Revisiting product classification to examine content marketing practices

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate how the degree of investment and involvement attributed to specific product categories, affect content marketing plans and practices on the Web and social media.

Design/methodology/approach – This is a conceptual paper based on the classification proposed by Morton and Devine (1985) on the axes of investment and involvement. The author uses secondary research evidence from both academic and industry sources to document content marketing trends in the US and the EU markets and allocates such trends using the semiotic square.

Findings – The findings indicate that products in each quadrant follow similar practices regarding content publishing, campaign planning and community management.

Research limitations/implications – Further research may test this model empirically and assess its merits in different markets.

Practical implications – Managers can use this model for content planning, considering category-related opportunities and limitations. The model may also serve as a teaching tool to familiarize students with older research and its potential contribution in current settings.

Originality/value – By applying an old model in the current US/EU context, this paper helps document and understand content marketing practices, paving the way toward their optimization.

Keywords Internet marketing, Marketing communications, Experiential marketing, Customer insight, Channel management, Virtual communities, Paid search, Marketing communication, Consumer generated advertising, Social media marketing, Online marketing, SEO, Content marketing, High investment, High involvement, Low involvement, Product category, Product classification model, Content publishing, Content planning, Connection planning, Conversion, Brand communities

Paper type Conceptual paper

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to revisit the model of product classification on the axes of investment and involvement, proposed by Morton and Devine (1985), to examine current content marketing practices. By applying a traditional advertising model in the complex digital environment, the author aims to offer insight and contribute to the teaching, research and practice of content marketing.

Both the idea of involvement – emotional or social – and the idea of investment – of time or of money – prevail in the social media environment where the term engagement often describes both (Gambetti and Graffigna, 2012, 2010; Kumar and Gupta, 2016). Classifying products or product categories based on their degree of user investment or involvement may constitute a useful tool to interpret current practices and inform future decisions in content marketing.

There is still room for optimization when it comes to content marketing practices since, according to industry reports, 71 per cent of US marketers surveyed claim that social media and content marketing are among the most difficult channels to measure for Return on Investment (ROI) (AOL Inc, 2016).

On the other hand, there is also evidence that the distinction between search goods, whose attributes can be assessed without interacting with the product, and experience goods, whose attributes can be assessed through experiencing the product, often blurs as the Web provides information that facilitates the purchasing process (Huang *et al.*, 2009. The definitions from Nelson (1970, 1974)). Despite such blurring, product classification on the axes of investment and involvement may help interpret variations in content marketing practices and pave the way for best practices.

This conceptual paper tries to document such observations and discuss relevant implications regarding both future research and content marketing decisions. To do so, the author studies content marketing and consumption in the Western context, focusing on the US and the EU markets. To conceptualize on how investment and involvement may be used to map content marketing practices, this approach examines content publishing, campaign structure and community building. There are other ways to classify parameters of content marketing (Schulze *et al.*, 2015); yet this approach is considered more relevant and inclusive of different popular practices.

2. Literature review
2.1 Product classification
The classification of goods in "convenience" goods, "shopping" goods and "specialty" goods had already been proposed since 1923 or even since 1912 as Mason (2005) argues, providing a thorough historic review of the attempt to classify goods based on consumer behavior. During the 1980s and 1990s, research attempted to interpret and determine advertising appeals, creative and media strategies by analyzing consumer perceptions and reactions per product or per category. Foote Cone and Belding (FCB) proposed a classification in four quadrants, known as the FCB Grid that Richard Vaughn (1980, 1986) studied and researched. His proposal attracted significant attention and several papers appeared ever since, proposing improvements, critiques or adjustments (indicatively: Rossiter and Percy, 1987, 1991, 1997; Rossiter *et al.*, 1991; Percy, 2001). These models are built around two dimensions:

(1) think/feel in the case of the FCB Grid; and

(2) high involvement/low involvement.

