

Selling Vs. Helping :
**Exploring The Ideal Digital Content Steering Strategy For Optimal
Online Customer Engagement In Knowledge Intensive Business
Services (KIBS)**

Marie De Silva

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Abstract

Customer interaction in the B2B Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS) sector saw a drastic paradigm shift to digital platforms from a predominantly physical ecosystem in the last decade. Digital transformation of the overall business sphere and growth of social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook and LinkedIn impacted the KIBS sector significantly. However, despite its criticality, theoretical and empirical explorations synthesising KIBS and digital content strategy has been significantly scarce and fragmented.

Replication of B2C and retail based strategies have been evident in the sector, but the rapid growth of KIBS in the global economy and its growing digital audiences have created a significant need for KIBS specific digital content engagement strategies at present.

This study therefore was conducted to explore the ideal content steering strategy for the KIBS sector through a comprehensive theoretical review and empirical investigation. It sought out to address the key research questions of (1) What factors facilitate digital content engagement? and (2) What factors facilitate digital content diffusion in the KIBS sector? and essentially what content appeals more out of 'selling' (utilitarian) or 'helping' (assertive) based digital content on SNS.

A comprehensive literature review was undertaken for this purpose based on which a conceptual visualisation of engagement and diffusion factors were addressed. Secondly a two-pronged in-depth empirical investigation of digital content of three New Zealand based small and medium tier KIBS entities was undertaken in the forms of a qualitative content analysis and a field experiment in order to gather empirical evidence to address the research questions. Primarily Facebook and LinkedIn were used as the platforms in the analysis owing to the presence of all three participants on these SNS.

The study established a new stream of research for academia synthesising KIBS and digital content marketing and visually conceptualising the phenomenon, being the first of its kind. The results of the study revealed that utilitarian (Helping) content garnered higher 'engager'

participation deeming it more effective in comparison to assertive (Promotional) content which garnered more 'passive' and 'expressor' participation. However, both approaches were only successful subject to being combined with informative and collaborative elements in posts and in presenting it in visual formats such as video or images. A comprehensive guideline for KIBS content development to leverage diffusion was further presented as a result of the study for KIBS digital marketers.

Further intervention factors such as network overlap and bandwagon heuristics and more were identified as potential influencing elements in this case, while potential demotivators to KIBS content engagement were also retrieved for future exploration.

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Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition / Description
Digital content steering strategy	Refer to the tone, appeal, format and type of content used and overall combination of these factors when publishing content by organisations with a view to increasing audience engagement.
Social Networking Sites (SNS)	SNS can be defined as web-based services that permit individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Commonly used SNS include Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram
Digital content marketing	Digital 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 which is focused on driving profitable customer action such as website clicks, purchases or subscriptions to email databases.
Digital content engagement	Content engagement is an action a user takes on a given piece of content developed and published by a company. It sends a signal (either to Google, a website or social platform) that the content was relevant to the organisation's audience in some way.
Stealth Marketing	Stealth marketing is defined as the strategy of advertising something to a person, without them realising they're being marketed to. There have been ethical considerations surrounding this strategic approach.
Informative and collaborative elements	Informative elements refer to providing useful or interesting information in content and collaborative elements refer to content produced by or involving two or more parties working together. In the current study, this may refer to sector bodies and associations with which the organisation may be associated.
Customer interaction	Customer interaction is the communication between a customer and a company. Every such interaction is considered an opportunity to connect with them, delight them, and increase their retention and advocacy.
Content diffusion	Content diffusion primarily refers to the wide spreading of digital content and having more audiences being exposed to specific pieces of digital content
Audience / Network overlap	Audience overlap occurs when members present in one audience also exist in a completely different audience. The percentages may vary based on context and sector.
Bandwagon heuristics	The bandwagon effect is a psychological phenomenon in which people do something primarily because other people are doing it, regardless of their own beliefs, which they may ignore or override. This tendency of people to align their beliefs and behaviors with those of a group is also called a herd mentality.

Digitalisation	Digitalisation is primarily the integration of digital technologies into everyday life. It also means the process of making digital everything that can be digitised and the process of converting information into digital format.
Internal automation (Digital process automation)	Digital process automation refers to the automation of business processes. Due to global market pressure to innovate, it has become a field in its own right. Core features of digital process automation include: Automating, streamlining, and restructuring existing business processes.
Cloud storage	Cloud storage is a cloud computing model that stores data on the Internet through a cloud computing provider who manages and operates data storage as a service. It's delivered on demand with just-in-time capacity and costs, and eliminates buying and managing your own data storage infrastructure.
Online / virtual brand community	Virtual brand community (VBC) is a specialised, non-geographically bound community based on a structured set of social relationships among followers of a brand.
Digital content strategies	A digital content strategy, much like any business plan, is a goal-orientated process that assists with an organisation's overall marketing efforts. The purpose of a digital content strategy is to provide direction towards an outcome

The above glossary has been provided prior to the content as there is a substantial amount of technical reference and terms which were required to be used in developing the thesis. The above glossary of key terms provide a guideline for reference for these terms and clarifies the context in which the information presented is based.

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma from a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed Marie De Silva,

20th April 2020

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Ethics approval for this study was granted on the 11th of June 2019

By the AUT Ethics committee

Application No: 19/127 (Title of study : Selling vs Helping: exploring the ideal digital content steering strategy for optimal online customer engagement in Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS) - approved for three years until 10 June 2022.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to this research

A noteworthy paradigm shift in the global economy in recent years is the emergence of Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS), led by a decrease in demand for labor and capital intensive services. Essentially KIBS organisations can be defined as external professional knowledge sources catering to the needs of other organisations who lack knowledge in specialised disciplines. These may include Human Resources (HR), Information Technology (IT), Legal or Research & Development (R&D). KIBS entities can be identified as having a unique ecosystem of operations and a significantly complex customer relationship dimension. By default KIBS organisations are therefore identified as predominantly Business-to-Business entities offering professional knowledge-based services (Dobrai and Farkas, 2009; Bolisani, Scarso & Giuman, 2017; Ritala, Hyötälä, Blomqvist & Kosonen, 2013).

Vargo and Lusch (2004) initially identified the pivotal role of the 'service' element in economic exchange post the industrial revolution and its 'goods' centric paradigm. The authors identified the shift in demand for skill and knowledge based outputs and also emphasized the criticality of the service element within the tangible goods marketing sphere as the driving force for success in sustaining client relationships. This phenomenon was recognised as the new dominant logic in marketing or the Service Dominant logic and was set as a foundation for marketing theory and future research stemming from their study (Hilton & Hughes, 2013; Skjølvik, 2017).

Fisk, Brown & Bitner, (1993) can be identified as the initial academic authors who delved into the evolution of services marketing literature and extracted the four key differentiating elements of services as opposed to products. These factors were derived from a plethora of fragmented research papers during their analysis, which identified four key differentiating elements of services. This foundational framework essentially known as the IHIP model stands for intangibility (I), heterogeneity (H), inseparability (I) and perishability (P), most authors within literature utilise these factors to differentiate products from standardised services.

However Biege, Lay, Zanker & Schmall (2013) form the foundations in arguing that the simple IHIP framework may not be adequate to explain the essence of KIBS entities although it is a form of services. While these elements complement the overarching factors which differentiate KIBS from other entities, it can be observed that within the services sphere, KIBS is a niche segment which is significantly different to other standardised services such as mail delivery, automobile repair or the like. KIBS services are primarily intellectual in nature. Past literature derives the unique ecosystem of KIBS by extending the IHIP model further and incorporating two more characteristics to the model which include (5) service interactiveness and (6) service complexity. These six factors therefore are deemed to differentiate KIBS from standardised and modular services (Biege et al, 2013; Rahikka, Ulkuniemi & Pekkarinen, 2011).

Biege et al. (2013) further identify that the uniqueness of the KIBS sector therefore lies in its (1) bespoke customer instances (2) the pivotal role of customer value co-creation required (3) the level of domain knowledge / immersion (4) and the co-dependence between supplier and receiver for success of outcomes in contrast to standardised services.

Innovation plays a pivotal role in successful service delivery within the KIBS sphere. It has been the focus of multiple authors within past literature. It can be observed through the analysis that innovation centric efforts in KIBS both internally and during external service delivery have contributed substantially to sustaining KIBS competitiveness (Janssen, Castaldi & Alexiev, 2018; Love, Roper & Bryson, 2011; Mina, Bascavusoglu-Moreau & Hughes, 2014). KIBS value generation is identified in a dyadic perspective as a joint problem solving process, where the customer essentially plays multiple roles of co-diagnoser, co-designer, co-producer, and co-implementer in most instances (Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola, 2011).

KIBS plays a pivotal role in most economies in the aspects of facilitating growth, innovation and export revenue (European Monitoring Centre on Change, 2005). In the context of the New Zealand commercial sector, KIBS has been identified as a leading sector generating one fifth of the GDP of the country, employing 432,000 individuals which is an estimated 16% of the overall labor force in the country. It was also identified that the sector generates 62% of New Zealand's commercial services exports valued at \$2.5 Bn (New Zealand Sectors Report, 2014). It has been observed during the analysis that data pertaining to the growth and performance of the KIBS sector is only available in the New Zealand Sectors Report published in 2014, which has

been prepared five years prior. The unavailability of growth data and key KIBS trends within the New Zealand commercial sector within the recent years is a key drawback as it is critical to explore industry shifts and trends on more frequent intervals in order to support potential research and development efforts.

Given this unique nature of KIBS, it can therefore be observed that the implications for digital content marketing of these entities becomes more complex and requires higher versatility. In contrast to standard services such as mail delivery or automobile repairing, the case of management consulting services for instance may require significantly customised content to approach and appeal to multiple unique clients within the digital marketing sphere. While digital content on discounted fees, promotional offers and organisation centric content may appeal to standard service audiences and retail ecosystems, KIBS audiences may not essentially be price sensitive and prone to generic content consumption. They may feel the need to engage with digital content which is purposeful and addresses their unique pain points from the perspective of an expert. However, these assumptions combining digital content marketing with KIBS can be observed as lacking academic attention as per the current body of literature available.

With increased digitalisation within the commercial sphere, digital content marketing plays a pivotal role in developing new business and sustaining client relationships for KIBS entities alongside many other sectors (Katona and Sarvary, 2014). The New Zealand Sectors Report (2014) in its Ministers Foreward brings forward an essential focus, elaborating the necessity for KIBS entities to adopt a more digitalisation oriented approach in doing business in the future. The report identifies the need for KIBS entities to change their approach to doing business to accommodate the growing digitisation trends and the changes in the global economy in order to remain internationally relevant and competitive.

KIBS organisations in recent years have been compelled to adhere to digitalisation in multiple aspects. Primarily, internal organisational process automation has come into play. For instance, KIBS firms increasingly automate internal project processes through various project management tools such as Trello, Microsoft Teams and Planner, to name a few key software platforms.

In addition to internal automation, delivery of services online via conferencing facilities across geographic borders to offshore clients have today taken precedence over international travel. enabling wider client reach and reduced cost and carbon footprint. Utilising cloud storage as opposed to physical document archives and the use of platforms such as Sharepoint have become commonplace in most organisations, regardless of their scale.

In light of the rich terminology utilised in the text which follows in all chapters, a glossary of key terms have been provided in page 10 and 11 of the document.

1.2 Research problem

A common misconception in the current context outlined by Katona and Sarvary (2014), is that Business-to-Business (B2B) entities viewed social media as a complimenting promotional tool as opposed to a strategic marketing channel. Despite its significant future implications, minimal commercial and academic focus has been given to what really works in the KIBS sector in terms of digital content.

The authors in their case study on Maersk Line; the shipping giant, and its gargantuan success in social media marketing further elaborate that an interesting shift can also be observed in how client relationship management and interaction takes place. The authors discuss how it has now moved on to social media platforms in the same manner as above. Opposing the common notion that digital content marketing and social media marketing are only essential to the success of retail and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) entities, it has recently come to light through this case study that KIBS audiences are active in digital channels and are active consumers of digital content. KIBS entities therefore have been driven to establish online presence beyond a website and basic web centric interaction tools.

Buratti, Parola and Satta (2018), examine in-depth the implications and adoption of social media marketing and digital content in more conservative settings such as B2B services and offer valuable contributions to literature. The authors identify that social media marketing affects the entire marketing process of B2B service firms. They conclude that online brand community discussions such as LinkedIn groups and forums may enable higher customer understanding and even offer a low cost and interactive platform for post-sales support for relationship

management (Simon, Brexendorf & Fassnacht, 2016; Habibi, Hamilton, Valos & Callaghan, 2015; Marcos-Cuevas, Natti, Palo & Baumann, 2016; Barker, 2015; Sloan, Bodey & Gyrd-Jones, 2015; Schembri, & Latimer, 2016).

Overall in terms of the research problem, it was observed that as a result of the replication of B2C strategies in the B2B sphere, KIBS entities in practice and in an academic perspective were lacking in critical knowledge of what works for this specific context in terms of digital content. An evident gap in literature persists in exploring the effects of replicating generic digital content strategies for conservative B2B service industries, of which KIBS is an essential sector.

1.3 The purpose of the research

Therefore, taking into consideration the above research problem, the need for the current study arose. The purpose of the current research is to offer guidance to B2B digital marketers in the KIBS sphere, on steering overall, digital content strategy and exploring the ideal type of content for optimal online customer engagement by exploring the comparative impacts of promotional versus informative digital content, also theoretically labeled as assertive versus utilitarian content.

In practice, two key types of digital content approaches are commonly observed in the KIBS sector. These include (a) promotional / Assertive content and (b) Content which serves a purpose / is utilitarian and informative in nature for the consumer who is viewing it. The research was undertaken therefore to explore what content strategies among these were more effective in generating sustainable KIBS digital audience engagement.

1.4 Objective of the research

Primarily, the objective of the research was therefore to explore What digital content steering strategy and type of content ideally generates high online audience engagement in the B2B KIBS sector.

The research aimed to uncover a potential guideline which could be used by KIBS digital marketers to implement audience appropriate content generating higher engagement, while also introducing a new perspective to KIBS digital marketing literature in an academic perspective.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the above, two core research questions were developed in order to achieve the overall objective of the research, These include:

1. What factors facilitate digital content engagement?
2. What factors facilitate digital content diffusion in the KIBS sector?

1.6 Research methodology

In order to address the above research questions, the methodology employed involved a comprehensive two-pronged approach. Five KIBS entities representing different KIBS sub-sectors were approached for recruitment as the research subjects. An ethically compliant comprehensive recruitment process with a reciprocal offer of value for their businesses was carried out for this purpose.

The relatively complex recruitment process was carried out to mitigate any risks to the primary researcher and the participant in terms of confidentiality of information, as publicly inaccessible internal data was required to derive valid results for the study. The participants were made well aware of the information requirements beforehand and were provided with an array of confidentiality procedures including complete anonymity and the ability to enter into non-disclosure agreements with the researcher.

The research method involved a comprehensive qualitative content analysis of the participant's social media channels containing relevant digital content as the first phase. This was then followed by a field experiment which aimed to practically explore the findings of the literature review and the content analysis in a live and organic actual setting.

The qualitative content analysis primarily involved the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns in the key content posted by participants in their key social media channels (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The content was thematically analysed to identify formats, framing approaches and content types in the content, which were then mapped against the engagement levels garnered in each case to analyse audience responses. This analysis of past trends in engagement in the KIBS context offered a stable platform to identify the formats, framing and content types which facilitated digital content engagement and also attempted to identify the KIBS specific factors which came into play in driving engagement. The field experiment thereafter was conducted taking into consideration appropriate learnings from the content analysis to enhance the trustworthiness of the results.

The field experiment was primarily supported by prior academic contributions by Mazza and Palermo (2018) and Sigurdsson, Menon, Sigurdarson, Kristjansson and Foxall (2013), who utilised a similar method to empirical research to explore validity of a content analysis or other approach in research. The experiment was conducted with an A/B testing approach where two comparative conditions in the forms of (a) An assertive / organisation oriented content piece and (b) A utilitarian user oriented content piece was tested for audience engagement by posting these on the LinkedIn page of the participant who volunteered. LinkedIn was chosen as the platform to conduct the experiment based on the widespread usage of it among the participants as opposed to other platforms such as Facebook. The study initially proposed images as the content format to be used in the experiment, however subject to learnings from the content analysis, a sub analysis was undertaken prior to launching the experiment to determine if videos or images would be more effective experimental materials. The content analysis indicated that videos were a preferred format for content. This is because videos garner higher impressions and engagement levels in the form of reactions and comments, therefore a format change was applied to the field experiment. Statistical testing subsequently was carried out using Chi-Square Analysis.

