketing situation in this specific industry, in order to plan an effective strategy.

Content marketing is considered a fuel for marketing activities. However, content marketing for industrial manufacturer businesses is different from other industries. The reasons are 1) their products are more complex; 2) many industrial marketers consider this is a boring industry; 3) their audiences have high expertise; 4) they have longer buying cycles; 5) the product serve a very specialized niche market; 6) the market information is not always available to obtain (Harris, 2021). Therefore, these businesses' task is to bring their great contents and content marketing strategy to online presence. With such support, their contents will be delivered to even greater audience, accomplish their missions in a wider scale.

In order to generate a suitable, profitable digital content marketing strategy, this thesis focuses on examining the concept of customer journey in the context of industrial manufacturer businesses, then adapt it to effective content types with measurable Key performance indicators (KPIs). Related theories and literatures are applied to support research objectives, to generate digital customer journeys with possible profitable content types.

The research is created for a commissioner corporate in the field of B2B industrial manufacturer. However, due to privacy policy, the business name and exact information will not be revealed in this thesis.

## 1.2 Objectives and research questions

The main purpose of this research is to create a digital content marketing strategy for the case company, which is based on their digital customer journey and previous digital marketing activities and results. The research creates an understanding framework for the case company to enhance their digital marketing activities in the future, with the supports of content marketing through multiple digital channels. The main research question is answered by conducting and analyzing the results of interview, survey, and observation processes, from the case company's current customers and representatives.

The main research question is:

**How to generate more marketing leads for a B2B industrial manufacturing company by providing digital contents through multichannel environment?**

The main question is answered with the support of 2 parts of sub-questions, which build more comprehensive understanding and outcome for the main question.

As discussing in the theoretical framework chapter, the connection between digital content marketing strategy and digital customer journey is undeniable. Therefore, the first part of sub-questions is about understanding the current digital customer journey of the case company. The sub-question is:

**SQ 1: What is a suitable digital customer journey for industrial manufactural companies?**

The second part is to understand the suitable contents and strategy for the pre-made customer journey. These questions create an overview of contents throughout multichannel environment, disregarding the geographical differences.

**SQ 2: What are types of content for lead generation in industrial manufactural companies?**

**SQ 3: What are the KPIs or metrics to measure the success of content marketing strategy in each stage?**

### 1.3 Theoretical framework

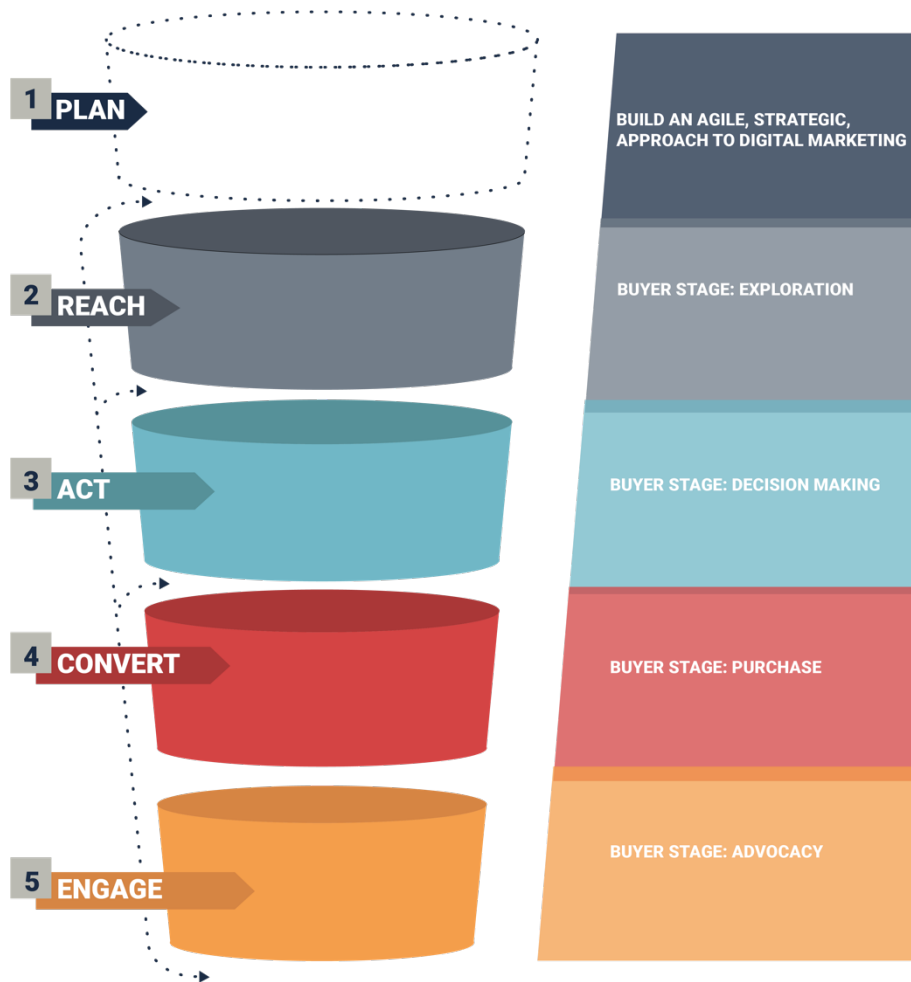


Figure 1 RACE framework

The main objective of this thesis is to create a Digital Content Marketing framework for the commissioner company, which focuses on generating marketing leads for the sales teams to proceed in the future. Therefore, it is necessary to apply a framework, which focuses on obtaining audience attention, while developing a plan to interact with these audience to increase their interest level about the products. Nevertheless, this framework should use online channels as the main marketing channels. the RACE (Reach, Act, Convert and Engage) framework (Figure 1) is applied. The RACE framework (Reach, Act, Convert and Engage), which is developed by Chaffey D in 2010 (2012) to understand, review and improve online marketing performance, is applied. It draws a relationship and evaluates the connection between customer acquisition, conversion, and retention, in order to measure the effectiveness of digital marketing activities.

This framework is suitable for the case company as it focuses on lead generation and sales for B2B business (Chaffey et.al, 2012). Starting with the creating digital marketing plan and strategies with branded contents, the framework is designed with four stages: Reach, Act, Convert and Engage. Reach refers to the activities of creating brand awareness, as well as the company’s products and services, by improving its online presence. This stage happens before audience become official leads or conducting purchasing activities. In other words, this stage contains customers’ touchpoints before lead and sales. The second stage is Act, which refers to interact. Generating leads is one of the most challenging activities and targets for marketers. In this stage, marketers must be as much as they could to encourage their audience to participate and interact with their digital marketing content and activities. Content marketing has the strongest influence in this stage, where it must attract the audience to search more, find more about the products and services. The next stage is Convert, where these marketing leads change into sales – paying customers. The final stage is Engage, which refers to developing and maintain a long-term relationship with these previous mentioned paying customers, which might lead to more sales and word of mouth in the future (ibid.).

#### 1.4 Customer journey

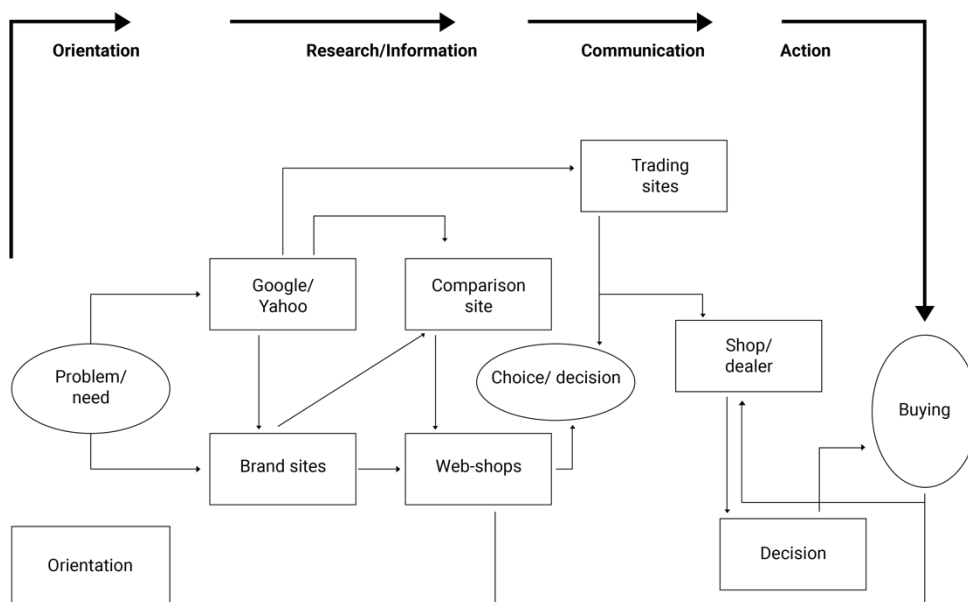


Figure 2 ORCA framework

As mentioned in the RACE framework, customer journey has a big contribution into understanding customers throughout all four stages, therefore, researching about digital customer journey of the case company is crucial. From the EKB model of Engel et. Al (1968),



customer journey has five stages, which are: 1) Need recognition, 2) Information search, 3) Evaluation of alternatives, 4) Purchase decision, and 5) Post-purchase behavior, with the first three stages are pre-purchase, and the last two are a loyalty loop. In addition, with the development of digitalization, customer journey adapts a multi-channel-purchase point of views (Wolny, 2014). Therefore, ORCA model (Orientation, Research information, Communication, and Action) is considered (Figure 2).

In this model, a customer uses multiple channels to search for information and purchase, instead of only one channel. However, this model is lack of context and many related channels in developing a complete map for customer journey (Wolny, 2014). Therefore, Wolny (2014) develops three distinguished models for three types of customer journey, which are “Impulsive journeys, Balanced journeys, and Considered journeys”. The research will reflex all three types of journeys into the digital customer journey of the case company to determine which one is the most suitable.

From the previous mentioned two theoretical frameworks, a possible framework to research is designed (Figure 3).

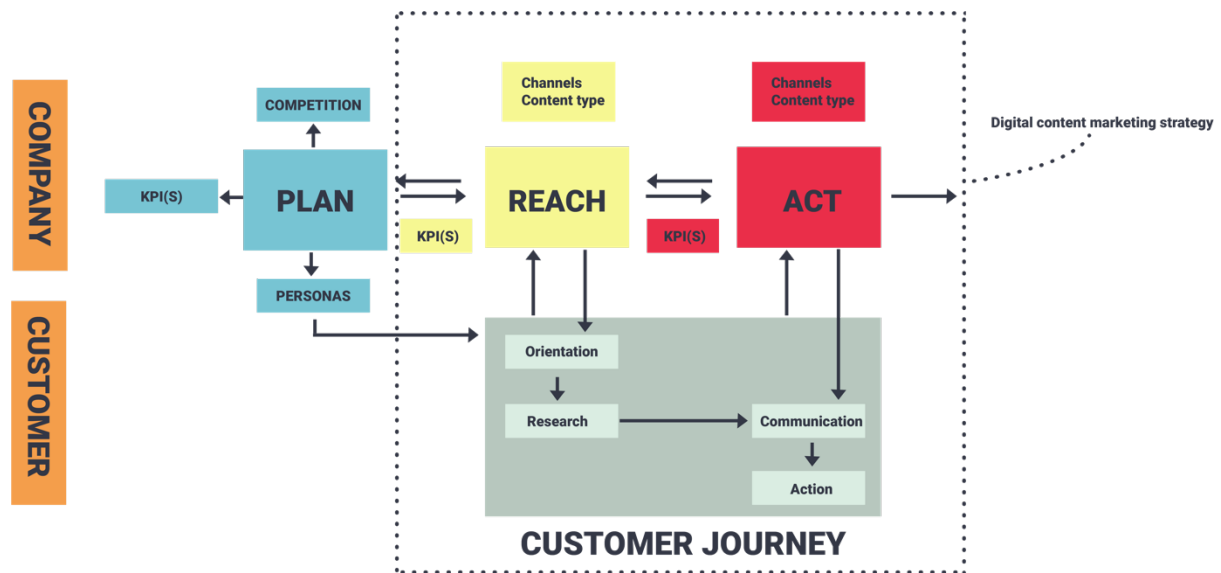


Figure 3 Research framework

The framework focuses on three first stages of the RACE framework – Plan, Reach, Act. The digital content marketing strategy mainly concerns Reach and Act stage. The first stage of the framework: Plan, is developed from the current research of the case company about their competition and personas. This information is regularly updated by both internal and external

resources. It is also the managerial foundation for this thesis, as determining research objectives, choosing informants for interviews, and using database for website and social media research. The personas include 2 types: Industry consultants and solution specifiers (A), and end users (B). The stages – Reach and Act heavily influence and be influenced by digital customer journey, which will be created by literature reviewing and collecting knowledge and experience from current customer journey as well as informants' customer journeys. In each stage, a set of KPIs, channels and content types are decided, in order to deliver the best result. There are four main stages of the digital customer journey: Orientation, Research, Communication and Action. However, as the research ends at stage Act, therefore, the Action stage in Digital customer journey also only concerns the result of communication.

## **1.5 Definition of key concepts**

In this research, each definition is the combination of different authors and ideas.

### **Digital content marketing**

Digital content marketing is an inbound marketing technique (Holliman et.al, 2014), which is a method to create and distribute attracting and educational content by different channels, in order to captivate and retain potential customers (ibid.). It is to create “brand engagement, trust, and relationships” (Hollebeek et.al 2019), while maintaining the specification on the content aspect (Taiminen, 2018).

### **Digital content marketing strategy**

Digital content marketing strategy is “an organizational vision for information and action plan for achieving it”, which means it is determined by the “business goals, organizational context, and user demands” (Batova et.al, 2016). This strategy contains many action plans, such as “ads delivery, passive perception, active consumption, cognitive and affective processing, and purchase advocacy” (Gavilanes et.al, 2018).

### **Lead generation**

Lead generation is “the collection of qualified connections to build relationships with and nurture until closed as a customer” (Karr 2015). It is to explain the process of developing digital marketing performances with two main views: increasing leads conversion rate or number of leads (Halligan et.al, 2014).

## **Metrics**

The lowest level of metrics is to click into the content, the next level is to click like the content, which reflexes a positive emotional state for the brand or the content itself, the coming level is to generate a short comment for the content, which is a sign of customer cocreated content in brand environment, and the last level of engagement is to publish a brand related content for other customers to join into the conversation. Sharing a post is also a sign that customers are adapting the brand identity for their owns (Gavilanes et.al, 2018).

## **KPIs**

The KPIs definition in this thesis is related to two themes: Digital marketing and Web analytics. They are divided into Quantitative indicators, such as 1) Impressions, 2) Traffic, 3) Unique users, 4) Lead, 5) Conversion; and qualitative indicators, such as Call to Action, User Experience; User flows (Saura, 2017). Nevertheless, some techniques, such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO) will have their own KPIs such as keyword. Measures like Click Through Rate (CTR), which is Number of clicks /Impressions; and advertising contracting models like Cost per Action (CPA) can also be considered as possible KPIs (ibid.)

## **Content type**

There are seven categories of content: “current product display, new product announcement, sweepstakes, sales, customer feedback, infotainment and organization branding” (Gavilanes et.al, 2018).

## **Customer Journey**

Customer journey is a map that visualizes customers' experience while interacting with services and products, by understanding and noting the touchpoints which the customers have been through (Stickdorn et.al, 2011), which is to understand services and products from customer's perspective (Halvorsrud et.al, 2016).

### **Touch points**

Touchpoints are put into four categories: 1) Brand-owned, 2) Partner-owned, 3) Customer-owned, and 4) Social/external/independent (Lemon et.al, 2016). Touchpoints are also defined by seven elements: "atmosphere, technology, communication, process, employee-customer interaction, customer-customer interaction, and product/service interaction" (Stein and Ramaseshan 2016).

### **Customer journey mapping**

Customer journey mapping is an important marketing tool for marketing development to develop customer journey into a linear journey, with multiple customer interactions (Paquin, 2013).

## **1.6 Delimitations**

However, with the scope and goal of the project, the research is mainly looking at the pre-stage and the first two stages of RACE framework (Figure 1). The pre-stage is to determine which types of content are most suitable for the company. Due to the more practical nature of the thesis, the research helps case company to create and perform some suitable actions for their future marketing, as well as to develop their digital content marketing strategy.

The contextual delimitations of the thesis are the focus of B2B and industrial manufacturing business. With the nature of the case company as an international company, the research is disregarding the factors of geography, business culture, political aspects, which creates some boundaries for the result of this study. As a result, the research does not create a broad generalized outcome, but an applicable finalization for the case company.

## **1.7 Research methodology**

The research is divided into two parts: theoretical and empirical part. The theoretical part has the foundation of a comprehensive literature review from academic articles and printed literature books. These literatures are mainly about marketing and digital marketing strategy, content marketing strategy, and customer journey as well as customer journey mapping. These studies apply both qualitative and quantitative research methods, such as Wolny (2014), Pandey, N et.al (2020), Clark, D (2016), Ho, J et.al (2020) with qualitative methods and Gavilanes et.al (2018) with quantitative methods.

The empirical part of this research is conducted and analyzed as single-case study approach with both quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Yin (2014), a case study is suitable for this research, as it is an approach for an empirical research, where the main purpose of the research is to test a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-world context. The application is even clearer when the phenomenon and the context does not contain a clear boundary. In addition, most used forms of the research questions are “what” and “how”, which is debated by Yin (2014) as the case study approach is the most suitable.