Approximately at the same time, Morton and Devine (1985) introduced a model mapping product positioning on a graph comprising a vertical axis representing cost and a horizontal one representing desire.

More recent studies have attempted to discern online practices or social media practices based on some distinction between different types of products. However, the prevailing distinction is between "fun" products and "useful" products (Schulze *et al.*, 2015) or between "hedonic" products and "utilitarian" products (Cheema and Papatla, 2008; Ahmad *et al.*, 2017) and between hedonic versus utilitarian dimensions (Voss *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, a more thorough tool could be developed if the investment factor is taken under consideration as investment affects time users spend online trying to determine the best choice (Broilo *et al.*, 2016).

2.2 Content marketing

Defining content marketing appears to be a very challenging task and there still seems to be no universally accepted definition (Dzamic and Kirby, 2018, p. 3). A proposed classification of definitions includes three categories: marketing-related, trade-related and consumer-centric (Dzamic and Kirby, 2018, pp. 3-8). For the purposes of this paper, the following definition is selected: "The discipline of creating quality branded content across all media channels and platforms to deliver engaging relationships, consumer value and measurable success for brands" (Content Marketing Association, 2013, also in: Dzamic and Kirby, 2018, p. 4). Therefore, content marketing includes publishing and requires planning while content is also used to create and maintain user communities (Hutton and Fosdic, 2011).

2.3 Content publishing

Social media appear to influence purchase decisions (Casey, 2017). Industry research shows that users choose content for a number of reasons among which inspiration, entertainment and information. Thus, certain product categories respond to these reasons by providing relevant content to meet the consumers' needs and desires, adopting different formats in each case. For example, users want to find information, answers and advice when it comes to health and cars but look for inspiration when engaging with food and fashion (AOL Inc, 2016). Therefore, in the online environment, both rational and emotional appeals are used to influence consumer choice. Informative content is believed to facilitate purchase decisions leading to an informed choice, while experience content or emotional content or entertaining content is believed to increase brand engagement (Huang *et al.*, 2009).

The idea that brands are publishers diffusing content online is already popular among both professionals and academic researchers (indicatively: Bonn, 2012; Hermida *et al.*, 2012). Successful cases like Red Bull are widely discussed (indicatively: Sanchis-Roca *et al.*, 2016; Kunz *et al.*, 2016; Gorse *et al.*, 2010). The brand has earned a lot of media coverage by becoming a hub for extreme sports fans, investing in relevant content production as well as events and activities with strong online-offline synergies, to the point media often refer to the brand as the "New ESPN" (Burg, 2014). Initiatives like the "Microsoft stories" (https://news.microsoft.com/stories/) or 'Coca-Cola Journey" (www.coca-colacompany.com/) also constitute examples of content publishing.

Branded content and native advertising are part of this set of practices. The former includes both informative and entertaining attempts for brands to create target-centric content (indicatively: Asmussen *et al.*, 2016; Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Feng and Ots, 2015; Basney, 2014; Jutkowitz, 2014; Sabate *et al.*, 2014). The latter is chosen as a tactic for broader reach when content is published in paid media, "matching the form, feel and function of the content of the media on which it appears" (Vinderslev, 2019; Bakshi, 2015; Borst, 2015).

Furthermore, influencer marketing belongs in this section because influencers are usually asked to either create branded content for their followers or promote existing content. Influencer marketing rapidly evolves as businesses acquire a better-rounded vision, gradually stop trying to control the message and use more sophisticated metrics (Armstrong, 2017).

All the above practices establish the importance of content and content marketing whose efficiency largely depends on the selected touch-points that may maximize reach as well as engagement. Indeed, the online environment calls for a re-definition of integrated marketing communications (IMC) and marketers need to re-conceptualize the allocation of content across different channels (Payne *et al.*, 2017).