1.7 Contribution of the study

The current study contributes in multiple ways to the KIBS academic and KIBS corporate sector. Primarily, the study offers a pioneering synthesised conceptualisation of KIBS literature with

core digital content marketing literature offering a view of why a bespoke digital content strategy is required for B2B KIBS entities and what drives the said engagement in this context. In terms of managerial implications, the primary contribution of the study is that it offers a working guideline which can perform as a basis when developing bespoke digital content for higher audience engagement in the KIBS sector. While these two primary contributions are offered, further multiple contributions in terms of methodological contributions and future research directions are also presented for future researchers resulting from the learnings of the study.

1.8 Thesis overview

The current Chapter provided a background to the research alongside the research problem, research purpose and objectives, the methodology of the study in brief and its overall contribution. Chapter two provides a comprehensive literature review and identifies the key gaps in literature. It then progresses to extract from the main body of literature a cluster of foundational research contributed by key authors which provide a basis for the empirical phase of the study. Chapter three proceeds to describe the method employed for the empirical investigation phase. Chapter four reports the research findings which is then followed by Chapter five where a critical analysis of the findings is presented in the form of a discussion addressing the two research questions. This Chapter offers three key contributions which include (1) theoretical conceptualisation and establishment of a new research direction for KIBS and digital content marketing (2) A KIBS digital content steering guideline which can be utilised by KIBS entities for leveraging digital audience engagement and (3) potential future research directions to expand this critical area of new research. It also discusses the limitations of the study while also offering insights on methodological findings gained through the study.

2.0 Literature Review

As the first phase of the research, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken to achieve two primary goals. The first goal of the review was to gain a thorough understanding of the research topic. In order to achieve this goal, a comprehensive review of past literature was undertaken to extract a historical evolution of KIBS and Digital Marketing literature and to identify persisting gaps.

The second goal of the literature review was to examine the perspectives of pioneering authors in relation to digital content steering within the B2B and KIBS sphere. In order to achieve the second goal, a thematic analysis was derived from the findings of the historical evolution of literature. This was developed to envision a synthesised conceptual view of factors driving digital content engagement in the KIBS sphere including all other factors influencing the phenomenon.

The literature sources examined spanned across multiple disciplines which included KIBS, Service dominant logic, Customer value co-creation, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Online consumer behaviour and online consumer engagement. The concluding remarks elaborate on the persisting gap in terms of KIBS specialised digital content marketing research which gave rise to the requirement of the subsequent empirical study.

The critical analysis of past literature revealed two key aspects in relation to digital content consumption which is projected in the conceptual framework. These include (1) motivators which may drive content consumption / viewing in general by digital audiences and secondly (2) the factors which drive actual content engagement which may potentially include reacting, sharing and commenting on a specific piece of digital content. However, a key observation was the persistent absence of studies which link KIBS literature with digital content related research studies.

2.1 Historical evolution of literature on KIBS and digital content marketing

In order to achieve the first goal of the literature review by examining the historical evolution of literature within this sphere, a chronological analysis deriving key themes which emerged in academic research in various time periods was conducted. The analysis examined the progression of related academic work to KIBS and digital content marketing literature. The analysis revealed that the overall body of literature commenced in the period from 1990 to 2005 with the introduction of services marketing as a mainstream academic focus (Fisk and Brown, 1993). This involved the identification of digital channels and stealth marketing as potential marketing tools which could be incorporated into a company's strategy, as a part of the marketing communications plan (Barnes, 2002; Kaikati and Kaikati, 2004; Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry and Raman, 2004). The simultaneous paradigm shift to the service dominant logic from the Goods dominant logic and shift to a service economy indicate the initiation of the KIBS sector during this period (Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

Commencing with the convergence of the internet and wireless communications, it was revealed that mobile telecommunications offered a lucrative platform for wireless advertising. Early forms in the nature of SMS (Short Message Service) allowed businesses to reach customers at their fingertips with the potential to convert message receivers to potential customers and also leveraged upselling and cross-selling capabilities (Barnes, 2002; De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2017). This era can be framed as the pioneering era in literature for the current research topic. It indicates the early developments in literature in terms of KIBS and Digital content marketing.

The below table provides a summary of the key events in relation to the research topic derived from the current body of literature and also encapsulates the emergent themes within academic research in line with each of the benchmarking events.

Table 1: Emergent themes from past literature in relation to KIBS and Digital Content Marketing

Time period	Key events	Emergent themes from events within literature
1990 - 2000	Identification of services marketing and digital communications as a marketing channel	Introduction of Services Marketing - Progressing beyond goods and tangibles Introduction of wireless digital advertising
2001 - 2005	Paradigm shift into service economy - initiation of Service exchange centric markets	Social media Service-dominant logic in services marketing Stealth and viral marketing - preliminary tactical approaches
2006 - 2010	Establishment of KIBS as an academic research focus Identification of digital content as a key marketing tool and introduction of the digital C2C channel	Introduction of KIBS as a key research direction - Defining KIBS, exploring the fundamentals of KIBS Introduction of Digital Content Marketing Electronic Word-of-Mouth Digital user experience Identification of the C2C channel
2011 - 2015	Expanding KIBS research horizons Pioneering studies on drivers of digital content consumption Initiation of research on B2B social media use and establishment of B2B social media as a critical marketing communications channel for B2B entities	Dissecting KIBS literature through research on innovativeness of KIBS Customer value co-creation Digital content consumption and the extended self Online consumer behaviour Drivers of content engagement and virality B2B Social media engagement and channel based research
2016 to date	Expanding horizons on B2B social media use and digital content consumption	Antecedents of B2B social media use and differentiating B2B from B2C Digital marketing Social media adoption and implementation in B2B settings Effect of Social media applications on B2B communications Effects of Traditional Advertising and Social Messages on Brand-Building Metrics and Customer Acquisition Digital content clutter Digital visual engagement Firm versus user generated digital content

A key observation derived from the body of work available at present is the absence of combined research in line with digital content marketing within the KIBS sphere. However, applicable theoretical foundations can be extracted from B2B literature. Katona and Sarvary (2014) bring forth a significant contribution to this perspective with their study on the shipping giant : Maersk Line. The authors discuss the potential of social media use for B2B entities in multiple perspectives including messaging / content strategies, Platform strategies and segmentation of platforms by objective of use and many more. Cawsey and Rowley (2016), Rowley (2008) along with Griner and Power (2018) among others offer complimenting insights on replication of B2C strategy on B2B ecosystems and stress on the criticality of B2B specific strategy development in digital content marketing.

The period commencing from 2006 to date can be identified as the most pivotal era for KIBS and B2B digital content marketing as it has expanded horizons significantly during this time including the recognition of engagement with technology as a key academic focus in marketing (O'Brien and Toms, 2007). KIBS literature initially emerged in 2009 with the study of Dobrai and Farkas (2009), which sought an understanding of the dynamics of the sector and its key success factors including innovation in KIBS services (Ángel López-Sánchez Jose, 2013). The dyadic joint problem solving process and customer value co-creation elements in KIBS were then focused as key sub-streams of KIBS literature thereafter (Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola, 2011; Bertrand, Karlan, Mullainathan, Shafir & Zinman, 2010; Komulainen, 2014; Kohtamaki & Partanen, 2016; Mustak, 2017; Pynnönen, Hallikas, Ritala & Mikkonen, 2014). The definitions of KIBS emerged during this period while simultaneously B2B social media and digital marketing channel research was given a steady academic focus (Biege et al, 2013; Lal, 2018; Gruner and Power, 2018).

However, the most relevant era for the current research topic is the ongoing phase from 2016 which explores B2B content consumption in depth (Whang, Pauleen and Zhang, 2016; Schivinski, Christodoulides and dabrowski, 2016). Commencing in the last three year period, multiple authors have embarked on researching the dynamics of digital content consumption and engagement within the B2B sphere. Key focal points include the critical analysis of the implications of duplicating B2C strategies in B2B settings, identifying the antecedents and

causal factors underlying digital content consumption, dissecting various social media platforms and content forms and assessing its effectiveness on the B2B sphere (Cawsey and Rowley, 2016; Iankova, Davies, Archer-Brown, Marder and Yau, 2018) and last but not least, delving into exploring the impacts of content origin in the forms of firm generated versus user generated content (Batum and Ersoy 2016; Susarla, Oh and Tan, 2016).

A steady progression of both KIBS literature and Digital marketing literature however can be observed, owing to the rapid growth of technology within the last decade. The B2B sector has seen a significant growth in academic attention within this period, which depicts the criticality of the sector to the global economy, however, it can also be observed that sectoral exploration into various B2B sub segments have been scarce.

The B2B sphere has multiple industry clusters of which KIBS remain a significant sector globally. As depicted in the historical evolution of academic work, it is imperative to delve into the various sectors within the B2B sphere to identify working digital marketing approaches in various sub segments. While the above historical progression depicts a growth in literature of the two key areas within this research topic separately, KIBS and digital content marketing approaches have not been merged in academic research. The closest linkage to the research topic lies in the work of Batum and Ersoy (2016) and their study of B2B content strategy in Turkish SMEs and the replication of B2C strategies in B2B settings, which yet generalises the B2B sector. The authors based on empirical research conclude that, while in certain circumstances replication of B2C strategies in B2B settings may yield results, it may be required to have unique and exclusive customised strategies for B2B companies in general (Batum and Ersoy, 2016).

2.2 Thematic analysis of views of pioneering authors

Based on the above historical evolution of literature, the following thematic analysis was developed in order to address the second goal of the literature review. The table outlines in a thematic form, the views of pioneering authors which attempt to address the overall research questions of the study pertaining to the factors facilitating digital content engagement and factors causing diffusion in the KIBS context specifically.

Table 2 : Authors and theoretical contributions derived from past literature in constructing the Integrated Framework

Theme / Cluster	Authors	Excerpts from literature
Internal antecedents and digital self	Meng et al (2018), Khan and Vong (2014), Belk (2014)	Theoretical contributions on internal antecedents predominantly driving content consumption and engagement. The perspectives on diffusion size and structural virality and identification of human behaviour objectives when engaging in the digital space
External Antecedents and message and source related factors and demotivators for general content engagement	Berger and Milkman (2012, 2013), Ho and Dempsey (2008), Yuki (2015)	Theoretical contributions on message related engagement drivers such as physiological arousal, content format, framing and appeal / tone, the level of valence generated and critical contributing factors such as source credibility.
Personal versus B2B / Professional digital content engagement	Keinänen and Kuivalainen (2015), Noguti (2016)	Formulation of theoretical foundation which illustrates that B2B social / digital behaviour is predominantly governed by the same motivators / drivers of personal digital content consumption and engagement illustrated by previous authors such as Berger and Milkman (2012, 2013)
Identification of intervening factors	Khan and Vong, 2014), Alhabash et al, (2014), Scholz et al, (2017), Hayes and King, (2019), Kim, (2018) Liu et al, (2017), Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, (2015), Katona and Sarvary, (2014)	The key intervention factors identified include network dynamics and Activity surrounding content , level of cognitive elaboration required , associated referral risk , bandwagon heuristics and SNS platform specific behavioural factors (Keinänen and Kuivalainen, 2015, Mazza and Palermo, 2018,).

Based on the above, the following drivers of digital content consumption were identified in a generic and B2B KIBS specific context

2.2.1 Internal antecedents as facilitators of digital content consumption

Past research essentially identifies personality traits, types of consumers, physiological arousal, social and cultural capital, social currency and emotional valence as key internal antecedents for digital content consumption (Berger and Milkman, 2012, 2013; Yuki, 2015, Ho and Dempsey, 2008). The factors which construct internal antecedents have a two-fold impact on the current research topic, in the form of motivating content consumption while also playing a pivotal role in initiating digital content engagement. While the factors drive content consumption, it can also be observed within past literature, that the factors also drive online audiences to engage and play an active role in content diffusion as a result of the same (Dessart, 2017).

Meng, Cheng, Bae, Peng, Tan and Liu, (2018) in their study of diffusion size and structural virality delve into personality traits which drive content consumption and engagement. The authors identify four key traits which drive human behaviour in this regard in the forms of (1) requiring to identify with a desired group (2) the need to be individualistic, (3) the need to be altruistic, and (4) the need for personal growth". It is identified by Meng et al (2018) that these driving factors lead online audiences to consume content, while also motivating them to engage with content as a progressive action leading to desired objectives.

However Mazza and Palermo (2018), present more accurate classifications of online users based on behaviour and objectives, which is more practically applicable in a strategic marketing perspective in the case of the current research topic. The authors state that in terms of behaviour, networkers, watchers and listeners, act as the passive participants who opt to be present in the community but not play an active role while expressers frequently prefer participation in the forms of storytelling, opinion sharing, interacting and sharing ideas. However, the authors stress the importance of retaining the key category who are the engagers in the case of brand development in digital spaces, who are proactively involved and participate in brand conversations by creating content or conversation, critiquing and being primarily the digital advocacy base. In the case of KIBS entities, although this may be a small fraction and low in numbers, it is essential to retain this group who are purely beyond the sole objectives of attention seeking or entertainment seeking (Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, 2015). While they may be devoted to brands, they may also critique it when required and seek internal

connections which will centralise KIBS brands within their respective niche communities (Mazza and Palermo, 2018; Kamboj, and Sarmah, 2018).

Berger and Milkman (2012, 2013), can be observed as the most prominent pioneering authors in relation to internal antecedents of digital content consumption and engagement. The authors signify through their research, the criticality of physiological arousal, social and cultural capital and social currency and emotional valence as key drivers of virality and content engagement. It is concluded by the authors that high arousal content attracts attention to both consumption and engagement, and emotional intensity in terms of positive emotions are more likely to be shared. However, it has also been observed during research that low arousal emotions such as sadness evoking content is less likely to be engaged with.

The requirement as human beings to develop and benefit from one another by cultivating reciprocally beneficial relationships can further be recognised as a driving force in content consumption and engagement. Technically termed as social and cultural capital development (Khan and Vong, 2014), it is also indicated that these factors act as driving forces in audiences consuming and engaging with content (Syrdal and briggs, 2018; Gandini, 2016).

Belk (2014), offers valuable theoretical insights into the “digital self” in the case of internal antecedents to digital content consumption and engagement. The theory primarily explores the disembodied personal self in the online sphere which allows an individual to project his/her desired self sans the constraints of the physical body in a virtual ecosystem. Based on this theoretical premise, the factor of social currency today plays a pivotal role as an antecedent to digital content consumption and engagement. Social currency primarily refers to resources both actual and potential which are acquired by an individual through online behaviour, which carries the potential to enhance the said digital self (Nikolinakou & Whitehill King, 2018; Yuki, 2015).

Emotional valence is a further complimenting factor within the cluster of internal antecedents generating online content consumption. Theoretical contributions on viral content diffusion explore the effects of emotional valence in-depth, specifically in the case of video content format where variations in emotional arousal throughout the duration of the video increases consumption potential (Shehu, Bijmolt and Clement, 2016; Berger and Milkman, 2012).

Past literature identifies the aforementioned antecedents as a general premise for digital content consumption and engagement and it can be observed that contextually relevant literature has been scarcely produced. However, as elaborated by Batum and Ersoy (2016), it is evident that strategizing digital content when appealing to varied audiences will require a customised bespoke approach (Keinänen and Kuivalainen, 2015).

2.2.2 External antecedents as facilitators of digital content consumption

External antecedents primarily drive content consumption as per the findings of many prominent authors (Berger and Milkman, 2012, 2013; Yuki, 2015, Ho and Dempsey, 2008; Koiso-Kanttila, 2004). These factors include Source credibility and trust (Subramani and Rajagopalan, 2003; Hajli, 2013; King, Racherla and Bush, 2014), Message framing, Message content and Message format in a given piece of digital content which is published and shared. In comparison to internal antecedents which have been identified as personality related consumption and engagement stimuli, external factors refer to content related specific elements which act as stimuli, which are beyond the control of the content consumer (Kim, 2015; Berger and Milkman, 2012, 2013).

In the online sphere, the element of trust is fundamentally dependent on an individual's network and the level of perceived closeness to various members within the network. Source credibility is a key driver of content consumption and also can be observed as the sole external antecedent which may determine digital content engagement, however further research is required to establish the causal relationship in this regard. Source credibility is positively correlated with the perceived closeness of the sender to the receiver. Content is deemed credible when received from a close member of the individuals network, thereby increasing consumption and engagement potential (Hajli, 2013; King, Racherla and Bush, 2014; Hamid, Lau, Cheung, 2019).

While source credibility remains the key external antecedent to digital content consumption, previous theoretical and empirical investigations also recognise specific message / content related physical factors which play a pivotal role in generating digital content consumption. Essentially, the factors which drive consumption include factors such as message framing, message content and message format.

Although literature is scarce in the topic of content origin, it can be observed that in terms of external influences/ antecedents, a further perspective may lie in where the content originates from. For instance, user generated content (UGC) such as reviews and recommendations are widely referred to as opposed to firm generated (FGC) testimonies to satisfactory service delivery. While the causal links remain under researched in this regard, it can be observed that content origin and source credibility is a lucrative future research direction which could bring in new insights into the current research topic (Susarla, Oh and Tan, 2016; Poulis, Rizomyliotis and Konstantoulaki, 2018).