With such chosen approach, the necessary data is collected from various sources (Metsämuuronen, 2008), which are normally from interviews, surveys, and observation (Nenonnen et.al, 2008). The research conducts interview with company’s suitable customers, and representatives to gather data for analyzing. Additionally, the data is generated by observing the company’s previous marketing results, social media channels’ performances, as well as standard customers’ behavior and digital footsteps.

The aim of this research is to create a digital content marketing strategy based on digital customer journey for the case company. From that point, the case company can use the generated framework from this research to implement and update their marketing activities for future development.

With social media channels, the case company has created their own corporate accounts, with the connect to their own websites. The main data about digital marketing performance will be

collected through these channels. As the main goal of the research is to focus on the digital content aspect of the big picture of digital marketing strategy, the visibility of the digital channels is not as important as the performance of each type of content.

## **1.8 Structure of the study**

The first section of the study focuses on generating more insight from relatable literatures to suggest a direction to employ digital content marketing. These literatures also introduce different types and elements of digital content. At the same time, the literatures of digital customer journey are also applied to create a foundation for the actual customer journey of the case company.

With the second section (chapter 3), the research methodology and research design are the beginning to describe different implementation stages of the process. This section explains the different approaches, methods and goals of both data collection process and analysis. With the insight from this chapter, it guides readers to a more designated path, to easily follow and understand the research further.

With the empirical section – chapter 4, the subsequent sections of the findings are categorized based on real customer journey and experience of informants, the digital marketing content types as well as the main metrics for the content performance. Nevertheless, this chapter paints a wholesome picture about the commissioner company performance – digital marketing wise from internal and external perspective with various analysis, such as website, social media.

The last section of the thesis is to summarize previous understanding, to generate a concrete conclusion about the topic. Nevertheless, the last chapter opens a direction for future research to explore.

## **2 Literature review**

### **2.1 Digital Content Marketing**

Nowadays, along with the development of technology and application of big data analytics, it is undeniable that Digitalization has a great impact on marketing and branding. In B2B (Business to Business) relationship, the role of digitalization is even more important, even though most of current digital marketing research focus on the effects of digital marketing on B2C (Business to Customer) relationship (Pandey et. Al, 2020). The impacts of digital marketing on B2B relationship do not stop at boosting customer acquisition, but they expand to various aspects, such as “Coopetition, Value co-creation, B2B branding, Servitization, Innovation networks, Relationship dynamics and Power of trust” (Hofacker et.al, 2020).

Content is a gateway for marketers to engage, interact and influence customers (Ryan, 2016). According to Damian Ryan (2016), content helps marketers to interact with their audience in all the phases of customer cycle, such as research, purchase, and review. Content marketing is not a new phenomenon, it has grown along with the history of marketing. With the development of technology and digitalization, content marketing is soaring and evolving into a new concept: Digital content marketing. In this research, the term “Digital content marketing” refers to “an inbound marketing technique to pull customers to online space” (Holliman, 2014), instead of “trading of digital content or goods over the Internet” (Rowley, 2008).

Digital content marketing, considered as an important inbound marketing technique (Holliman et.al, 2014), is also described as a method to create and distribute attracting and educational content by different channels, in order to captivate and retain potential customers. According to Hollebeek et.al (2019), Digital content marketing is also taken into account how relevant and brand-related digital contents are, in order to develop customers’ “brand engagement, trust, and relationships”. Digital content in B2B marketing works as the bait, the attraction to companies’ online space, such as websites, and social media channels (Holliman et.al, 2014), as for many marketers and companies, web (online space) traffic is still viewed as the most effective KPI to measure the success of digital marketing activities (Anon, 2010).

B2B Digital Content Marketing needs to be more specific on the content aspect, as B2B customers usually search for specific information, which relate to exact industry issues,

phenomenon, and trends (Taiminen, 2018). Digital Content Marketing is fundamentally different from traditional advertising, which main purpose is to convince customers to buy what the advertisement offers (Hollebeek et.al, 2019). Traditionally, audience passively receive information from the advertisement, however, with the development of social media, this action has changed. The audience now are actively taking part in creating content under various format (Huotari et.al, 2015). Nevertheless, advertising, and traditional marketing communications are constantly criticized and judged by customers (Hollebeek, 2019), therefore, in order to create “brand engagement, trust and relationships”, businesses must find a way to improve B2B brand engagement in Digital Content Marketing interaction, as well as, transforming Digital Content Marketing interactions into valuable relationship (Taiminen et. Al, 2019). One of the methods is to focus more on SEO, because SEO is a more preferred online marketing tools for industrial companies (Peter Doza et.al, 2020). Even though there are many positive research about the use of social media in B2B marketing, however, within industrial business world, social media channels are still barely used for business purposes among managers (Keinänen et.al, 2015). Therefore, it is important to research customers’ purposes in using social media for business (ibid.)

## **2.2 Digital Content Marketing characteristics**

As Digital Content Marketing is a branch of Content Marketing, it maintains Content Marketing characteristics, while develops its own characteristics with the support of technology and digitalization. Digital Content Marketing helps customers to get free valuable content, maintains long term engagement, trust and relationship with customers, remains as a part of customers’ activities with their consents, earns audience by offering value in exchange (Hollebeek et.al, 2019).

Digital Content Marketing, and Content Marketing in general, brings value to customers as providing them valuable information based on the needs of potential customers, who previously searched for such information (Järvinen et.al, 2016). This characteristic requires marketers to shift their mindset from “broadcasting”, which means one-way explaining of product based-selling, to inbound approach as providing relevant content for audience to self-absorb (Holliman, 2014). This helpfulness not only creates customer benefitting content, but also generates trust, brand engagement, and relational value (Holliman et.al 2014) (Hollebeek



et.al, 2019). In order to understand and keep-up-with industry trends, market development, improve personal skills in specific industry area, or to research information for business ideas, customers are constantly searching for industry information, not only about product and services. Therefore, Digital Content Marketing activities should also be about knowledge sharing, problem solving (Taiminen, 2019).

The helpfulness of first characteristic leads to the important second, which is to build a long-term relationship with customers (Taiminen, 2019). A long relationship with customers is determined by not only product quality, but also by brand-building, brand reputation (Holliman, 2014). With the expansion of digitalization and social media, brand owners are facing both opportunities and challenges. Brand owners now must consider their “brand-building as an interactive process in a conversational environment” (ibid.). Therefore, business needs plan to control their digital content creation in social media as well as other online space, because one online contribution might lead to a long-term effect on brand-reputation (Huotari, 2015). Digital Content Marketing does not deliver sales directly, however, it creates trust and relationship for the long run (Hollebeek, 2019). Digital Content Marketing understands the aims of users when they visit online space. Users do not absorb information by only one method, they receive information by “read, learn, see and experience” (ibid.). Therefore, relevant digital content can create a shortcut to customers hearts and minds.

Dissimilar to traditional advertising, Digital Content Marketing does not interrupt audience activities, instead, it operates based on customer consent, permission, or opt-in (ibid.). It is considered as a two ways communication between audience and marketers. The marketers only start providing personalized, relevant information to an individual once the permission is given (Bicks, 2016). Especially, Digital Content Marketing works by pre-determined information from target analysis (Loredana 2015), therefore, without the audience consent, Digital Content Marketing would not be as effective. With the development of digitalization, the power has been shifted to the customers on the matter of content and marketing communication (Bicks 2016).

Last but not least is the value exchange of Digital Content Marketing. The earned audience will appreciate the content more than forced audience, which lead them to engage with the content provider more (Hollebeek 2019). In order to create and deliver valuable content, marketers

must actively listen to customers' requirement, the companies can also invest more on content creation by improving the collaboration between internal marketers with field specialists (Järvinen et.al, 2016)

## **2.3 Digital content marketing strategy**

### **2.3.1 Strategy**

According to Clark (2016), content marketing strategy is not only about managing content, but also about understanding how to plan and develop content. It is a deeper, clearer, and higher level of recognizing content production, content life cycle and content incorporation across organization. Content marketing strategy can be considered as “an organizational vision for information and action plan for achieving it” (Batova et.al, 2016). The content marketing strategy must define business goals, clarify the organization's content corpus, generate a plan for content production across organization, and have a clear schedule of evaluating, managing, and publishing such contents. Therefore, the success of the content marketing strategy is hugely determined by the “business goals, organizational context, and user demands” (ibid.).

Content marketing strategy is a mixture of branding, direct marketing, indirect marketing with the effect of Word of Mouth (Martin, 2016). Especially with digital content marketing, it is difficult to fully track down each step in completed customer journey from the beginning till the final purchase, as customers usually use multi-channels (ibid.). The advertising element of content marketing is more complicated with many steps: “ads delivery, passive perception, active consumption, cognitive and affective processing, and purchase advocacy”. Nevertheless, between passive perception and cognitive & affective processing is the period for customers to process the given information and build their own opinions about the content (Gavilanes et.al, 2018).

The complexity of content marketing strategy does not only lie in the customers, but also in the marketing team. Content marketing strategy require large range of working field, such as marketing, web design, corporate communications with various roles, for example, user experience designers, marketing coordinators, public relation specialists, and most of all, all these roles must share the same goal when they operate their tasks (Clark, 2016).

Even though content marketing strategy is crucial for business (Clark, 2016), not every marketer has a distinctive content marketing strategy for their business, disregarding their vivid objectives for the content marketing (Holliman et.al, 2014). As the most recent statistic about content marketing in UK, only 38% of the marketers have documented content marketing strategy (Statista, 2019), and many marketers do not use correct technologies for content marketing, such as marketing automation software, analytics tools, and customer relationship management platforms (Martin, 2016). One big challenge for content marketing strategy is the need for transparent content marketing KPIs, and other equivalent metrics. Finding the right experts, who have skills and experiences in producing good content, with journalistic storytelling quality, and be able to deliver company's image, is not an easy task as well. Last but not least, the challenge lies inside the B2B organization as it is difficult to make executive level people to notice the meaningful and beneficial ideas behind content marketing strategy (ibid.). As customers have different reactions and motivations between product/ price related posts, and educational/ entertaining posts, content marketing efforts are not always sales oriented, even though they also increase the likelihood of purchasing (Gavilanes et.al, 2018).

### **2.3.2 Lead generation**

Lead generation is the main purpose of the second stage of RACE – Act. Lead generation has always been considered as one of the most important steps in sales and marketing, with the knowledge of lead generation process (Croft, 1995). It is highly valuable for the company to understand and differentiate profitable leads and bad lead qualification (ibid.). If sale people only focus on those leads which they consider as “serious to lead to sale” (Olivia, 2006), they might lose the “ready-to-buy” customers, which is potential for the future (Hasselwander, 2006). There are many definitions of lead generation. According to Kolowich (2017), “A lead is a person who has indicated interest in your company's product or service in some way, shape, or form. Lead generation is the process of attracting and converting strangers and prospects into those leads”. According to Karr (2015), lead generation is “the collection of qualified connections to build relationships with and nurture until closed as a customer”. All the definitions are explaining the process of developing digital marketing performances with two main views: increasing leads conversion rate or number of leads (Halligan et.al, 2014). The concentration of lead generation definition is shifting throughout each stage and purpose of marketers. In the Reach stage, lead generation would refer more to quantify leads, however, in

the later stages, lead generation refers more to qualify leads (ibid.). The trigger reasons for lead generation depend on 1) offer: variety of content forms, such as webinar, eBook, whitepaper, 2) Call-to-Action, create a bridge from the audience to the company's website, 3) Landing page, which has the main purpose of converting leads, 4) form, which comes back to the support of content marketing (Meher 2017, Halligan et.al 2014).

### **2.3.3 Metrics**

There are many levels of engagement, the lowest level is to click into the content, the next level is to click like the content, which reflexes a positive emotional state for the brand or the content itself, the coming level is to generate a short comment for the content, which is a sign of customer cocreated content in brand environment, and the last level of engagement is to publish a brand related content for other customers to join into the conversation (Gavilanes et.al, 2018). Sharing a post is also a sign that customers are adapting the brand identity for their owns. Therefore, a successful strategy contains many metrics with large set of objectives (ibid.).

According to Gavilanes et.al research (2018), sales and infotainment posts are the most effective in creating positive reactions toward brands. Infotainment, customer feedback, and sweepstakes are generating the most engagement between customers and branded contents. On social networks, infotainment and sweepstakes are the most beneficial to expand brand advocacy. Sales and discount posts can only attract traffic but do not create deeper engagement. The creativity of the posts is highly value for content effectiveness.

According to Pophal (2020), with content marketing, the most popular metrics are Clicks and click-through rate, which demonstrate the number of clicks on links; Shares as the number of shares that a post has; Scroll depth as how far audience scroll down a page; and Time on screen, which refers to the amount of time people spend to stay on one page. Most marketers consider goals for content marketing as brand awareness (78%); customer retention (69%); customer recruitment (61%); lead generation (63%); and lead nurturing (37%), while they use web traffic (56%) as the major metric to measure content marketing effectiveness (Anon, 2010). However, these are not what executive level people care, they care more about the action that the audience take after reacting with a post, which are leads, conversions, and the end game is sales (Pophal, 2020). With the goal of driving new business inquiries, then brand exposure, the more popular

metrics are leads generated number; acquiring cost per lead; lead generation rate quality; conversion lifetime value; ROI (ibid.).

On the same topic of metrics for content marketing, Martin (2016) also shared the same view with Pophal. He added that content marketing should help nurture the customers (lead generation), instead of only getting noticed by customers (increasing traffic). Martin also suggested businesses to apply more content management technology, such as CRM software; marketing automation tools like Salesforce, HubSpot, Pardot to track user journey from the moment when they notice the first content to their next interactions; Keyword search analytics tools (2016). However, content creators and marketers still must keep in mind the creative side of content creation. If marketers only react to numbers to create contents, the contents might become mechanical (ibid.).

#### **2.3.4 How to create digital content marketing strategy**

The content generated by business must have their own characteristics, deliverable meaning, and narrative, while creates emotions and tonality, with a correct amount of content (Gavilanes et.al, 2018). The level of customer engagement is what drive a good content, which is an emotional, psychological, and physical investment. There are seven categories of content: “current product display, new product announcement, sweepstakes, sales, customer feedback, infotainment and organization branding”, which can exit under two main forms “explicit, such as banner advertising and commercial video, or implicit, such as fan pages, firms’ tweets...” (ibid.). Content marketing activities should contain at least five mentioned content types, depend on the goals and target of the marketer, for example if brand advocacy is the main focus, then the marketers should use more sweepstakes and infotainment posts (ibid.).

Pophal (2020) proposed a metric namely “a weighted pipeline”, which focuses more on customer journey, in order to help audience to solve their problem and create value at the moment they need it, instead of focusing only on the contents themselves. The combination of content marketing strategy and customer journey creates more valuable metrics, such as: net new demand; future demand; the effects of customer journey on customer’s motivation; the effect of marketing on revenue and customer churn; and the impact of brand advocacy. In order to build more accurate framework for content marketing and receive more specific results,

marketers should constantly discuss with sales team to decide the tracking targets; calculate their marketing expenses; frequently conduct external market research; customize their content based on customer journey; and offer downloadable content (Martin, 2016).

Van Riper (2019) created a six step plan to make a successful content marketing strategy: 1) Understand target audiences and how to reach them, as getting clear information about target customers' demographic such as age, gender, level of education; and psychographic such as attitude classification, value, motivation; 2) Look for the common ground between business offers and community demands; 3) Create emotional connection with audience in content message by both visual and written formats; 4) Use suitable channels to deliver contents in the right time; 5) Maintain flexibility in communication schedule for something urgent, such as last minute news, current trend; 6) Have a clear future plan and metrics to measure the return value frequently. Besides, marketers should know some effective content creation tips, such as locate call to action at the content center; understand the on-going trend; and know how to evaluate their own contents (Anon, 2018).

## **2.4 Customer journey**

### **2.4.1 Understanding customer journey**

Customer journey and customer experience are ranked as one of the most important research field in the recent years (Marketing Science Institute, 2016). Positive customer experience creates higher conversion rates and customer loyalty, as well as generates more sales and increases retention rate of customers (Lemon et.al, 2016; Gustafsson et.al, 2005). Customer journey is an attractive method and research area for business as it mainly focuses on enhancing the positive usage of customer experience, in order to improve business's products and services (Zomerdijk et.al, 2010).

Customer journey is a map that visualizes customers' experience while interacting with services and products, by understanding and noting the touchpoints which the customers have been through (Stickdorn et.al, 2011). Nevertheless, customer journey reflexes a chain of designed or un-designed events, where customers learn about the business, leads to purchasing activities, and post purchasing experiences (Norton et.al, 2013). Customer journey is also considered a method to understand services and products from customer's perspective

(Halvorsrud et.al, 2016). Through customer journey, business can gain more knowledge about customer's emotion, motivations, and attitudes throughout the whole experience that they have had (Zomerdijk et.al, 2010). These knowledge helps business to design better experiences for their customers, create more competitive advantages and understand about different customer segments' expectations (Nenonen et.al, 2008).

The definition of customer journey is added another perspective by Wolny (2014), as non-linear processes, which is different from decision making models with hierarchical perspective. Customer journey is also a value co-creation process, which makes it mostly independent from the effects of businesses (Åkesson et.al, 2014).

