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The Confusion of Content Marketing

A study to clarify the key dimensions of content marketing

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Title

The confusion of Content Marketing, A study to clarify the key dimensions of content marketing

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Abstract

Content marketing is a popular marketing strategy, which has increased significantly during the last years. The term content marketing is new but companies have been working with parts of the strategy for decades. The new digital era changed the communication from a one-way to a two-way communication. Customers now have a demand for relevant content that is valuable for them.

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop an understanding of this marketing strategy, and clarify the key dimensions that distinguish content marketing from other marketing strategies. This thesis rests on a realistic philosophy with an abductive approach.

Based on previous research different definitions of the marketing strategy are used to develop a model of the key dimensions of content marketing. A qualitative data collection with semi-structured interviews is performed on seven participants in order to explore what is seen as important aspects, and to gather new insight about the unclear marketing strategy.

The findings indicate a differentiation between companies, but there is a consensus of the most important aspects. Findings of how the strategy is done results in a new model, and a new definition of the marketing strategy. Suggestions for further research include examining how companies measure content marketing.

The results contribute with a clarification and further description of what content marketing is, and the most important aspects to consider when working with the strategy. The results of this study are useful as a guideline for people starting to work with content marketing, with the aim to understand the marketing strategy.

Keywords

Content marketing, marketing strategies, digital marketing, online marketing, branded content

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1. Introduction

In this chapter the background, and problematization of content marketing is described. The chapter continues with the research question, purpose, and limitations of this dissertation. At the end of this chapter, the outline of the following chapters is presented.

1.1 Background

The concept “content marketing” has over 25 million search results on Google and according to Google Trends, the search item has increased significantly during the last years. A new digital era started in 2005, known as Web 2.0, which actively encouraged participation between companies and potential customers (Cosh, Burns, & Daniel, 2008). This opened up for a two-way communication between companies and customers, where customers can interact and comment on the published content (Cosh, Burns, & Daniel, 2008). Marketing strategies changed from a one-way to a two-way communication, and this was the emergence of digital marketing and the rise of content marketing (Patruti Baltes, 2015).

According to Joe Pulizzi (2012) who is the founder of the leading global content marketing education and training organization, Content Market Institute (CMI, 2017), content marketing is not a new concept. It has been around for over hundred years and started late 1800s with John Deere’s magazine *The Furrow*. John Deere’s magazine *The Furrow* is one of the first examples of content marketing, and is a source of information to its target audience (Pulizzi, 2012).

Marketing, that used to be only push marketing, have changed from a sales perspective to a combination between push marketing, and pull marketing. This change has led to more interaction with customers and requires innovative content (Eldeman, 2010; Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman, & Hansen, 2009). Traditional marketing strategies deliver their advertisements through paid media, which are both standardized and personalized (Malthouse, 2007). The definition of marketing, according to American Marketing Association (AMA), which is the essential community for marketers (AMA, 2013, p. 1), is the following:

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.

The definition of marketing is a general definition of all marketing strategies. Content marketing can be seen as a sub-branch within marketing. However, there is no common accepted definition or description for content marketing, which is very confusing (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). One out of the many definitions is CMI's (2017) definition of content marketing, which is a wide description of content marketing, and is similar to the definition of marketing (CMI, 2017, p.1):

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.

With this stated, according to CMI (2017) content marketing is the process of creating personalized valuable content to an interactive, engaged, and targeted audience (CMI, 2017). Both definitions, marketing and content marketing, state that it is a process of creating and delivering any offerings or content that contributes value for customers. Marketing has to contribute value for customers, stakeholders, and society at large, compared to content marketing that only focus on delivering value to a clearly defined and targeted audience. Both marketing and content marketing has the perspective of profitable customer action. It is underlined in the definition of content marketing, due to the focus to inform potential customers, and do not have the focus on sales (CMI, 2017). Therefore, the profitable perspective of content marketing can easily be forgotten. According to Pulizzi (2013), the content has to provide information with the companies' business goals in order to be referred as content marketing. The definition of marketing and the definition of content marketing do not differentiate much from each other. However, three elements from the definition of content marketing differentiate when comparing CMI's (2017) definition of content marketing with AMA's (2013) definition of marketing: (1) valuable and consistent content, (2) acquire and engage, (3) specific clearly targeted audience.

According to Rowley (2008), content marketing interacts more with the audience than other marketing strategies by mostly using a two-way communication. When using content marketing, digital communities and channels are efficient and help customers to interact and engage with the delivered content (Lieb, 2011). The content has to at-

tract and retain customers by consistently creating and present content in order to intensify or change consumer behavior (Pulizzi, 2013). The content has to be owned and controlled by the organization, which means that the content has to be published on companies' own media channels, for example their webpage (Pulizzi, 2013; Wang, Qiao, & Peng, 2015).

1.2 Problematisation

The shift from a one-way to a two-way interaction is important for companies when delivering relevant content to the right audience. Therefore, the importance of content marketing has increased (Pulizzi & Barrett, 2009). Companies should consider to use content marketing since potential customers are searching for relevant content that engage, entertain, and educate them (Halligan & Shah, 2010; Odden, 2012; Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Customers want to enter a relationship with a company before they purchase their product or service (Odden, 2012). To meet customers' requirements, companies need to change from a selling perspective to a more informative and helpful perspective (Jefferson & Tanton, 2013).

However, according to Holliman and Rowley (2014), a lot of companies do not invest as much resources as needed in content marketing. This is because there is confusion in the understanding about what content marketing consists of, and why it should be of importance to implement this marketing strategy. It is also challenging to implement the strategy because the large amount of dimensions, which is important in the creation of content marketing (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Content marketing is perceived and interpreted differently, which results in various definitions with many dimensions of the marketing strategy. Even if companies work with some dimensions of content marketing, it causes difficulties and confusion to say that they are working with the marketing strategy. This is because they have different perceptions of what content marketing is, and some companies may work with what is seen as the concept content marketing, but to them content marketing contains other aspects (Du Plessis, 2015; Pulizzi, 2013; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016).

Previous research has contributed with a variety of theoretical definitions and explanations where they highlight several aspects that are seen as important for content marketing. However, the wide range of explanations contradicts each other, and is

emphasizing different aspects. This has led to confusion of the marketing strategy (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). According to Du Plessis (2015), there is an abundance of different aspects of what content marketing consists of. The practitioners' perspectives dominate content marketing through several marketing organizations, where Content Marketing Institute (CMI) and Content Marketing Association (CMA) are two out of many. In CMI's latest research about the usage of content marketing in North America, nine out of ten answered that they work with content marketing (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Even if companies say that they are working with content marketing, there is a gap in the understanding of the specific aspects, and how content marketing differentiates from other marketing strategies (Du Plessis, 2015). It is difficult to say if a company actually works with content marketing, or if they only use the term content marketing for the same marketing strategy that they always have performed (Du Plessis, 2015).

The definition of marketing and the definition of content marketing, do not vary significantly (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Therefore, it is unclear what content marketing actually is, and what specific dimension that distinguish content marketing from marketing. This thesis will emphasize how companies work with content marketing, what companies see as key dimensions, and important aspects to consider when using content marketing. As mentioned in the background, content marketing consists of several aspects that are repeated in numerous of articles, and in combination form content marketing. According to Pulizzi and Handley (2016), the marketing strategy, content marketing, is popular and commonly used. However, companies that claim to work with content marketing may not actually work with what is seen as the aspects of this marketing strategy, due to the confusion about content marketing, and various perceptions of what the marketing strategy is (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016).

Content marketing is still under researched in the academic field and the existing research provides a wide range of definitions, and aspects of what content marketing are (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Therefore, it is important to investigate this marketing strategy, and get an understanding for what is seen as the key dimensions of content marketing. This dissertation will contribute with knowledge, and clarifications about what content marketing really is. There is criticism that this marketing strategy is not a new concept, and that the dimensions are the same as in other marketing strategies

(Du Plessis, 2015; Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Lieb, 2011). The criticism is based on the fact that companies always has worked with the many dimensions, but not referred it as content marketing. Therefore, we want to investigate what specific aspects that distinguish content marketing from other marketing strategies.

1.3 Research question

How do companies work with content marketing, and what is seen as the key dimensions of this marketing strategy?

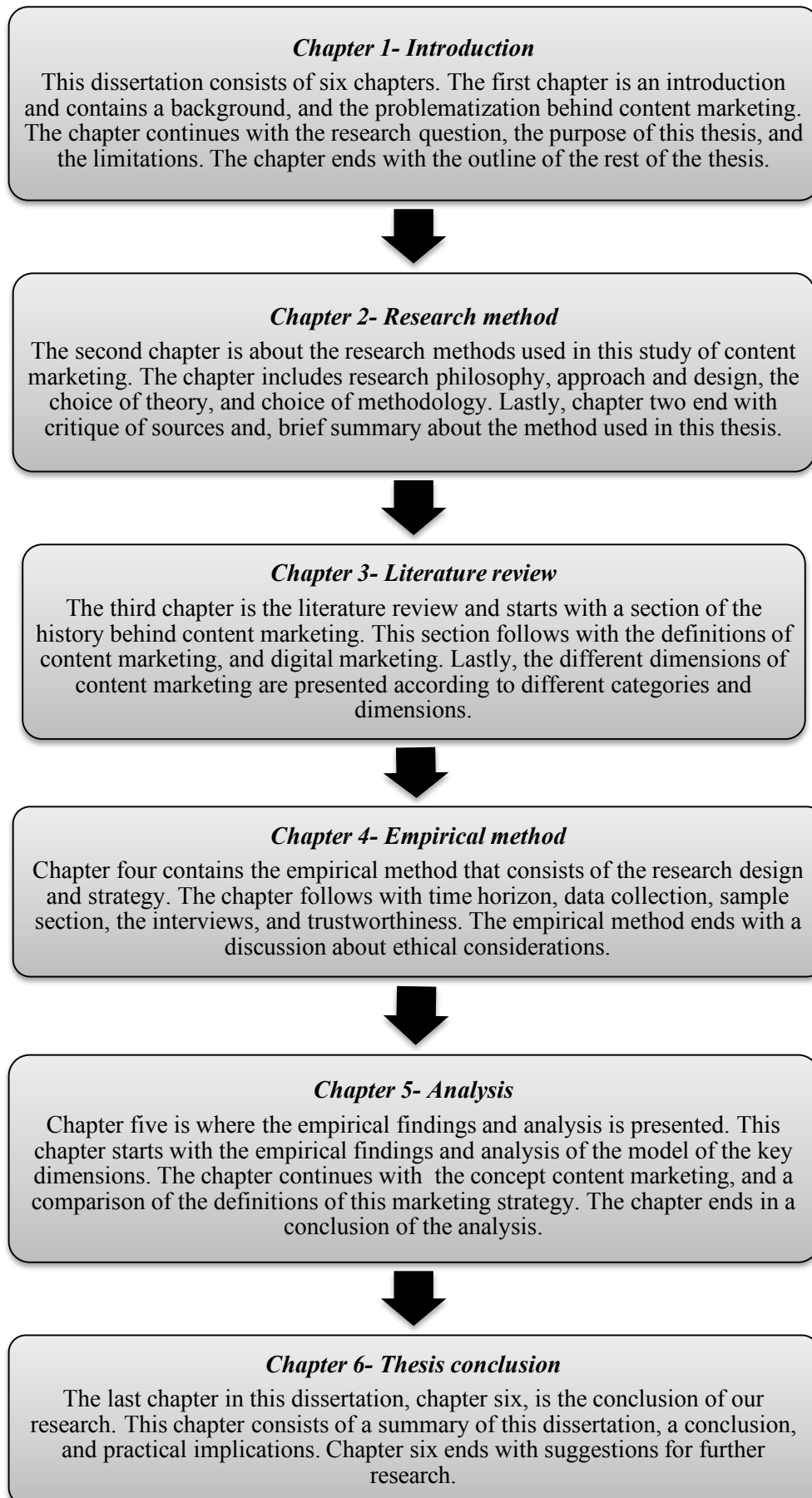
1.4 Purpose

The aim of this study is to develop an understanding of the marketing strategy content marketing, and clarify the key dimensions that distinguish content marketing from other marketing strategies. With the hope to contribute to the academic research with clarifications to the unclear concept content marketing, the purpose is to strengthen previous research and contribute with new perspectives and findings to increase the understanding of content marketing. Therefore, this dissertation's objective is to examine how companies work with content marketing, and what the specific dimensions that is of importance for their content marketing strategy.

1.5 Limitations

One limitation of this research is that only companies who state they are working with content marketing are being examined. Therefore, the answers from the interviews will be from people with expertise, and experience within content marketing. Another limitation is that only companies that have been working with two specific selected marketing agencies are examined in this research. This is due to the time limit of this study, and therefore, generalizations cannot be made.

1.6 Outline



2. Research method

In this chapter the choice of methodologies are presented. The purpose with this chapter is to present the methods used in this dissertation. It contains research philosophy, research approach, choice of theory, and choice of methodology. Chapter two ends with critique of sources and a brief summary.

2.1 Introduction

The research onion by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) are used to better understand how the different stages of research methodology are dependent on each other. In this dissertation a similar structure is used, but this model consists of seven different layers, placed in the following order: research philosophy, research approach, research choices, research designs, research strategies, research time horizons, and lastly techniques and procedures. Each layer consists of different research approaches, and the most suitable one are chosen in this dissertation. The research onion starts from the outside layer, which is research philosophy and continues towards the center of the onion, which consists of data collection and data analysis (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). In this chapter the first three layers will be explained, and the last four layers will be explained further in chapter four.

