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Content Marketing: Brand Effectiveness in Commercial Premises of Saint Vincent

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the effectiveness of content marketing to perceptually verify brand positioning in commercial establishments in San Vicente, Ecuador. The objective of this study was to: The aim of this study was to analyze the perception of local actors regarding the effectiveness of content marketing in the brand positioning of commercial establishments in the cantonal capital of San Vicente. The research had an exploratory approach that, through the explanatory analytical method, combined quantitative techniques, facilitated the interpretation of the results. The survey based on the Likert scale generated a correlational study feasible in the criteria of the results. These indicated that visual content is valued positively by an important segment of consumers, although a large part is neutral (52.2%), suggesting the need to improve in this aspect. In addition, useful information seems to significantly influence purchasing decisions, while the motivation to research products also presents opportunities for optimization. This article concludes that local brands must reinforce their visual content (40%) where it is proposed to offer more detailed information and design strategies that motivate the consumer to explore more, to improve their positioning and success in a competitive environment.

INTRODUCTION

Content marketing has become highly effective in brand development today because it allows brands to create and share valuable and relevant material that attracts and retains a clearly defined audience. By providing useful and educational content, brands can establish themselves as thought leaders and experts in their industry, which builds trust and credibility among consumers. Furthermore, this approach encourages building long-lasting relationships with customers, increasing loyalty and retention. Quality content also improves SEO, increasing online visibility and attracting organic traffic to the brand's website. Together, these strategies strengthen the brand's presence in the market and contribute to sustained business growth. The effectiveness of brand positioning in local businesses is now evident, as it allows brands to connect with the local community in an authentic and relevant way. By creating content that resonates with the specific interests and needs of the local population, brands can increase their visibility and recognition in the area. This approach helps build trust and loyalty among local customers, who value personalization and close communication. In Ecuador, localized content marketing has strengthened the presence and recognition of the brand at a commercial level, driving traffic and sales in the stores or businesses. Studies show that content marketing is a marketing strategy that focuses on creating and distributing relevant and valuable content for your target audience. Unlike traditional advertising, which interrupts consumers with promotional messages, content marketing seeks to attract and retain potential customers by offering them useful and interesting information (Castilla *et al.*, 2023). However, (Molina, 2021) in his blog he argues that

content marketing is a marketing strategy based on the creation and distribution of relevant and valuable content to attract, capture and retain a defined audience, and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action. It requires knowledge of the buyer persona to best target the needs of our different audiences.

Instead, (Londoño, 2023) in his blog he argues about the benefits of content marketing, where he expresses that these offer a series of advantages for companies, including increased web traffic, high-quality content can attract more visitors to your website, which can lead to more potential customers and sales, which improves search engine positioning (SEO), search engines give priority to websites that publish high-quality content and give greater brand recognition, contributing to a stronger and more recognizable brand, reflected in consumers' purchasing decisions (Cueva *et al.*, 2021).

Other considerations explain that this is a marketing strategy focused on attracting potential customers in a natural way, according (Lemoine & Párraga, 2024) to which relevant content distributed in the different channels and digital media where the audience is a way to involve your target audience and grow your network of leads to customers through the creation of relevant content and also by creating a positive perception of your brand. Other considerations explain that you have to adopt the best and most modern customer acquisition strategies, the main element being: an Inbound Marketing strategy. One of the main ones is Content Marketing, which is used and recommended by the world's leading specialists (Giraldo, 2019).

Authors such as (Montiel, 2024) and Farías *et al.* clarify that recognizing content marketing as one of the key

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pieces of inbound marketing is very important to boost any commercial activity. This approach is characterized by offering customers what they are looking for and understanding that today's consumer no longer has a passive role, but decides what interests them, how they are informed and what, how and when the purchase decision is made by customers or consumers, showing the owners of these businesses how to manage these types of products or content (Farías *et al.*, 2020).

Other considerations regarding the inbound marketing approach based on the concept of not being invasive and providing what customers want by focusing on providing value. This leads to much more segmented actions being carried out, which in turn are more effective because they are more targeted and therefore more economical (Mercadé, 2015).

