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SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

MASTER THESIS

**AN ANALYSIS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTENT
MARKETING STRATEGY: THE CASE OF “SPORT GARAGE”**

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ANA PAVLOVA

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

The undersigned Ana Pavlova, a student at the University of Ljubljana, School of Economics and Business, (hereafter: SEB LU), author of this written final work of studies with the title An analysis and implementation of content marketing strategy: the case of "Sport Garage", prepared under supervision of prof. dr. Mateja Kos Koklič

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
1 UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING	3
1.1 Characteristics of Social Media Marketing.....	4
1.2 Social Media Platforms	5
1.2.1 Success factors for social media platforms.....	5
1.2.2 Facebook.....	7
1.2.3 Instagram.....	8
1.3 Social media funnel	13
2 CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY	15
2.1 Setting SMART goals.....	16
2.2 Measuring the effectiveness of content marketing through KPIs	17
2.3 Researching buyer persona and audience	19
2.4 Creating unique and engaging content.....	20
2.5 Creating social media content calendar.....	21
2.6 Tracking and measuring campaigns.....	22
3 ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY OF NIKE	22
3.1 Target audience and buyer persona	23
3.2 Channel choices	24
3.3 Content activities.....	25
3.4 Marketing strategy	26
4 EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SPORT GARAGE CUSTOMERS	27
4.1 Purpose and goals of empirical study	28
4.2 Research hypotheses.....	28
4.3 Methodology	30
4.4 Analysis of results.....	31
5 DISCUSSION	41
5.1 Main findings and business implications	41

5.2 Limitations and recommendations for further research.....	43
CONCLUSION.....	44
REFERENCE LIST	46
APPENDICES	47

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Post from Hot Pockets Instagram.....	10
Figure 2: The North Face Instagram feed.....	100
Figure 3: The Athlete's Foot Slovenia Instagram feed	111
Figure 4: High-converting ad campaign	122
Figure 5: Tagged product for easier shopping experience.....	133
Figure 6: Oreo engaging content	211
Figure 7: Consumers' age groups	311
Figure 8: Level of education of consumers	322
Figure 9: Consumers' living standard	322
Figure 10: Consumers' employment status	333
Figure 11: Workout frequency	333
Figure 12: Influencers' impact on consumer buying decisions	344
Figure 13: Influencers' impact on consumer buying decisions	355
Figure 14: Influencers' impact on consumer buying decisions	355
Figure 15: Social Media accounts used by consumers	366
Figure 16: Online purchasing of sportswear	377
Figure 17: Internet usage by consumers	377
Figure 18: Buyer persona.....	422
Figure 19: Research findings	455

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: H1. - Chi-Square Test Statistics	7
Table 2: H2. - One sample statistics	7
Table 3: H3. - Chi-Square Test Statistics	8
Table 4: H3. - Chi-Square - Frequencies	8
Table 5: H4. - Chi-Square Test Statistics	9
Table 6: H5. - Chi-Square Test Statistics	9
Table 7: H5. - Chi-Square - Frequencies	9
Table 8: Content calendar for Sport Garage.....	10

LIST OF APENDIXES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in the Slovene language)	2
Appendix 2: Research questionnaire	4
Appendix 3: Tables of the analysis	7
Appendix 4: Content calendar.....	10

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have become a standard element of people's social life (Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides & Alarcón-del-Amo, 2014). They provide users with a network on which they can connect with friends, communities, groups, and businesses.

Social media lets consumers get information about the products, such as discounts, special promotions, and the latest products. "Viral marketing" is an online form of word-of-mouth communication to share information organically with family and friends via the internet (Kagan, 2019). "Word of mouth" is a form of marketing that relies on customers sharing their experiences with a product or service with others through conversation. Viral marketing is a strategy that encourages individuals to spread a marketing message to others, allowing it to reach many people quickly and grow exponentially. It is a type of word-of-mouth marketing that uses existing social networks to increase brand recognition (Wilson, 2018). The most successful viral marketing campaign involves influencers who have a massive base of followers on social media platforms (Kagan, 2019). In addition, "Content marketing" is a sort of marketing that concentrates on developing, posting, and distributing content for a targeted audience online. It is used to attract, engage, and retain customers (Bakklog, 2023).

Social media sites have a considerable impact on consumer buying behavior. The power that social media has cannot be unnoticed by brands. Studies show that many people rely on customers' reviews and information on social media before purchasing a product. Statistics show that 54 percent of social browsers use social media to research products. Millennials and Gen Z as the first mobile generations are the groups that spend most of their time on social media. These social browsers are also brand-engaged through liking, commenting, following, and sharing (Beer, 2018).

Globally, more than 97 percent of businesses use social media marketing to target consumers, which provides them with less costly combined marketing activities. Facebook is chosen by more than 54 percent of marketers as their first platform. The businesses use social media platforms as a tool for four purposes: (1) branding, publicity, and reputation management; (2) business networking; (3) market research and feedback; and (4) customer relationship management and customer service. Even though social media is used to acquire more customers and increase brand awareness, businesses must also focus on building brand loyalty and keeping customers entertained on their social media profiles (Ismail, 2017).

Creating quality content is the most critical component of building a successful online presence. Nowadays, viral is one of the most successful methods of developing brand presence, growing audience engagement and driving sales. Content creation is a number

one priority for most marketers (Riserbato, 2020). Content marketing is defined as “A method for companies to educate, inform, entertain and inspire the action of existing and potential customers. Content marketing promotes the product or service by raising brand awareness and by shaping the consumer perception. Content marketing is an integral part of social media marketing.” (Braun, 2017). In addition, content marketing strategy is the process of planning, creating, and distributing content on the right platforms. Some key factors that should be considered when developing a content marketing strategy are the business goal, target audience, design, and copywriting (Aboulhosn, 2019). The visual representation of the business's social media profile first catches the customer's eye (Frick & Eyler-Werve, 2015).

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a deeper knowledge of content marketing strategy and to implement this knowledge in practice to provide recommendations for optimizing social media accounts of Sport Garage. In doing so, I aim improve the social media presence of Sport Garage through the different types of campaigns for different buyer personas.

The goals of this master's thesis are:

1. To define and explain content marketing, the benefits of using it and social media metrics to analyze the content.
2. To examine the case of a world leader company for sports apparel "Nike" and to present their digital marketing strategies.
3. To create a social media content strategy for Sport Garage by understanding the importance of social media content strategy and the steps of developing a successful one.
4. To develop a social media content calendar
5. To analyze the results of the implemented strategy

The objective of this thesis is to create a content marketing strategy and social media content calendar for a sportswear apparel company in North Macedonia and to improve the company's online presence. Using the literature review, social media calendar will be developed, an example case of content marketing for the Nike brand will be explored, a buyer persona will be identified, and a recommendation in content marketing will be provided at the end.

The empirical research will be focused on developing the buyer persona. The primary purpose is to profile a typical customer of this company and explore its lifestyle, social media usage, and online purchasing behavior. Additionally, the following research questions will be answered through this survey:

RQ1: Who are Sport Garage customers' age groups?

RQ2: What type of lifestyle Sport Garage customers have?

RQ3: Which social media platform is the most preferred by Sport Garage customers?

RQ4: What time of the day are Sport Garage customers more actively using social media platforms?

RQ5: Does social media content influence the buying decision of Sport Garage customers?

RQ6: What type of content is more efficient for the decision to purchase online?

The thesis comprises theoretical and empirical parts based on primary and secondary data. The theoretical part provides a better understanding and knowledge of the topic studied, and at the same time, it sets the base for empirical research and data collection. The empirical part is based on primary data. A survey questionnaire is used to understand and create the buyer persona for the company. The goal was to understand online consumer behavior in the context of buying sportswear, create a value proposition, and increase customer engagement. The survey was created and shared online on social media platforms, and the target consumers were adults from North Macedonia, mainly near the region where Sport Garage is located.

In the conclusion, a buyer persona is created together with the content calendar for Instagram and Facebook.

1 UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Today, most campaigns are made based on several integrated marketing strategies. Since content marketing is an integral part of social media marketing, it is essential to understand the value of social media marketing. The primary distinction between content marketing and social media marketing is as follows: content marketing is what is provided to potential customers, while social media is where businesses connect directly with their potential customers (Braun, 2017). Nowadays, the power to share information and to communicate with anyone in the world is given to the people by social media platforms. First, it was only designed for communication among internet users, but then it became the place where people can find different types of products and services. So, businesses took advantage of it and started to use these platforms, with more than 3 billion users globally, as a place where they can easily promote their products or services (Dollarhide, 2019).

Social media marketing has brought huge changes for businesses and how they operate now. The focus is on making social platforms the best way to deliver different content types. It is where the businesses and the potential or existing customers interact directly, improving brand engagement and customer satisfaction. Small businesses have the

opportunity to improve their sales and brand awareness at a larger scale by creating virtual communities (Braun, 2017).

1.1 Characteristics of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is defined as: "The use of social media platforms to connect with your audience to build your brand, increase sales, and drive website traffic. It involves publishing great content on social media profiles, listening to and engaging with followers, analyzing results, and running social media advertisements" (Read, n.d.). Turban et al. (2018) define social media marketing as "The application of marketing communication and other marketing tools using social media. Social media marketing facilitates social commerce, builds brands, repairs brand reputation damage in social media, and fosters long-term customer relationships, among other things." (Turban, 2018). Chaffey and Ellis – Chadwick (2016) define social media marketing as "Monitoring and facilitating customer-to-customer interaction and participation throughout the web to encourage positive engagement with a company and its brands. Interactions may occur on a company site, social networks, and other third-party sites" (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2016).

Social media marketing is one of the biggest trends, especially during COVID-19, when everyone is stuck at their home and wasting their time on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, which are now "shopping destinations" (WARC Category Intelligence, 2020a n). For businesses, it is all about finding their target audience and customers who can interact with their brand (Baker, 2020). In addition, social media platforms dramatically changed how businesses market their products or services. The number of companies, even the smaller ones, that are hiring social media experts or consultants to improve their online presence and activities is efficiently increasing (KVNW, n.d.).

With the use of social media marketing, companies can reach a wider audience by displaying ads specifically for whom are tailored. Marketers have the opportunity to create an audience based on their demographics, behaviors, interests, and more (Read, n.d.).

Social media marketing has many benefits, some of the most evident being: increasing brand awareness, generating leads and boosting conversions, improving customer relationships, and learning from competitors. First, by using social media, companies can improve brand awareness through social engagement. Users of social media platforms can comment, like, or share posts, and in that way, they engage with brands, leading to higher brand awareness. Also, businesses can direct the audience to their website by including direct links in their posts or bio. The second benefit is that promoting products

or services on social media is a great way to increase sales and improve lead generation. This is maybe the easiest one because people have already chosen to follow the brand. The third benefit is that businesses can improve customer relationships by responding to questions and reviews, interacting with them on posts, and asking them about products or services. The fourth benefit is learning from competitors. Companies can find out what works for them by analyzing their competitors, specifically their campaigns, posts, and tactics (Hubspot. 2019).

1.2 Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms are the primary tool to engage with customers and build a brand. The change in technology helped in developing better marketing strategies at lower costs. Social media platforms have the power to promote a product or a service to the whole world (Clark, 2019).

Today, internet users are more than information receivers. They are also content creators and active social media users (Liu, North & Li, 2017). Studies indicate the importance of using social media platforms for businesses to engage personally with customers. It is the key to building solid relationships (Malik, 2019).

With more than 3 billion users worldwide, the role of social media in improving businesses is enormous. It is the ability to gather data that helps companies to focus on market research and marketing efforts. It allows companies to target the right audience, drive sales by building strong customer relationships, and distribute coupons and sales to potential customers (Dollarhide, 2019). Furthermore, due to algorithm changes, businesses need to pay more for their content to be shown in front of their audience. (WARC, 2016). Now, businesses should focus more on paid campaigns, so the created content can be shown in front of a larger group of internet users. The businesses that do not create paid campaigns have their content shown less on social media platforms, which leads to lower engagement and decreased sales (Barnhart, 2021). Also, business results become more measurable and vital. Organic reach, defined as the number of internet users that have seen content through unpaid delivery, is a thing of the past (Sehl, 2021).

1.2.1 Success factors for social media platforms

There are several things essential to be successful on social media platforms. The first step to take in mind is balance. According to Kantar's CrossMedia database, Facebook is at the top of all the channels regarding cost efficiency. Furthermore, brand equity has increased in the past six years because of the impact of Facebook. The important thing is that companies must keep a spending balance between other channels to deliver positive ROI. (Whiteside, 2021). Successful campaigns mean distributing spent through the most important channels and objectives for the brand. Studies show that synergy plays a vital

role in boosting campaign performance. For social media, the best results come from synergy with online video, TV, and out-of-home advertising. Earned media, such as reviews, PR, brand experience, and blogs, are key touchpoints that should be concluded as a part of the digital marketing plan (Walley, Gates-Sumner, Salter, 2020). Customer touchpoints are part of the customer experience and are defined as "the complete set of connections and interactions that a customer has with a brand both online and offline via a multitude of touchpoints." There are online and offline customer touchpoints. Online touchpoints are social media, chatbots, e-commerce transactions, video views, etc. Offline touchpoints are outdoor advertising, in-store experience, etc. (WARC, 2021).

The second step is to have clear objectives. There are different things to consider when companies use different channels for marketing. Even though traditional marketing is more trustworthy, digital marketing scores more on innovation. Companies should consider these two things to improve their way of advertising. Clear objectives can avoid confusion and duplication on all channels (Walley, Gates-Sumner, Salter, 2020).

The third step to consider is versatility. We all learned from 2020 that everyone should be prepared for the unexpected, as most companies could not react fast to the disruption caused by COVID-19. Annual media planning is a past. In post-COVID days, scenario planning and dynamic planning is the norm. Social media is the channel where companies can react and respond fast to changes and, for now, is the best channel for dynamic planning (Walley, Gates-Sumner, Salter, 2020).