Message framing refers to the negative or positive framing of content and the nature of appeal. Positively framed content as per Berger and Milkman (2012) may carry higher potential to consume although in specific circumstances, negatively framed content may also affect online consumer behaviour such as in the case of the charity sector.

Message content is a critical component within the sphere of external antecedents. Berger and Milkman (2012, 2013) further emphasize the ability of utilitarian content to be more widely consumed and shared as a result of online consumers aiming to project self efficacy. It is also vital that the content is of significant quality and authenticity. Content which compromises on quality may be viewed as harmful to the desired digital image if interacted with, therefore, it has been concluded that content quality plays a pivotal role in engagement and specifically diffusion.

Aided by the introduction of various digital channels spanning beyond wireless messaging (Barnes, 2002) and into Social Networking Sites (SNS), digital content today has evolved into multiple formats. With increasing clutter and decreasing attention spans, content has evolved from text to imagery and video. Visual content is deemed more consumption savvy which has driven leading microblogging sites such as Twitter to enable media sharing alongside its 140 character text submissions (Khan and Vong, 2014; Nikolinakou & Whitehill King, 2018; Repovienė, 2017).

In addition to content formats, fragmented evidence in past literature also direct focus to the impact of linguistics and text variations as complimenting external antecedents (Noguti, 2015). Evidence persists on the impact of various factors such as alliteration and repetition of terms

and words which may influence content consumption, however these factors may not be determinants of consumption, but rather augmenting elements.

External antecedents to content consumption and engagement are vividly interdependent and drives content consumption and engagement when the majority of discussed factors combine. Past literature identifies that when digital content is high in source credibility and appealing in terms of message related factors, it carries significant consumption and diffusion potential especially within the ecosystem of Social Networking Sites (SNS) (Berger and Milkman, 2012, 2013; Yuki, 2015). However, once again, as in the case of internal antecedents, it can be observed that contextual research on the impact of this phenomenon in B2B and B2C settings have scarce empirical exploration and therefore is required to be addressed as a key gap in relevant streams of literature.

2.2.3 KIBS specific diffusion facilitators

Content consumption is a primary focus of all entities in both the B2B and B2C sphere, however, in order to gain access to a multiplied online network, the ultimate objective is to create digital content engagement. In the case of the current research topic on the ideal digital content steering strategy for KIBS entities, the key objective is unravelling a working approach to what content will be subject to engagement. Content can be two-fold, which includes purposeful content or random entertainment based content and in the case of the current topic, the internal and external antecedents and intervening factors discussed project a general perspective that both these types of content can evoke engagement.

Noguti (2016), defines engagement more relevant to the B2B sector in the context of Consumer Communities (CCs) as behavioural responses to posts in CCs motivated by the factors stated by Berger and Milkman (2012) in the forms of purpose of content (Hedonic or utilitarian value), level of emotional evocation and valence caused, level of activity surrounding the piece of content and the views of Belk (2014) on the level to which the content compliments the desired digital self image.

While content consumption is driven by a plethora of factors discussed in (a) above, content engagement can be observed as an advanced progression which requires higher stimulation for

online audiences. Essentially past literature signifies the below factors as direct influencers to general content engagement:

2.2.3.1 User centrality

The tone of content plays a pivotal role in attracting views and creating content related engagement. In the case of user centrality, past research illustrates the comparative effects of user-centric content and organisation-centric content (Yardley et al, 2016; Munjal, Mishra & Shanker, 2019). User-centric content primarily refers to content which is purposeful for the online community and is user oriented, whereas organisation-centric content comprises information which promotes or centres itself on the organisation and offers significantly less value to the online consumer. Past research directs attention to the strength of user-centric content as tools to attract online audiences into engaging with content published by a firm especially in the work of Batum and Ersoy (2015) who argues the criticality of B2B entities analysing target audiences and choosing the right content strategies and MARCOM tools accordingly with a content marketing strategy specific to different channels. In relation to antecedents of consumption and engagement, a causal link can be observed in this case where the objectives of engagement for an online user predominantly revolves around enhancing their digital image and leveraging their social currency. However, this hypothesis requires further academic attention to establish its basis.

2.2.3.2 Types of content

Types of content primarily refer to the two key categories of digital content which include FGC and UGC. FGC refers to Firm Generated Content which comprise of content developed and digitally disseminated by the firm, whereas UGC refers to User Generated Content, or content created by users within the consumer community and also those which may be external to the interests of the company (Susarla, Oh and Tan, 2016). Within these two classifications, it can further be observed that content can be produced in the forms of (1) Informative content (2) Utilitarian Content (3) Socializing Content (4) Collaborative content and (5) Entertaining Content. Past research elaborates the potential of entertaining and socialising content to be

more prone to diffusion, however, in the perspective of a B2B audience member, behavioural dynamics may differ from the regular B2C audiences.

Within the sphere of organisation disseminated content, Ordenes et al (2018) identify a few key tones that are further identified in past research as complementing classification of types of content. These include:

1. Assertive content (True or false statements with minimal emotional valence E.g: We launched our new product)
2. Expressive content (Appreciating, offering opinion or evoking desires for a product)
3. Directive content (call to action type acts)
4. Commissive acts (Promise to deliver something)
5. Declaratory acts (unilateral decision with direct consequences)

These categories are commonly utilised by entities across both B2B and B2C spheres today as tactical approaches to digital content development. However, in the case of B2B audiences, replication of these tactical strategies and their effectiveness remain unexplored.

2.2.3.3 Positive content characteristics

Reiterating the perspectives of Berger and Milkman (2012), and adding new elements into the mix, the key positive content characteristics which attract engagement as per the analysis of past literature include high levels of quality within content, innovativeness, authenticity and personal touch along with novelty, sense of involvement evoked by the content and last but not least, dialogic versus monologic nature of content.

Inherently qualitative content is observed as attracting higher engagement levels alongside the level of innovation and novelty produced in digital content. The factor of user-centricity (Yardley et al, 2016) once again comes into play in this case, where past academic researchers have concluded that increased sense of involvement of the user in disseminated digital content may invoke higher engagement levels. It is ideally expected to create a dialogic ecosystem instead of a monologic approach which will enable the user to get involved and become an essential element within the consumer community (Achen, 2017).

2.2.3.4 Approach to content presentation and structuring

Although intended content may be of use and substance, engagement and consumption of digital content in general is significantly impacted by the approach taken to present and structure content. Ideally due to excessive content clutter today, it is imperative to differentiate the structure and presentation of content and also its accompanying text. Past research by Ordenes et al (2018) stresses the potential of visual elements and rhetorical styles to attract higher levels of engagement and consumption of online content. Content format and framing as elaborated in external antecedents play a pivotal role in this regard. Today content has evolved to include multiple media formats, of which imagery and videos attract the majority of attention (Valentini, Romenti, Murtarelli and Pizzetti, 2018). However, contextual relevance is of critical importance in this case as well. Although common attraction strategies may prove effective in B2C settings, the same may not be applicable for more objective oriented niche B2B audiences. However, in general, more visual content is deemed to have higher interaction and engagement levels.

2.2.3.5 Brand conversation facilitation and timely expert interventions

In line with the desired digital self and virtual image, online consumers today opt to identify with complementing brands and communities. In the case of engagement, past literature identifies the likelihood of these online audience members to become active members of desired brand communities, thereby actively participating in brand related conversations and experiences (Rosenthal and Brito, 2017; Yardley et al, 2016). It is also indicated by the authors that when required these communities remain active and engaged when timely expert interventions are facilitated by entities to answer or discuss brand related queries and share opinions. Overall, it is believed that higher brand conversation facilitation through related digital content therefore is likely to draw in significant engagement levels in KIBS.

2.2.3.6 Negative experiences with a brand

Although far from the ideal consumer testimony in the digital space, the literature analysis reveals that a negative experience with a brand is likely to create higher engagement levels online. However, it is critical to have digital mediation strategies and digital crisis management strategies in place in order to sustain increased engagement and drive positive outcomes from such scenarios (Dineva, Breitsohl and Garrod, 2017; AISheikh, Shaalan and Meziane, 2017). As commonly said within the sphere of marketing, negative WOM is likely to go significantly viral as opposed to positive WOM, which may correlate to intensified emotional evocation in comparison to positive content. Although the B2C dimension may face mass engagement with such scenarios, the comparative damage to the brands may differ vastly in the case of B2B scenarios. Essentially being more personal, niche and smaller close-knit communities, an interesting future research direction will be to explore the comparative effects of such episodes and its impact on performance and new business development in a KIBS / B2B setting.

2.2.3.7 Accessibility and social interaction

A key element which attracts engagement further is deemed to be accessibility and social interaction (Hajli, 2013). Accessibility to consumer communities, service / product offerings and overall bridging of distance between the consumer and the brand through digital content has been indicated in previous research as a potentially high engagement generator alongside the increased ability of socialising by engaging with specific digital content. As part of achieving the desired digital self image (Belk, 2014), interacting with desired online personas through content which facilitates socialisation is viewed by past academics as a lucrative engagement creation platform.

2.2.3.8 Value-in-use and co-creation facilitation

In line with User centricity, past literature also suggests that higher engagement levels may be driven by digital content which offer value-in-use and also facilitates the value co-creation process. Although literature is scarce in this regard and fragmented, these characteristics within digital content may carry significant potential especially in the B2B context. Rosenthal, Pereira

and Brito (2017) conclude that in the retail context, brand meaning on brand pages can be orchestrated by brand managers, but content curation should be a dyadic function based on both keeping content close to desired brand goals and also be based on the functional use of content for the users and their views. However, the strength of the brand plays a pivotal role in this mix and brand can only be a centre of content if there is a strong brand presence. The authors believe that unless a brand has a strong identity, that the strategy to content must involve topics which can otherwise engage the online audience beyond the brand. In the current scenario, it can be observed that most strong brands as in the retail sector lies with the larger global KIBS entities therefore, for the SME category in KIBS, it may be advisable to have a contextual relevance and open discussion approach to commonly faced sectoral challenges in order to appeal to the niche KIBS digital audiences. However this factor requires future research. A study by Dessart (2017) in addition to the above in support of the same premise illustrates how early digital brand community building must not involve brand content, but topical content to create initial engagement which can then progress to brand centric content gradually. This is essentially KIBS specific and is a speculative observation by the author given the criticality of demonstrating value-in-use and co-creation facilitation within the KIBS sphere. This remains an essential future research direction and a key gap in amalgamating KIBS and Digital content marketing literature.

2.2.3.9 Free or Complimentary service offerings based content

Essentially proven in the B2C and retail contexts, a key engagement generator is content which carries information or directives on gaining complementary service offerings. Simple offers such as buy one - get one free deals, evoke higher utilitarian benefits thereby ushering in increased engagement and sharing across SNS. However, in the case of B2B settings, it can be observed that more tangible services may be influenced by this strategy than the intangible or intellectual services (Berger and Milkman, 2013).

The above factors as per past literature are considered key drivers of online content engagement in general. However, an evident gap remains in terms of addressing KIBS specific engagement factors as a crucial sub-segment of the B2B sector. Taking into consideration the nature of KIBS entities therefore, User centricity, Types of content, Positive content characteristics, Presentation, Content Structuring, Brand conversation facilitation and expert

interventions, Negative consumption episodes, Value-in-use and co-creation facilitation have been recognised by the author of this thesis as probable KIBS specific digital content engagement factors as per the above analysis.

In addition to the above contextual credibility can be deemed as a critical factor which could determine the engagement levels of the B2B KIBS digital audience despite the scarcity of literature in this regard. In essence the KIBS sector is one which requires professional expertise and credibility as per observations made in practical application. In the case of digital content associated with these entities therefore, it is imperative for the audience to view them as credible sources of information which could offer valuable information in a given context such as having proven expertise in the field of technology or finance for instance (Liang et al, 2019). In comparison to common entertainment content, in the case of objective digital content it can be observed that contextual credibility will be a decisive factor in creating online engagement.

However, the above remain as speculative observations as practically experienced by the author, and require academic empirical investigation in order to determine validity.

2.2.4 Potential Intervention factors and demotivators of content engagement and diffusion

In addition to the antecedents of content consumption and engagement, past literature also brings forward multiple factors which may intervene in determining the levels of consumption and engagement which takes place. However, these factors are primarily related to digital content virality and require further contextual exploration to determine effects in the context of KIBS entities.

The key intervention factors identified include network dynamics and Activity surrounding content (Khan and Vong, 2014), level of cognitive elaboration required (Alhabash et al, 2014; Scholz et al, 2017), associated referral risk (Hayes and King, 2019), bandwagon heuristics (Kim, 2018; Liu et al, 2017) and SNS platform specific behavioural factors (Keinänen and Kuivalainen, 2015, Mazza and Palermo, 2018, Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, 2015, Katona and Sarvary, 2014). In the context of general content consumption, past literature

identifies these factors as probable determinants of the strength / level of consumption and diffusion of content.

Network dynamics in terms of general content primarily refers to inter-network ties and the level of network overlap among members of the online audience. It can be observed through the past body of literature especially in the work of Khan and Vong (2014) that higher network overlap between senders and receivers may invoke more intense consumption patterns and may also affect / cause higher engagement levels. This phenomenon is closely related to that of Bandwagon heuristics, which essentially describes the tendency to adhere to trend and consume and engage in content which is more popularly accepted. Bandwagon Heuristics refer to online consumer behaviour which drives a user to follow the majority in consuming content and the level of network overlap can also potentially impact this phenomenon and the level of consumption and engagement (Kim, 2018; Liu et al, 2017; Cummins, Peltier, Schibrowsky and Nill, 2014).

Alhabash et al (2014) state that the level of cognitive elaboration required when consuming content may further determine engagement levels. In the event a piece of content requires higher cognitive elaboration and critical thinking or problem solving effort, it may influence the level of consumption and engagement (Scholz et al, 2017). Especially given the current content clutter in the online sphere, higher requirements in terms of cognitive elaboration may have significant impact. In the case of KIBS entities and their associated digital content however, the case may differ. With the audience essentially being focused on problem solving in their own business cases and seeking working advice from KIBS professionals, this may have the opposite effect of a typical scenario which may occur in a retail or B2C setting.

Referral risk is an online consumer behaviour trait which can be deemed as closely related with the theory of Belk (2014), on the secondary desired virtual self. Although the factor is commonly associated with engagement more than consumption, referral risk primarily refers to the level of perceived risk by a member of the online audience in engaging with a specific piece of content, in the perspective of its negative impact on the projected secondary virtual self-image (Hayes and King, 2019). If desired objectives of an individual's online image is at risk by associating oneself with a specific content element, it can be observed in past research that avoidance from association may take place, despite consuming content.

SNS today are the primary catalysts of online content, and the C2C channel is gaining rapid leverage across both B2B and B2C sectors. Within SNS it can be observed that consumption and engagement dynamics can vary vastly and these channel based differences may also intervene in terms of behavioural patterns of online content consumers and their engagement levels. Primarily the consumption and engagement dynamics of Facebook will be vastly different to that of Instagram and YouTube as leading SNS across the world. While reactions and comments influence enhanced consumption and engagement on Facebook, the number of followers of a specific Instagram account may determine further consumption levels of the page. Hypothetically, taking into consideration available theoretical and empirical research, these observations can be made in general terms, however, contextual exploration is once again required to determine the actual impact of the said phenomena (Keinänen and Kuivalainen, 2015, Mazza and Palermo, 2018, Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy and Sashittal, 2015, Katona and Sarvary, 2014; Feng, Guo & Chiang, 2009; Moran & Muzellec, 2017; Nicholls, 2010).

Closely linked to this factor is that of activity surrounding a specific piece of content (Khan and Vong, 2014) within these SNS. For instance, in the case of YouTube videos, content with higher view counts and higher activity surrounding them inherently attracts more online and offline word-of-mouth and therefore tends to garner higher consumption levels. Although causal links between the phenomena are yet to be comprehensively explored and is a further potential future research direction, a vivid correlation can be observed among them. The analysis of past literature in terms of potential intervening factors to digital content consumption and engagement reveals that the topic is significantly fragmented across multiple sub divisions in marketing including theoretical explorations in content diffusion, virality and consumer behaviour. Furthermore the topic is scattered more deeply within virality where it is then explored in other cross disciplines within the social psychology sphere. Although the above is a generalised perspective in relation to the current topic, it is evident that in-depth exploration of these factors and their dynamics and their influence on the strength of consumption and engagement is required in a more KIBS specific context.

Given the relatively smaller mass of the online audience in the case of B2B KIBS entities, these factors could potentially hold a higher or lower influence on consumption and engagement. In

order to derive a more accurate strategic approach to online content development in the KIBS sphere, these factors require further academic attention.

