

LAPPEENRANTA-LAHTI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

School of Business and Management

Master's in International Marketing Management (MIMM)

Krista Pitkänen

**CONTENT MARKETING IN THE B2B SECTOR: PRACTICES,
CHALLENGES AND ASSUMPTIONS**

Master's Thesis, 2021

1st examiner: Associate Professor Anssi Tarkiainen

2nd examiner: Post-Doctoral Researcher Jaakko Metsola

ABSTRACT

Author: Krista Pitkänen
Title: Content marketing in B2B sector, practices, challenges, and assumptions
Faculty: School of Business and Management
Master's Programme: International Marketing Management (MIMM)
Year: 2021
Master's Thesis: Lappeenranta University of Technology LUT
82 pages, 3 figures, 8 tables, 4 appendices
Examiners: Name 1. Associate Professor Anssi Tarkiainen
Name. 2. Post-Doctoral Researcher Jaakko Metsola
Keywords: Content marketing, B2B digital marketing

Content marketing is an inbound marketing technique. Rather than directly selling to the potential customer, this approach tries to create engaging content that purchasers want to consume. This leads to the relationship, and the relationship leads to market share and sales conversion. The more practical aspects of how content marketing is being used to create brand awareness and engagement in the B2B sector remain to be studied. Research gaps were addressed using a qualitative and descriptive case study design. Primary data took the form of interviews with senior marketing managers at Silicon Labs, and a review of digital content published by Silicon Labs. Secondary data was synthesized through a review of the relevant scholarly and trade literature. The theoretical framework was based on a previously developed and validated content marketing process model. Interviewees identified the greatest challenge as the identification and coordination of quality content. Analysis revealed a gap between theory and practice which may provide an opportunity for Silicon Labs to refine their approach by creating of customized content based on the development of detailed buyer personas. There is a need for a digital content marketing strategy based on the new content marketing paradigm, along with a strategy to reflect brand building, rather than product awareness. The basis for this is the investigation of customer characteristics and buyer personas. Silicon Labs and other B2B firms can use these recommendations to improve the content creation approach, coherence, and production plan for their digital marketing.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tekijä: Krista Pitkänen
Tutkielman nimi: Sisältömarkkinointi B2B sektorilla: käytännöt, haasteet ja oletukset
Akateeminen yksikkö: Kauppakorkeakoulu
Pääaine: International Marketing Management (MIMM)
Valmistumisvuosi: 2021
Pro Gradu -tutkielma: Lappeenrannan teknillinen yliopisto LUT
82 sivua, 3 kuviota, 8 taulukkoa, 4 liitettä
Tarkastajat: Nimi 1. Apulaisprofessori Anssi Tarkiainen
Nimi 2. Tutkijatohtori Jaakko Metsola
Avainsanat: Sisältömarkkinointi, digitaalinen sisältö, houkuttelumarkkinointi

Sisältömarkkinointi on inbound markkinointi tekniikka. Tässä lähetyksessä pyritään luomaan mukaansatempaavaa sisältöä jota potentiaalinen asiakas haluaa kuluttaa, suoran myymisen sijaan. Tämä johtaa suhteeseen brandin kanssa ja suhde johtaa markkinaosuuden ja myynnin konversion kasvattamiseen. Käytännön näkökohtia siitä, kuinka sisältömarkkinointia todellisuudessa käytetään brandi tietoisuuden ja sitoumuksen luomiseen B2B sektorilla, ei ole vielä tutkittu kovin hyvin. Tutkimusaukkoja korjataan käyttämällä laadullista ja kuvaavaa tapaustutkimussuunnitelmaa. Primaaridata on haastattelut Silicon labsin vanhemman markkinointijohtajan kanssa ja heidän julkaisemansa digitaalisen sisällön analyysi. Seondaarinen data on synteesi asiaa koskevasta tieteellisestä ja kaupallisesta kirjallisuudesta. Teorettinenkehys perustuu aiemmin kehitettyyn ja validoituun sisältömarkkinointiprosessiin. Haastateltavat identifioivat suurimmaksi haasteeksi laadukkaan sisällön tunnistamisen ja tuottamisen. Analyysi paljasti teorian ja käytännön välisen kuilun, mikä voi tarjota Silicon labsille mahdollisuuden hienosäätää lähestymistapaansa luomalla räätälöityä sisältöä joka perustuu ostaja persoonien kehittämiseen. Tarvitaan digitaalisen sisällön markkinointistrategia joka perustuu uuteen sisältömarkkinointimalliin yhdessä strategian kanssa joka heijastaa brandin rakentamista, tuote tietoisuuden sijaan. Tämän perustana on asiakkaan ominaisuuksien ja ostaja persoonien tutkiminen. Silicon labs ja muut B2B yritykset voivat käyttää näitä suosituksia parantamaan johdonmukaisuutta, digitaalisen markkinoinnin lähestymistapaa sisällönluontiin ja tuotantosunnitelmaa digitaaliseen markkinointiin.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The typical business-to-business B2B purchaser completes nearly sixty percent of their purchasing decisions online prior before to even contacting the seller (Adamson et al., 2012, p. 1). B2B purchasers face requirements and external justifications that household consumers do not in relation to accounting for purchases and their authorization. While business buyers have researched solutions, set requirements, ranked options, and benchmarked price and quality targets for decades, today this is completed with considerably more information in an expanded global market of choice (Adamson et al., 2012). The result is that companies that target the business market have had to change the way that they market and acquire purchasers. The creation of engaging content is, however, a new direction for this area. Content marketing seeks to capture the attention of potential customers who are actively seeking advice, information, or information relating to purchase (Holliman and Rowley 2014, p. 285). By offering interesting content, which is not focused on the product itself, a brand can capture attention, engage, and build trust with new potential customers. According to a 2017 survey by Beets and Handley (2018), more than ninety percent of B2B marketers in North America were using content marketing tactics, and more than half of companies had a person or team dedicated to content marketing. This transition from mass marketing to content marketing has occurred rapidly over the previous decade. Content marketing provides a less irritating approach than mass advertising, which many potential customers find interruptive (Holliman and Rowley 2014, p. 270). Content marketing addresses this issue by creating and distributing content that is both interesting and relevant to the customer. It is the customer that chooses to pay attention in the case of content marketing approaches, and they may

even participate in the marketing by sharing that content. The purpose of this study is to gain insight in relation to how content marketing is being used as part of B2B marketing strategies, as well as the main challenges identified by practitioners.

1.2 Problem statement

The internet and social media have changed much of the rules of marketing and branding strategies. In fact, many marketing and managers are finding it challenging to keep up in with emerging technology, processes, and platforms (Holt 2016). Content marketing is an inbound marketing technique which does not try to sell to the potential customer, but rather tries to create engaging content that purchasers want to consume which lead to the relationship that predicts a sale. There are many disadvantages to this approach, given that it does not have a direct association with sales, and results are only seen over a period of time (Järvinen and Taiminen, 2016). Inbound marketing tactics which market to those already indicating their interest in purchasing has many advantages of efficiency relative to mass advertising forms of marketing. It is more efficient, and more effective in terms of metrics such as lead conversion, brand awareness, and sales (Rose and Pulizzi, 2011). Content marketing, in comparison to traditional approaches, can result in reduced costs, reduced risks, and greater profitability while integrating what were previously the silo departments of sales and marketing (Rowley, 2008). Content marketing is more effective in the development of marketing relationships by offering advice, counsel, and knowledge management as a key aspect of customer service as well as marketing drivers (Ndubisi and Nataraajan, 2016). The emerging nature of content marketing means that it has been analysed more by researchers for management companies and trade magazines rather than academic scholars. The more practical aspects of how content marketing is, and can, be used to create brand awareness and engagement remain to be

studied (Järvinen and Taiminen, 2016). The role of social media in B2B content marketing is similarly undefined in the scholarly literature (Järvinen and Taiminen, 2016). These research gaps will be addressed in this case study.

1.3 Background and literature review

Content marketing is considered by many scholars to be “the fundamental tool of digital marketing” (Baltes, 2015. p. 111). Content marketing is a customer-centric approach which prioritizes the interests of the potential customer over the promotion of products. Content marketing is an inbound marketing technique which falls under the concept of pull marketing, where marketing tries to capture the interest of customers who are already seeking information about the product or service (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). By taking a customer-centric approach that is less about explicit advertising and more about the customer needs, brand creates a higher level of trust in customer (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). This approach can be considered a paradigm shift from outbound marketing, which interrupts the content of interest to the consumer, through leveraging engage media as a form of inbound marketing (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). The customer-centricity which has driven disruptive business models is not well represented by early conceptions of digital marketing, which focused on outbound strategies that were interruptive and unwelcome (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). Over the past decade, the development of interactivity and social media has helped to challenge the prevailing view of marketing as outbound advertising (Vinerean, 2017). Internet users have widely rejected the interruptive advertising that tends to be characterized by banner ads and popup windows promoting products (Nair, 2017; Vinerean, 2017).

Wang and fellow researchers (2019) noted that companies had adopted content marketing even

before the digital age, with current practices reflecting a digital transition of content marketing. Pulizzi (2013) noted that non-digital content marketing also continues to be part of B2B strategy through their participation and engagement with industry and professional organizations, and events such as conferences or the provision of informative newsletters or guides. Today, however, B2B content marketing is likely to take the form of consumer or purchaser information, webinars and professional development, or images and videos with an informative or entertainment value to the targeted audience (Wang et al., 2019). Increasingly, it is the digital version of content marketing which is referred to by the term. B2B content marketing was defined by Holliman and Rowley (2014, p. 285) as involving "creating, distributing and sharing relevant, compelling and timely content to engage customers at the appropriate point in their buying consideration processes, such that it encourages them to convert to a business building outcome." This definition has been widely adopted by other researchers in this topic area (Wang et al., 2019).

When organizations in the B2B sector choose to adopt a content marketing strategy, there are typically specific objectives in relation to its implementation. Holliman & Rowley (2014) described three main goals in relation to B2B content marketing:

- increasing sales and customer acquisition (lead generation and nurturing, sales volume and profitability, sales optimization, and increased traffic to website);
- Brand building and brand awareness goals; and
- customer retention and loyalty (trusted brand status, consumer satisfaction, repeat purchase intention, and retention over time).

1.4 Research question, aims, and objectives

These research questions will help to build a comprehensive picture of the status of content marketing as a B2B strategy for global firms. The first question provides understanding of the context and strategies currently in use in relation to digital content marketing in the B2B sector. The second question is focused on practices and techniques for implementation, while the final question captures the challenges and issues moving into the future. The main research question is:

1. How is digital content marketing used in brand building in the B2B sector?

The first supporting research question is:

2. What methods and processes are used in current B2B content marketing strategies?

The second supporting research question is:

3. What are the current challenges for digital content marketing in the B2B sector?

With the help of these research questions more information can be gained on content marketing in B2B context and gain more insight into issues identified as research gaps. All these questions are explored both in terms of academic literature and case research material.

1.5 Research design, theoretical framework, and methods

The research design is a qualitative, descriptive case study using primary and secondary information to better understand the variables, issues, and practices of importance in contemporary B2B content marketing. Analysis will use thematic content analysis based on grounded theory methods. Case studies are a common approach to building the knowledge base of business (Koskinen et al., 2005). The current state of B2B content marketing research was inadequate for the identification of variables required for a more empirical approach. The research strategy, based

on grounded theory methods and thematic content analysis, was chosen because it provided the capacity to investigate unknown factors in this emerging phenomenon. Instruments of importance were the interview guide and the coded transcripts of interviews.

Grounded theory was first proposed by Glaser and Strauss as a rigorous approach to exploring the experiences of patients dying in palliative care settings (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2007). The selection for the semi-structured interview targeted participants were senior marketing managers using a purposive selection approach that resulted in a convenience sample. A purposive approach often used where a randomised approach might be impractical or impossible due to the small population of possible respondents (Eriksson et al., 2015). The analysis framework was inductive and based on the development of a case study narrative, the identification of important variables in that narrative, and thematic content analysis of semi-structured interviews with marketing manager in the B2B sector. This provided for the information required to respond to the research questions. Ethical considerations included protection of from any risks of harm, the provision of informed consent by participants, and assuring confidentiality of personal or private information (Eriksson et al., 2015).

Theoretical framework this thesis is based in is presented in Figure 1. It shows modified framework of the content marketing process model by Naseri and Noruzi (2018). Figure shows the relationship between content marketing processes and what are the relevant elements in content marketing strategy. It has added elements from conceptual model of goal oriented digital content marketing in the B2B sector from Yaghtin et al. (2020) Both of these models are explored more in chapter 2.