The fourth step is transparency. It's important for companies to consider how they communicate with their customers. About 64% of social media users do not want their data to be used for advertising. On the other side, 43% of social media users prefer their data to be used for advertising, so they can see relevant and specific ads according to their interests (Walley, Gates-Sumner, Salter, 2020).

The last step is effectiveness. Companies should set clear KPIs, which can be measured and analyzed to maximize ROI (Walley, Gates-Sumner, Salter, 2020). One of the most known key performance indicators on social media platforms are follower count, impressions, post reach, web traffic, shares, clicks, likes, mentions, comments, profile visits, etc. (Chen, 2021).

From these five steps, there are five questions that companies should address (Walley, Gates-Sumner, Salter, 2020):

- Balance: Do you have more than 50% of media spend in any single channel?
- Objectives: Do you have clear and distinct objectives for your social activity, aligned across all paid and earned channels?
- Versatility: Are you able to react fast to media disruption?

- Transparency: Are you confident that your social activity is being targeted in a considerate way?
- Effectiveness: Are you testing and learning with social?

Furthermore, there are many social media platforms, but according to marketers worldwide, the most important platforms for businesses are Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Even if Facebook is on the first place among users and marketers, Instagram growth is perfectly strong. In one study, more than 70% of the marketers answered that they will focus more on posting on Instagram and reduce the activity on Facebook (Statista, 2021).

1.2.2 Facebook

Digitalization has increased the usage of many social media channels (Drummond, O'Toole, & McGrath, 2020). Facebook, created in 2004 and finally went online in 2006 by Marc Zuckerberg, is constantly increasing the number of active accounts (Tankovska, 2021a). An increase of 12% in active users year over year is a platform that gives many opportunities to businesses to create strategies and to build strong engagement with their customers (Beveridge, 2022). According to statistics, Facebook has 1.8 billion users per day, which means a massive base of users' data. The data from Facebook users is a perfect way to target the right audience for specific businesses and create successful strategies (WARC Category Intelligence, 2020b).

Furthermore, it has a subnational impact on businesses' success and operations. Users can avoid physical interaction and be more in the virtual world. In addition, businesses can build engaged relationships with an increased number of customers in a way that they could not do before (Jones, Borgman & Ulusoy, 2015).

Facebook continues to generate more opportunities for advertisers to create better campaigns, such as augmented reality on Facebook Messenger and chatbots, improved video campaigns, etc. Nevertheless, several disagreements over the accuracy of campaigns, the usage of user data, and the spread of hate speech and misinformation on its platform have affected the reputation of Facebook. What interested most marketers is the possible damage to their brands' reputations. Facebook has created a three-tier model to help brands feel safe using the platform (WARC Category Intelligence, 2020b). The model is created to identify suitable content and build a safe environment for brands. The three key priorities are (Castro, 2021):

1. "Building out Facebook's content moderation capabilities, both human and AI, and enabling users to report inappropriate content

2. Helping brands understand their safety tolerances, and the types of content they consider to be unsuitable
3. Building brand safety into newer social environments, such as messaging apps."

After COVID-19 situation, Facebook is more of a shopping destination. Facebook Shops were announced by the company in May 2020. It enables other companies to sell their products or services online using the platform. It is free to use unless there is payment. In that case, businesses pay 5% of the transaction. While some of the biggest companies are cutting back their paid campaigns on Facebook, over 140 million smaller companies are here to fill the gap. Larger businesses can learn from modestly-sized firms because they quickly respond to changes in Facebook user needs and the user wants (WARC Category Intelligence, 2020b).

Furthermore, Facebook allows businesses to build strategies using its tools. In September 2020, Facebook created a single place called "Facebook business suite" for business owners to access the tools they need to run their business accounts on Instagram and Facebook much more quickly than before. All the tools, such as messaging, posting, advertising, and insight, are aligned to improve businesses' managing experience across the apps (Meta, n.d.). One of Facebook's most powerful tools is Ads Manager. It is a place for advertisers to run their ads on Facebook, Instagram, Audience Network, or Messenger.

In October 2021, Mark Zuckerberg announced a new Facebook name, Meta. He said their target group is primarily young adults from 18 to 29 years old, not the older crowd that was their core before. It is focused on creating a new generation of online interaction, known as the "metaverse ."Their new company name represents everything they do, not just Facebook (Bond, 2021). The primary thing of this new digital world is virtual and augmented reality. Gaming will be the first feature of the metaverse. Workout sessions and education and work features will also be included (Kim, 2021). In this virtual space, people can create avatars that represent each other while using some features (Canales, 2021).

Facebook is the winning platform if marketers know how to combine the right objective, ad type, placement, and targeting options through optimization and testing. Its targeting tools enable marketers to create cost-effective and powerful campaigns (WARC Category Intelligence, 2019).

1.2.3 Instagram

Years ago, brands were focused on guerilla marketing to keep and attract new customers. These strategies were expensive, so smaller businesses could not afford it and they were struggling to grow their brands. However, with the adoption of internet everything has

changed. Social media platform Instagram has proven that is a powerful platform to build a brand (Clark, 2019)

With more than 1 billion monthly active users (Tankovska, 2021b), according to Statista the most active users are from 25 to 34 years or around two thirds of total Instagram users, which makes this platform an excellent choice to build a brand (Tankovska, 2021b). Studies show that Instagram users are more likely to engage with brands than Facebook users. Furthermore, content is the main part of the Instagram. More than 95 million videos and photos are shared daily and this is the reason why over 500 million users open the app on a daily basis. The core of a strategy, should be a good quality content (Read, n.d). Marketers should focus on creating engaging Instagram content that is unique and delivers users a purpose to follow a brand. To be more creative, marketers should consider the profiles of brands' competitors to promote uniquely the products or services. In addition, customers can be seen as promoters. They can generate content and re-post brands content on their private profiles, or companies can encourage them to use brands' hashtag to express their feelings or experience with the products or services. Another thing to consider is the right frequency of posting on Social Media Platforms. If marketers post infrequently, there is a chance for a brand to be forgotten by its followers. If marketers post frequently, there is a chance for a brand to become annoying to its followers. Both scenarios could lead to decrease in engagement and to a loss in followers. Studies show that is better to post only when there is a quality content to share (Hubspot, 2020). Interesting thing about Instagram users is how in most cases they engage with brands that do not constantly share photos of their products or services on their profiles, but more funny and unusual posts such as memes and quotes. Not posting a product or a service increases brand awareness in a unique way. It is about to not using Instagram as a platform for advertisement, but to develop the right strategy to provide value to Instagram's community for long-term success.

There are six strategies to be considered when marketers use Instagram for businesses (Forsey, 2022):

1. "Add value with your content" – It is critical for companies to have high-quality and thoughtful content, because at the end Instagram is a leading visual platform. With the highest engagement rate, to succeed on Instagram, marketers should develop more creative and interesting content. It is not just about posting a picture of a product and increasing sales or brand awareness. For some brands it is better if they do not. A great example is a brand called Hot Pockets. They sell microwaveable pocket sandwiches and their presence on Instagram is totally in a different direction. Instead of posting their sandwiches, they engage with their audience through humor by posting funny quotes or memes. Figure 1 shows one of their posts.

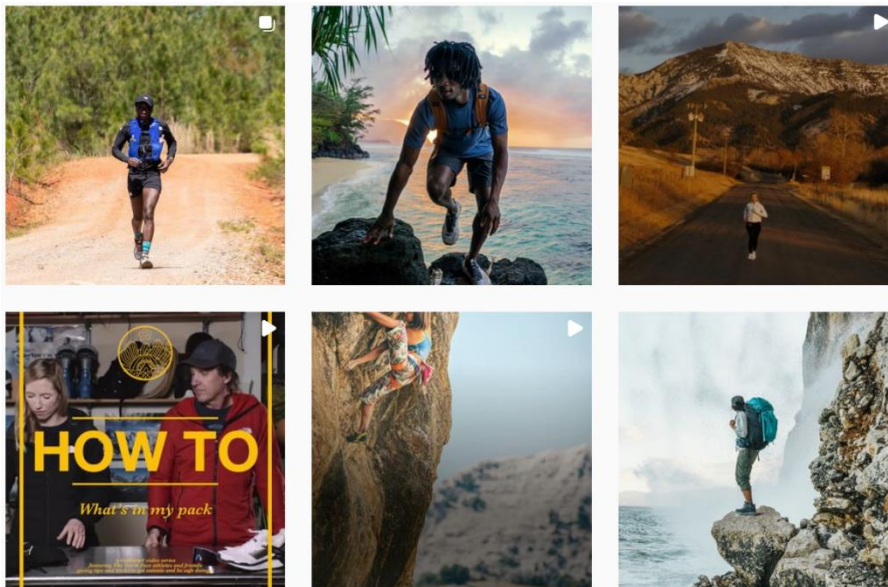
Figure 1: Post from Hot Pockets Instagram



Source: Hot Pokets (2021).

On the other hand, The North Face brand posts adventurous pictures which are related with their audience. Figure 2 shows their feed.

Figure 2: The North Face Instagram feed

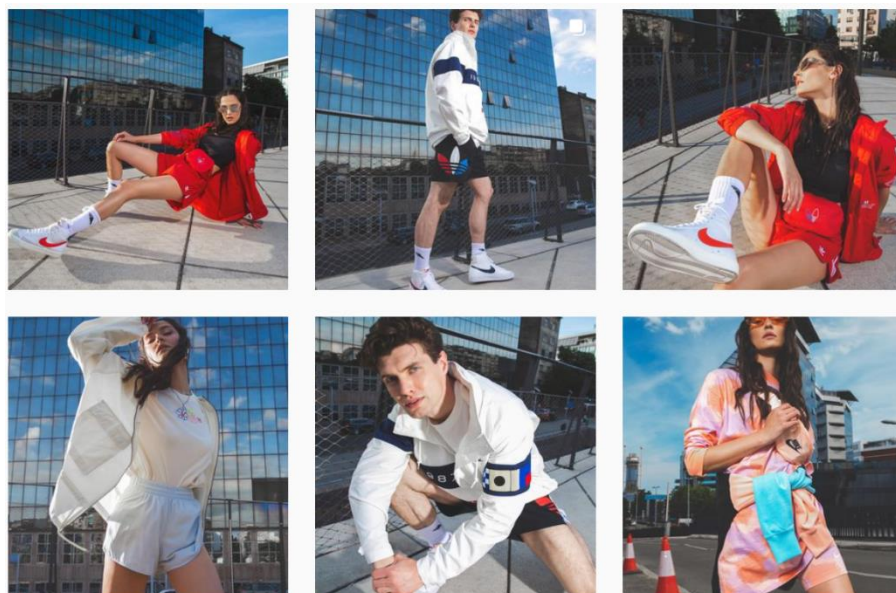


Source: The North Face (2021).

To conclude, Instagram is not just a platform to advertise a brand, but it is about providing value to Instagram's community. It is foremost for a long-term success.

2. "Maintain a Consistent Theme" – Marketers need to make a consistent tone of a voice and aesthetic feed. In that way they are most likely to attract the most authentic audience. Brands focused on their niche can create stronger connections. The picture bellow shows the feed of the brand The Athlete's Foot Slovenia. Their feed is consistent, with similar color pallet and filters, focused on pictures with young people. Also, they are consistent in their captions which are written for a younger population. Another thing in their consistency is they have the same hashtags in their post such as "Dare to play" and "Taf style". Figure 3 shows their feed.

Figure 3: The Athlete's Foot Slovenia Instagram feed



Source: The Athlete's Foot Slovenia (2021).

3. "Engage With Your Audience" – It is important for brands to show their audience that they value their meaning and interest. As a result, the audience is more connected to a particular business. There are different ways for brands to engage with their audience such as: reply to comments on a post, run giveaways or contests, give shout-outs to followers on Stories or use Instagram Stories polls feature, etc.

4. "Consider Influencer Marketing" – Nowadays, influencers are trusted source of information and they are connected with authentic audience. Through influencers,

companies can successfully drive sales and grow brand awareness. Similar to influencers is micro-influencing. Micro-influencers are individuals with more followers than the ordinary people, but less followers than celebrities. Companies partner with this kind of profiles in order to promote their products or services in a different and more accurate way than sponsored campaigns (Bernazzani, 2019). There is a survey conducted and 82% participants said that they are likely to be more curious about a brand recommended by a micro-influencer. It's important for brands to identify the right influencer for their niche.

5. “Implement an Instagram Ad Campaign” – When marketers create campaigns it is critical to focus on one goal in order to have successful campaigns. An ad with a focus to sell a product will look completely different to one that aim to attract followers. A great example of high-converting ad is by Green Chef. Figure 4 shows delicious food for vegans and an enticing 40 dollars off. Their goal is obvious: to sell their product.

Figure 4: High-converting ad campaign

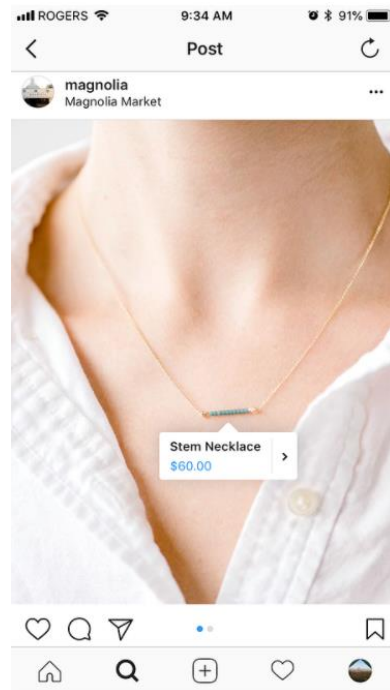


Source: Forsey (2022).

Furthermore, YouTube invested in paid campaigns but with totally different goal. Their goal is simply to gain more followers. They create campaigns with famous singers to attract the users of Instagram and Facebook to follow their account.