## **2.4.2 Touchpoints**

Touchpoints refer to each individual event where customers interact with the company, which happens throughout all channels and in many different points in time (Zomerdijk et.al, 2010). Touchpoints have different characteristics, which depends on the nature of the services and products to define the importance. Companies need to seek for the most influential touchpoints to enhance the effects of them (Lemon et.al, 2016). Touchpoints are put into four categories: 1) Brand-owned, 2) Partner-owned, 3) Customer-owned, and 4) Social/external/independent (ibid.).

Brand-owned touchpoints refer to company managed ones, such as websites, advertisement, services, prices, loyalty programs. Partner-owned touchpoints refer to the one that are jointly controlled by both the company and other partners, such as marketing agencies, distribution channels. However, sometimes, the boundary of brand-owned and partner-owned touchpoints are unclear. Customer-owned touchpoints refer to customer activities that independently affect the overall experience of the journey, such as customer's individual demands and emotions. Social/external/independent touchpoints refer to the influence of external environment, such as other customers' opinions, peer influence (ibid.).

In a research of Stein and Ramaseshan (2016), touchpoints are defined by seven elements: atmosphere, technology, communication, process, employee-customer interaction, customer-customer interaction, and product/service interaction.

Atmosphere refers to the surrounding of customers when they interact with the service/product provider. In digital context, the surrounding focuses on music, colors, graphic design, layout, website design of the interface (ibid.).

Technology is one of the most important factors in digital customer journey. Technology refers to the comfortable and beneficial interaction with the business through technological interface (ibid.).

Communicative touchpoints are the one that create one-way communication between customers and business, such as email, advertisements, both informational and promotional contents. With these touchpoints, the quality of information is highly valued, as they influence customers throughout pre-purchase – purchase – post-purchase processes (ibid.).

The process element refers to the series of actions that customers go through in order to reach their goals. In digital context, these elements include the navigation of online presences, such as website, mobile phone, tablet, and other platforms; the user-friendly characteristic of the online user interface, as well as the timelines of these interface (ibid.)

Employee-customer element does not only mean the face-to-face interactions, but also through phone, online environment, and other social media channels. Supportive employees ease the interacting process for customers during their journey, make customers more comfortable in choosing products / services. However, it can also create highly negative experience for customers (ibid.)

The social encounters between customers highly influences the pre-purchase stage of the customer journey, such as searching and evaluating products and services, generating word of mouth effects by giving information and feedbacks about the products and services. As a result, this element might create positive or negative impacts on customer journey (ibid.)

Product element refers to both direct and indirect interactions with the product, such as using the product (direct), or experiencing the product display (indirect). Depending on the specific



situation, this element can create bad of good impacts on the purchase or post-purchase stages (ibid.).

### **2.4.3 Customer journey mapping**

Customer journey mapping has been recognized as an important marketing tool for marketing development (Paquin, 2013). With the development of technology and digitalization, customer journey has developed into a linear journey, with multiple customer interactions (ibid.). In order to improve customer experience, the service owner should understand customer journey touch points by mapping out their interacting steps on the journey of decision making (Richardson, 2016). However, customer journey mapping is more and more complicate with the appearance of new touch points (Richardson, 2010). Knowledge gained from customer journey mapping can help service provider to enhance customers' experience in each of their interactive touch points (Rosenbaum et.al 2017). However, it does not mean companies should note every possible touch point, which might make too complicate map (ibid.)

### **3 Research methodology**

#### **3.1 Research design**

The study is to provide further insight about digital content marketing in the context of business-to-business industrial manufacturing companies. In order to generate these outcomes and insight for this topic, the research is conducted with an exploratory study approach, in order to clarify one's understanding of the phenomenon (Saunders et.al. 2016). With this exploratory approach, the main research questions are normally beginning with "How" or "What" to seek the details and reasons behind the research phenomenon (ibid.). The nature of the exploratory approach is also reflected through the research questions of this study.

Even though single-case study strategy is traditionally considered for qualitative research, this study is the combination of both qualitative and quantitative approach. As the research concentrates on digital content marketing strategy, the case study approach generates more in-depth understanding for the topic (Yin, 2003). According to Robert Stake (1995), he stated that "no method is purely quantitative or qualitative, but the distinction lies in the emphasis". The data in this research is gathered with both qualitative manner – interview marketing strategy related creators and representative for different personas; and quantitative manner - gathering data of content performance through corporate social media channels of the case company. The data collection will be discussed further in the later parts of the study.

#### **3.2 Case background**

This research is conducted as a single-case study, which means only one context and one case are analyzed. According to Yin (2003), the single case study has five major principles – "critical case, unique case, typical case, revelatory case, and longitudinal case". In the context of this research, the unique case is applied. The target company is a business to business – industrial manufacturer corporate, who is seeking for the application of digital content marketing in their holistic marketing strategy to generate more marketing leads. This case company specifies a typical size and level of utilization of digital content marketing in business strategy.

The single case study company researched in this research is treated as the main object of the whole study, to understand more in-depth of the phenomenon digital content marketing. The content performance acts as the unit of analysis, however, the main interest is to generate a strategy as a whole. Choosing content performance as the core unit of analysis also reflects the desirable outcomes of both the research and the case company.

With the aim and objective of the research, content performance is examined through users' reactions on social media channels, as well as opinions and ideas of personas' representatives through interviewing.

### **3.3 Data collection**

#### **3.3.1 Social media channels and data collection**

The corporate social media channels of the case company were created long before the research started, therefore, the research will need to set a specific time period for analyzing. This period of 1 year (from the beginning of Feb 2020 till beginning of Feb 2021) as the case company had a main product launch in Feb 2020, which generated more contents and users' reactions from that period. As a newly established small division from a big corporate, before the product launch, the case company has not done any major publicity as well as huge campaign. After the product launch, the case company has a new product in their portfolio, with an opportunity of reaching wider markets and various requirements. Marketing wise, the product launch provides a foundation of content strategy for the business year of 2020-2021.

The chosen social media channels are Facebook and LinkedIn as the nature of the business as well as the wide usage and application of these two channels among the case company's audience. The commissioner company is most active in these two channels, from sales, branding to infotainment. Therefore, these two channels generate the most data for research. Nevertheless, according to informants (Chapter 4), they are not exciting about other occurred channels, such as Instagram and Twitter. As a result, the researcher chose to focus on the two channels: Facebook and LinkedIn.

The content of posts is all categorized according to seven types of content from the literature review – “current product display, new product announcement, sweepstakes, sales, customer

feedback, infotainment and organization branding” (Gavilanes et.al, 2018). Social media activities include reaction to the posts and contents.

The data is specifically gathered and analyzed by each post, with the support of Facebook and LinkedIn Business analytics, which is to provide insight about number of clicks, post reactions, comments, and shares. The data collected from these analytics tools is primary data with direct access from the case company.

With the similarity of main objective – understanding of content strategies, this research heavily employs data collection and analyzing methods of an existing research from Gavilanes (2018), namely “Content strategies for digital consumer engagement in Social networks: Why advertising is an Antecedent of Engagement”. However, due to the differences in the business natures and lack of resources, this research has some changes of its own. In Gavilanes’ article, the main channel is Facebook, however, with a more “serious” nature and variation of activities from the commissioner company, this research uses both LinkedIn and Facebook. Gavilanes’ article also has bigger database, more case companies, and more coders, which they can apply Holsti’s Percentage of Agreement method to calculate the agreement among all coders. However, as this thesis also has one coder, the effectiveness of contents is calculated by engagement rate (Chapter 4).

### **3.3.2 Website and data collection**

The website activities have a great attribution in publishing articles and product related content, however, at the moment, it is not the main attribution to the measurement of lead generation, due to the lack of specific tools and call to action on the website. The case company website is also considered as a channel for marketing and communications, which directly provide the audience information about products, services, and organizational activities of the case company. Therefore, most of the analysis related to the website is about understand the traffic measurement, the visitors’ behaviors. With the current content management system of the case company, the user flow is represented clearly in comparison and direction of other social media channels.

The current flow shows where the visitors come from, which page do they visit, which pages do they visit the most. However, as mentioned before, due to the lack of call to action on the website, it is not possible to measure visitors' engagement and generation, as there is no final destination on the website. Therefore, the data gathered from the website is mainly to understand about the digital customer journey of the case company. The company integrates a Website & Content management tools in their digital marketing activities. From this web manager, it shows the visitors flow from other channels to the website, from each individual web page to each other. Nevertheless, the web manager also recognizes the used keywords. However, due to privacy policy, the web manager is not able to record and categorize every traffic, in addition to company's privacy policy, the exact traffic flows cannot be visible for public as well as shown in this research. The result of web manager analysis can be used to make a conclusion for this thesis.

### **3.3.3 Interview and data collection**

The interviews were conducted as semi-structured thematic interviews approach. These interviews are revolving around the main research questions, but adapting through each interview context, background, and interests of each interviewee. The interviewees personas are listed in the table below. These personas are based on the previous research of the commissioner company, and they are listed as 2 types: Industry consultants and solution specifiers (A), and end users (B) (Figure 4). These two types of personas are the main targets of the commissioner company with long term concentration and relationship. They are influencers and decision makers in the industry. However, due to company privacy policies, name, location, and position of the interviewees cannot be shown.

| Interviewee     | Persona | Length of the interview |
|-----------------|---------|-------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | A       | 45 minutes              |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | A       | 45 minutes              |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | A       | 45 minutes              |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> | A       | 45 minutes              |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> | B       | 45 minutes              |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> | B       | 45 minutes              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> | B       | 45 minutes              |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> | B       | 45 minutes              |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> | B       | 45 minutes              |

*Figure 4 List of interviewees*

Due to the current situation of Covid-19, as well as the business nature of an international corporate, the interviews were conducted as online-face-to-face sessions. With the requirement of corporate data protection, the interviews were not recorded, but instead, taking note by both the interviewers and a third party, provided by the case company. The transcripts were then compared and imported to Nvivo, coded according to the theoretical framework. The interview questions are provided in the.

The interviews were conducted for one month – February 2021. The interviewee’s contacts and interviews were provided and monitored by a case company’s representative. The interviews have different background, positions, who are similar to the previous-determined personas.

After data was collected, the differences in patterns and interests of each interviewee are also taken into account, in order to provide more holistic outcomes. The data is primary data, generated and analyzed by the researcher, which creates more meaningful thoughts and discoveries for the research.

## **4 Findings**

This following chapter focuses on demonstrating the key findings of the research. The chapter is divided into two smaller sections: Customer Journey and Digital Content Marketing, which are presented according to the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 1 (Figure 3).

For this chapter, the findings from both online channels analysis and interviews were combined, in order to create the most holistic results. The interviews were coded based on the discussion about the digital customer journey and digital content marketing of the commissioner company. The interviews are also divided based on different personas of the interviewees: Industry consultants and solution specifiers (A), and end users (B) (Figure 4).

With the digital customer journey interviews, three main codes are in place: 1) History with the commissioner company; 2) How interviewed companies approach or are approached by field related brands; and 3) Factors affecting interviewed companies' decision in partnering.

With digital content interviews, main codes for this section are: 1) Online channels that interviewed companies receive field related contents; 2) Most preferred online channels; 3) Least preferred online channels; 4) Most preferred content types; 5) Least preferred content types.

### **4.1 Customer journey**

#### **4.1.1 Website data analysis**

Because of the privacy policies from Google, Google analytics cannot record enough information to generate a usable conclusion. The matter affects deeply performance marketing activity of the commissioner company. Nevertheless, it also impacts defining buyer stage of users. With the lack of recording, it is not possible to clearly divide three later stages: Act – Convert – and Engage. Therefore, creating digital customer journey based on Google analytics is not enough. However, the commissioner company has their own web management software, which is to measure the total number of visitors, visits as well as the behavior of the visitors.

The web manager suggests a user flow across the commissioner company's website, which shows most popular web pages for visitors. These pages are the landing page, product page,

and search. The search function of the website directs to specific language pages, specific product portfolios. Therefore, it is recognized that the most popular goal of users when they access commissioner company website is to search for the products.

From the web manager, there are five sources that lead users to the website (Figure 5). They are: 1) Search Engines – 132 790 visits; 2) Direct Entry – 62 439 visits; 3) Campaigns – 12 022 visits; 4) Websites – 6 974 visits; 5) Social Networks – 2 653 visits (Figure 5).

#### Channel Types

| CHANNEL TYPE      | ▼ VISITS | ACTIONS | ACTIONS PER VISIT | AVG. TIME ON WEBSITE | BOUNCE RATE |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| ☐ Search Engines  | 132,790  | 586,776 | 4.4               | 2 min 39s            | 47%         |
| Direct Entry      | 62,439   | 211,293 | 3.4               | 1 min 46s            | 64%         |
| ☐ Campaigns       | 12,022   | 16,432  | 1.4               | 26s                  | 85%         |
| ☐ Websites        | 6,974    | 29,926  | 4.3               | 2 min 22s            | 51%         |
| ☐ Social Networks | 2,653    | 4,811   | 1.8               | 58s                  | 70%         |

*Figure 5 Channel Types*

Search Engines are the most popular source, which generates the most visits as well as user actions (Figure 5). Commissioner company’s users use various search engines, such as Google; Bing; Yandex; DuckDuckGo; Yahoo; Baidu... Google is the most popular search engine with 118 820 visits out of total 132 790 visits of search engines. From recorded keyword list, 500 most used keywords contain the commissioner company’s brand name. However, the tool only defines 2000 visits with their clear keywords, the rest – about 130 000 visits do not have their keywords recorded. Therefore, the tool does not provide enough information to conclude that users, who use search engines to engage with the commissioner company, only use branded keyword to interact with commissioner brand (ibid.).

In order to investigate further, the researcher uses a digital marketing tool, namely Ahrefs, to confirm the undefined keywords. The tool also shows that top 20 organic keywords of the commissioner only all contains brand name, instead of more generic keywords. These branded keywords also generate 95% of the traffic. In other words, most of users only use search engines to check the brand information after they know the brand from somewhere else (figure 6).



| Keyword                                | Volume | Current traffic | Current position |
|--|--------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> brand name             | 2000   | 1375            | 1                |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> brand product          | 2100   | 1287            | 1                |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> brand product          | 500    | 215             | 1                |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> brand product          | 500    | 125             | 1                |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> brand product          | 200    | 84              | 1                |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> brand product          | 350    | 51              | 2                |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> brand product          | 100    | 48              | 1                |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> brand product          | 100    | 46              | 1                |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> brand product location | 100    | 36              | 1                |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> brand product         | 250    | 35              | 2                |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> brand product         | 60     | 32              | 1                |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> brand product         | 80     | 30              | 1                |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> brand product         | 60     | 28              | 1                |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> brand product         | 90     | 25              | 1                |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> brand product         | 150    | 25              | 2                |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> brand product         | 60     | 22              | 1                |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> brand product         | 100    | 22              | 1                |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> brand product         | 70     | 21              | 2                |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> brand product         | 200    | 19              | 7                |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> brand product         | 50     | 18              | 1                |

*Figure 6 Commissioner company top 20 keywords*

With further keyword research, within 2190 related keywords, there are about 2000 non-branded keywords. However, they only generate 5% of traffic. Therefore, there is an opportunity to optimize these non-branded keywords to activate new users here. The list of keywords is removed from this publication due to privacy policy of the commissioner company. The keywords in Figure 6 are directly related to brand names, and branded product names

With the direct entry, these users visit the website directly, instead of going through any other channels. It can be assumed that these users have already been through the first 3 stages of the RACE funnel (Plan – Reach – Act), because these users have already been interacting with the

brand. Campaigns can still be the source to introduce the case company to new users. During Covid time, many campaigns from case company are digital, with supports and advertisements from SEM, social media ads. Therefore, social media can be considered as a source for lead generation. The same case is applied to Websites.

After discussing with current project and product managers of commissioner company, the researcher understands that the most common and traditional customer journey begins with trade shows and exhibitions. New users know the brand from trade shows, exhibitions and start using search engines and social media to learn more about the commissioner company.

Combining the analysis result of the website with a discussion between the researcher and current project and product managers of the commissioner company, 6 possible customer journeys are drafted (Figure 7).

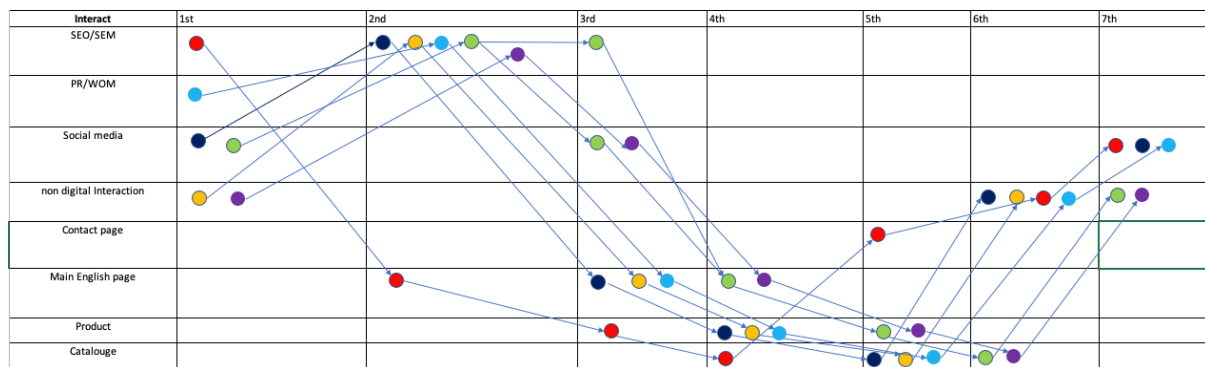


Figure 7 Possible customer journeys

|  |  |          |   |
|--|--|----------|---|
|  | Customers who is actively looking for solution, know from social media                                 | active   | Orientation is the first stage            |
|  | Customers who is actively interact with Commissioner company from non digital channels, such as events | active   | Orientation is the first stage            |
|  | Customers who is actively looking for solution, know from Google                                       | active   | Orientation is the first stage            |
|  | Customers who Commissioner company found from social media   | inactive | Orientation is the first and second stage |
|  | Customers who Commissioner company found from non digital interactions                                 | inactive | Orientation is the first and second stage |
|  | Customers who is actively looking for solution, know from WOM  | active   | Orientation is the first stage            |

Figure 8 Each customer journey definitions'

The first customer journey is for users who are actively looking for solution and they know the brand from social media. These users are active looking for new technology, new solution

(Figure 7&8). The second customer journey is for users who are actively interact with commissioner company from non-digital sources such as events, and they also actively search for new solutions and technology (ibid.). The third customer journey is for users who actively look for new solution and technology and they choose search engine to seek for new brands (ibid.). The fourth customer journey is for users who know the commissioner brand from social media channels (ibid.). The fifth customer journey is for users who know the commissioner brand from other websites, such as online publishers (ibid.). The sixth customer journey is for users who are actively look for new solutions but know the brand from word of mouth (ibid.). Even though six customer journeys have different begins, they all use search engines in the first or second touch point of their journey. The final customer journey will be confirmed by interviews with different personas.

