

PECULIARITIES OF DIGITAL MARKETING AT B2B SEGMENT

Cumulative data from «Statista» reports says that global retail e-commerce sales will reach \$ 4.5 trillion by 2021. And all those numbers had started from \$ 1.3 trillion in 2014. However, in those tremendous volumes, B2B segment dominates B2C. It is showing 234 % difference in market size in 2017 (\$ 7.7 trillion and \$ 2.3 trillion respectively) [1]. Thus, digital marketing becoming more complex for such competitive B2B industries (and some B2C with the similar business processes – selling luxury cars, building wooden houses etc.) constantly receiving new tools, technics and channels with evolving classic ones. But still there is one tricky question – who communicates via web from the side of «business»?

With the rise of digital marketing, academics and experts were divided into two parties with different views on the similarity / difference between digital marketing communications at consumer and industrial markets. Traditionalists argue that communications in the B2B marketplace have significant differences that should be taken into account while interacting via Internet. Those differences relate to message style, communication channels, design and functionality of sites.

However, the position of their opponents deserves attention. If «offline» B2B marketing really possess specific features in personal requests by agents / individual offers, catalogs, exhibitions, demonstrations etc., and as a result, in collective decision-making, then in online everything is reduced to the setting of a contact with a certain person – one person – as well as in B2C, for what the digital marketing system actually works. Therefore, the next question arises: who is this person according to the process of decision-making or the transfer of information in general? But this is a problem in the segmentation and targeting methodology to reach the «right» people, rather than the pointing on differences of digital marketing for the B2B segment as a whole.

Therefore, it might be useful to look at the current trends in B2B digital marketing communications. Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs University have made prognostic information based on survey results regarding expectations – Fig. 1.

Thus, analyzing Fig. 1, we may note that there is no particular difference between the B2B and B2C segments in the trends of content interactions. So, it strengthens the still stable positions of the e-mail, underlines the importance of video and blogging, and also proves that social networks are relevant for any type of a market or business model.

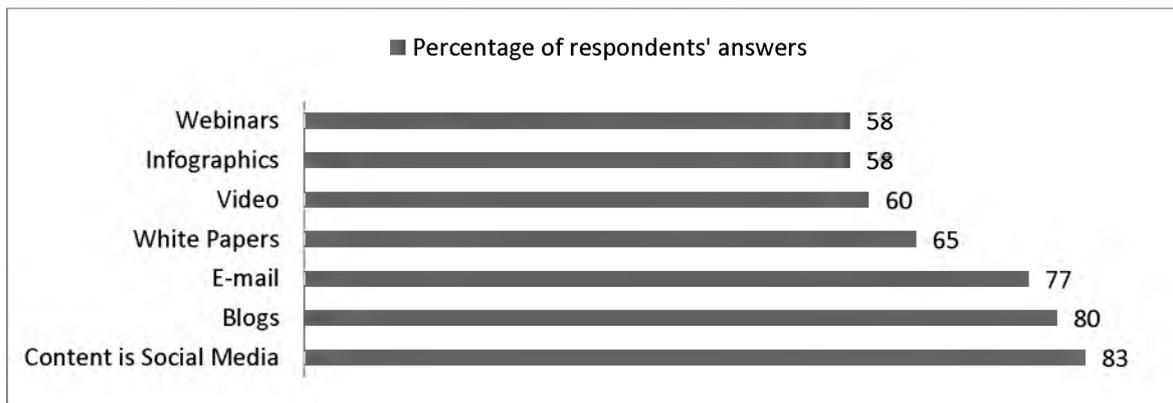


Figure 1. The most effective digital communication channels for the B2B segment [2, p. 28]

On the other hand, we shall admit some main difficulties in B2B digital marketing, namely: complexity of the product, high contract's prices, multistage decision-making, sometimes – a long period of time from the occurrence of a need till actions regarding purchase and quite often an individual approach to pricing.

In addition, one of the biggest potential obstacles is so-called ZMOT principle – Zero Moment of True that is point in the buying cycle when the consumer researches a product/company, often before the seller even knows that they exist (it is actually strongly relevant for B2C as well) [3].

All listed above obstacles might be overcome by right content marketing (e.g. lead-magnets, useful additional content), set triggers of e-mail, effective feedback (support), free project calculation, video of reviews or backstage of business.

References

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