

BUSI48907: Consultancy Experience  
Project  
Literature Review

What Type Of Content Works Best On  
Which Social Media Platforms

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## Introduction

This essay will investigate the literature behind what type of content works best on which platforms for B2C marketing. This will be relevant to digital marketing as a deeper understanding of what different platform's audiences are interested in seeing in their social media feeds, this will help marketers to create platform specific content that works best for each digital marketing platform. This essay will investigate current views and identify the relationship between differing theories whilst looking for gaps in the knowledge that need to be investigated more thoroughly. Along with this the importance of knowing the customer persona of each social media platform will explain how it can impact upon content strategies. The literature sourced for this review has been gathered through academic journals as well as a few high profile blog articles relating to the digital marketing industry in order to maintain the most up to date information at hand.

This essay links directly to the consultancy experience project as producing a content strategy for the client was a key aspect of the project this meant having to research their target customer and develop an understanding of the content they would be attracted to based on which platforms they use. This essay aims to investigate further how the different platform's users consume content and why it is necessary to understand the customer persona that B2C companies which to target with their content.

This literature review will be reviews literature based on what content is currently popular for all and also will be investigating the significance of knowing the target customer in order to be able to market to them using appropriate formats of content on the most appropriate social media platforms for that particular market. This essay also defines how further research could be undertaken to further the current understanding of each social media platforms typical customer persona to provide more in depth understanding of who is likely to be using which platform.

## Knowing The Audience

When it comes to understanding what types of content to post on social media, knowing the recipient audience is key. A large part of creating content depends solely on who will engage with that content and therefore investigating the audience in which the company wish to attract is very important. Creating a customer persona is an excellent way to establish the customer base. Reid, 2013 explains how the best way they have seen customer personas presented is by using visual images of what their target customer thinks about and cares about. This is an excellent way to understand and visualise what customers are like. Heberger, 2017 suggests that when constructing a customer persona, it is especially important to be detailed and that the temptation to include everyone as possible customers will lead to failing to attract anyone. The idea that trying to obtain as many customers as possible by targeting a broad range of customers seems like a good idea however it is difficult to attract everyone as this would result in the company's content strategy not being relevant to anyone and therefore leading to failure. Reid, 2013 also states "that content has to answer questions in the user's mind" This means when developing content, it is very important to find out what the ideal customers want to see. This requires market research and the ability to imagine being the customer in order to understand them. Each of the key authors in this area are all agreed upon that it is necessary to understand the customers in order to create content appropriate to them. This understanding of the customer can also point to which social media platforms they may be using the most.

## Formats That Are Best For Each Platform

Once an understanding of the customer has been conducted then knowing the right format the content needs to be in so that the customer would be engaged is a key step in developing a content strategy. There are some particular formats of content that are inclusive of everyone. Lua, 2020 describes the best general types of format for content for each social media. It is stated that:

- Facebook users engage with videos and curated content.
- Instagram users engage with high quality photos and videos, quotes and stories.

- Twitter users engage the most with news, blog posts and gifs.
- LinkedIn users are more engaged with jobs, company news and professional content.
- Pinterest users engage with Infographics and step by step guides.

This brief understanding of the types of users that use each platform will help marketers when developing their customer persona as knowing which platform the customer persona is likely to use will help the company to understand what types of format to use when creating content.

Video content is particularly engaging as it allows the audience to quickly and easily consume the content. Grant, 2014 explains how engaging content has minimum jargon and is easy to read. As videos require no reading this means most people prefer them to lengthy written posts. Therefore, video content is an effective way to generate engagement.

User generated content also seems to be very popular. “Currently 86% of consumers in their mid-teens to mid-30s say that user-generated content has more influence on what they buy than product copy found on the website.” (Reid 2013) This shows how the move towards influencer content and content created by other users is attracting customers to B2C companies as to customers it is more useful and informative. This is because customers see it as a type of review and it gives the perception of being more trustworthy as it is less sales orientated. (Choi and Lee, 2017) However, user generated content in the form of reviews are much more likely to be negative, 41% of consumers are more likely to share a negative review on Twitter. (Ismail and Khalid, 2015) Therefore, user generated content has the potential to impact companies negatively.