#### **4.1.2 History with the commissioner company**

With A personas, all interviewees have rather long relationship with commissioner company, which are more than 10 years.

Even though the company (below) works as an international distributor in many different fields and industries, the company gained their knowledge and professionalism through their acquisition, which is dissimilar with other interviewees, who are strong direct players in this specific field only.

*About 10 years ago, \*interviewee 1<sup>st</sup> company's name\* acquired a company called \*name\*, which is a \*country\* market leader \*the industry\*, and I came up through that organization. (1<sup>st</sup> interviewee)*

The keyword “value-added” is used several times by several interviewees from the persona A group. The keyword is used to both describe themselves as service providers, their business goals but also what they are looking for from their partners. With this interviewee (below), he had a long history with the commissioner company, both internally and externally. Therefore, he understands the business core, business culture, as well as business future.

*We have a long history with \*commissioner company\* and medical product. We consider ourselves as a valuable reseller. We are not a typical distributor, as we do high capacity \*product\*, maintenance,*

*installation, we design customized products. We can be considered as a value-added reseller or value-added channel partner. I have worked for \*commissioner company\* for 19 years, then I spent another 19 years with a system company here in \*country\*, from 1979. (3<sup>rd</sup> interviewee)*

These companies also have strong influence in the industry with both international and local levels. Their influence is contributed by size of the organizations, field-related-media controls, and field-related portfolio.

*\*1<sup>st</sup> interviewee company\* is a large global company, so we are now under the name \*name\*. It makes us the largest industrial distributor in the planet. As I mention, we are in \*numbers\* countries, about \*number\* sales worth worldwide. The headquarter is in the US but we are operating global. We are one of a few global. We are one of few truly global distributors, who operates on a single platform, regardless of country, currency or language. (1<sup>st</sup> interviewee)*

*I wrote for several online news. Organization like \*2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee company\*, who put news out on the daily basis would catch my attention. (2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee)*

*The list appears to be for the people who are the primarily end users, resellers of your products, which I'm not. I've been in the business for 35 years. I facilitated the act between the manufacturers and the consultants. Most manufacturers are not doing a very effective jobs of interacting with \*industry\* community, some are better than the others. \*Commissioner company\* in general does alright. (2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee)*

With such long working relationship, the commissioner company with the A personas also generated a person-to-person relationship, which is difficult to alternate in a short period of time. It is also difficult for the interviewees to recall how they knew commissioner company from the beginning as they are all 10+ years relationship, with changes in management and personnel. However, most of the time, the relationship started with a sponsorship relationship, or field-related conferences.

*About 10 years ago, \*1<sup>st</sup> interviewee company\* acquired a company called \*name\*, which is a \*country\* market leader in \*industry\* distribution business, and I came up through that organization. (1<sup>st</sup> interviewee)*

With B personas, the history between commissioner company and interviewee companies are from 2 to 10 years. Some of them knew \*commissioner company\* from the internet, some of them from their education, and some of them from field-related conference. This particular end user can be considered as a special case. He is the only interviewee that is qualified \*industry professional\* with similar educational background. Therefore, he knew the brand from education, rather than other common reasons.

*We have a long relationship with \*commissioner company\* for years, and we have been using a lot of brand products. We became more involved with \*commissioner company\*. I am a qualified \*industry professional\*. I knew about \*commissioner company\* from my education. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

This interviewee below is an example of knowing the brand through the internet. He knew exactly what he was looking for, then he went to the internet to find a suitable provider. With stating “research online”, he meant using search engine – Google (he clarified later on during the interview). This interviewee is also a representative of a younger generation of users. His organization has a under 10 years-old relationship with the case company.

*We were looking for smart \*product\*, that could give us a standard \*product\* as well for \*product\*. And after doing some research on there (online), we came across \*commissioner company\*. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

This end user has a long relationship with the case company, over 10 years. He has a traditional customer journey with the case company – he knew the case company from a conference, which does not involve the internet while creating a relationship between the service provider and the end user. “Conferences” – Exhibition, trade show take a big part in traditional branding activities of companies in this field.

*I've got to conferences in \*city\*. We met these big players in the \*industry\* management field in these conferences. If I need a new*

*\*product\* system, I would do my research, going to these conferences to see what is out there that we could. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

However, they all have one similarity is that they all need references from their network, both personal (their friends) or professional (previous employment, field-related circles, colleagues). These connections might be from the current customer perspective, or past customer perspective or within the commissioner company. Even if the end users possess previous knowledge about the commissioner brand, it is still important for them to hear from their own network. In this interviewee case, he has a long personal relationship with an internal factor of the case company. They were friends before they started working with each other.

*I know \*commissioner company\* from one of the staff and she is my friend. She works for \*commissioner company\* in \*country\*. She made a proposal for us few years ago... We can say back to 20 – 30 years ago, we studied at secondary school together. When she knew I work at the \*field\*, she contacted me and try to get the project. Then she gave us a proposal. After 2 or 3 years later, we decided to use \*commissioner company\*. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

In this interviewee case, she knew about the brand due to her long experience in the field. It did not clearly indicate whether she worked with the case company before this employment or not. However, it shows that she knew about the brand before working for this current company.

*I also got connection from previous employment as well. I've been involved in \*industry\* for so long. I've got a network of contacts. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

Even with their own knowledge from various sources – conference, experience or their own research, all interviewees confirmed that they need to cross check the brand's trustworthiness, product and system quality with their professional connections. It does not clearly indicate whether they are formal or informal references. Some of the long-term-relationship interviewees actually become sources of reference themselves. A field network is established by all interviewees, especially with persona B, disregarding their operating fields.

*I've got a system that all the \*industry\* companies now that come to me for advice and guidance on how we do the system. It is like a precure the network as well. If I have been happy with system, I would*

*help to sell products to other \*industry\* companies. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

*As we are in transition, there are many people leave, and we're getting a lot of fresh blood from other \*industry\*. They brought their knowledge with them. And we might go back and Google what other has. We have to check carefully to fulfill all the requirements. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*We basically just went out on the internet and look up smart \*product\*, look up from our networking with \*name\*, see what other companies are using, use our networks with other people in the industry to figure out what pluses and minuses (\*6th interviewee\*)*

#### **4.1.3 Approach or are approached by field related brands (Online)**

There are several ways for the interviewed companies to approach or be approached by a new brand: 1) Through conferences; 2) On the internet; 3) By the availability of the brand on the market; 4) by cold calling; 5) by personal relationship.

With persona A, approaching/ approached by meeting at a conference or personal relationship are the most common method. It can be explained by the long traditional relationship which was established between the interviewed companies and commissioner company. There is still one interviewee strongly insisting on the traditional approach method.

*In \*country\*, the most popular providers are \*commissioner company\* and \*competitor 1\*, sometimes \*competitor 2\*. You cannot be in the business without knowing the company. If you take \*product\*, \*commissioner company\* is one of the names that comes to mind. Before \*name\* approached me, I did not understand the difference between \*commissioner company\* brands, which creates brand confusion. And it might be confused in the marketplace as well. (\*2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee\*)*

However, nowadays, according to interviewees, they are approached/approaching new brands through the internet – websites, social media more often. They are more open with various channels than before. Their open-minded attitude does not come from age, but most likely comes from personal experience. This observation is made since there is only one interviewee denying the impact of digitalization and internet in the research field. Other interviewees, who are the same age and in the same persona group with the denying interviewee, do not have similar opinion.

*\*Commissioner company\* has expended its focus in the \*country\* Market, with \*name\* and his team running the lead. It's really a person-to-person relationship, through connection that got us to the point where we work together as a distributor and manufacturer. It was not the product, it wasn't the marketing, it wasn't even as a part of \*commissioner company\*. It was truly just a relationship that grew into something that we think it has a lot of opportunity to grow.... Potential partners approach me at least monthly, sometimes it's weekly. They approach us through website, and LinkedIn (\*1st interviewee\*)*

Other interviewees in persona A group still claim that internet is an important factor when they get to know a field-related brand, especial commissioner brand. Search engine is their first choice, followed by their professional circle, such as through social media. History length with commissioner company is not a considering factor, for example, the two interviewees below have different history length with the commissioner company – one is over 10 years, and one is under 10 years.

*We searched from the internet. I know \*commissioner company\* as we do represent the system. (\*4<sup>th</sup> interviewee\*)*

*I normally see this information (brands) by scanning through LinkedIn, I tend to see better information on LinkedIn, which is more relevant to the work that we do here. Because at the same time, like most people, my email box is full, which is not enough time to deal with those things, but I think LinkedIn has been a very good source of relevant information. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*



With the persona B, interviewed companies cover all 5 different methods of approaching/approached new brands. In many cases, several methods are applied, mix and match with each other, depend on the actual standards and requirements of each company. In both approaching and being approached cases, persona B companies all have their specific needs before the sales process started. Most end users are proactive with collecting their knowledge about the brand that they want to use. Some end users even take the matter into their hands by contacting or cold calling the brand possessing their required solutions. However, search engine(s) is a big part in their decision-making process. All interviewees mention “search on the internet” at some point in their interview. Some interviewees use search engine at the very first stage of researching process, some others use search engine after hearing about the brand from their connects or conferences.

*For \*industry\* management brands in general, we tried to find strong \*product\*. We try to buy some market, stores, we also tried to find from the internet... we looked for \*commissioner company\* on the internet and researched more information. (\*5<sup>th</sup> interviewee\*)*

*If I am interested one company, I would cold call that company. Sometimes, other \*product\* companies contact us, but we don't have so much interest in them. (\*8<sup>th</sup> interviewee\*)*

Search engines, especially Google can be considered as the first touch point for many end users, simply they are the first choice crossing their minds if they need to search for any brands. Researching frequency depends on the need of each business. Each interviewee below has their own way to verify the information they receive from search engine. Some of them use their field connection, some use field events and tradeshow, some use their colleagues. However, all of them have a similar starting point: Search Engine (s).

*If I have to search for a new brand now, I will go to the internet and use the search engine. If I want to search for the \*product\*, I will search for electronical \*product\* system. I would also network with other contacts that I've got within the industry. I've got a system that all the \*industry\* companies now that come to me for advice and guidance on how we do the system. It is like a precure the network as well. If I have been happy with system, I would help to sell products to other \*industry\* companies. (\*7<sup>th</sup> interviewee\*)*

*Typically, we just use Google and find the vendors, \*name\*. When we go to \*name\*, they assign us to conference. We typically look at who are the vendors that were at the conference the year before, and figure out who's a part of that, and figure out who to be trusted or not, by comparing with industry standard. As mentioning before, it is just networking with everybody else. If we find out who are using that product, what are the pluses and minuses, then we go from there. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

*Like once a month, we might search for something out there, or we might hear from someone from the office, or we might see somewhere, then we google and have a look at it.... As we are in transition, there are many people leave, and we're getting a lot of fresh blood from other \*industry\*. They brought their knowledge with them. And we might go back and Google what other has. We have to check carefully to fulfill all the requirements. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

On the other hand, using the internet to search for new brand also receives some controversial opinions as the content of provided information, the amount of information, and trustworthiness from both personas. Even though all interviewees use the internet as strong factor or at least a complimentary impact in brand searching process, some of them still maintain their doubts about the result. Or just because of their strong portfolio, they know exactly what and where to search. Most negative opinions about using the internet to search come from persona A group. Some interviewees contradict their own previous opinions. It can be interpreting as search engines are important for them, however, they still need to carefully filter the information, nevertheless, they are not satisfied with all provided information and contents.

*Searching from the internet does not provide much information that you need. (\*4<sup>th</sup> interviewee\*)*

*From online, I sometimes hear, but not a lot. Because I am still getting to know people in the \*industry\* circle. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*I would say the internet is not a strong player in term of getting my attention to \*commissioner company\*. For some reason if I need to*

*research something related to \*product\* solution... I would go looking for in \*commissioner company\*. I don't react to advertising; I react more to news. (2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee)*

*To search for a new brand, I would start with Google (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

It is important to mention that many of the interviewees do not find it is necessary to search for a new field-related brand, because of the complexity in changing a system, solution and technology, due to both organizational and financial reasons. For persona A, most of these companies have big portfolio and strong position in the market, therefore, their need of adding a new brand is less.

*To be honest I don't, because potential partners usually approach us and they try to position themselves as unique offering to the market. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

For persona B, the financial and operational reasons dominate their need of searching for a new brand.

*Once we purchase a system, there is no use to search for another one until we change the system. We don't replace it often as it costs a lot. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

Nevertheless, most interviewees are uncomfortable with cold calling, cold emails, or similar methods. Out of all the interviews, there is only one interviewee that is comfortable with cold calling due to his background in sales. However, he also only receives these calls out of respect, not because he finds it interesting or necessary. Most interviewees consider the best way – the most comfortable and least disturbing method to reach them is through search engine.

*I am comfortable with cold call, cold emails. I understand the process. I at least hear the person out or read the message to see if there is something for me. I try to give that salesperson a bit of time, of give them a good look over before I make a decision. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*Cold call is disturbing. I don't want marketing emails; I don't want to subscribe to anything. The best way to reach me is the SEO, or*

*something along LinkedIn. Or something that related with \*name\*.  
(\*6th interviewee\*)*

#### **4.1.4 Factors affecting partnering decisions**

Factors affecting partnering decisions relates to interviewed companies' approaching/ approached methods. There are several factors regarding both the brand and the product, which interviewees take into consideration while deciding which brands to collaborate with. With persona A, the most popular factors are the popularity of brands, the quality, the added value, and the uniqueness of the product /solution. For persona B, the most popular factors are the popularity of the brand, customer feedback about the brand, the quality of the product, the suitability of the product with their current system.

It is understandable why companies in persona A care more about the added value and the uniqueness of the products. As stated above, these companies have large portfolio of all the biggest brands in the field, they have seen most of the products in the market.

*In multiple occasions, the product satisfies a unique need such as difficult situation to run \*problem\*. What would get my attention is to see product like \*product\* that would help me satisfy the unique application. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*I try to analyze the market based on that solution, if it is a very crowded space where there's no value added or differentiate value or not interested. But if there is something unique to the solution, which we think it is sellable to the market, we may take some interests and have some dialogues. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

However, the popularity of the brand is also very important for them, as it would be easier for persona A companies to suggest for their customers. In this case, they follow their customers' brand suggestion.

*Our goal is to sell our design correctly, which is suitable with the \*industry\*. I need to choose \*product\* from a standard brand name,*

*which is worldwide recognized. We need a full data base to present to the clients. Some clients they know \*commissioner company\*, they will ask for \*commissioner company\*. It is the same way with other brands (\*4<sup>th</sup> interviewee\*)*

Persona B companies also care for the popularity of the brands; however, they consider it from a more practical perspective, which is the flexibility of the solution system. With end users, the most important factor is the practicality of the products. With big brands, end users believe that they have had more experience and resources in researching and developing their system to adapt to various end users' situation. Especially, big brand companies have several years in the field with many case companies over the years.

*With big company, you can have more flexibility to change their software to benefit the end users. Smaller companies do not really get that. For reputation of a brand, I would define by their actual products. I want to feel the products, to see what it made off. I knew most of their reputation for big companies. With smaller companies, I would talk to them personally and check their products. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

Similar to the approaching methods stated above, the review from other customers with the same background, especially the one that they know, is very important for the interviewees to make their decision. Combining with the actual testing quality of the products, the companies use the information to reflex on each other. Some companies have more complicated testing system than others. They have many different testing rounds with different professionals, and different aspects of the product. The physical feeling of the products is highly valuable for the interviewees to decide anything, it was stated clearly with many end user interviewees.

*We look at two aspects: what is the best solution, and also talking to other \*industry\* which have the knowledge of using the system. We wanted to know what it comes from, what works, what does not work and what other options they have looked at. Each \*industry\* has different experience and using places; therefore, we use these pieces of information to generate our whole decision. So, we were looking what were in the market, but also what \*commissioner company\**

*could provide to us. The position of the reference is very important when I choose one solution (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*(We) see what other companies are using, use our networks with other people in the industry to figure out what pluses and minuses they are using at the time (\*6th interviewee\*)*

The decision processes of each company are dissimilar. With this case company below, due to the secrecy in their working field, the decision-making process is rather complicated, which involves many different parties – both internal and external, and separated testing steps.