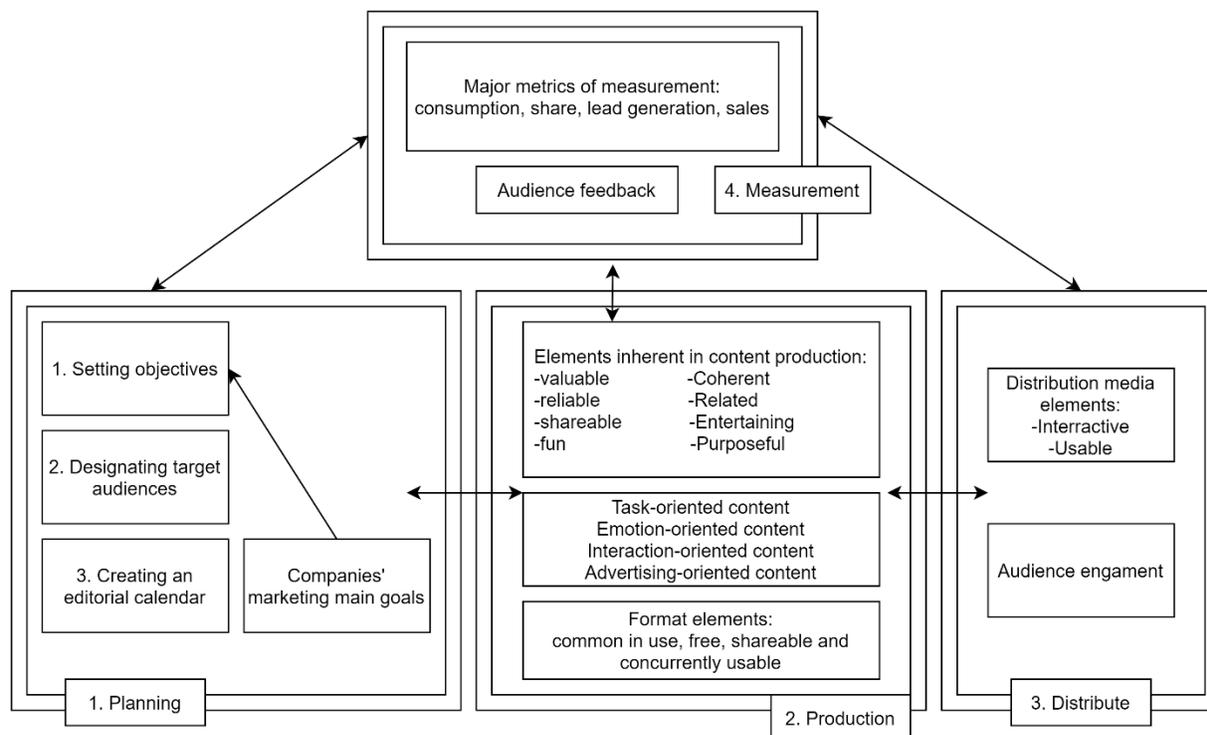


Figure 1 Theoretical framework of the thesis based of Naseri and Noruzi, 2018, p. 12 and Yaghtin et al., 2020 p. 1016.

1.6 Operational definitions.

Below are short definitions for the key concepts of this study. Many concepts can be defined in several ways and therefore it is useful to clarify the definitions that will be used throughout the thesis.

B2B refers to business-to-business revenue models where the main transaction occurs between businesses (Chen and Mansa, 2020). Typically, B2B occurs between companies operating at different levels of the supply chain, such as between a supplier and producer, or distributor and

retailer (Chen and Mansa, 2020). The main contrast of B2B models is with business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-government (B2G) type businesses (Chen and Mansa, 2020).

B2B sector refers to that part of the business environment that includes companies that conduct business mainly with other companies as their customer (Ndubisi and Nataraajan, 2016). The B2B sector can be differentiated as a group from firms that sell primarily direct to consumers or to government, with many common characteristics based on the targeted market and different buying behaviours (Ndubisi and Nataraajan, 2016).

Brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of them to identify the goods or services of one company from another (Kotler 2011, Aaker 1991, American Marketing Association). Brand serves to differentiate the product or service from others that are created to serve the same need (Kotler & Keller 2012).

Brand awareness represents the consumers' ability to recognize or recall a brand (Keller 2001). Brand awareness is an indirect indicator of sales, and it further has two directions of possible sentiment, including both positive and negative connotations of the brand.

Brand image is the “perception of the brand in the minds of consumers”, with the objective “to create positive perceptions in the minds of target customer groups; these perceptions constitute the brand image” (Doyle, 2016). The measurement of success in relation to brand image goals is the consumer preference for that product over that of the competitors (Doyle, 2016).

Clickthrough rate (CTR) means “the average number of click-throughs per hundred ad

impressions, expressed as a percentage... CTR measures what percentage of people clicked on the ad to arrive at the destination site; it does not include the people who failed to click, yet arrived at the site later as a result of seeing the ad” (Marketingterms.com, n.d.).

Content analysis refers to approaches and methods which provide for the analysis of open text documents and media, such as the thematic content analysis often used in grounded theory methodology.

Content marketing is described in Doyle’s (2016) marketing dictionary as a “process of using different types of content, such as commentary, reports, blogs, videos, slides, and methodologies in different formats, either to build the brand or to attract, acquire, or engage target audience”. Scholarly literature has defined it as “creating, distributing and sharing relevant, compelling and timely content to engage customers at the appropriate point in their buying consideration processes, such that it encourages them to convert to a business building outcome.” (Holliman and Rowley 2014, p. 285).

Digital content refers to “information in many different types of digital formats, such as video, written texts graphics, slides... digitally presented information delivered essentially over the Web, over the internet or in any kind of social network.” (Holliman and Rowley 2014, p. 274). This can mean, for example, videos, podcasts, documents, searchable archives, customization tools, analysis tools, or blogs. Not all digital content is appropriate for content marketing, which does not focus on product promotion.

Inbound enquiry. This term refers to unsolicited contact or questions from a potential customer. Today, such questions will often be clustered in the forum around blogs or articles in relation to common questions or opinions relating to a product area.

Inbound marketing is “focused on attracting valuable consumers (potential, existing, or aspirational) that choose to interact with a particular company that provides them with something useful” and “represents the process of reaching and converting qualified consumers by creating and pursuing organic tactics in online settings” (Opreana and Vinerean, 2015). While inbound enquiries can provide leads for sales personnel but answering questions before someone asks is likely to lead such a user to the website and raise brand awareness.

1.7 Limitations of the study

All research has limitations, and identifying those limitations helps to create transparency. This study will be focused on content marketing in the B2B context, and the results are therefore likely not applicable to the ordinary market which includes consumers. This study will focus on brand building and awareness, and this may result in missing the insights in relation to other details and approaches to measuring content marketing effectiveness, such as search engine optimization. There are limitations in relation to the customer perspective, given that primary interviews will be conducted with marketing managers, rather than consumers. Secondary sources will provide for some mitigation in relation to this important perspective. In terms of the location of the study, the intent is to explore the topic from a global perspective, given the new global nature of markets. Other limitations include the time and resources available to the sole researcher, which had an impact on sample size and interview length.

1.8 Outline of the study

This first chapter of the study focused on presenting why this research is needed, the aims of the study, the research questions and an overview of the approach, preliminary literature review and theoretical framework. The second chapter of the study provided the current background, and the scholarly and trade literature on content marketing. This section was focused on peer reviewed work and supplemented with articles from trade journals. The third chapter of the study provides the research design and methods. The fourth chapter presents the results from data collection and connects theory to practice through analysis and interpretation of that data. The fifth and final chapter provided the discussion, conclusions, and possibilities for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides background in relation to the foundations upon which this study was based. It begins with the theoretical and conceptual aspects of content marketing, including definitions and the status of research. This section is followed by an overview of the scholarly findings in relation to B2B content marketing, and the identification of gaps. This context and information reveals that the research and study of B2B content marketing and content marketing generally is in early stages.

2.1 B2B Content Marketing

There are certain expectations in relation to how any business does digital marketing, whether they target consumers or other businesses. One examples of this is the need for a user-friendly website which supports navigation of transactions or relationships as well as any information that might be needed in the purchasing process, without having to contact a representative (Hyder, 2017). In the following sections the content marketing process is introduced as well as elements related to each phase of the process. Literature also covers goals of content marketing and how those goals are measured.

2.1.1 Concepts and models for understanding B2B content marketing

There is considerable difference in the models and concepts used in academic versus practitioner literature, and this is perhaps the first division or classification in understanding research relating to content marketing generally, and B2B content marketing specifically (DuPlessis, 2017). Naseri

and Noruzi (2018) conducted a systematic review of literature and synthesis in order to create a multidimensional model of content marketing. This model revealed four stages to the process of content management, beginning with planning, moving to production, optimization of distribution, and measurement for continuous improvement of each process (Naseri and Noruzi, 2018) A summary of the stages is described in the table below.

Table 1: Elements of successful content marketing (adapted from Naseri and Noruzi, 2018, p. 12-13)

CATEGORIES	CONCEPTS	ACTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS
Content marketing planning elements	Define target audience	Finding out the identifying factors like needs, interests, desires, and demographic data such as age, occupation etc.
	Identify objectives	Possible objectives include increasing brand awareness, lead generation, new customer acquisition, thought leadership, engagement, customer loyalty, lead nurturing, sales
	Define an editorial calendar	Deciding what kind of content should be produced and who will be producing it. Also planning the distribution channels.
Elements inherent in content production	Valuable / excellent	Valuable content can inform, educate, be meaningful and relay specialized information related to purchasing needs
	Related	Related to customer needs and interests
	Reliable	Factors of reliable content are truthfulness, authenticity, accuracy and quality
	Entertainment	Entertaining content was described as engaging, humorous, good and fun, intelligent
	New (exclusive)	Elements related to newness of content were creativity, freshness, originality and timeliness
	Coherent	Consistent with previous content & coordinated overall
	Sharing	For content to be easy to share it should be free and accessible
Content formation elements	Purposeful	Purpose of the content should be non-commercial, helpful, effective, inspiring and instructive
	Format	Format should be common in use, inexpensive, easy to share and possible to use simultaneously
Elements	Interactive	Interactivity requires content to be social and

CATEGORIES	CONCEPTS	ACTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS
in distribution	Usability	something the potential customers can participate in Easy to access and free
	Consumption	Measuring consumption can be done for example through page views, number or downloads and average time on site
Elements of measuring effectiveness	Share	Measuring sharing can be done for example following the number of likes, shares, tweets, posts forward etc.
	Lead Generation	Measuring lead generation
	Sales	Online sales and offline sales

The dynamics of this model required further exploration, in terms of the functional relationships and structure of operations which was mapped by Naseri and Noruzi in the figure below.

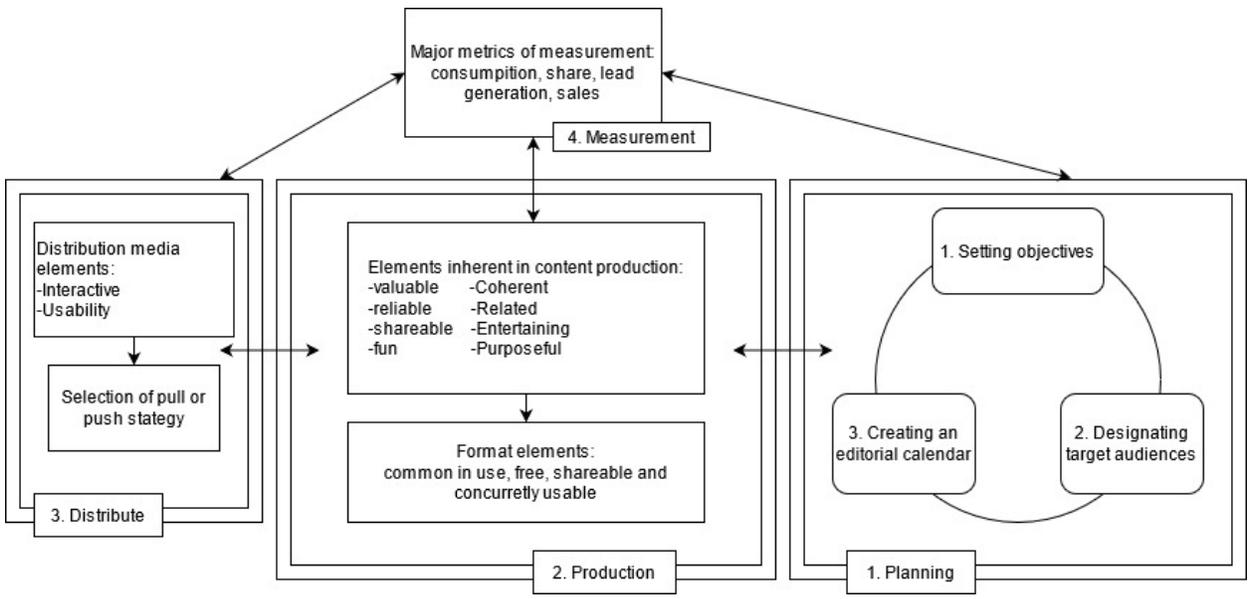


Figure 2 Basic framework of the content marketing process model, based of Naseri and Noruzi, 2018, p. 12

Yaghtin et al. (2020) also produced a conceptual model digital content marketing in the B2B sector. It shares some elements with the Naseri and Noruzi model by also identifying similar process

stages, but it places more focus on company’s marketing goals, audience engagement and audience feedback.