6. “Utilize Shoppable Posts” – What is popular now are shoppable posts on Instagram and Facebook, where marketers tag their products from website catalogues for easier shopping experience. Figure 5 shows a tagged product and if a customer clicks on it will open a company’s web site.

Figure 5: Tagged product for easier shopping experience



Source: Forsey (2022).

1.3 Social media funnel

Digital transformation has brought a few changes when it comes to the relationship between businesses and customers. Companies are focused on customers’ needs and interests more than ever. This shift companies to adopt new business models and adapt the fast-changing market reality. It is interesting how this change was driven by the customers and not the companies. In order to deliver a successful content strategy, it is important to find out who the new digital customer is and how to create a good customer experience. It is customer journey that drives brand’s strategy (Lund, 2021).

Social media marketing funnel is the journey that customers experience with the business. It is related to the four steps of buying cycle of the customer described bellow.

It starts from the beginning when a product or a service is introduced to a customer to the final phase, where a customer decides to buy it or not (S-Lawler, 2019). To explain why it is critical for marketers to develop a content marketing strategy, it is necessary to understand the steps of buying cycle (Steimle, 2014). Authors name these steps differently, but in general they are divided in four main journey phases: (1) Awareness; (2) Engagement; (3) Conversion; and (4) Consumer (Shleyner, 2020). Each phase is explained on more details below.

Awareness - The purpose at this stage is to present the product or a service to a broader audience, so users can be aware of brand existence. It is about to raise the voice of a brand among social media users who have not heard about its products or services yet. At the beginning, marketers should connect with prospects through brand awareness campaigns and different posts (Aboulhosn, 2020b). Metrics that can be used at this stage are: shares, likes, mentions, impressions and links (Shleyner, 2020).

Engagement – After someone is aware of a brand existence, they shift one step down the funnel. It is the time for brands to build a relationship with users. Metrics indicating that there is an interest from the social media users are: likes, comments, shares and clicks (Kim, 2020).

Conversion – This is the phase that is related with the decision-making process. Brands should use social media accounts to influence users' decisions in few ways. Different reviews, limited time discounts and specific promotions can be shared to attract the potential customers and convert them into loyal ones (Francis, 2017).

Consumer – This is the final step where the potential customer is becoming an actual customer.

Traditional marketing is good when it comes to the second two stages. Content marketing takes the role of raising awareness of products that customers may have never considered in the past. In many cases, the potential customers discover the product or service on social media platforms, and by the time they contact the businesses, they are already convinced of making a transaction (Steimle, 2014). Furthermore, content marketing is important to educate leads (the potential customers and prospects) about services and products, to boost conversions and to create a community around a business. Additionally, the number of users on the social media landscape continues to grow, businesses started to measure the campaigns and the performance of their social media, so they can make data driven decisions (Fan & Gordon, 2014).

As explained the consumer journey at the beginning of this thesis, Anna (2020) defines similar categories in the online buying process: the first step is product awareness which leads to interest in buying the advertised product, followed by targeting the right audience who want to learn more about products or services which at the end leads to driving purchases, visits and registrations on a website (Walley, Gates-Sumner & Salter, 2020). Studies show that lower-funnel ads which are focused on tangible actions such as buying a product or clicks provide more incremental sales than upper-funnel which is focused on brand building. Furthermore, campaigns from the upper funnel are less costly than the lower funnel. It's calculated per impression and it's cheaper because the reach for brand building is broader, while the campaigns from the bottom funnel are created for tighter audience who is most likely to make a purchase. In categories such as retail and e-commerce, brand building is a great option when it is done consistently for generating short-term sales (Shew, 2021).

2 CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

Nowadays, many businesses use content marketing strategy as the main part of their digital marketing plans. Studies show the importance of content marketing for any kind of brand, because all social media platforms require a content to engage with customers. The only case where the content is not that relevant, is when the created campaign is about discount or sale (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2016). Content marketing takes the role of raising awareness of products that customers may have never considered in the past. In many cases, the potential customers discover the product or service on social media platforms and by the time they contact the businesses they are already convinced of making a transaction (Steimle, 2014). Furthermore, content marketing is important to educate prospects and leads about services and products, to boost conversions and to create a community around a business. If the content is designed for the target audience, it will increase the number of qualified leads who may take an action such as sharing the content or making a purchase. It is even better if customer takes actions such as writing product reviews or comments known as "earned media" (Kenton, 2018). People decide based on the content whether they will become a part of a community or a customer. Many of the businesses which use social media platforms make a common mistake of not having a content marketing strategy.

Content marketing strategy is defined as: "the strategic marketing approach of creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action" (Harris, 2019). The key question answered from content marketing strategy prompts: "with a zillion of information and entertainment, how can I best reach potential customers and provide value for them" (Frick & Eyler-Werve, 2015)?

If Social Media Marketing is defined as a subset of Digital Marketing, with content marketing the focus is on inbound marketing. Content marketing is the creation of educative and fun content that solves customers' wants and needs. The content should be build based on the created buyer persona, so it can solve their problems. The focus is to create interactive and informative content, using multiple formats of content to increase brand awareness and loyalty (Lehnert, Goupil & Brand, 2021).

Successesful content speaks for the brand through sharing the value within the content. The created content should be like a story as it follows: (1) authentic which means true and trusted; (2) involving which means to adress customer needs; (3) intriguing which is about telling a story that grabs attention and (4) strategic which means it is important to the created buyer persona (Lehnert, Goupil & Brand, 2021).

It is not enough just to update the social media but to be consistent with defined goals, to create posts that are valuable and to distribute them on the right platforms. Only in that way can marketers analyze the results (Aboulhosn, 2020a). Every strategy depends on the industry and the target audience specified for the business. The content marketing strategy adapts to each company, but there are few specific objectives that need to be considered in order to deliver a value for the social media users (Baltes, 2015).

2.1 Setting SMART goals

When creating social media content strategy, the first thing to do is to identify the goals for the company. There are several goals that marketers can consider and it depends on the company's needs and level in the industry (McCoy, 2020). To have goals means that marketers will know what type of content should be created. The aim is to find the right values that the company wants to deliver and to explore the audience. The goals should be specific in order to tailor the content to meet those goals. If the goal for a company is increasing sales, the content strategy should be posts that lead social media users to a landing page or a web site to buy the product or a service (Aboulhosn, 2020a). To set SMART goals means to create specific, measurable, attainable realistic and time bound goals. Marketers should define specific goals with deadlines and real numbers. For example, it is not about to write down to have more followers on Instagram but to define the number of followers that should be achieved in a specific period of time. Increasing brand awareness, brand loyalty, sales and customer engagement are few of the goals that marketers can address for a company (Baker, 2022). Furthermore, it is also important nowadays that everything that is done is measurable, so that the right decisions can be made on the basis of demanding but realistic goals (Shelley, 2021).

2.2 Measuring the effectiveness of content marketing through KPIs

It's the time when marketers should focus more on learning how to analyze and measure data with a purpose to make the right decisions (Murray, 2019). Key performance indicators (abbr. KPIs) are essential in content marketing (Search Engine Journal, n.d.). Everything needs to be measured in order to identify campaigns that are not as effective as they should be. Then, marketers should react fast before it affects the whole objective. Similarly, effective campaigns with positive key performance indicators should be additionally explored for further improvements and more effective results. Marketers should indicate KPIs and measure them actively without changes. They need to be persistent with the selected KPIs for a longer period of time with the aim to have more convenient results (Murray, 2019). Also, when digital marketers analyze incorrect KPIs the final solution and decision will not be good for the business because it is based on results that are not accurate (Harnish, 2019). Furthermore, if goals are not linked with the right KPIs, results are useless in the long run. Another thing is to get the whole picture, marketers should use multiple ROI metrics. When several key performance indicators are analyzed, there is a deeper and broader perspective on content marketing strategy or goal (Murray, 2019). There are different groups of KPIs, but in this thesis the focus is to examine Social Media KPIs. Social Media KPIs are metrics used to analyze the effectiveness of the company's marketing strategy on the social media platforms. Essentially, these metrics are the tracked data from the company's social media platforms individually on Facebook, Instagram, Youtube or collectively (Olafson, 2021).

Furthermore, there are a number of Social Media KPIs to evaluate a content, but the focus will be on the twelve most valuable for successful results (Traphagen, 2019):

1. Reach – it is the number of users that has seen the content. These kind of users may interact with the business but passively. The quality of content and when the target audience is online are two things that affect the numbers of reach. This metric gives an answer if the posted content is valuable for the users (Olafson, 2021). The first thing to decide is whether reach is important for the business. It is not always a good idea to reach more people. Reach can be achieved through campaigns from the top of the funnel such as brand awareness and thorough paid campaigns with increased budget and broader audience. Although increasing reach is difficult through organic way, there are some things that can be done by asking an audience to share the content, creating posts that the audience would like to share and creating conversations through engaging content is a key metric that Facebook or Instagram will show the content to more users (Traphagen, 2019).

2. Impressions – it is the number of times a post is displayed in someone’s timeline or feed. To point out, it does not mean that the user who saw the post has made an interaction such as reading the post or noticing it (Olafson, 2021). This metric is difficult to control. In most of the time it depends on the reach (Traphagen, 2019).

3. Shares – it is the number of intentionally shared content by users with their friends. According to one study, the characteristics of a content with high number of shares are: “(1) Long form rather than short form; (2) Have at least one image; (3) Invoke awe, laughter or amusement; (4) List or infographic; (5) Trustworthy in appearance (including trusted source); (6) Shared by at least one influencer”. It is always important to be in line with the business’s goals, but it needs to be done in a way that the users will want to share it (Traphagen, 2019).

4. Likes and reactions - it is the number of interactions in one social media post, by clicking a button called “like” or the other emojis (Traphagen, 2019). The number of likes can be improved by analyzing what kind of content from competitors and your business get the most attention and likes and to try to be consistent with similar posts (Olafson, 2021).

5. Comments – it is the number of interactions under each post. To improve the number of comments digital marketers can write a caption with strong opinion or to made people think by asking them a valuable question (Olafson, 2021).

6. Link clicks – it is the number of clicks on a link that is exposed on social media platforms. It is a great opportunity for businesses’ websites to be shared on social media platforms and to engage with the audience in a different way, showing them more options for a product or a service. It is important to call attention to the link in a caption by adding emoji or special text (Traphagen, 2019).

7. Most popular content – it is the post that has the most engagement. Since, this kind of a content cannot be improved, it is a great opportunity to find out what kind of posts are best to engage with the target audience (Traphagen, 2019).

8. Social Referral Traffic – it is the number of users that visited a site through social media platforms. To improve traffic, first marketers should improve all other metrics above. Most of the posts on a platform must be linked with a site to get more traffic. Relevant influencers are good choice to share a content with their audience. Furthermore,

to add buttons on a post to encourage users to click directly without wasting their time to search (Traphagen, 2019).

9. Conversions, leads and purchases – These three metrics are very similar. Conversion means an action from a target user of any social media platform with outcome of desired action related to a business goal. Lead is the information a business can get such as name, surname, email, age etc., from a prospect through social media platforms. Purchase is the final step where the transaction is made initiated from social media platforms. Improving conversions is a whole science and marketers should create the right strategy with improving all metrics and then focusing on conversions (Traphagen, 2019).

10. Optimal Days/Times for Engagement – Some post on social media platforms are with better results on some days and at chosen time. It depends on when the target audience is online. This can be improved by each business analyzing its own target audience on each social media platform (Traphagen, 2019).

11. Followers – it is the number of followers gained on each platform (Olafson, 2021). To increase the number of followers businesses should be consistent with valuable and interesting content. As well, paid campaigns are always a good idea (Traphagen, 2019).

12. Audience demographics – This metric is maybe the most important for achieving better results from the metrics above. It is the characteristics of the target audience such as gender, age, location, income etc. Based on the data from audience demographics, it is the best way to create buyer persona for a business (Traphagen, 2019).

All these metrics can be tracked and analyzed at Facebook Business Suite (Facebook Business, 2020). Also, there are platforms that can be used for analysing the performance of the social media platforms, but they offer only 30 days trial free to use. Most of the small companies, use the Facebook Business Suite as a free tool for all advertisers (Read, n.d.).

2.3 Researching buyer persona and audience

Buyer persona means to create a profile of an ideal customer, based on the data and research available for a business. It is easier to be successful on a long run when a business is focused on qualified prospects. Defining a buyer persona is critical for driving sales, creating valuable content and product development. Furthermore, it helps companies to

understand customers' specific need and behaviors. It depends on the business how many personas will be developed. Marketers can develop one or two personas, or ten or twenty personas. It depends of the company's products and services and to which range of customers they serve. There are different ways to create buyer personas such as interviews, research, surveys with a mix of the data that the business already have (Vaughan, 2021). To understand and create a buyer persona there are several questions that should be point out. Details including age, language, location, interests and stage of life are the basic ones. Furthermore, knowing which social media platforms the audience is using is crucial. Another important thing is customers' pain points related to a specific business or the whole industry. Information about customer goals can help with making a solution and it also helps in getting to know the target audience. The customers' pain points and goals can be more easily retrieved from the sales team because the team is in close relationship everyday with the customers. The important thing after knowing that is to create benefits and values for the customers to achieve their needs. The three key questions marketers should answer while creating buyer persona are:

- How can we help the customer?
- What are your audience's main purchasing barriers? And how can you help overcome them?
- Where are your followers at in their buying journey? Are they researching or ready to buy? Looking for reviews?"