2.3 Summary of Literature Review

The above literature review as the initial step of the study, revealed a historical evolution of KIBS and digital marketing literature illustrating the gap on the synthesis of the two streams in academia. However, utilising the available B2B theoretical and empirical findings of a cluster of pioneering authors, answers for the research questions in the forms of internal and external antecedents and drivers of content engagement were extracted for empirical investigation. Furthermore, potential intervention factors and demotivators were also extracted for future research areas.

Amidst the identified factors, for the empirical investigation which follows below undertaken to address the research questions at hand, the key external antecedents and message related determinants of engagement were extracted pertaining to content formats, framing approaches and content origin. A conceptualisation of the overall phenomenon was also given a foundation through this Chapter. The below method section outlines the process and methodological description of the empirical research segment of the study followed by its findings and the discussion addressing the research questions.

3.0 Method

3.1 Study design and overview

In order to conduct the empirical study to explore the above factors identified in the literature review in relation to the ideal content steering strategy for the KIBS sector, a two-pronged research was undertaken with a sample of New Zealand based Small to medium scale KIBS entities. The study involved the collection of back-end internal analytics data gathered in response to 2 content posts placed on the KIBS organisations social media platforms of the volunteering participants. Therefore, approval was obtained after a thorough screening of the research approach and methods and overall study from the ethics committee of the Auckland University of Technology.

Anonymity of participants and confidentiality of information was given highest priority as the information was of a competitive advantage nature for each of the participants and it was ensured that no two participants from the same KIBS sub-sector were recruited for further conflict management.

Phase I of the study consisted of a comprehensive content analysis conducted on the SNS of the volunteering participants (Doran et al, 2015 and Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), while Phase II consisted of an online field experiment (Li et al, 2018) which set out to analyse the comparative performance of two posts in the nature of user oriented (Helping) versus organisation oriented (Selling / promotional) content. The guideline to analysing content was aligned with the above extraction derived from the literature review.

3.2 Research purpose

The research purpose therefore is to offer guidance to B2B KIBS digital marketers through this theoretical and empirical study on steering their content strategy for optimal user engagement.

By exploring comparative performance of assertive and utilitarian content, the research aims to unleash the more engaging formats and framing approaches for KIBS audiences.

The study shows in-depth insights into the digital performance of SNS of the participants and progress beyond general metrics which can be gained through external views. For instance, the study explored the performance of various content formats, follower trends and impressions as opposed to generic examination of random engagement rates and reactions which can be gained by viewing the social media pages as a visitor.

This focused and in-depth approach is vital, as it delves into multiple metrics within the aforementioned larger performance categories of content, followers and impressions on social and digital channels. As an external observer limited exposure is available where comparative performances among types of content, time periods in which content or follower activity trends have differed. In order to perform the research study in question and to derive maximum accuracy, it was essential to have an in-depth view into comparative digital channel performance.

3.3 Research approach

Phase I consisted of a content analysis of previous digital content approaches utilised by the participants and corresponding audience engagement (Doran et al, 2015 and Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Sigerson & Cheng, 2018). Phase II of the study consisted of a field experiment (Li et al, 2018) conducted on a social media channel of a volunteering participant. This set out to explore comparative reactions to two types of content in the lines of company-oriented content and user-oriented content. This method was used to provide another source of data to complement or the content analysis (Guba and Lincoln, 1982).

Both phases required access to the back-end analytics data of the participant company's digital channels in order to gain the data needed for both phases. An application was submitted to the AUT Ethics Committee and the process for obtaining approvals was duly followed. Recruitment of participants was initiated after obtaining the said ethics approval from the University Ethics Committee.

Participants were offered a reciprocal benefit in the form of a free consultation on their digital marketing and content marketing strategy by the primary researcher and providing them with a report on the findings and recommendations for optimising their social media / digital channel presence. This audit and recommendations report was also followed up with a free one-on-one consultation session to clarify and explain the reports to the participant company. This offer was extended as the primary researcher is a Digital Marketing Consultant by profession with over 10 years of experience in the field in providing digital marketing services to KIBS entities. The aim was to offer a value-based return on participation for the volunteers by saving them costs in engaging a Digital Marketing Consultant for an audit and strategic consultancy engagement.

3.4 Research objective and research questions

Primarily, the objective of the research was to explore the ideal content steering strategy and types of content which generated high engagement levels from appropriate audiences in the KIBS sector. Aligned with this objective, the two research questions pertaining to (1) What factors facilitate digital content engagement? And (2) What factors facilitate digital content diffusion in the KIBS sector? specifically were developed for empirical investigation.

3.5 Sampling and recruitment

3.5.1 Sampling Strategy

Primarily, the population targeted for recruitment from the KIBS sector included companies from popular KIBS sub-segments within New Zealand. The overall scale of the KIBS sector within the country amounts to over 100,000 small, medium and large scale entities. In terms of the sample group within this sphere, primarily, small and medium scale KIBS entities were targeted to derive a sample group of five companies for this study. The primary prerequisite for participation was that the volunteering companies needed to be active on a minimum of 2 digital marketing channels over the past 6 month duration and have adequate content and a considerable follower base which could be utilised to derive data (Guba and Lincoln, 1982).

Primarily, Targeted sampling was utilised to avoid any conflict of interest by recruiting only one participant from one sub-segment which could include Consultancy Services, IT services, HR Services, Mortgage Brokering, Insurance services providers and the like (Trotter, 2012). Essentially purposeful sampling as opposed to a randomized approach was deemed more resourceful in the given KIBS environment which would better aid the primary researcher to comprehend the ecosystem of each participant and their corresponding performance (Forman, Creswell, Damschroder, Kowalski, & Krein, 2008). While predominantly B2B service providers were the focal point, it was taken into consideration that some of these entities may cater to a combination of both B2B and B2C client segments, therefore these unique instances were also accommodated subject to them operating in different service areas.

Given the diversified nature of each participant within the same sector, unlike in many other commercial scenarios, quality of information was given precedence over quantity of participants (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). Therefore when selecting the sample size, a maximum of 5 participant companies were targeted to be recruited. This smaller sample group was also selected given the complex and interrogative nature of the study, as confidential information was required to be accessed. The profile of the participant was defined essentially by the nature of their services (KIBS Centric), The size of the organisation (small to medium tier) and the nature of clients to whom the services were provided in terms of classifying clients 'businesses only' or 'businesses and end-consumers both (B2B and B2C)'.

3.5.2 Recruitment of participants

Recruitment of participants was a well defined four step process with appropriate confidentiality measures in place. Overall six companies were approached to explore interest in participating in the study. While four of these companies were based on contacts of the primary researcher, two of the companies were recommendations made by two of the initial four companies. A noteworthy finding in this case therefore was the effectiveness of referrals in recruiting participants for academic study in the B2B KIBS sphere. Overall the potential participants approached included small to medium tier companies in the following KIBS sub-segments based in Auckland:

1. An Insurance Company

2. An IT service provider
3. A Fundraising consultancy company
4. An Impact Investment facilitation company
5. A Mortgage Brokering company
6. A Financial Services provider

Initially the above list was developed and contacts were gathered in each case to commence the recruitment process. Once the contact list was developed the primary researcher followed the below steps to recruit interested participants from the list in compliance with the ethical guidelines set out:

Step 01 - Requesting permission to access the company and its representatives

As the first step, a formal request via telephone or email requesting the owner / director of the potential participant company for permission to access a representative such as the Marketing Manager to request for their participation was carried out for each of the contacts in the list.

The owner / director was sent an information pack containing (1) The participant information sheet (2) The permission to access form and (3) The consent form and was given a brief with regard to the basics of the study to seek permission and explain the reciprocal value-based offer. It was communicated that the selected company representative will not be under any duress to participate, and will solely join voluntarily. The level of confidential information required was well communicated and clarified at the onset in order to avoid any potential issues. This was the initial step where the company was approached to explore if they would like to volunteer to participate in the study.

Step 02- Setting up face-to-face meeting

The second step was upon acceptance of the invitation to participate, the primary researcher arranged a face-to-face meeting with the participant company's representative to establish a schedule of meetings, and to determine the way forward in data gathering. In the case of refusals, an email thanking the party was dispatched.

Step 03 - Signing of NDA - Non-Disclosure Agreement with the firms / participants

The third step executed on the volunteers was inquiring on the signing of an NDA (non-disclosure agreement) prior to the primary researcher accessing their data, this offer was then put forward by the researcher. The purpose of this step was to ensure that any potential conflict of interest which may arise will be mitigated through a legalised non-disclosure process, so as to provide confidence to proceed to the participants. The step was used as a secondary and supporting conflict management measure in addition to ensuring that two entities from the same KIBS sub-sector were not to be recruited.

Step 04 - Requesting access to their digital channels

In terms of accessing the required data for analysis, the primary researcher then requested the company representatives for log-in credentials of the said channels which they preferred to expose. The companies were informed well prior to agreeing to participate about the access required to the back-ends of their digital channels. This was outlined in the participant information sheets and consent forms accordingly. The back-end analytics portals in this case refer to the performance insights provided by social media platforms such as Facebook insights, LinkedIn Analytics and tools such as Google Analytics (Brooker, Barnett, & Cribbin, 2016; Schivinski, Christodoulides, & Dabrowski, 2016). These tools developed and presented by social media site developers and search engine companies such as Google offer comprehensive insights on the performance of digital content over a defined period. These include the levels of engagement in terms of reactions, shares and comments on social media posts, performance related to growth or decline of followers, the number of visitors to a webpage and many more such benchmark data. Business entities use these tools in order to assess digital return-on-investment in terms of marketing objective achievement.

3.6 Final participant group of the research study

In total six potential participants were approached to explore their interest in participating, out of which it was revealed that only three entities volunteered to participate given the nature of the

study where the primary researcher requires internal analytics access. Declines were received from the Insurance services provider and the IT services provider and the financial services provider as they were unwilling to participate as they had to reveal internal data to the researcher.

Also it was observed during this phase that referrals were the most effective canvassing method amongst entities of this nature. Recruitment of the three participating companies were the result of personal referrals amongst each other (Adjei, Noble & Noble, 2013; Barreto, 2014; Tien, Rivas & Liao, 2019; Pihlaja, Saarijärvi, Spence & Yrjölä, 2017; Lopez-Lopez, Ruiz-de-Maya & Warlop, 2014).

The reason for the decline was also enquired during this time to explore the nature of recruitment barriers for academic study in the case of the B2B KIBS sector. The below table outlines the details on the alias assigned to each participant, the sub-segment in the KIBS sector in which they operate, their decision on participating or declining to participate in the study and the reasons for their decisions respectively.

Table 3 : Summary of approached participant group responses

Participant Alias	Operating KIBS Sub-segment	Participation	Reasons for volunteering to participate in the study
RS_01	Social Purpose Consultancy Sector	Accepted	Found great value in the reciprocal offer and was willing to share confidential information as the primary researcher was personally acquainted.
RS_02	Impact Investment Consultancy Sector	Accepted	Found great value in the reciprocal offer and was willing to share confidential information as the primary researcher was personally acquainted.
RS_03	Mortgage Brokering	Accepted	Found great value in the reciprocal offer and was willing to share confidential information as the primary researcher was referred by a mutually trusted party.
RS_04	Insurance Services	Declined	Declined to participate as they were not comfortable with sharing internal access to their digital channels
RS_05	Information	Declined	Declined to participate as they were

	Technology Services		not comfortable with sharing internal access to their digital channels
RS_06	Financial Services Sector	Declined	Declined to participate as the Chief Executive was not available for a prolonged period during which the research took place. The company did not want to expose internal data without the knowledge of senior personnel.

The key cause for decline was the reluctance to expose information pertaining to competitive social media performance metrics to unknown parties. RS_03 agreed to come onboard as a result of a personal recommendation / invitation from the management of RS_01 therefore the entity volunteered to participate. In the case of RS_06, they were recommended by RS_03 to the primary researcher to inquire on whether they will be interested to come onboard. Insights were therefore obtained for the content analysis from the Fundraising Consultancy, Impact Investment Facilitator and the Mortgage Brokering company. The details of the final three participants with regard to their digital presence, content posting frequency, active channels and overall strategic focus was as below. The table outlines details which illustrate how these participants met the qualifying criteria for the study.

Table 4 : Digital presence and strategic focus of final sample group

Participant Alias	KIBS Segment	Description	Digital presence	Average Posting frequency	Active Channels	Strategic focus
RS_01	Social purpose consultancy sector	RS_01 operates as a fundraising consultant for the social purpose sector in New Zealand for the last 4 year period. The company is headquartered in Auckland with offshore consultants in the United Kingdom and also has recently entered into the Australian Market.	12 months - 21/11/2018 to date	2-3 content elements per month 5+ on months in which events are attended / participated in	Website, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google Blog	Organic Audience Development and engagement for brand building, inquiry generation, thought leadership projection and customer relationship management

RS_02	Impact Investment sector	RS_01 separated its Impact investment work and launched a sub brand recently in the form of RS_02, analysis was also conducted for its brief period. This arm focuses on primarily facilitating impact investments by developing operational models involving a blended return for both investors in the form of ROI and social purpose organisations.	8 months - 11/04/2019 to date	1-3 Content elements per month	Website, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google Blog	Organic Audience Development and engagement for brand building, inquiry generation, thought leadership projection and customer relationship management
RS_03	Mortgage Brokering	RS_03 is a small scale mortgage brokering business based in Auckland. The two founders have over 35 years of experience in the field and the company offers consultation services on securing finances and sourcing competitive mortgage rates across a plethora of clients. The company also puts clients in touch with needed parties when getting a mortgage including valuers, lawyers and property inspectors.	5+ years	2-5 posts per month	Facebook Linked In Google adwords	Business development through active lead generation and branding purposes. The business also aims to increase its overall digital reach through these channels

All volunteering participants were active on digital media for over a period of 6 months, in relation to key criteria and were also present on a minimum of two leading SNS. It was observed that Facebook and LinkedIn were the most commonly utilised platforms in this regard amid the sample group. Each of the companies had an average posting frequency of 3 posts per month.

Within the content it was observed that both paid and organic content was present. While RS_01 and RS_02 did not show any paid distribution of content, RS_03 did depict traces of paid promotions of digital content on their page on Facebook. Organic content is identified as those posts which have not been paid to be distributed in the form of Facebook ads or post boosting. Organic content is simply firm generated content which appears in the company page and is

unpaid and un-advertised and viewed online by audiences. Paid content is primarily where the company pays for the distribution of content in the form of ads or boosted posts (Debusk, 2019). Common paid tools for leveraging social media content are identified in the forms of Facebook ads, Facebook post boosting, Facebook likes increasing campaigns and Facebook campaigns to increase visits to a company website. Similar tools are present on LinkedIn and other social media platforms which assist a company to pay for the distribution of their content across their network and beyond. Such paid ads and tools allow for more specific or wider audience targeting and a customisable criteria to enable bespoke online presence leveraging for entities (Vogel, 2017).

3.7 Communicating results to participants

Once the analysis was completed, participants were provided with a comprehensive report on the findings in each of their individual cases. This was accompanied by a brief summary report as a quick snapshot and guide which would offer key insights on the functional and dysfunctional elements of their individual digital marketing approaches and a breakdown of strategic recommendations which can be used to overcome issues and optimise their company's digital performance. With regard to the analysis of the retrieved data, the following sections outline the mixed methods approaches used by the primary researcher to address the research questions based on the same. The two-pronged research consisted of a (1) qualitative content analysis and a (2) comprehensive field experiment as the qualitative and quantitative mixed methods respectively.

3.8 Phase I - Qualitative Content Analysis - conventional approach

The first phase of the empirical investigation of the study comprises a qualitative content analysis (Doran et al, 2015 and Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Peruta & Shields, 2018). In line with ensuring optimal reliability and accuracy of the data extracted, the conventional content analysis approach was utilised with coding categories derived directly from the text data. The channels utilised for this purpose include LinkedIn and Facebook from which the posts were extracted for analysis as these were the most commonly used platforms by the participant group.

3.8.1 What is the conventional content analysis method?

Three approaches to qualitative content analysis can be identified in past literature where conventional content analysis is found to be most applicable as a design in describing a phenomenon. It is identified as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). This method allows researchers to use existing data to develop categories offering a more synchronised coding approach with available data. Essentially identified as an inductive category development method, it is also recognised that this study design is widely utilised.

Conventional content analysis in the current scenario involved dissecting social media posts in the channels of the participating companies line by line in order to derive codes after which a thematic analysis approach was taken to develop themes.

3.8.2 Justification of use of the conventional content analysis method

In the current scenario, the findings of the literature review illustrated that existing literature and empirical evidence is scarce with regard to what type of content is more effective and garners higher user engagement among B2B KIBS digital Audiences. In such scenarios as per preceding methodological studies, it is recommended that the conventional qualitative content analysis method will be most effective to derive accurate findings. This is due to the fact that preconceived categories may not prove to be effective in situations where minimal literature is present, therefore constructing coding through text data has been proven as more effective (Li, Cox and Wang, 2017). The method is also considered more appropriate as it is grounded in industry examples and as the posts are significantly rich in information.