*For \*industry\* management brands in general, we tried to find strong \*product\*. We try to buy some market, stores, we also tried to find from the internet. After hearing about \*commissioner company\* from my friend, we looked for \*commissioner company\* on the internet and researched more information. We requested the \*product\* for testing as well. For other \*product\* brand, we can buy from the market, the stores, but for \*commissioner company\*, we need to fill in some information to get them. It was not easy. We found out that \*commissioner company\* is also a \*industry\* management system, which is not easy to copy. We separated the \*product\* and the \*product\*, then sent them to different people. We sent the \*product\* to a guy in \*city\* and gave him \*time\* to \*test\* and send the \*product\* to another person \*test\*. After they confirmed that they were both unsuccessful, so we noted the quality of \*commissioner company\* product. After that we tried again and gave both \*product\* and \*product\* to one more person with the same tasks. They still cannot do it. They said that if I lose the \*product\*, the only way is to break the \*product\*. So, we considered that the product is also passed this round. After that, we bring the \*product\* to another internal team to \*test\*, and it took about \*time\* to unsuccessfully \*test\* the \*product\* with really loud noises. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

Nevertheless, the end users also look at how can they employ, apply the offering to their current system, as it is not likely that they could change their whole system every time they decide to

use a new product. The system here could be their IT system, \*product\* system or \*industry\* system, it depends on each company and each industry.

*I think for us, it was the technology but also about how we employ it, how we make it work. The IT side of it is a bit more difficult as we have to jump through so many IT roofs. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*We know what want from the beginning, so we don't have to hear everything that the company have to offer, so it would be based more on the \*product\* platform. I would look at the whole solution. It's not just what the \*product\* looks like, it's also about the \*product\*, the whole system, the software, how many combinations can that \*product\* platform offer in the \*product\* chain. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

*We bring the \*product\* to another internal team to \*test\*, and it took about \*time\* to unsuccessfully \*test\* the \*product\* with really loud noises. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

The summary of this analysis is created as figure 9 below. Figure 9 is divided into 3 main segments as the analysis goes. Each segment is listed with different statements, which represent each element that affects the segment. The numbers in column Persona A and Persona B represent number of informants who agree with the statement.

|                          | Statement                                    | Persona A | Persona B |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|-----------|
|                          | <b>Number</b>                                | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| History                  | Over 10 years relationship                   | 3         | 2         |
|                          | Know the brand through conferences           | 2         | 1         |
|                          | Know the brand through internet              |           | 1         |
|                          | Know the brand through market                | 1         | 2         |
|                          | Know the brand by education                  |           | 1         |
|                          | Know the brand through personal relationship | 1         | 2         |
| Searching for new brands | Using internet to search for new brands      | 3         | 5         |
|                          | Using connection to search for new brands    | 4         | 5         |
|                          | Doubting the internet (search engine)        | 2         |           |
|                          | Uncomfortable with cold call                 | 3         | 5         |
| Decision making factors  | Popular brand                                | 3         | 3         |
|                          | Product quality                              | 4         | 5         |
|                          | Added value and uniqueness                   | 3         |           |
|                          | customer feedback                            | 2         | 5         |
|                          | Current system suitability                   |           | 3         |

Figure 9 Coding figure

## 4.2 Digital Content marketing

### 4.2.1 Social channel analysis

|            | New product announce | Current product display | Sweepstakes and contest | Sales and promotion | Customer feedbacks | Infotainment | Organizational branding | Total |
|------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Facebook   | 3                    | 7                       | 0                       | 4                   | 19                 | 12           | 38                      | 83    |
| LinkedIn   | 3                    | 9                       | 0                       | 0                   | 27                 | 20           | 37                      | 96    |
| Total each | 6                    | 16                      | 0                       | 4                   | 46                 | 32           | 75                      | 179   |

Figure 10 Social media posts

From social media channels, there are total of 179 posts gathered in a year (February 2020-February 2021) (Figure 10). They are all in English, coded according to seven types of mentioned contents: New product announcement, Current product display, Sweepstakes and



contest, Sales and promotion, Customer feedbacks, Infotainment, Organizational branding. They were posted under three most popular format: Text, Link click and video.

From Facebook, there are 83 posts, divided as the following: New product announcement – 3 posts, Current product display – 7 posts, Sweepstakes and contest – 0 post, Sales and promotion – 4 posts, Customer feedbacks – 19 posts, Infotainment – 12 posts, Organizational branding – 38 posts (ibid.).

From LinkedIn, there are 96 posts, divided as the following: New product announcement – 3 posts, Current product display – 9 posts, Sweepstakes and contest – 0 post, Sales and promotion – 0 posts, Customer feedbacks – 27 posts, Infotainment – 20 posts, Organizational branding – 37 posts (ibid.).

From all seven types of content, the commissioner company uses organizational branding the most, followed by Customer feedback and Infotainment. Sweepstakes and contest is not used at all, therefore, there is not enough information to conclude whether Sweepstakes and contest is suitable for lead and action generation or not (Figure 11).

|                          | Reach  | Clicks | Likes | Comments | Share | Amount percentage | ER     |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|-------|----------|-------|-------------------|--------|
| New product announcement | 2383,0 | 38,0   | 75,0  | 1,0      | 8,5   | 2,23 %            | 3,55 % |
| Current product display  | 995,5  | 22,1   | 23,3  | 0,3      | 4,4   | 10,06 %           | 2,81 % |
| Sweepstakes and contest  | 0,0    | 0,0    | 0,0   | 0,0      | 0,0   | 0,00 %            | 0,00 % |
| Sales and promotion      | 365,0  | 5,5    | 21,0  | 0,0      | 5,0   | 2,23 %            | 7,12 % |
| Customer feedbacks       | 877,3  | 17,0   | 15,3  | 0,1      | 2,9   | 25,70 %           | 2,09 % |
| Infotainment             | 992,0  | 25,9   | 20,6  | 0,7      | 3,5   | 17,88 %           | 2,49 % |
| Organizational branding  | 987,5  | 22,9   | 24,0  | 0,5      | 2,9   | 41,90 %           | 2,78 % |

Figure 11 Social media content analysis

After coding, social media content is analyzed by calculating the average Reach (Impression), Clicks, Likes, Comments and Share of each content type. New product announcement has the highest average in all five interactions. With Reach, followed New product announcement, Current product display has the second highest average, then Infotainment. With Clicks, followed New product announcement, Infotainment has the second highest average, then Organizational branding. With Likes, followed New product announcement, Organizational

branding has the second highest average, then Current product display. With Comments, followed New product announcement, Infotainment has the second highest average, then Organizational branding. With Shares, followed New product announcement, Sales and promotions has the second highest average, then Current product display (Figure 11).

As the nature of social media, Engagement Rate is applied. Engagement rate is calculated as ratio between sum of all interactions to impression. Sales and promotion have the highest ER, followed by New product announcement, and Current product display (ibid.).

#### **4.2.2 Online content attraction**

The first observation, persona A interviewees often read more \*industry\* related articles and content than the persona B interviewees. Most of persona A interviewees read \*industry\* articles, magazines, contents weekly, sometimes even daily. Because they need to be well informed about the industry situation and technology, in order to make a thoughtful and fruitful suggestion for their customers. Depending on their background, they focus more on dissimilar contents. Some interviewees value content from trade and \*industry\* magazines more, some value new-technology-and-product-related content.

*At least weekly, sometimes daily. I want to be informed on the cutting edge of the industry. I want to make sure that I understand what's going on. As far as merger and acquisitions, and trends, I find it's important in my role to stay in tune with that part of the business. Some others like trade magazines, I find it's a little less helpful. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*An hour per week. I filter through, find the one that is relevant then go from there. I'm not gonna spend a lot of time reading something on \*product\*. If an article looks relevant to our company and customer based, then I try to get much as much information as I can from it. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*.... \*industry\* system news, \*industry\* business, \*industry\* technology executive. I wrote for several online news. Organization*

*like \*commissioner company\*, who put news out on the daily basis would catch my attention. (2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee)*

In contrast, persona B interviewees read \*industry\* articles, magazines, contents so much less, some read monthly, some read yearly. It is suited with their previous mentioned focus: the products, offering and solution. They care more about news and information which directly affect them and their situation.

*I sometimes read them. I get these magazines once in a while (year). It's more like from technology point of view. I want to know what out there and the how could I use it. One single feature is not that important as if we want to update, we have to change the whole system. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

*Not often. I also don't see often. I'm not in any network where I give out information. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

*Not very often. I do if only it's about the product that I'm using currently. I don't follow many online \*industry\* publishers. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

*I don't get \*industry\* magazines, and I don't read them as I don't have time. Unless my boss comes and tell me that I have to look at these articles, these solutions... (\*9th interviewee\*)*

In online environment, captivate headline and the keywords capture attention of both personas. Attractive and informative keywords and titles help them to filter out the information faster. Most of the interviewees confirm that they normally skim the content. They will read more careful if the headlines get their attention. Therefore, an attractive headline is one of the most important factors.

*I decide to click the links based on how it grabs my attention. The interest level I have on how its portraits. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*I would like to see how it would affect or hurt me. It depends on what attention grabber that you're gonna use. Show me some keywords on the title (\*6th interviewee\*)*

*The infotainment might be good depends on how it is presented, different headline, something that related to \*commissioner company\* brands. Don't tell me that you're innovative, show me your solutions (\*2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee\*)*

With the differences in searching and processing \*industry\* information and contents, different personas also get attracted by different content factors. With persona A, the interviewees are attracted by the information which they consider as facts, data, from trustworthy publishers.

*The interest level I have on how its portraits. I will decide to check them out if they have data, facts, case study, peer review, information, I find it much more interesting than advertisement. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*Some things catching my attention are new articles, press releases, which happens to be associated with the brand finals. On the \*industry\* system news, \*industry\* business, \*industry\* technology executive. (\*2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee\*)*

Persona B interviewees care more about specific information which relates to the product they are using, such as the changes in the product, how the product is employed in real life situation, or how the product would affect the users.

*I would like to see how it would affect or hurt me. It depends on what attention grabber that you're gonna use. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

*Yes, mostly from the internet, which is related to \*industry\* management physical, software. Also, about how to protect the \*industry\*. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

Product information can be delivered under different formats, such as whitepapers, portfolios, brochures, product videos. These contents also create trust for users, since they are provided by the manufacturer, and they are also the source of information when users need specification.

*With \*commissioner company\*, I know what products that \*commissioner company\* have, I look for brochure, blog post on the website to get more information. I normally check their functions, rating, and what they look like in general. If I cannot get enough of*

*this information, I would contact the sales to see whether they could send over a sample for instance. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

*Specification is very important to us. We did find the videos about the \*product\* system is very useful, as I can easily take them to stakeholders and say this is what we are implementing, this is how we intend to use it. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

With interviewees who use several solutions and products, their content niches are more detail. They are not only about the product, but also about operating markets, market requirements.

*I would search more based on the industry application, so something that ties to retail, and \*industry\*. If I search for \*product\* and \*product\*, I will see most of the things that I am familiar with, but to us, it is important to search from the application side, focusing more on the solution for a specific market, or the market requirement then work from there. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

### **4.2.3 Most preferred online channels**

Google is the first choice for both personas when it comes to research information online. Google is not only the tool to search for specific information and contents, but it is also the place for companies to verify the information that they received from other online channels. Google normally where a company will start with and keep coming back to it along their customer journey. All interviewees, disregarding their persona, stated that they would use Google at some point of their research for field related contents and information. Many of them start with Google, many of them use Google to verify their given information, disregarding sources (friends, networks, social media...)

*I would start with Google, and then I probably end up to some \*industry\* magazines, they tend to be pretty reliable central sources for good information. Ordinarily, we would be looking for new things at trade shows. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*Google is the first one as it is comprehensive, you are casting a wider net, it is a collective of websites. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*The most important channel is Google because it is the most famous, even if you don't know \*commissioner company\* brand, people still can go to Google and find more information. For the majority of people, you can use Google and YouTube. (\*4th interviewee\*)*

In this case, the interviewees use Google to search for more information after knowing about the brand. The interviewees look specifically about the brand information and products.

*I find the information in Google with \*commissioner company\* name, which leads to the \*commissioner company\* website. We directly checked the products one by one with different quality and qualification to see which one is suitable for us. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

*If I want to learn more about the current stage, I might do the google search (\*2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee\*)*

In this case, the interviewees look for more generic information about a genre of product or solution, to see a bigger picture in the field and industry. This activity is disregarding persona background.

*If I look for something more generic, I will go to Google (\*7th interviewee\*)*

*Like once a month, we might search for something out there, or we might hear from someone from the office, or we might see somewhere, then we google and have a look at it. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*About google, I would get more attention from \*product\* technology and development (\*8th interviewee\*)*

Even with a huge amount of information and content, none of the interviewee concerns about content filtering ability while using Google. Some of them cannot explain their content filtering method as in “trust their gut”.

The common search process is to use Google to lead them to other content providers. In persona A, the destinations are \*industry\* magazines, \*industry\* & technology articles. With Google, the users can see an overall picture, rather than just one specific brand. It is also a popularity contest, to see how a brand is rated online.

*I search more from Google. I would go to google, which often direct to one of the magazines that I mentioned earlier. But at least with google, I feel it's a bit of level playing field outside of the SEO and all that stuff. I feel like it is more comprehensive look, and you make it more data point, while in linkedin article, it is more like a more singular view. I try to get to get as much of the whole story as I can, just so I feel I understand of the whole concept more throughout. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*I would start with Google, and then I probably end up to some \*industry\* magazines, they tend to be pretty reliable central sources for good information. Ordinarily, we would be looking for new things at trade shows. Some companies are doing virtual trade shows, which are terrible. We have sat through some virtual demos, which are somewhat difficult. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*The most important channel is Google because it is the most famous, even if you don't know \*commissioner company\* brand, people still can go to Google and find more information. For the majority of people, you can use Google and Youtube. (\*4th interviewee\*)*

However, for persona B, the destination is more straightforward. Even starting with Google, most of the time is the commissioner company's website. As stated before, most of persona B interviewees know what they need. The sales process starts before starting selling.

*We use internet to find specific electronic based platforms, and we checked out 4 -5 different companies, and we tried to get as much information from the website and possible. If we find it suitable, we start contacting the company to have more in depth conversation about the products. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

Even though it is not well divided between the two groups of personas, most interviewees prefer to search brand specific keywords, such as brand names. Well-known brand is an important factor to attract users. However, this case only works if users know the brands from somewhere else. With these interviewees, most of them know these brands by experience, trade shows or network.

*I normally just use that brand names, I rarely search for more conceptual terms. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*\*product\*, \*product\*, and the \*commissioner company\* name, which lead to the website. (\*4th interviewee\*)*

*I find the information in Google with \*commissioner company\* name, which leads to the \*commissioner company\* website. (\*4th interviewee\*)*

*I would look for big brand that I know, and if they have a fairly good reputation behind them. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

*I would search for brand more; I would look for a specific solution from a specific brand (\*9th interviewee\*)*

In some other cases, if searchers do not look for a specific brand, they would look for a specific technology and solution, which ties to their pre-determined requirements. From these interviewees' point of view, there is not much space for a salesman to sway them with new technology or application, without a specific testimony from actual users.

*In google, I would search more based on the industry application, so something that ties to retail, and \*industry\*. If I search for \*product\* and \*product\*, I would see most of the things that I am familiar with, but to us, it is important to search from the application side, focusing more on the solution for a specific markets, or the market requirement then work from there. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*There would probably something like smart \*product\* solution, electric \*product\*, electric \*product\* solution. We would stumble around \*product\* then go to something else that you guys have like \*product\* and such. (\*6th interviewee\*)*



The second most important channel is YouTube. Many interviewees, especially from the persona B, consider YouTube as one of their destination from Google. From all the interviews, there is not any doubt or controversial opinion about content published on YouTube. However, not many interviewees think about directly searching for information and contents. Most of them would access the YouTube contents through Google suggestion.

*For the majority of people, you can use Google and Youtube. I sometimes also check Youtube to check the instruction, function of a product. You can check these contents multiple times until you understand. (\*4th interviewee\*)*

*Youtube is also very important, such as testing a \*product\* video, like testing control, testing the force on the \*product\*. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

*As I search deeper, I would end up with a video that sits on Youtube. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

For persona B, even though YouTube channel was not mentioned a lot during interviews, however, there were several discussions about the needs for video contents. Combining the most popular channel – Google, Google online channels are more favorable to interviewees.

*We did find the videos about the \*PRODUCT\* system is very useful, as I can easily take them to stakeholders and say this is what we are implementing, this is how we intend to use it. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

Company website receives several controversial opinions, some people like it, they go straight to the website or use Google to search for the website if they need any information. Some people have negative perspective about it. However, interviewees, who have long relationship with commissioner company, do not check the company website often, or even never. Most interviewees agree that website is a good source of information. All the contents on the website are provided by manufacturer. In other words, these contents are branded and guaranteed by the manufacturer. There are several requirements for a website. Interviewees want to see product portfolios, specification, case studies. It is important to understand that for users, website is not just a tool for marketing and data collection. It is a proper source for information.