Currently, the businesses located in San Vicente are very representative at a visual level due to the geographic location of the cantonal capital where a very representative commercial mobility is observed when located between two cantonal capitals such as Bahía de Caráquez and the canton Jama. The Bahía Extension of the Eloy Alfaro Lay University of Manabí through the department of Engagement with Society and the Research Directorate seeks to integrate business diversification strategies that combine from the substantive academic processes to promote the transfer of knowledge to the urban and rural communities located within its radius of action, where the seven research projects are focused on various problems that prevail in a deficient use of advertising content in the commercial businesses object of studies.

It is set as an objective analyse the perception of local actors regarding the effectiveness of content marketing in the brand positioning of commercial premises in the cantonal capital of San Vicente. In order to carry out the research, it is proposed to review scientific articles that, from the bibliographical context, contribute to the study of the object and field of this research, which in turn aims to diagnose the commercial activity under study to define content marketing strategies based on the brand of commercial premises in order to develop effective content marketing strategies that respond to a better brand positioning of commercial premises located in the cantonal capital of San Vicente.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Content Marketing

Vázquez (2013) expresses that content marketing encompasses a set of strategies aimed at attracting, creating and delivering content to a brand's followers and users, with an approach that goes beyond generating traffic, claiming (Borja, 2021) that the main objective is to foster empathy and dialogue around the brand's proposals, avoiding the dissemination of superficial and unidirectional content.

Unlike traditional advertising, content marketing has the great advantage of reaching specific audiences in their different stages, promoting interaction and, in many cases,

motivating these same audiences to generate content in favour of the brand, according to various specialists. This approach provides value throughout the entire consumer journey, from the first contact with the brand to the completion of a purchase and beyond, contributing to their loyalty and turning them into brand ambassadors (Meza, 2022).

(Giraldo, 2019) argues that content marketing is a strategy to connect with your target audience and expand your network of leads and customers by creating relevant and valuable content. By attracting, engaging and providing value to people, this technique helps build a positive perception of your brand, thus facilitating the generation of more business opportunities.

Other studies show that content marketing is a strategic process that contributes to the positioning of a brand and facilitates its connection with the target audience. Through the creation of valuable content, the brand produces materials of interest and utility for users, thus generating a significant and relevant link (Montes de Oca & Peña, 2022).

Content marketing is a valuable tool for local businesses, especially in a context where resources may be limited and the need for genuine connection with the public is essential. Unlike traditional advertising, content marketing allows for a two-way relationship, where consumers not only receive information, but also interact and actively participate in building the brand narrative.

Creating relevant and valuable content helps local entrepreneurs position themselves as references in their communities, generating trust and loyalty in consumers. This approach, by focusing on providing value at each stage of the customer journey (from discovery to loyalty), is able to transform consumers into brand ambassadors. This is particularly beneficial for local businesses, which rely heavily on word of mouth and the perception of proximity and authenticity.

In scientific terms, content marketing for local businesses can be analysed as a facilitator of identity and cultural roots, as it allows messages to be adapted to the needs and values of the community. It also contributes to local economic development by promoting the visibility of local products and services, strengthening the circular economy and allowing consumers to feel that their support has a tangible impact on their environment. This marketing approach generates benefits for both entrepreneurs and the community, promoting a more sustainable and connected business ecosystem.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this research specifically exploratory approach in research combines qualitative and quantitative aspects to explore a phenomenon that from the investigative perspective from different perspectives used to study a problem that is not clearly defined, so it is carried out to better understand it, but without providing conclusive results, which from the criteria based on the platform (Velázquez, 2024).

Through the An explanatory analytical method was employed in the present study by breaking down how and why content marketing impacts brand positioning in local businesses. This involves closely examining the elements of content marketing, such as creating relevant content and personalizing it for the local audience, and then explaining its effects on visibility, customer trust, and local SEO. Through this approach, causal relationships and specific mechanisms that make content marketing effective in strengthening brand presence in the local community can be identified and explained. This method also made it easier to generate an analysis of the current situation of the businesses and ventures located on the central avenue of the city of San Vicente, causing the factors that affect the effectiveness of the brand of said businesses to be described.