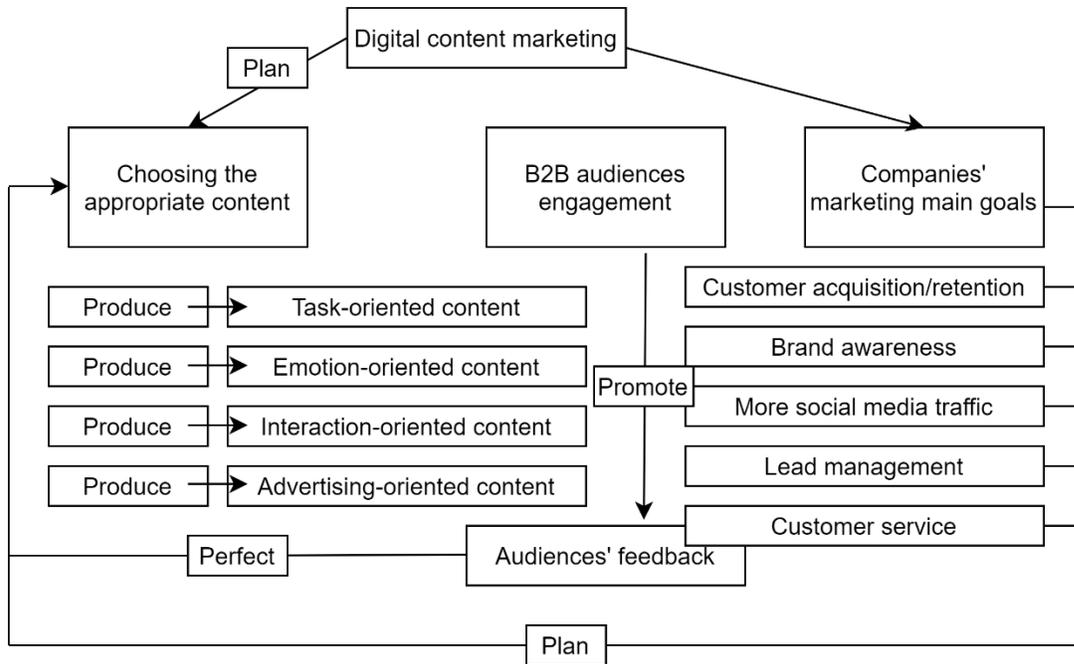


Figure 3 The conceptual model of goal-oriented digital content marketing in the B2B sector, based on Yaghtin et al., 2020, p. 1016

The content classifications in figure 3. are explained more in table 4. Yaghtin et al. (2020) identified 12 content types produced by B2B content marketers in Instagram. Content types could also be classified according to whether the content type was task oriented, emotion-oriented, interaction-oriented, or advertising-oriented. According to this research the task and emotion-oriented content were the most interesting to the audience among the content classes (Yaghtin et al. 2020, p. 1014).

Table 2 Identified content classes and content types adapted from Yaghtin et al. (2020, p. 1011)

Content classes	Identified content types
Task oriented	Products and services
	Innovation and Technology
	HSE/CSR performance

Emotion-oriented	Feelings and family
	Art and nature
	Motivational
	Adventurous
Interaction-oriented	Questions and puzzles
	Training
	Events and ceremonies
Advertising-oriented	Celebrities
	Fashion and styles

2.1.2 Organizational goals in B2B content marketing

As was discussed before, Holliman and Rowley (2014) identified three main goals of B2B content marketing:

1. goals related to increasing sales and customer acquisition (lead generation, increasing sales, lead nurturing, upsell/cross-sell, increasing website traffic)
2. goals related to branding (brand awareness, brand building)
3. goals related customer retention and loyalty (achieving trust brand status, customer satisfaction, customer retention/loyalty).

Many of these goals are also noted by other researchers (table 5). Yaghtin et al. (2020) identified B2B marketers' goals from their Instagram content as lead management, customer acquisition/retention, getting more traffic in social media, customer service and brand awareness. Rakix et al (2014) notes that firms execute digital content marketing to support the implementation of multiple business objectives such as brand awareness, attraction of customers, along with creating leads, maintaining customer relationships and loyalty. Research by Taiminen & Ranaweera (2017, p. 1773) found that digital content marketing is a major driver for brand

engagement.

Table 3 Content marketing goals across academic literature

	Holliman and Rowley (2014)	Yaghtin et al. (2020)	Rakic et al (2014)	Taiminen & Ranaweera 2017	Rose and Pulizzi, 2011
Goals related to increasing sales and customer acquisition	lead generation	x	x		
	increasing sales				x
	lead nurturing	x			
	upsell/cross-sell				
	increasing website traffic	x			
Goals related to branding	brand awareness	x	x		x
	brand building			x	
goals related customer retention and loyalty	achieving trust brand status				
	customer satisfaction	x			
	customer retention/loyalty	x	x		

In trade literature organizational goals in relation to B2B content marketing have revealed that brand awareness tops the survey of executives, with 82% reporting this objective, followed by lead generation (74%) and customer acquisition (71%) (Edmond, 2014). Sales was in fact the least given response, with just 45% reporting this objective (Edmond, 2014). Of course, each of these are rather loose and subjective concepts, and it can be noted that the same activity, for example the establishment of a digital information site for customers, could be viewed as a strategy to fulfil any of these goals. Still, how the goals are conceptualized is important to the shape of the plan and its execution.

Table 4 Organizational Goals for B2B Content Marketing

OBJECTIVE	SURVEY RESPONDENTS
Brand awareness	82%
Lead generation	74%
Customer acquisition	71%
Thought leadership	68%
Engagement	64%
Customer retention/loyalty	57%
Website traffic	57%
Lead management/nurturing	54%
Sales	45%

2.1.3 Measuring content marketing performance

Measurement in content marketing is of great interest to those practicing it, as well as scholars trying to understand it (Rancati and Gordini, 2014). Metrics are categorized across four areas, namely media consumption, media sharing, sales leads generated, and sales revenues (Rancati and Gordini, 2014). These measurements run the gamut of brand awareness, website traffic, and sales results (Rancati and Gordini, 2014). Typical media consumption metrics which can be viewed one of a growing number of analytic software platforms include page views, downloads, the number of visitors, and the time spent on page.

Table 5 Common Content Marketing Metrics (Adapted from Harris, 2019)

GOALS	APPLICATION TO B2B SECTOR	
Brand awareness	Volume of website traffic in a given time period, page views in a given time period, media views in a given time period, downloads in a given time period, social chatter, sentiment of social chatter, number of referral links.	Views of content assets and website can indicate research in relation to a potential purchase, it predicts brand awareness, and data tracking who views the pages can help in the development of buyer

		personas.
Engagement	Number of comments, shares, or reactions, inbound communication volume.	This can provide feedback, but many firms do not participate in social media postings in the same way that individuals do.
Lead generation	Volume of self-identifying customers, subscriptions, conversion rates.	As with business focused on consumers, the volume and conversion rate are important, but a self-identifying business customer may be more invested as they are achieving objectives and completing tasks.
Sales	Online and offline sales, customer surveys, anecdotal evidence.	These remain just as important, and for ongoing business accounts the online and offline division may be blurred.
Customer retention/loyalty	Consumption of content by current customers.	Customer retention and loyalty are of critical importance in the B2B sector (Youssef et al., 2018).
Upsell/cross-sell	Sales growth before and after initiative or in a given time period.	This helps to provide evidence in relation to marketing effectiveness, just as it does for digital marketing for firms selling to consumers.

For the most part, the common marketing metrics do apply to B2B, despite the great differences in buyer personas and buyer behaviours.

2.1.4 B2B content marketing

There is plenty of scholarly literature which has identified important aspects of inbound, non-promotional media as a means of building a trusted authority position and brand awareness. Järvinen and Taiminen (2016, p. 173) also described the common practice in digital marketing of

using behavioural targeting using marketing automation. One study of the Instagram posts and pages of 24 top B2B companies found that there was a higher alignment of content with marketing objectives, and effective learning through continuous improvement for these top organizations (Yaghtin et al., 2020). There was a significant correlation between the alignment of Instagram media and marketing goals, and the growth of leads and sales (Yaghtin et al., 2020). The consumption of digital media, as well as the content marketing development effort, positively predicted high quality posts which were aligned with marketing goals (Yaghtin et al., 2020).

An online survey of large B2B brands revealed that current digital content marketing practices included bundling supportive information, approaching content as a means of solving a problem, and using buyer personas to focus the content to be interpreted or explained were the actions which were required in order for content to build trust and nurture B2B customer relationships (Taiminen and Ranaweera, 2019). Critically, the objective of brand relationships and customer engagement that drives it requires more than simply brand awareness, and reason to make a cognitive-emotional connection (Taiminen and Ranaweera, 2019).

2.1.5 Summary

There is an expectation of sophistication in relation to digital marketing activities, and this includes B2B firms. In terms of the development of the scholarly knowledge base in relation to B2B content marketing, there continue to be issues in relation to terminology and standardization, particularly between academic and practical literature. Several models have been developed in order to better understand the goals and objectives, processes, and project management aspects of content marketing in this context. Content marketing planning elements help to guide the vision of what

can be achieved using these emerging methods. For the most part, organizational goals in relation to B2B content marketing remain focused on brand awareness, rather than creating depth and loyalty in the customer relations. The metrics used in content marketing are categorized across four areas: media consumption, media sharing, sales leads generated, and sales revenues. Typical media consumption metrics include page views, downloads, the number of visitors, and the time spent on page. These indicators cannot provide accuracy in relation to the important objectives of brand relationships and customer engagement, or the extent of cognitive-emotional connection.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, conceptual aspects, analysis approach, methods and procedures, and ethical considerations. There were three stages to this research design, which began with a review of the secondary literature, primary data collection, and final analysis and organization of research findings. In the first stage of the study, descriptive research was used to provide a review of associated concepts and research. This secondary research set the context for the study and this step helped to confirm that the current research status of B2B content marketing was not adequate to permit the identification of variables for conducting a more empirically focused study. A suitable research approach was therefore one that provided for investigation of unknown factors that could provide the basis for further and more quantitative research. The second stage was the primary data collection, and the development of that process. Documents and instruments in this stage included an interview guide, and an information document for potential participants to provide for informed consent. The final stage was the analysis and reporting of the results, resulting in this paper describing and discussing the study.

3.2 Research design

This qualitative study intends to be descriptive and exploratory, rather than causal, correlational, or experimental (Hirsjärvi et al., 2004, pp. 125-126). A case study approach supported by thematic content analysis, and based on grounded theory methods, provided for the conceptual basis. The importance of these theoretical frameworks and principles are the guidance and framework in relation to the identification of factors of interests where those factors are not yet known

(Alasuutari, 2010). While a typical, positivistic approach requires the identification of variables of importance, and a hypotheses relating those variables, exploratory research, the case study allows for initial investigation when truly little is known (Easton 2010, Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007).

In this study, the research questions are for the purpose of identifying variables and building models and theories. The questions are as follows:

RQ1. How is digital content marketing used in brand building in the B2B sector?

This question helps to establish the purpose of B2B content marketing from the perspective of practitioners, and it will provide for responses to compare between the secondary literature and marketers in the field. Sources to aid in responding with include the literature review, the case study analysis, and the primary interviews.

RQ2: What methods and processes are used in current B2B content marketing strategies?

The question will provide for the identification of current B2B content marketing methods and approaches from the practitioner perspective. This can then be compared with more theoretical models, as well as reviewed across variations.

RQ3. What are the current challenges for digital content marketing in the B2B sector?

This question will help to link the research results to future research by identifying the continued

pain points for the implementation of B2B digital content strategies. It is the identification of the challenges which create the problem statements and research that can help to resolve them.

3.2.1 Case study design

Case studies are a common approach to building the knowledge base of business, particularly in relation to emerging issues and topics (Koskinen et al., 2005). A case study involves the examination of an aspect or process of one or more companies (Koskinen et al., 2005, p. 154-155). According to Hollweck and Yin (2014), case studies provide facts in context in the form of a narrative, which can be a foundation for further research. For these reasons, a case study approach was deemed to be the most appropriate way to better understand the current status, context, and challenges of content marketing by B2B companies and industries.

There are various types of case study designs, including illustrative, cumulative, critical instance, and exploratory case studies (Colorado State University, 2021). Illustrative studies provide for narrative and introduction to an event or phenomena (Colorado State University, 2021). Critical instance studies are for situations with little generalizability to other contexts (Colorado State University, 2021). Cumulative case studies look at accumulated cases and look for commonalities and variation (Colorado State University, 2021). Exploratory cases provide for data collection and both narrative and evidence-based analysis upon which future research can be based (Colorado State University, 2021). This study uses an exploratory and cumulative case study design, with an in-depth focus on the case of Silicon Labs.

3.2.2 Justification

The justification for the approach begins with the choices and options available for business and social research, typically divided into quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative research is considered to provide a higher level of evidence upon which decisions and practices can be based. While marketing research makes great use of quantitative analysis as part of marketing intelligence practices today, qualitative approaches remain an important tool for the investigation of new phenomenon in a dynamic and changing global business environment. Quantitative research works to refine the solutions to important questions through specific testing of assumptions, while qualitative research helps to provide the content and foundation for such studies. Qualitative approaches, however, are often seen as a less rigorous approach to the examination of a topic. In cases where the research is attempting to understand less quantifiable phenomenon such as attitudes and behaviour, ways for needed to help deconstruct, synthesize, and analyse data which was collected. Grounded theory methods were a response to these needs (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2007).

3.2.3 Grounded theory methodology

Exploratory research into phenomenon in the social science has benefited greatly from grounded theory methods, which provide for an inductive, rather than deductive approach to rigorous data collection and analysis. Glaser and Strauss first proposed the approach in the late 1960s during their sociological study of the experiences of dying patients (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2007). The need for the identification of variables, and a hypothesis to be tested, could not meet the exploratory needs which intended to define the framework and variables of importance from the

view of the subject, and not the researcher (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2007). The method involves a close documentation of observations and other data which is collected from the targeted group, and the variables of importance are discovered from this data by reviewing, organizing, and synthesizing it (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2007). The concept of saturation of results refers to that point in data collection where no new results come to light, providing for internal validity of the approach (Aldiabat and Le Navenec, 2018). The production of new models and theory have been associated with grounded theory methods (Aldiabat and Le Navenec, 2018). Thematic content analysis is typically the procedure that is used in the rigorous data analysis in this approach.

The philosophy and approach to grounded theory methodology has changed somewhat over time, reflecting further justification of the approach on its own merits, rather than its accommodation of positivistic values (Groen et al., 2017). This can be seen in the table below, which summarizes the original grounded theory methodology and approach in relation to the modified constructivist grounded theory approach (Groen et al., 2017). The greatest differences are in relation to views on subjectivity and objectivity, and the methods of either incorporating or ensuring that these were transparent or not present.