2.4 Campaign structure
Campaign structure, for the purposes of this paper, is segmented in two different observed trends: the first is conversion planning, a mainstream mantra of most experts. Conversion is the user's choice to visit (click on) a brand owned asset, like a website, after being exposed to content, and complete a desired action like an online purchase, a subscription or a request for proposal (Chaffey and Smith, 2013). The importance of planning and optimizing such conversions is significant, especially when it comes to display advertising on the Web or on search engines (Jansen and Clarke, 2017).

Connection planning, the second visible trend, is a term first coined by Coca-Cola (i-com, 2016; Manjur, 2015; Zmuda, 2013; Sellers, 2012), defined by the brand's executive Ivan Pollard as "the discipline of deploying your resources across owned, earned, shared and paid media in such a way that it delivers business results" (Zmuda, 2013). This approach focuses on user experience. Online campaigns and content structure are based on synergies and links between platforms with no dead ends hoping to keep consumers constantly engaged. The user is kept in the loop of tailored touch points through frequent activations (Gendron, 2017). The term appears to match a number of similar campaigns mainly for products that are not purchased online; hence, conversion to a website is less important. Top-of-mind awareness and maintenance of a positive image are the objectives.

2.5 Community building
Though often simply referring to those who follow social media accounts, brand communities carry a lot of depth and a long tradition. The term originated long before the web became an established touch point. A brand community is defined as a:

> [...] non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand [...] [that] exhibit three traditional markers of community: shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).

Virtual brand communities can be described as aggregations of consumers on the internet who display an interest in some brand or product (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; Muñiz and Schau, 2005, 2007; Schau *et al.*, 2009).

Several ways for community members to connect are observed and analyzed online, like webs, pools, and hubs (Fournier and Lee, 2009). The important role of brand communities has been observed and studied extensively (Algesheimer *et al.*, 2005; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Adjei *et al.*, 2010). Research metrics for the robustness and ROI of communities are also sought after (Di Mauro *et al.*, 2017). Literature now clearly divides brand communities from other forms of consumer-brand networks (Gensler *et al.*, 2013).

Martinez-Lopez *et al.* (2016) suggest that communities should be formed after a careful market and audience analysis in alignment with broader marketing strategy and their recommendations include factors like the product category (pp. 213-215). They also define the kind of involvement the community manager should maintain as the community evolves. Furthermore, Parmentier (2015) suggests that communities go through stages from formation to maturity while research (Sibai *et al.*, 2015; Hsiu-Yu and Ting-Ling, 2015) argues that the degree and type or style of moderation on behalf of community managers may or even should vary depending on the type of the product and the stage of the community.

3. Methodological approach

This is a conceptual paper that does not produce empirical evidence but, instead, uses existing evidence, mainly from the US/EU market, that indicate an old model can be fruitfully applied in a new context guiding practice and learning.

According to Shapira (2011, pp. 1314-1315) models are important tools not because they make claims about truth but because they prove to be useful in a variety of contexts. Especially when applied in new domains, models build conceptual frameworks that organize observations and pave the way for new insight or for a better organizing of major issues in a domain of inquiry. Models make abstract or complicated observations appear more concrete, explicable or predictable (Delgado, 2015, p. 134). They may also create analogies when transferred from one domain to another.

Models do not propose or affirm a true/false hypothesis. They selectively use and organize evidence in a way that facilitates interpretation and future research hypotheses. It can be argued that even evidence which does not support a model, may still prove to be a contribution *per se* (MacInnis, 2011; Whetten, 1989). To assess a model, one factor is whether it may lead to changes in the relevant practice; another factor is whether it advances current discussions, stimulates new ones or revitalizes old ones (Whetten, 1989, p. 494).

Conceptual thinking leads to the formation or re-examination of models by tracing patterns or connections that help understand an abstract problem. This process may rely on divergent thinking and lead to visual representations, typologies, figures or other depictions. In marketing, conceptualizing may lead to a better understanding of how to manipulate or arrange environments leading to desired outcomes (MacInnis, 2011, pp. 140-141). Conceptual thinking does not constitute a research hypothesis *per se* but may lead to insightful interpretations, and to the design of original empirical research (MacInnis, 2011, pp. 140-141).