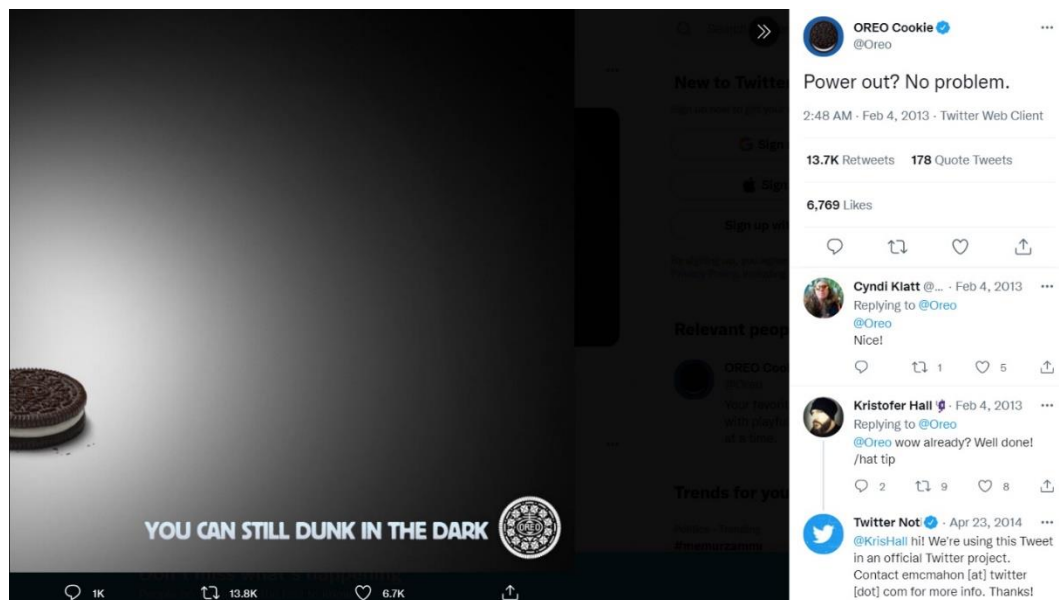
At the end, with all the data marketers should look at the common characteristics and group them together. The aim is to create a real person with a name, a home, a job title and more characteristics (Newberry, 2021).

2.4 Creating unique and engaging content

The content on the social media platforms is what provides a broader picture of a brand. To engage with the audience, company has to be consistent and to post a quality content. Digital marketers understand that is important to post regularly, but they struggle to create engaging content. There are different ways to create unique and engaging content, but it is important to know why the content is created, based on which goals is created (Henderson, 2020). One of the strategies to grow engagement is to speak to the audience. To share real photos instead of sharing photos from different content websites. A professional photographer for a brand that uses social media platforms is critical to get more engagement. Furthermore, the text bellow every post is as important as the content. Another way is to create graphics and charts. Sharing customer reviews is good when it comes to gain more trust from the audience. There is a study that shows an average person reads seven reviews before buying some product or service. Moreover, contents are fun way to grow an audience. It can be done through like, share and comment to participate,

tag a friend and user generated content by users creating post based on a theme and tagging a brand. Also, influencers with a huge base of followers can increase the number of brands' followers too. The audience already trusts them, so promoting a brand and engaging through influencers is essential. An important way to engage with an audience is for a company to show how it cares about the audience through current events. It means to respond fast to different events that the target audience cares about. One example of this is when Oreo posted a picture on twitter related to Super Bowl when the lights went down (Csutoras, 2020). Figure 6 shows the engagement and the creative content that Oreo shared. The company used the epic moment of Superbowl, when all the lights went down, in a fun way to interact with their customers on Twitter.

Figure 6: Oreo engaging content



Source: Oreo Cookie (2013).

2.5 Creating social media content calendar

In order to manage all social media platforms and to be in line with the fast-changing needs of the customers, it is important to be more organized. Social media content calendar gives marketers a big picture of the whole content marketing strategy. The basic characteristics that every social media calendar is built of are: (1) The time and the date of the post; (2) The social media platform where the content will be posted; (3) The type of the post whether it is a video or a photo; (4) Tags and links; (5) Any information that is important and relevant (Newberyry & Cohen, 2022). Such a calendar saves time and it

enables easier testing and analyzing of different strategies. Posting in a planned way can build a better brand voice and more time to be aware of the trending topics while researching for the next month content. The strategy should be based on a content that entertains the audience but is still related to the industry of the business. In general, majority of the content should contain information with the intention to help the audience (Aboulhosn, 2020a). Using social media calendar gives the freedom to schedule posts and to be prepared for improvements (Newberyry & Cohen, 2022).

After a lot of brainstorming and creating quality and entertaining content, there is a simple rule to follow for posting on social media platforms. First, to attract audience and generate profits, one third of the posts should be to promote the business. Second, one third should be posts from influencers related to the business and the last part is about the personal stories of a business (Clark, 2019).

2.6 Tracking and measuring campaigns

Nowadays, as the number of users on social media landscape continues to grow, businesses started to measure the campaigns and the performance of their social media, so they can make data driven decisions (Fan & Gordon, 2014). Likewise, it is important to track everything in order to optimize the content calendar in the next months (Aboulhosn, 2020a). Today, the Facebook Business Suite is a management tool that helps marketers to create content, paid campaigns and analyze the performance of their work. The analytics tab gives marketers a full overview of the success of Facebook and Instagram in one place (Hutchinson, 2020). This tool helps marketers to understand the outcomes of paid and organic social media campaigns across the two platforms. With all the metrics, visual reports and trends it is easier to recognize where to make enhancements (Facebook).

3 ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY OF NIKE

This chapter examines the content marketing strategy of "Nike" since its core business is related to the company Sport Garage. Namely, this is a store for selling sportswear, where Nike is their primary brand. Nike is a "Role model" for startups and small businesses to find out how to improve the presence on social media platforms with different content strategies for different target groups.

As a sportswear brand with more than 197 M followers on Instagram (Katarzyna, 2022) and more than 35 M followers on Facebook (Katarzyna, 2022), Nike is one of the most popular clothing brands on social media and the internet as a whole. Furthermore, Nike has a better online presence than its competitors (Rebook, Adidas, and others). The company represents an excellent example to be analyzed since it is one of the first companies that adopted Social Media Marketing proficiently (All Answers Ltd., 2018).

Nike is also a pioneer not just in promoting their products but also a lifestyle, which is evident with their "Just Do It" slogan. It is interesting to see how Nike promotes a healthy and goal-driven lifestyle while making billions in sales (Ravi, 2018).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a clearer picture of how Nike uses its social media platforms and other content marketing initiatives to promote their products and engage with customers.

I analyzed the case study of Nike through four key elements that are part of every social media strategy: (1) Target audience and buyer persona; (2) Channel choice; (3) Content activities; (4) Goals (Effing & Spil, 2015).

3.1 Target audience and buyer persona

In the early years of its existence, Nike strictly sold running shoes, targeting active people who loved spending time outside. To become the global brand it is today, Nike had to adjust its buyer persona to a much broader audience and its products accordingly to fit its new, broader target market (Willigan, n.d.). When Nike looked into the facts behind its NikePlus loyalty program and app, it discovered that loyalty app users spend 40 percent more than average consumers. Nike recognized a potential to raise sales by increasing NikePlus membership, and in 2018 declared a goal to tripple the number of members in the following five years. According Nike's chief digital officer, Adam Sussman, part of this plan was to precisely define who it was targeting (Raka, 2019).

Nike defined three buyer personas (Raka, 2019):

1. The weekend runner

The "Weekend Runner," according to Nike, is a woman in her 30s who plans to run a half-marathon in the near future. She like the Nike Run Club app, which provides her with a wealth of information about her running habits and accomplishments. Nike added elements like tips from coaches and other recorded encouragement to the app to keep the

Weekend Runner interested and perhaps sign-up other ladies like her. Of course, based on actual running preferences, you can get personalized shoe recommendations.

2. The style shopper

Many young people nowadays choose active apparel, and Nike is attempting to ensure their devotion with its "Style Shopper" character. This character is a 26-year-old lady who wants to look her best before, during, and after her exercises.

3. Dedicated sneakerhead

A true "Sneakerhead" is a person who is addicted of buying limited-edition sneakers or athlete's high-top release is a part of the pleasure. With its SNKR Stash experience, NikePlus brings the excitement of sneaker hunting to its app, allowing users access to special product debuts. Sneakerheads are taken on a city-wide treasure hunt for virtual "Stash Spots" where they may buy things via mobile using the app.

3.2 Channel choices

When it comes to Nike's social media platforms, they have decided to utilize their platforms and to operate for global audiences. They do not have different accounts for every country, but they have created different accounts for different target groups related to each sub-brand, e.g., Nike Football; Nike Basketball; Nike Women; Nike Sportswear, etc. (Raghunath, 2019).

Utilizing every social media platform, Nike is growing their community of different target groups with different strategies (Raghunath, 2019). In addition, Nike utilizes each major social media platform to reach its content marketing goals. Since Nike no longer uses Facebook (their last post on Facebook is from 2019) and rarely uses Twitter, these platforms will be excluded from the analysis. In the following sections, I analyze their Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube activities, as well as different apps.

Instagram. As a highly visual platform, Nike utilizes Instagram to post inspiring, high-quality images of the latest sporting events, commercial content, content from sponsored athletes, and much more. The pictures are almost always accompanied by a motivating and/or insightful caption that aligns with their "Just Do It" slogan (Balan, 2017). Their strategy is to use famous athletes who play on huge events such as the NBA Finals, World Cup, Wimbledon, etc., to gain constant engagement (Raghunath, 2019).

With 200 million followers, Nike has more followers on Instagram than all of its competitors combined, so this suggests that it is the leading platform Nike uses, especially for engaging with its younger audience (Katarzyna, 2022).

LinkedIn. As LinkedIn is tailored to professionals, Nike has an entirely different content strategy for this platform than Instagram. Yet, it is still very effective in telling the Nike story and presenting the brand and products while also staying true to the professional tone of LinkedIn (Nauska, 2018).

When it comes to posting, Nike mainly uses LinkedIn for showcasing their social and environmental efforts, such as their work with the LGBTQ community, black empowerment, and other worthy causes. Additionally, they post stories that paint Nike as a friendly and inclusive working environment (Nauska, 2018).

Nike utilizes other valuable tools that LinkedIn provides, such as the Job Board, where Nike lists open positions that people can apply to, the current value of its stock, and more (Nike Careers, 2022).

YouTube. As the main video platform on the internet, Nike finds great use in YouTube, where it shares motivational videos, commercials, engaging content featuring their sponsored athletes, and much more. With nearly 1.7 million subscribers and around 2 million views per month, Nike is way ahead of competitors in terms of engagement on YouTube (Granlund & Prick, 2019).

3.3 Content activities

Nike uses each social media platform very selectively by targeting different audiences for different platforms and purposes. Their posts are motivational, clear, and highlight famous people (Raghunath, 2019). Instagram appears to be their preferred platform, where they share high-quality photos mainly for the younger population (Grano, 2020). Nike uses IGTV to post videos recorded of different and unknown individuals, and it is something that they are doing online and offline—supporting different people, cultures, and characters (Raghunath, 2019). Twitter is to share news and updates of their brand. Also, Nike runs campaigns related to global events to extend its reach. In addition, gamification is another approach that Nike added to create a more extensive community on social platforms. Nike inspired many of its customers to download their applications and challenge friends to compete among them with their physical activities. It is interesting how Nike does not create campaigns specifically for its products. They are one of the most outstanding storytelling companies. Their strategy is not to sell sneakers but to sell a belief. They want to motivate everyone that every hardworking person can achieve everything if they are unstoppable and fearless. Furthermore, according to Nike,

it is better to keep it simple. Their copywriting is short, simple, and memorable (Grano, 2020).

But Nike's content marketing goes way further than social media. Nike utilizes different content types that provide great value to their customers and constantly, one of which is applications (Piskorski, 2014).

Nike Apps. Another major part of Nike's content marketing strategy is utilizing web and mobile applications, which have been the driving force for customer engagement over the last decade. As of February 2022, Nike has four main apps, each targeting a different portion of their customers (Williams, 2021):

- Nike main app – shopping for all Nike products. Daily motivational content to help people reach their sport and style goals.
- Nike SNKRS app – for people passionate about sneakers and staying in the loop on the latest releases. Includes news and exclusive content about new sneaker releases.
- Nike Run Club: Running Coach – targeted to runners or people who want to get into running. Allows progress tracking, running log, community interaction, and more.
- Nike Training Club – provides free guidance, videos, and workouts from experts for people passionate about working out. Includes various exercises for all experience levels.

What separates Nike from most of its competitors is that these apps are entirely free to use. Nike does not try to monetize its Training and Running app. Instead, it uses it as a value-adding aspect of its content strategy to boost customer loyalty and familiarity with the brand (Williams, 2021).

3.4 Marketing strategy

The first component of Nike's strategy is to identify the target market for a certain product. For example, for most of its products it aims to appeal to all sorts of athletes or sport enthusiasts.

Some examples of these targeted approaches are product sponsorship by a variety of professional sporting teams, college sports teams, and celebrity. This is the area where Nike has achieved a significant competitive edge over other companies in the industry. The list of clubs and athletes who endorse Nike is extensive, and all are considered to be at the pinnacle of their respective sports. The list begins with Michael Jordan and continues with athletes such as LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Tiger Woods, Lance

Armstrong, Derek Jeter, and Cristiano Ronaldo; teams include the National Football League (NFL), and soccer powerhouse Manchester United Football Club.

Nike did not invent this strategy, but it made it popular and proved its effectiveness. This technique performs a fantastic job of growing Nike brand recognition and popularity as fans see their favorite athletes, celebrities, and teams wearing Nike gear. This increases their desire to buy those products since they want to support and emulate their favorite player/team. Furthermore, consumers begin to link specific items with win and triumph, creating attraction for these products worn by collegiate and professional players who are sponsored by Nike.

An underappreciated aspect of this strategy is that Nike's portfolio of high-profile athletes will continue to increase, since when the greatest athletes choose to be endorsed by Nike, others will follow, in order to be mentioned in the same sentence as the best in their respective sports. For instance, Nike has sponsorships from three of the top basketball players in the previous ten years: LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, and Kevin Durant, all of whom want to be put in the same basket as Naismith Hall of Famer Michael Jordan.