Table 6 Differences between classical and constructivist grounded theory Adapted from Groen et al., 2017.

LEVEL OF DIFFERENCE	CHARACTERISTIC	CLASSICAL GROUNDED THEORY	CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY
Partial congruence	Bracketing	Awareness of preconceptions and assumptions as a bias, rather than a hypothesis.	Use of iterative processes to organize, refine, and interpret data.
	Sensitizing concepts	Concepts are	Background information

LEVEL OF DIFFERENCE	CHARACTERISTIC	CLASSICAL GROUNDED THEORY	CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY
		departure points, but data is grounded in itself rather than external models.	informs and guides in relation to the exploration of data.
	Theoretical sampling	Intentional and purposive sampling based on a narrow set of criteria to develop theory and models.	Intentional and purposive sampling based on a narrow set of criteria to develop and interpret categories that inform theory and model.
	Quality criteria	Theories are generalizable, and explain processes, interactions, or actions.	Theories may be generalizable, and explain processes, interactions, or actions.
	Causality assumptions	Causality is interpreted as influence.	Causality is contingent on situations rather than fixed.
Incongruent	Role of values	Objectivity, neutrality, and passivity are valued.	Maintains a transparent but non-neutral position with identification of potential biases.
	Reflexivity	While researcher experience is acceptable as a point of initial justification for research, reflection is discouraged, and considered destructive	Reflection is used throughout the process to drive interpretation.
	Role of Interpretation	Researcher does not take interpretive stance and interprets only by describing categories.	Interpretation occurs during the analysis, and resulting theory, model, or description is recognized as an interpretation.

3.3 Sampling and selection

The selection of respondent for the semi-structured interview used a purposive approach that resulted in a convenience sample. The targeted participant was a senior marketing manager, and

selection was based on invitation, meeting screening criteria, and volunteering to be interviewed. Invitations were made through the contacts of the researcher indicating that senior marketing managers in B2B industries and markets were sought for short interviews. A purposive approach is justified in cases where the total population of possible respondents is very small and specialized (Eriksson et al., 2015). Such is the case with this study, where the person of interest with response that contributes to understanding the problems are composed of the limited number of marketing managers in global B2B firms.

3.4 Data collection

3.4.1 Overview of data collection

Data to provide a foundation for the case study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary source was semi-structured interviews with senior marketing manager of global company and review of the content marketing materials for the associated companies. The secondary sources included both scholarly and trade journals and data which provided the context and narrative for the case study. Potential respondents were invited to be interview by email or video conference using any major platform. The data instrument for this study was an interview guide, which is provided in Appendix A. This interview guide was provided in advance of the semi-structured interview to provide the respondent with time to reflect on the questions. The questions in the interview guide were focused on specific areas but provided for open-ended responses. In practise it was noticed that the research questions did not resonate with the interviewee and had to be modified to be more practical in nature rather than theoretical. One problem was that the interviewee did not use the same terms or language that the academic study

uses. New interview questions are in appendix B. Data was also be acquired by reviewing media used in content marketing for a company.

3.4.2 Justification of the use of semi-structured interviews

The use of interviews for the collection of data is a common approach in qualitative studies. Semi-structured interviews were used to gain more meaningful data, because the subject, rather than the researcher, as more power over the prioritization of topics and issues (Roulston et al., 2018). While surveys and structured interviews provide for comparative analysis of predefined variables and themes of interest, semi-structured interviews are better used when the respondent has the expertise or experience in relation to the categories of interest (Roulston et al., 2018). Semi-structured interviews provide for an approach where the framework and perception of the interviewee can be captured and explored without the bias of the researcher assumptions (Roulston et al., 2018). The interview session was half an hour.

3.5 Analysis

3.5.1 Overview of the analysis framework

The analysis framework was inductive rather than deductive. It included both the construction of a case study narrative and thematic content analysis. These two frameworks, and the resulting analysis, provided the information used in responding to the research questions.

3.5.2 Case study analysis procedures

The case study analysis began with the synthesis of facts and data as part of the literature review. From this, the variables of interest were extrapolated based on that narrative. These variables were then used to summarize the case studies in the form of a data table. The raw data table can be found in Appendix C.

3.5.3 Thematic analysis procedures

Thematic analysis was used in the analysis of the interview data. First, the interview transcripts were reviewed many times in order to have familiarity. The entire transcript was coded in relation to themes that were identified in the review of the content (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). During this process, there were also cumulative rounds of refining the themes that were identified, resulting in recoding of the transcript and refinement of analysis (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). These themes essentially identified variables for categorization and comparison in this exploratory stage (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

3.6 Ethical considerations and limitations

The globally recognized principles of ethical research include the protections of subjects from harm or negative impacts, the right to privacy and confidentiality, and the need for participation in research to be voluntary and driven by informed consent (Eriksson et al., 2015; Takala and Häyry, 2019). Ethical considerations in this study included ensuring that participants to the study were not exposed to any risks of being harmed, that they provided informed consent, and that their personal information and responses were regarded with privacy and confidentiality (Eriksson et al., 2015).

The first step after selection and screening was to explain the purpose of this study, the requirements and risks of participation, and the right of the participant to withdraw this consent at any time, and for any reason. The personal information of participant, including name and contact information remained as confidential and private data available only to the researcher in a password protected file. Research responses were encoded by an alias identification number.

3.7 Summary

This qualitative, descriptive case study uses primary and secondary information to better understand the variables, issues, and practices of importance in contemporary B2B content marketing. Analysis used thematic content analysis based on grounded theory methods. The current state of B2B content marketing research was inadequate for the identification of variables required for quantitative research with a higher level of evidence. The approach taken provided the capacity to examine the phenomena while the variables of importance remained unknown. Instruments of importance were the interview guide and the coded transcripts of interviews. The selection process for the primary interview research was purposive, and it targeted senior marketing managers. The analysis framework was both inductive and descriptive, including the development of a case study narrative, analysis of variables, interview data collection, and thematic content analysis to aid in responding to the research questions. Ethical considerations included protection of participants from harm, the provision of informed consent, and assuring confidentiality or personal data. This chapter provided a project plan, outline, and justification for the results which are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Case study Analysis and Results

Chapter 4.1. goes over several small case studies from trade literature providing an overview of the content marketing campaigns and initiatives done by several companies. Chapter 4.2. takes look into the main case study company Silicon labs with data collected from secondary sources. Chapter 4.3. is the analysis of the interviews from senior marketing manager in Silicon labs. Chapter 4.4. is the content analysis of Silicon labs website and chapter 4.5. is the discussion and considerations. Chapter 4.6. summarizes the results of the case study.

4.1. Case Studies in the literature

Data collected from these cases are included in the case study data table in Appendix D.

4.1.1. Brand awareness and new reach in relation to targeted personas

Ciox Health wanted to find new growth strategies in relation to targeted buyer personas. Customized content messaging was developed for each stage of the buyer stages using infographics, interactive quizzes, self-assessment tools, and video (Odden, 2018). Results included a 42.8% email opening rate and a 14.5% clickthrough rate, representing significant improvements (Odden, 2018).

Allegiance Capital, private investment bank specializing in mergers and acquisitions, sought new reach targeting middle-market CEOs and executives (Hyder, 2017). Further, they sought to specialize the message for each industry, especially the oil and gas industry (Hyder, 2017). New

content platforms and initiatives included blogs, white papers, influencer connections, and direct emails promoting content to position the company as a thought leader (Hyder, 2017). This was supplemented with a search engine optimization initiative to help ensure that search engine users interested in the content would find the sites and content (Hyder, 2017). The results were greater coverage in media outlets, an increase in LinkedIn followers of 78%, and reaching 76,000 Twitter users (Hyder, 2017). Three infographics became the most popular asset on the site (Hyder, 2017).

Optum wanted to use content marketing as part of the market launch for OptumIQ to attract decision makers and influencers (Odden, 2018). The “Data In Focus” included livestream, and email campaign, paid social, media, and direct mail. There were 5,022 external registrations, exceeding registration-to-attendee conversion rate goal by 33%.

SAP wanted thought that its brand needed a more humanizing aspect to target innovators (Odden, 2018). The “#LifeAt” video resulted in 4.5 million impressions, and view through rates of between 21% and 31% videos (Odden, 2018).

ChannelAdvisor wanted an account-based marketing strategy using direct mail (Odden, 2018). The campaign provided pre-loaded Amazon devices with custom applications to educate potential customers (Odden, 2018). Results included an ROI of 130%, and 39% of the generated opportunities were new contacts (Odden, 2018).

Harland Clarke wanted to increase brand awareness as part of the product launch for GRC Spotlight (Odden, 2018). Harland Clarke’s “Keeping Up with Kevin” campaign starred expert

Kevin Malicki. The content was formatted in video blogs that were widely shared on LinkedIn, with 33,000 impressions (Odden, 2018).

Bottomline Technologies wanted to expand brand awareness using an interactive eBook to highlight how various organizations used their products to achieve organizational goals. The results were an 54.3% email open rate, 39.8% click through rate, and 362 syndicated content downloads (Odden, 2018). Leads were forecasted as \$3.2 million in associated pipeline revenues (Odden, 2018).

Broadridge wanted brand awareness and education of targeted buyers. Development of interactive infographics, eBooks, executive briefs, and Q&A's to address and resonate with buyer issues and frameworks (Odden, 2018). An internal guide helped ensure that the sales staff were aligned with the content marketing and its goals (Odden, 2018). The results included 2,133 market qualified leads, and nearly seven thousand downloads (Odden, 2018).

Ipswitch designed the "Defrag This" podcast and blog as a means of new reach which targeted IT professionals (Odden, 2018). The results were a 174% increase in blog visitors and a 133% increase in organic traffic (Odden, 2018).

MATRIX Software wanted differentiation from competitors through consumer education (Odden, 2018). The "150 Points of Opportunity" campaign was intended to create brand awareness that had this outcome with a 44-page eBook and five standalone videos (Odden, 2018). Results include a 43% increase in average session duration and 25% growth in C-suite interaction and engagement

(Odden, 2018).

Kount wanted to expand global awareness and reach of the quality anti-fraud technology offered. Fraud360 included a global focus, webinars, and video production to capture the attention of specific industries and buyer profiles (Odden, 2018). Results included 450 webinar registrants and thousands of views of videos (Odden, 2018). The campaign reached thousands of professionals in targeted regions in Asia-Pacific (Odden, 2018).

OpenText wanted to use edutainment to increase reach and brand awareness. The microsite of content was refurbished to provide for popular culture theme, and designed for easy consumption (Odden, 2018) The initiative resulted in greatly increased traffic to the microsite, with page views increasing by 1,062% (Odden, 2018).

Veracode wanted to drive awareness and generate demand for application security (Odden, 2018). The Application Security Program Journey multi-touch campaign consisted of mapping content assets to the points in the buyer's journey (Odden, 2018). This content generated 4,000 inquiries, 479 opportunities, and 241 sales (Odden, 2018).

ADP wanted better identification of prospects and leads, and better conversion rates. Research Nurture Program leveraged website data and automation to better identify key buyer personas and customized content for them. This was used as the basis of an email-based nurture initiative to deepen relationships with customers (Odden, 2018). Thousands of new influenced sales opportunities generated. Millions of dollars forecasted in total opportunity (Odden, 2018).

LookBookHQ wanted new reach for better leads with better conversion rates. The campaign consisted of an interactive digital experience built on the LookBookHQ platform, a direct mail component, and follow-up email outreach from sales (Odden, 2018). Booked 300 meetings (Odden, 2018). Results included 50 new leads, and an increased conversion rate of 56%, more than double the previous year conversion rate of 27% (Odden, 2018).

4.1.2 Expansion of existing strategies

Many firms in the case studies sought to better support or revitalize their current digital and content marketing campaigns. Equifax wanted expansion of content marketing strategy A seven plus touch points campaign included emails, social media and blog postings, webinars, and email promotion. Webinars every three months provided a way for Equifax to stand out as a thought leader in relation to emerging trends (Odden, 2018). The result was a doubling of registrations for webinars. As with the previous case, the value ecosystem in this case is not made clear by describing the importance of the increased webinar registration (Odden, 2018).

Bottomline Technologies wanted Invigoration of existing quarterly awareness email campaigns. Content was developed around pop culture themes and customized with relevant messaging by role including infographics, white papers, and checklists. 1,000 infographic downloads within 24 hours (Odden, 2018). 62% of downloads were new customer contacts (Odden, 2018).

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield wanted to expand the value of its existing digital assets, but the current content was outdated, dealing with a benefits guide which described changes under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This information was replaced with a more dynamic newsroom with

a focus on what was of interest to plan holders. The results was a 103% increase in page views, 102% increase in search views, and 798,000 total page views in the first year (Odden, 2018).

4.1.3 Thought leadership and trustworthiness

Xactly wanted to increase trustworthiness and authority in solving customer problems. Power of X campaign used demonstration and testimonials to engage customers and build relationships through an all-segments approach that included a landing page hub, social promotion, direct mail, customer videos, and webinars (Odden, 2018). There were 280 leads generated as a result of the initiative (Odden, 2018).

Cherwell Software wanted to develop a comprehensive influencer program for the IT service management industry An eBook called IT Service Management 2020 was supplemented by blog posts, an infographic, and a webinar. Results included a 240% greater download rate, and a 29% increase in web traffic contributed to 22% of the revenue pipeline for 2017 (Odden, 2018).

Siemens PLM Software wanted to educate customers and prospects, provide thought leadership (Odden, 2018). Their initiative included blog posts answering common buyer questions in relation to digital twins and threads (Odden, 2018) The result was 3,800 page views a ranking of second on Google for these terms (Odden, 2018).