One way to conceptualize is to revise existing frameworks through a novel perspective (MacInnis, 2011, pp. 140-141). This paper attempts to do precisely that: apply an old conceptual framework in a new context by using corroborating secondary empirical evidence mainly from two types of sources: academic research and industry reports from the US and the EU markets.

4. Conceptual framework

The proposed framework mostly relies on the work of Morton and Devine (1985) and the products are categorized accordingly. The author chose to use the semiotic square instead of the double axis. The two axes imply that each product is a dot on a map, after some measurement. The semiotic square relies on the premise that similar products will occupy relevant territory, indicating tendencies rather than positions (Figure 1). Both axes relate to consumer actions and reactions before, during, and after the purchase process, as well as to engagement. Yet, on the axis of investment, this engagement is more rational while on the axis of involvement this engagement is primarily emotional. Engagement can have both emotional and rational (functional or utilitarian) parameters (Gambetti and Graffigna, 2012, 2010). The author suggests each quadrant leads to a different kind of engagement (Figure 2).

4.1 The investment axis

The horizontal axis represents cost and the time consumers invest to make an informed purchase decision. On the right hand side are expensive products bought after careful consideration like cars, technology apparel, long lasting consumer goods, traveling and leisure, or even insurance policies and banking investments. On the left hand side are fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), supermarket products, gadgets and accessories. Products with significant switching costs would tend to be on the right side.
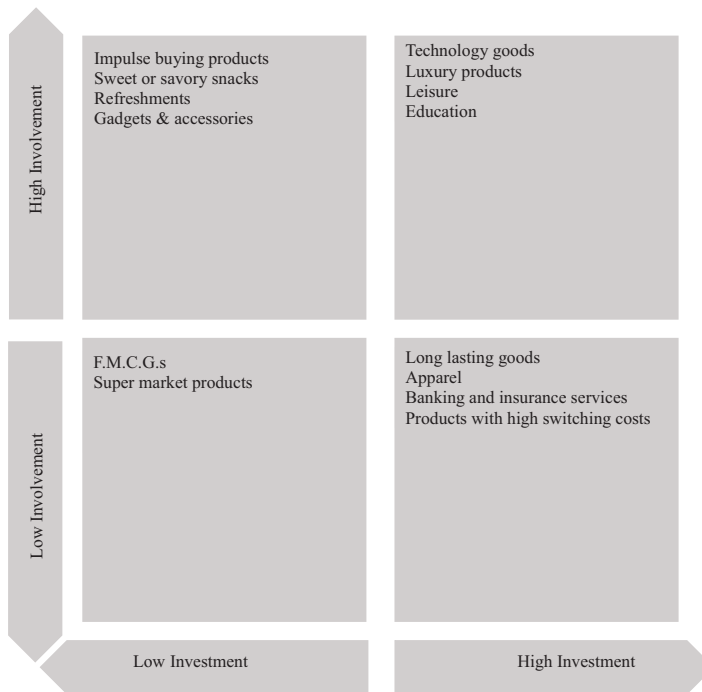
Figure 1.
Proposed product
classification model

Toward the right hand side, informative, educational, functional content appears to be of paramount importance to facilitate the purchasing decision as well as usage and maintenance. Text-rich content like news, white papers, slide share presentations, e-publications, statistics and tutorials also help a brand prevail as an industry trusted expert worth consulting. At the left-hand side, product information appears to matter less.

Furthermore, US industry research data indicate consumers read and post reviews for high investment products like electronics (67 per cent) and household appliances (55 per cent) far more frequently in comparison to beauty products (27 per cent) or clothes in general (30 per cent) (Gammon, 2014). Not all research data about product reviews is segmented in a compatible way (Bright Local, 2017); however, it appears that high investment products attract more reviews, regardless of the degree of involvement.

