

Integrated Marketing Communication
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Lecture - 56
Content Marketing

Hello friends, welcome back to yet again an essential discussion on the modes of integrated marketing communication. Now we are reaching a stage wherein we are wondering that we have worked so hard and thought about gaining the attention of our customers, persuading them with all the limitations of space and time and devices and the space on devices and along with ad clutter and message clutter and competition from all the sides.

And we have engaged so much creativity, and so much about the ability to plan and reach out to customers through different platforms. There is a vital mode that enables us to overcome several limitations. But again, concerning that particular kind of mode, we have to think strategically, think creatively, and plan.

Creativity, planning, and strategic perspective remain with us, but we try to remove the limitations of space and time. Here we tend to be elaborative because other modes of communication have given us the ability of reach and frequency has enabled us to pass on specific messages to the customers wherein several elements of positioning can be elaborated.

But we want several details at one goal. Catalogs, we have talked about. That is an effective mode, but there are several aspects we want to carry forward for our customers. And there comes the role of content marketing. And you would realize that this is an important aspect, which has a complementary role in B2B (business-to-business) marketing. It has a prominent role, beyond much beyond being complimentary.

But again, this is an important thing. Because when consumer decision is comparative, it is crucial concerning price sensitivity, or it is associated with life choices, it is associated with sensitive moments, significant moments of life itself. Then definitely, content marketing has a particular role to play.

There are several facets, which we will keep on discussing content marketing during this session.

Let us see, what McDonald's CEO Don Thompson says. He suggests that we have to ensure that the food is relevant. And that the awareness around McDonald's as a kitchen and a restaurant, as a kitchen and a restaurant that cooks and prepares fresh, high-quality food, is strong and pronounced. Now, this is an important aspect which the CEO wants.

How it happens. Content marketing is beneficial; that means freshness, quality, and , are projected in front of the customer.

McDonald's question time, our food, your questions. That is the program as the case says. McDonald's had some questions associated with their image. As they were struggling with it. one part of the time, they were struggling with questions on their positioning or reputation, not precisely positioning.

when you serve masses, then definitely there are several questions which come up. And then from other sides, people concerned about the general health of the masses, write articles wherein several foods are continuously being questioned. Fast food is one of those categories of foods that are continuously being questioned in terms of its impact on long-term health.

And there are several medical types of research that are going on, several kinds of outputs are coming up, and McDonald's as an organization has to face it up. McDonald's realized that people have to, , have big questions about the quality and origin of their food, from the standpoint of the ingredients, how food is prepared, and how they are working in their restaurants. , how they go from farm to restaurant and so on.

People want to, and people are concerned, this precisely happens in several cases, wherein a whole lot of sales has dipped down many a time. These are very important questions. If you put up this kind of a question in front of a mother that, this kind of food probably might not be healthy for your children, then the mother would become immediately skeptical.

McDonald's realized they should be coming up with this question. And they decided to take on the challenge of answering customers' questions by listening to real customers online and answering honestly in real-time and engaging the people in a two-way dialogue between customer and company.

The campaign has created the most trustful content in the form of questions and answers, around 10,000 customer questions that helped them to build strong relationships. Now, this cannot be done through other modes of advertising. You can put up, say that this is fresh, coming straight

from the farm.

Unless you explain this complete process, people might or might not believe it, and if they believe it, they might not be able to visualize it; who would be able to visualize that you are producing one quality burger around the world? How are you managing it? So that is an important thing, which has to be told to the customers as such.

And people accepted and loved their transparency. And it also builds trust and belief, and this is the ultimate objective of a marketer to develop trust amongst its customers, traversing as word of mouth for future customers. We discussed word of mouth and its importance in our earlier discussions. Regardless of the scenario, a bad image can also be, it can be shifted to effective content marketing and so on.