LinkedIn sought to create engagement and thought leadership with the marketers that use the platform (Odden, 2018). The “Live with Marketers” campaign was intended as a show about and for marketers using social media (Odden, 2018). There were 12,000 registrants and 5,000 live

attendees (Odden, 2018).

CAS at American Chemical Society wanted to support awareness of its capacity and thought leadership, targeting scientists (Odden, 2018). They developed the “Where Does Your Time Go?” initiative, which included an infographic (Odden, 2018). This generated 20,400 views and 489 leads (Odden, 2018).

Oracle wanted Brand awareness, thought leadership in the finance sector. The Modern Finance Leader blog series targeted finance executives globally. 330 posts published 90,000 unique visits, 500,000 page views and a quarterly 63% increase in web traffic (Odden, 2018).

Paycom partnered with best-selling author, futurist Jacob Morgan, in an effort to expand reach and reputations (Odden, 2018). The content was intended to help human resources management professionals to understand the continued difficulties in improving employee engagement despite increased investment (Odden, 2018). The content included a two-part podcast, a webinar and thought leadership blog (Odden, 2018). The results included 255 live attendees, 30 of which registered for a consultation (Odden, 2018). There were also 1,172 podcast downloads and 1,410 blog post page views (Odden, 2018).

SAP Ariba wanted a lifecycle nurture program for targeted personas in various positions (Odden, 2018). The resulting program used developed personas mapped to eighty important accounts that emphasized thought leadership and common concerns (Odden, 2018). The results was a 454%

increased open rate for emails to customers (Odden, 2018).

Grant Thornton wanted To target business leaders and thought leadership in relation to growth and manage disruption management. Developed more than sixty content parts and social media distribution using paid advertising to expand reach of content marketing (Odden, 2018). Results were very positive, and the initiative surpassed its reach goal by 400%, and conversion rate goals by 750% (Odden, 2018).

Radius wanted to increase brand awareness and targeted reach by supporting thought leadership and authority in the professional field (Odden, 2018). The “Radius’ Revenue Ops campaign” included an eBook that was co-created with associated companies, and there were 500 eBook downloads in the first forty-eight hours (Odden, 2018). The engagement of more than three hundred top accounts results in the influence of more than \$5 million in pipeline (Odden, 2018).

4.1.4 Targeting current customers to learn more about them

Several case studies described firms who wanted better ways to capture data about existing customers, and then use this information more effectively in targeting and campaigns (Odden, 2018). Trapeze Group wanted to identify which accounts should be targeted in terms of deeper engagements and customization (Odden, 2018). The development of more personalized media and messaging for engagement with top performing accounts results in a 111% increase in session duration of customers using the site, and a 100% response rate to the direct mail component (Odden, 2018).

Chase for Business sought to engage the small business owners who were already attending the same trade events and in person conferences (Hyder, 2017). Chase for Business was already holding events with well-known keynote speakers, and these conferences were popular (Hyder, 2017). Feedback from attendees, however, revealed that they wanted more customized attention at these events (Hyder, 2017). The “Social Media Genius Bar” was inspired by the Apple business model, and it provided one-on-one counsel in relation to social media and digital marketing for small business owners (Hyder, 2017). Feedback revealed that it was a favourite event at the conference for attendees, who shared their experiences of the initiative on social media (Hyder, 2017).

Emma was another firm that wanted higher resolution in relation to consumer profile data and market segments (Odden, 2018). For their initiative, they conducted research with 200 marketers and consulted over 25 industry experts to address the contemporary objectives and challenges people in marketing professions (Odden, 2018). Emma then reported on that study in an Email Marketing Industry Report which received over 41,000 views and increased the downloads from the firm site by 37% (Odden, 2018).

ADP wanted better identification of prospects and leads, and better conversion rates. Research Nuture Program leveraged website data and automation to better identify key buyer personas and customized content for them (Odden, 2018). This was used as the basis of an email-based nurture initiative to deepen relationships with customers (Odden, 2018). Thousands of new influenced sales opportunities generated. Millions of dollars forecasted in total opportunity (Odden, 2018).

Uberflip wanted to generate marketing qualified leads for sales team and develop data in relation to existing accounts (Odden, 2018). A marketing maturity self-assessment tool and eBook for challenging ambitious marketers to reach higher (Odden, 2018). Results included impressive impressions and click rates over just a three-month period (Odden, 2018).

4.1.5 Efficiency and process improvement

Efficiency and process improvement have been drivers of content marketing strategies. Tempur Sealy Hospitality developed a digital presentation approach for B2B buyers in hospitality to replace carrying physical samples (Odden, 2018). The resulting interactive mattress cutaway tool permitted the sales representatives to use a digital presentation to sell mattresses to hotel customers, both online and at trade events (Odden, 2018). The digital tools were adopted by nine out of ten sales representatives (Odden, 2018).

The idea behind Blackbaud's "Choose Your Solution" campaign was to reduce complexity in customer decision-making (Odden, 2018). An interactive assessment tool supported cultural organizations to find the fundraising solution they needed, find qualified leads faster, and coordinate data to reduce repetitive questions from sales reps (Odden, 2018). As a result, there were 36 influenced opportunities with 42% market qualified leads conversion rate and increased \$34,000 in sales (Odden, 2018).

4.1.6 Summary

These case studies provided a brief overview of a variety of campaigns and initiatives, and the

firms that engaged in them. In terms of how digital content marketing is used in brand building in the B2B sector, it is used to advance reach and reputation, but there are also more practical applications in relation to innovating current business processes and creating a community within which to nurture customer relationship. The role of brand awareness is an important one, and regardless of targeted audience, content type, or main objective, brand awareness was correlated as the expectation of a direct or indirect positive impact on brand awareness. A repeated motif in the case studies, however, was the narrowing of brand awareness through first developing buyer personas, then developing customer data repositories, and finally using these to target brand awareness in an extremely specific way. In terms of the methods and processes that are used in current B2B content marketing strategies, they included cross-platform and media development around a theme, with various distribution dependent on the scope and characteristics of the marketing target. The current challenges for digital content marketing in the B2B sector, based on review and reflection, would appear to be the lack of metrics to tie internet use and indicators with business objectives. For example, the case studies often did not reveal how the cost of the campaign related to the outcomes, or the extent to which results represented an improvement. Many of the initiatives also require considerable effort and resources for upkeep, particularly in the case of original content creation.

4.2 Case Study: Silicon Labs

4.2.1 Overview of the case

Silicon Laboratories, Inc. (Silicon Labs) is a semiconductor company based in Austin, Texas. The company has focused on problem solving and design and outsourced production, often referred to as fabless (Goldbery, 2019). The products include the microcontrollers (MCUs), wireless system

on chips (SoCs), sensors and broadcast capacity required for semiconductors, silicon parts, and software. In the first few decades, the company was a supplier with close relationships to just a few customers who produced things such as microchips for TV tuners (Goldbery, 2019). With a small base of customers in its niche, there seemed little reason to investigate digital content marketing approaches (Goldbery, 2019). Since 2012, development has focused on the internet of things (IoT), and today this represents about half of revenues for Silicon Labs. The market has become broader and more horizontal, and as a result Silicon Labs had to change its B2B marketing approach (Goldbery, 2019). Competitors to Silicon Labs include AltoBeam, Analog Devices, Broadcom, Cypress Semiconductor Corp., Dialog Semiconductor, PLC, Espressif, Infineon, Maxim Integrated, and MaxLinear.

The mission today is to find “solutions for a smarter, more connected world” (Silicon Labs, 2020). The company holds over seventeen hundred patents which support achieving that vision (Mosher Zinck, 2018). In a recent news release, the firm outlined how it had leveraged products and service to help customers to help people globally to navigate the pandemic through remote work, and other innovations (Silicon Labs, 2020). Further, technology developed by Silicon Labs was used in smart medical devices that included pulse oximeters, ventilators, blood glucose monitors (Silicon Labs, 2020). The news release indicated that their values and vision were:

to uplift and support one another, our partners and customers, and the communities we live in. We are inspired by our team's ability to stay focused and achieve so much together, despite circumstances beyond our control. How we dealt with 2020 fills us with pride and gratitude (Silicon Labs, 2020, n.p.)

Recent achievements included the launch of a new security solution called Secure Vault, new low-energy Bluetooth connection components that last up to ten years, acquired Redpine Signals, a

low-power Wi-Fi connectivity innovator, and released Simplicity Studio, free software which is added to their collection of free developer software (Silicon Labs, 2020). Recent content marketing initiatives have included a comprehensive Power over Ethernet (PoE) portfolio to facilitate the launch of 5G small cells, and 6,000 registrants for the global, online “Works With Smart Home Developer” conference with firms such as Amazon, Comcast, and Google (Silicon Labs, 2020).

4.2.2 Background and History

Silicon Labs began in 1996 in Austin, Texas, founded by former engineers for Crystal Semiconductor, a company owned today by Cirrus Logic Inc. (Sopensky, 2000). The first product for Silicon Labs, in 1998, was a product to reduce the costs and form factor of modems, followed by a synthesizer for mobile devices (Sopensky, 2000). The company made its initial public offering in 2000 (Sopensky, 2000). At this time, the competitive intensity of the American, Japanese, South Korean, and Taiwanese companies in the semiconductor market was increasing (Kozmetsky and Yue, 1998). The semiconductor production sector is dominated by companies from the United States, Taiwan, South Korea, and the European Union who provide components to makers of various electronics and telecommunications devices and appliances (Aelker et al., 2013). The semiconductor industry has included a high level of growth, however this has been accompanied with great volatility, expectations of increasing performance, and disruption from innovation (Aelker et al., 2013).

In the semiconductor industry of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, clusters such as those proposed by Michael Porter as catalysing innovation and growth were the main model for understanding the market and industry (Ketelhöhn, 2006). For companies such as Silicon Labs,

the proximity to buyers was a defining factor in market size and relationships (Ketelhöhn, 2006). While the Silicon Valley of Northern California is often the image of the high technology industry, there are important clusters across the world in a variety of important cities, including Austin, Texas (Ketelhöhn, 2006). The rise of global markets, manufacturing outsourcing, and increased complex coordination has also increased the specificity of product marketing, and who it is being marketed to (Aelker et al., 2013). The same could be said to be true of sales, resulting in a number of challenges for both sales and marketing. Average annual growth of the semiconductor market has been about 13%, for decades, however this consistency hides considerable market volatility (Aelker et al., 2013). The semi-conductor market experienced a serious downturn around the early years of the millennium, and at the same time the demand for flash memory, the least expensive kind of semi-conductor, began to increase in relation to IOT development generally (Yinug, 2008).

4.2.3 The Early B2B Marketing Approach and Change

In the first decade or so, the company was able to work with a few vertically integrated customers to meet a niche need. The need for change had become clear with a transformation of the product focus to the internet of things (IOT) niche in the semiconductor market. Rather than working closely with a few customers on a variety of needs, IOT components were now produced on a larger scale, meaning that there were more customers (Mosher Zinck, 2018). In fact, the sales team which had dealt with just a few hundred accounts with companies they knew well had to manage sales for more than 35,000 firms (Goldbery, 2019). Scaling the sales, however, meant using digital means as much as possible to automate components of sale (Mosher Zinck, 2018). The website for Silicon Labs had previously played an important role, and this was described as

managed by complex Excel spreadsheets which required many iterations (Mosher Zinck, 2018). Marketers were very aware of the need to serve their targeted buyer personas, who tended to be engineers (Goldbery, 2019).

It is worth noting that much of the information available in relation to the development of content marketing at Silicon Labs is part of the content marketing provided by Adobe Systems. It was described that Silicon Labs began with a plan, a way to measure how that plan was operating, followed by optimization strategies (Goldbery, 2019). Essentially, the content marketing for Adobe in relation to the Silicon Labs case studies refers to many specific products, including Adobe Analytics, Adobe Experience Manager, Adobe Target, and Marketo Engage (Goldbery, 2019, n.p.). One major positive outcome was increased publishing speed, which occurred in part because marketing campaigns no longer had to be hard-coded and uploaded by IT staff (Goldbery, 2019). The previous content management system (CMS) had not provided for the marketing team to directly manage campaigns through an interface (Goldbery, 2019). This ease of access also resulted in more market research to understand buyer journeys and navigation of content and purchases (Mosher Zinck, 2018).

Rather than a complex product information management system, a database of products and content assets are used to tag pages and fragments (Goldbery, 2019). This content included information regarding technical documentation and specifications, reference manuals, and white papers, as well as promotional videos and images (Mosher Zinck, 2018). Once the content was organized and tagged as assets, automation was used to extrapolate appropriate content to be manifested based on the user profile (Mosher Zinck, 2018).

4.2.4 New Data Tracking and Analysis Capacity

The use of digital marketing strategies provides a platform for data collection and analytics capabilities by measuring or tracking such things as customer navigation, triggers to purchase, and consumer segmentation. The result is a better understanding of what is popular, what is effective, and areas of weakness where continuous improvement targets can be made (Mosher Zinck, 2018). Software, such as the Adobe Experience Manager, is used for automatically tagging posts and recommendations, resulting in increased conversion and engagement (Mosher Zinck, 2018). Load times are also a significant data measurement that helps to identify problematic weaknesses that create barriers to customer conversion.

4.2.5 The Content and the Content Marketing

The biggest change which facilitated the transition to content marketing was the empowerment of the marketing team to make changes without the need for the technical and software development support that had characterized the past (Mosher Zinck, 2018). At Silicon Labs, the integration of the updating of information and the implementation of such changes are now the responsibility of the marketing team of about thirty people (Mosher Zinck, 2018). One example of the type of content that is used in the digital marketing includes a white paper sponsored by Silicon Labs provided an overview of internet of things integration with wireless MCUs (Char, 2015).