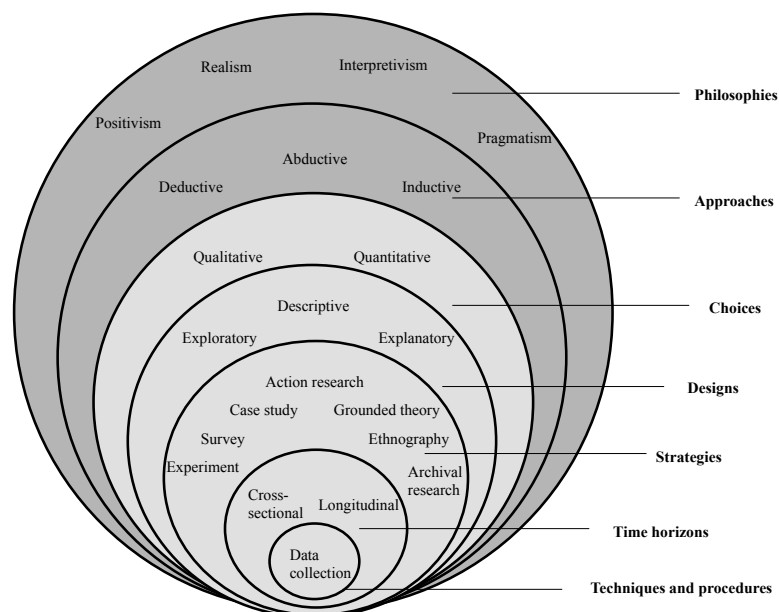


Figure 2.1 The research onion

(Based on Saunders *et al.* (2009) *Research methods for business students* p.108)

2.2 Research philosophy

The research philosophy allows the writers to relate, and make assumptions to the researchers' defined ideas about how they view the world. These assumptions will affect the research methods and strategies that this dissertation will use. The different philosophies according to *Figure 2.1- The Research onion* is: positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Positivism is a philosophy that allows the researcher to view the social reality with observations, and the final result of this research method is law-like generalizations. Another philosophical view is realism, which relates to how people sense and observe the world, and if the reality shows the truth. The realistic approach has similar characteristics as the positivistic philosophy. They both assume a scientific method to develop knowledge. However, realism is the philosophy where only the context, and its mind exist. According to Saunders *et al.* (2009) there are two different forms of realism: direct- and critical realism. These two forms are important to understand the reality of the data, because direct realism is that the truth is what is seen, and critical realism is that due to social conditions the reality can be interpreted differently (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The philosophy interpretivism suggests that it is necessary to include an understanding between humans and their role as social actors. The last research philosophy is pragmatism. This philosophy is a combination of the different philosophies mentioned, because it is unlikely to follow only one philosophy (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

The philosophy used in this dissertation is realism, due to the research aim of clarifying what content marketing is, how companies work with the marketing strategy, and the key dimensions that distinguish content marketing from other marketing strategies. What the participants in the interview say is seen as reality for what content marketing is. People working with content marketing perceive and relate to the concept different, and this must be taken into account when compiling the data. Therefore, critical realism is of relevance in this study, because this philosophy relates to how people observe and sense something, and if it is the reality.

2.3 Research approach

The research approach supports how to involve and use theory in the research. There are different ways to approach the research: the inductive, the deductive, or the abductive approach (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The first research approach is the deductive ap-

proach that develops and test theories or hypothesis from already existing theories and literature. The inductive approach is the opposite of the deductive approach. In the inductive approach, researchers build a theory on the data collected (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

In this dissertation the abductive approach will be used. The purpose of this research is theory development and to understand content marketing as a marketing concept. This is neither a pure inductive or deductive approach, but a mixture called the abductive approach (Alvehus, 2013). In an abductive approach, the research process switches between the empirical data, and the theoretical framework (Alvehus, 2013). The data are collected through semi-structured interviews from strategic selected participants, and are then analyzed with the theory. The abductive approach is used because this thesis will develop dimensions from existing literature and collect data that might lead to modifications of the key dimensions.

2.4 Choice of theory

In this dissertation, different perceptions from marketing theories are applied in the description of the marketing concept content marketing. This research has an abductive approach where the research is less reliant on the choice of theory. Content marketing is limited academically explored, and is instead mainly formed by practitioners (Du Plessis, 2015; Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Despite the limited academic research about content marketing as a marketing concept, content marketing is described as a marketing strategy in this dissertation to be clarified, and further developed.

2.5 Choice of methodology

When collecting empirical data there are two choices of methodology that can be used, qualitative and quantitative research strategy (Bryman & Bell, 2011). One way to distinguish the two methods is that a qualitative method focuses more on words and pictures, while a quantitative method focus on numbers (Denscombe, 2009). According to Bryman and Bell (2011), a qualitative method uses a holistic description and the purpose is to understand phenomena in its social context. This is of relevance in this research where the aim is to get an understanding about the concept content marketing. A quantitative method, on the other hand, tends to be chosen when the aim is to generalize and explain a phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

This dissertation will follow a qualitative method with semi-structured interviews to develop an understanding about the marketing strategy content marketing. Since content marketing is not a clear concept, and needs further research about the procedure of the marketing strategy. Therefore, this study will have a qualitative approach, and an exploratory purpose in order to explore the key dimensions of content marketing (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

2.6 Critique of the sources

A majority of the sources used in this dissertation are peer-reviewed articles extracted from Kristianstad University's database *Summon* and *Google Scholar*. The authors of the articles strengthen the trustworthiness because many of them are regarded experts within their fields. Another aspect that increases the trustworthiness of the articles is the fact that they cite older articles within the field that states the same things, and are generally regarded as classical sources. In addition to the articles, academic reference books were used. The information and theories within the literature review has consistently been consulted by other researches so we assume it can be considered reliable.

2.7 Summary

This dissertation rests on a realistic research philosophy with an abductive approach, since the purpose is to develop an understanding about the concept content marketing and clarify the key dimensions the concept consists of. In the description of the marketing strategy content marketing, definitions from marketing theories are used. To be able to develop an understanding about the unclear concept content marketing, a qualitative study with semi-structured interviews with strategic selected participants is conducted.

3. Literature review

This chapter contains a literature review to get an understanding about the concept content marketing. The chapter begins with the history behind content and continues with definitions of content marketing, the importance of digital marketing, and ends with a deep explanation about the different dimensions of content marketing.

3.1 The history of content marketing

The concept content marketing has been around for more than hundred years (Pulizzi, 2013). One of the first examples of content marketing was in 1895 with the magazine called *The Furrow* (Pulizzi, 2013; Gardiner, 2013). John Deere was the man behind the magazine and his intentions for *The Furrow* were to educate farmers about the new technology with stories that the farmers cared about, instead of directly selling equipment (Nosrati, Karimi, Mohammadi, & Malekian, 2013). This indicates that *The Furrow* was filled with informative articles that engaged a clearly defined target audience instead of focusing on sales (Pulizzi, 2013).

Another example of early content marketing is *The Michelin Guide*, which started in 1900, by André Michelin (Pulizzi, 2013; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). The first edition of the guide was distributed for free to drivers in over 350,000 copies. *The Michelin Guide* contained information for drivers on how to maintain their cars, find hotels, and so on (Pulizzi, 2013). This example also focuses on delivering information to a target audience instead of selling a product or service (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). A third example is the cookbook *Jell-O* from 1904 (Nosrati, Karimi, Mohammadi, & Malekian, 2013). *Jell-O* distributed free copies from the cookbook with recipes of how to use their product. Two years later, *Jell-O's* product lead to sales over 1 million dollars (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). This indicates that the company used content marketing to inform their customers on how they could use their product, which eventually lead to sale.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s when the first stories about content marketing were introduced, the term content marketing did not exist (Pulizzi, 2013). According to Patrutiu Baltes (2015) the term content marketing, was first introduced by John F.

Oppedahl in 1996, at the American Society for Newspaper Editors, where he led a roundtable for journalists. However, according to Du Plessis (2015) the term content marketing was not used until the emergence of digital marketing that allowed companies to use a pull marketing strategy. Pulizzi and Barrett (2008) proposed the first definition of the concept content marketing. Pulizzi has later proposed plenty of updated definitions and more descriptions of the concept content marketing (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Pulizzi, 2013). As late as 2014, Holliman and Rowley performed the first academic research, which has the focus on the digital field of content marketing. Before their research, it had only been produced surveys and books from prestigious marketing research agencies within the digital field of content marketing (Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

There is a lack of academic research within the field of content marketing. However, according to Feng and Ots (2015) there is a good explanation why. This is because this marketing strategy has recently become a fast-growing phenomenon, which has not yet become a distinct research field. Researchers started to explore the concept content marketing in recent years (Feng & Ots, 2015). In addition, content marketing overlaps with several other marketing concepts. *Table 3.1- Content marketing search results* displays the results found on content marketing when using Kristianstad University's library database called *Summon*. The results are limited to different year ranges. An increase in both journal articles and books is observed after 1996, when Oppedahl, as mentioned coined content marketing. An even larger increase is observed after the emergence of web 2.0 in 2005, where the number of articles and books has increased drastically. According to Du Plessis (2015) the concept of content marketing is under researched relative to the increased popularity of content marketing in companies. Content marketing goes by many names, and the variety of names for the marketing strategy results in research about the same strategy but may not be referred as content marketing (Feng & Ots, 2015).

Table 3.1 Content marketing search results

	Journal articles	Books	Total
Pre- 1996	5	1	6
1996-2005	155	17	172
2005-2016	1724	262	1986
Total	1884	280	2164

3.2 Definitions of content marketing

Content marketing is a marketing strategy with many names, and examples of names according to Pulizzi (2013) are: custom media, branded content, inbound marketing, branded storytelling, and many more. The definition of content marketing varies between distinctive authors and is very confusing since there is not a common accepted definition (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). However, most researchers and practitioners agree that content marketing, and inbound marketing are described as the same strategy (Du Plessis, 2015; Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Pulizzi, 2013; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). Furthermore, different definitions of content marketing from several researchers and practitioners are presented in *Table 3.2- Definitions of content marketing*.

Table 3.2 Definitions of content marketing

Author, year, found in	Definitions
Pulizzi (2013), from his book <i>Epic Content Marketing</i>, p. 5	“Content marketing is the marketing and business process for creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience- with the objective of profitable customer action.”
Rowley (2008), from her article <i>Understanding digital content marketing</i>	“Content marketing can be defined as a management process where a firm identify, analyze and satisfy customer demand to gain profit with the use of digital content through electronic channels.”
Järvinen and Taiminen (2015), from their article <i>Harnessing marketing</i>	“Content marketing, as defined by the interviewees, refers to processes of creating and delivering content (i.e., text messages, pictures, videos, animations) to target customers in ways that add value and engages them in relationships with the company.”
Du Plessis (2015), from her article <i>Academic guidelines for content marketing: research-based recommendations for better practice</i>	"Content marketing is a strategic brand storytelling technique aimed at changing consumers' inactive behavior through unobtrusive, engaging brand conversations in earned media."

The definitions in *Table 3.2- Definitions of content marketing* vary, and there are some differences that make it confusing to understand what content marketing refers to (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). The first definition of content marketing in the table above are composed by Pulizzi (2013), in his book called *Epic Content Marketing*. His definition is very similar to CMI's (2017) definition of content marketing in the introduction of this thesis, but Pulizzi's definition is more specified. This is why it is used in *Table 3.2- Definitions of content marketing* when comparing different definitions. The similarities are not unexpected since Pulizzi is the founder of Content Mar-

keting Institute (CMI, 2017). Both definitions highlight the importance of creating and distribute valuable content to attract a clearly defined audience with the objective of profitable customer action.

The second definition in *Table 3.2- Definitions of content marketing* by Rowley (2008) varies significantly from Pulizzi's (2013) definition of content marketing. Rowley (2008) emphasizes in her definition that content marketing is about "satisfying customer demand to gain profit" with electronic channels. However, Pulizzi (2013) mentions the profit objective of customer action instead of gaining profit, which can easily be misunderstood for sale. The two definitions mention the profitable perspectives that are pointing in the same direction. Electronic channels are not a word used in Pulizzi's (2013) definition of content marketing. According to Patrutiu Baltes (2015), who uses CMI's (2015) definition, the content must be on the digital market to compete with other brands. However, content marketing exists in many forms, for example printed or e-magazines, newsletters, videos, podcasts and so on (Pulizzi, 2012; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). This indicates that content marketing exists on more than electronic channels, and there is a large differentiation in the definitions of content marketing.

Järvinen and Taiminen (2015) offer a third definition of content marketing. Their definition highlight the importance of content marketing to "create and deliver content to target customers" and also that the content has to engage and add value for the customers. This definition is in line with Pulizzi's (2013) definition. Lastly, Du Plessis' (2015) definition based on 55 definitions that are analyzed and triangulated with views of content marketing practitioners. She mentions that "content marketing is a strategic brand storytelling technique", and that the aim is to change consumer behavior. This differentiates from the other three definitions because they do not mention storytelling. However, Du Plessis' (2015) definition states that it is important to engage conversations between the consumer and the brand. This is in line with Pulizzi (2013), and Järvinen and Taiminen (2015) mention in their definitions of content marketing.

To sum up, two of the definitions in *Table 3.1- Definitions of content marketing* state that content marketing is about delivering valuable content to a defined audience.

However, there are three main differences between the researchers' definitions. Rowley's (2008) definition differentiates from the others because she mentions that content marketing has to be on electronic channels. Du Plessis (2015) mentions content marketing as a storytelling technique, and with the aim of a changed consumer behavior.