It does not imply that McDonald's had a bad image, no. McDonald's realized that it may go that way. It may lead the situation towards mistrust or distrust from the customer's side. They took on the challenge, but head-on answered the queries and gained the customers' trust. The story goes on McDonald's, one of the world's largest fast-food sales companies.

Content marketing is related to, , content on videos, white papers, and reports. And reports are critical when you go for, , specifically b2b or, let us say, counter-effective, kind of questions that come to the customers' minds. So then e-books, infographics. Now infographics we have talked about earlier as well.

Coffee table books are an essential element of content marketing. Many times you visit places, you have coffee table books about organizations. Almost every organization goes for those things, which are full of pictures, information, etc. You have several videos related to that kind of book. So you read that book. Then you watch videos, which is how content marketing keeps working.

Newsletters and news feeds are essential, and these are very common, , in this era of the Internet exchange. And then, although e-mode is becoming more significant, so are FAQs. This has become so important in due course of time. I feel that almost all of us would have visited FAQs, , about almost everything we purchase.

Not only in terms of the usage effectiveness, which FAQs bring in, but there are several trivial doubts that they clear. And in today's era wherein several products have become such that you just purchase and install them yourself and keep using them and maintaining them. And several

things in automotive today we have started maintaining ourselves.

So those handbooks, those FAQs, are essential for us to understand because they will accompany us all through in terms of getting closer to the product and developing trust towards the marketer. So that starts, the journey starts with communication. How-to-studies are there, photographs are there, case studies are there, and games and applications are there.

Now content marketing is essential for positioning a brand in the minds of the consumers. The positioning, or should I say strengthening the positioning in due course of time, both ways. And it is an umbrella term that focuses on matching content that is information inspiration or entertainment to a customer's needs at whichever stage they are in, in the buying cycle or a consumer's journey, should I say?

Content marketing is a strategic approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and drive profitable customer action. And this statement was given by the Content Marketing Institute in 2017. The reference is explicit. You can visit their site, and for further details.

The components are related to the substance on one side and workflow on the other side. Structure on one side, governance on the other side. Workflow and governance are related to people components. Substance and structure are related to content components. I have been continuously suggesting that matrix, any form of the matrix, any form of structure is just to enable you to understand that this is how this can be seen in a two-dimensional plane .

This is where a model, this matrix is related to a model explaining content strategy. So at the core, if you look at the strategy. It is surrounded by substance, workflow, structure, governance, and so on.

And principles of content creation are related to developing the customer persona, creating an engagement cycle, developing a brand story, and developing the content marketing channel plan. You would say that this is a sort of, , a common principle in the case of almost all the modes we have discussed until now. That is very true. But look specifically at developing a brand story.

This is very important concerning content marketing, because a story around a brand can be created through continuous messages on different modes in an integrated fashion. At the same time, a customer uses that brand through content marketing. That is an essential element that one should remember and understand. Now I will take it, take these principles one by one.

When first developing the customer persona, marketers should know the person they are selling to more than their demographics, behavior, behaviors, individual needs, buying cycle, customer motivation and goals, and whichever way we have been looking at the customers. We have to intensify our relationships with the customers. How?

The only way is to go into a deeper connection and detailed description of our intent, our understanding of the customer, our intent for the customer, our intent for the customer's satisfaction, towards the products, and our products and services in the future. How can we do that? We can do that through dialogues, communication, and social media, as we have talked about.

But again, the point is until and unless the customer knows thoroughly about our processes, entirely about our processes, until that stage, we might not be able to emphasize the significant point. And for this, we have to explain to them all the scenarios associated with how big we are, what kind of supply chain we have, what kind of plants and automatic systems we have, and so on.

I remember there have been stories on especially food items that how food items or packaged food items are specifically processed. And there was a time when people used to discriminate between packaged and fresh food. But in today's era, a lot of packaged food has also been taken. , they immediately brought out food from farms.

Because people have realized in due course of time that modern technology has enabled us to retain the freshness of vegetables and fruits for a longer time. Who has done that? Content marketers have done that. The other element is why should this person care about the company? That is precisely the point. You will tell them, and they will care.