Getting influencers to review products is an upward trend in marketing. So much so that companies have begun to create CGI influencers. Lil Miquela a CGI influencer has 2.6million followers on Instagram. Lee and Mudge, 2018 article on this topic predict that companies will begin to make their own CGI influencers due being able to easily control them. Whereby they could carefully curate the content so as to not impact the company negatively that user generated content can. This is a new form of content that marketers may be looking to in the near future.

Hwong et al., 2017 Has researched into what content is likely to receive the most engagement specifically for the field of space science. This study has discovered that some top features of engaging content for space science is photographs, anger, visual descriptions, positivity and anxiety for Facebook. While for Twitter it has found that photographs, gifs, videos, hashtags and certainty is typical for increased engagement of content related to space science. This is similar to the findings of Lua, 2020 however their research suggested more current affairs and news was better for Twitter content but like this study also noted that gifs work well for engagement too as well as photographs for Facebook. This study has developed understanding of their audience's attitudes towards content relating to the topic and how much engagement is likely to happen. This shows how emotions can play a large part in content, as anger and anxiety were popular for this topic perhaps other emotional content can generate engagement with other topics. This study also corroborates the understanding that visual content is widely consumed over most platforms as previously stated the ease of understanding is more effortless when an audience want to consume content. (Grant, 2014)

## Common Themes of the Literature

The common themes of the reviewed articles show that understanding your audience is key to creating content. This means that when marketers design content they first need to have researched and developed an understanding of their customer. Without this in-depth knowledge then the content can fail to attract anyone by trying to target everyone. (Heberger, 2017)

This is evident through failed marketing campaigns due to companies lack of understanding of their audience. For example in the 1980s Colgate attempted to branch out and sell frozen lasagnes. (See Appendix 1) This was unsuccessful as customers associated Colgate with toothpaste and not delicious food. (McLaughlin, 2020) This was a failure of Colgate to understand what their customers wanted and released a product they thought would be successful to a large audience which failed as the connotations of tooth paste and food do not work well together. Another campaign targeted at everyone was that of Aldi, using

twitter to ask customers to fill in the blank within the sentence “I became an ALDI lover when I tasted \_ for the first time.” (See Appendix 2) This campaign failed to predict that by advertising to the whole world they would get back some unpleasant replies. (Gorbatch, 2020) However if they were to target a more specific audience such as parents in a manner that was less public they may have found their feedback to be more pleasant. One particularly effective marketing campaign that had a very specific audience they wished to target was Chanel No5 with their Mothers Day campaign featuring images of children’s drawings of the product. (See Appendix 3) (Bestdesigns.co, 2020) This product could easily be marketed to everyone as it is a product that all women could use however choosing to specifically target families with a cute style of campaign was successful for the company as they had developed an ideal customer for their product and developed a way in which to attract them to the brand.

Along with this the move to interactive content such as videos, user generated content and influencer content both CGI and human is more influential and engaging. This type of content appears more trustworthy, attractive and easy to consume. (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019) B2C companies are moving towards this type of content to attract their audiences as opposed to written content which can often be considered boring and full of jargon. (Grant, 2014) Lua, 2020 research on what types of content works best on each platform is also corroborated by these other authors as it is clear that visual content is much more engaging than that of written.

Most people are expected to maintain a presence on every social media platform (Scolere. et al, 2018) however, a common theme of the literature shows that using the bigger social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter as opposed to TikTok (Jonas, 2020) is best for companies especially if they are a small businesses. For these smaller companies researching which platforms their ideal customer uses is the most effective use of their time rather than targeting all platforms. (Kinman, 2020) This shows how important building a customer persona is as all of the literature points to the need to know who the customer is before it is possible to understand the content and platform required to target this customer.