3.3 Digital marketing and content marketing

Content marketing has recently become a rapid growing marketing strategy, due to the technological developments. This has made it possible for all companies to publish compelling brand stories on various media channels (Du Plessis, 2015). Moreover, this has led to the number of companies that uses content marketing has increased, with the use of social media (Wang, Qiao, & Peng, 2015; Pulizzi, 2013). Tim O'Reilly, who introduced the term Web 2.0 in 2005, defines and highlights the importance of content created and shared among all parts on the web (O'Reilly, 2005). On today's media channels people can connect, not only with family and friends, but also with organizations and brands that people identify themselves with (Newman, Chang, Walters, & Wills, 2016). The technological development has changed the way for companies to communicate, from a one-way to a two-way communication. This allows new innovative interactions between the companies and the customers (Rahim & Clemens, 2012). The change in technology has led to the development of digital marketing, which is a sub branch of marketing. Digital marketing are utilizing the modern digital channels by focusing on communicating, and to build a deeper relationship with customers (Royle & Laing, 2014).

The modern channels in digital marketing are often referred as social media, which is a virtual community where people interact with each other using a personal profile (Donath & Boyd, 2004). Digital marketing is mostly used on social media channels that today have a bigger audience compared to other traditional media channels (Forouzandeh, Soltanpanah, & Sheikahmadi, 2014). Customers on the digital channels have the possibility to use different ad blocks to filter the marketing messages that are published, and only focus on the information that appeals to them (Malthouse, 2007). This results in a change of the communication strategy that companies are adapting to (Campbell, Pitt, Parent, & Berthon, 2011). Organizations have to adapt to

the changed consumer behaviors and use content marketing in order to survive (Malthouse, 2007).

According to Halligan and Shah (2010), the use of content marketing implicates creating valuable content from the needs of potential buyers, who actively have engaged in searching information about the commodity. Numerous of existing customers search for news and supportive information about their products or services they already possess, rather than with an aim of repurchasing (Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, Wege, & Zhang, 2013). The improvements in information technology (IT), the shift in communications, and consumer behavior have led to a rise of content marketing in the digital world (Dennis, Merrilees, Jayawardhena, & Wright, 2009). Now there is an opportunity to create-, and consume information. This leads to an increase of value to the information that already is published by editing, comment, or create new content on the web (Malthouse, 2007). Initially companies used social media to share their advertisements, but social media goes beyond this point, and is a two-way communication platform (Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke, 2015). The result of interaction with the companies shared messages, leads to increased demand for content marketing (Kosio-Kantilla, 2004; Pulizzi & Barrett, 2009).

3.4 Dimensions of content marketing

The strategy of content marketing is described by numerous of researchers that highlight important parts or dimensions that together form the strategy (Pulizzi, 2013; Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016; Escobar, 2016; Halligan & Shah, 2010). There is no consensus between the aspects that is described in different articles, but when combining the interpretations, several dimensions are found. The aspects described in the following section are highlighted as key dimensions of content marketing, and are divided into three categories: strategy, activity, and results. The first category is strategy and includes: target a specific audience, reflect company values and brand image, and fulfill customer needs. The second category is activity, which contains: two-way communication, delivering consistent content, storytelling, informative content without the perspective of sales, and lastly entertaining your audience. The final category is results with: value, trust, and profitable customer action.

3.4.1 Strategy

Before the creation of content in this marketing strategy, a strategy has to be taken into consideration by the marketers (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). The first strategy is to decide the target audience that the content is intended for. Secondly, it is important to reflect the company's values to be sure that the image and values are mutually shared. Lastly, the content has to fulfill the customer needs.

3.4.1.1 Target a specific audience

The definitions of content marketing in *Table 3.2- definitions of content marketing*, highlight the importance of target a clearly defined, and understood audience in content marketing (Pulizzi, 2013; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). A clearly defined audience in a company's content marketing strategy can create meaningful relationships between the company and the audience by attracting, engaging, and retaining the audience for a long time (Patruti Baltes, 2015). This indicates that a company builds a positive brand image (Patruti Baltes, 2015). According to Järvinen and Taiminen (2016), content marketing is about target specific customers to build relationships. This is done by adding valuable content that engage and inform the customers, rather than promoting the companies' products and services. Before creating content, a company must identify its target audience to be able to consider what content to publish, to meet their audience needs (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). However, marketers also have to work, and think like a publisher to reach the target audience and deliver the required content (Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

To be able to define the specific target group, companies need to perform an analysis of their audience (Patruti Baltes, 2015). The target analysis includes extensive research about the companies' target market, in order to know whom the potential readers will be in order to create specific content that appeals to them (Patruti Baltes, 2015; Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke, 2015). A content marketing strategy has different factors for success. One of them is to match the message and content with the companies target audience to achieve customer engagement (Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke, 2015). However, generating content that appeals to a clearly defined audience is a learning process that involves an ongoing analysis of the companies' audience (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). This is done to eliminate the content to a broad audi-

ence, which fails to speak to the companies' real customers (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016).

3.4.1.2 Reflect company values and brand image

When using content marketing as a communication strategy it is important to not forget the values that define the companies (Escobar, 2016). Even if the content is not directly about the company itself, it has to reflect the company's image through the content. The brand image is composed by three elements: brand personality, brand positioning, and brand identity (Escobar, 2016). Brand personality includes emotional bonds between the brand and the customer. Brand positioning is the result of perceptions, and impressions customers feel towards a brand. The last element is brand identity, which reflects how you are as a company or a brand. Where a company is from, tends to be incorporated in their organizational culture and reflects the companies' values and image (Escobar, 2016).

The message of the content has to communicate the companies' image, which should reflect their values (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Pullizi & Handley, 2014; Pulizzi, 2013). By using content marketing, companies tell a story about who they are to their customers. Therefore, the published content must reflect the companies' values (Patruti Baltes, 2015). The companies' brand image will be negatively affected if they fail to deliver relevant content (Escobar, 2016).

3.4.1.3 Customer needs

According to Pulizzi (2013), the audience and their needs is the first and last thing a company should consider in their content marketing strategy. To create content without knowing the needs of your customers is a failure (Pulizzi, 2013). Therefore, all content created by a company should be based on customer needs (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). To be able to identify the needs of a company's customer, active listening is required (Escobar, 2016). The emergence of social networks has helped companies with the determination of customer needs (Escobar, 2016). Monitoring social media, collecting feedback and comments, helps companies to define customer needs and interests (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). Instead of focusing on promoting the company's products or services, content marketing should solve customer prob-

lems, and identify their needs (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016; Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

3.4.2 Activity

The second category of the dimensions is the way content should be performed. There are five dimensions that have to be taken in consideration in order to get the expected results. The first one is two-way communication followed by consistency in the activity of content, storytelling that is the way to communicate the information, and how the content should be angled without the perspective of sales. The last dimension in the activity is to entertain your audience.

3.4.2.1 Two-way communication

Two-way communication differentiates from one-way communication in several ways. It is more personalized than one-way communication, which focuses more to the mass (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Van den Bergh). A two-way communication enables feedback and input from the audience (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Van den Bergh). The technological developments in the past decades have led to changes in how companies communicate with their customers, a shift from a one-way to a two-way communication (Rahim & Clemens, 2012). The changes in communication have led to changes in marketing strategies, because traditional marketing that used to be one-way communication, are now using both communication strategies (Malthouse, 2007). Content marketing compared to other marketing strategies interact more with the audience by mostly using a two-way communication (Rowley, 2008). According to Rowley (2008), content marketing is delivered through electronic channels, which open up for a two-way communication between the audience and the company. The audience can easily have direct contact with the company who publish the content on the digital channels. Two-way communication enables more interaction, and higher engagement between a customer and a company (Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke, 2015).

Interactions in content marketing allow the customer to be a part, and influencing the narrative content (Cronin, 2016). The digital marketing and social media channels make it possible for people to interact with each other (Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke, 2015). This enables companies to take advantage of the interactive platform, and use the participatory interaction media to deliver content to the targeted audience

(Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke, 2015). The interactions in content marketing do not only refer to interactions between the business and the customer, but also customer to customer through the opportunities to share and comment the published content (Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke, 2015).

Engagement is determined by customer needs, and is important because customers are participants of the content created, not just readers (Ashley & Tracy, 2014). According to Kilgour *et al.* (2015) content is correlated to engagement and attention. Content marketing is an innovative way to develop a long-term relationship with companies' target audiences (Halevi & O'Hanlon, 2016). Content marketing differentiate from advertising in terms of engagement, which is about engaging the potential customers in ways that help them solve their problems (Ley, Pratt, & Wang, 2016). To engage customers is important because they will lead to more sales and profits (Ley, Pratt, & Wang, 2016).

According to Ashley and Tracy (2014), companies that use content on digital channels have more engagements. This is because it is easier for the targeted audience to follow, comment, and share the published content, and therefore engage with the company or brand. Marketers should understand what specific content that is most effective for the target audience to achieve customer engagement. This leads to an increase of brand awareness, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth for the company (Ashley & Tracy, 2014). Moreover, when working with content marketing the message interacts with its customers, and trigger the audience to engage (Ashley & Tracy, 2014).

3.4.2.2 Delivering consistent content

The importance for the content to be delivered on consistent basis is stated by many different researchers (Pulizzi, 2013; Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Wang, Qiao, & Peng, 2015; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015; Halligan & Shah, 2010; Cronin, 2016). In this section three types of consistency are described: to be time consistent, to be consistent with information, and to have a consistent voice. Pulizzi (2013) mentions consistency in his definition of content marketing. To consistently create content that attract and retain customers is of great importance when it comes to the activity behind content marketing (Pulizzi, 2013).

Time consistent with the content created is important, therefore the content always has to be distributed on time and as expected of the companies' audience (Pulizzi, 2013). The mindset has to be that the audience is subscribers of the content, which means that the company consistently must deliver content as a promise to their customers (Pulizzi, 2013). If the company fails to keep the promise to deliver content on a regular basis, the risk is that the customers will forget about the company and brand (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). To engage and build a relationship with their audience, companies must regularly publish content (Wang, Qiao, & Peng, 2015).

To be *consistent with information* is according to Holliman and Rowley (2014) important, because content marketing needs to include consistent information that potential customers want to receive (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Communicate a consistent and cohesive brand image helps the customer to easily predict and understand what the company stands for. If the brand image is inconsistent it can lead to confusion and ambiguous expectations of the company (Navarro-Bailón, 2012). If the content deliver valuable and consistent information to potential, and existing customers, the outcome results will be loyalty and profit (Patruti Baltes, 2015). It is also important to be consistent in the publishing of content, by posting similar information through all channels (Halevi & O'Hanlon, 2016). To deliver consistent information, the published content should be of multipurpose, that allows the content to appeal on several channels. For example, a Facebook post can be composed into a Twitter message or a blog post can also appear in the company's magazine (Cronin, 2016; Halevi & O'Hanlon, 2016). When being consistent in the usage of all channels, the audience will see similar information on various channels (Cronin, 2016). Different channels should also be electronically linked together. By linking all messages and information to each other, the result will be a consistent message that reaches a wider audience (Cronin, 2016).

Voice consistent means to be consistent in how to communicate the message to the audience. The messages have to be in line with each other by using content with a consistent voice (Pulizzi, 2013). For companies who are using several channels, it is important to be consistent with similar messages by a consistent voice (Halevi & O'Hanlon, 2016). At the same time, it is important to adapt the content in order to fit

different channels, for example newsletters are more informative than a Facebook post (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015).

3.4.2.3 Storytelling

According to Pulizzi (2013), content marketing is the same marketing strategy as storytelling but in new modern channels. The strategy of storytelling is to tell a story about the brand or company in order to build a relationship with the potential customer, or customers. However, according to other authors, storytelling is only a key dimension of content marketing (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). The purpose of developing and deliver a company's story through the content, is to differentiate the company from other competitors (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Narrative has the effect of engage and arouse emotions by the informative story (Halevi & O'Hanlon, 2016). To increase the authenticity of the content, companies have to show who they are by telling their story that is reflected on their in values (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015).

3.4.2.4 Informative content without the perspective of sales

Content marketing is about interacting with companies' customers, and potential buyers without selling products or services. Instead the companies should deliver informative, and ongoing information that makes the buyer search for their brand (CMI, 2017; Rowley, 2008). By not using the sale perspective, companies will build long-term relationships with their audience, which will drive positive customer action (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). The objective of building relationships by being informative, and help the customers through the decision-making process will consequently drive to sales (Eldeman, 2010).

The use of content marketing indicates delivering content to the needs of potential buyers who actively have engaged in searching information about the companies' products or services (Halligan & Shah, 2010). Customers search for content that engage, entertain, and educate them (Halligan & Shah, 2010; Odden, 2012; Holliman & Rowley, 2014). To meet customers' requirements, companies need to change from a selling perspective to a more informative, and helpful perspective (Jefferson & Tanton, 2013).

3.4.2.5 Entertaining your audience

Ashley and Tuten (2014) found that one of the most important motivators for the digital content, is that the content has to be entertaining. Pulizzi (2012) also describes the importance of deliver entertaining content in order to engage the audience, and to build an emotional connection between the company and its audience. According to Holliman and Rowley (2014), it is important to deliver entertaining content, because customers seek for content that either has the purpose to educate or entertain them. Lieb (2011) argues that companies have to choose a strategy in the early stages. They have two options, to be informative or communicate entertaining content. She states that content cannot be both informative, and entertaining at the same time (Lieb, 2011).

3.4.3 Results

The last category of the dimensions is the results, which is the expected output of content marketing. The first result is to evaluate if the content is valuable or not. The second result is to evaluate if the customers experiences trust for the company. The last result is to see if the content created is profitable for the company.