What unique value proposition does the company offer this person? Then there is an element which can be explained through this small example. Decathlon has done wonders, and they are doing very well.

Companies often talk about being customer-centric. But Decathlon has put its customers at the heart of its growth strategy. They have built the world's largest sporting goods company by championing a consumer-centric approach through innovative technology and rapid expansion. This, being the world's largest, can be rechecked on different sources.

If it is there, please accept that, or otherwise just accept it as a gesture that they are significant. High-quality, innovative products are sold at the most affordable price by targeting consumers who seek value for their money rather than image or brand names. Decathlon uses single image ads to showcase their products and keep customer testimonials in most of their ad copies.

So, they focus upon customer testimonials. There are numerous "how-to" articles about various sports and products on their website. Each focuses on a distinct customer persona, associating almost everyone with some of their products. That is how they have focused on content marketing or content-based communication to retain their customers and continue expanding their business over time.

The second aspect in place of what we are discussing is creating the engagement cycle. Again, you would feel that this is generic. Still, there are some aspects which are specific to the abilities of content marketing, wherein you can generate awareness through other modes as well, but strengthening the awareness, strengthening the confidence on the awareness of the customer can be complemented through content marketing.

And which definitely can again play a very important role in the post-purchase experience. As in FAQs, I emphasized other modes and elements we discussed. So post-purchase behavior or experience can be strengthened because that will become, as I repeatedly am saying, the reason for word of mouth. If you are happy, you are feeling comfortable.

For example, let us say, a washing machine. You purchase the washing machine, and it starts making a funny sound the day you switch it on. And it usually happens. And you feel frightened that you have put in some 1000 rupees, and ultimately, you are at the losing end. But then you surf through their website. You go into some details.

You go into some booklets on the website or hard copies, which have been provided to you, and there they say that try and adjust the base of the washing machine through the kind of wheels which are given with that or adjust the platform. And you slightly focus upon that and start working beautifully.

That is where your confidence gets raised. Then you start reading about how to use that washing machine efficiently and what kind of detergents should be used. It becomes a part of your life. After two or three years then, you become delighted. You refer that washing machine to someone else who is about to change one, who is about to buy one.

And then post-purchase, probably after 10 or 12 years, whichever is the lifecycle of that particular washing machine, you end up buying the same brand once again.

Creating an engagement cycle can also be exemplified through Vodafone's beautiful example, wherein Vodafone always knew how to boost user engagement. And the Zoozoo campaign, it brought in, it gained lots of attention. And I will not elaborate upon that.

Just to mention here, they came up with their own Zoozoo emoji and collaborated with IPL to increase its customers. Promoted their campaign with the #BeSuper campaign on Twitter and asked users to share their incredible stories with #Super so that more people could know about their exciting deeds.

The campaign garnered a lot of attention and helped make Vodafone a staple in mobile networks. And then they started elaborating upon how. They started flowing the content through and elaborating upon how this will help the customers in due course of time, what additional features they have, and how the customer can benefit through their several services.

What is their signal strength in due course of time, what is there, other aspects which customers can feel advantaged by and so on? Now comes one of the most critical parts.

Developing a brand story is where I started my discussion on how a customer perceives and experiences your brand? What is your brand promise to the customer? What is the brand's history? it is vital for an organization to emphasize a brand's history because that reaps in the customer's confidence.

Because we all want to get established with a stronger deep-rooted brand and organization, what does your brand help the customer to achieve? This can be said as a narrative, even if it is a consumer product. Have you heard any organization saying that we have been in India for many years? I think Nescafe came up with this kind of campaign.

And that beautifully exemplified that they have been a part of our journey all through. A historical perspective can strengthen many things regarding marketing communication, and content marketing is an enabler of that.