Products that are more expensive also appear to use pull strategies more often, aiming at high conversion rates as either some action is to be completed online or because content is provided in owned media. Search Engine Optimization and Marketing (SEO, SEM) would more likely work, since consumers actively seek information, at their own pace and time, before making a considerable investment, rather than being attracted by push content. Experts suggest that when it comes to Google AdWords the high investment sector thrives (Irvine, 2018). Regarding email marketing, industry research finds that in the USA (YES Lifecycle Marketing, 2017) financial services have the largest open rate (34.0 per cent) followed by insurance (25.5 per cent). Investment appears to be a more determining factor than involvement when it comes to interacting with email content. Though research suggests that there is room for improvement in email marketing (Hartemo, 2016), sectors
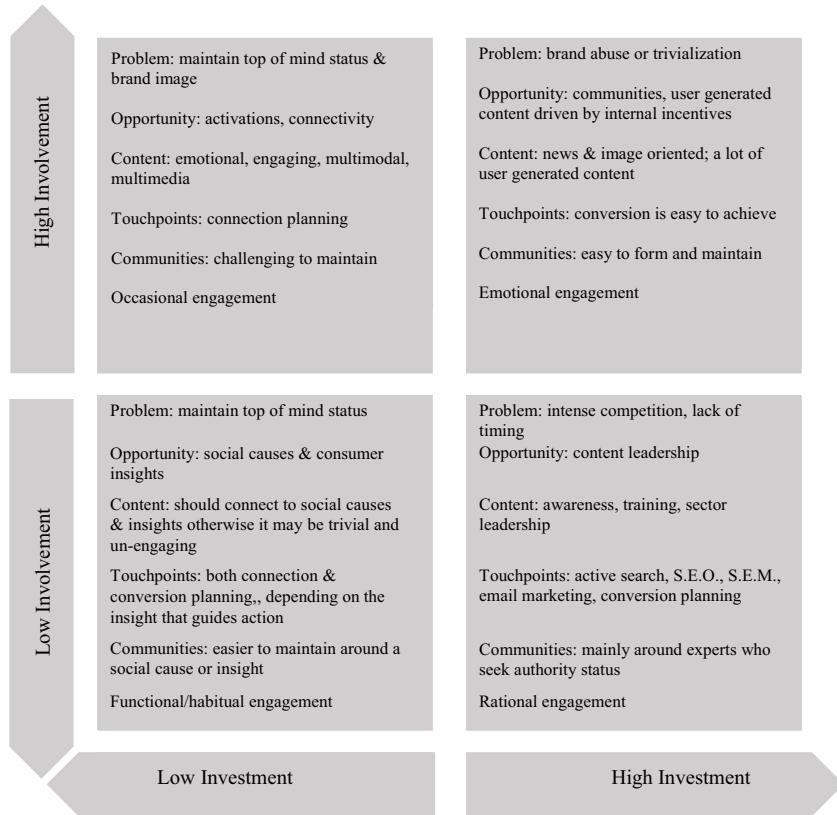
High Involvement

Problem: maintain top of mind status & brand image

Opportunity: activations, connectivity

Content: emotional, engaging, multimodal, multimedia

Touchpoints: connection planning

Communities: challenging to maintain

Occasional engagement

Problem: brand abuse or trivialization

Opportunity: communities, user generated content driven by internal incentives

Content: news & image oriented; a lot of user generated content

Touchpoints: conversion is easy to achieve

Communities: easy to form and maintain

Emotional engagement

Low Involvement

Problem: maintain top of mind status

Opportunity: social causes & consumer insights

Content: should connect to social causes & insights otherwise it may be trivial and un-engaging

Touchpoints: both connection & conversion planning,, depending on the insight that guides action

Communities: easier to maintain around a social cause or insight

Functional/habitual engagement

Problem: intense competition, lack of timing
Opportunity: content leadership

Content: awareness, training, sector leadership

Touchpoints: active search, S.E.O., S.E.M., email marketing, conversion planning

Communities: mainly around experts who seek authority status

Rational engagement

Low Investment   High Investment

Figure 2.
Content marketing
per quadrant

with greater response usually are associated with higher investment products. At the lower end, push strategies help the product maintain top of mind awareness.