3.4.3.1 Value

There are not many authors that specify what exactly it means to deliver value in a content marketing context where the content is free to end-users. Rowley (2008) specifies what it means to deliver value with the content that is published online. According to her, producers cannot determine the value of the content, because value is what the customer gets out of the content. Therefore, it is necessary to fully understand the audience in order to create valuable content (Rowley, 2008). Patruti Baltes (2015) refers to value as the creation of content that is interesting, gets the customer's attention, and later transforms into long lasting relationships. Another definition of valuable content is to tell a company's story, and produce their image into interesting and convincing content that is useful for the customer. If a company is able to create content that the customers find useful and valuable, the company has managed to create value (Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

3.4.3.2 Trust

According to Holliman and Rowley (2014), it is important to make the target audience feel trust in the relation between a company and its customer. To gain trust it is

necessary to have consistent behavior over a long time, and manage to hold that consistent promise to the audience (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Content marketing is seen as a long-term marketing strategy to build trust with the target audience. One way of earning the audiences trust is to provide customers with information that help them through the stage in decision-making of the buying process (Rahim & Clemens, 2012). Holliman and Rowley (2014), identifies factors described as key elements to enhance trust with content marketing. The elements include shared and mutual values to the audience, deliver qualitative communication, take into account and respect the audience (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Trust is also an important factor when delivering content because the opportunity for customers to create, or contribute with new content make the reputation of companies more vulnerable (Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

3.4.3.3 Profitable customer action

According to the definitions of content marketing in *Table 3.2- Definitions of content marketing* all authors agree that content marketing should deliver profit for companies. Pulizzi (2013) mentions the objective of driving a profitable customer action, which leads to profit for companies. However, Rowley (2008) mentions profit for a company but not specifically how. Companies that deliver constant and relevant information can help their audience by building a relationship with potential customers, and therefore increase revenue because the companies profitable customer action (Rahim & Clemens, 2012). If the content do not work against this objective, it is not seen as content marketing (Pulizzi, 2013). According to Pulizzi (2013), the created content must have a goal of directly attract, or retain customers in some way. Therefore, content marketing should positively influence customers instead of a direct sales pitch. This is because customers will eventually lead to profits for the company (Nosrati, Karimi, Mohammadi, & Malekian, 2013).

3.4.4 Model of the key dimensions of content marketing

The dimensions of content marketing are divided into three categories: strategy, activity, and results. The dimensions that together form the model in *Figure 3.1- Key dimensions of content marketing*, is a visualization of the process in content marketing. The first category is strategy and includes the dimensions: target a specific audience, reflect company values and brand image, and fulfill customer needs. The second cate-

gory is activity, which contains: two-way communication, delivering consistent content, storytelling, informative content without the perspective of sales, and lastly entertaining your audience. The final category is results with the dimensions: value, trust, and profitable customer action. The empirical data collection and analysis will be based on this model, which consist of different definitions of content marketing from several researchers and practitioners. Their definitions, and understanding about the concept form the model of the key dimensions of content marketing for this dissertation.

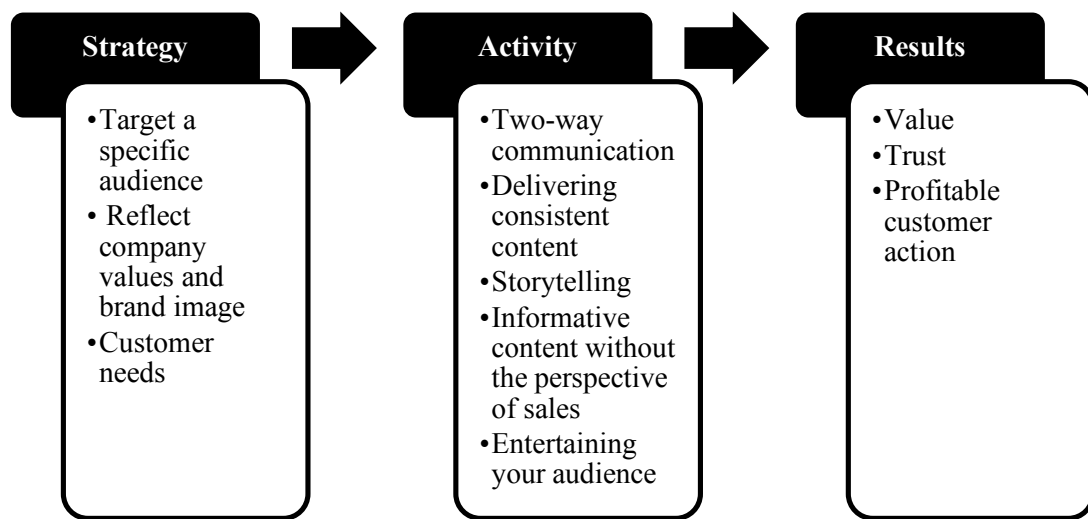


Figure 3.1 Key dimensions of content marketing

4. Empirical method

In this chapter the empirical method is presented. The last four layers of the research onion from chapter two will be explained which are as follows: the research design and strategy, time horizon, and data collection. The chapter continues with sample selection, interviews, and trustworthiness. The last section discussed in this chapter is the ethical considerations.

4.1 Research design and strategy

The research design in *Figure 2.1 - The research onion* has three different research methods: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. The exploratory research design aims to explore what is happening, and clarify understandings of a problem. Two advantages of the exploratory research are flexibility, and adaptability to changes (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The aim for this dissertation is to develop an understanding about content marketing, and clarify the key dimensions that distinguishes this marketing strategy from other marketing strategies. Therefore, the exploratory research design is suitable, because the purpose of this research is to seek new insights and clarify understandings of a problem. When new data appear in the exploratory research, the researcher must be willing to change direction and develop new theories, which enhance the ability to adapt to changes and to be flexible (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

According to *Figure 2.1- The research onion* from Saunders *et al.* (2009), there are seven different research strategies divided into the categories: experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, and archival research. All of the seven research strategies can be combined and used with the three research designs, and the choice of research strategy will be conducted from the research question (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). This dissertation is inspired by a case study design. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), a case study can be constructed with any kind of research, and should be selected by the expectation of gaining as much information and learning about the case. A case study is concerned with the nature and complexity, and involves an empirical investigation of a specific phenomenon using multiple sources of evidence (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, the case of this research will

be the marketing strategy called content marketing, because the aim is to get clarification about the key dimensions of content marketing, but also to gain new insights about this marketing strategy. To gather information about the concept content marketing by using multiple sources, the literature review from chapter three will be compared with the data collected from semi-structured interviews.

4.2 Time horizon

When conducting a research study there are two different time perspectives: cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. The cross-sectional study is a research over a specific phenomenon, at a specific period of time (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). For a qualitative cross-sectional research, it is common that the study contains semi-structured interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The second alternative is the longitudinal study, which often is over a longer time-period where the study contributes to measurable variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The time horizon for this dissertation is a qualitative cross-sectional study, in order to clarify the concept content marketing by performing semi-structured interviews. This research is to clarify content marketing and how companies work with this marketing strategy over a specific point of time. Therefore, a cross-sectional time horizon is performed. Another reason is the constraint of time for the research, because this dissertation is conducted during 14 weeks.

4.3 Data collection

The last section of the research onion in *Figure 2.1- The research onion* is the data collection methodology. There are two ways to collect data, through primary data collection or secondary data collection (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Primary data is the collection of new data with a specific purpose to a research. Secondary data can be both raw data and compiled data (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). In our dissertation the main data source is primary data, because the aim of our research is to develop an understanding about content marketing. Another aspect is to develop new dimensions of content marketing, which is established with primary data. Interviews contribute to this research with relevant, and reliable data to the research question. Therefore, the data are collected through semi-structured interviews (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

When collecting data through interviews, there are some advantages and disadvantages to consider. The advantages with interviews are that a lot of information can

be collected during a short period of time (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). This is in line with the cross-sectional perspective used in this dissertation. Another advantage is to get an understanding of how the participants perceive the research field, and their previous experiences of the performance of content marketing (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). This is helpful since the aim of the research is to get an understanding about content marketing (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). There are also a few disadvantages with interviews. One of them is the interview effect where the interviewer might influence the participants answers, which can have a negative effect on the analysis and results (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). To avoid this negative effect, the participants did not receive the questions before the interview. They only received an information letter with two example questions from our opening questions (*see appendix 2– Information inför intervju*). According to Ahrne and Svensson (2015), another disadvantage is the difficulties to interpret interview data. To interpret the interview data, keywords and themes are identified separately by the interviewers, and then compared in order to identify the relevant data.

4.4 Selection of participants

This dissertation does not use a random selection of participants, instead a snowball sampling is used to select relevant participants. Snowball sampling is the technique to make initial contact with a relevant participant who then identify further participants, and so on (Saunders *et al.*, 2014). This was done to gain purposeful information within the selected participants. The selected participants are from two marketing agencies with two companies that are customers to one of the marketing agencies. The snowball effect started with a company that according to them successfully works with content marketing. In the beginning of this company's content marketing strategy they hired a marketing agency for expertise when working with this marketing strategy. This marketing agency is the second selection, and provided another customer of theirs that they had been helping with content marketing. To make sure that there was no risk of similar answers because both companies used expertise from the same agency, a second marketing agency was used in this research to see if they work differently with content marketing. Within the selection, all participants state that they have been, or are working with content marketing. The participants that have expertise, and experience in content marketing are more likely to provide more detailed answers.

The participants of this dissertation are seven people from four different industries. Participant 1 and 2 work at a university, as a communication strategist, and a marketer. Participant 3 works at a large marketing agency, which is presented in the majority of the Nordic countries, and has the title editor. Participant 4 and 5 work at a smaller digital marketing agency located in Sweden, as a senior digital marketer, and copywriter. Participant 6 and 7 work at a multinational corporation that operates within the business-to-business market, and both participants have the title communication manager. Participant 3, 4, and 5 work at marketing agencies, and participant 1, 2, 6, and 7 work at companies that are customers to the marketing agency that participant 3 works at. Furthermore, the participants are summarized in *Table 4.1- Participants*.

Table 4.1 Participants

Number	Title	Type of company	Sex	Length of interview
1	Communication strategist	University	Female	26 minutes
2	Marketer	University	Female	36 minutes
3	Editor	Marketing agency	Male	62 minutes
4	Senior digital marketer	Marketing agency	Male	64 minutes
5	Copywriter	Marketing agency	Male	28 minutes
6	Communication manager	Multinational corporation	Female	57 minutes
7	Communication manager	Multinational corporation	Female	38 minutes

4.5 Interviews

In this section the interviews are presented, and includes practical information about semi-structured interviews, the interview guide, transcriptions, and ends with a data analysis.

4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

In a semi-structured interview the participants have the opportunity to influence the interview's structure and the interviewer must actively listen, and be open for follow-up questions (Alvehus, 2013). The participants' opportunities to influence the structure and the questions during the interviews are of relevance for this research in order to strengthen the model, and gain new knowledge and insight to this marketing strategy. In this dissertation the semi-structured interviews were conducted to get nuance, and detailed answers from the participants. The interviews were all face-to-face and performed with same structure. The locations of all interviews were at the participants' offices. During the interviews, one of the interviewers took notes of the answers while the other interviewer asked the questions. The interviewers switched between interviewing and taking notes. To be sure that all answers is properly interpreted all the interviews were audio-recorded. This was done to eliminate transcription

errors (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). In total, seven interviews were performed and the average length of each interview was 45 minutes.

4.5.2 Interview guide

An interview guide, see *Appendix 1- Interview guide 1*, were used during the first semi-structured interview. The interview guide is formed from our model in *Figure 3.1- Key dimensions of content marketing*, but also consists open questions to gain new insights and knowledge about content marketing from the participants. A pilot interview was performed in order to see if the questions were easy to understand, and if the interview guide gave purposeful information. After the pilot interview the questions were reviewed, and some questions were added to get relevant data for this research. The interview guide that was used on the following six interviews is *Appendix 3- Interview guide 2*. In each interview small changes of the questions were made depending on the company and participant being interviewed.

There is a mixture of open-ended, and closed questions in order to get concrete answers, but at the same time get in-depth descriptions and new insights to the concept (Denscombe, 2009). The first part of the interview guide contains the warm up questions, where the participants get familiar with the subject, and get comfortable with the interview. The introduction started with simple questions about daily work tasks, and an open-ended question about what they define as content marketing. In order to see if the participants' definition was affected by the interview, a similar question was asked at the end of the interview. After the warm up questions the following of the interview were divided in the categories: strategy, activity, and results. The questions in each category are open-ended, and are designed from *Figure 3.1- Key dimensions of content marketing*. Each dimension in the model has questions, and following-up questions to ensure detailed answers. The questions focused on how the participants work with content marketing, by asking questions about different aspects. This was done to gather new insights and descriptions from the participants. The majority of the questions were open-ended in order to find new aspects of content marketing that previous research may have failed to discover. The participants spoke undisturbed about the subject, and were not interrupted to encourage findings of new dimensions.

4.5.3 Transcriptions

In order to transfer the collected data into qualitative information, the data were transcribed into separate documents. The transcription of the collected data took approximately 32 hours to transcribe, and amounted to 95 pages of data. According to Ahrne and Svensson (2015), the transcription has to be performed by the interviewer in order to eliminate the risks of interpretation errors. In order to minimize the risk of interpretation errors, the interviewers therefore performed the transcriptions to be sure that the answers were correctly transcribed. The language for the interviews was Swedish, which are the native language for the majority of the participants. After the interviews, the data collected was transcribed into Swedish, and only important statements that are cited in this dissertation were translated into English. This was done to make sure that important voice modes are not missed, and that the translations are as correct as possible (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015).

4.5.4 Data analysis

When performing interviews for a qualitative research method it is common to use analysis methods like: meaning condensation, categorization and meaning interpretation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Meaning condensation means that longer statements and sections are compressed into shorter ones, while meaning categorization means that the statements are being simplified into different categories. A meaning interpretation is used when trying to read between the lines (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this dissertation all three methods were used, but a meaning categorization was the most important in order to identify key dimensions of content marketing. When analyzing the data, the interviewers read through each transliteration separately to make sure that the interviewers did not influence each other when choosing important sections. Firstly, the interviewers compressed each transliteration to shorter section with the most important aspects. When this was done the interviewers color-coded different sections into the three categories: strategy, activity, and results. Within each category the different dimensions were coded, and a fourth category for new findings was also taken into consideration in this process. A meaning interpretation was used for important statements that could not be categorized, but could be interpreted to one of the three categories.