Nike spends a lot of money on advertising campaigns once the target market and sponsor have been determined. Nike believes that this significant investment will broaden and grow the size of its audience. The "Just Do It" campaign, for example, is probably the industry's greatest advertising tagline of all time, and it continues to propel sales even now.

Nike did not gain a devoted following by emphasizing their distinctive sneakers. In fact, Nike's campaigns rarely, if ever highlight their products. With their advertisements, they successfully generate emotion in the customer implementing emotional branding. Every campaign is created to induce certain desires and feelings that can only be met by Nike products. They care about their customers and their needs and preferences (Islam, 2017).

4 EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SPORT GARAGE CUSTOMERS

The primary goal of this chapter is to present the findings and conclusions of the quantitative research that was conducted. First, the purpose and goals of the empirical study as well as related research questions are presented. Next, arguments for five research hypotheses are introduced. In addition, the methods and data collection used in the study are also discussed. According to the findings from both the theoretical and empirical parts, future research recommendations are provided.

Based in Vinica, North Macedonia and established in 2017, Sport Garage is a top-notch place to shop activewear at. Offering a variety of athletic apparel, casual wear and

footwear for kids, women and men through a portfolio of worlds leading brands such as Nike, Reebok, Converse and Vans.

Even though it has started as a single shop in a small town, Sport Garage is driven with the purpose to leave a bigger impact in the sports clothing community and has a goal to expand and progress across the country.

Targeting the youth culture that wearing activewear can make you active, Sport Garage fuels, creates, inspires and empowers daily through their Facebook and Instagram profiles.

Until 2023, Sport Garage aspires to fully develop and put into effect their online website and increase the number of customers by starting to sell online nationwide and reach and serve their customers more easily and efficiently.

4.1 Purpose and goals of empirical study

The purpose of this research is to develop a deeper knowledge of content marketing strategy and to implement this knowledge in practice to provide recommendations for optimizing the social media accounts of Sport Garage. In addition, based on the gained knowledge of the theoretical part I developed a content marketing calendar for the created buyer persona for Sport Garage. Furthermore, the buyer persona was created from the analysis of the survey conducted and spread online. The main research question is stated as: what is the type of buyer persona for Sport Garage? Additional questions were developed in order to answer the main question:

- Who are Sport Garage customers' age groups?
- How many times do Sport Garage customers work out?
- Which type of social media platform is the most preferred by Sport Garage customers?
- Do social media influencers impact the buying choices of Sport Garage customers?
- How many times do millennials shop online?

The goal is to create a content marketing calendar and provide recommendations for future improvements based on the collected data.

4.2 Research hypotheses

These hypotheses are related to the buyer persona, understanding the customers, and creating a content marketing calendar according to their needs and lifestyle. In order to answer the main research question, five hypotheses were developed. The first hypothesis tests the active life of the consumer:

H1: Consumers who buy sportswear online work out at least three times per week.

A survey conducted in 2020 shows that Millennials and Gen X are the most active in sports. It makes them the generation with the highest participation rate. Gen Z was the generation with the lowest participation rate in sports (Statista, 2022). The second hypothesis tests the impact of influencers on consumers buying decisions.

H2: Consumers agree that influencer marketing has a significant impact on their buying decisions.

Influencer marketing is becoming a more prevalent method of promotion in today's society, and influencers are people who, by their knowledge, abilities, and character may affect consumers' buying decisions. Another important fact is that the message sent from influencers is not shared just among their followers, but also mouth to mouth (Kasmi & Elarraf, 2019). The following hypothesis tests which is the most used platform among social media users:

H3: The most used social media platform among users is Instagram.

In 2022, statistics show that Instagram is Millennials' favorite social media platform (McLachlan, 2022). Also, Instagram is one of the most powerful advertising platforms among Gen Z and Millennials when making decisions to purchase a product or a service from a brand (Dixon, 2022). Since this thesis discusses the importance of social media platforms, the third hypothesis tests whether shoppers prefer more user-generated content or branded content.

H4: Millennials shop online at least once per month.

The trend of purchasing online among millennials in 2022 is increasing constantly. One of the main reasons is that consumers can compare prices and products. Also, they search for discount coupons, and even if the brand is known and they have a discount on a website, consumers most often make a purchase (Ross, 2022). The last hypothesis tests the age group of Sport Garage customers:

H5: The most common age category among consumers is 25-34 years of age.

Most of the data available online is that millennials are the core target audience for lifestyle and performance sportswear (Weinswig, 2018). Millennials are aged from 23 to 38 years old (Dimock, 2019). Thanks to the millennials, sportswear brands gain a part in fashion, and workout clothes become a lifestyle (Gosselin, 2020). In the second hypothesis the most used social media platform for Millennials is tested:

4.3 Methodology

Quantitative research was conducted as a survey to create a buyer persona for Sport Garage. The idea here is to understand the online users and to create the buyer persona based on the questionnaire. In addition, a questionnaire was developed and described.

The questionnaire was created on the survey portal Google Form and shared online on Facebook posts and direct messages, from August 08, 2022 to September 09, 2022. All the questions from the survey can be observed in Appendix 2.

The questionnaire was developed in English and then translated into Macedonian, since my population of interest is Macedonian customers of Sport Garage. Before sharing the survey online, I tested it among 7 respondents, to find out if there was a mistake or something unclear and hard to understand and answer.

The questionnaire is created from 12 questions and took 3 minutes to answer. The questions were written by using established scales from the existing literature. The first two questions are about consumer habits related to workouts and online purchases of sports clothes. First, respondents were asked about their “frequency of workouts” to understand their habits and preferences. As in the original scale from Min Cho, the range of possible answers was: Almost every day; 4-5 days/week; 3 days/week; 1-2 days/week; A few times a month; I do not do special workout (Cho, 2016).

Then respondents were asked about their “online purchasing behavior” to understand the number of potential customers for Sport Garage. The following response categories adopted from the study by Min Haeng-Cho were used: Yes; No; I don’t know (Cho, 2016). To test the impact of influencers on consumers purchasing decisions, three statements were adopted from Kasmi et al. (2019) and measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from ‘I strongly disagree’ to ‘I strongly agree’ (Kasmi & Elarraf, 2019).

The next part of the questions was related to social media platforms. Respondents were asked which social media platform they use, to understand where Sport Garage should be the most present. Multiple choice answer was applied, using the original scale adopted from Marry Madden et al. (2013): Facebook; Twitter; Tik Tok; Google+ (Google Plus); Instagram; Tumblr; Pinterest; Snapchat; LinkedIn; MySpace; YikYak; Other (please state); I don’t use social media (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, et al, 2013). Another question was asked to understand the “shopping habit” of consumers. The original scale was adopted from the literature from Ronald E. & Elizabeth B (2002): More than once a week; About once a week; Only about once every two weeks; Less than once every two weeks, but more than once a month; Less than once a month; A few times a year; I never purchase online (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, et al, 2013).

The final part of the questionnaire was about demographics. Respondents were asked about their age to understand the age range for Sport Garage customers. Several response

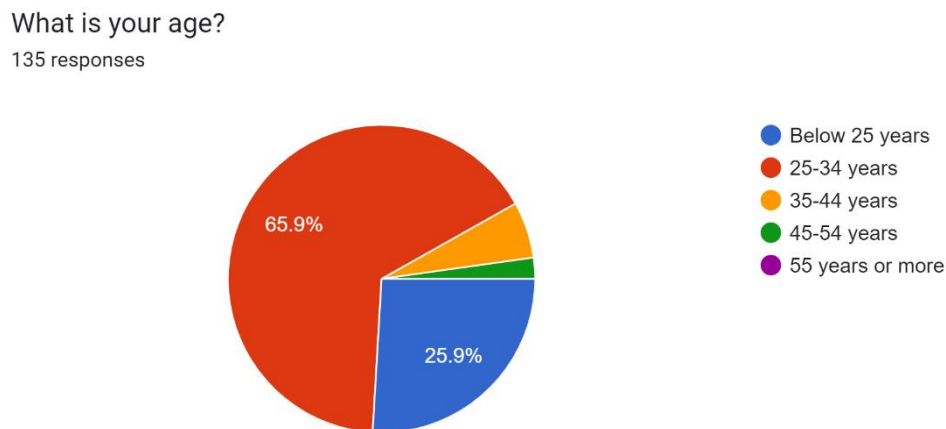
categories were listed: Below 25 years; 25-34 years; 35-44 years; 45-54 years; 55 years or more. Another question was asked about their “gender”. Also, several response categories were provided: Male; Female; Don't want to say. The third question in the demographic section was about their “level of education”, using the following response categories: Elementary school; High school; Associate school; Bachelor’s degree; Master’s degree; Doctor of science. The next question was about their “living standard”, with the following response categories: Much above average; Above the average; Average; Below Average; Quite below the average. The last question was about their “employment status”. For statistical analysis of the data, Microsoft Excel was used.

4.4 Analysis of results

4.4.1 Sample description

A total of 135 responses were collected in the final sample, out of which 52.6% were females and 44.4% were males. All respondents provided answers to all questions and all respondents completed the survey until the end. The majority of respondents, 65.9% or 89 are from 24 to 34 years old, 25.9% or 35 respondents are below 25 years old, 5.9% or 8 of them are from 35 to 44 years old, and 2.2% or 3 respondents are from 45 to 54 years old. Figure 7 shows the age groups of respondents.

Figure 7: Consumers' age groups



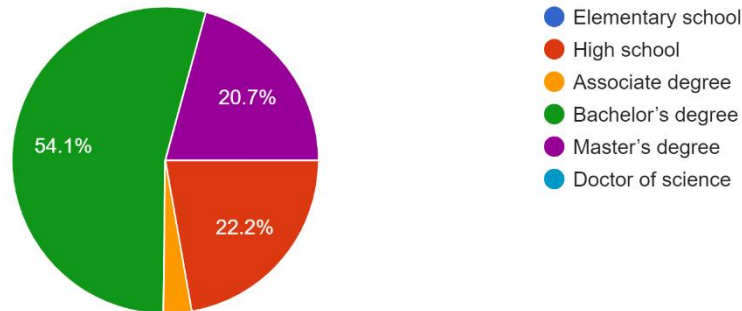
Source: Own work.

According to the analysis of their educational level, the majority of them were highly educated. 54.2 % had a bachelor’s degree, 20.7 % had master’s degree. 22.2% finished high school and the rest (3%) have completed an associate degree. Figure 8 shows the level of education of respondents.

Figure 8: Level of education of consumers

What is the highest level of your education?

135 responses



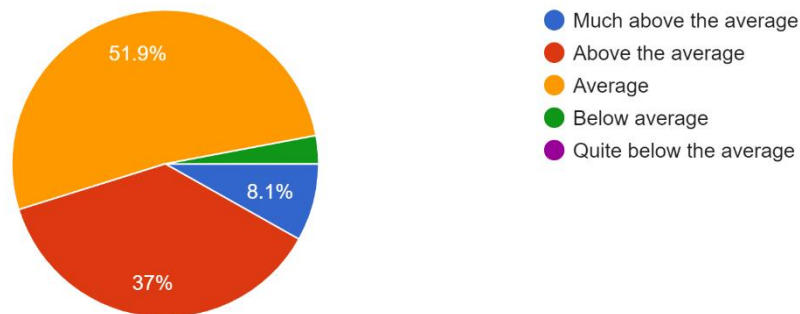
Source: Own work.

Majority of the respondents (51.9%) stated their living standard as average, 37% responded that their living standard is above the average, followed by 8.1% who stated that it is much above the average. The rest (4%) answered it is below average. Figure 9 shows the living standard of the consumers.

Figure 9: Consumers' living standard

Generally, how would you rate your living standard?

135 responses



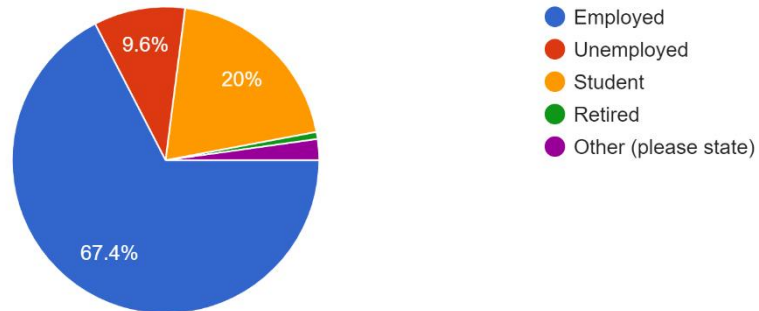
Source: Own work.

67.4% or 91 respondents are employed, 20% or 27 respondents are students, 9.6% or 13 respondents are unemployed, 2.2% or 3 of the respondents answered other, 0.7% or 1 respondent is retired. Figure 10 shows their employment status.

Figure 10: Consumers' employment status

What is your employment status?

135 responses



Source: Own work.

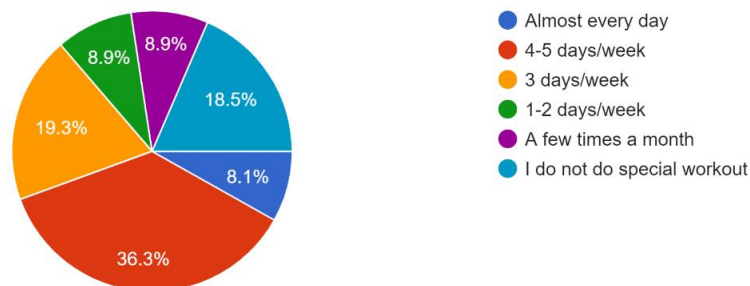
4.4.2 Descriptive statistics

One of the questions asked about the frequency of consumers' workouts (Figure 11). The largest share of respondents (36.3% or 49 individuals) workout 4-5 days per week, 19.3% or 26 workout 3 days per week, 18.5% or 25 do not do special workout, 8.9% or 12 workout a few times a month, 8.9% or 12 workout 1-2 days per week, 8.1% or 11 workout almost every day.