High investment products are also considered more likely to attract pools of interested customers forming communities around them (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001) though research shows that low investment products may also form brand communities (Cova and Pace, 2006).

4.2 The involvement axis
Involvement is interpreted as an emotional response towards a branded product, affecting consumer choices, leading to loyalty, trial or impulse buying. On the upper end "love brands" (Roberts, 2003) are expected to be found, as well as products often defined as lifestyle, image, badge or ego-expressive products (Holt, 2004), while utilitarian products gather toward the lower end. A social aspect is included in this framework: products we care to discuss about in social encounters would move up on the axis of involvement.

At the higher end there would be more examples of experiential content that becomes popular as a discussion token. Such content might include, but should not be limited to, product information. At the lower end, product related information is hardly effective, thus products seek content areas that build a bridge between consumers and the brand. Such

areas might become trivialized like food recipes or cleaning tips. There are however, good examples of consumer insight-based campaigns that actually increase the degree of involvement and move a product to a higher position. The Dove "Real Beauty" campaign or the Always "#likeagirl" campaign would constitute such examples. Therefore, while a product might belong in the low involvement segment, certain brands might achieve to increase the degree of consumer involvement.

Email marketing content appears to be of less importance in this segment. In the aforementioned YES Lifecycle Marketing (2017) research, technology (16.5 per cent), entertainment (16.2 per cent) and hospitality (15.3 per cent), all being high involvement categories, fall behind, while low involvement products like in retail, consumer services and CPG have an open rate as low as 14.6 -14.8 per cent.

Regarding campaign structure, it seems that in both ends connection planning is widely used while especially at the lower end conversion planning is considerably less popular. Maintaining or increasing the degree of involvement appears to be a strategic priority. Industry data research in 2015 and 2016 have been reporting on Facebook display advertising that consumer packaged goods ranked top five on the list of spenders while the food and beverage section also held a very high position (Jacobs, 2015; Salesforce, 2016). The category of low involvement appears to spend a lot even though conversion does not appear to be a priority, probably to promote pages, accounts, or activations that keep consumers in the loop, and to maintain a top of mind position. Organic content is less likely to pay off for products in the lower segment.

Temporality is another factor relating to the involvement axis. Brands do not often stay off the grid for too long, so that involvement does not fade away. Especially low involvement brands need frequent reminders of their role in consumers' lives, thus adding in their content calendars anniversaries, days dedicated to causes, seasonality and even daily news.

The involvement axis also affects community building. At the high end, communities are more likely to grow organically and require lighter moderation, especially after the formation stage (Wirtz et al., 2013). Successful online brand communities revolve mostly around products at the high involvement sector (Brenner, 2017). At the lower end communities are harder to form and maintain, while influencers (that may be deployed by high involvement products as well though) appear to constitute a more established and effective way to attract consumers and maintain engagement, especially in platforms like Instagram (Kumar and Gupta, 2016).

5. Categorization on four quadrants
5.1 High investment – high involvement
Best practices in the digital ecosystem overall, advocate in favor of user generated content, interactivity, organic communities and word of mouth, as well as earned media. This is the quadrant where this approach is more likely to be achieved because of genuine consumer interest that stems from both emotional and economic value. Products and services in this quadrant also attract more active searches (Irvine, 2018):

- *Content publishing* is not a major challenge in this quadrant as product and brand news are more likely to generate genuine, organic interest and word of mouth. User-generated content is expected to be more frequent and easier to achieve. 'Un-boxing' videos (Buist, 2014; Kelly, 2014) for Apple or Samsung are such an example and customer reviews are another. Even negative reviews reveal that users dedicate time and effort. However, such reviews matter less in the presence of strong brands (Nga et al., 2013).