The next step in the data analysis is that important quotes were compiled in an excel document according to the different categories. This was done to get a simple overview of the most important aspects from the 95 page transcripts. In order to make the structure of the empirical findings and analysis in chapter five as clear as possible, the same structure of the model in chapter three with the key dimensions were used. The categories: strategy, activity, and results were discussed separately and the aspects that could not be categorized or interpreted into any of them were analyzed separately in a category called new findings. The value of discussing them separately was that they could be compared easily to see if they differentiated or not. Furthermore, this gave control that all the dimensions of the model were taken into consideration as intended. When the categorization and compilation was done, the interviewers discussed and compared the data, which led to the findings that is presented in chapter five.

4.6 Trustworthiness

According to Bryman and Bell (2011), there are four criteria to trustworthiness for a qualitative study. These criteria are: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. *Credibility* focuses on how believable the findings are, and if the findings make sense (Miles *et al.*, 2014). In order to ensure that the findings have credibility, people with expertise and experience within the field of content marketing were interviewed. The participants' opinions and answers in the interviews for this research are determining whether or not the dimensions are important. The open questions are important for this study to be able to define new key dimensions for content marketing. Another factor to ensure credibility is the pilot interview that was done before starting the rest of the interviews. The pilot interview established credibility because the questions were tested on a participant with experience of content marketing.

Transferability is if the findings can be applicable to other contexts (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Miles *et al.* (2014) transferability is also about how far the study can be generalized. The aim of this research is to get clarifications of content marketing by information and knowledge from people with expertise within this marketing strategy. The main purpose of this study is to contribute with an understanding of the marketing strategy, and not to generalize the findings. This means it cannot be transferred to similar organizations that work with content marketing.

Dependability explains if the study is consistent with the findings, stable over time, and across the different interviewers and methods (Miles *et al.*, 2014). In this dissertation the identities of the interviewers are open, which might lead to the participants changing their answers to what they think is the most suitable for this study. Therefore, no prior information about the questions was given before the interview in order to minimize the risk of participants changing their answers. Another threat to the dependability is the fact that there are two people interviewing, and interpreting the data collected. By following the structure of the questions in the interview guide during the interview minimizes this threat. To eliminate the interpretation errors the interviewers transcribed the data and performed the categorization by themselves. The categorization was compared and discussed to not missing any important aspects and answers from the interviews.

Confirmability focuses on if the interviewers have acted in good faith, and not let his or her personal values interfere with the research and findings (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this research the interviewers have tried to be as objective as possible when analyzing the data. This was done by not interpreting the answers but instead see what they actually said. The data of this study is retained and can be reanalyzed, which increases the confirmability according to Miles *et al.* (2014).

4.7 Ethical considerations

For ethical reasons the companies and the names of the participants being interviewed are not published, they are anonymous in this study. Instead of using their real names, the participants of this study are presented with numbers to differentiate them. The interviews were conducted and transcribed in Swedish for the convenience of the participants, and to make sure the material represented what the participant actually said. Furthermore, an information letter about the interview *Appendix 2- Information inför intervju*, were conducted and sent to the participants before the interview. This was done to save time, and to give them some background information about the study.

5. Empirical findings and analysis

In this chapter the empirical findings and analysis of the interviews are presented. The chapter begins with the empirical findings and analysis from the model of the key dimensions. The chapter continues with a comparison of the definition of content marketing, a comparison of content marketing and marketing, and ends in a conclusion of the analysis.

5.1 Key dimensions of content marketing

Following, a deductive analysis presented, where the model of the key dimensions of content marketing from *Figure 3.1- Key dimensions of content marketing* presents the order of the findings. They are divided into three categories: strategy, activity, and results. The first category is strategy and includes the dimensions: target a specific audience, reflect company values and brand image, and fulfill customer need. The second category is activity, which contains: two-way communication, delivering consistent content, storytelling, informative content without the perspective of sales, and entertaining your audience. The final category is named results, and has the dimensions: value, trust, and profitable customer action. The new findings that could not be categorized or interpreted into any of the dimensions above create new dimensions that are presented at the end of each category. However, there are also new findings presented as sub dimensions to some of the dimensions in the tables. In each category a table is presented with the findings. The findings are explained and analyzed after each table, by comparing the participants' answers with the literature review from chapter three. This was done to examine if the dimensions of content marketing in the model were important or not according to the participants answers.

5.1.1 Strategy

According to all participants, the strategy behind content marketing is crucial to publish content. Participant 7 (P7) argues that it is needed to have a strategy behind the content, and that her company never publishes anything randomly. P1, P2, P6, and P7 mention that they have a long-term strategy, and they follow up this strategy during the year. P1 and P3 emphasize that it is important to do a situation assessment in order to possibly involve some news in their content. Therefore, the strategy is not followed up by 100 %. P7 claims that their strategy is followed up by approximately 70 %. A

presentation of the findings in the content marketing strategy is presented in *Table 5.1- Summary of the findings in content marketing strategy*. On the left side of the table the findings are presented with the dimensions from the model of the key dimensions of content marketing, and on the right side of the table main aspects of the specific dimension are presented. The numbers after the categories show how many of the participants who mentioned this specific category. The illustrative examples give further explanation for what is categorized within the different categories.

Table 5.1 Summary of the findings in content marketing strategy

Dimensions	Sub dimensions and illustrative examples
Target a specific audience (7/7)	<p>Target different audiences on different channels (7/7) Illustrative example: <i>"We have different products and services on various channels, because of this we have to divide the audience and to only have one target audience is not working anymore."</i></p> <p>Analyze customer behavior (7/7) Illustrative example: <i>"In the beginning of a content marketing activity, we do an analysis where we define and look at what a specific audience is interested in."</i></p> <p>Identify personas (4/7) Illustrative example: <i>"We have to create content for thousands of people for a certain product. What we are trying to do is to compile the persons to five or six personas. Then we know that for example, one person is a man between 35-45 years, working as a production manager at [...] We know that he is interested in [...] So he becomes a persona and is a combination of maybe 50 different people, but by average this is the persona they become. Then we know that some content has to be targeted to him."</i></p> <p>More targeted than other marketing strategies (2/7) Illustrative example: <i>"More interesting and relevant, and more targeted to the audience than to just stand there and scream out your message to everyone, because most people do not care what you have to say."</i></p> <p>Content marketing gives a wider audience (2/7) Illustrative example: <i>"I would say that content marketing gives another width, we reach a wider audience with this type of information than speaking in general about products."</i></p>
Reflect company values and brand image (7/7)	<p>Reflected on all content created (6/7) Illustrative example: <i>"It is something I think permeates everything we do in most of our marketing. There are several channels for the work of our business where the core values is always present in the background."</i></p> <p>Show companies brand identity (7/7) Illustrative example: <i>"Reflect more or less but our core values is always in the background."</i></p> <p>Brand building (5/7) Illustrative example: <i>"To see how the business strategy can fit into our content and how it can strengthen our brand."</i></p> <p>Genuine content (2/7) Illustrative example: <i>"The most important aspect of content marketing is that the content has to be genuine [...] Genuine means that they stand for what they deliver, and they do not make up things that are not correct."</i></p>
Customer needs (7/7)	<p>Base all content on customer needs (3/7) Illustrative example: <i>"Identify the personas in a three step model to know what our customer needs are. The three step model starts with identifying personas and divide them in a detailed matrix [...] The first step is to create interest, the second one is support and evaluation, and the third one is called capture lead, the last step does not involve content marketing [...] this step is about sales."</i></p>

Customer interest (7/7)

Illustrative example: "...we try to find out what the customers are interested in. In our teams we have people who meet our customers so their input is important, they know what customers are asking for."

Relevant content (3/7)

Illustrative example: "What the customer wants to know and what we consider relevant for them. We want the content to be as good as possible."

Base content on potential buyers (1/7)

Illustrative example: "Based on what the need of potential buyers, and what would make them our customers so we start from there and move backwards."

5.1.1.1 Target a specific audience

As seen in *Table 5.1-Summary of the findings in content marketing strategy*, all participants mention that it is important to target a specific audience in content marketing. This is in line with Pulizzi (2013), and Järvinen and Taiminen (2016), who highlight the importance to target a clearly defined and understood audience. Patruti Baltes (2015), stresses that companies have to analyze their audience to identify the target group. All of the participants state that it is important to analyze the audience and customer behavior. A majority of the participants mention that they do this by identifying personas (P1, P2, P3, P6). However, P4 emphasizes "to define our audience as women 55 or something is not really an audience". He finds that today when digital marketing is crucial, it is more important to analyze the audience online behavior instead of generalizing a group. Järvinen and Taiminen (2016) argue it is important for a company to have a clearly defined audience, in order to avoid speaking with other than the company's customers. However, P2 and P7 disagree with this, because they state that content marketing gives a wider audience than other marketing strategies. P7 argues that the content gives a wider target audience because the content is of value for more people than only the customers. All participants emphasize that they have different audiences on various channels, which is an interesting aspect because previous research in this dissertation did not mention this.

5.1.1.2 Reflect company values and brand image

All participants claim that the companies' core values has to be a part of content marketing, in order to show the audience what the company stands for. According to Escobar (2016) it is important to remember the values that define the companies, and that the content created has to reflect the companies' images. P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, and P7 mention in *Table 5.1- Summary of the findings in content marketing strategy* that companies' values has to be reflected in all content created and this is in consonance with Escobar (2016). Participants P2, P4, P5, P6, and P7 argue that content marketing

is important for the company's branding. Content marketing strengthens the brand by truly showing the audience who the company is and what they stand for (P2, P5, P6, P7). The brand building aspect is in line with Holliman and Rowley (2014), and Pulizzi and Handley (2014), who argue that the content has to communicate the companies' brand images.

A finding that is not mentioned in previous research is that the content should be genuine. P2 emphasizes that one of the most important aspects when working with content marketing is to be genuine, which means to stand for what they deliver, and not make things up. Another aspect that can be connected to genuine content is emphasized by P7, everyone involved in the process of the content needs to know what is being published, to stand behind the content, and represent the brand. Genuine content is related to the dimension called reflect company values and brand image, and could be a new sub dimension. This is an interesting aspect since no previous research mentioned genuine, but P2 claims it is the most important aspect when working with content marketing.

5.1.1.3 Customer needs

All participants argue that it is important to consider customer needs when planning their content marketing strategy, and also what the company's audience is interested in. According to Pulizzi (2013), customer needs is crucial for content marketing. Therefore, all content created by a company should be based on the need of their customers (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). P6 and P7 mention that all content created is based on their customer needs. According to P6, an example under the main aspect base all content on customer needs, in *Table 5.1- summary of the findings in content marketing strategy* is used when considering customer needs. P6 also states that content is based on how big difference it makes for their customers. P3 stresses that one of the most important aspects of content marketing are to measure and analyze what content that meet their customer needs, and why the content is interesting. The analysis and measurements are based on the statistics from social media and digital channels. Escobar (2016) also mentions that social networks help companies determine what customer needs is.

5.1.2 Activity

Activity is the second category in the model of the key dimensions of content marketing, and is how content should be created before being published. Some important aspects to consider in the activity of creating content are: the right tone, language, the right timing, and correct information (P1, P2, P6, P7). Early in the process, before creating all content for the project, it is important to form the content in order to fit the right channels (P3). A presentation of the findings in the activity of content marketing is presented in *Table 5.2- Summary of the findings in the activity of content marketing*. The left side of the table consists of the key dimensions found in the model of the key dimensions of content marketing, and the right side consists of main aspects of the dimensions.