*In the websites, I like data, facts, figures, case study, use, examples that usually found in a singular website. I would really prefer to see*

*that kind of information in oppose to imbedded video or advertisement.  
(\*1st interviewee\*)*

*I find the information in Google with \*commissioner company\* name, which leads to the \*commissioner company\* website. We checked directly the products one by one with different quality and qualification to see which one is suitable for us. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

*\*product\*, \*product\*, and the \*commissioner company\* name, which lead to the website. I represent the whole current system, such as the software, the platform, which can connect to the \*commissioner company\* \*product\*. (\*4th interviewee\*)*

*I would look at the whole solution. It's not just what the \*product\* looks like, it's also about the \*product\*, the whole system, the software, how many combinations can that \*product\* platform offer in the \*product\* chain. If some smaller companies pop up, I want to know about their history, their process, their manufacturing. I look for brochure, blog post on the website to get more information. I normally check their functions, rating, and what they look like in general. If I cannot get enough of this information, I would contact the sales to see whether they could send over a sample for instance. The website is most of important. Most of the time when I get on a website, I kinda know where I want to go. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

*The website would be the most trustworthy, and it is also the most possible channel for potential partners to get my attention. The content aspect is the most important (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*About the Website, eventually, you would end up at the website to get the best content you can. On the website, I tend to go to the product information. I want to know the product capability with the product information. At some point, whether before I get there or once I'm there, I want to see the case study information. Once I'm there, I want to see the case study. Normally, I see the case study then I go to the*

*website to research the product capability. If an end user is talking about the product, I think it carries a lot of weight. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*With already established company, I would just go to their website. I would go to a specific manufacturer rather than conducting search. I don't because I know what \*commissioner company\* has and I don't need the access. I could imagine consultants who works with \*product\* everyday, they would. \*2nd interviewee\* is also a vehicle for people to find information about \*commissioner company\*. I find that often some companies try do marketing, while ignoring some of the traditional channels. Marketing for \*INDUSTRY\* community many times appear to be an afterthought. Consultants need to be the focus of every marketing effort, not only to sell products (\*2nd interviewee\*)*

There are also some controversial opinions from persona B. It is necessary to understand that persona B focuses more on the practicality of the product, therefore, they trust the actual sample products than information published on website. For some interviewees, website is just a marketing tool and contacting point.

*I don't check your website often. As soon as we check out the products and the sample sent out to us, we don't trust it often. My goal here is the product portfolio and the contact person. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

*The website is also good as long as you know what're you looking for. From the website, I look at the whole pictures: tech, review, ability. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

Social media channels do not receive much positivity as a good source for information. Many interviewees do not use social media for their professional purposes at all. It could come from different reasons, such as IT \*industry\*, organizational regulations, habits. Even if the interviewees are comfortable with social media, most of them still do not use social media for professional purposes.

*I'm comfortable with social media, but due to my IT policy. I cannot do it at work, I have to wait till I finish work or use my personal phone. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

*But with social media, we cannot access social media within the hours. It is one of those restriction for \*industry\*. However, I also don't use social media for professional life. I don't use Facebook and LinkedIn. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*I don't use social media for my professional use. I don't have time to get involved with social media. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

They mostly use Google to verify the information that they receive from social media. The most trustworthy social media channel is LinkedIn. LinkedIn is considered as a more professional social media channels, where users can expand their network.

*I typically just use LinkedIn. I contacted you guys from email. I probably trust something that comes in LinkedIn, and I would verify it on Google. For example, from one potential partner, I usually see new things that he posted on there. That is a good way for me see news. I get on LinkedIn maybe once a day. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

*I do think LinkedIn as the most effective, as I have the ability to define my market based on my application. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*I have a lot of followers on LinkedIn. I use them to find more consultants that we can interact with. I join in articles, discussions. If I found something interesting, I would put a post on it. (\*2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee\*)*

However, this platform is only popular with interviewees from Europe and US. Other interviewees, such as from Australia, Asia, do not use or rarely use LinkedIn. All non-US/EU interviewees use LinkedIn for professional purposes, rather than job hunting.

*I use LinkedIn, but not so often, and Facebook. Facebook is more famous in \*country\*. LinkedIn is mostly to look for job, share personal achievements. I mostly don't check any content there. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

#### 4.2.4 Least preferred online channels

Social media in general is not the most exciting methods to interact with interviewees. Some of them do not use social media at all, some of them use social media but not for professional purposes, and some of them use social media for professional purposes but with hesitating manner. Interviewees always use search engines to cross-check information received from social media, even LinkedIn. Interviewees are not comfortable with interacting on social media in professional manner, especially persona B.

*I probably trust something that comes in LinkedIn, and I would verify it on Google. For example, from one potential partner, I usually see new things that he posted on there. That is a good way for me see news. I get on LinkedIn maybe once a day, but I don't necessarily reach out to my vendor on LinkedIn. I don't do that because I am really cautious about adding my vendor on LinkedIn, because I don't want that to be used again me on the opposite site. I don't want bad guys to see that I am friend with \*COMMISSIONER COMPANY\* on LinkedIn, as they might think that I am using \*name\*. Because of that, I don't follow a lot of people, I don't add a lot of people on there, and I don't interact with a lot of people. (\*6<sup>th</sup> interviewee\*)*

*I don't describe trustworthiness to any of social media platform. I would consider the source more. I would look at the publication, organization, which by nature is objective. (\*2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee\*)*

Facebook is widely used by interviewees; however, it receives many controversial opinions. Most interviewees do not trust information given on Facebook. Many interviewees find Facebook misinformation and providing bias opinions. Several company IT policies are also against their employees using Facebook during working hours. However, disregarding these negative opinions, Facebook are still admitted being used by many interviewees for their personal purposes.

*We use twitter, linkedin, a bit of youtube. But we don't use facebook, as I find facebook is very crowded with misinformation. I don't find it as a quality source of workable information. Facebook is more*

*subjective and more opiniated, while LinkedIn can be the same, but it is presented in a more professional manner. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*I use LinkedIn, but not so often, and Facebook. Facebook is more famous in \*country\*. LinkedIn is mostly to look for job, share personal achievements. I mostly don't check any content there. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

*I mostly use LinkedIn, we do not use facebook and twitter... I try to stay away from Facebook as far as I can. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*I'm comfortable with social media, but due to my IT policy. I cannot do it at work, I have to wait till I finish work or use my personal phone. I also have some work friends on facebook that I can ask for help in the field. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

Instagram is rarely mentioned as a good channel for this industry. Twitter is mentioned once with negative perspective. The two channels are not popular among interviewees. Many interviewees do not pay attention to Instagram, or they do not understand Instagram usage in the field.

*We do not use facebook and twitter... (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*I also use linkedin, Instagram. It depends on if someone has a background that related to my field, I've got in touch and ask for feedback. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

*I don't find value in Instagram (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*Personally, I don't use Instagram because I don't want to use much time. I am not from the digital generation. (\*4th interviewee\*)*

#### **4.2.5 Most preferred content types**

Even though receiving some controversial ideas, customer feedbacks still receive the most attention and positive attitude from the interviewees of both personas. Many interviewees value information provided from customer feedbacks. They think customer feedbacks help them to understand more about the product, its application and previous users' experience. Surprisingly, they do not pay much attention to negative feedbacks, but the source of these feedbacks is very

important. If the feedbacks come from one of their network members, they are even more valuable.

*The position of the reference is very important when I choose one solution. With the customer feedback, it is about how they implement the system, what benefits do they find from the system, positive things mostly, I don't really look for the negative. I would look at the whole picture. If I hear negative feedbacks, I would compare the ratio between the positive and the negative feedbacks. I would look at the source of the negative feedbacks, who did they come from, is it big or small business, who's the person who wrote the feedbacks. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*If you get a \*industry\* professional end user saying this was my problem, this is how I resolve it, it carries a lot of weight in oppose to \*commissioner company\* saying this is what you need. I take a lot more stock in what an end user has to say. I would say customer feedback has the most impact (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*I will comment on Customer feedback. If someone I knew and trusted providing these endorsements publicly, it is more meaningful for me (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*I like the new product announcement, current product display, customer feedback.... I also care about the customer feedback as well. I speak to \*industry\* managers of different companies. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

*With customer feedback from other sites, we have to check the source of the feedback. Also, we have to see if the other site connects with \*commissioner company\* site or not. From my side, I have to study more information before I can trust. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

However, for two interviewees from persona B, they generate negative opinions about customer feedbacks, especially the one published by the commissioner company. They find customer feedbacks are bias and they only serve marketing purposes. They also think customer feedbacks are not always the truth.

*Customer feedback not so much, because it is always from a person point of view, while I have to look at the whole big picture, you cannot always trust them. I have to know the actual sources of the feedback (\*8th interviewee\*)*

*I don't trust customer feedback. I would trust the feedback from my people who are using your products than the customers feedback that you make. Because you will put your good feedback on, not the bad stuff. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

Sales & promotion does not generate focus from persona A so much, but it grabs attention from persona B, especially with interviewees who have shorter relationship with the commissioner company.

Persona A interviewees do not seem to pay much attention to sales and promotion. Many of them find Sales and promotion contents are useless and boring, which do not generate any real content for them and their customers.

*Sales, promotion, and sweepstake, I don't see value there. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*Nobody wants to sit through an hour-long sales pitch. They wanna understand the solution for an important challenge. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

However, for person B, the situation is totally opposite. Most of the interviewees find Sales and promotion contents are one of the first that get their attention. It can be explained as persona A, they are all familiar with the commissioner company and the product. Therefore, listening to a sales pitch is not interesting them at all, since they know everything about it. However, end users do not interact with as many brands as persona A, therefore, the information is still fresh for them.

*The most interesting is the product display and sales & promotion. The most important is sales and promotion. After we find it, we can explore more about the product details. (\*5th interviewee\*)*



*Sales and promotion is the most important, because it makes me want to discover more about your offer, after that it goes to the customers feedback. (\*4th interviewee\*)*

*The one would grab my eyes the most is the sales& promotions and new product announcement. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

*What I focus on the most is the product itself not the solution. I don't really focus on sales and promotion. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

New product announcement receives contradicting opinions from persona A. Some Persona A interviewees focus on updating their information. Understanding a new product is also their opportunity to provide their customer the most up-to-date solution. On the other hand, some interviewees

*I find new product announcements are always premature, often it is not even ready for commercial release, so I really can't think about a product that will be available for another 12 months. I just don't have time for that. So, what currently available including case study, I can sell it today. However, it generates awareness, start a conversation or get other people's thought. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*The new product announcement is also critical, and it clear defines end user value in that. Those are the highest impact. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

However, with persona B, new product announcement and current product display only grab their attention if they are related to their currently used solutions. As stated before, persona B interviewees are interested in specific information and products.

*The one would grab my eyes the most is the sales& promotions and new product announcement. New product announcement, I would like to see how it would affect or hurt me. It depends on what attention grabber that you're gonna use. Show me some keywords on the title. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

*New product announcement is the most interesting. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

*For me, the current product display, new product announcement and customer feedback is something that we would look at. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*I like the new product announcement, current product display, customer feedback. I would like to see what come on to the market. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

Current product display contents are mostly welcome with persona A interviewees. Some of them consider these contents as marketing material, some of them consider as specification – product information material. The most valuable aspect of Current product display is its availability for markets and users.

*Current product display is important. It's real, it's now, it has the product in hands. It is to serve customer today. It is proven, it is available, it's hopefully tested. I generally try to solve a problem for my clients. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*I would value the current product display as I am a technician (\*4th interviewee\*)*

However, with persona A, especially the ones have long history with the commissioner company, they understand the brand, they understand the products, therefore, the information provided by current product display is not fascinating.

*About the current product display, \*commissioner company\* does a fine job with it. The marketing materials have always been top notch. The challenge is to make it relevant with the current market space. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*Current product display is not fully interesting. (\*2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee\*)*

Current product display is highly valued with persona B, because of its application. Persona B interviewees mostly treats current product display as a source of information, specification, rather than marketing materials. Therefore, for them, its most valuable aspects are practicality and accessibility. Additionally, current product display should come with various formats both documentary and interactive ones. The goal is to help end users fully understand product usage and potential.

*I would notice sales & promotion, and current product display (\*5th interviewee\*)*

*I know what products that \*commissioner company\* have, I look for brochure, blog post on the website to get more information. I normally check their functions, rating, and what they look like in general. If I cannot get enough of this information, I would contact the sales to see whether they could send over a sample for instance. (\*8th interviewee\*)*

*For me, the current product display, new product announcement and customer feedback is something that we would look at. I personally use the current product display quite often. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*With the current product display, it is to see what match product requirement is there. It is also about being informed about what's going to come out to the market. What I focus on the most is the product itself not the solution. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

*If you get me through these two (Sales & promotion, new product announcement), I would need more information from the display (level 2). My goal here is the product portfolio and the contact person. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

#### **4.2.6 Least preferred content types**

Sweepstakes and contest does not have good feedback from all personas. It is related to negative perspective of interacting through social media. Some interviewees even consider sweepstakes and contest as “not-serious business”, and “no added value”. With the nature of Sweepstakes and contest as an interaction with audience through online environment, many interviewees make it clear from previous section that they do not want to leave much online footprint such as comments, likes, it is natural that they do not want to associate with sweepstake and contest. Most persona B interviewees do not comfortable with leaving comments online, even if they are comfortable with using social media for professional life.

*Comments: nothing, because as I comment, I would have to consider why do I have to do that, it also creates more notification for my phone. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

*I don't comment very often (\*6th interviewee\*)*

*Sweepstake and contest, I don't see value there. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*Sweepstakes and contest we would not take part in. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*I'm never a fan of sweepstake and promotion types in our world. This is a serious business. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*Sweepstakes and contests I would never join. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

Organizational branding does not generate attention. More than half interviewees do not mention Organizational branding. Some interviewees from both personas talk briefly about it, but none of them show any positive affection about Organizational and branding. However, they also confirm that Organizational and branding contents are sent to them very often.

*About organizational branding, it helps me to understand the company priority and what vertical market they are targeting, what is the niche in the market that they try to pursue. These contents are sent to me very often. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

*I would press "like" for organization branding; however, I don't like to press like so much (\*5th interviewee\*)*

*\*Commissioner company\* has always done excellent job with organizational branding. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*Organizational branding does not do much. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

Infotainment is a "gray area" for interviewees. As stated before, many interviewees from persona B do not read field related articles often, therefore, Infotainment does not seem to excite them. Unless the article is directly related to their organizational activities and current application. For persona B, Infotainment and branding needs carefully planning, from contents to keywords and copywriting. Especially news is the most interesting aspect to persona B, Infotainment needs to be news and trends related.

*On social media, the most useful one is infotainment. I would react to news (infotainment) to understand the situation so we can find a way to take care of our own. (\*5th interviewee\*)*

*New product announcement is the most interesting, then infotainment (\*8th interviewee\*)*

*Infotainment, If it's about the product that I really wanna look at, I would invest some times on to it. (\*6th interviewee\*)*

For A personas, Infotainment has more effect, however, some of them concern about the actual content of these articles and how these articles would affect the commissioner brand. Persona A is a group of field experts, as a result, they are skeptical about what they read and conceive. Even though this group is more welcome with Infotainment, the commissioner company needs to know their strength and weakness in the industry, avoid appearing as direct selling and amateurs. Writing tone is highly regarded. All interviewees show negative feeling toward marketing material in disguise as Infotainment.

*One thing is when you are writing about marketing piece, you have to be careful while tapping into industry professional, what they already know if you try to tell them what they need. They know what they need. It's an interesting line that you have to walk to get the message across: "we understand what you need, and here is to fix the problem". I have read many brochures come off as manufacturer trying to tell users what they need to do or how they need to do their job. Solution more than guideline. About the infotainment, I would really try to be clear and objective, really try to tie it back to my experience with the customer need, make sure that it is relevant to the products, how to products satisfy specific customer needs. Nobody wants to sit through an hour-long sales pitch. They want to understand the solution for an important challenge. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*I have a strong bias on the contents that educate me and tell me something that I might not know or talk about solution that I might not be aware off. Consultants are looking for unique solutions. The infotainment might be good depends on how it is presented, different headline, something that related to \*commissioner company\* brands. Don't tell me that you're innovative, show me your solutions. (\*3<sup>rd</sup> interviewee)*

*About infotainment, sometimes they are more informative, sometimes they are more entertaining. Sometimes they are more subjective, rather than objective, that's why I put it in the middle. It is the most valuable if it includes to most specific rather than just some marketing ideas but actual use cases with real information. For example, sometimes use a panel from the company, so it's a bit of an echo chamber, they are all speaking the same language to each other, which may or may not be relevant to the outside audience. Sometimes it is just for branding. (\*1st interviewee\*)*

#### **4.2.7 Virtual training perspective**

Due to the impact of Covid-19, Virtual training, tradeshow, exhibition have a big influence in marketing and branding of commissioner company. As started before, trade shows and exhibitions are important method for commissioner company to expand their network and seek new customers. Therefore, the marketing team has been organizing and engaging the brand with various virtual trainings, tradeshow, exhibitions from all over the world. As the matter of fact, the commissioner company also organizes their own virtual podcasts and interviews. It is crucial to learn more how the key persona interviewees think and interact with virtual trainings, trade shows and exhibitions. Even though these activities are a part of Infotainment type of content, they deserve their own section because they are newly applied during the pandemic.

Most interviewees are happy and excited with this new format of interaction. They also come up with some improvement suggestions for the future. However, one interviewee who organized a virtual tradeshow for his business, did not have satisfied experience with the format. It needs clarifying that the trade show did not involve commissioner company. Some interviewees have never attended to any virtual trade shows, trainings, and exhibitions in the field, but they confirmed attendance of their colleagues.