- *Campaign planning* is less of a challenge. Push techniques are less effective than pull techniques as conversion is easier to achieve. Established brands in this quadrant do not rely only on social media platforms. On the contrary, they may also rely on owned media like websites or forums, at least for their core audience.
- *Brand communities* are also more likely to thrive in this quadrant since they often form around luxury or quasi-luxury products, examples including Ducati, Play Station, X-Box (Dholakia and Vianello, 2011; Marchi *et al.*, 2011; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; Cova and Pace, 2006). Brand communities for such products have been documented before the web (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Industry research (TrackMaven, 2016) shows that products like cars and restaurants which typically belong in this quadrant have considerable engagement rates and the largest audience size. Furthermore, higher education, sports and entertainment, media and publishing also achieve higher degrees of engagement, and larger audiences (TrackMaven, 2017).

5.2 High investment – low involvement

- *Content publishing* is the key in this quadrant. The metaphor of the publishing brand is the most accurate to describe best practices. Users actively search for content to make an informed decision. A rewarding strategy is to provide ample informative and training content whether textual or (audio)visual, with experiential value (Wallace, 2018; Papandrea, 2017). The Sunset Bank Tutorials, the SoFi Learn website section, and the Nerdwallet blog are such examples. User-generated content is more about recommendations, referrals and troubleshooting.
- *Campaign planning* includes significant investment in SEO and SEM. Email marketing campaigns have high response and open rates (YES Lifecycle Marketing, 2017). In this category, conversion is of paramount importance and a lot of know-how is invested in calls to action and effective landing pages as well as in CRM programs with newsletters, affiliate marketing etc. Some products in this category appear to achieve high audience growth rates (TrackMaven, 2017, 2016).
- *Brand communities* around experts who provide information and support are more likely to emerge and create dense hubs with intense interaction as potential customers might often look for forums and ask questions. The Siemens online forum and community are such examples.

5.3 Low investment – high involvement
Products in this quadrant have been promoted with emotional advertising and frequent bursts to maintain top of mind position amongst competitors as choice is often impulsive rather than the result of intensive research or meticulous comparisons. A lot of these products appear to transfer their past successful practices online:

- *Content publishing* in this category is usually more emotional and experiential than informative, including (audio)visual material that is considered more engaging (Hsieh *et al.*, 2012). Content calendars require frequent postings, as well as steadily fed, inter-connected touch points that prolong or increase interaction with the brand. A trend observed in this quadrant has to do with content territories: brands often look for a content area, a territory to occupy and take a leading role in, to create a constant connection with consumers' interests. Red Bull's efforts to promote extreme sports constitute a successful example.

- *Campaign planning*, therefore, is more likely to rely on connection planning since conversion to a website is not monetized unless a product is sold online. A lot of viral campaigns include products in this category, like Oreo 360 ('admin', 2015; N.A., 2013; Diaz, 2012) or Dove Real Beauty (Craik, 2017; Bahadur, 2014; Gray, 2013; Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2012, pp. 316-318; Vranica, 2008). Dove appears to have been one of the pioneers in this quest achieving considerably larger involvement compared to competitors.

- *Brand communities* are likely to form in social networking sites or even in owned media (Cova and Pace, 2006). Still, their maintenance may prove to be demanding as community engagement is expected to have picks and valleys, rising when a campaign takes place.