3.8.3 Units of analysis and authenticity of data

A single post has been utilised as the primary unit of analysis (Peruta and Shields, 2018), where the coding scheme was developed therefore from the text data identified in the form of 8 top LinkedIn posts and 7 top Facebook posts of the SNS's of the participant group. When

conducting the content analysis, organic traction was primarily taken into consideration in order to avoid any misrepresentations of engagement and to enhance accuracy of the results. The reason for such segmentation was to derive more accurate figures on how many audience members were viewing and interacting with posts without the KIBS entity paying for its distribution and higher visibility (Debusk, 2019). These figures project an unskewed image of genuine engagement as opposed to being paid to see, like, share or comment on a given post or piece of content.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the effectiveness and sustainability of traction gained on digital channels via paid advertising may not be as impactful as organic traction and may not offer qualitative engagement outcomes to companies. These observations may be intensified in a KIBS ecosystem which is significantly complex and conservative. However, although observations exist in this regard in practice, it is evident that academic empirical investigation lacks attention in this perspective. Therefore, in order to establish evidence and foundations for future research, an empirical investigation was carried out purely based on the organic traction displayed on the analytics data of participant digital channels.

For the purposes of the current academic content analysis, a simplified coding process was developed by the primary researcher as per preceding studies by Pande and Sharma (2018) and Apperson et al (2019) which could assist in extracting a performance for a unified set of indicators for each of the platforms assessed. The broad classifications used to conduct the coding framework were content format, content type and framing approach / appeal.

3.8.4 The coding Framework

Table 5 : The coding framework

Category	Code	Definition
Format	(1) Link	A link is identified as an action directive which instructs the digital audience of KIBS entities to click on a given link which leads to a website or web location containing information or any desired data the company wishes to expose their readers to. A link is also characterised by the function of tagging, where within content, a third party within the network of the KIBS entity is tagged via name or by company name within the post content. The tagging function could entail an

		<p>individual or an entity.</p> <p>E.g: statements which may be titled as “click the link to find out more” or tagging an entity through statements such as ‘it was a pleasure to meet with <name of person>”</p>
	(2) Image	<p>Primarily referring to the visual components within content, This code is singularly utilised to depict static visuals with no motion element. The element could illustrate more vividly the text content of the post or create an engaging visual statement to capture attention in any form.</p>
	(3) Video	<p>Further in the category of visual components, this code is singularly utilised to depict motion visuals where essentially an event taking place may be recorded and uploaded to the SNS of the KIBS entity. This code may also depict a live stream of activity taking place or any form of motion visuals which may be presented within post content.</p>
	(4) Status Update	<p>A statement or question or an opinion which is posted as a status update only with no other motion or static visuals or links to third party locations on the web. A status update is posted as a text based post only.</p>
Framing	(5) Informative	<p>Content which suggests knowledge with regard to topics or aspects of interest to the digital audience of KIBS entities E.g: Trends in the industry</p>
	(6) Utilitarian	<p>Content within posts which offer guidance on overcoming common issues within a KIBS sub-sector and offers directives and methods and processes which may enhance performance of KIBS clients E.g: statements or titles such in nature of ‘how to’, ‘what to do when’, ‘Quick guide to’ within the content of post</p>
	(7) Assertive	<p>Content directed to the audience consisting of information purely about the organisation which does not indicate a utilitarian nor informative nature. This type of content requires no action to be taken by the audience but is intended to provide more promotional insights on the KIBS entity. E.g: Statements within content which may indicate terms such as ‘We are proud to announce...’</p>
	(8) Expressive	<p>Expressive content primarily refers to opinions and perspectives expressed on third party content by the company. This may include views on general industry trends and implications to the sector, agreement or disagreement within post content on general policies, processes, others</p>

		opinions and the like. E.g: such indicators within post content may include terms such as “in our opinion...” or ‘we think...’
	(9) Collaborative	Collaborative content indicates linkages with industry bodies or third parties in the form of individuals, entities or even events within post content. The collaboration types of content may include terms such as ‘we are happy to have partnered with <name of entity> or highlights from the <name of event> held last week where we met <name of individual>
Type	(10) Firm Generated Content (FGC)	In coding the types of content, the key two elements comprise of Firm Generated and User Generated Content. Firm generated content can be identified as those developed by the KIBS entity for their specific digital audiences. This content which essentially originates from within the organisation can be identified by (1) Language - addressing the audience in first person and also in an advisory manner (2) the individual who posted the content - In terms of the association with the KIBS entity (3) by tone of voice (‘telling’ indicated with statements such as ‘how to’ within content) (4) Self descriptive in certain instances such as the usage of terms like ‘we are’, ‘we do’ and ‘we believe’
	(11) User Generated Content (UGC)	User generated content as a code primarily refers to post content which is developed and disseminated by the users or audience of the KIBS entity. UGC’s can be two fold (1) Independent conversations or status updates E.g: Personal status update tagging the entity (2) participating in brand or service related conversations of KIBS entities. E.g: commenting on threads, participating in online groups created by the brands. Within the sphere of UGC, classification of types of audience members are further considered in coding as below:
	(11.1) Passive participants	These audience members can be classified as (1) Networkers, (2) Watchers or (3) Listeners. These members can be identified through passive actions such as merely liking or applauding for content and opting to be present in the network but not be actively involved.
	(11.2) Expressors	In contrast to passive participants, expressors prefer frequent participation in the forms of sharing opinions, sharing stories, interacting with other members of the KIBS network and even sharing ideas. These members can be characterised by commenting on posts with the content of the above nature such as sharing ideas, opinions and stories.
	(11.3) Engagers	Identified as the advocacy base of KIBS entities in the online space. The engagers are characterised by proactively involving in brand conversations and creating content for conversation around the KIBS brands. Engagers may also display critiquing behaviour as they are highly loyal to the

	brands.
(12) Reactions	<p>Reactions are identified as a passive engagement tool consisting of sub-tools such as putting a 'thumbs up' sign on a post to indicate like or applauding a specific update post. These differ by various social networking platforms. In the case of LinkedIn, reactions are identified by Thumbs up, Applause, Love, Idea or Thinking emojis which can be posted on click, this is customised to suit the professional nature of the social network.</p> <p>In the case of Facebook however being a more informal platform, a variety of reactions are available for users in the forms of thumbs up, love, haha, wow, sad and angry. This coding category aimed at classifying the types of users engaged with content in the KIBS context.</p>

3.8.5 Summary of code development procedure

The above coding was developed manually taking into consideration the conventional method of utilising available data and content to develop the codes. Appropriate elements of past literature were also embedded for further enhancing theme tracking within the posts. The digital channels / SNS of the participating KIBS group were used for this purpose, primarily the LinkedIn and Facebook page post data.

The first category of 'Format' explores the various types of formats in which content is presented. These aim to identify if the content is only textual or visual in nature or if both elements are present, or if in certain instances, text is embedded in visuals.

The second category of 'Framing' attempts to identify the tone and approach to content presenting taken by the content developer. The categorical code breakdown represents the various framing approaches most commonly utilised by KIBS entities and was developed to help the line by line analysis of posts.

The final category of 'type' aims to locate the origin of content to determine various roles played by audience members within the digital landscape of the KIBs entities and to assess the impact of 'Type' on engagement.

This method of code development was adopted to avoid preconceived categorisations from skewing findings. While ten key code categories were derived from the coding procedure, it was also observed that User Generated Content contained three subcategories linked from past literature which were applicable.

3.9 Phase II - Field Experiment

Phase II of the research study, subsequent to the content channel analysis, consisted of a field experiment conducted to further support or unleash new findings in comparison to Phase I. Prior to proceeding with the study, preceding literature produced by Mazza and Palermo (2018) and Sigurdsson, Menon, Sigurdarson, Kristjansson and Foxall (2013) were referred to in order to ensure that the field procedure was progressed cohesively and with minimal margin of error. The experiment was conducted on the LinkedIn platform of RS_01, who volunteered to be subjected to the field test.

3.9.1 Design and procedure

The initial research proposal for this study aimed at developing two comparative conditions within the field experiment for testing. Content for the experiment included:

- Test A - An organisation centric graphic image with text as test A
- Test B - and an informative / user centric graphic image with text as test B

However, prior to embarking on the experiment, during the content channel analysis a sub-analysis was undertaken on the content format performance of the volunteering company, on the channel which was offered for experimentation. This was done to further enhance the accuracy of the end result in the field experiment incorporating findings from the literature review.

It was observed during the analysis that the LinkedIn pages of all participants projected a significant presence of video content and predominantly in the case of RS_01, the page content

displayed that videos as a format has ushered in high impressions and most importantly, higher interaction and engagement. Debusk (2019) states that over 72% of businesses have experienced higher conversion rates and more engagement for their content by adding videos to their digital marketing activity and social marketing strategies. These findings alongside the contributions by Khan and Vong (2014) on YouTube virality and Hodis et al (2015) further confirm through past literature that motion visuals attract higher engagement rates on SNS. Taking into consideration these significant contributions from past literature and also the below sub-analysis on RS_01, it was concluded that videos in place of images were more suited for testing in the case of the current field experiment.

Table 6 : Results of content format analysis to be utilised for field experiment

	Content Format	Impressions	Avg Clicks	Avg CTR	Avg Reactions	Avg Comments
RS_01	Images	982	26	21.55%	3.67	0.3
	Links	765	5	3.35%	3.57	0
	Videos	1268	7	2.75%	8.25	1.25

The table depicts the types of formats utilised by RS_01 and its corresponding impressions gained, Average clicks on posts, Average Click-Through-Rate (CTR - referring to the percentage of clicks made on the post by viewers), Average reactions on posts such as likes and the average comments received for posts in relevant content formats.

It was revealed through the analysis that videos garner higher potential for engagement although CTR and clicks were higher for images. In order for impressions / views to increase on a post, the more impactful metrics in this case as reflected on the increased impressions are the levels of reactions and comments. The contagion effect of content can be seen to increase dramatically in the event of these two metrics being higher in comparison to others.

As a result of the above, the initially proposed image based field experimentation approach was amended to include two video based posts with the same content approach.

The two test videos were aired on different timelines and comparative analytics and engagement level reports were developed for each for a period of 28 days. Essentially LinkedIn

metrics outlined in the table above were taken as the measurement criteria to conclude the performance of both tests.

In terms of the tests therefore, the following was conducted:

- Test A - A brief video commemorating the 4th anniversary of the company where the founders spoke for a brief 1.5 minutes on their journey and key success factors with an element of interactivity.
- Test B - A quick 8- minute guide to overcoming a key issue faced by the sector in which RS_01 operates.

Test A contained a firm generated video with the founders which explained about their journey to date in celebration of the fourth anniversary of the company and asked viewers to share their thoughts on the four key drivers of success in their respective organisations. In order to address the key research question on selling and helping and which approach would drive higher engagement, Test A was developed with an assertive, and socialising approach utilising a video format.

Test B primarily was created with a utilitarian and informative content approach in mind utilising the same video format with an element of collaboration with a leading industry body in the background of the post. The video containing an 8 minute guide to overcoming a key issue faced by the sector in which RS_01 operates was therefore developed for purposes of launching Test B.

3.9.2 Analysis of findings from the field experiment

Statistical analysis was carried out using Chi-Square testing for the field experiment. This method is predominantly utilised in testing relationships between categorical variables and also to increase the trustworthiness of the research by using two methods of analysis. Given the current data set, the analysis methodology required the ability to assess interdependencies within the variables of content appeal (promotional versus informational) and corresponding engagement levels (clicks, reactions, shares) which was enabled with chi-square testing.

Chi-square testing is considered more relevant for digital field experiments, as these primarily evaluate correlations and associations between the aforementioned categorical variables and evaluate if a dependency exists. In the current context, in order to arrive at a conclusion on the type of content preferred by online audiences of RS_01, chi-square testing was utilised to determine the statistical significance of variables associated with its engagement (Hair, Black, Babbitt and Anderson, 2010; Sigurdsson, Menon, Sigurdarson, Kristjansson & Foxall, 2013). These post engagements include the audience reacting, commenting or sharing the presented content in the case of the promotional and utilitarian posts. The test was performed to evaluate which post gained higher engagement in comparison to the other.

3.10 Justification of research approach

The aforementioned two-pronged research study design incorporating experimental techniques was primarily adopted to achieve the key objectives of the research, and in order to objectively gain results for the stated research questions. Phase I content analysis was a study on the past performance of digital channels of the volunteering participants which analysed engagement levels and audience participation with associated digital efforts, while Phase II essentially provided a live simulation environment to explore the results of the content analysis.

In order to achieve the stated research objectives which include (1) Understanding the role of digital content in KIBS (2) Establishing the need for focused strategy for KIBS digital content (3) Understanding what drives engagement for digital content - The antecedents and context specific factors and (4) Establishing a working guideline to digital content management for optimal consumer engagement in the digital sphere, the two-pronged study design provided a comprehensive empirical platform. Phase I depicted the criticality of content in the digital sphere in terms of engagement and reach of the brand and also collated data which offered conclusive evidence on the need for a focused strategy through accepted metrics and key performance indicators.

The mixed method approach was adopted for this study in order to primarily strengthen the overall findings and conclusions of this research and validate findings (Wisdom and Creswell, 2013). A mixed method approach is known to reveal similarities or contradictions in the findings of one another when a qualitative and quantitative research is undertaken in testing a common

phenomenon, therefore by integrating the two methods, the study explored content engagement in the past, and also tested the findings in a real-time digital environment to observe similarities or disparities through a second confirmatory exercise to derive more comprehensive and synergised data for analysis. The two methods provided substantial grounds to derive a conclusion on the content types and dynamics within each of these types which drive online audience engagement.

While a plethora of research questions can be brought forward in the discussion, the study focuses on two key areas which include (a) What factors drive digital content engagement? And (b) What specific factors drive KIBS / B2B content engagement?. The intervening factors have been identified as those which can potentially influence engagement as per literature, however, empirical evidence through future research is required to determine the dynamics of these factors in KIBS digital engagement further.

3.11. Accuracy

Accuracy of the presented findings were of paramount importance in the current study, hence initially a two pronged approach was adopted to provide robustness to the findings within each sphere and compare and contrast with available preceding research evidence.

Building on the premise presented by Guba and Lincoln (1982), four key paradigms were primarily considered when tailoring the methodology and deriving findings through the analysis. These paradigms include Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability.

3.11.1 Trustworthiness and credibility of findings

In terms of trustworthiness and credibility of findings, ensuring authenticity of data was a key sub consideration. This was done by utilising only organic data extracted from the available real-time insights from all three participant's social networking channels and back-end data for the analysis. All or any data pertaining to paid promotions were intentionally excluded from the analysis.

The data gathered was verified by SNS administrators as the key performance metrics which display the progress of online presence on a specific channel by a brand in general. In terms of credibility a key tool utilised is triangulation in this case where multiple verified data sources and multiple methods were employed to cross examine and validate findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Guba and Lincoln, 1982).

3.11.2 Transferability

In the current context it was pivotal to extract findings which can at least in a broader fashion bring together a generalisable guideline to address the research questions. The ability to transfer and cross apply the findings were a key focus when conducting the study and findings were extracted and analysed to an extent which allowed transferability. Purposive sampling was carried out as a crucial tool to explore multiple contexts within the KIBS sphere in order to ensure transferability.

3.11.3 Dependability

As a key paradigm of reliability, dependability primarily focuses on the replication potential of the said research method. In the current study, replication has been fully empowered with the use of a simplistic combination of a content analysis and Field approach. The stability of the approach is validated through the characteristics of easy replication of the same method in future research efforts which can expand horizons within the topic. Overlapping methods in the nature of triangulation further increase the element of dependability in this case which has been applied.

3.11.4 Confirmability of findings

In order to derive a working guideline to address the research questions posed in the study, it was vital to ensure confirmability of findings. Guba & Lincoln (1982) stress on the importance of qualitative confirmability by employing prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, triangulation, referential adequacy materials and member checks during qualitative analysis. Data confirmability therefore in the current context is ensured through triangulation and

observation of user interaction with organic content (Debusk, 2019). It was pivotal to ensure that the data on which the findings were based were verified by academics and practitioners both alike and by moderating bodies which include the SNS administrators. Key metrics have been uniformly applied across the two key analysed Social Networking Sites.

4.0 Findings

The findings presented below consist of the results of the two analyses conducted. Phase I of the study is a qualitative content analysis and phase II consists of a field experiment, which is tested using the chi-square method.

4.1 Study One : Qualitative Content Analysis findings

4.1.1 Results of coding of message related factors on LinkedIn

The results of message related categories pertaining to format, framing and type were classified by thematically analysing how the post content had been structured and developed. The three LinkedIn pages of the three participants were analysed for this purpose taking into consideration the key 8 posts within a 6 month period.

4.1.1.1 Results of coding procedure on post content format

The below table projects the results of the analysis on post content formats observed in the three participant's page posts.