Figure 11: Workout frequency

How often do you workout?

135 responses



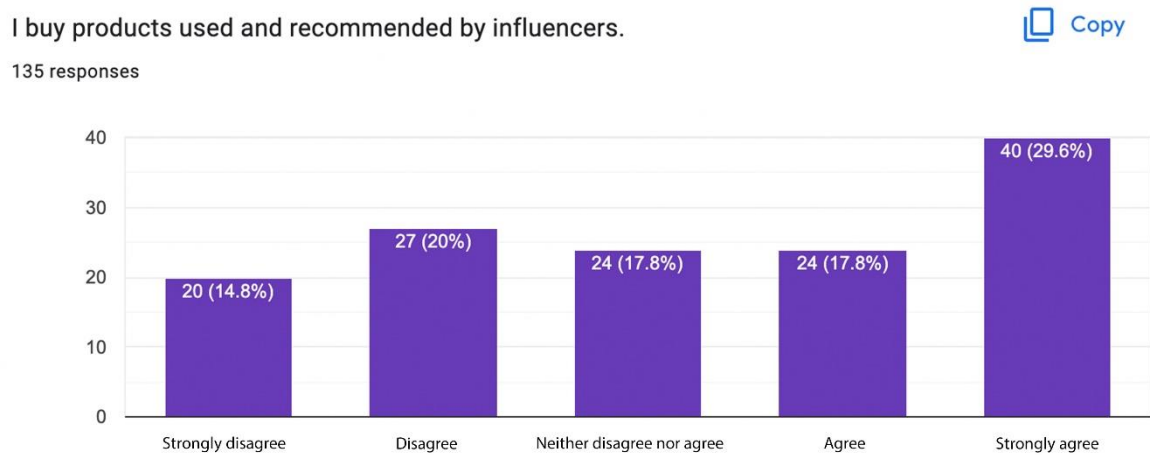
Source: Own work.

The next question asked respondents to state whether they had ever purchased sportswear online. Large majority (82.2% or 111 respondents) have purchased sportswear online,

16.3% or 22 have never purchased sportswear online, and 1.5% or 2 respondents answered that they don't know.

The respondents were also asked to provide their level of agreement (from 1=I strongly disagree to 5=I strongly agree) with the statement »I buy products used and recommended by influencers« (Figure 12). The results show that 29.6% or 40 respondents strongly agree with the statement above, 20% or 27 respondents answered that they disagree, 17.8% or 24 respondents answered they agree, 17.8% or 24 respondents answered that they neither disagree nor agree and 14.8% or 20 respondents strongly disagree. The mean value of this statement was 3.27 and the standard deviation was 1.44.

Figure 12: Influencers' impact on consumer buying decisions



Source: Own work.

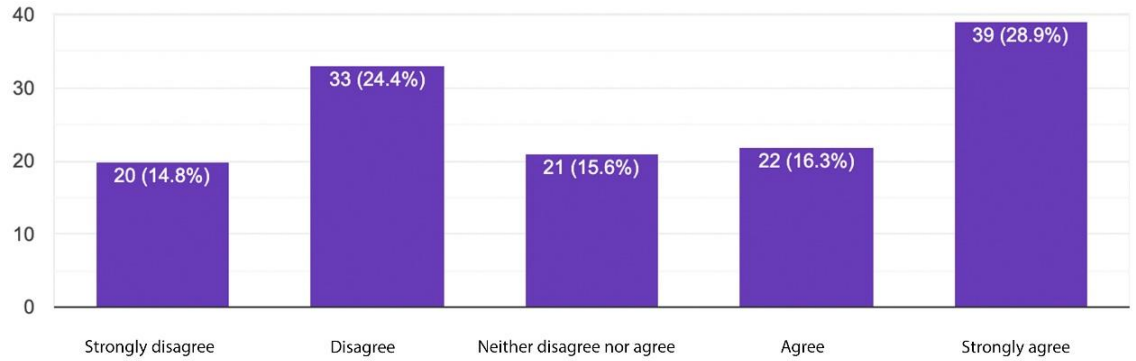
Next, the respondents provided their level of agreement with the statement »I recommend products used and recommended by influencers« (Figure 13). 14.8% or 20 respondents answered that they strongly disagree with the statement, 24.4% or 33 respondents answered that they disagree, 15.6% answered that they neither disagree nor agree, 16.3% or 22 respondents answered that they agree and 28.9 or 39 respondents answered that they strongly agree. The mean value of this statement was 3.20 and the standard deviation was 1.45.

Figure 13: Influencers' impact on consumer buying decisions

I recommend products used and recommended by influencers.



135 responses



Source: Own work.

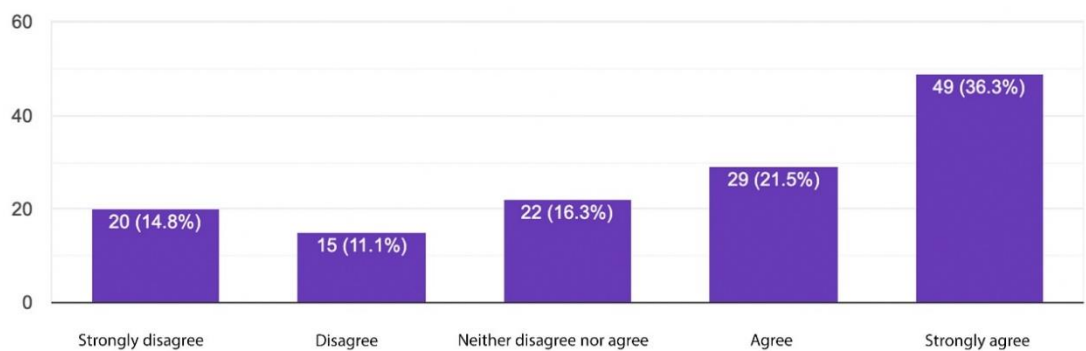
Finally, as seen in Figure 14, 14.8 or 20 respondents answered that they strongly disagree with the statement, 11.1% or 15 respondents answered that they disagree, 16.3 or 22 answered that they neither disagree nor agree, 21.5 or 29 of the respondents answered that they agree and the majority of the about 36.3% or 39 respondents strongly agree. The mean value of this statement was 3.53 and the standard deviation was 1.44

Figure 14: Influencers' impact on consumer buying decisions

I search for products used and recommended by influencers.



135 responses

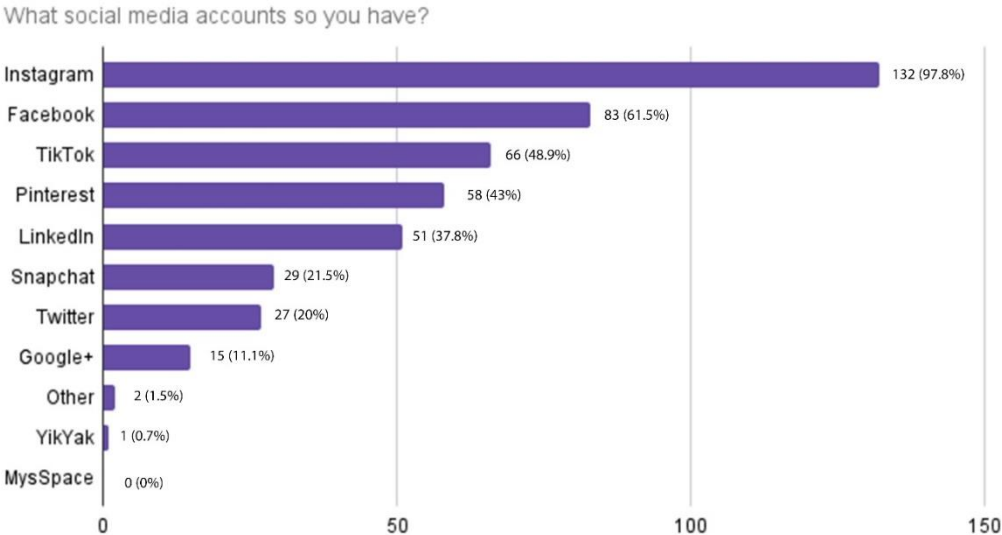


Source: Own work.

I also asked the respondents which social media accounts they have and they could select more than one platform (Figure 15). The most used social media platform was Instagram with 97.8% or 132 respondents, approximately two thirds (61.5% or 83 of them) answered that they have Facebook, 48.9% or 66 respondents have Tik Tok, 43% or 58 respondents

have Pinterest, 37.8% or 51 respondents have LinkedIn, 20% or 27 respondents have Twitter, 21.5% or 29 respondents have Snapchat, 11.1 or 15 respondents have Google+, 3.7 or 5 respondents have Tumblr, and 1.5% or 2 respondents have other social media accounts, , 0.7% or 1 respondent has YikYak, , 0% or non of them have MySpace.

Figure 15: Social Media accounts used by consumers



Source: Own work.

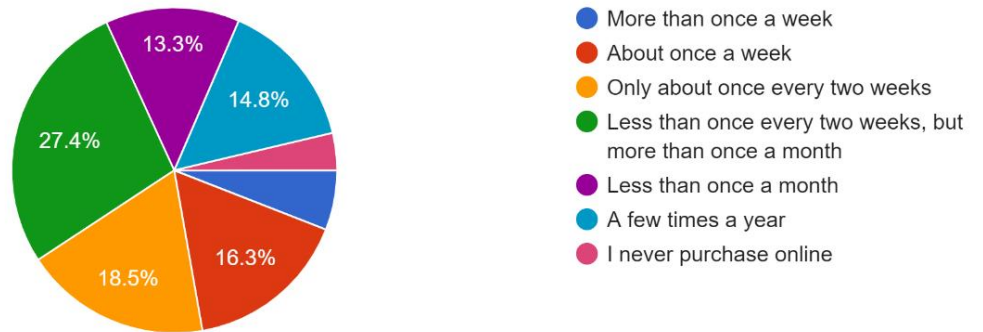
The next question asked about the time spent on social medial platforms. The majority of respondents, about 98.5% or 133 answered that they use social media platforms daily and only 1.5% or 2 respondents answered that they use it weekly. Other responses («Monthly«, »Yearly«, »I don't use social media«) were not selected.

One of the questions addressed also the frequency of purchasing sportswear online (Figure 16). The respondents answered that 5.9% or 8 of them are purchasing more than once a week, 16.3% or 22 answered that they are purchasing about once a week, 18.5% or 25 answered that they are purchasing online only about once every two weeks, 27.4% or 37 answered that they are purchasing online less than once every two weeks, but more than once a month, 13.3% or 18 respondents answered that they are purchasing online less than once a month, 14.8% answered that they are purchasing online a few times a year and 3.7% or 5 respondents answered that they have never purchased anything online.

Figure 16: Online purchasing of sportswear

How often do you purchase online?

135 responses



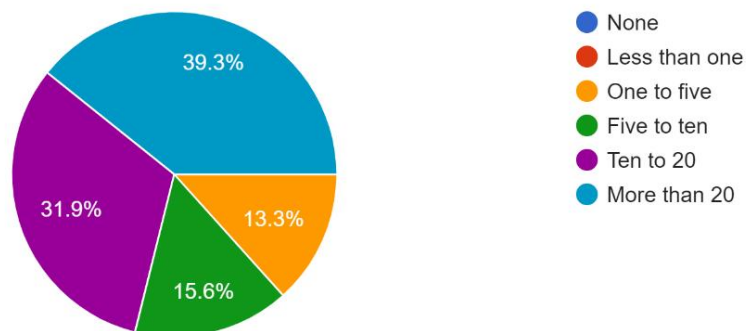
Source: Own work.

Finally, I asked the respondents about the time spent using the internet. As seen in figure 17, 13.3% or 18 respondents answered that they spend one to five hours weekly using the internet, 15.6% or 21 respondents answered that they spend five to ten hours weekly, 31.9% or 43 respondents answered that they spend 20 hours weekly and 39.3% or 53 respondents answered that they spend more than 20 hours weekly using the internet. None of the respondents selected answers »None« and »Less than one«.

Figure 17: Internet usage by consumers

On average, about how many hours a week do you spend using the internet?

135 responses



Source: Own work.

4.4.3 Hypothesis testing

This chapter presents the analysis of 5 hypotheses which were done in excel. The results are briefly explained and presented. In addition, five hypotheses were tested to create a buyer persona for Sport Garage.

H1. Consumers who buy sportswear online work out at least three times per week.

Two questions were included in the survey to test the first hypothesis. The first question is “How often do you workout?” and the second question is “Have you ever purchased any sportswear online?” Chi-squared test was used to test this hypothesis. Respondents who answered the online purchase question with “No” and “I don’t know” were excluded from the analysis for testing H1. This means that from the number of respondents who answered that they have purchased sportswear online was 111.

In order to test this hypothesis, the 111 respondents who answered to the question “How often do you work out” were grouped into two groups. The first group were those who work out at least three times per week and provided either of the following answers: “Almost every day”, “4-5 days/week” or “3 days/week”. In the other group were respondents who work out less than three times a week and answered either of the following: “1-2 days/week”, “A few times a month” or “I do not do special workout”. To tests separately the respondents who answered that they work out three or more times per week, and those who work out less than that, Chi-squared test was used to determine whether results of the two frequencies from the sample are statistically significant. Conditions for the test were met since less than 20% (0% in our case) of the expected frequencies is not below 5 and the minimum expected frequency is at least 55.5. Chi-squared test value is 16.66, and the P-value is 0.00, which means that we can reject the null hypothesis and we can say that there are differences in the frequencies of workouts for those who buy sportswear online. Thus, H1 is supported. The Chi-square test is presented in Table 1, Appendix 3.

H2. Consumers agree that influencer marketing has a significant impact on their buying decisions.