*During this Covid time, I have my training online. Normally, with the company, we would have a vacation training. We now normally use \*name\*. Searching from the internet does not provide much*

*information that you need. Most of the information from \*commissioner company\*, I've got it from the Technician. I do like these online training. The online training, you can learn disregarding your location and time zone. However, it is also limited as you cannot see lecturers. For me, I would like to have some parts are online, some parts are face to face. With the online training, sometimes, it feels unreal. But because of Covid, you have no choice. With offline training, I would like to have it related to technical side. For the sales and marketing, online is ok. It would save more time and money. (\*4th interviewee\*)*

*My team in the part has taken part in online seminar, but until now, it is not something that I've been involved in. (\*9th interviewee\*)*

*The virtual trade shows are terrible from exhibitor perspective, it is pretty bad. From attendee's perspective, we haven't done much. Videos are great format for training. As an attendee, you can sit through the training and get some things out of it. But as an exhibitor, you're just hoping that someone would click on your virtual booths, so we had a very experience with that from the visitor side. As exhibitors, we try to put meaningful content on the virtual. Booths then hope that people would go to it. When we see someone, who look into the booths, we would log into the chat and say "hi, what can we help" and almost instantly, they would click off. (\*3rd interviewee\*)*

*I join sometimes. The best thing a webinar can do is to be recorded and make the recording available. Consulting is very busy, with the addition of project management responsibility. The time differences might affect people who join. During the organizing time, people might not be available. With recording, people can easily check out the available content as well. (\*2nd interviewee\*)*

*Now they have virtual conferences that you can pick and choose the presentation that you want to go to. So, I've done that. \*name\*, (\*commissioner company\*) he's my contract manager, he's just sent*

*me out a link to a virtual conference within \*commissioner company\*. I've given my detail to relevant conferences, and many companies got in touch to showcase their offers. I considered these conferences are very good, very interactive, very educational. I think many companies are very flexible on how they overcome the Covid restriction. I would expect it to be very interactive, very clear and concise about what you can do and what can you link to. What information can you get from that area. I suppose a pre-meeting email could be set out about what you expect to see. If I get to a stand in a conference, I'll be able to ask all of my questions. I think in the virtual scenario, it is about the ability to ask questions. (\*7th interviewee\*)*

The summary of this analysis is created as figure 12 below. Figure 12 is divided into 3 main segments as the analysis goes. Each segment is listed with different statements, which represent each element that affects the segment. The numbers in column Persona A and Persona B represent number of informants who agree with the statement.



|                            |   | Persona A | Persona B |
|----------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|
|                            | Number                                    | 4         | 5         |
| Online content attraction  | Reading content frequency weekly and more | 3         | 0         |
|                            | Attracted by headlines                    | 3         | 5         |
|                            | Attracted by facts and data               | 3         |           |
|                            | Attracted by specific product info        | 1         | 5         |
| Most preferred channels    | Google                                    | 4         | 5         |
|                            | Youtube                                   | 3         | 4         |
|                            | Website                                   | 3         | 4         |
|                            | Linkedin                                  | 2         | 1         |
| Least prefer channels      | Instagram                                 | 4         | 5         |
|                            | Facebook                                  | 3         | 5         |
| Most Prefer content types  | Customer Feedback                         | 4         | 3         |
|                            | Sales and promotion                       | 1         | 5         |
|                            | new product annluncement                  | 4         | 3         |
|                            | current product display                   | 3         | 5         |
| Least prefer content types | Sweepstakes and contest                   | 4         | 5         |
|                            | Organizational branding                   | 4         | 5         |

Figure 12 Coding figure

## **5 Conclusion and discussion**

This chapter is a summary of primary data findings from interview, website analysis and social media analysis, with the literature review, in order to create conclusions for the previously generated research question. The connection between interview, website analysis, social media analysis and literature review is the foundation for future suggestions and implementation. The results will be examined from the managerial perspective. The concentration is to provide an insight about current digital customer journey, as well as potential of developing future digital content for commissioner company. The limitation for future improvement of this research is discussed after as a suggestion for future research.

### **5.1 Discussion**

In this chapter, the research questions are answered based on primary data findings from interview, website analysis and social media analysis. After that, the information is used to update current previous proposed theoretical framework.

#### **SQ 1: What is a suitable digital customer journey for industrial manufactural companies?**

As the commissioner company has 2 main personas: industry consultants and solution specifiers (A), and end users (B), digital touch points should also be discussed according to these personas. In general, digital customer journey from this research is dramatically different from previous customer journeys made for the commissioner company. From the research findings, it clearly shows that online presence takes a big part in creating brand image, trustworthiness, while directly affect customer decision-making process. The importance is confirmed by several interviewees, one interviewee even stated that if he does not find a brand online, it scares them away. It re-ensures Hollebeek et.al (2019) research that Digital content marketing is also considered how relevant and brand-related digital contents are, in order to develop customers' "brand engagement, trust, and relationships". However, digitalization affects different personas differently.

In the two customer journeys, according to the definition of Lemon et.al. (2016), brand-owned touch points are websites, tradeshows; partner owned touchpoints are online publishers, news & trends; Customer-owned touchpoints are search engines, exit network, and social/external/independent touchpoints are social media, email, cold calls.

Reflecting to touchpoints definition of Stein et.al (2016), seven elements: atmosphere, technology, communication, process, employee-customer interaction, customer-customer interaction, and product/service interaction are creating impact on each touchpoint. Employee-customer element now has more impact on non-digital channels, however, with the current application of digital tradeshows, further research will have more data to reflex.

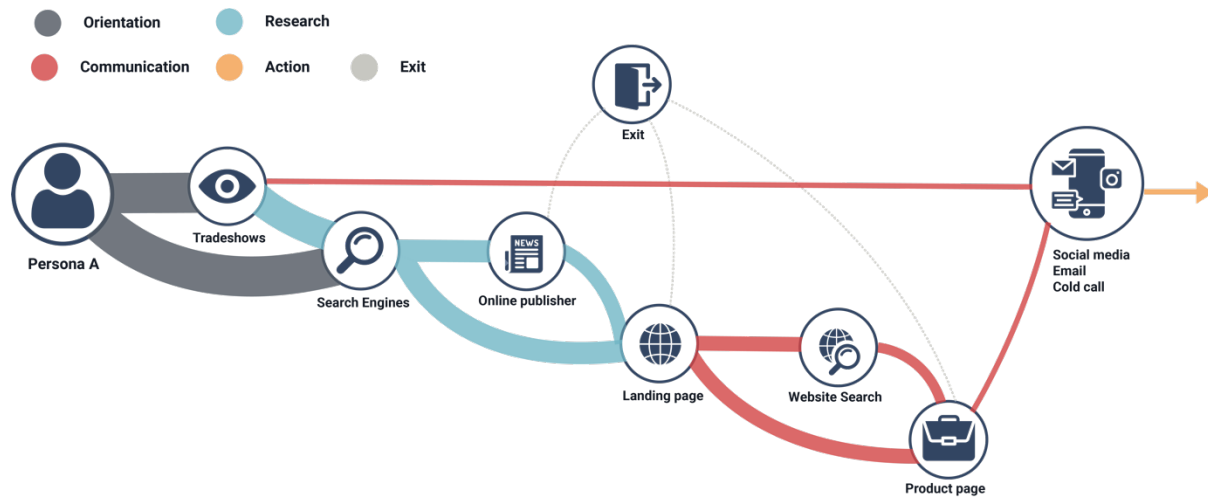


Figure 13 Persona A customer journey

Persona A are industry consultants and solution specifiers, who can be considered as the gate keeper to the end user. They are experts in the field with years and years of experience and long history with the commissioner company (Figure 9). Most of them – three out of four considers internet has a big impact on their work. Traditionally, they are normally in contact with similar brands from trade shows, exhibitions, but they also admit that they use search engine to search for brand with specific product niches (SE – Tradeshows:1). Even if they know a brand from non-digital situations, they still use search engine to learn more about the brand and research for their requirements (SE: 2). All interviewees seem very proactive with their search, and most of them are against selling from brands (No sales: 3). Search engines lead them to the commissioner company’s website or other industrial publishers, which they also value. From search engines, which web page they land on depends on their keywords, for example, with branded keywords, they land on the landing page, with more niche keywords, they land blog section or product section. The interviews show that this persona has big chance of searching for niche keywords, this is where SEO becomes effective (Figure 9). Eventually, the publishers lead them to the commissioner company’s website (Landing page: 4). According to the web manager, landing page receives the highest traffic, also highest bounce rate. If users

do not bounce out from there, they will go to product page (5) or search (5) then product page (6). However, the blog section is barely visited, which can be improved further in the future. Half of the interviewees from persona A use social media in their professional life. As a result, they are the most likely to connect with the commissioner company’s social media presences (7).

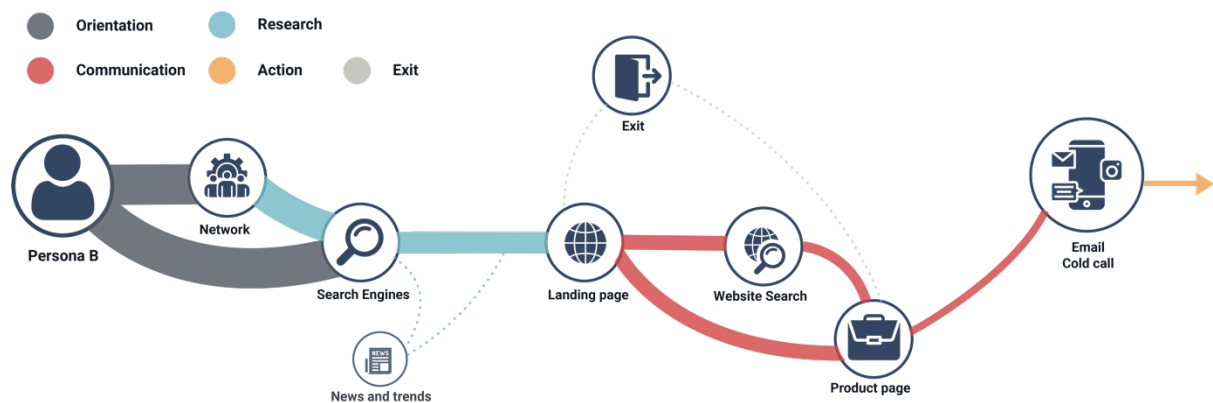


Figure 14 Persona B Customer Journey

Persona B are end users, who implement the commissioner company’s products and solution. They are people who directly experience the products, use the products, and generate feedbacks about the products both formally and informally. These interviewees knew the commissioner company from non-digital channels such as experience, personal relationship, professional network, or tradeshow (1) (Figure 9). However, they also admit that they normally use search engines to seek for new brands, or at least to validate the information that they receive from other sources (1-2). Search engines lead them to the commissioner company’s website. As persona B interviewees do not read industrial magazines or related articles often, online publisher or website blog section have less impact on them (Figure 12). Therefore, they are most likely to land on the landing page of from search engines. Especially, these interviewees use branded keywords to search more, and they are highly affected by brand popularity. However, it does not mean that SEO is not important in this case, because the interviewees confirm that they are paying more attention in news and trends, which are directly related to them. According to the web manager, landing page receives the highest traffic, also highest bounce rate (anonymous source). If users do not bounce out from there, they will go to product page (5) or search (5) then product page (6). Social media channels are not very popular among this group. All five interviewees are skeptical about social media, only two out of five use Social media for professional purposes. Therefore, it is not likely that they will interact with

the commissioner brand's social media channels afterward. However, all of them highly value YouTube (Figure 12). Therefore, a connection between YouTube channel and the website is more valuable for the commissioner company.

## **SQ 2: What are types of content for lead generation in industrial manufactural companies?**

The findings from website analysis shows that the most popular type of content is the product display, since the product page is the second most popular visited page, following landing page. However, from SEO research, the commissioner company's website does not fully optimize keywords and search engines (Figure 6). With branded keywords from search engines, the traffic is mainly generated with branded keywords, which lead to the landing page or product page. This factor might affect the result of analysis. Nevertheless, users who use branded keywords have already passed the earlier stage of the framework, such as planning and Reach. The fact that the web manager cannot fully record all traffic history due to privacy policy is also noted.

The findings from social media analysis shows that the most frequently used types of content are Organizational branding, followed by Customer feedback, then Infotainment on both channels Facebook and LinkedIn. However, the Engagement Rate (ER) shows that the most effective types of content are Current product display, then Sales & promotion on Facebook. On LinkedIn the most effective content types are Current product display, followed by Infotainment. In general, the most effective types of content are **Sales & Promotion, New product announcement and Current product display**. It could be seen that the most effective types of content – Current product display, Sales and promotion, and New product announcement are not in sync with the most frequently used content types. From this analysis, it shows that the audience care more and interact more with Current product display, Sales& promotion, and New product announcement, instead of Organizational branding, Customer feedback and Infotainment. As the final result also includes social media campaign results – mostly for brand awareness, it can be assumed that the audience are still in the first three stages of the RACE framework – Planning – Reach – Act.

The findings from the interview shows that the most popular content types among interviewees are **Current product display, New product announcement, Customer feedback and Sales**

**& Promotion (Figure 12).** The least popular content types are Sweepstakes & Contest and Organizational branding. This finding is somewhat in sync with the result from website analysis and social media analysis, which also mention Current product display, New product announcement and Sales & Promotion. Most interviewees value specification of the product, facts, and data. Customer feedback is highly valued among informants, especially the source of these feedbacks. However, the brief keyword and SEO research shows that these factors have not been optimized strongly. It leads to the result that even though audience value this type of content, but there is no connection to the published content. An attractive headline is important to all interviewees. It can be argued that Customer feedback is posted on social media, especially LinkedIn often. This is where the researcher takes a deeper look at online channel interests of the interviewees and explain below. It can also be seen that Organizational branding is overly used by the commissioner company on various channels. However, from website analysis, social media analysis and interview analysis, this is one of the least effective types of content. It does not receive extreme negative feedbacks from audience; however, it is simply not interesting for audience. Infotainment is in a gray area, depended on personas and needs. Some interviewees with persona A value infotainment, however, some others only consider it as a marketing tool. With persona B, none of the interviewees read infotainment often if they are not related news. The findings continue with the content preference differences of different personas. Persona A interviewees value customer feedback and new product announcement the most, while persona B interviewees value sales & promotion and current product display the most.

The most popular channels are Google, YouTube, Website and LinkedIn (Figure 12). The least popular channels are Instagram and Facebook. Google and YouTube are the most popular channels of all, and they are used by all interviewees. They use these channels from the very first touch points of customer journey, disregarding their personas and background. In this industry, all interviewees value an overview of a brand and product, from the specification, to technology, to whole solution and to current news and trends. They can easily receive that vast information from Google. YouTube is also highly valued, due to their content format – video, which is easy to follow, easy to distribute, and visually pleasing. The website receives some contradicting opinions; however, most users still trust the information published on company website. This is where they are led to the most from search engines. It should be noted that the users are led to the website with branded keywords, in other words, they know the brand before

using search engines for the brand. LinkedIn is the only social media channel made the list. LinkedIn receives more trust and respect than other social media channels, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter. However, LinkedIn is only popular to interviewees from Europe or US. From other regions, it is treated as a job hub, rather than social media channels. Many interviewees do not use LinkedIn at all. It is also noted that more than half of the interviewees do not use social media for professional life, or even at all. Therefore, reaching potential audience through social media in this industry might not be the most effective method. Facebook receive highly negative feedback as a source of information; however, it is used by all most all interviewees. With such potential, Facebook is still listed as one of the focused channels.

As mentioned above, Customer feedback is posted often on social media channels, such as Facebook and LinkedIn. However, since the core audience do not value social media, the content type becomes ineffective. Especially, social media contents are more difficult to be ranked high on search engines. On the commissioner company's website, the Customer feedback section is well updated, however, due to technical problem, the pages were not indexed by Search Engines, which do not create any SEO value.

**SQ 3: What are the KPIs or metrics to measure the success of content marketing strategy in each stage?**

With the confirmation from interviewees and customer journey, most persona B starts with Sales & promotion, new product announcement, then to Current product display, and Customer feedback. For persona A, the process is more complicated as most of them know the commissioner company from tradeshows and exhibition. However, they are also highly attracted by educational contents, new product announcement and industrial magazines.

According to the RACE framework, in the first stage – Reach, KPIs are Unique visitors, Value per visits, and Fan/Followers. These KPIs work for Sales & promotion, and New product announcement, which require large amount of reach. These KPIs also suitable for the social media channels in preparation for next stage. However, they are mostly targeting persona A. Nevertheless, as stated before, the most important channel in this industry is Google, YouTube and website, not social media channels. Therefore, KPIs related to SEO and keywords should

also be added, such as Keyword rankings, backlinks, branded vs non-branded traffic, and organic click through rate. Each of these KPIs show the position and direction on search engines. Especially in case that Google is a highly valued channel, these KPIs are the standard and foundation for any future SEM campaign. As in this stage, the most important goal is brand awareness, therefore, with content marketing, the most popular metrics are Clicks and click-through rate, which demonstrate the number of clicks on links (Pophal, 2020).