5.4 Low investment – low involvement

Products in this quadrant often belong to traditional global distribution companies who have heavily affected advertising practices worldwide, but their mass media approaches do not often find their equivalent online. In the traditional media, they are promoted with heavy advertising to maintain a "top of mind" status (Kotler and Armstrong, 2001). Mainly functional (focusing on a Unique Selling Proposition) or emotional (transforming a product attribute to a consumer benefit that transcends rational functions) campaigns for such products are less likely to have a social aspect:

- *Content publishing* that instigates discussion and engagement has proven to be a challenge, as trivial tips and posts are flooding the digital world. However, there are brands that make a difference when tapping on global consumer insights or touching social issues that indirectly relate to the product. One such example would be the campaign "#likeagirl" by Always. Mr Clean (www.facebook.com/mrclean/), by Procter and Gamble is a similar attempt to create a distinctive character and increase interaction, relying on the traditional approach often referred to as 'Create a character' (Applegate, 2015, p. 57; Hosany *et al.*, 2013; Delbaere *et al.*, 2011; Callcott and Phillips, 1996). 'Free the kids' by Persil is one more example (Swift, 2016; Roderick, 2016; Beltrone, 2016; Oster, 2016). When successful, such campaigns might also evoke user-generated content. A consumer insight with social implications appears to be the most successful strategic approach in this quadrant.

- *Campaign structure* mainly aims at diffusion, prioritizing reach versus interaction. Therefore a connection planning approach is more likely to be adopted, to achieve word of mouth and buzz, reaching consumers in their preferred touch points.

- *Brand communities* are tougher to form but may appear if a social cause is involved. However, inspiring hashtags will not suffice. Activities, events and offline synergies of a participatory nature are necessary to foster a community around a cause, especially if this community is powered by a brand. The Always campaign: '#likeagirl' did include calls to action, requesting consumers to support the brand's "epic battle" (https://always.com/en-us/about-us/our-epic-battle-like-a-girl). One could investigate whether such synergies yield results; whether brands live up to the expectations, they create; or whether they simply integrate former social responsibility activities under the current brand cause (Figure 2).

6. Managerial implications

No classification is to follow blindly, as sometimes breaking a few rules may be beneficial (Loef, 2002). In any case, brands should invest in locating non-trivialized content and deliver such content through experiential and interactive formats.

High investment products should persist in product-related long-form, informational and educational content like white papers, reports and expert reviews, presented in engaging ways like infographics or video. Such content is likely to yield significant benefits, and constitute competitive advantage, provided it has a long-term perspective and lifecycle, not running obsolete quickly. However, content from high investment-low involvement products is more likely to be accessed via active search rather than promoted posts; hence, the need to patiently wait for results.

Low investment-high involvement products should invest in connection planning to maintain top of mind status. The choice between conversion and connection planning leads to different practices affecting the entire content marketing process, from page design to content formatting, involving different experts and requiring different implementation.

Different types of engagement require different types of community building and management. Low involvement products could foster interactivity between experts, suppliers or influencers who will then reach consumers. Low investment products could foster multi-platform communities around relevant social causes. All types of communities should aim at intrinsically generated user content and interaction. Social causes and insights may help a branded product increase emotional value moving on a better position along the involvement axis. However, such attempts should move beyond mere diffusion, to enable users, combine online-offline activities and instigate literal involvement.

7. Academic research and implications

Every conceptual framework comes with limitations. Empirical research should test the model's resonance. Furthermore, such research may also examine the model's use in different contexts, as this paper focuses in the US and the EU market.

Research may also test whether the model serves to classify brands within the same product category, as in each category certain brands stand out, or not, because of their emotional value, their price or image.

This model may have educational merit too. Showing how analogies between old and new research may apply in different contexts fosters critical and divergent thinking, stimulating interest for theories that may appear obsolete.

Academics may benefit by re-examining and adjusting old advertising models in the online landscape. Such models may investigate the Business-to-Business sector, as well as the consumer's lifecycle that might affect investment and involvement in different product categories, one example being motherhood. Already some researchers remark that involvement and investment are consumer rather than product related attributes (Rajasekhar and Makesh, 2013).

In this paper, the product classification model was used to shed light on how product category may affect content marketing, focusing on content publishing, campaign planning and community building. Relying on pre-existing empirical evidence, the author attempted to show that while the digital environment is still being explored, we may selectively re-use old marketing tools to make better sense of it, informing managerial decisions, offering academic insight to future research and enriching the teaching of marketing.

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