Table 7 : Results of the analysis on post content formats

Participant	No of Posts analysed	Posts containing all formats (Link +Image+Video)	Posts containing two formats (E.g: Link + Image, Image + Video)	Posts containing single format (E.g: Image)
RS_01	8	0	2	6
RS_02	8	0	3	5
RS_03	8	0	8	0

It was identified during the analysis that in terms of content formatting, the posts developed by all participants employ multiple formats as opposed to a single format in majority of instances.

However, the most common phenomenon is the use of two complimenting formats among all three participant posts.

The most commonly used combination in post content formatting was observed as 'Link + Image' where content presented is visually represented while a caption explaining the context is also present. While it was observed that all three content formats were not included in post structure at any point, posts containing a single format were also relatively common.

For instance the below post from the selected ones for the content analysis extracted from the LinkedIn page of RS_01 demonstrates the common phenomenon above. Please note that branding and names have been censored to maintain anonymity of participants:

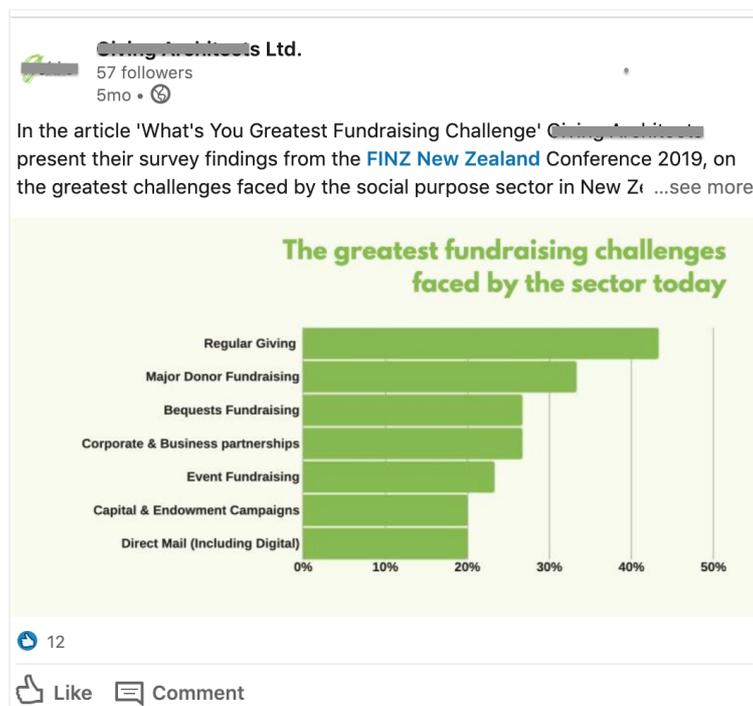


Figure 1 : Example post extract demonstrating Link+Image formatting

It was observed in the analysis that no simple text updates in the form of 'status updates' were used by any of the participants as a format approach.

4.1.1.2 Results of coding process of content framing approaches in posts

The analysis on content framing approaches primarily took into account the key framing approaches widely used by the sample group, therefore the codes were limited to Informative, utilitarian, assertive, expressive and collaborative content. The posts were dissected for terms, words and phrases which indicate a specific framing approach or a combination of approaches.

Based on the above, the key 8 posts extracted from each participant’s LinkedIn page was initially recorded and followed by an analysis on the number of framing approaches used within a single post and the most common framing approaches utilized.

Table 8 : Results of the analysis on post content framing

Participant	No of Posts analysed	Posts containing single framing approach (E.g: Utilitarian)	Posts containing two Framing approaches (Assertive + Collaborative)	Posts containing 3+ framing approaches (Assertive + Collaborative + Utilitarian)
RS_01	8	3	4	1
RS_02	8	3	5	0
RS_03	8	8	0	0

The results of the analysis depicted that most commonly in the selected posts a single framing approach was used while the next majority was observed in posts where two framing approaches were used. Only a single instance was observed where three framing approaches were embedded in post content.

The most common strategy of combining two framing approaches was observed in multiple instances. However, a prominent instance was observed in the following statement:

“FINZ NORTHERN OUTSTANDING MAJOR DONOR FUNDRAISING - LEARNING LUNCH at Potters Park Event Center

*A few moments captured at the event last week where **the Directors of shared best practice insights on preparation, planning and execution of a major donor strategy, what major donors look for and the importance of donor centricity.***

A big thank you to MFINZ and the awesome FINZ Northern team for putting together this amazing event.

The caption to the post commences with the acknowledgement of presence at a key industry related event while presenting an assertive statement where a company update on sharing knowledge at the event is indicated. The collaboration element is further re-enforced by tagging an individual and an industry body at the end by thanking them for facilitating the collaborative event. The statement combines two key framing approaches pertaining to collaboration and assertion and re-iterates the collaborative element to illustrate the linkage to the prominent industry body.

A singular instance of a combination of three framing approaches was exposed in the results where the caption read as:

“Enlightening the Educate Plus NZ Chapter Conference 2019 audience on 'Dynamic conversations for impactful fundraising outcomes'

Click on the video to **catch the 8 minute quick guide shared by <name of director> at <Company name> at the conference.**

The statement, when dissected, contained company branding alongside the name of a prominent figure in the company as sharing thoughts in the first person context through a video. Therefore the second sentence which carries the statement was observed and coded as an assertive phrase. The phrase which indicates a 'quick guide' accompanied by the latter part of the first sentence commencing with "Dynamic conversations..." referring to the topic of the quick guide, thereby indicating a utilitarian executable set of advice for a desired outcome. Collaboration has been stressed in the phase where the publisher of the post has identified an industry body and also a related conference in the form of the 'Educate Plus NZ Chapter' and its 2019 conference. Collectively the statement reflects three framing approaches and was identified as the only instance in which this phenomenon was observed.

4.1.1.3 Common post framing combinations analysis results

Taking the previous analysis as the first step to developing the coding classifications in the content, the below analysis was then conducted, to analyse the most commonly utilised framing approach combinations in posts.

Table 9 : Common post framing combinations

	Assertive + Collaborative posts	Utilitarian + Collaborative Posts	Informative + Utilitarian posts	Assertive + Utilitarian + Collaborative posts
Number of Posts	7	1	1	1

The results revealed that the majority of posts with two or more combinations were in the nature of Assertive + collaborative content. A single instance of combining this approach with a third approach was observed where a utilitarian approach also added to the post content as shown previously. A further instance of an assertive and collaborative post was observed as below in a post by RS_02:

*“It’s been an insightful two days **at the Impact Investment Summit Asia Pacific 2019 for the _____ team!***

*Day 01 was a highlight - A challenge from local and international experts about the role of impact investment in transforming economies and the purpose of capital in those economies. **A sold out event with an array of impact investors, entrepreneurs, Government officials and only a small handful of people facilitating impact investment deals like us.**”*

The statement brings out a collaborative tone by tagging the industry event in its title of the post, while the final statement highlights the nature of the company of RS_02. The descriptive nature of the post in terms of the organisation and its declaration of presence combined form a strong assertive presence in the content alongside the identified collaborative element with a prominent sector event. This is a key example of how the participant companies have framed assertive and collaborative posts.

4.1.1.4 Single framing approaches analysis results

While the above analysis dissected the post combinations, a further analysis was undertaken to observe the use of single framing approaches within the post content of all participants. It was revealed through this analysis that primarily, informative content was used in the majority of single framing approaches followed by both utilitarian and assertive content equally. It was also observed that singularly, expressive and collaborative content have not been used in the post content analysed.

Table 10 : Single framing approaches analysis results

	Informative	Utilitarian	Assertive	Expressive	Collaborative
Number of Posts	8	3	3	0	0

The following excerpts from RS_02 illustrate the single framing approaches taken into consideration in the coding process. The first pertaining to informative posts was as below where a key trend in the sector was explained in the context of the reader for information on what potentially can be expected based on the same.

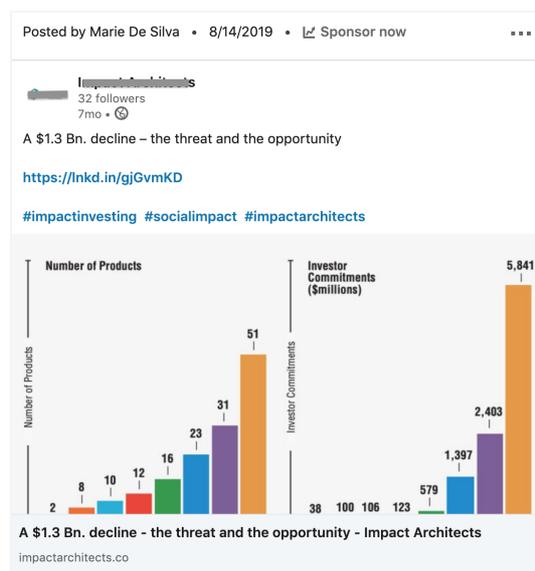


Figure 2 : Example post extract demonstrating informative single framed post

The caption highlights a key informative industry statistic in the form of “A \$1.3Bn Decline...”. The lines which follow explain briefly the essence of the article in the form of what threat and opportunities can be expected as a result of the shift in industry trends. This can be identified as a primarily single framed post, which indicates no assertion or utilitarian element in terms of directly executable advice, but rather some informative insights.

4.1.1.5 Results of coding process of content type and user interactions with content

The following analysis aimed to explore the origin of content primarily and the nature of reciprocal involvement in terms of Firm Generated Content (FGC) and User Generated Content (UGC) within the posts. The standard 8 posts from each participant were analysed and mined for origin in terms of FGC and UGC. The analysis also then proceeded to encode the instances when users interacted with firm generated content and vice versa.

Table 11 : Summary of user interactions

Participant	No of Posts analysed	Firm Generated Content	User Generated Content	Firm Generated Content with User Interaction	User Generated Content with Firm Interaction
RS_01	8	8	0	8	0
RS_02	8	8	0	5	0
RS_03	8	8	0	7	0

The results of the analysis revealed that all content analysed were firm generated and not generated by users. However, the key analytical result was observed in user interaction with firm generated content. It was observed that user interaction with FGC was respectively at 100% in the case of RS_01, 62.5% in the case of RS_02 and 87.5% with RS_03. The average level of interaction of users with FGC therefore across all participants was observed at 83%.

Interaction in this case was summarised as below:

Table 12 : Interaction summary for RS_01

Post	REACTIONS					
	Thumbs up	Applause	Love	Idea	Thinking	Comment
1	6	0	0	0	0	0
2	11	0	0	0	0	1
3	12	0	0	0	0	0
4	19	3	0	0	0	4
5	6	0	0	0	0	0
6	4	0	0	0	0	0
7	1	0	0	0	0	1
8	8	0	0	0	0	0

The interaction summary for RS_01 displayed the above results where it was observed that thumbs up and applause were the most common reactions while comments were intermittently present. However, the comments were generic in nature primarily expressing wishes or congratulatory comments. An instance of such interaction is illustrated in the below post:

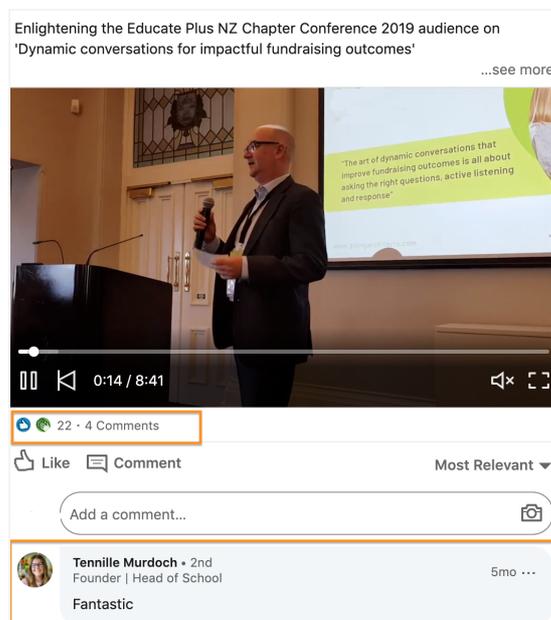


Figure 3 : Example post extract demonstrating user interaction on LinkedIn - RS_01

The excerpt highlights user interaction on a firm generated post in the form of most common reactions. These include ‘thumbs up’ and ‘applause’. While the post is utilitarian in nature, it can be observed that ‘engager’ level interactions have not been observed while more generic appreciative sentiments have been shared in the form of comments. Two other similar comments were observed followed by the above in the nature of:

“Really insightful. Thanks for sharing your wisdom!” and “Great insights! Thank you for sharing”

These comments and reactions were present across the majority of content posted by RS_01.

Interaction summary for RS_02

The interaction summary for RS_02 depicted the below results for the 8 posts analysed. The results showed that thumbs up and applause were the key reactive tools utilised by users and comments were low in nature at 1 overall for all comments analysed.

It was also observed that no reactions took place in the Love, Idea and Thinking reactions.

Table 13: Interaction summary for RS_02

Post	REACTIONS					
	Thumbs up	Applause	Love	Idea	Thinking	Comment
1	1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	0	0	0	0	0
5	18	2	0	0	0	1
6	3	0	0	0	0	0
7	1	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0

Interaction remains similar in overall trends in RS_02 as in the case of RS_01. The below excerpt from the examined post illustrates a high performing post in the content of RS_02.

The post involves participation at a prominent industry event where RS_02 launched its brand in the Australian market. While reactions as previously observed in RS_01 remain in the ‘thumbs up’ and applause categories of user interaction, comments were observed once again to be generic sentiments by the followers of the page. Phrases such as “Congrats” describe common positive sentiments.

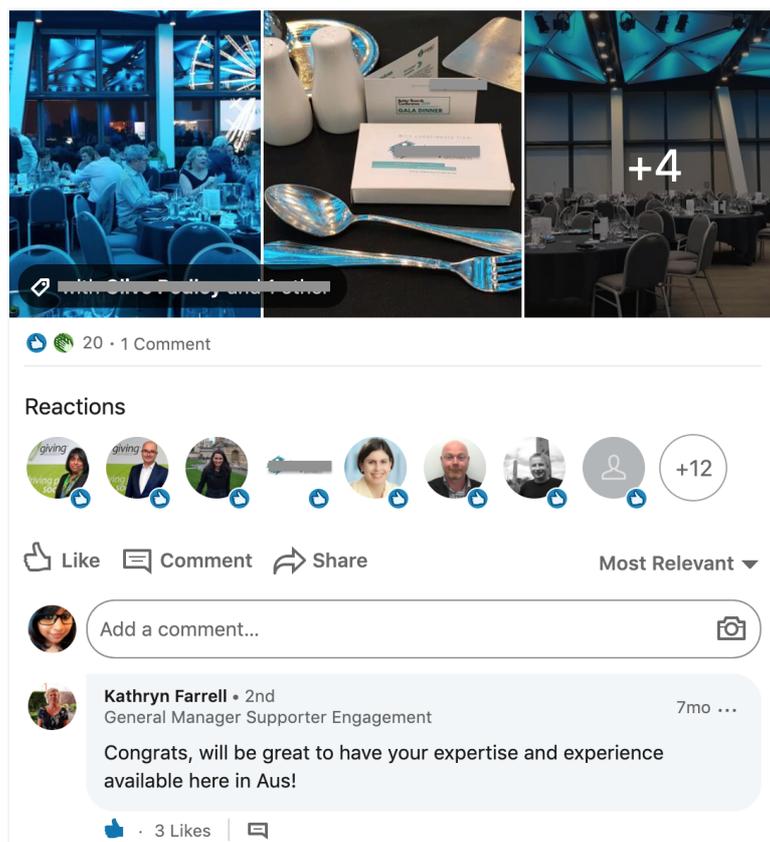


Figure 4 : Example post extract demonstrating user interaction on LinkedIn - RS_02

Interaction summary for RS_03

The interaction summary for RS_03 projected least user involvement where only reactions in terms of ‘thumbs up’ were projected. It was observed that no comments had taken place across

the posts and also in the case of reactions, the results were marginal at below 10 reactions in each instance.

Table 14 : Interaction summary for RS_03

Post	REACTIONS					
	Thumbs up	Applause	Love	Idea	Thinking	Comment
1	3	0	0	0	0	0
2	4	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	0	0	0	0	0
5	1	0	0	0	0	0
6	6	0	0	0	0	0
7	2	0	0	0	0	0
8	2	0	0	0	0	0

4.1.1.6 Collated interaction summary and categorical user presence for all posts

Taking into consideration the key coding classifications of UGC, the below summarised table was therefore developed as a result of the above three analysis result tables from individual participants.

Table 15 : Collated interaction summary and categorical user presence for all posts

	Reactions (Passive Participants)	Comments (Expressors)	Commencing threads, Sharing opinions, storytelling (Engagers)
RS_01	70	6	0
RS_02	26	1	0
RS_03	19	0	0

The results depicted that overall engagement was dominated by passive participants merely putting a 'thumbs up' or 'applauding' a post. A minority of expressors were also present in the post content, whereas no engagers were observed.