Table 5.2 Summary of the findings in the activity of content marketing

Dimensions	Sub dimensions and illustrative examples
Two-way communication (7/7)	<p>Engagement (7/7) Illustrative example: <i>"We had a lot of engagement, we had likes, shares, comments, and questions..."</i></p> <p>Interactions (5/7) Illustrative example: <i>"We have a lot of followers on Facebook and a lot of interactions, especially when comparing with our competitors. One of them have around 20 times the followers as we have, but we have around the same amount of interactions..."</i></p> <p>Dialogue (4/7) Illustrative example: <i>"We want to communicate with our presumptive customers [...] Some channels are less suitable for dialogue and there need to be resources, people who actually have a dialogue with the customers."</i></p>
Delivering consistent content (7/7)	<p>Time consistent (6/7) Illustrative example: <i>"The most important aspect is continuous communication so that you do not publish any content that you think will work for half a year."</i></p> <p>Adapt the content for different channels (7/7) Illustrative example: <i>"Customize content by channels, for example, you can write an article about something and make a really long version of that article in a magazine or on a website [...] make a very short version of that article and send it out in social media."</i></p> <p>Same voice as target audience (5/7) Illustrative example: <i>"The content is on the target audience levels by not talking over their heads and instead keeping it at their level [...] we take something that is usually a little bit over the head and takes a few steps back and simplifies it a bit and this is how it is done in content marketing. It is on the receiver's level rather than using business terms."</i></p> <p>Publication plans (6/7) Illustrative example: <i>"We have a plan to post at least one Facebook post a week, and one or two post every week on Instagram..."</i></p> <p>Electronically linked content (3/7) Illustrative example: <i>"A LinkedIn post has the purpose to click. It should be so interesting that it leads to the webpage [...] The goal is to make the audience convert."</i></p>
Storytelling (7/7)	<p>Storytelling is crucial: (3/7) Illustrative example: <i>"The story behind the business is much more interesting and that will result in more engagement from the customers, rather than only talking about performance or size. Storytelling is crucial."</i></p>

Informative content without the perspective of sales (6/7)	Informative content (5/6) Illustrative example: <i>"We would rather give information about a new product with stories of our customers' experiences, than selling the products. Sometimes we use the selling perspective, but if we do we are not working with content marketing anymore."</i> Not the perspective of sales (5/6) Illustrative example: <i>"Content marketing should not be "hey, buy our product", the strategy should be to build a brand first, which will later lead to profit."</i>
Entertaining your audience (5/7)	Interest (5/5) Illustrative example: <i>"My goals with the magazine is that anyone should find something interesting to read even that they do not care about the brand or company."</i> Easy to consume (3/5) Illustrative example: <i>"The content should be easy to consume, so the people that are interested in our products can make contact."</i> Fun (2/5) Illustrative example: <i>"The content should work for anyone interested in your product [...] it should be fun, easy to consume, and informative."</i>
Editorial perspective (2/7)	More editorial (1/2) Illustrative example: <i>"Work more editorial with the content to get the target audience engaged and interested."</i> Work as a journalist (1/2) Illustrative example: <i>"In many ways there is no difference in working with content marketing or being a journalist. It was easy to go from a journalist to content marketing, because if you are a journalist you have to know whom you are writing for to make sense to them. This is exactly in line with content marketing, you have your personas that you need to identify and know what they are interested in to be able to angle the content to them. If you are a marketer it is important to communicate right language and messages, but if your are a journalist you do this without even thinking."</i>
Digital content (7/7)	Content is mostly on digital channels (7/7) Illustrative example: <i>"A big part of content marketing has the foundation in digital marketing."</i>

5.1.2.1 Two-way communication

As seen in *Table 5.2- Summary of findings in the activity of content marketing*, all participants mention that a two-way communication is vital when using content marketing. However, some channels are better suited for a two-way communication than others (P1). According to Ashley and Tracy (2014), engagement is important because the audience is contributors to the created content. That the audience is contributors and not just readers is in line with what a majority of the participants emphasize. P1 highlights that their customers engage and interact with their content, and that they are trying to have a dialogue with their audience. They want to have a dialogue because it shows the audience that the company is on the same level as the audience, and is closer to the presumptive customers.

However, Kilgour *et al.* (2015) emphasize that content marketing do not only refer to interactions between a company and their customers, but also between customers to other customers by the opportunity to share and comment. All participants mention that their audiences show a lot of engagement by shares, comments, likes, and down-

loads. In Rowley's (2008) definition of content marketing, she argues that content marketing is delivered through electronic channels, which open up for a two-way communication. There is a difference in how, and what electronic channels companies uses for their content. For example, the university that P1, and P2 work at uses social media channels and measure the communication by likes, shares, and comments.

5.1.2.2 Delivering consistent content

All participants argue that consistency is important to content marketing, which is stated by several researchers (Pulizzi, 2013; Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Wang, Qiao, & Peng, 2015; Patrutiu Baltes, 2015; Halligan & Shah, 2010; Cronin, 2016). According to Pulizzi (2013), it is important to publish content continuously because the audience should be seen as subscribers. If a company fails to publish continuously, there is a risk that the audience forgets about the company and brand (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). As seen in *Table 5.2- Summary of findings in the activity of content marketing* in the sub dimension called time consistent, to publish continuously is in line with P4. He argues that the most important aspect is to have continuous communication, and not only two posts a year. If a company starts to deliver content continuously they have to proceed, otherwise the audience loses their trust against the company (Wang, Qiao, & Peng, 2015).

According to Holliman and Rowley (2014), it is important to adapt the content to different channels. All participants agree that it is important to make sure that the content have the right format for the specific channel. Halevi and O'Hanlon (2016), underline that the content should have the same voice with similar messages on different channels. However, none of the participants claim that they have the same voice on different channels, because they have different audiences on the channels. The majority of the participants highlight that it is important to have the same voice as the target audience, and communicate the message on the receivers level (P2, P3, P4, P6, P7). The participants see this as one of the most important aspects when talking about consistent content on various channels. To have the same voice as the receivers is not mentioned by previous researchers.

5.1.2.3 Storytelling

None of the participants mention this dimension before the question in the interview came up. However, storytelling is something every participant argue are important, but do not work with as much (P1, P2, P6, P7). As seen in *Table 5.2- Summary of findings in the activity of content marketing*, the participants of the marketing agencies claim that storytelling are crucial (P3, P4, P5). Pulizzi (2013) mentions that content marketing, and storytelling is the same marketing strategy but in modern channels. The diversity of responses to this dimension is interesting, but also very confusing since some participants claim that storytelling is important. However, none of the participants use storytelling.

5.1.2.4 Informative content without the perspective of sales

As presented in *Table 5.2- Summary of findings in the activity of content marketing*, a majority of the participants claim that content should be informative (P2, P3, P4, P6, P7), and not have the perspective of direct sales (P1, P2, P4, P5, P7). According to Jefferson and Tanton (2013), companies need to change from a selling perspective to an informative perspective. P5 argues that the strategy should not have the focus on sale, but instead focus on brand building, and to make the audience interested in the brand first, and later the product. Therefore, the strategy should be to focus on delivering information about the brand, which will later lead to the ultimate result that is profit. Halligan and Shah (2010), and Rowley (2008) mention that content marketing is about delivering information to an audience, who actively engage in searching information about the brand. P6 and P7 also state this aspect of content marketing. P6 says, “rather wait then to push, instead we would like it if our target audience would be the ones that download our information”. This indicates that it is important to not push the potential customer to buy a product or service.

5.1.2.5 Entertaining your audience

According to Ashely and Tuten (2014), one of the most important aspects of content marketing is that the content has to be entertaining. A majority of the participants in *Table 5.2- Summary of findings in the activity of content marketing* agree (P3, P4, P5, P6, P7). The participants also mention that it has to be interesting, easy to consume, and fun. P4 says “content should be fun and informative, and a combination of the two is best”. This is not in line with what Holliman and Rowley (2014), or Lieb

(2011) emphasize. They argue that the content either has the purpose to educate or entertain, and that content cannot be both informative and entertaining. This reasoning speaks against P4, and is an interesting aspect of content marketing.

5.1.2.6 Editorial perspective

A finding mentioned by Holliman and Rowley (2014) is the editorial perspective. However, it is not a dimension in the model of the key dimensions of content marketing, because many of the previous researchers did not mention it. In *Table 5.2- Summary of findings in the activity of content marketing*, P1 claims that working more editorial is an important dimension of content marketing, in order to get the target audience engaged and interested. According to P3, working as a journalist, and working with content marketing is no difference. He argues that it is easy to go from journalism to work with content marketing. He stresses “if you are a marketer it is important to communicate the right language and messages, but if you are a journalist you do this without even thinking”. It is interesting that two participants emphasize the importance for the created content to use an editorial perspective, and this aspect forms a new dimension within the category named activity.

5.1.2.7 Digital content

Digital content forms a new dimension within the category called activity in the model of the key dimensions of content marketing. This is because working with digital channels has a lot of benefits compared to traditional channels. For example, it is much easier to convert from one channel to another in digital marketing, which is highlighted by P4, P6, and P7. According to Du Plessis (2015), the technological developments have made it possible for all companies to publish compelling brand stories on digital channels. As seen in *Table 5.2- Summary of findings in the activity of content marketing*, all participants claim that digital content is important to their content marketing. Therefore, it should be taken into consideration when working with content marketing. Digital channels give the opportunity to measure, and see what content the audience consume and interact with (P4). P3 mentions that all content are based on analyses of customer needs. These analyses are based on data that is collected from digital channels, and the digital channels give the opportunity to work with marketing automation (P3, P6). Marketing automation is about marketing messages that appear for one person, and are based on this person’s previous online behavior.

5.1.3 Results

The results are the expected output of content marketing. There are a few ways to measure the results according to all the participants. Examples are by using Google analytics (P2), measure conversions (P4, P6, P7), and measure shares, likes, and comments (P1, P6, P7). Specific goals and expected outputs are set before starting a new project (P2, P3, P5, P6, P7). P1 says, “It is pretty easy to measure content marketing which facilitates this marketing strategy”. A presentation of the findings in the results of content marketing is presented in *Table 5.3- Summary of the findings from the content marketing results*. On the left side of the table is a presentation of the key dimensions, and on the right side the main aspect of the specific dimension is presented.

Table 5.3 Summary of the findings from the content marketing results

Dimensions	Sub dimensions and illustrative examples
Value (6/7)	<p>Determined by interactions (5/6) Illustrative example: “If we take Facebook as an example, first of all we measure interactions, and interactions to number of views.”</p> <p>Share messages and good content (3/6) Illustrative example: “We are not only looking for a ton of likes, we want to share a message and good content.”</p> <p>Valuable even if you do not purchase our products (1/7) Illustrative example: “Whether you buy our products or not, you should still benefit from the content we share.”</p> <p>Should bring something to the reader (2/6) Illustrative example: “Valuable for different audiences, things worth knowing, content should bring something valuable to the reader.”</p>
Trust (7/7)	<p>Presence and continuously post content (2/7) Illustrative example: “Trust is built with being presence and continuous with what we post.”</p> <p>Communicate with the audience (3/7) Illustrative example: “Trust is built by answering your customers, so that you do not have an one-way communication.”</p> <p>No expectations (2/7) Illustrative example: “Very important to not trying to sell your products and to not expect anything from your audience.”</p> <p>Knowledge (2/7) Illustrative example: “We have the knowledge, you can feel safe with us.”</p>
Profitable customer action (5/7)	<p>The ultimate goal is profit (5/5) Illustrative example: “The large goal is to create preference for our company, then we have more specific goals for all content projects.”</p> <p>Indirectly selling products (1/5) Illustrative example: “We are indirectly becoming sellers, and this is measurable so we can see a clear effect of what we are doing.”</p> <p>Drive traffic to the website (3/5) Illustrative example: “The goal is for the content to be so interesting that they will click on the link and convert to our webpage.”</p>
Relationship building (2/7)	<p>Crucial for content marketing (1/2) Illustrative example: “The most important aspect in content marketing is building relationships between the audience, and our company.”</p> <p>External and internal relationships (1/2) Illustrative example: “Content marketing means [...] trying to get a relationship with new customers, existing customers, and co-workers.”</p>

5.1.3.1 Value

According to Rowley (2008), value cannot be determined of the producers, because value is what customers get out of the content. As seen in *Table 5.3- Summary of the findings from the content marketing results*, P4 mentions that the content should be valuable for the audience whether they buy a product or not. P1 claims that they determine the value of the content by the number of interactions and views. However, P5 and P6 evaluate the audience online behavior by measuring how many customers that read the entire content, or how long the audience stay on the website. Even if the participants determine value in different ways, a majority mention that delivers valuable content to the audience is important (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6.). P6 claims that delivering free valuable material that the customer is in need of will result in trust.

5.1.3.2 Trust

As presented in *Table 5.3- Summary of the findings from the content marketing results*, all participants mention trust as an important dimension of content marketing. However, their opinion on trust differentiates a lot, and often involves other dimensions of content marketing. According to Holliman and Rowley (2014), it is important to gain trust with the target audience. This is in line with P2, who mentions that they build trust by being presence and continuous with what they publish. Another important aspect is to use a two-way communication with their audience (P1, P4, P5). This is in line with Holliman and Rowley (2014) that mention it is important for customers to create, contribute to the content, and to respect the audience. By answer the target audience's comments as P4 emphasizes, a company respects the audience, and trust is created. According to Rahim and Clemens (2012), one way of earning the audience's trust is to provide their customers with relevant information that will help them through the decision-making stage of the buying process. P6 mentions that they share relevant knowledge to the audience in order for the audience to feel trust against the company's expertise. P6, expresses that trust is shown when the target audience, and departments within the organization turn to the communication department for help. This means that trust is shown both externally, and internally with content marketing.

5.1.3.3 Profitable customer action

According to Pulizzi (2013), all content created should attract or retain customers in some way. This is in line with a majority of the participants, as seen in *Table 5.3-Summary of the findings from the content marketing results*. They argue that the ultimate goal for content marketing is profit (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6). P6 claims that the major goal is to create preferences for the company, but there are more specific goals to each project, which means that content marketing is not about profitable customer action. Nosrati *et al.* (2013) mention that content marketing should have a positive influence on customers, instead of a direct sales pitch. This is in consensus with what P1 says, “fulfilling the expected outcomes to get more satisfied customers”, which indicates that the content should result in satisfied customers.

5.1.3.4 Relationship building

A new dimension in the category named results from the model of the key dimensions of content marketing is for the content to be relationship building. This aspect is earlier mentioned in chapter three within the following dimensions: target a specific audience, informative content without the perspective of sales, and value. Patrutiu Baltes (2015) emphasizes that content marketing is about creating meaningful relationships between the company and the audience. P1, and P2 also mention this aspect of building relationships with the target audience as important. Therefore, to build relationships should form a dimension on its own, because P1 mentions relationship building as the most important aspect. Moreover, since it is mentioned in three dimensions it might fit into results, since this is the output of the strategy and activities for the created content.

5.1.4 Review of the model of the key dimensions

The analysis of the model in *Figure 3.1- Key dimensions of content marketing* is performed in order to clarify the confusion around content marketing, and explain what the concept content marketing means. All three categories: strategy, activity, and results were mentioned of all participants. P1 and P3 mentioned that in the strategy it is necessary to do a situation assessment in order to publish relevant content. Another interesting aspect is that all participants emphasize that they have different audiences on various channels, instead of one specific target audience. This should be taken into consideration, and be a sub dimension to the dimension target a specific audience. To

deliver genuine content is seen as one of the most important aspects according to P2, and is also mentioned by P7. Genuine content means that companies do not deliver any content that they do not represent. Therefore, genuine content should form a sub dimension to reflect company values and brand image.