4.2.6 Summary of case

The premise for the change had been the need to scale to serve tens of thousands of potential

customers, and increased capability for automated ordering based on the new framework. The secondary data and indicators available, however, are limited, and curated as part of Adobe Experience Manager software's content to drive its own marketing. The result is a number of gaps in understanding current practices and effectiveness, as well as value flow from content driven marketing. Still, with the information provided it is possible to understand the research questions in light of this case study. In terms of how digital content marketing is used in brand building in the B2B sector, it is through the positioning of that brand in relation to things that matter to the customer. The role of brand awareness within the B2B content marketing strategy was not well discussed in the trade literature, however it is clear that providing value added without shameless self-promotion has become a new standard in digital marketing. In terms of the methods and processes that are used in current B2B content marketing strategies, these begin with understand the customer through buyer personas and segmentation that drives data tracking and content development that is focused on their interests and issues. The current challenges for digital content marketing in the B2B sector, as described in the case study, were summarized as coordinating content for automation, and the solution was content management software, however the information came from content marketing developed for such a content provider.

4.3 Interview results

Two interviews were conducted with senior marketing managers at Silicon Labs. The first interview (the transcript can be found in Appendix A), was conducted by email exchange, as a result of social restrictions at the time. Some modification were made in relation to the second interview, which are described later in this section. In both interviews, the shape and format of content marketing was described as being their website, which included online training, a blog

relating to common problems faced by the targeted audience, success stories, and regular webinars.

One unexpected outcome and problem identified after the first interview was that the concept of content marketing, and associated terms, did not resonate with the first interviewee. They felt that the questions were not relevant to their workplace, as they did not recognize the terms. When asked about brand building and brand awareness, the interviewee responded that they did not understand the question. Because of the difficulties in achieving rich data in response to the first interview, certain modifications changes were made for the second interview (transcript is found in Appendix B). Follow-up questions were sent to the first interviewee in order to mitigate the issue. Academic terms were, for the most part, were removed, and questions were changed to be more practical in nature. While the terminology was not familiar to the interviewee, it was still clear that the concepts behind them were. These concepts were then identified through content analysis.

4.3.1 Thematic content analysis of interviews

The transcripts of the interviews were reviewed iteratively for overarching themes, and colour-coded according to the final list of themes that was developed. These main themes that were identified were content distribution, content creation challenges, metrics, and sub-optimal approaches.

4.3.2 Content distribution

Content distribution was described as an important activity for the marketing team, and a major

tool for digital content marketing goal achievement. These search engine-based strategies focus only on inbound potential consumers who are searching for product information. Customer acquisition is therefore dependent on the narrow band of potential customers at the point in the buyer lifecycle where they are ready to purchase. This strategy fails to assume purchases from customers who become loyal to the brand and depend on the brand for information leading up to the point of purchasing decision. Existing customers, however, were managed by the sales team through monitoring and interaction with the identified Tier 1 customers. These content distribution activities were presented as germane to the marketing efforts.

4.3.3 Challenges in content production

Challenges in content production for digital content marketing included the difficulties in achieving the resources to consistently produce quality, meaningful content. In the interviews, the difficulty of recruiting content experts was cited as the cause of problems. Intertwined with this issue was avoiding inaccurate and poor-quality content which could reflect badly on the company. Quality was cited as a preference to quantity. It was implied that the products of such production would be static content presented either on web pages as mostly text, or in videos.

4.3.4 Metrics

Metrics were another repeated theme. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools were described as being important to metrics, which revolved around revenue impact and the efforts required to capture that revenue. There was no content evaluation from a user-facing perspective

described. Instead, content was evaluated in terms of approval for publishing, with little assessment of trends. Metrics that were mentioned included the number of registrants for webinars, but even these indicators were ultimately assessed against the specific lead generation that the event had in terms of sales metrics, and not those for content marketing evaluation.

4.3.5 Sub-optimal approaches

Sub-optimal approaches included the content production strategy, the lack of evaluation of content from a customer-centric perspective, failure to develop targeting personas, lack of recognition of brand awareness promotion, and lack of engagement with marketing analysis and scholarly work. Content production was described for both non-directly related material (such as new content relating to emerging IOT and similar needs during the pandemic), as well as product-related content. To that end, it seemed that there was a blurring of marketing content, and content marketing, in that the product related content marketing was simply an advertising effort in the traditional sense. Elements of good content were discussed in relation to the challenges of acquiring good content, as well as features. These features included succinct, visually pleasing, accurate, and at written at a high level of expertise. The challenges to quality content creation, the elements of good content, and continuous improvement through ongoing evaluation can be seen, to that extent, as being interrelated parts of the sub-optimal strategy. The failure to develop targeting strategies was evident, as was a suboptimal marketing position driven by product promotion rather than brand awareness. A lack of familiarity with academic terms, models, and approaches was evident in both interviews, and related to some impairment of the discussion. One interviewee stated that “We do not use the term content marketing in our everyday language”

(Interview 2).

4.4 Review of Silicon Labs website and content

Since the website was identified as the core of the content marketing strategy, the content itself was explored to extend the case study. The website landing page provided promotion of various products and content. There were several approaches to navigation, with a main horizontal navigation bar at the top of the page with five tabs: Products, Solutions, Developers, Support, Resources, Company, How to Buy, and settings icons (Silicon Laboratories, 2021). A quick scroll through the landing page revealed that it was organized in the typical Wordpress-type template.

Clicking on the various content promotion frames revealed the characteristics of the copy text used in the content promotion. There were a number of issues. The text was not concise, and it did not flow. There were also problems relating to grammar, run on sentences, and punctuation, such as the following excerpt:

When kicking off a software project, one of the first considerations is the question, do I build custom or use off-the-shelf? Read this article to understand this topic and the factors to ensure interoperability and how to choose the right wireless technology (Silicon Labs, 2021c).

The interviewees and the literature had highlighted webinars and white papers, however these were not highlighted in the mix. The webinars turned out to be just short videos explaining how the products were used, and they did not focus on training needs of the consumer, but rather, the product promotion desires of the marketing team (see, for example, “Smart Home: Works With Any Ecosystem”, Silicon Labs, 2021c). The tightest focus, and highest quality content offerings,

were related to more technical and specific, engineering focused content. For example, specific solutions for the problem of low-energy Bluetooth development were reviewed, with further references and resources, and of course product promotion at the core (Silicon Labs, 2021). There were a number of curious findings that led to wondering if separated marketing teams were pursuing goals in isolation. For example, a promotion was found for the Works With 2021 Conference hosted by Silicon Labs by using a search engine to find training and activities, but there was no promotion or discussion of the event on the landing page or content page links which it provided. In fact, the event had a completely separated web page, with no real cross-promotion (Silicon Labs, 2021b). In fact, despite the logos of partners and sponsors, the logo for Silicon Labs did not appear anywhere on the conference landing page (Silicon Labs, 2021b). The only reference to Silicon Labs was in the title (Silicon Labs, 2021b).

4.5 Discussion and considerations

In order to synthesize and provide an overview of what was learned from the interviews, the elements of successful content market as adapted from Naseri and Noruzi (2018) were applied to structure the data.

Table 7 Application of elements of successful content marketing

CATEGORIES	CONCEPTS	SUMMARY
Content marketing planning elements	Defining the target audience	The target audience was only described by title and organization, without references to demographic, psychographic, behavioural, or geographic data.
	Identify objectives	Objectives were identified and consistent across the interviews, however the focus was lead generation, revenues and sales, rather than the recommended lead generations strategy through creating brand awareness and customer loyalty/retention.

CATEGORIES	CONCEPTS	SUMMARY
	Define an editorial calendar	With problems such as recruitment and quality control in content production, it appeared that the processes were not mature enough to incorporate a formal schedule of content production and publication.
Elements inherent in content production	Valuable / excellent	Content was described as information intended to satisfy specialized and technical purchase-related information needs.
	Related	The information that customers need to use products, or to make purchase decisions, drives content development at Silicon Labs.
	Reliable	Reliability and quality were relayed as important elements, but challenging to achieve, in the interviews.
	Entertainment	Appealing and informative was identified, however the use of storytelling, humour, and creativity is not as apparent.
	New (exclusive) Coherent	Goals of fresh, creative, coherent content, but challenges achieving it.
	Purposeful	In terms of non-commercial, instructive, and effective purpose, most of the content appears to be product promotion, however the webinars, white papers, and similar higher level content does appear to meet this criteria.
Content formation elements	Format	Common in use; inexpensive; sharing; simultaneous use
Elements in distribution	Interactive	Unlike the recommendation, Silicon Labs focuses more on the purchaser in their role (such as in the case of the webinars), rather than social, participatory, or automated and interactive media.
	Usability	Content accessibility was ensured by being freely available, and also search engine/SEO related strategies to ensure that the content would be as high as possible on related search results.
Elements of measuring effectiveness	Consumption	Consumption of content can be more or less directly related to specific products or product areas, but content consumption may not be optimized in terms of increasing brand awareness.
	Share	The focus is on business-related social media such as LinkedIn, rather than traditional social media.
	Lead Generation	Lead generation is a priority.
	Sales	Interviewees identified sales/revenues as the most important metric.

4.5.1 Content marketing goals

Content marketing goals, as described by the interviewees, included customer acquisition, thought leadership, revenue and sales, and engagement. This could be compared to the proposed goals of digital content marketing described by senior marketing executives in Edmond's 2014 survey, namely brand awareness, engagement, lead generation, sales, and customer retention and loyalty. The goals described by interviewees were therefore reviewed against this model of ideal content-driven marketing goals. Brand awareness was not only not an interest of interviewees, it seemed contrary to a product-specific focus on content marketing production. For example, content views were related to product sales. There was further little discussion of promoting engagement through interactivity, thought leadership, sentiment analysis, or intelligence gathering in relation to market characteristics. While engagement was mentioned, there was no mention of specific processes to automate the posting of content from the website, or the use of social media metrics to monitor engagement. As with the case of Allegiance Capital (Hyder, 2017), the interviewees described the use of white papers, blogs, and similar content, with a social media focus on LinkedIn users. This further reflects the reduction of buyer personas to a role and a title (which LinkedIn provides), rather than exploring the demographic, psychographic, behavioural, and geographic variables while create the different segments of consumers. Lead generation was of major importance to Silicon Labs, as described by the interviewees. Two narrow channels: existing customers (with Tier 1 customers as a priority), and customers at the point of purchasing in the buyer lifecycle who are using a search engine to find more information. Webinars and white papers are likely building brand awareness to some extent, but this was not acknowledged by interviewees, and it is not clear from the review of the content. Customer retention and loyalty was not discussed as an aspect of

strategy, rather the focus was new sales and new customer acquisition. Sales were the single priority which other goals were intended to serve. Lost or missed sales were not mentioned as a research activity for the marketing team.

Table 8 Silicon Lab B2B Content Marketing Goals

SILICON LAB ACTIVITIES	
Brand awareness	Content views are related to product sales, no mention of interactivity, thought leadership, sentimental analysis, or intelligence gathering in relation to market characteristics.
Engagement	No mention of interactive content. Little use of content from the website, or social media metrics to monitor engagement or user characteristics.
Lead generation	Lead generation was of major importance to Silicon Labs, as described by the interviewees.
Sales	Sales were the single priority which other goals were intended to serve.
Customer retention/loyalty	Customer retention and loyalty was not discussed as an aspect of strategy, rather the focus was new sales and new customer acquisition.

The lack of relevance to the interviewees of the concepts and terms used in trade and scholarly works were initially assumed to be a matter of context. The analysis of themes revealed that the issue was retention of an old marketing paradigm, with a sales-driven orientation, and a failure to fully grasp the importance of customer-facing media, or the core ideas of content marketing to drive brand awareness. In short, what Silicon Labs is engaged in is digitally driven traditional marketing, with more attention to content, but without intention to create communities based on content reflecting thought leadership.

4.5.2 Targeting and understanding the consumer

As described by Adobe content, Silicon Labs had, with the new content administration tools, succeeded in advancing their targeting and buyer personas (Goldbery, 2019; Mosher Zinck, 2018). Despite this empowerment, finding quality content was clearly a great challenge to achieving the goals of digital content marketing. This appeared to reflect the missing step in the development of a digital content strategy, in that marketing activities had yet to focus on intelligence gathering and interest in relation to customer personas, segments, and characteristics. It is clear that Silicon Labs is that it has not entirely given up its old-fashioned close customer relationship approach between existing customers and sales staff. While this worked well when Silicon Labs was a small company in a small community, it has impaired the development of digital content strategy that can scale to a much greater volume of customers. One example of this was how digital content marketing was described by interviewees as the development of a supplemental form of product marketing, thereby missing the importance of brand awareness building, detailed understanding of buyers, and the formation of communities to generate retention and loyalty. The traditional sales paradigm depends on the personal knowledge of sales persons in relation to specific customers. This can be effective, but scaling up sales requires a significant, labour intensive effort. Digital content marketing, on the other hand, uses the detailed buyer personas that are developed for each market segment to refine targeting, determine opportunities, and understand less than optimal performance of digital marketing content. This requires an obsession with the customer, and the characteristics that are discovered through analysis of user tracking data. This was not mentioned as a priority or driver of digital content development and marketing, and it helps to explain the difficulties and challenges in creating appropriate content. It is not clear to senior managers who they are creating the content for, beyond perhaps job titles.