As a research technique, the use of surveys using the Likert scale was selected as the most effective research technique to assess perceptions and attitudes towards content marketing in retail stores. The Likert scale allows respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements related to the effectiveness of content marketing. This method facilitates the quantification of subjective opinions, providing data that can be statistically analysed to identify trends and patterns. By using this scale, a more nuanced and detailed understanding of how content marketing impacts brand positioning at a local level is obtained.

The population to be studied will be the commercial premises located in the cantonal capital according to statistics kept by the Tourist Extension Observatory.

From the total, the most representative activity will be selected and from this, 35% of the premises located on the main street of San Vicente will be selected due to not being exposed to the insecurity and violence that Ecuador is currently experiencing, using non-probabilistic random sampling by coexistence, choosing 40 people who frequent the premises located on the main avenue of the cantonal capital of San Vicente.

To validate the questionnaire and determine its reliability, the statistical software SPSS version 26 will be used. This will facilitate an internal consistency analysis using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This method will assess the coherence of the responses in the different questions of the questionnaire. In addition, an exploratory factor analysis is intended to be carried out based on the results to identify the underlying structure of the questionnaire and ensure that the grouped questions reflect coherent constructs. It is also useful to consider reviewing the descriptive statistics of each item and performing test-retest reliability tests if possible, to ensure the stability of the responses over time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey was structured in six open questions and five questions that responded to the profile of the client or consumer in order to measure the relevance of brand content in commercial premises located in an urban area of San Vicente, Ecuador. It should be noted that the scale of Likert in order to correlate results and evaluate reliability. Below are the results of the profile grouping gender, educational level, shopping preferences and purchase frequency as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of the respondent profile

Parameters		Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Select your gender	Female	24	60.0	60.0
	Male	16	40.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	
Educational Level	Postgraduate	3	7.5	7.5
	Secondary	13	32.5	40.0
	University	24	60.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	
Shopping Preferences	Footwear	13	32.5	32.5
	Confections	3	7.5	40.0
	Lingerie	1	2.5	42.5
	Others	18	45.0	87.5
	Perfumery	5	12.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	
Purchase Frequency	Diary	4	10.0	10.0
	Monthly	18	45.0	55.0
	Fortnightly	6	15.0	70.0
	Weekly	12	30.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	

Regarding gender, the study indicates that 60% of respondents were female, while 40% were male. This suggests that, in the commercial establishments of San Vicente, female participation in the surveys was higher. This data could reflect a trend of greater consumption or interest of women in commercial establishments, which is relevant for marketing strategies, since a greater part of the content can be directed towards this segment. Regarding the educational level, it is observed that 60% of respondents have a university education, followed by 32.5% with secondary education and 7.5% with postgraduate studies. These results suggest that the profile of the typical consumer of these commercial establishments in San Vicente has a high level of education. This could influence purchasing decisions and the effectiveness of content marketing strategies, since consumers with a higher educational level may respond better to content that is informative and focuses on product quality.

In terms of shopping preferences, 45% of respondents mention that they prefer products from the “Other” category, which includes a variety of items outside of the specific categories mentioned. 32.5% prefer footwear, followed by 12.5% for perfumery. The clothing and lingerie categories have a lower preference, with 7.5% and 2.5% respectively. This data suggests that, while there is considerable interest in footwear, the market is diverse and encompasses many different products. The “Other” category may indicate an opportunity to diversify content

strategies and capture this broad interest in different types of products.

In terms of purchasing frequency, 45% of respondents make purchases on a monthly basis, followed by 30% who make purchases on a weekly basis. Only 10% make purchases on a daily basis, while 15% make purchases on a biweekly basis. This shows that most consumers have a less frequent (monthly) purchasing behavior, which may be indicative of planned spending and may influence how marketing campaigns are designed. Campaigns could focus on monthly promotions and strategies to make the most of these consumption patterns.

The results suggest that the primary target audience is college-educated women who primarily purchase a variety of products, including footwear, on a monthly basis. This information is key to defining effective content marketing strategies, targeting campaigns toward topics that resonate with this demographic, highlighting product diversity, and tailoring messaging for consumers that are more educated. Periodic campaigns that maintain attention and interest throughout each month could be especially effective in this context.