In the category named activity, a majority of the participants mentioned all dimensions of the model. However, none of the participants claim that they have the same voice through all channels. They modify the content and adapt the voice to various channels. This is an aspect that does not match the model and should be a new dimension under activity, and the sub dimension named consistent voice is seen as less important and may not be relevant to be a part of the model. Another interesting aspect is that storytelling was not mentioned by any of the participants before the question about this dimension was asked. All the participants on the marketing agencies emphasize that storytelling is a necessary part of content marketing, but none of the participants in the other companies claim that they perform storytelling. Storytelling might not be an own dimension of content marketing, because the findings of the participants show that it is not important enough to form an own dimension.

Editorial perspective, and digital content are two other dimensions added in the model. Editorial content is crucial to get the audience engaged and interested, and should therefore be a part of the category called activity. Digital content is important due to the data that can be compiled in order to evaluate the customer needs. Working with digital content makes it possible to use marketing automation, and to make it possible for customers to convert from one digital platform to another. Therefore, digital content should be new dimension in the category called activity.

Results are the last category of the model of the key dimensions, and this is something all participants claim to be important. They emphasize the importance of all three dimensions: value, trust, and profitable customer action. However, an aspect that is not a previous dimension of the results is the fact that the content builds relationships as result of the other dimensions. The findings of the dimensions in *Figure 3.1- Key dimensions of content marketing* are that the dimensions do not follow a specific order, and they interfere with each other. An example is relationship building in the category result, which is an output from the dimensions in the categories strategy and activity.

Therefore, this dimension interferes with other dimensions because it is mentioned in both target a specific audience, informative content without the perspective of sales, and value.

5.3 The concept content marketing

All participants agree that content marketing is not a new concept, and it is in line with Joe Pulizzi (2012) who mentions that companies have worked with content marketing for several decades. The participants emphasize that they have always been working with the dimensions that they today refer to content marketing. However, they have only been working with the concept content marketing since one and a half to six years, depending on which company and respondent were asked. Content marketing as a marketing strategy has increased since the digital era started in 2005 (Cosh, Burns, & Daniel, 2008). The confusion about the concept, and when the participants claim to start working with content marketing is interesting. The fact that the participants argue that they have always worked with the dimensions of content marketing, but never called this marketing strategy content marketing until a few years ago is even more interesting. What happened a few years ago? According to P6, and P7, they heard about the concept content marketing five years ago, and thought it could help them with information around their product launches. They decided to go to a conference in America about content marketing, which was hosted by Content Marketing Institute (CMI), and the founder Joe Pulizzi. This strengthens the fact that content marketing as a concept has grown since the new digital era in 2005 started. A reason for this fast growing marketing strategy could be that the technological developments offer a wide range of channels to communicate the marketing messages. Another reason is the customers' changed online behavior. These changes and developments have led to that companies were in need of a new strategy that compiled all different marketing activities into one strategy. Moreover, this emphasizes that content marketing is a relatively new concept, and is under developed because companies find new aspects of this marketing strategy during their work.

However, P3 claims that content marketing is a concept that will disappear in a few years because content marketing only refers to creating content, and does not involve strategy and analysis. This is not in line with the other participants, or Rowley's (2008) definition of content marketing. She describes content marketing as "a man-

agement process to identify, analyze and satisfy customer demands” (Rowley, 2008). All participants claim that the strategy, and analysis of the companies’ customers is crucial to be able to successfully use content marketing as a marketing strategy. P6, and P7 emphasize that the demand for content marketing has increased, due to the fact that companies have realized it is a successful marketing strategy. However, P3’s discussion about that content marketing will disappear in a few years is very interesting, especially since he later claims that strategy and analysis are important, but not something he personally works with since he is an editor and only creates the content. This in turn can be interpreted as that he emphasizes that content marketing as a term will disappear, but the important aspects will be something they will still work with, because it is not a new concept.

5.3.1 Definitions of content marketing

In order to get a clarification of what the participants see as content marketing, they answered a question about what content marketing meant for them. This in turn shows what the participants highlight as the most important parts of content marketing, which is central for this study due to the many aspects of what this marketing strategy consists of. The results are presented in *Table 5.4- Participants definitions of content marketing*, and the key aspects are in italics to be distinguished.

Table 5.4 Participants definitions of content marketing

Participant	Definitions
Participant 1	“Content marketing is about working more <i>editorially</i> with content that will <i>engage</i> , and <i>interest</i> the <i>target audience</i> . The target audience will get something out of the content, different from the more traditional marketing of products and services.”
Participant 2	“Content marketing means that we are ourselves, that we tell who we are, and try to get a <i>relationship</i> with new customers, existing customers, and co-workers.”
Participant 3	“Content marketing is more like talking to those who might be <i>interested</i> , and not just talking about themselves, but talking about what the recipient cares about.”
Participant 4	“The content you make should work for anyone who is <i>interested</i> in your product. Lets say they are not only interested in your brand, but still your type of product, so it should be both <i>fun</i> , <i>easy</i> and <i>consumable</i> , and it should be <i>useful</i> .”
Participant 5	“Spontaneously, if I am thinking about content marketing. I am thinking about <i>brand building</i> and mostly in social media.”
Participant 6	“Content marketing means that we <i>support</i> our customers with materials they <i>need</i> through the <i>buying process</i> .”

Participant 7	“Above all, sharing <i>knowledge</i> is <i>non-selling information</i> , so it can be technology knowledge, something that is not sales information in general.”
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The major difference are that before the participants continuously worked with content marketing, the focus was on what the companies wanted to communicate and not on what the customers wanted to consume (P6). To move the focus from what the company wants to communicate, and instead focusing on relevant content that is helpful for the audience is a continuous theme from the definitions. To base the content on what the customers want to consume is in line with the dimension customer needs. P7 highlights that the focus is not on sale anymore, and this is something that is mentioned of the majority of the participants during the interviews. Moreover, P1, P3, and P4 mention that the content has to interest the target audience by delivering entertaining information. To work more editorial with content that is of interest for a target audience is expressed in the definition by P1. Other participants also mention these aspects as key aspects. According to P4, the content should be easy and consumable, and by this he means that it is important to use the same voice as the audience. A majority of the participants highlight to use the same voices as the audience as an important aspect, when creating and communicating the content (P1, P3, P4, P6, P7). Some of the key aspects, for example relationship and brand building are seen as outputs of content marketing. Therefore, these key aspects are not a part of the definition, but are still important aspects to consider in the creation of content. A compilation of the participants' definitions of content marketing that is presented in *Table 5.4- Participants definitions of content marketing* results in the following definition:

Content marketing is the creation of interesting, entertaining, and helpful information without the perspective of sales, by sharing editorial content that is based on the target audience needs and voice.

Previous definitions of content marketing do not differentiate much from the participants' answers, all aspects have been discovered in previous definitions. However, to have the aim of helping customers, by publish helpful content that will lead the potential buyers through all steps in the buying process is something that no previous definitions mention. According to the model in *Figure 3.1- The key dimensions of content marketing*, the following dimensions are highlighted as important according to the participants of this study: *customer needs, informative content without the perspective*

of sales, entertaining your audience, target a specific audience, and to deliver consistent content. These five dimensions were the aspects of content marketing that the participants highlighted as what content marketing meant for them, before starting to ask questions around the specific dimensions. Therefore, this gives a fair view of the dimensions of content marketing.

5.3.2 Comparison between content marketing and marketing

There is criticism that content marketing is not a new marketing strategy, because the dimensions are the same dimensions as in other marketing strategies (Du Plessis, 2015; Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Lieb, 2011). However, there are a few aspects that distinguish content marketing from other marketing strategies. According to P1, content marketing is more valuable than traditional marketing. She says, “Content marketing is about that our audience should get something out of the content that the traditional marketing cannot give”. This shows that the customer needs, and valuable content is major aspects, and are crucial to content marketing.

Another aspect by Järvinen and Taiminen (2016) is that they argue it is important for a company to have a clearly defined audience, in order to avoid speaking with other than the company's customers. However, P2 and P7 disagree with this statement because they state that content marketing gives a wider audience than other marketing strategies. P7 argues that the content gives a wider target audience because the content is of value for more people than only the customers of the company. However, according to the definition of content marketing (CMI, 2017) and the definition of marketing (AMA, 2013), the two definitions differentiate in the term of its customers. Marketing has a wider audience, which consist customer, stakeholders, and society at large. Meanwhile, content marketing has the focus to target a clearly defined target audience. This is an interesting aspect, and an important dimension that distinguish content marketing from other marketing strategies. Although, P2 and P7 argue content marketing gives a wider audience than traditional marketing, the definitions by AMA (2013), and CMI (2017), which should be reliable speaks against them. The other participants in the interviews also express a clearly defined audience.

According to Rowley (2008), content marketing interacts more with the audience by using a two-way communication compared to other marketing strategies. P1 empha-

sizes that the main purpose of content marketing are to have a two-way communication in order to get interactions from customers. All participants emphasize the importance to have a two-way communication. This shows that a two-way communication is something that is more important when working with content marketing. Another aspect that distinguishes content marketing from other marketing strategies is that content marketing should positively influence customers instead of communicating a direct sales message (Nosrati, Karimi, Mohammadi, & Malekian, 2013). To not have the perspective of sales, but instead help and inform the potential customers when working with content marketing is mentioned by a majority of the participants. P6 emphasizes that they rather give relevant, and entertaining information about the products, than selling the products. She continues with that they sometime use the selling perspective, but then they are not working with content marketing anymore (P6).

5.4 Conclusion of the analysis

As a conclusion of the findings, *Figure 3.1- Key dimensions of content marketing* needs to be revised after the findings from the participants' answers. The participants emphasize all three categories: strategy, activity, and results as important aspects to consider when working with content marketing. The new findings of important aspects, and potential new dimensions resulted in seven modifications to the model. In order to deliver relevant content, flexibility is mentioned by the majority of the participants. Moreover, this means that a strategy is needed for the content, but at the same time it is important to be flexible if there is any interesting news that can be included in the content. In the first category of the model that is strategy, different audiences on different channels are added as a sub dimension to the dimension: target a specific audience. In addition, genuine content is added as a sub dimension to the dimension: reflect company values and brand image.

In the second category that is activity, the dimension storytelling is removed. This is because a majority of the participants claim not to work with this dimension. Instead three new dimensions are added, these are: adapt voice to different channels, to have an editorial perspective when creating content, and to use digital content. The new dimension called adapt voice to different channels is added because the participants claim that they have different audiences on different channels. Moreover, to have an

editorial perspective is added as a dimension because the participants mention this as crucial, and previous researchers also emphasize this dimension. The last modification to activity is for the content to be digital, and this dimension is added due to the fact that all participants stated this as an important aspect in content marketing.

The third category called results show that the aspect measurable is important to be able to measure the dimensions within this category. This can be done with many different methods, and after the digitalization it has become easier to measure content marketing according to the participants. The last modification to this model is to insert relationship building to the category results of content marketing. This resulted in a revised model that is presented in *Figure 5.1 - The new model of the key dimensions of content marketing*.

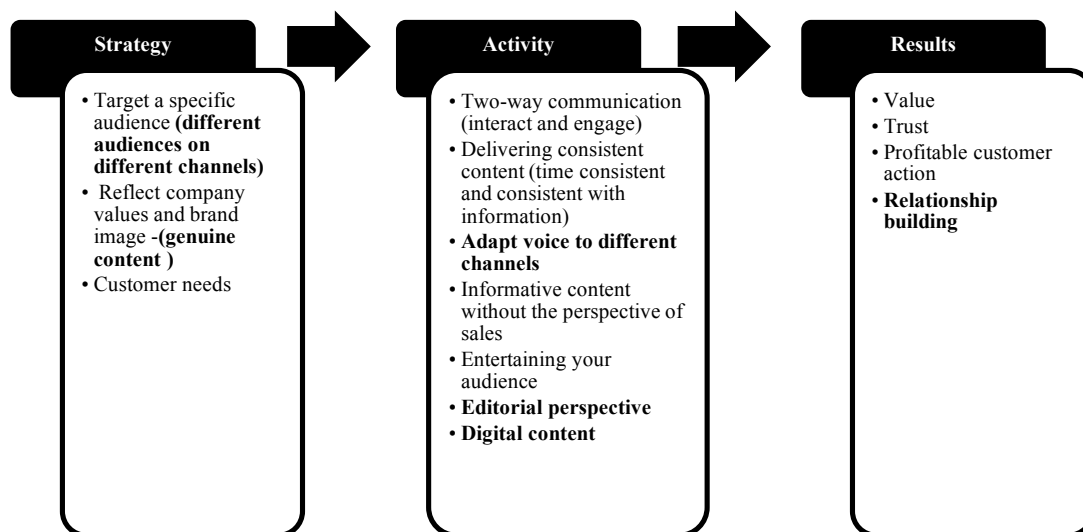


Figure 5.1 The new model of the key dimensions of content marketing

Content marketing as a marketing strategy has increased since the digital era called Web 2.0 started in 2005. The dimensions of content marketing are not a new marketing strategy, and companies have been working with one or several dimensions without referring it as content marketing. However, there is still confusion about content marketing, and what dimensions it consists of. A majority of the respondents claim that content marketing is a holistic marketing strategy that helps them to manage the digital developments. However, according to P3, content marketing is not a marketing strategy that involves the holistic perspective, but none of the other participants agree. The major difference when starting to refer the dimensions, as content marketing was

that the focus on what the companies wanted to communicate moved to what the audience wanted to hear. An example is P6 and P7, who mention that the focus was on product communication before the company started with content marketing. The product managers decided how the information about the products would be communicated, but the focus has now changed to the customer needs, and the communication department has now more power within the organization. Holliman and Rowley (2014) emphasize that a lot of companies do not invest as much as needed in content marketing, due to the confusion in the understanding of content marketing. This is in line with P6 and P7 that mention how the demand has increased when the managers has seen how important content marketing is for the company. P7 stresses that she thinks the company will probably add more resources in the work of content marketing in the coming years.