4.6 Summary

If, as described in the academic literature, the purpose of content marketing is the positioning of the brand in relation to that which is valued by the customer, it is not entirely clear that this translates into B2B content marketing. Certainly, it is not a focus as described by senior managers at Silicon Labs. A further possible gap in practice was in relation to the buyer personas, and data-driven analysis and segmentation. Salespeople, and personal knowledge of customers appeared to continue to drive lead generation and customer relationships, without supplementing this with a more automated lead generation system based on content developed for detailed buyer personas. While the greatest challenge that was identified was the identification and coordination of quality content, the solution clearly requires more than content management software; what is needed is the creation of customized content based on the development of detailed buyer personas. There is a clear opportunity for Silicon Labs to refine their digital content marketing strategy with a refocusing of the paradigm and strategy to reflect brand, rather than product awareness, to explore customer characteristics and map buyer personas, and to use these to improve the content creation approach, coherence, and production plan.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Responding to the Research Questions and Main Findings

The first research question asked, “How is digital content marketing used in brand building in the B2B sector?”. This was to better understand the context and strategies currently in place with reference to the B2B sector. Based on the conducted interviews with senior managers at Silicon Labs, brand building was not a conscious product of activities. The interviewees described production information dissemination, training, and general awareness as the main targets of digital content marketing and clarified that there was a tight focus between the sale of a product and content marketing pieces.

The second research question asked, “What methods and processes are used in current B2B content marketing strategies?”. This was focused on the practical aspect of execution of the B2B digital content marketing strategy. Interviewees described digital marketing strategies focused on search engine optimization, but they did not describe the cycle of content production, implementation, evaluation, refinement, and how that contributed to understanding the customer. Attempts to use social media were limited to business-oriented sites such as LinkedIn, and the content that was referred to was unidirectional, non-interactive, and focused on promoting products. Based on this study, B2B marketing strategies were still struggling to grasp the content marketing model.

The third research question asked, “What are the current challenges for digital content marketing in the B2B sector?”. Clearly, the greatest change is making the paradigm shift from a focus on sales staff and revenues in the traditional model, to interactivity, brand awareness building, and

engagement in the new digital model. Silicon Labs is a leader in its technological area; however the marketing efforts have not adopted the basic premises of content marketing.

5.2 Recommendations

Content coherence and quality requires the development of content around themes, with those themes tied to the interests and personas of consumer segments. Silicon Labs needs to expand its marketing activities in relation to understand their targeted buyer personas. This must go beyond titles and roles, and explore the psychographic, demographic, behavioural, and geographic aspects of both customers and site users, with a view to understanding more than which product they might be interested in. Data analysis of tracking, in combination with social graph data, can help to create in-depth, detailed scenarios that will help to support determination of content, content coherence, and lead generation at scale. This would be similar to what was described in the ADP case study, and it was successful in dramatically increasing conversion rates. What is missing in the current Silicon Labs approach is the understanding of the targeted persona, and this leads to impairment of customization and content determination, and a focus on product promotion in the current content. This could be further enhanced by developing a deep understanding of the targeted buyer persona lifecycle, and the development of specific content based on differing needs at different points in the lifecycle, in a manner similar to that described in the SAP Ariba and Veracode case studies (Odden, 2018). Essentially, but with a great deal of potential challenges, Silicon Labs, in terms of its marketing approach and activities, must make a paradigm shift to brand awareness which provides the foundation for successful digital content marketing.

5.3 Conclusion

Digital content marketing, as an inbound marketing technique, should not be promoting products for the purpose of sales. Instead, this approach attempts to engage potential customers with information that they want, and thereby create the basis for a customer relationship. The role of social media in B2B content marketing is relatively undefined in the scholarly literature. These research gaps were addressed in this case study of brand building through content marketing in the B2B sector. Primary and secondary data, include a review of content and interviews with senior marketing managers at Silicon Labs, was assessed against established parameters and models for digital content marketing. While marketing managers identified the greatest challenge as the identification and coordination of quality content, this study identified the practice gap in relation to the research and analysis that led to in-depth understanding of the targeted consumer segments through detailed buyer personas. A refocused digital content marketing strategy requires a paradigm and strategic shift that will facilitate content creation, coherence, and production because it is well defined who it is for, and what content they want.

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Appendix A: Interview 1

Interview answers received: email 19.11.2020.

Position: Senior marketing manager at Silicon Labs.

Research question 1: B2B digital content marketing

How is digital content marketing used in brand building and other aspects of marketing in the B2B sector?

Not sure I understand the question, but outside pre-COVID era events most/all of our marketing was digital (web, webinars, search engines, SEO, email etc.). Our focus activities are in web, webinars, on-line trainings, search engines and web/email campaigns. Like I say later our effort are more geared towards technology and product marketing and more limited on brand marketing.

In your opinion, has this represented a radical change in how B2B is conducted? Why or why not?

I would not say this has been a radical change. COVID may be been a more radical change to us in 2020 and 2021 as all trade shows and F2F customer meetings did get cancelled and we've been trying to implement digital alternatives.

How has the concept of brand awareness shifted with digital marketing generally, and the content marketing direction specifically?

I have no comments to the question above.

Research question 2: Identifying methods and processes

What methods and processes are used in current B2B content marketing strategies?

Not sure I understand the question. Can you give an example what you mean with methods and processes.

Are the methods used static, or are they subject to continued change and development?

Some methods are pretty static, but especially due to COVID we've needed to rethink how we do customer meetings, trade shows and events and lot of those have moved to virtual events and customer meetings to Zoom/MS teams.

Do you feel that your company follows best practices in relation to content marketing?

I cannot say.

Research question 3: Current challenges

What are the current challenges for digital content marketing in the B2B sector?

Having right skills and know-how in our case. COVID in 2020 and 2021 and a lot of physical events moving to virtual. Also "Zoom fatigue", so people getting frustrated to constant flow of virtual meetings/events.

Which challenges are manageable, and how should they be managed?

We've been trying to move event to virtual and make them as engaging and good as possible. Having right skills and know-how is manageable as well, by having right people in the company, which we might now have executed on.

Which challenges to B2B content marketing, and the new digital marketing context, pose the greatest barriers to achieving marketing and organizational goals?

In our case having the rights skills and resources

Additional comments

Is there anything else that you would like to add in relation to the transition, practices, challenges, barriers, or future of B2B content marketing?

Appendix B: Interview 2

Interview date: 01.12.2020.

Position: Senior marketing manager at Silicon labs.

Original language: Finnish

What is your position in the company?

I'm a senior marketing manager. I'm responsible for the retail and commercial segment in one of our business units. We have several responsibilities perhaps the **most important being revenue, and how to influence it.** We are responsible for the road map and defining our view of what the market & customers need. And of course since we have a reliable road map we also answer for marketing to products to customers and key accounts. We have several roles.

Who are the people responsible for marketing?

Different segments have their own strategies. The marketing team is decentralized around the world as is the business.

Are sales and marketing part of the same team?

No, the sales team is a completely separate organization from the marketing team.

How planned is your marketing?

We make a yearly plan for the segment that covers the objectives for the year, for example for the revenue growth. The plan also includes what products we want out, what marketing activities will be done, what key customers will be prioritized and few other things.

How do you define content marketing? Is it a concept you use?

We do not use the term content marketing in our everyday language. We talk more about **total leadership marketing which is higher is about higher level solutions.** For example how to lessen the energy use in the office and why these solutions should be brought into offices to be more environmentally friendly and green. We made one campaign where we talked about how new digital solutions can make customer experience better in the supermarket. **So we talk about these higher level solutions and why those should be done.** Then we also have product marketing

where we talk about our products and why our customers should use them and why we are better than our competitors. That is already quite detailed, on the level of some specific product.

What kind of content do you produce for your customers or potential customers?

Yes we produce all kinds of information, for example about how Covid-19 has affected the retail market or how bringing digitalization to the retail side has changed customer behaviour. We produce info to our website, for example white papers ja webinars. In the webinars we have either experts from our company or from our customers, partners or industry influencers.

What are the goals of content marketing? For example for one of these webinars.

We want either new customers (referred to as “opportunities”) or create an image that we know and understand what we are talking about and that we are marked leaders in our field. We are targeting both completely new companies and people and companies we already know. These are the things we are really aiming for and we want to turn those things into revenue. Sure we also add concrete goals like how many participants we have and what is the activity level among participants and do they ask questions etc. We want to create follow up call to action. But in the end this all aims towards increasing revenue.

How do you monitor achieving these goals?

It depends on what kind of content we are talking about. In the webinar we follow the number of registrations, what titles the people who come have, how many people from the same company, how many from the registered people participate or watch those afterwards. Also on some level the activity level in the webinar. You of course notice if people are not actively following or asking questions, but it’s not followed systematically. Then we follow how the opportunities develop. If we have kept a webinar how many people contact our sales afterwards and do we have a case. We can also follow these cases in our CRM and see how much money they bring in and how long the process was. Years afterwards we can also measure the overall revenue.

Do you add all new leads to CRM?

Yes we use a marketing automation and CRM. The programs are partly linked and we

aim to add everything. We also follow the traffic in our website and if we have captive content then who is downloading it. Those are the mainly digital activities in the early stages. Then if we identify the possibility to sell to the customer then the sales might write down extra information regarding the customer, for example what has been discussed and offered, who our competitors are and when customer estimates they might start using our product.

Do you classify people according to which state of the purchasing process they are?

Yes we use categorising. We classify customers based on purchasing process for example "Opportunity identified", "evaluation", "design in", "design win" ja "mass production". In the everyday language we also use tier 1-4. These are related to the amount of revenue, and size of the company and tell about the potential of the company.

Do you communicate differently to the customer depending on which level they are or in which part of the purchasing process they are? For example communicating by email or direct contact etc.

Yes and everything between. We have an automatic campaign to promote our webinars and then to tier 1. customers we might make a very detailed and customized marketing plan. When we know the customer industry, products or what they special they do we might target specific people with marketing campaigns. We also have the mass campaigns for example for new products that go out quite similarly to all our contacts. We have dedicated sales people for tier 1. customers and it is their job to understand who are the decision makers and influencers at the customer. Sales also need to understand what kind of attitude the customer has towards us and what is happening in the customer company.

How is content marketing a part of your other marketing and brand building?

I can't say that everything is separately thought out. Sure when we have these business segments each segment produces marketing material targeted to that particular segment and targeted customers. I cannot say if these segments are in line with each other or if there is overarching marketing strategy in the highest level. Segments mostly do what they want to do. There is also brand marketing that does not directly involve the segments. We might for example

market ourselves to universities as a good employer.

What is the typical purchasing process for your customers?

We have several. Most customers have a need for our technology and what we do. And they often search us out or already know about us. I'm sure there are some examples where we have been able to create that need but mostly their existing product or technology needs our technology. They either know us, are an existing customer or we are a complete unknown. Sure there is competition but a lot of them cannot offer in many technologies what we can. We have also evaluating tools that can be bought online and customer can try out if our product is good enough for their needs. After that they continue with us or drop us, based on the ease use and functionality. And if we get selected and we have the correct technology then they start conversations with our sales. They discuss pricing and lead times, quality, standards and business demands. There are many things depending on the customer. Usually if we can match everything customer needs the sale gets made. The sales process is very long, on average from the technology evaluation to purchase the process might take 12-18 months. Some customers buy from us 3 years, some 10.

What marketing channels do you use?

LinkedIn is the most important from the social media platforms. We also have activity in Facebook and Instagram. In different markets we of course have different platforms, in China WeChat and Baidu. Our main communication channel is our website. We have customer forums for support and knowledge base. Those are very important when dealing with complicated technology because the role of customer support is very big. We also aim to build a community and portal for product users to get support. These portals are completely built under our website. Then the webinars are one channel. This year is the exception, but usually we also participate in fairs.

Do you have criteria for content quality? How do you produce material?

No we honestly don't have. Sure we have communication templates and when producing material there is a review process. We also have virtual teams that produce leadership content and product content and they have templates that have been found to be good. Those are

improved or changed according to need.

What kind of content do you think is good?

The content needs to be about a subject that is interesting or meaningful. If it's not I will not watch it. I also prefer it if the material is well produced rather than that there is a large quantity of it. I don't want to read 100 pages but rather 3 and after that consider if I want to continue. Time is very limited after all. It is very important that the material has been produced to a certain level of abstraction. It can always be deepened, and there can be many levels, you do not have to jump to the deepest and most detailed level immediately. I prefer to start from high concepts and then decide if to continue. It also matters that the material is visually pleasing and modern. The content matters the most however.

What challenges have you had in content marketing?

Producing quality content. Finding people with enough knowledge about the preferred topic. That they can produce meaningful content. I have seen a lot of different content, in some cases they have been able to produce great quantities but once you dive in you notice big factual errors and things that just don't make sense. That kind of content is not something you want to let out of the company, because that might give the impression of the whole company that we don't know what we are doing. Especially if there are clear factual errors. If we talk about the total leadership material that aims towards big decision makers, for example vice president level, then they have usually seen and experienced a lot, so the material needs to be something that really interests them. That is very difficult. If you just make a basic product show with the basic capabilities then that is easy. So basically only people with a high enough knowledge level can produce more challenging content. It is also challenging that these people are usually very busy and it is difficult to find time for content producing. We would like to have more video material because that is easier to consume than written material. But producing good quality content is a degree more difficult. At least it is challenging. It is also more difficult to keep a video updated through the years compared to updating an article.

