

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

Chapter V includes conclusion, discussion, recommendations from responders and suggestions for future research.

### 5.1 Conclusion

To conclude this independent study, content marketing, as any other marketing activities, will require great amount of research before implementation. Research work is the key to create data-driven, relevant and high-quality content. MyAgent prior content marketing efforts were lacking planning and customer research processes, thus their content has significant gaps and failed to succeed as all success metrics and KPIs demonstrated. MyAgent management understood the lack of processes they have had, thus based on this study they now decided to build completely new website for their business.

Content marketing, as any other marketing activities, will need lots of research before the implementation. MyAgent didn't have any planning processes nor customer insights backing up their prior content marketing efforts, thus it failed to success. Research and proper planning processes are ultimately the key to create, ideate and optimize data-driven content, that will be high-quality and relevant for its audience.

### 5.2 Discussions

The given scenario is a common issue across all industries amongst companies that start implementing content marketing. In fact, based on Content Marketing Institute's B2B Content Marketing Research 2016, only 37% of all companies that are implementing content marketing have a documented strategy. (Content Marketing Institute ,2016). This said, more than half of the companies are publishing content without setting timeframes or goals etc., and top of that marketers fail to identify how their content is perceived and who is consuming it. Also, companies must be patient when they decide to implement content marketing, as benefits are not going to show up immediately.

As in the beginning of this study, performance analysis indicated about the poor performance of myagent.fi based on selected key metrics. Also, results of content audit clearly pointed out, that the existing on-site content is not aligned with brand's mission and vision statements. Thus, following those old steps would not lead MyAgent to success in terms of generating brand awareness and leads through content marketing.

This study has additionally introduced numerous tools to find answers to such questions as can be seen above. Today, there is no need or time for guessing games, because the fierce competition on digital channels. Now, myagent.fi domain traffic volumes and quality were proofed to be low in both cases. What are then those key factors that makes better than other? Obviously, as it turned out during this study, the primary reason to unsuccessful content marketing is the absence of documented planning – the absence of content strategy.

However, many marketers are vowing that they have content strategy, yet they fail to see any benefits and soon they ditch the idea of content marketing. Now, the first key factor to is to document everything, which makes content marketing management possible in future. It also enables marketers to monitor success metrics during the way. This was the first significant flaw in MyAgent prior content marketing efforts.

The second obvious reason why content marketing efforts fail is because they are misaligned with the business's core values and goals. Successful content marketing is always aligned with the business's mission and vision statements. MyAgent failed to do this in their prior content, but in future, they must reflect these statements to each piece of content they are planning to publish on their website.

The other, very significant and common problem among companies who are implementing content marketing is that they like to talk about themselves, how excellent their brand, products or services are. The problem is, people don't want to read brand-centric content. This is great bottom-of-funnel tactic, but how to convert potential customers into leads before that? Many marketers agonize with this matter, when the answer is quite simple. Key to successful content marketing is relevant and high-quality content, and this can be only done by thorough customer research. When a company studies customer insights and interviews different customer segments, it will know what type of content each group is looking to consume. This said, MyAgent must develop customer personas based on customer interviews. As part of this study, an interview has been created for three segments: prospects, leads and existing customers. Next step prior to content ideation is to conduct this interview. This will ensure them great starting point for their first content marketing campaign.

In terms of SEO, keyword research is very important process as part of content strategy. Finding a niche and identifying search queries can make or break one's content marketing campaign. Keyword spreadsheets can be also a great way to find content ideas for future blogs etc. As part of this study, a keyword research was conducted to help MyAgent identify the level of competition of certain keywords and search volumes, to help them target keywords in future and ultimately improve their SERPs.

On top of to customer and keyword research, marketers must understand customer lifecycle stages and content marketing funnel. Knowing these principles will help marketers to create relevant and timely content through customer lifecycle, thus ultimately increasing conversion rates. In terms of customer lifecycle, the key finding during content audit was that the MyAgent website is heavily relied on bottom-of--funnel content. Website is full of calls-to-action for trial offers, brochure downloads, and request buttons, despite the assumption that most of visitors isn't ready to buy initially. To succeed in future and improve conversion rates, they need to fill all content gaps utilizing tools such as content marketing matrix.

Another common mistake is to implement content marketing without setting specific business objectives for content. It is incredibly difficult to maintain focus and nearly impossible to measure long-term success. It is not enough only defining mission and vision statement, and along content with-it, but marketers must also set short- and long-term SMART objectives to guide their efforts. Therefore, MyAgent will need a solid set of objectives for their content marketing campaign. As part of this study, three goals have been set, namely: Generating brand awareness, SEO goals and lead generation. Each goal has been then broken into specific SMART short- and long-term objectives.

In terms of turning content marketing into consistent source of revenue in future, marketers must understand content marketing ROI. This study has been emphasizing the fact, that in most cases, content marketing begins with negative ROI, but marketers must also understand the qualitative and peripheral benefits it brings on table. However, in the end, content marketing is one of the highest ROI activities in marketing field.

### **5.3 Recommendation from Respondents**

Based on recommendation from responders, MyAgent decided to create whole new website for their business, because they understood that making all the necessary changes would take as much time and

money than creating a completely new website for their services and corporate blog. They are now using this research findings as a guide to avoid all previous faults, and now they also have clear understanding of the necessary processes what content creation and search engine optimization must include.

Results of the interviews pointed out that MyAgent content didn't offer value for its audience. MyAgent had mainly publishing content about telling themselves, when interviewees actually want to consume content that is solving their problems. This means guides, demo videos, trend reports, infographic case studies, webinars, checklists, data sheets and price guides, whitepapers and communicate better with product features.

Based on recommendations from B2B responders, MyAgent need first to build brand awareness by educating target audience using rational content: guides, trend reports demo videos, infographics and reports and whitepapers. Now, after educating potential customers, they need to move them further down in content marketing funnel, by convincing them publishing webinars, checklists, data sheet & price guides, caste studies and improving the overall buying process by creating more specific product features.

To conclude this recommendation from responders, it can be tempting to create and publish irrelevant content only frequency or better SERPs in mind, and faster too, however, this type of strategy is proven to be ineffective and it is likely to only harm brand image. Hence, the golden rule of content marketing is to understand the target audience and sum the recommendations from responders. This is the only effective way to serve target audience effectively in each and every customer lifecycle stage.

As the interviews proved, quality goes over quantity, and behind every tactic, there should be data-driven strategy to meet target audience wants and needs. Indeed, the buzz word "content is the king" holds true, but only if marketers plan it right.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Future Research**

For future research, the process would be easier to start by doing the customer research. There are no right or wrong order to do these processes, however it can save a lot of precious time. Raw data surely is valuable information for any marketer out there, but without customer insights it is very easy to do wrong hypothesis.

For instance, when collecting data with Google Analytics and results show, that the overall content is performing poorly. Example, now, that if average session duration is low, marketers should create longer content. Wrong. If customer research finds out that the average reader is i.e. a busy businessman who enjoys brief two minutes articles in a form of checklist or such, now these marketers would have started creating long content and only make things even worse.

So, for future research, always start with customer research.

### **5.5 Research Limitation and Difficulties**

The biggest difficulty was the distance between researcher and MyAgent and its target audience. The company as well as the target audience is located in Finland and this independent study was operated in Thailand. This created some challenges, mainly in organizing meetings and finding the interviewees.

Limitations of the study was face to face interviews that are best way to collect information. Also lack of time, only the planning processes and data collection could be done. Thus, the content creation and distribution had to be left out.