

Chapter 12

SME Digital Content Engagement With Online Customers

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ABSTRACT

Modern consumers are active co-producers of content published on companies' different online platforms, but content must be relevant and engaging for customers to participate. Therefore, digital content marketing continuously calls for an improved amount of data and research to create and customize relevant, value-creating content for the company's stakeholders. Theory argues that brand-related, value-creating, and relevant content is an open invitation to engage with a company to build the necessary trust with customers and at the same time establish a closer relationship between the two parties. Transforming marketing strategies to a digital content-based paradigm has successfully been applied in large companies with in-house marketing and communication departments and/or large marketing budgets. However, for small and medium-sized enterprises transforming their marketing strategy to a digital content strategy is challenging. This case study demonstrates challenges of SMEs in digitally transforming their marketing strategies and SoMe engagement from their customers' perspectives.

CASE BACKGROUND

In this chapter we focus on the digital transformation of b2c marketing strategy. For small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), the spread of digital strategy is a game changing opportunity but also a po-

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Figure 1. Digital marketing and channels



tentially serious challenge. The challenge emerges from SMEs losing business by not possessing the skills, time, or knowledge to transform fundamentally, but only adopting superficial elements of digital transformation. From previous research, we know that SMEs do not use the full potential of new digital technologies, and therefore do not derive the benefit from digital opportunities (Taiminen and Karjaluo, 2015). Digital marketing provides growth opportunities for large companies as well as SMEs. One of the advantages for SMEs is that they can get ‘easy’ access to new and old segments through targeted (precision) marketing and affordable investments in for instance pay-per-click. Marketing as a value creating activity within a firm’s business model is transforming through digitalization (Verhoef et al 2021). In this chapter we turn our attention to how SMEs handle digital transformation in their marketing strategy. Marketing is continuously changing due to several factors, including digital opportunities and changes. Meanwhile, consumers’ expectations for more customized, even personalized, outreach and interaction continue to grow (Roger et al. 2021). That is, marketing is digitalized through a new set of techniques developed through the Internet to persuade users to buy a product or service (Avery, Steenburgh, Deighton, & Caravella, 2012).

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