Now Paper Boat is a perfect example of exemplifying a brand story. The nostalgia-triggered marketing with a modern-day twist to everyone's favorite aam Panna and jaljeera defines Paper Boat's brand journey. It is a usual product that every household used to make in their homes, and they were packaging that product and marketing it. So it had to have that kind of a thing associated with itself. From curating and transforming people's stories into beautiful illustrations and doodles to playing around with various themes, Paper Boat utilized all digital media at the core. Paper Boat effectively utilized storytelling to create its brand in the minds of the customer. And they chose nostalgia to create emotional appeal visible from their tagline "Drinks and Memories," and they elaborated through different kinds of descriptive details sent to the customers through different modes. The brand believed in making people taste memories.

Then there is an element of content marketing channel plan, wherein where will the customer view your content? What device will the customer be using? Because that is how you will structure your content. Why would people want this content through this channel? What do we hope the consumer will do with the content? What are the objectives of each channel as they relate to the engagement cycle and so on?

So now, let us talk about how content marketing is relevant for translating a marketer's or an organization's brand essence. The brand essence sums up the unique attributes of a brand and the basis for its emotional connection with customers. How can you do that? Obviously, through a detailed narrative and story.

And we have seen in preceding examples, whether it be of Paper Boat or Vodafone or other examples. They have made a difference in time while making the customer aware of the context they carry for their customers. The brand essence can be a helpful guide for ensuring that the content one creates and the marketing and the associated marketing activities represent the brand appropriately.

Now that must be related to the brand story. The reason for that brand; for example, have you

seen that book published by Amul, Anand Milk Union Limited. So that book details the story we have mentioned. I have mentioned that book in earlier sections also. That book actually, details upon the complete journey of Amul.

And that projects the brand essence, the reason why Amul exists. They suggest how they have associated with their stakeholders, whether it be their suppliers or partners or societies, which are associated, milk unions associated with them, or their customers at the end of the day. And how that is associated with a central perspective of utterly butterly delicious.

Now that is what that book carries. And this is precisely what content marketing is. How you connect that with your customers' interests is an essential question for a marketer because, the customer always wants to remain connected with you based on the interest he may carry concerning your products or offerings.

What is the value you add to your customers' lives? Is it convenience, health, status, whatever? So that is primarily the perspective around customer content marketing. Sorry.

So let me take you to, , one last element of content marketing, content marketing communication. That is, matching content formats to the objectives. See, information can be presented, by this time you are wondering that, should I publish a book? Should I go for a video? Should I go for several FAQs? Should I go for some other mode?

Should I go for a coffee table book? The information can be presented through any number of mediums, both an opportunity and a challenge faced by content marketers. To gain and keep the attention of consumers and users, it is sometimes not enough to rely simply on text-based forms of content. So it has to be innovative.

We have to see what can be utilized to reach closer to the customer and tell the story. The role of content marketers is to select the suitable medium based on overall objectives, production capabilities, and the audience's needs.

And here is a glimpse of, here is a glimpse of, different forms of content will support different objectives. It is self-exemplary, wherein celebrity endorsements can say something. Community forums can emphasize some other points. Reviews can talk about something else.

If you see on this two-dimensional plane, wherein, , emotional to rational aspect and awareness to purchase aspect is demonstrated. And on one corner there is, , an aspect of entertainment. On the other hand, it is an aspect of inspiration. On one, it is to educate the customer. And on the other, it is convincing the customer.

So different kinds of elements fall, , at different levels in different quadrants, but the message is clear: there are several options. It depends upon what objectives we carry and how efficiently we can utilize those options to narrate our story to reach the customers' hearts. Reaching the hearts of the customers is what we have to do at the end of the day.

With this thought, I leave you to ponder further what we have discussed. And in our next session, we will discuss some more aspects related to the measurement and evaluation of integrated marketing communication. Then we would be moving on towards ethics and how ethics is important for integrated marketing communication and its understanding.

And after that, I will say goodbye to you regarding the complete course. Bear with me, till then goodbye.