Instead, the visual relevance of brand content, the usefulness of information for making purchasing decisions and the motivation of content marketing for market research were diagnosed in order to make a correlation to verify strengths and weaknesses in commercial activity, showing the following results. Table 2 shows the results of the correlations studied.

Table 2: Correlation between visual relevance, decision-making and content marketing motivation

Parameters		Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Visual relevance of brand content	OK	12	30.0	30.0
	Disagree	2	5.0	35.0
	I totally agree	5	12.5	47.5
	Neutral	21	52.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	
Usefulness of information for purchasing decisions	OK	18	45.0	45.0
	Disagree	4	10.0	55.0
	I totally agree	5	12.5	67.5
	Strongly disagree	1	2.5	70.0
	Neutral	12	30.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	
Content Marketing Motivation for Market Research	OK	15	37.5	37.5
	Disagree	3	7.5	45.0
	I totally agree	5	12.5	57.5
	Neutral	17	42.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	

Let's start with the Visual Relevance of Content. The results show that 30% of respondents agree and 12.5% strongly agree that the visual relevance of branded content influences their purchasing decision, adding up to 42.5% positive responses. However, 52.5% of respondents remain neutral, indicating that although there is a positive

perception towards the value of visual content, the majority does not have a defined stance on its impact. Only 5% of respondents disagree. This suggests that although visual relevance is important, retailers in San Vicente have the opportunity to further strengthen their visual elements to better capture attention and increase engagement.

The usefulness of information in branded content is perceived positively, with 45% of respondents agreeing and 12.5% strongly agreeing, giving 57.5% positive responses. This indicates that more than half of consumers find the information provided useful for their purchasing decisions. 30% of respondents remain neutral and 10% disagree, while only 2.5% strongly disagree. These results suggest that relevant and detailed information in branded content has a considerable impact on purchasing decisions, reinforcing the importance of providing clear and accurate information that facilitates the decision-making process.

In terms of the motivation generated by content marketing for market research, 37.5% of respondents agree and 12.5% strongly agree, adding up to a total of 50% positive responses. This implies that half of consumers consider that content marketing motivates them to research more about available products and services. However, 42.5% remain neutral and 7.5% disagree. These results indicate that although content marketing generates interest and curiosity, there is room for improvement in terms of further motivating consumers to explore and learn about the market in greater depth.

The results of this rating highlight that branded content

is valued for its usefulness and ability to motivate market research, but the high proportion of neutral responses suggests that the current impact could be strengthened. Retailers in St. Vincent have the opportunity to develop more effective strategies that improve visual appeal, maximize the usefulness of information, and increase consumer motivation to research further.

To achieve this, it would be beneficial for brands to invest in more eye-catching visual elements that are consistent with their identity, provide detailed information that better guides consumers in their decision-making process, and design content that fosters greater curiosity and interest in products. By reinforcing these aspects, companies could not only capture consumer attention, but also improve brand perception and boost customer loyalty, contributing to the success and growth of their business activity in the competitive environment.

It is important to highlight the importance of brand content through the perception of the survey, correlating three responses that integrate brand content encourages participation and engagement with visual effectiveness and attractiveness and whether the brand generates trust where similar correlative results were observed as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Brand content promotion, participation and engagement

Parameters		Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Branded content encourages participation and engagement	OK	14	35.0	35.0
	Disagree	6	15.0	50.0
	I totally agree	3	7.5	57.5
	Neutral	17	42.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	
Branded content is visually appealing	OK	16	40.0	40.0
	Disagree	4	10.0	50.0
	I totally agree	6	15.0	65.0
	Neutral	14	35.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	
Branded content builds brand trust	OK	17	42.5	42.5
	Disagree	4	10.0	52.5
	I totally agree	5	12.5	65.0
	Neutral	14	35.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	

The table analyses three aspects of branded content: participation and engagement, visual appeal and trust building. As to whether content encourages participation, 42.5% of respondents feel neutral, 35% agree, 7.5% strongly agree and 15% disagree, showing a moderately positive perception with a notable portion of indifference. Regarding the perception that content is visually appealing, 40% agree, 15% strongly agree, 35% neutral and only 10% disagree, indicating a generally favourable appreciation. In terms of whether content generates trust in the brand, 42.5% of respondents agree, 12.5% strongly agree, 35% neutral and only 10% disagree, suggesting

an overall positive perception. The tendency towards neutral responses across the board implies a possible lack of profound impact, although the overall perception is favourable, especially in visual appeal and trust. This suggests there are opportunities to improve content in order to turn neutral perceptions into very positive ones, especially in terms of engagement and effectiveness.