The key dimensions of content marketing distinguish from other marketing strategies. The following are the main aspects that differentiate the sub branch content marketing from marketing: valuable content, a clearly defined target audience, more interactive, and informative content without the perspective of sales. The concept content marketing has more focus on creating informative, and valuable content to a clearly defined target audience, which in turn open up for more interaction. Moreover, a two-way communication exists in both content marketing and marketing, but within content marketing a two-way communication is crucial (Rowley, 2008). Another aspect that distinguishes content marketing is that the content has the perspective of help and inform potential customers that will eventually lead to sales, marketing on the other hand has the purpose of sales. This aspect is mentioned by P6, who mentions that if their goal for a project is to make profit they are not working with content marketing.

6. Thesis conclusions

The last chapter in this dissertation is the conclusions of the research. The chapter begins with a summary of the dissertation, and continues with the conclusion of this research, and practical implications. This chapter ends with suggestions for further research within the content marketing field.

6.1 Summary of this dissertation

There is limited previous research about content marketing, and because of this there is a research gap since previous studies contributed with a variety of definitions and different perceptions. This has led to confusion around the concept content marketing (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Therefore, the aim of this dissertation was to develop an understanding of content marketing and to clarify the key dimensions of this marketing strategy. The study focused on how companies work with content marketing, and on exploring what aspects that are of importance for their content marketing strategy. In order to focus on this, a literature review was performed in the field of content marketing to distinguish this marketing strategy, and what key dimensions that are of importance. With the theories used, a model was developed with three categories: strategy, activity, and results. In order to study content marketing, dimensions that were seen as important were put within each category. The interview-guide used in the semi-structured interviews, was based on these dimensions in order to explore the important parts of content marketing. After our analysis, our model was revised, six other dimensions and sub dimensions were found, and one was removed.

6.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to explore and gain knowledge on how companies work with content marketing, and what is seen as the key dimensions of this marketing strategy. Previous research has contributed with a wide range of explanations of content marketing, which contradicts each other and is emphasizing different aspects (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Du Plessis 2015). In order to clarify what content marketing is, and which of the aspects that is seen as the key dimensions, a detailed literature review with semi-structured interviews were performed. After conducting these, it became even clearer that content marketing is a wide concept and the participants used various dimensions differently. The participants' answers included the dimen-

sions identified from the literature review, but they varied from company to company. However, when interpreted the collected data, all dimensions were found and some new important aspects. This resulted in a revised model that is presented in *Figure 5.1- The new model of the key dimensions of content marketing*.

The findings from the participants' show that companies have different audiences on various channels instead of one target audience, which is emphasized by Pulizzi (2013), Järvinen and Taiminen (2016), Patrutiu Baltes (2015), and Holliman and Rowley (2014). Different audience on various channels is a sub dimension to the dimension target a specific audience. Another new sub dimension is genuine content, and is highlighted by the participants. However, it was not found in previous research. These two aspects are the changes in the category called strategy in the new model. In the category named activity, the dimension storytelling are found in our old model. Pulizzi (2013) emphasizes storytelling as the same thing as content marketing, and Holliman and Rowley (2014) mentions storytelling as a dimension of content marketing. However, storytelling did not seem as an important aspect according to the participants, and is therefore not a part of the new model. Three new dimensions were added in the category named activity, these are: adapt voice to different channels, editorial perspective, and digital content. To adapt the voice to different channels is not in line with Pulizzi (2013), and Halevi and O'Hanlon (2016). They emphasize that it is necessary to have the same voice on various channels. However, a majority of the participants mention that they change the voice to different platforms, which formed this new dimension. To have an editorial perspective is strengthened by Pulizzi's finding. Digital content is something that is mentioned by Du Plessis (2015), Wang, Qiao and Peng (2015), and Pulizzi (2013). Moreover, it is emphasized as crucial according to all participants. In the last category called results, relationship building is added as a new dimension. For the content to build relationships is previous mentioned by Pulizzi (2013), Holliman and Rowley (2014), and Patrutiu Baltes (2015). Previous research only mentioned building relationships, but the participants highlighted this aspect as a key dimension of content marketing.

Based on this, we conclude that how companies work with content marketing differentiate from company to company, and the key dimensions of this strategy can be found in our new model. Moreover, this dissertation contributes with a new definition

of content marketing, which is a compilation of the participants' definition of content marketing and results in the following definition:

Content marketing is the creation of interesting, entertaining, and helpful information without the perspective of sales, by sharing editorial content that is based on the target audience needs and voice.

Our definition of content marketing is, compared to CMI's (2017), and Pulizzi's (2013), more specific and contributes with a narrower definition to the concept content marketing. This is expressed in the following main aspects: helpful, editorial content, audience needs, and audience voice. These important dimensions of content marketing are not highlighted in other definitions used in this dissertation (CMI, 2017; Pulizzi, 2013; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016; Du Plessis, 2015).

6.3 Practical implications

The aim of this dissertation was to fill up a gap in the academic research field by providing a clarification to the key dimensions of content marketing, and an increase in the understanding of this marketing concept. Existing research has been limited, and focused on providing a wide range of dimensions to the concept content marketing. Therefore, this thesis had the focus to compile and gather new insights in order to identify the key dimensions of this marketing strategy. Additionally, this dissertation contribution to the research field is a deep explanation of content marketing by providing a model of the key dimension of content marketing, and a new definition of content marketing.

For practical reasons, the results and conclusion of this thesis can be of value for people that are starting to work with content marketing. We believe that the model can be used as a guideline for marketers when starting to work with content marketing, but may not be ultimate for marketers with expertise within content marketing. This is because there is many different ways to perform this marketing strategy, and the model of the key dimensions of content marketing is only one way.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

There is still a need for further academic research within the field of content marketing. The contribution of this thesis is a model of the key dimensions of content marketing. A suggestion for further research is to perform a quantitative research, where

the importance of each of the key dimensions of the model is tested. Another suggestion for further research is that it is hard to determine if the content a company creates increases the sales or not. One problem found during the interviews was the fact that business-to-business organization had trouble to measure if the content actually were the deciding factor for the customers to do a purchase or not. This is because the sales division will never claim that the sales are due to the marketing department. Therefore, the measurement of the content marketing cannot be fully performed. This problem with content marketing is one suggestion that further research can be based on.

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Appendix 1- Interview guide 1

Inledningsfråga/ Warm up question:

1. Hur länge har ni arbetat med content marketing? / How long have you been working with content marketing?
2. Vad innebär content marketing för er? / What does content marketing mean for you?
3. Berätta om en kampanj där content marketing var viktigt. / Tell us about a campaign where content marketing was important.

Strategy:

4. Hur ser er strategi ut för content marketing? / What strategy do you have for your content marketing?
5. Hur integreras er content marketing strategi med företagets övergripande strategi? / How does your content marketing strategy interact with the companies strategy?
6. Har ni upptäckt något som inte fungerar i er content marketing strategi? / Have you discovered anything that did not work in your content marketing strategy?

Target a specific audience:

7. Vilken är målgruppen för er content marketing och hur är den identifierad? / Who is your targeted audience and how do you identify the targeted audience?

Reflect company values and brand image:

8. När ni arbetar med content marketing, hur speglas företagets värderingar och varumärke? / When working with content marketing, how does your content marketing reflect the company values?

Customer needs:

9. På vilket sätt tar ni hänsyn till kunderna och deras behov när ni arbetar med content marketing? / How do you consider your customers and their needs when working with content marketing?

Activity

10. Vad är viktigt för er att ha i åtanke när ni arbetar med utförandet av content marketing? / What is important to consider when working with the activity of content marketing?

Two-way communication:

11. I vilken utsträckning integreras kunderna med er content marketing och vad får ni för respons och engagemang från er målgrupp? / To what extent do the customers integrate with content marketing and what kind of responses and dedication from your audience?
12. Hur väljer ni kommunikationsstrategi för er content marketing? / How do you choose communication strategy for your content marketing?

Delivering consistent content:

13. Vilka olika plattformar använder ni när ni publicerar ert content? / What different channels are you using when publishing your content?
14. När och hur ofta publicerar ni ert material? / When and how often do you publish your content?
15. Om flera plattformar används, använder ni er utav samma content på samtliga plattformar? Varför? Varför inte? / If different channels are used, do you use the same content on all channels? Why or why not?

Storytelling:

16. Anser ni att storytelling är en del av content marketing och skulle ni säga att ni använder detta i ert arbete med content marketing? / Do you consider storytelling to be a part of content marketing and would you say that you are working with storytelling in your content marketing?

Entertaining your audience:

17. Vilken typ av budskap vill ni förmedla och vilken ton använder ni till er målgrupp? / What kind of message do you want to deliver and what voice do you use to your targeted audience?

Informative content without the perspective of sales/ **results:**

18. Vad har ni för specifika mål med er content marketing och vad är era förväntade resultat? / What specific goals do you have with your content marketing and what are your expected results?

Value:

19. Hur vet ni att ert innehåll uppskattas av er målgrupp? / How do you know that your content is appreciated by the targeted audience?

Trust:

20. Hur arbetar ni med att bygga ett förtroende mellan målgrupp och varumärke? / How do you work with building trust between your audience and brand?

Avslutningsfråga/ Closing question:

21. Beskriv de tre viktigaste aspekterna av content marketing. / Describe the three most important aspects of content marketing.

Appendix 2- Information inför intervju

Hej!

Tack för att ni hjälper oss med vårt examensarbete på ekonomprogrammet med inriktning internationellt företagande och marknadsföring på Högskolan Kristianstad.

Content Marketing är en populär marknadsföringsstrategi inom många olika organisationer. Den akademiska forskningen av Content Marketing är relativt ny och är i behov av ytterligare studier för att öka förståelsen för marknadsföringsstrategin som ett akademiskt ämne. Vårt examensarbete har som syfte att skapa en djupare förståelse för ämnet och de viktigaste delarna av marknadsföringsstrategin. Studien är även tänkt att undersöka dimensioner som särskiljer Content Marketing från andra marknadsföringsstrategier, samt hur arbetet med Content Marketing ser ut.

Intervjun kommer att ta cirka 60 minuter och består av 24 frågor. Exempel på frågor är följande:

- Vad innebär content marketing för er?
- Berätta om en kampanj där content marketing var viktigt.

Era svar från intervjun kommer att transkriberas för att sedan tolkas, jämföras och analyseras med vad olika teorier säger om ämnet Content Marketing. Intervjuerna kommer att spelas in för att underlätta vår analys, men ni och ert företag kommer att vara anonyma i vår studie och endast vi som utför intervjun och vår handledare kommer att veta vilka ni är.

Hoppas att detta gav er lite mer information inför intervjun, om ni har några frågor kan ni nå oss på telefonnummer 070-3274700 (Albin) eller 076-8061174 (Amanda). Vår handledare heter Lisa Källström och kan nås på lisa.kallstrom@hkr.se eller 044-2503117.

Vi ser fram emot att träffa er snart!

Med vänliga hälsningar

Amanda Claesson och Albin Jonsson

Appendix 3- Interview guide 2

Inledningsfråga/ Warm up question:

1. Vad har du för position i ditt arbete? / What position do you have in your work?
2. Hur länge har ni arbetat med content marketing? / How long have you been working with content marketing?
3. Arbetar du med content varje dag? / Are you working with content marketing every day?
4. Hur ser en dag ut när du arbetar med content marketing? / What does a normal day for you look like when working with content marketing?
5. Vad innebär content marketing för er? / What does content marketing mean for you?
6. Berätta om en kampanj där content marketing var viktigt. / Tell us about a campaign where content marketing was important.

Strategy:

7. Hur ser er bakomliggande strategi ut för er content marketing? / What does your strategy for content marketing look like?
8. Hur integreras er content marketing strategi med företagets övergripande strategi? / How does your content marketing strategy interact with the companies strategy?
9. Har ni upptäckt något som inte fungerar i er content marketing strategi? / Have you discovered anything that did not work in your content marketing strategy?

Target a specific audience:

10. Vilken är målgruppen för er content marketing och hur är den identifierad? / Who is your targeted audience and how do you identify the targeted audience?

Reflect company values and brand image:

11. När ni arbetar med content marketing, hur speglas företagets värderingar och varumärke? / When working with content marketing, how does your content marketing reflect the company values?

Customer needs:

12. På vilket sätt tar ni hänsyn till kunderna och deras behov när ni arbetar med content marketing? / How do you consider your customers and their needs when working with content marketing?

Activity

13. Hur ser processen ut när ni jobbar med content marketing och vad är viktigt att ha i åtanke innan ni publicerar ert content? / What is the process and activity when working with content marketing and what is important to consider before publishing your content?

Two-way communication:

14. I vilken utsträckning integreras kunderna med er content marketing och vad får ni för respons och engagemang från er målgrupp? / To what extent do the customers integrate with content marketing and what kind of responses and dedication from your audience?
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*Informative content without the perspective of sales/ **results:***

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22. Hur vet ni att ert innehåll uppskattas av er målgrupp? / How do you know that your content is appreciated by the targeted audience?

Trust:

23. Hur arbetar ni med att bygga ett förtroende mellan målgrupp och varumärke? / How do you work with building trust between your audience and brand?

Avslutningsfråga/ Closing question:

24. Beskriv de tre viktigaste aspekterna av content marketing. / Describe the three most important aspects of content marketing.