4.1.2 Results of coding message related factors on Facebook

In terms of the Facebook posts of the three participants, it was observed that RS_01 and RS_02 had the same strategy across both platforms, therefore results remained identical. However in comparison to these two participant's posts, RS_03 was observed to have a more aggressive and Facebook focused content strategy. While formats and framing approaches remained same for the first two participant's data, changes were observed in RS_03 in comparison to other as below:

4.1.2.1 Results of coding procedure on post content format

In analysing the post content format, it was found that utilising a single format was the most commonly employed approach. It was also observed that posts containing over 3 formats were not present and a marginal percentage also included two formats.

Table 16 : Results of coding procedure on post content format

Participant	No of Posts analysed	Posts containing all formats (Link +Image+Video)	Posts containing two formats (E.g: Link + Image, Image + Video)	Posts containing single format (E.g: Image or video)
RS_01	8	0	2	6
RS_02	8	0	3	5
RS_03	8	0	0	8

The results revealed that the key differentiator from the LinkedIn analysis of RS_03 is the mixed method approach to content formatting present on the Facebook posts. Out of the 8 posts that have been subjected to analysis, 62.5% projected the use of videos ($\frac{5}{8}$) with the exception of a status update, an image post and a Link format post.

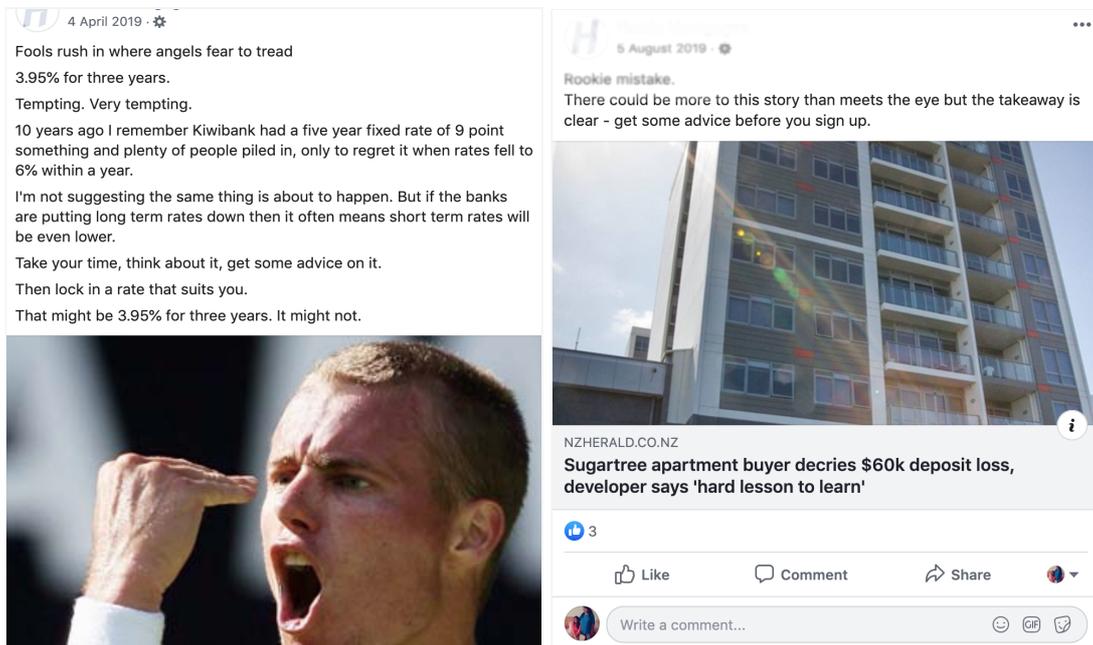


Figure 5 : Example post extract demonstrating single and double formats

In the case of the most common format the above extraction shows a typical example of single format posts on the left. The excerpt on the right highlights an example from a post containing two formats, where a link has been presented with an image to an informative article. The post extracted from the Facebook page of RS_03 with a strong presence on the platform illustrates a common post structure utilised.

4.1.2.2 Results of coding process of content framing approaches

Content framing approaches analysis results revealed once again traces of two framing approaches present in content in the case of RS_03, as opposed to their strategy on LinkedIn where only a single framing approach across all posts were observed. The table below illustrates the summary of findings:

Table 17 : Results of coding process of Content framing approaches

Participant	No of Posts analysed	Posts containing single framing approach (E.g: Utilitarian)	Posts containing two Framing approaches (Assertive + Collaborative)	Posts containing 3+ framing approaches (Assertive + Collaborative + Utilitarian)
RS_01	8	3	4	1
RS_02	8	3	5	0
RS_03	8	6	2	0

The analysis results project that single framing approaches are similar to LinkedIn in usage, remaining the highest observed approach among content of all three participants. A similar trend in over three framing approaches were observed for posts containing three approaches as in the case of LinkedIn.

The second step in analysing content framing approaches were aimed at identifying the commonly utilised combinations in framing present in the Facebook posts of the three participant pages. The summary of findings in this regard is as below:

Table 18 : Common Framing combinations on Facebook

	Assertive + Collaborative posts	Utilitarian + Collaborative Posts	Informative + Utilitarian posts	Assertive + Utilitarian	Assertive + Utilitarian + Collaborative posts
Number of Posts - Total	7	1	2	1	1
RS_01	3	1	0	0	1
RS_02	4	0	1	0	0
RS_03	0	0	1	1	0

As per the findings, it was revealed that a new category emerged in framing combinations in the form of 'Assertive + utilitarian' content in addition to the previous findings of the LinkedIn analysis. The results also re-enforced the presence of Assertive and collaborative as a widely used framing combination yet again in all three participants, followed by utilitarian and informative posts.

In terms of a dual framing approach, the following extraction illustrates a commonly observed example of assertive and collaborative content:

“Thank you Responsible Investment Association Australasia for featuring us and our role in facilitating impact Investment deals in a growing impact investment market. We look forward to continuing to add value to the sector by working together with organisations and impact investors who want to scale impact to benefit people and planet through great impact investment projects”

The commencement of the text by thanking a prominent industry body indicates the need to highlight collaboration while the sentence continues to describe the nature of work carried out by the organisation in an assertive manner. Further the element of collaboration is reinforced by a statement on how the organisation wishes to further continue and strengthen ties within the network.

In the case of singular framing instances, it was observed that a majority of posts contained the informative approach while assertive content was observed as the second most widely utilised single content framing approach. Utilitarian posts were also significant whereas both expressive and collaborative content was not observed as being utilised as single framing approaches across all posts from all participants.

Table 19 : Summary of use of single framing approaches on Facebook

	Informative	Utilitarian	Assertive	Expressive	Collaborative
Number of Posts - Total	5	3	4	0	0
RS_01	1	1	1	0	0
RS_02	1	0	2	0	0
RS_03	3	2	1	0	0

In illustrating an instance of the said single framing approach which has been predominantly observed, the following text extracted from a post is presented in a utilitarian perspective.

“Pain Point: bank statements (live demo)

Getting your paperwork to us can be a pain.

We need it in a specific format, up to date and all at once so we can pitch you in the best possible light to the bank and get a quality loan approval for you.

The good news is that we've got this cool portal which helps solve the problem and can deliver all those statements to us in under 2 minutes.

Check out our live demo below to learn how it works.”

The above extracted text clearly identifies an instance of single framing appeal, where it is explicitly termed in the title of a key sector pain point, which is followed by a brief description of the scenario with a final directive to refer to the said video to learn how it works.

4.1.2.3 Results of coding process of content type and user interactions with content

As in the case of the LinkedIn analysis, it was observed that all content analysed in posts were Firm generated. However, While RS_01 and RS_02 displayed marginally lower user interaction with FGC in the context of Facebook posts in comparison to LinkedIn, RS_03 displayed a marginal increase where all posts on Facebook in the case of RS_03 were subject to user interaction. The following table outlines the results of the content analysis.

Table 20 : Results of coding process of content type and user interactions with content

Participant	No of Posts analysed	Firm Generated Content	User Generated Content	Firm Generated Content with User Interaction	User Generated Content with Firm Interaction
RS_01	8	8	0	6	0
RS_02	8	8	0	3	0
RS_03	8	8	0	8	0

4.1.2.4 Summary of interaction for all three participants

Table 21 : Interaction summary for RS_01

Post	REACTIONS							Comment	Shares
	Thumbs up	Haha	Love	wow	sad	Angry			
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	
3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

As per the independent post analysis of RS_01, it was revealed that user interaction remained minimal in comparison to LinkedIn. An extract from the RS_01 Facebook page is projected below as an example which illustrates the said lower engagement levels.

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from the Fundraising Institute of New Zealand (FINZ) dated 7 November 2019. The post content includes a quote: "The art to dynamic conversations that improve fundraising outcomes is asking the right questions, active listening and providing the best possible response." and a link to an article on fundraising outcomes. The post's performance metrics are as follows:

- 1 Likes, Comments & Shares
- 1 Likes (0 On Post, 0 On Shares)
- 0 Comments (0 On Post, 0 On Shares)
- 0 Shares (0 On Post, 0 On Shares)
- 0 Post Clicks
- 0 Photo views, 0 Link clicks, 0 Other Clicks
- 6 People reached, 1 Engagement
- 0 Hide post, 0 Hide all posts
- 0 Report as spam, 0 Unlike Page

The post also features a 'Boost Unavailable' button and interaction options for Like, Comment, and Share.

Figure 6 : Post performance example from RS_01 Facebook page

Table 22 : The interaction summary for RS_02

Post	REACTIONS						Comment	Shares
	Thumbs up	Haha	Love	Wow	Sad	Angry		
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

As per the analysis it was observed that interaction remained lowest for RS_02 on Facebook. While the other participants have experienced comments and shares on Facebook, it was observed that RS_02 had no comments or shares across all posts. An excerpt from a post and its performance is as below:

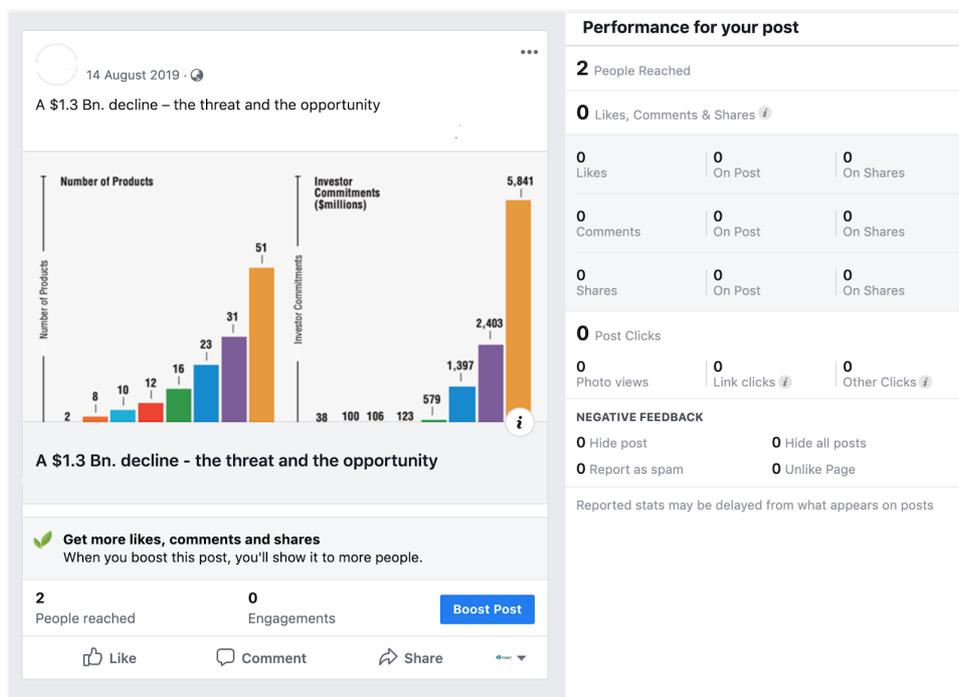


Figure 7 : Post performance example from RS_02 Facebook page

Table 23 : The interaction summary for RS_03

Post	REACTIONS						Comments	Shares
	Thumbs up	Haha	Love	wow	sad	Angry		
1	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
2	12	0	2	0	0	0	16	4
3	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
4	19	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
5	11	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
6	18	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
7	10	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
8	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

As per the above results derived from the content analysis, it was observed that an exponential growth in user interaction was evident in the content of RS_03 in comparison to the other participants. This is illustrated in most posts observed during the analysis. The following post highlights the level of user engagement of content of RS_03 in comparison to the other participants where 14 reactions have been observed with a significant comment and sharing pattern observed as a result of the post. The content framed in a utilitarian manner has recorded 16 comments from the follower base of the RS_03 alongside 4 shares, which project significant exposure to the personal networks of the user base.

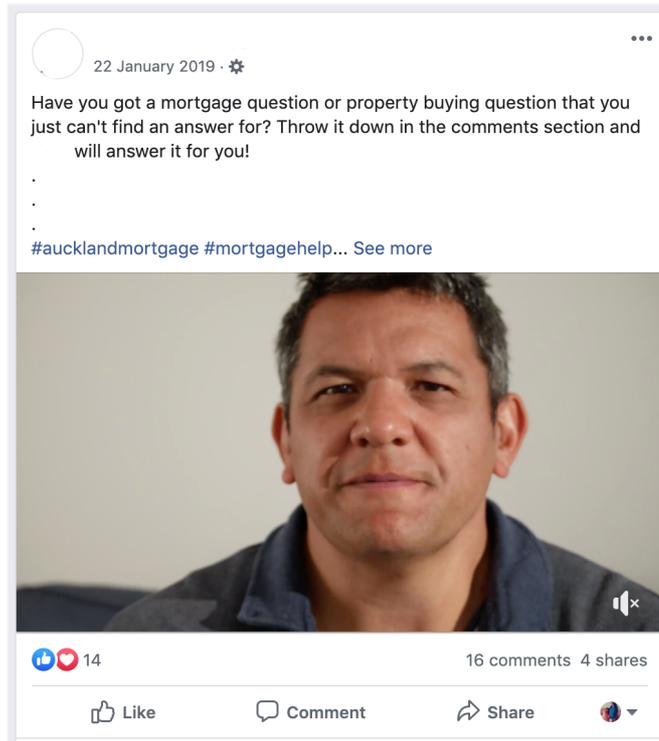


Figure 8 : Post performance example from RS_03 Facebook page

4.1.2.5 Collated interaction summary and categorical user presence for all posts

Table 24 : Collated interaction summary and categorical user presence for all posts

	Reactions (Passive Participants)	Comments (Expressors)	Commencing threads, Sharing opinions, storytelling (Engagers)
RS_01	9	2	1
RS_02	6	0	0
RS_03	106	24	13

As per the above table on collated interactions across all three participant’s content across Facebook, it was found that the passive participation remained highest as in the case of LinkedIn, where a higher percentage of networkers, watchers and listeners can be observed. Secondly, while RS_01 recorded significantly lower expressors on Facebook, RS_02 remained the same, however, RS_03 was highlighted with a significant growth in the same category.

A key result of the analysis however, is the presence of engagers in two participants within the posts. It was found that many shares of content have taken place, while comment threads were also observed. The comments for RS_03 primarily consisted of further questions on posted single content pieces and expressed opinions on the same. However, RS_01 and RS_02 experienced more generic congratulatory notes and also occasional appreciation of informative content.

The presence of engagers were identified through the shares and comments as below for the previously presented post:

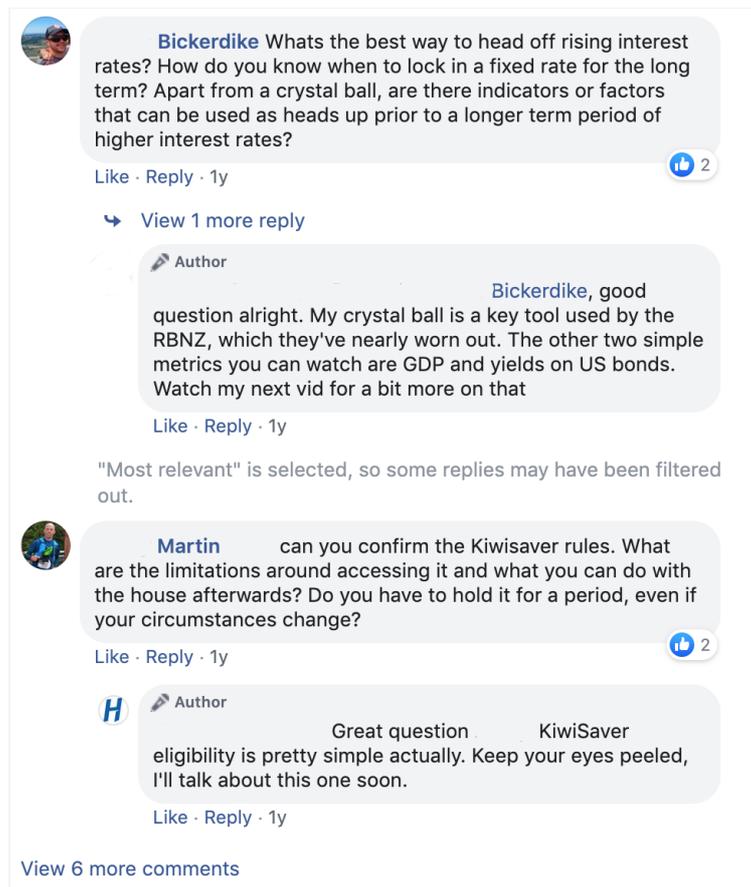


Figure 9 : Example of engager presence observed in RS_03 page content

The above comments project active engagement by users and also may create conversation hooks to potential other network members if they are facing similar challenges. These can be

observed as engagers who are interested and are interacting for more purposes than mere presence or expressing a generic sentiment.