Discussion

Research on the effectiveness of content marketing in retail stores in San Vicente highlights several key points on how content strategies can influence consumer

perception and behavior. One of the most significant findings is the positive assessment of visual content, although with a marked neutral tendency, suggesting that while there is an appreciation for this type of content, there is still considerable room to improve its appeal and effectiveness. This coincides with what was proposed by Castilla *et al.* (2023), who emphasize that content must be both visually attractive and relevant to maintain consumer attention and strengthen brand loyalty.

The usefulness of information is also presented as a determining factor in making purchasing decisions. More than half of the respondents considered that, the detailed information provided through brand content was useful, which supports the idea that consumers look for content that provides value and facilitates their purchasing process. As Molina (2021) points out, the creation of content must be aimed at solving the specific needs of the audience, and for this, it is crucial to know the “buyer persona” and adapt the information effectively and where the university institutions of Ecuador are generating strategies based on the continuous improvement of the country’s ventures (Lemoine *et al.*, 2023).

The study shows that although content marketing can motivate consumers to do more research on products, a high proportion of neutral responses suggests that retailers need to improve in this regard. Authors such as Londoño (2023) explain that content strategies should be not only informative, but also inspiring, to attract consumers to delve deeper into the brand. This motivation could be fostered with more dynamic and engaging content, such as explanatory videos or infographics that highlight the benefits of the product and generate genuine interest and where it generates a display in search engines (Lemoine *et al.*, 2019).

In the specific context of San Vicente, the results reflect the need to develop more sophisticated strategies that capture consumer attention and generate sustainable interest. The high proportion of neutral responses in the perception of visual content indicates that there is still important work to be done to improve the design and presentation of the brand. Recommendations include investing in more impactful visual elements, such as high-quality graphics and multimedia content, to better capture the attention of the target audience and thus boost entrepreneurship in the area (Carvajal *et al.*, 2021). Finally, this study demonstrates that, although content marketing has proven to be a valuable tool for retail outlets in San Vicente, there is a significant opportunity for optimization. Consideration should be given to developing content that not only informs, but also inspires and engages the consumer, improving visual relevance and motivation to explore products. As Giraldo (2019) highlights, a well-executed content marketing strategy is key to building a strong brand presence and fostering long-term loyalty. This is especially relevant in a geographic and commercial environment such as San Vicente, where competition is constant and connection with the local community is essential (Villacis *et al.*, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The review of literature and bibliographic and scientific foundations contributed to the understanding of the subject of study, facilitating the verification of the relevance of the research topic to strategically influence the content marketing generated at the level of commercial activity with the aim of achieving greater brand effectiveness in commercial premises located in the urban area of San Vicente.

According to the survey results, we found that the profile characteristics indicated that local businesses could benefit from developing content marketing strategies that align with the interests of this group, with a focus on varied products and informational campaigns that highlight the quality and variety of their offering. In addition, the monthly purchase frequency suggests that creating loyalty strategies through monthly promotions and relevant content can be effective in increasing retention.

Although it is statistically denoted that the brand effectiveness in commercial premises in San Vicente is moderate, a positive impact was evident in visual and trust aspects, presenting an opportunity for improvement in the generation of participation and in the motivation of consumers to investigate more about the denoted products where 42.5% of respondents indicated a positive perception about the visual relevance of the brand content, while 55% showed that the content is visually attractive. These results suggest that the brand’s visual elements are well positioned, although there is a significant number of neutral responses that show an opportunity to improve the overall visual perception and better capture the attention of consumers.

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