Appendix C: Interview Coding

OVERARCHING THEME	SUB-THEME AND CODING INSTRUCTIONS	SAMPLE OF CODED TEXT
Unfamiliarity with academic terms	Light green	We do not use the term content marketing in our everyday language.
Things of importance	Yellow	most important being revenue, and how to influence it
Content produced	Blue. High level non-marketing material not directly related to the product	Yes we produce all kinds of information, for example about how covid-19 has affected the retail market or how bringing digitalization to the retail side has changed customer behaviour.
Content produced	Blue. Material related directly to products	talk about our products and why our customers should use them
Content marketing goals	Orange. Customer acquisition	We want either new customers
Content marketing goals	Orange. Thought leadership	marked leaders in our field
Content marketing goals	Orange. Thought leadership	create an image that we know and understand what we are talking about
Targeting	Pink. Target audience	We are targeting both completely new companies and people and companies we already know.
Content marketing goals	Orange. Revenue /sales	These are the things we are really aiming for and we want to turn those things into revenue.
Content marketing goals	Orange. Engagement	Sure we also add concrete goals like how many participants we have and what is the activity level among participants and do they ask questions etc
Content marketing goals	Orange. Lead generation	We want to create follow up call to action
Things of importance	Yellow	all aims towards increasing revenue
Content marketing metrics	Lilac. Engagement, traffic & quality of that traffic	In the webinar we follow the number of registrations, what titles the people who come have, how many people from the same company, how many from the registered people participate or watch

OVERARCHING THEME	SUB-THEME AND CODING INSTRUCTIONS	SAMPLE OF CODED TEXT
		those afterwards.
Content marketing metrics	Lilac. Number of contacts /leads	Then we follow how the opportunities develop. If we have kept a webinar how many people contact our sales afterwards and do we have a case.
Content marketing metrics	Lilac. Revenue	follow these cases in our CRM and see how much money they bring in and how long the process was.
Content marketing metrics	Lilac. Traffic	We also follow the traffic in our website and if we have captive content then who is downloading it.
Content marketing distribution	Dirty yellow.	We have an automatic campaign to promote our webinars and then to tier 1. customers we might make a very detailed and customized marketing plan.
Content marketing distribution	Dirty yellow.	we might target specific people with marketing campaigns.
Content marketing distribution	Dirty yellow.	We have dedicated sales people for tier 1. customers and it is their job to understand who are the decision makers and influencers at the customer.
Brand awareness & inbound	Turquoise.	Most customers have a need for our technology and what we do. And they often search us out or already know about us.
Content marketing distribution	Dirty yellow. Social media	LinkedIn is the most important from the social media platforms. We also have activity in Facebook and instagram.
Content marketing distribution	Dirty yellow. Social media	Our main communication channel is our website.
Elements of good content	Green.	The content needs to be about a subject that is interesting or meaningful.
Elements of good content	Green.	I also prefer it if the material is well produced rather than that there is a large quantity of it. I don't want to read 100 pages but rather 3

OVERARCHING THEME	SUB-THEME AND CODING INSTRUCTIONS	SAMPLE OF CODED TEXT
Elements of good content	Green.	It is very important that the material has been produced to a certain level of abstraction. It also matters that the material is visually pleasing and modern.
Elements of good content	Green.	It also matters that the material is visually pleasing and modern.
Things of importance	Yellow	The content matters the most however.
Challenges in content marketing		Producing quality content.
Challenges in content marketing	Leaf green.	Finding people with enough knowledge about the preferred topic.
Challenges in content marketing	Leaf green.	That they can produce meaningful content.
Challenges in content marketing	Leaf green.	I have seen a lot of different content, in some cases they have been able to produce great quantities but once you dive in you notice big factual errors and things that just don't make sense. That kind of content is not something you want to let out of the company, because that might give the impression of the whole company that we don't know what we are doing.
Things of importance	Yellow	Especially if there are clear factual errors.
Challenges in content marketing	Leaf green.	material that aims towards big decision makers, for example vice president level, then they have usually seen and experienced a lot, so the material needs to be something that really interests them. That is very difficult.
Challenges in content marketing	Leaf green.	So basically only people with a high enough knowledge level can produce more challenging content. It is also challenging that these people are usually very busy and it is difficult to find time for content producing.
Unfamiliarity with academic terms	Light green	Not sure I understand the question

OVERARCHING THEME	SUB-THEME AND CODING INSTRUCTIONS	SAMPLE OF CODED TEXT
Content marketing distribution	Dirty yellow.	(regarding question about use of content marketing in brand building) most/all of our marketing was digital (web, webinars, search engines, SEO, email etc). Our focus activities are in web, webinars, on-line trainings, search engines and web/email campaigns
Things of importance	Yellow	our effort are more geared towards technology and product marketing and more limited on brand marketing.
Unfamiliarity with academic terms	Light green	I have no comments to the question above (in regards to question about brand awareness)
Unfamiliarity with academic terms	Light green	Not sure I understand he question. Can you give an example what you mean with methods and processes.

Appendix D: Data Collection, Brief Case Studies

FIRM	TARGET	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	RESULTS	SOURCE
ADP	Targeted personas	Better identification of prospects and leads, better conversion rates.	Research Nurture Program leveraged website data and automation to better identify key buyer personas, customization, and content determination.	Thousands of new influenced sales opportunities generated. Millions of dollars forecasted in total opportunity.	Odden, 2018
Allegiance Capital	Targeted personas (middle-market CEOs and executives)	New reach and greater engagement through thought leadership	New content platforms and initiatives included blogs, white papers, influencer connections, and direct emails promoting content to position the company as a thought leader that was customized for buyer profiles and supplemented with a search engine optimization initiative.	Greater coverage in media outlets, an increase in LinkedIn followers of 78%, and reaching 76,000 Twitter users.	Hyder, 2017
Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield	Current customers	Customer engagement..	Renovated the existing content away from Affordable Care Act (ACA) information with a more dynamic newsroom with a focus on what was of interest to plan holders.	103% increase in page views and 102% increase in search views.	Odden, 2018
Blackbaud	New reach	New, faster leads, administrative efficiency	Choose Your Solution campaign, interactive quiz to help arts and cultural organizations identify the right fundraising solution and reduce complexity in customer decision-making.	36 influenced opportunities with 42% leads conversion rate and increased \$34,000 in sales.	Odden, 2018
Bottomline Technologies	Current customers	Invigoration of existing quarterly awareness email campaigns.	Content was developed around pop culture themes and customized with relevant messaging by role including infographics, white papers, and checklists.	1,000 infographic downloads within 24 hours, 62% of downloads were new customer contacts.	Odden, 2018
Bottomline Technologies	Reach	Brand awareness.	interactive eBook describing customer success stories.	54.3% email open rate, 39.8% click through rate, 362 syndicated content downloads	Odden, 2018
Broadridge	Targeted personas	Brand awareness and education of targeted buyers.	Development of interactive infographics, eBooks, executive briefs, and Q&A's to address and resonate with "buyer pain points". Used an internal guide for sales staff.	2,133 MQLs 6,995 content downloads	Odden, 2018
CAS at American	Targeted personas	Thought leadership	developed the Where Does Your Time Go? infographic.	Generated 489 leads 20,400 views	Odden, 2018

FIRM	TARGET	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	RESULTS	SOURCE
Chemical Society	(scientists)				
ChannelAdvisor	New leads, raising awareness	Better conversion rates	Account-based marketing strategy using direct mail to distribute pre-loaded Amazon devices with ChannelAdvisor skills and apps.	Achieved an ROI of 130%, 39% of generated opportunities were net new.	Odden, 2018
Chase for Business	Targeted persona (small business owners)	Increase engagement with existing customers	The “Social Media Genius Bar” provided one-on-one counsel in relation to social media and digital marketing	A favourite event at the conference for attendees, who shared their experiences of the initiative on social media.	Hyder, 2017
Cherwell Software	Targeted personas (IT service management)	.Thought leadership	to develop a comprehensive influencer program for the IT service management industry using an eBook with influencer opinions on ITSM industry predictions supplemented by blog posts, an infographic, and webinar.	100% share rate with influencers 240% greater download rate 29% increase in web traffic	Odden, 2018
Ciox Health	Targeted personas	Increased leads and conversion	Customized content using infographics, interactive quizzes, self-assessment tools, and video.	42.8% email opening rate 14.5% clickthrough rate	Odden, 2018
Emma	Targeted personas (marketers)	Develop data for current customers and segments.	Conducted research with 200 marketers and 25 industry regarding current goals and challenges of marketers, then distributed report.	Over 41,000 unique views Contributed to 37% of the company’s content downloads	Odden, 2018
Equifax	New reach	Expansion of current strategy	A seven plus touch points campaign included emails, social media and blog postings, webinars, and email promotion.	Registrations for webinars more than doubled.	Odden, 2018
Grant Thornton	Targeted personas (business leaders)	Thought leadership	Developed more than sixty content parts and social media distribution using paid advertising to expand reach of content marketing.	Exceeded reach goal by 4x Exceeded conversion rate goal by 7.5x, reach and conversion goals exceeded	Odden, 2018
Harland Clarke	New reach	Brand awareness.	“Keeping Up with Kevin”, video blogs, LinkedIn — to help deliver tips and real-world scenarios.	33,000 LinkedIn impressions	Odden, 2018
Ipswitch	Targeted personas (IT leadership)	Thought leadership	“Defrag This” podcast and blog.	200% growth in blog subscribers, 174% increase in visitors, 133% increase in organic traffic	Odden, 2018
Kount	New reach	Expand awareness of the products	Webinars, and video production	450 webinar registrants and thousands of views of videos, many from	Odden, 2018

FIRM	TARGET	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	RESULTS	SOURCE
				targeted regions in Asia-Pacific.	
LinkedIn		Creating engagement and community.	“Live with Marketers”, a live talk show by marketers for marketers dealing with marketing attribution, ROI optimization, and social media.	12,000 registrants, 5,000 live attendees Increased projected revenue.	Odden, 2018
LookBookHQ		Better conversion rates	Interactive digital experience built on the LookBookHQ platform, a direct mail component, and follow-up email outreach from sales.	Generated 50+ new leads, and 56% conversion rate, up from 27%.	Odden, 2018
MATRIX Software	New reach, current customers	Brand awareness, customer engagement	“150 Points of Opportunity” to differentiate their content using a 44-page eBook and five standalone videos.	77% return rate, 43% increase in average session duration, 25% growth in C-suite engagement.	Odden, 2018
OpenText	New reach, current customers	Brand awareness, customer engagement	The microsite of content was refurbished to provide for popular culture theme and designed for easy consumption.	9:12 average session duration Increased social traffic to the microsite by 1,062%	Odden, 2018
Optum	Targeted personas	A part of the market launch for OptumIQ to attract decision makers and influencers.	The Data In Focus event in person and via a livestream used paid and organic social, digital, and other methods to promote the event as part of the launch.	5,022 external registrations Exceeded registration-to-attendee conversion rate goal by 33% 886 marketing contacts	Odden, 2018
Oracle	Targeted personas (finance sector)	Thought leadership	The Modern Finance Leader blog series targeted finance executives globally.	330 posts published 90,000 unique visits, 500,000 page views and a quarterly 63% increase in web traffic.	Odden, 2018
Paycom	Targeted personas (HR professionals)	Thought leadership	Partnership with best-selling author, keynote speaker and futurist Jacob Morgan to expand reach through a two-part podcast, a webinar, and a series of blog articles.	255 live attendees, 30 requested consultation, 1,172 downloads 494 podcast page views 1,410 blog views.	Odden, 2018
Radius	New reach	Raising awareness, thought leadership	“Radius’ Revenue Ops” campaign using eBook distribution.	500 eBook downloads in the first 2 days Influenced more than \$5 million in pipeline	Odden, 2018
SAP	Targeted personas	Thought leadership	SAP launched its #LifeAt video campaign to highlight their innovators, game-changers, and true entrepreneurs.	4.5 million impressions 31% view-through rate for 5:00 videos, 21% view-through rate for 1:00 videos	Odden, 2018
SAP Ariba	Targeted personas	A lifecycle nurture program for targeted personas,	Appropriate target identification and distribution of customized messages for emails	454% increased open rate for emails to customers.	Odden, 2018

FIRM	TARGET	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	RESULTS	SOURCE
			targeting accounts using non-promotional language emphasizing thought leadership.		
Siemens PLM Software	Targeted personas	To educate customers and prospects, provide thought leadership.	Series of blog posts answering common buyer questions on digital twins and threads.	3,800 page views, high Google rank for topics addressed in posts.	Odden, 2018
Silicon Labs	Targeted personas	Brand awareness and customer engagement	Adoption of software for content management through templates and fragments, and enhanced data tracking, analysis.	Empowerment of marketing in relation to website and digital content, more efficient implementation, and content creation.	Goldbery, 2019; Mosher Zinck, 2018
Tempur Sealy Hospitality	Targeted personas (B2B buyers in hospitality)	Efficiency and increased awareness	Digital presentation approach for B2B buyers in hospitality to replace carrying physical samples.	Achieved a 90% adoption rate with the sales force	Odden, 2018
Trapeze Group	Current customers	Identify top accounts for personalized messaging.	The development of more personalized media and messaging for engagement with top performing accounts.	111% increase in session duration, 100% response rate to direct mail.	Odden, 2018
Uberflip	Current customers	New leads and conversion, develop customer data holdings.	A marketing maturity self-assessment tool and eBook for challenging ambitious marketers to reach higher.	907,843 impressions and 1,297 clicks on social media in 3 mos., 38% question completion rate	Odden, 2018
Veracode	New reach	Brand awareness and customer engagement	The Application Security Program Journey multi-touch campaign promoted content mapped against the buyer's journey.	Content generated 4,000 inquiries 479 opportunities, and 241 sales	Odden, 2018
Xactly	Current customers	Brand awareness and customer engagement	Power of X campaign used demonstration and testimonials through social promotion, direct mail, customer videos, and webinars.	280 leads generated	Odden, 2018