In the next stage Act, users know the brand and start interacting – researching about the brand. They are more interested in more specific information such as Current product display and Customer feedback. In this stage, on social media, Engagement Rate (ER) is the most important KPIs. This KPI also reflects through Clicks, Likes, Comments, and Shares as each of these actions reflect a level of engagement between brands and audience. There are many levels of engagement, the lowest level is to click into the content, the next level is to click like the content, which reflexes a positive emotional state for the brand or the content itself, the coming level is to generate a short comment for the content, which is a sign of customer cocreated content in brand environment, and the last level of engagement is to publish a brand related content for other customers to join into the conversation (Gavilanes et.al, 2018). These are also the KPIs applied in this research. In this phase, companies care more about the action that the audience take after reacting with a post, which are leads, conversions, and the end game is sales (Pophal, 2020). With the goal of driving new business inquiries, then brand exposure, the more popular metrics are leads generated number; acquiring cost per lead; lead generation rate quality; conversion lifetime value; ROI (ibid.). RACE framework also makes the same suggestions. However, from a content marketing point of view, the most important KPI here is the Cost per Action, such as download materials, contact salespersons. A method to record these actions to convert to cost should be implemented on the website as well as the web manager.

Nevertheless, SEO should be corporate in every step of a digital marketing strategy. Therefore, previous mentioned SEO and keywords KPIs - Keyword rankings, backlinks, branded vs non-branded traffic, and organic click through rate should be maintained. Especially in this case, many users start their sales process before the company starts selling, and they use search engine to confirm their previously received information.



## 5.2 Updated theoretical framework

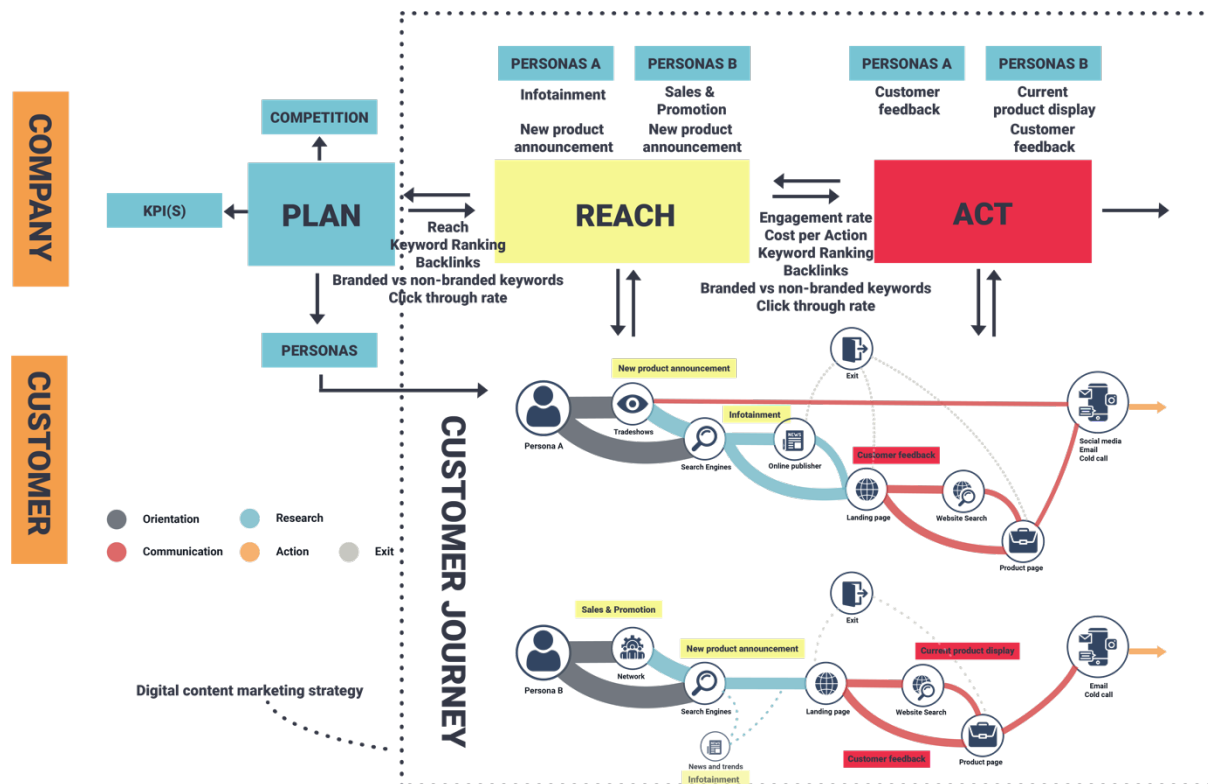


Figure 15 Updated Framework

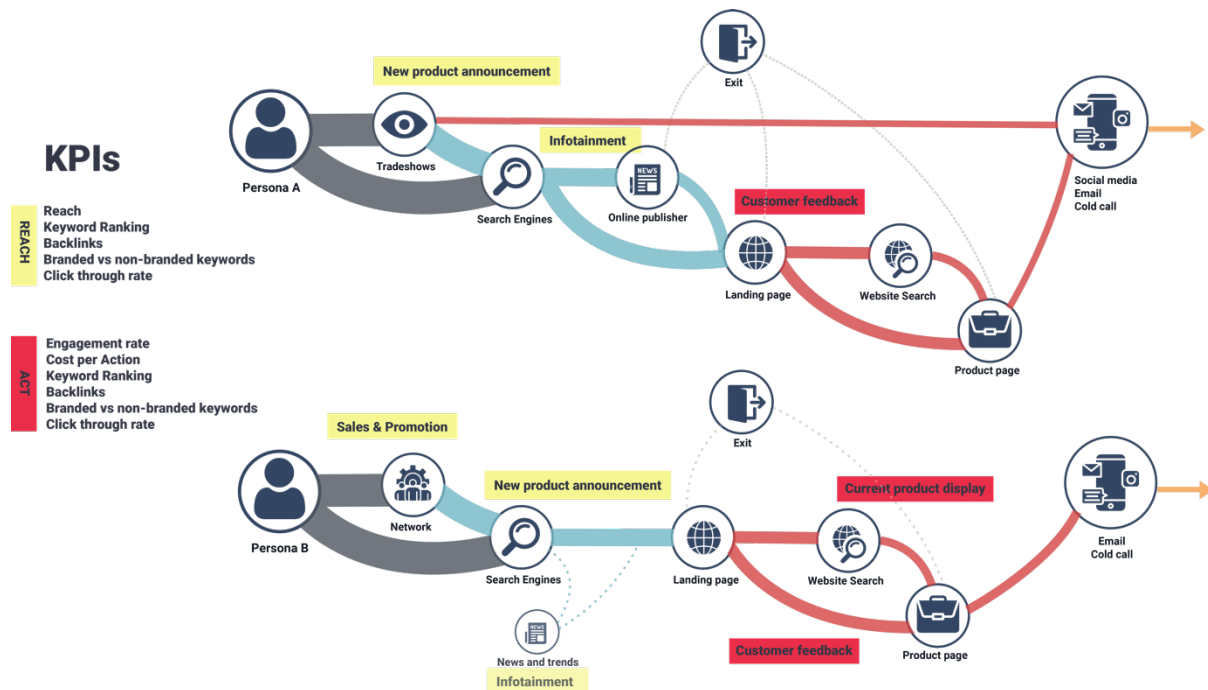


Figure 16 Simplified framework

After the analysis from online presence and interviews, this chapter presents updated framework from the original framework (Figure 3). The updated framework shows the

collaboration between digital content marketing strategy with customer journeys of two personas: industry consultants and solution specifiers (A), and end users (B).

With persona A, the strategy begins with tradeshows touchpoint in Reach stage. Before Covid-19, these tradeshows are mostly offline and face-to-face, which means this touchpoint does not belong to digital content marketing strategy. However, due to Covid-19 situation, these tradeshows are now virtual, and the most valuable content type is New product Announcement. It is important to understand that persona A are experts in the field, therefore, they might have known everything about Current product display. Search engines are also strong player in this stage, which can be directly used to find new industrial brands, or people will use Search engines to research more about the brand after attending to tradeshows. As persona A are interested in news, educational materials, Infotainment is highly valuable to get their attention. Search Engines will lead users to an online publisher in the industry or direct to company's landing page. As explained above, this persona spends time on researching, collecting information, updating knowledge and review from various source, the online publishers are effective with them. According to the interview, what they want to see most about the company is Customer Feedback (Figure 9, 12). Then, it leads them to research more information about the brand and they start to interact with the brand. There is another way with this persona, since they do not have strong negative feeling about social media, cold calls, so they might interact with the brand right after tradeshows (ibid.).

With persona B, the customer journey is less straight forward than persona A. They make use of their network the most, then the search engines (Figure 9). In this phase, Sales and promotion contents have more effect on them, just to get them used to with the brand. Especially, news and promotion contents receive lots of attention from persona B (Figure 12). After that, they will use search engines to research about the brand, or in some cases, they will directly use search engines. Even though this persona does not spend lots of time of reading Infotainment content, however, these contents are strong in optimizing non-branded keywords, therefore, producing these contents will create an advantage for website on search engine. Especially with people who has never heard about the brand, they are more likely to search for non-branded keywords. After reaching the website, this persona interests in both current product display and customer feedback (Figure 12). However, most of them are not comfortable with social media and cold calls, therefore, there is no direct connection with the persona (Figure 9). Nevertheless,

this persona has very strong opinion on what they want, what they need, therefore, they are active in researching.

### **5.3 Theoretical implications**

This chapter provides theoretical implications for this study, which based on the previous review literature as well as empirical study via online presence analysis and interviews.

Lead generation is an important target for B2B companies. The findings reassure current literature about industrial company marketing tool, such as Peter Doza (2020), that SEO is more preferred and valuable for industrial manufacturer with the same channel Google. As said, Google is still the most valuable search engine among informants. (Figure 12)

The result of the thesis also extends finding from previous research about social media B2B use, such as Keinänen et.al (2015) that social medias are still seldom used in industrial business world. The research found that social media usage situation also depends on operating regions, such as LinkedIn is more popular in Europe, US, than Asia, Latin America. Social media still makes an impact on industrial business, depends on what channel is considering, such as YouTube is very popular as a trustworthy source of information. The research also confirms that in this business line, social media users do not like to openly interact in any social media channels, such as likes, comments (Figure 12).

The thesis also extends the knowledge of Content strategies in Social Networks, such as Gavilanes et.al (2018). This thesis focuses directly to B2B industrial manufacturers, and finds that in general, the four most effective types of content to generate more marketing leads are Current product display, Sales & promotion, New product announcement and Customer feedback. Customer feedback and New product announcement work well with Industry consultants and solution specifiers, while Current product display and Sales & promotion work better with end users. (Figure 12)

## 5.4 Managerial implications

The research provides valuable information and future suggestions of customer journey map for different personas as well as a digital content marketing strategy from a practical view. It also provides understanding of the current content marketing activities as well as audience requirements. This result generates a strong foundation for the commissioner company to apply in their further development in digital content marketing strategy, which closely follows their customer journeys.

The actions and results of the research are for a specific case, which can contain a lot of variation while implementing in a business environment. The findings suggest implemented techniques for the commissioner company, which offered them a direction for their future strategy and development. As the nature of a strategy and theoretical framework, they need testing in a practical business environment. Therefore, there is no indication for an expected result.

The first implication is to generate a general digital customer journeys for core personas of industrial manufacturer. It is important to understand the differences in customer journey of industry consultants and solution specifiers, with customer journey of end users. From the beginning, these two personas have different begins and purposes. Industry consultants and solution specifiers are seeking for new products, new solutions to enlarge their portfolio, so they can provide more suggestions for their customers. On the other hand, end users are looking for a suitable qualified product and solution to implement or integrate with their system. Two suggestions for customer journey are made in Findings chapter. For more general observation, even though physical aspects, such as tradeshow and exhibition, are still very important in this industry. However, companies are changing and more open to digital options. Companies start listing search engines as a viable option to seek new partners as well as a good source of information.

The second implication is about effective content types for industrial manufacturer companies. This industry is very specific and unique with several characteristics: secrecy, heavy machinery, technology oriented. Over the years, the routine of branding over tradeshow and exhibitions has become the most viable and only option for companies in the industry. With the suggestion

of seven content types from Gavilanes et.al (2018): “current product display, new product announcement, sweepstakes, sales, customer feedback, infotainment and organization branding”, it is important to find out which contents type are the most effective for the companies to generate more marketing leads. In general, the four most effective types of content to generate more marketing leads are Current product display, Sales & promotion, New product announcement and Customer feedback. Breaking down into two core personas, Customer feedback and New product announcement work well with persona A, while Current product display and Sales & promotion work better with persona B. The contents should be produced according to current trends, with relatable headlines and keywords for example.

The fourth implementation is the application of Search Engine Optimization into B2B digital marketing strategy.

The last implication is about KPIs to implement such strategy. There are many digital content marketing KPIs out there, but it does not mean they are all suitable to one specific strategy or campaign. In this industry, which search engine is the most important channel in digital aspect, optimizing search engine and applying SEO and keyword KPIs are natural choices. This industry has a long sales cycles, which also means the strategy and KPIs also must develop over time and adapt to the most up-to-date trends. Discussing about digital content marketing, marketers cannot neglect SEO and keyword research. Especially in this industry, users-digital-habit is highly affected by search engines.

## **5.5 Limitations and further research**

Due to the research method employed to examine and answer research questions, the results of this study might not be widely adapted to broader industries. The research results are highly fitted to this specific industry with their characteristics as well as the users’ characteristics, which is a limitation for this research. The most crucial value of this research is to generate a deeper understanding of a particular case in this specific field. Therefore, it can be suggested for future research to conduct with the similar fashion but with different niche industries. This research is based heavily of the previous research by Gavilanes et.al (2018). It results in different perspective of a previous research. Future research might be able to broaden the scope to generate more findings, which speak to more general audience. Due to the size of the

interview process, the result is strictly generated from the data gathered from interviewees' perspectives and experience. Future research can have broader scope of interviewees to generate more overviews on the same matter.

Due to the privacy policy, the data using in website and social media analysis is not able to reveal a whole overview of digital journey. Additionally, it is not possible to specify and differentiate personas from such data. Some other data for this research is gathered using external digital marketing tool. The validity of this data heavily depends on individual providers. For future research, more detail digital manager should be employed.

According to Gavilanes et.al (2018), the research data is coded by two different coders, then two separated results are compared to eliminate coder bias. However, due to the scope of this research, there is only one coder, therefore, it is not possible to eliminate coder bias. The data set of this research comes from only one provider, which might make it questionable to represent a whole industry.

Due to the characteristic of this project, the researcher does not directly implement the strategy into action. Therefore, it is not possible to test the strategy in practical business environment. Digital marketing should be continuously improving, with the update of new methods and trends. The research is not able to monitor the result and optimize accordingly. Some improvement factor such as calculating Cost per Action cannot be implemented during the research as it needs a period of time after implementing the strategy. Nevertheless, the implementation timeframe is not defined. This factor might affect the SEO and keyword research results.

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## **Appendix:**

Interview questions:

### **Introduction question:**

Can you briefly introduce about yourself and business?

### **Customer journey**

#### **Orientation**

1. How different \*industry\* brands get your attention on the internet?
2. Which channels do you use to learn about potential partners?
3. Which channels do you use to interact with (potential) stakeholders? Where do you search this information?
4. How do you interact with them?
5. In your opinion, which channels is the most trustworthy for \*industry\* information?
6. How did you know about the commissioner company? How did you first hear about the commissioner company?

#### **Research**

1. What is commissioner company's related material/information that you check the most in Internet?
  - a. Intentionally (you actively search for them)
  - b. Unintentionally (you inactively search for them, but they catch your attention)
  - c. (Follow-up) Where was it?
2. (Follow-up questions) What is the most important information to provide as an industrial manufacturer?
3. (Follow-up questions) What is the most important information to provide as \*industry\* provider?
4. What do you want to see from these contents? What information do you want to get? What are your goals when checking these contents?

5. What do you do to search for more information of a potential stakeholders/ partners?  
What did you do in commissioner company's case?
6. (Follow-up) What challenges do you face while searching for commissioner company's contents and info?
7. How often do you use digital channels for interaction with potential partners?  
(Commenting, sharing, reading online posts, joining webinars...) (disregarding direct messaging)
8. (Follow-up) 8. Where does this happen in Internet?

### Content

1. Which content types do you want to see first from an organization that you have never heard of? (*Give the context: which way of contacted, channels*)
2. What kind of industry-related material you read online?
3. How often do you read \*industry\* related material in Internet? (Whitepaper, brochure, articles...)
4. (Follow-up) What kind of form they usually are?
5. What kind of keywords do you search in Google?
6. If you need to look for \*industry\* related information in Internet, what kind of key words you use to search
  - a. new solution
  - b. industry related new etc.
7. Rate the effectiveness in building trust and relationship of these contents (presenting)
8. Rate the effectiveness in building trust and relationship of these channels

### Scenario

1. What do you feel when?
  - a. Receiving a cold call
  - b. Receiving a cold email
  - c. Asked to subscribe
  - d. Receiving marketing emails
  - e. Receiving direct messaging from social media
  - f. Provided sales presentation/brochure

- g. Searching for product brochure
  - h. See a social media post from your partner
- 2. Match interviewee with hypothetical customer journey, verifying each touch point.
- 3. Match interviewee with hypothetical content offering, verifying contents of each touch points
- 4. Rate and issues of:
  - a. Commissioner company's landing page
  - b. Commissioner company's product page
  - c. Commissioner company's LinkedIn
  - d. Commissioner company's Facebook
  - e. Commissioner company's Instagram