To find out whether consumers believe that influencers have an impact on their buying decisions, three statements were used: “I buy products used and recommended by influencers“, “I recommend products used and recommended by influencers“, and “I search for products used and recommended by influencers“. The respondents were asked about their level of agreement with these statements. An average value of these three statements was calculated across the whole sample. To test this hypothesis one-sample t-test was used to see whether the average value is significantly higher than the value 3.0.

The average value for the three statements is 3.27, which is higher than the critical value of 3. Based on sample data, we reject the null hypothesis at a p-value of 0.05 and we can conclude that consumers agree that influencer marketing has a significant impact on their buying decisions, supporting H2. The one-sample t-test is presented in Table 2, Appendix 3.

Additionally, I also checked the mean values that were calculated for each statement separately and the results are as follows: statement number one "I buy products used and recommended by influencers" has a mean value of 3.27; Statement number two "I recommend products used and recommended by influencers" has a mean value of 3.2; Statement number three has a mean value of 3.53. We can see that each individual mean value is also higher than the critical mean value of 3.

H3. The most used social media platform among users is Instagram.

To test H3, the fourth question in the survey was used asking on which social media platform respondents spend most of their time. To test whether frequencies are equally distributed or not, the Chi-squared test was used.

The results of distribution indicate that the preferred social media platform among users is Instagram, followed by Facebook and Tik Tok. Based on the sample data, we can reject the null hypothesis at a very significant p-value of 0.00 and we can say that there are differences in the preferences of social media platforms among users (Tables 3 and 4 in Appendix 3). This supports the third hypothesis.

H4. Millennials shop online at least once per month.

In order to test H4, respondents were asked how many times they shop online and what is their age. Since the target group for Sport Garage are millennials, only millennials were included to test the hypothesis. Out of 89 millennials in the survey 33.7% (30 respondents) responded that they shop online less than once per month, the rest (66.3% or 59 respondents) responded that they shop online at least once per month. Furthermore, the Chi-squared test was implemented to test this hypothesis.

The chi-square test shows that the p-value is higher than 0.05, which leads us to the following conclusion: based on sample data, we cannot reject the null hypothesis and we can say that there are differences in the online shopping frequencies for millennials (Table 5, Appendix 3).

H5. The most common age category among consumers is 25-34 years of age.

To define the age group of Sport Garage customers, respondents were asked about their age. The majority (65.9% or 89 respondents) were between 25 and 34 years old, while

the second biggest category was comprised of those who are below 25 years old. To test whether frequencies are equally distributed or not, the Chi-squared test was used.

Based on sample data, we can reject the null hypothesis at a very significant p-value of 0.00 and we can say that there are differences in the age categories among respondents. This can be also seen from Tables 6 and 7 in Appendix 3. This supports H5.

4.4.4 Interpretation of findings

This part summarizes the findings of the empirical study supported by the literature. The results show that the consumers who buy sportswear online, workout more than the others. Especially after Covid 19, the sportswear market is overgrowing since consumers are more about living a healthy and active lifestyle. In one study, 23 000 respondents answered that they were wearing sportswear “a couple of times a week.” Many fashion and outdoor clothing brands partnered up to create apparel that provides comfort while following the fashion trends, such as the collaboration between Gucci and North Face (Abdulla, 2022). In the case of Nike as a global brand, it is clear that it promotes healthy lifestyle and focuses on active people (Ravi, 2018). Also, Nike has created few buyer personas, from which one of them is someone who loves sport and healthy lifestyle, called "Weekend Runner" (Raka, 2019).

My empirical study also supports the second hypothesis about influencers having a significant impact on consumers' buying decisions. More specifically, based on this study it seems that consumers not only buy recommended and used products by influencers, but also recommend them to friends and family as well as search for these products. The literature shows that nowadays influencers are the one that people trust and they are a huge factor of growing a business (Bernazzani, 2019). According to Clarke, one-third of the posts should be created by influencers and business should find the right influencers for their products and services (Clark, 2019).

The findings of the survey show that the most used social media platform among millennials is Instagram. According to Statista, around two thirds of all users or users from 25 to 34 are the most active on Instagram (Tankovska, 2021c).

According to the literature the trend of online shopping is constantly increasing, especially for the millennials. Most of them are purchasing online at least once per month and one of the reasons for that is they can compare prices and products (Ross, 2022). This is also confirmed through Hypothesis 4 where two thirds of the millennial respondents answered that they shop online at least once per month.

According to the literature, Millennials are the primary shoppers of sportswear apparel (Weinswig, 2018). Millennials have changed fashion trends. Now everyone is about comfortable clothes but also stylish and cool (Gosselin, 2020). This is also supported by

hypothesis 5, where respondents were asked about their age, most of whom were between 25 to 34 years old.

5 DISCUSSION

The trend of online purchasing is constantly growing. COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on the purchasing behaviour of consumers in Macedonia. In 2019 and 2020, online purchasing increased by more than 50% (Boceva & Kiselicki, 2021). Furthermore, everyone uses at least one social media platform and has the chance to search and learn more about business products and services. The fact that Instagram has created an option for everyone to be a "Content Creator" shows the importance of Content Marketing for businesses (HubSpot, n.d.). Companies should invest more in e-commerce and provide consumers with quality content and a better online purchasing experience.

In this chapter, the research results are discussed with the findings of the theoretical part of this thesis. First, based on the survey and the hypotheses, buyer persona development is discussed, and recommendations for increasing engagement are provided.

5.1 Main findings and business implications

Based on the data collected and analyzed a buyer persona is built for Sport Garage. For a company, knowing one's customers is one of the most important steps to increasing engagement and brand awareness. Today it is crucial for every business to understand and create their buyer personas in order to develop a strategy and engaging content posted on social media platforms (Vaughan, 2021). Since one of the steps of creating a content marketing strategy is to create a buyer persona, a survey was developed with questions that helped to create a buyer persona for Sport Garage. The data was gathered and summarized, so the buyer persona was built. Figure 18 shows the created buyer persona for Sport Garage, based on the survey. A more detailed description is provided below.

Figure 18: Buyer persona



Source: Own work.

Given the prevalence of the millenials in the sample and the company's strategy the target group of Sport Garage are millenials, men and women from 25 to 34 years. Most of the respondents are employed and living an average life. More than half of the respondents have a bachelor's degree, around 20% of them have a master's degree and the others were high school students. They are actively involved in sports and also interested in online shopping and buying sportswear apparel. Furthermore, based on the analysis influencer marketing takes a huge role in the current marketing strategy of Sport Garage. The findings of my empirical study indicate that influencers have an impact on consumers' buying decisions. Consumers use products recommended by influencers and also they recommend the products to family and friends. There are many social media platforms, but every business should choose the right platform for its brand. The results of the survey showed that the target group of Sport Garage uses Instagram, Facebook and Tik Tok on a daily basis. All the above describes the buyer persona of Sport Garage. The persona will be named Luka. So, Luka is 28 years old who loves to workout at least 3 times per week and he is purchasing sportswear online at least once per month. He is employed, lives an average life and has a bachelor's degree. Luka follows influencers on social media platforms which have a huge impact on his purchasing decisions. Also, Luka recommends the products to their family and friends. Of all the social media platforms, he uses Instagram the most frequently, on a daily basis. The above-explained buyer persona is presented graphically in Figure 18.

To answer the fourth research question, a content calendar is provided and can be found in Appendix 4.

5.2 Limitations and recommendations for further research

As part of this master thesis, I have used the quantitative method, more specifically, survey to create a buyer persona for Sport Garage. I have gathered responses from 135 respondents, which is a rather small sample to create one buyer persona and it is difficult to generalize conclusions because the respondents were not randomly selected from the population I was interested in (Sport Garage customers). According to the case study of Nike, they have created a few buyer personas, because they have different types of products for different target groups (Raka, 2019). So, because of the variety of products and different types of preferences, it is better to create a few buyer personas for Sport Garage. Additionally, there were not many psychographic questions included in the questionnaire to capture respondents' lifestyle. For future research, I would suggest to repeat the survey with more questions (addressing also lifestyle) and on a bigger randomly selected sample. An online questionnaire is easy to deliver to the consumers, however, it has its limitations. Through the questionnaire, it is not possible to delve deeper into the respondents' thoughts and behavior. I would suggest additional qualitative methods to be used, such as interviews and/or focus group in order to ask additional questions and to get more information about the respondents.

Building brand awareness and engaging community on the social media platforms is not easy, especially nowadays when consumers have all the information about every product or service on the internet. It takes time to build a brand. It is important to be consistent on social media platforms, to bring value to the consumers and most important thing is to care about consumers' needs and opinions (Ismail, 2017).

Since we live in a fast-changing environment, for further research it would be great to run a longitudinal study for developing a content marketing strategy, in order to keep up with the new trends.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, content marketing is an effective and cost-efficient way to reach and engage customers. It allows businesses to build relationships and increase brand awareness by creating and sharing valuable messages and content that connect with their target audience. Content marketing can be used to drive traffic to a website, generate leads, and increase sales. However, it is essential to remember that content marketing requires planning, strategy, and consistent effort to be successful. With the right approach and dedication, content marketing can be a powerful tool for any business.

Businesses will now achieve their marketing by generating and sharing the most significant content in the world for that specific niche. Content marketing was established a long time ago, but few businesses used it at the time. Nonetheless, it has recently emerged as a new marketing trend due to changes in customer behaviour and technology features (Riserbato, 2020). Customers understand the value of information and how it can help them make better purchase decisions. As a result, people begin to demand more information. Furthermore, they are becoming more intelligent and wiser. Therefore marketers have little alternative but to provide truthful and unique content because information manipulation does not work in this digital age. (Court, Elzinga, Mulder, & Vetvik, 2009). Also, according to my empirical study, many consumers answered that they follow influencers and trust their product or service reviews. Based on this, I infer influencer marketing can help build more trust and engage with consumers differently.

A few factors must be considered in order to create good content marketing. It is preferable to have individualized content since customers want to be unique. They want to feel special and valued as individuals. When a message is individualized and incorporates powerful emotions, consumers are more likely to build a stronger relationship with a company (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016). Furthermore, consumers feel user-generated content is considerably more trustworthy since it is not compensated to propagate favourable word of mouth about specific products. Also, businesses must be ethical and honest with the consumers. As a result, content marketers must ensure that the contents are authentic and transparent to increase brand awareness and customer loyalty (Lehnert, Goupil & Brand, 2021).

Furthermore, creating a content marketing calendar is essential for any business looking to maximize its content marketing efforts. It allows businesses to plan and organize their content marketing activities in an efficient and effective way. By utilizing a content marketing calendar, companies can ensure that their content reaches the right audience at the right time and most effectively. Additionally, content marketing calendars can help businesses track their progress and measure their success, allowing them to make necessary adjustments.

The research conducted in this master's thesis has provided a comprehensive understanding of buyer personas and their role in marketing. It has been shown that buyer personas are an effective tool for creating useful content, as they allow for a better understanding of customer needs and preferences. Furthermore, this research has highlighted the importance of making accurate buyer personas for developing effective marketing strategies. By leveraging the insights gained from this research, businesses can create more effective marketing strategies to help them reach their desired goals.

As expected, my data analysis provided valuable suggestions and insights for a content marketing strategy following the research. Based on this study, Sport Garage may more easily establish its strategy and organize the development of its materials to ensure that they are as helpful and efficient as feasible. Moreover, it was able to comprehend and show how knowing customers is crucial in creating content marketing strategies. Thus, this study helped me have access to a variety of essential information and helped me to plan and design a more forceful and efficient content marketing strategy.

Bellow is a picture that presents the developed hypothesis and findigns from the analysis.

Figure 19: Research findings



Source: Own work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in the Slovene language)

Ugotovitve kažejo, da trend spletnega nakupovanja nenehno narašča. COVID-19 je močno vplival na nakupno vedenje porabnikov v Makedoniji. V letih 2019 in 2020 se je spletno nakupovanje povečalo za več kot 50 % (Kiselički, 2021). Poleg tega vsakdo uporablja vsaj eno platformo družbenih medijev in ima možnost iskati in izvedeti več o izdelkih in storitvah. Instagram je porabnikom ponudil možnost, da postanejo „ustvarjalci vsebine“, kar kaže na pomen vsebinskega trženja in trženja prek družbenih medijev za podjetja (Instagram, 2022). Vsebinsko trženje je sestavni del trženja prek družbenih omrežij in je opredeljeno kot uporaba platform družbenih medijev za povezovanje z občinstvom za izgradnjo blagovne znamke, povečanje prodaje in spodbujanje prometa na spletnem mestu. Vključuje objavo zanimive vsebine na profilih družbenih medijev, poslušanje sledilcev in sodelovanje z njimi, analiziranje rezultatov in prikazovanje oglasov v družbenih medijih (Buffer, n. d.).

Digitalna transformacija je prinesla nekaj sprememb, ko gre za odnos med podjetji in strankami. Podjetja so bolj kot kdaj koli prej osredotočena na potrebe in interese strank. To podjetja usmerja k sprejemanju novih poslovnih modelov in prilagajanju hitro spreminjajočim se tržnim razmeram. Zanimivo je, kako so to spremembo spodbudili kupci in ne podjetja. Da bi zagotovili uspešno vsebinsko strategijo, je pomembno ugotoviti, kdo je nova digitalna stranka in kako ustvariti dobro uporabniško izkušnjo s kakovostno vsebino. Strategijo blagovne znamke poganja pot do stranke (Lund, 2021).