From researching the literature on the topic of what types of content works best for which platforms it is possible to find that authors overwhelmingly agree on the key aspects relating to this topic whereby an understanding of the audience is the most effective way to create content perfect for the target customer. However there is generalised opinion that some forms of content such as videos, and visual content overall works better to attract and engage consumers than that of written content this is from the ease of understanding that Grant, 2014 explains.

## Gaps In Knowledge

Reading through the literature a gap in the knowledge is who are the different users of each social media platform. Is it even possible to group different people together based on the platforms they use? Currently it is evident that new social media platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat are being used by a much younger generation as opposed to Facebook and Twitter users. This information is important to marketers as it can give them a more detailed understanding of each platform's user and therefore leading them to create more detailed customer personas while focusing on the platforms that are relevant for their audience.

There is some information of demographics of each social media platform. Chen, 2020 has created infographics with information such as gender, age and location as well as income and education level on most social media platforms. (See Appendix 4.) This is a great start towards further research in this area which can give marketers basic information regarding the audiences of each platform but based on this knowledge is it possible to determine the audience's preference of content format? Further research would need to be conducted to assess the possible format preferences by the users of each platform. For example, is it possible to determine that TikTok users would not enjoy long video tutorials but in fact prefer a short snappy tutorial video? Or is it possible to determine that Twitter users prefer to read news article than to view TikTok style videos? Therefore is there a general format for content based on each platform's user? This information would be particularly good for marketers to know so that when they have found the right platform for their target



audience they can then generate the preferred format of content for their audience to consume leading to a better customer relationship with the company as it would help the brand identity appear in line with the customer's own identity.

## Further Research That Is Required

Further research into the more behavioral and psychographic information of each social media platforms users could be conducted to better the understanding of what formats of content best suit that particular platform. This would require a large amount of research with a sizable research sample in order to generalize it to each platform. It is suggested that accessing data from the social media platforms themselves would be the most efficient way to do this however, it raises ethical concerns over the sharing of personal data limiting the study and therefore potentially distorting the results.

Along with generating a customer persona for each social media platform based on information that needs to be researched, this could then help marketers identify which platforms host customers that closely match their own customer persona leading to a greater understanding of what type of content that customer would most likely interact with. Research into what formats of content work the best on each social media platform would need to be conducted this could be in the form of gathering data on what formats of content gain the most engagement, therefor also test the hypothesis that videos and photographic content are most commonly engaged with format due to the ease of their ability to be consumed by the users of the social media platforms.

## Conclusions

From the research conducted in this literature review it is evident that more research is required to fully understand what type of content works best on which social media platform. However, there is key evidence showing the demographic information of each platform's users as well as an overview of content that is more likely to be consumed by all such as videos and user generated content. It has also noted that new forms of content are being created such as CGI Influencers which are increasing in popularity rapidly and would be more easily managed by marketers.

This literature review has also discovered the importance of knowing the customer persona of each social media platform in order to then match them to the company's customer persona in order to discover the social media platform most likely to be used by them and also what content they preferer to engage with. Evidence of failed campaigns shows the impact of not researching the target customer can have on the company whereby product lines fail, brand image can be lost and loss of revenue can occur.

To understand this topic further it is recommended that a larger study be conducted to generate the data required to fully develop the customer personas of each social media platform and their preference for content. As this would require a large research sample this would be a particularly hard study to conduct, however this could provide benefits to the marketing industry by giving marketers a rough guide of each social media's customer persona and their preferred format of content.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1 – Colgate Frozen Lasagne campaign.



### Appendix 2 – Aldi fill in the blank campaign.



**ALDI Australia**  @ALDIAustralia 1h  
Fill in the blank! #tellus #feedback  
#ALDI

I became an ALDI lover  
when I tasted \_\_\_\_\_ for  
the first time.



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### Appendix 3 – Chanel No5. Mother's day campaign.



### Appendix 4 – Facebook Infographic (Chen, 2020)