Vsebinsko trženje ozavešča o izdelkih, o katerih kupci v preteklosti morda nikoli niso razmišljali. V mnogih primerih potencialne stranke odkrijejo izdelek ali storitev na platformah družbenih medijev in ko stopijo v stik s podjetji, so že prepričane, da bodo izvedle transakcijo (Steimle, 2014). Poleg tega je vsebinsko trženje pomembno za izobraževanje potencialnih strank o storitvah in izdelkih, povečanje konverzij in ustvarjanje skupnosti okoli podjetja. Če je vsebina zasnovana za ciljno občinstvo, bo povečala število kvalificiranih potencialnih strank, ki bodo morda izvedle dejanje, kot je deljenje vsebine ali nakup. Še bolje je, če stranka izvede dejanja, kot je pisanje ocen izdelkov ali komentarjev, del prisluženih medijev (Kenton, 2018). Ljudje se glede na vsebino odločajo, ali bodo postali del skupnosti ali stranka. Mnoga podjetja, ki uporabljajo platforme družbenih medijev, nimajo strategije vsebinskega trženja. Pomembno je vedeti, da uspešna vsebina govori v imenu blagovne znamke, tako da ustvarja vrednost s pomočjo vsebine.

Magistrsko delo se osredotoča na vsebinsko trženje v primeru športnih oblačil. Športna oblačila so oblačila, oblikovana za udeležbo pri različnih vrstah telesne vadbe ali iz praktičnih, udobnih ali varnostnih razlogov (Enciklopedija, 2018). V zadnjih nekaj letih, predvsem v času Covida, so športna oblačila postala trend na modnem trgu. Vsi so sprejeli način življenja, v katerem so dajali prednost udobju in dobremu počutju. Vplivneži so svoje elegantne kose začeli kombinirati s kosi za prosti čas (Vocast, n. d.) Športna oblačila

so postala modno oblačilo tako za mlajše kot za starejše generacije (Enciklopedija, 2018). Dandanes je vsakdanji ulični slog večine ljudi sestavljen iz oblačil, ki so bila prej namenjena samo za fitness. Poudarek je na udobju in funkcionalnosti, kar so ugotovili tudi izdelovalci športnih oblačil (Vocast, n. d).

Namen magistrskega dela je bil razviti poglobljeno znanje o strategiji vsebinskega trženja in to znanje uporabiti v praksi, da bi oblikovala priporočila za optimizacijo profilov družbenih medijev Sport Garage. Pri tem sem želela izboljšati prisotnost Sport Garage v družbenih medijih z različnimi kampanjami za različne persone. Namen je bil ustvariti tudi koledar vsebin družbenih medijev za podjetje s športnimi oblačili v Severni Makedoniji in izboljšati spletno prisotnost podjetja ter profilirati tipično stranko tega podjetja in raziskati njen življenjski slog, uporabo družbenih medijev in spletno nakupovalno vedenje. Anketa je bila ustvarjena in deljena na spletu na platformah družbenih medijev, ciljni porabniki pa so bili odrasli iz Severne Makedonije, predvsem blizu regije, kjer se nahaja Sport Garage.

Ugotovitve moje empirične študije kažejo, da porabniki, ki kupujejo športna oblačila na spletu, telovadijo več kot drugi. Empirična študija podpira tudi hipotezo o pomembnem vplivu vplivnežev na odločitve porabnikov pri nakupu. Natančneje, porabniki ne kupujejo le izdelkov, ki jih priporočajo in uporabljajo vplivneži, ampak te izdelke tudi iščejo in jih priporočajo prijateljem in družini. Literatura kaže, da so dandanes vplivneži tisti, ki jim ljudje zaupajo in so velik dejavnik pri rasti podjetja (Bernazzani, 2019).

Ugotovitve moje raziskave kažejo, da je med milenijci najbolj uporabljena socialna platforma Instagram. Po podatkih Statista je na Instagramu najbolj aktivnih približno dve tretjini vseh uporabnikov oziroma uporabnikov, starih od 25 do 34 let (Tankovska, 2021).

Trend spletnega nakupovanja je v nenehnem porastu, predvsem med milenijci. Večina jih prek spleta kupuje vsaj enkrat na mesec in eden od razlogov za to je, da lahko primerjajo cene in izdelke (Ross, 2022). To potrjuje moja raziskava, kjer sta dve tretjini vprašanih milenijcev odgovorili, da nakupujeta prek spleta vsaj enkrat na mesec.

Moja raziskava je tudi potrdila, da so najpogostejša starostna kategorija med ciljno publiko za športna oblačila porabniki med 25 in 34 let. Glede na literaturo so milenijci glavni kupci športnih oblačil (Weinswig, 2018).

Analiza empiričnih podatkov je zagotovila dragocene predloge in vpoglede za strategijo vsebinskega trženja. Na podlagi te študije Sport Garage lažje oblikuje svojo trženjsko strategijo in zagotovi čim večjo korist za svoje stranke.

Appendix 2: Research questionnaire

Dear respondent,

First of all, let me thank you for taking my 3 minutes survey. You are a great help!

As a student, I am working on my master thesis and I need to collect the right data and to create buyer persona for sportswear store in Macedona. My target audience involves Macedonian

citizens. This is why I chose you!

And don't worry, you will remain completely anonymous. I promise!

Q1. How often do you workout? (H5)

- Almost every day
- 4-5 days/week
- 3 days/week
- 1-2 days/week
- A few times a month
- A few times a year
- I do not do special workout
-

Q2. Have you ever purchased any sportswear online?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q3. Please indicate the level to which you agree with each statement:

- **I buy products used and recommended by influencers.** Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither disagree nor agree (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree
- **I recommend products used and recommended by influencers.** Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither disagree nor agree (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree
- **I search for products used and recommended by influencers.** Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither disagree nor agree (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree

Q4. Which social media accounts do you have? (Check all that apply)

- Facebook
- Twitter

- Tik Tok
- Google+ (Google Plus)
- Instagram
- Tumblr
- Pinterest
- Snapchat
- LinkedIn
- MySpace
- YikYak
- Other (please state): _____
- I don't use social media

Q5. Think about social media platform (ex: Facebook, Instagram) that you use most often. How often do you use it

-

Daily; Weekly; Monthly; Yearly; I don't use social media

Q6. How often do you purchase online?

- More than once a week
- About once a week
- Only about once every two weeks
- Less than once every two weeks, but more than once a month
- Less than once a month
- A few times a year
- I never purchase online

Q7. On average, about how many hours a week do you spend using the internet?

- None
- Less than one
- One to five
- Five to ten
- Ten to 20
- More than 20

Q8. What is your age?

- Below 25 years
- 25-34 years
- 35-44 years
- 45-54 years
- 55 years or more

Q9. Which gender do you identify most with?

- Male
- Female
- Don't want to say

Q10. What is the highest level of your education?

- Elementary school
- High school
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctor of science

Q11. Generally, how would you rate your living standard?

- Much above the average
- Above the average
- Average
- Below average
- Quite below the average

Q12. What is your employment status?

- Employed
- Unemployed
-
- Student
- Retired

- Other (please state), _____ .

Appendix 3: Tables of the analysis

Table 1: H1. - Chi-Square Test Statistics

Chi-Squared test for Hypothesis 3				
	Value	df	P-value	significance
Chi-Squared test	16.66	1	0.00	0.05
N		111		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected N less than 5. The minimum expected N is 55.5.				
If P-value < Alpha = null hypothesis is rejected		FALSE		
If P-value > Alpha = null hypothesis is accepted		TRUE		
H0: there is no impact of working out on buying sportswear.				
Ha: working out influences the decision to buy sportswear				

Source: Own work.

Table 2: H2. - One sample statistics

One sided One sample test			
		N	135
		Mean	3.274074
		Std Error Mean	0.125971
		Significance	0.05
		df	134
		test statistic	-0.22593
		Critical value	1.6568
H0		If Test < T-value = null hypothesis accepted	TRUE
H1		If Test > T-value = null hypothesis rejected	FALSE
H0		If mean > 3 = null hypothesis accepted	TRUE
H1		If mean < 3 = null hypothesis rejected	FALSE

Source: Own work.

Table 3: H3. - Chi-Square Test Statistics

Chi-Squared test for Hypothesis 3	Value	df	P-value	significance
Chi-Squared test	238.05	8	0.00	0.05
N	135			
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected N less than 5. The minimum expected N is 5.				
If P-value < Alpha = null hypothesis is rejected	TRUE			
If P-value > Alpha = null hypothesis is accepted	FALSE			

Source: Own work.

Table 4: H3. - Chi-Square - Frequencies

Observed	Observed	Expected	(O-E)^2/E
Facebook	83	51.77777778	18.827134
Twitter	27	51.77777778	11.85717692
Tik Tok	66	51.77777778	3.906533143
Instagram	132	51.77777778	124.2927992
Pinterest	58	51.77777778	0.747734859
Snapchat	29	51.77777778	10.02026705
LinkedIn	51	51.77777778	0.011683357
Google+	15	51.77777778	26.12327134
Tumblr	5	51.77777778	42.2606104
Total	466		
		Chi-Squared	238.0472103
		P-value	5.86739E-47

Source: Own work.

Table 5: H4. - Chi-Square Test Statistics

Chi-Squared test for Hypothesis 4	Value	df	P-value	significance
Chi-Squared test	0.14	1	0.71	0.05
N	89			
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected N less than 5. The minimum expected N is 28.				

If P-value < Alpha = null hypothesis is rejected	FALSE			
If P-value > Alpha = null hypothesis is accepted	TRUE			

Source: Own work.

Table 6: H5. - Chi-Square Test Statistics

Chi-Squared test for Hypothesis 4	Value	df	P-value	significance
Chi-Squared test	138.16	3	0.00	0.05
N	135			
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected N less than 5. The minimum expected N is 33.75.				
Chi test P-value				
Significance				
If P-value < Alpha = null hypothesis is rejected	TRUE			
If P-value > Alpha = null hypothesis is accepted	FALSE			

Source: Own work.

Table 7: H5. - Chi-Square - Frequencies

	Observed	Expected	(O-E) ² /E
Below 25 years	35	33.75	0.046296296
25-34 years	89	33.75	90.4462963
35-44 years	8	33.75	19.6462963
45-54 years	3	33.75	28.01666667
	135	135	
		Chi-Squared	138.1555556
		P-value	5.73799E-26

Source: Own work.

Appendix 4: Content calendar

Table 8: Content calendar for Sport Garage

Date	Content Type	Content Description	Social Media Platform	Copywriting
01.12.2022	Post	Picture of a mens sneakers	Instagram/Facebook	Minimalistic and classic - (hashtag of the model of the sneaker) is your ideal everyday essential
02.12.2022	Post	Picture of a mens hoodie	Instagram/Facebook	Go - to hoodie that will elevate your style
03.12.2022	Post	Influencer Collaboration	Instagarm	(name of the influencer) has picked out her favourite, sportish, chilly-season style. Wanna copy the look? Visit our store!
04.12.2022	Story	National Cookie Day - This or That - Picture of a healthy and unhealthy cookie!	Instagram	Which cookie do you prefer?
05.12.2022	Reel	Video - Outfit of the day	Instagram/Facebook	The word on the street is you need this outfit in your wardrobe. Get the look now! Visit our store.
06.12.2022	Post	Picture of a womens sneakrs	Instagram/Facebook	Hey girl, getting your 15.000 steps in will never be more comfortable than in this sneakers.
07.12.2022	Post	Picture of a womens hoodie	Instagram/Facebook	Hey girl, meet the gotta-have-it hoodie everyone's talking about.
08.12.2022	Post	MEME: Cardio is much better when your activewear is on point!	Instagram/Facebook	Most effective daily cardio: Run to our store!
09.12.2022	Post	Picture of kids sneakers	Instagram/Facebook	Ready, set, explore! Your kids new partners in adventure!
10.12.2022	Post	Picture of kids tracksuit	Instagram/Facebook	High durability and long lasting comfort. Ideal for climbing trees or running across playgrounds!
11.12.2022	Reel	Influencer Collaboration	Instagram	A moment for (name of the influencer) in this must-have cozy combination, please!
12.12.2022	Post	Just today - Sneakers on SALE	Instagram/Facebook	Don't miss this offer. Run with style with (model of the sneaker)
13.12.2022				
14.12.2022	Post	National Free Shipping Day	Instagram/Facebook	Shopping + Free delivery = Perfect combo!
15.12.2022				

16.12.2022	Post	Gifr for her	Instagram/Facebook	Now is the time to surprise her. Choose the crème de la crème pieces that represent everything she loves.
17.12.2022	Post	Gift for him	Instagram/Facebook	Surprise him with the ultimate gift - his favourite football team jersey!
18.12.2022	Post	Gift for your BF	Instagram/Facebook	Twinning with your boyfriend just got easy. Shop the unisex collection!
19.12.2022	Post	Gift for your MOM	Instagram/Facebook	1.Show your mom your appreciation with this head to toe outfit we have prepared! 2.Classic style with elegant design, we prepared a head to toe outfit for your mum! Because moms deserve all!
20.12.2022	Post	Gift for your DAD	Instagram/Facebook	We have the perfect dad shoes! Chunky, retro-styled comfort over everything sneakers!
21.12.2022	Post	Gift for your sister	Instagram/Facebook	Surprise her with something that you will enjoy wearing later!
22.12.2022	Post	Gift for your brother	Instagram/Facebook	Is your brother a sport fanatic? If the answer is yes, we have the perfect sports fan gear for him!
23.12.2022	Post	GIVEAWAY: Are you ready to open your gift?	Instagram	Drum Roll, Please!
24.12.2022				
25.12.2022	Post	Just today - Sneakers on SALE	Instagram/Facebook	The sneaker you didn't know you needed until now! Don't miss this special offer!
26.12.2022	Post	MEME:	Instagram/Facebook	
27.12.2022				
28.12.2022	Post	Just today - Tracksuit on SALE	Instagram/Facebook	Perfect for both everyday wear or training sessions. Don't miss this special offer!
29.12.2022				
30.12.2022				
31.12.2022	Post	New Year's Eve	Instagram/Facebook	Happy New Year's Eve to our loyal customers! Looking forward to new collections and countless comfortable outfits!

Source: Own work.