4.1.3 Summary of themes derived from the qualitative content analysis

Overall, the findings of the qualitative content analysis projected the below thematic results. In order to conduct the in-depth overall analysis, the first approach consisted of identifying the key coding categories in relation to formatting, framing and content origin within the posts which were analysed. Followed by this, key themes were extracted which could be observed within the content, the detailed findings are as below:

Table 25: Key themes observed in post content

Coding Category	Key Themes observed
Content Format	(1) Single formatting
	(2) Dual formatting
	(3) Three or more formats
Content Framing	(1) Single framing
	(2) Dual framing
	(3) Three or more framing approaches
Content Origin	(1) Firm Generated Content with User Interaction

It was observed during the analysis that posts contained single, two formats and three formats within content, while framing approaches revealed a similar trend with single, dual and triple approaches used within one post. The above findings were derived from the independent analysis of Facebook and LinkedIn post content of the three participants. In terms of content origin it was observed that Firm generated content with user interaction were only available for analysis as a theme. No user generated content was observed within the posts other than for reactions, comments and shares in various instances on firm generated content.

In line with the above thematic analysis the below tables were summarised as the overall findings of the analysis combining the format, framing and type analysis in the case of the post content extracted from the LinkedIn and Facebook pages of the participants. In line with the above themes it was revealed in the analysis that a multitude of sub themes emerged from the content. These were primarily combinations from format and framing approaches which are shown above as primary themes.

For instance, two common sub-themes observed were assertive and collaborative posts in image format and utilitarian and collaborative posts in video format. Many such themes which were observed are classified in the below tables and projected against corresponding user interaction behaviour:

Table 26 : High engaging posts across all three participants on LinkedIn

SUB THEME	REACTIONS					COMMENTS
	Thumbs up	Applause	Love	Idea	Thinking	
(1) Assertive and collaborative posts in image format	32	2	0	0	0	2
(2) Informative content in Link + Image format	12	0	0	0	0	0
(3) Utilitarian + Collaborative posts in video format	19	3	0	0	0	4
(4) Utilitarian content in video format	4	0	0	0	0	0
(5) Assertive content in image format	6	0	0	0	0	0

It can be observed through the above trends that while assertive and collaborative content in image format have received a higher number of reactions in the form of ‘thumbs up’, Utilitarian and collaborative posts have garnered higher interaction levels in the form of comments. Active participation of the online audience on utilitarian posts is therefore illustrated through the analysis. Yoon, Li, Ji, North, Hong and Liu (2018) in their study of attracting comments and

digital engagement metrics illustrate the effectiveness of comments as a form of user interaction which has depicted a positive correlation with revenue growth.

These findings illustrate the vitality of comments in social media content within a commercial setting, and also affirms the position of utilitarian content as being more effective in the current scenario among the participant's SNS Content.

The analysis concludes by indicating that assertive and collaborative content in image format and utilitarian and collaborative content in video format may generate higher engagement. Both utilitarian and assertive content as singular framing approaches when combined with visual formats may also carry higher engagement potential. The below examples illustrate these scenarios in the content of the participant groups. The below extract of a post illustrates a video format utilitarian and collaborative post which was identified as a high engagement activity on the analysed posts.

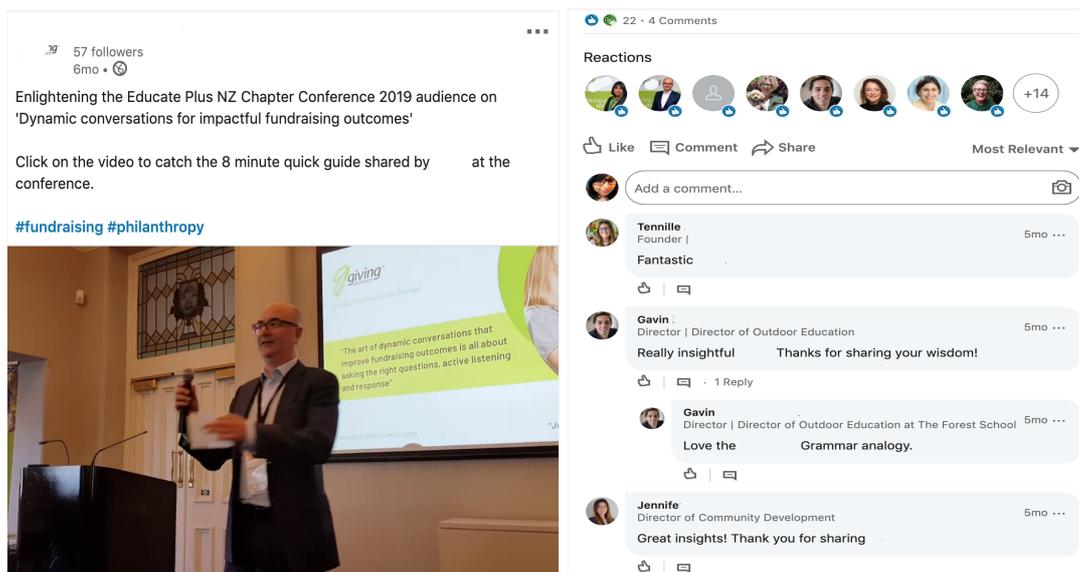


Figure 10 : Example of utilitarian and collaborative content in video format

Similarly, the below is an image format collaborative and assertive post which has been highly successful. The post projects a thought leadership recurring event facilitated by the organisation which is also collaborated with thought leaders in the sector for more purposeful outcomes for the attendees.

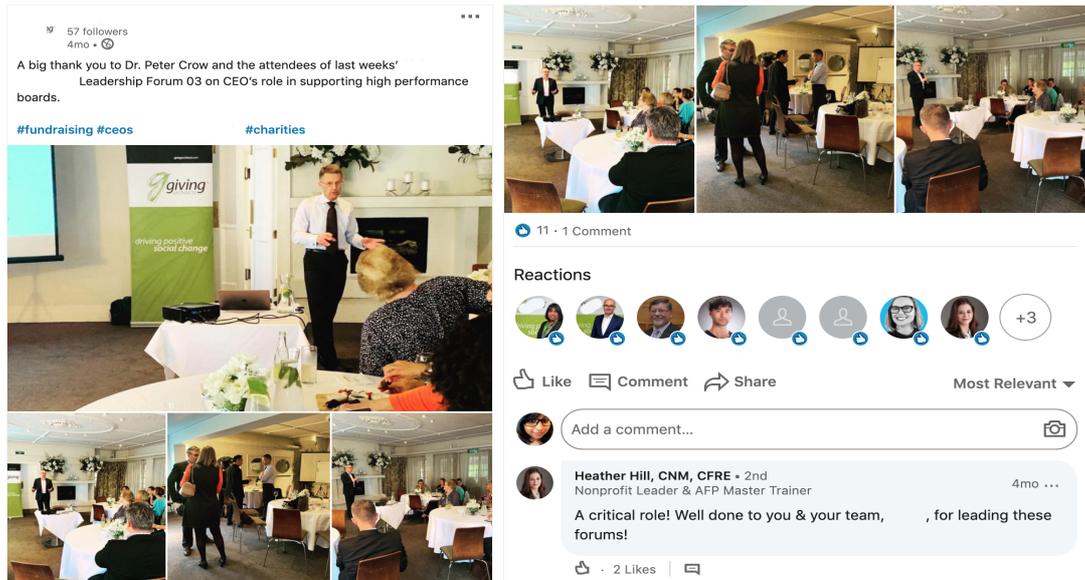


Figure 11 : Example of assertive and collaborative content in image format

In terms of singular framing approaches, the following are two excerpts which have been observed. The assertive post shows a video introducing the company with captions.

(1) Utilitarian post

Posted by • 3/29/2019 • Sponsor now

Ltd.

57 followers
1yr •

Tackling the dynamic and transformational nature of capital campaigns

"Our people and planet challenges, often referred to within the context of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, present incredible fundraising opportunities. Under the right circumstances, capital campaigns can be part of a historical moment when we join with our supporter base to address great unmet needs."

Capital campaigns are still largely about good planning and sequential task management. There are essential tasks, roles and responsibilities that remain critical to success. They all must be efficiently executed in order to achieve great outcomes. However, we believe some of the 'golden rules' of capital campaigns need to be a little more flexible in response to a changing landscape.

#fundraising #capitalcampaigns #philanthropy #strategy #success

Read more on our blog @
<https://lnkd.in/gjR3FNX>



Tackling the dynamic and transformational nature of capital campaigns
.blogspot.com

(2) Assertive Post

Posted by • 7/17/2019 • Sponsor now

32 followers
8mo •

Introducing



Figure 12 : Examples of singular framing approaches

On Facebook however, it has been observed that informative and utilitarian content has gained higher reaction in the form of videos, followed closely by assertive content in image format as a singular approach. Informative status updates are also observed as high engagement generating content.

Table 27 : High engaging posts on Facebook for all participants

SUB THEME	REACTIONS						COMMENTS	SHARES
	Thumbs up	Haha	Love	wow	sad	Angry		
(1) Assertive and collaborative posts in image format	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
(2) Assertive content in video format	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(3) Assertive content in image format	20	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
(4) Utilitarian content in video format	12	0	2	0	0	0	16	4
(5) Informative content in video format	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(6) Informative and utilitarian content in video format	19	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
(7) Informative status update	11	0	0	2	0	0	0	3

In line with the above similar analysis conducted on Facebook it can be observed that effective interaction in the forms of comments and shares (Yoon et al, 2018) have been significant in utilitarian content, as opposed to assertive content.

In both instances in the cases of LinkedIn and Facebook, as the two key platforms subjected to analysis, it was observed through qualitative content analysis that passive interactions in the forms of reactions are commonly experienced for Assertive content, while engager level interactions have taken place more for utilitarian content (Mazza and Palermo, 2018). These interactions are displayed in the higher number of comments and shares as shown in the above table and also the previous LinkedIn analysis.

Mazza and Palermo (2018), indicate the importance of sustaining engager level interaction on content in general in the commercial context to ensure that brand centric conversation remains active among the targeted digital audience. In the KIBS content analysis it was revealed that this was achieved in instances when utilitarian content was presented.

An instance of a video format informative and utilitarian post has been observed as below alongside an assertive and collaborative image based post

(1) video format informative + utilitarian



(2) Image format assertive + Collaborative



Figure 13 : Examples of combined framing approaches on Facebook

The single format appeal examples remain similar to those previously projected in the LinkedIn findings.

4.2 Study two : field experiment findings

Chi-square testing was carried out to assess the performance of the two videos on the LinkedIn and Facebook pages of RS_01. The following dataset was utilised for testing purposes as the base retrieved data from the field experiment which was primarily focused on LinkedIn, however, in order to further assess cross-platform impacts of the digital content, the content was also posted on Facebook and results extracted.

Table 28 : Field Experiment - Summary of Results

Variables	RS_01	RS_01	RS_01	RS_01
	LinkedIn	LinkedIn	Facebook	Facebook
	Promotional	Informational	Promotional	Informational
Likes	4	19	0	0
Shares	1	0	0	0
Follows	0	0	0	0
Clicks	6	15	3	5
Click-thru-rates	1.94%	1.94%	0	0
Impressions	309	773	0	0
Reach	0	0	9	7
Reactions	4	22	0	0
Engagement rate	4.21%	5.30%	1	0
Comments	1	4	1	0
Duration of visitor stay	3 seconds	3 seconds	15 (3 second views) 10 (10 second views)	18 (3 Second video views) 14 (10 Second video views)
# of visitors	364	232	25	32
# views lifetime	154.6 Minutes	169.9 Minutes	9 Minutes	32 Minutes
Audience size	54	54	11	11
Engagement	13	41		

In order to explore the significance between the stated categorical variables on the performance of the informational versus promotional posts, number of visitors have been utilised as the basis of calculation.

4.2.1 LinkedIn data analysis results

In assessing the comparative performance of the two conditions in the field experiment, five key measurement metrics were utilised. These include likes, shares, clicks, reactions and comments primarily. After conducting the field experiment, the following results were observed.

Likes

The frequency of likes divided by the number of visitors, was significantly higher for condition 2 (Informational post) than condition 1 (Promotional Post). The results indicated $m = 8.2\%$ [=19/232] for the utilitarian post compared to $m = 1.1\%$ [=4/364]. The chi square test displayed a result of $X^2(1) = 19.20$ ($p < .001$).

Shares

The second test conducted was to assess the results in terms of shares for the two conditions. For condition 2 the result indicated : $m = 0\%$ [=0/232], while for condition 1 $m = 0.3\%$ [=1/364] was observed. Overall the chi square test displayed a result of $X^2(1) = 0.63$ ($p > 0.1$). It was observed that for shares both conditions did not display significant outcomes.

Clicks

The number of clicks divided by the number of visitors in the case of the two conditions was then carried out. The test results yielded $m = 6.5\%$ [=15/232] for condition 2 while $m = 1.6\%$ [=6/364] resulted for condition 1. Overall the chi square test displayed a result of $X^2(1) = 9.6$ ($p < 0.01$). The test result indicated that clicks were significantly higher for condition 2.

Reactions

An overall analysis of reactions was conducted thereafter. When testing the two conditions condition 2 resulted in $m = 9.5\%$ [=22/232], which was observed as significantly higher than the result which was observed in condition 1 ($m = 0.3\%$ [=1/364]). Overall the chi square test resulted in $X^2(1) = 23.8$ ($p < 0.001$).

Comments

The final test conducted to assess the performance of the two comparative posts was on comments received. It was observed during the test that condition 2 displayed a marginally higher result at $m = 1.7\%$ [=4/232], in comparison to condition 1 at $m = 1.1\%$ [=4/364]. Overall the chi square test resulted in $X^2(1) = 3.5$ ($p < 0.10$).

4.2.2 Facebook data analysis results

Taking into consideration the replication of the field experiment on Facebook in exploring cross platform engagement, the results of the experiment concluded that overall, the data retrieved was significantly weak in nature and therefore, significant statistical relationships could not be established comprehensively.

A chi square test was conducted to assess performance of likes in the two comparative posts as the data available was sufficient was this test. Condition 02 (utilitarian post) resulted in a marginally lower result at $m = 14\%$ [=8/57], in comparison to condition 01 at $m = 15.6\%$ [=5/32]. Overall the chi square result observed was $X^2(1) = 0.15$ ($p > 0.1$).

However further testing could not be carried out as the data was insufficient to offer significant insights into comparative behavior in the case of the two posts.

4.2.3 Summary of findings - field testing experiment

Based on the above results, it can be observed that overall, the utilitarian post has garnered higher engagement from the digital audience of RS_01. While the Facebook analysis remains inconclusive, LinkedIn offered significant insights to digital audience behaviour in line with the two presented types of content.

In comparison to condition 1, condition 2 which was the utilitarian post was observed to have more likes along with higher number of clicks. This indicates that online viewers of the post opted to click on the video presented in condition 2 to view the video longer.

Reactions in the form of 'thumbs up', applause and other LinkedIn specific tools which empower the function of passive participation were also viewed as being higher in the case of conditions 2 compared to condition 1.

In terms of comments, indicating engager level involvement, it was observed that condition 2 had a marginally higher level of interaction in comparison to condition 1 while shares for both posts were observed as being low and statistically insignificant.

In summary, the chi square test on the field experiment therefore revealed that, while the assertive content in video format in condition 1 did indicate expressor and passive engagement, comparatively condition 2 in the form of a utilitarian video was more preferred by the audience and gained higher engagement from all categories of users consisting of passive participants, expressers and engagers.

5.0 Discussion

The current study establishes a novel academic perspective for future research, by synthesising KIBS and digital content marketing literature. The exploratory research can be identified as a pioneering step in this synthesised space.

The study identifies the unique nature of KIBS within the service sphere characterised by the role of bespoke service delivery, value co-creation and innovation, which should be the lens through which digital content strategy development should also be viewed in this context.

As a growing sub-sector of B2B business, KIBS entities also require a strategic focused approach to creating more engaging content as opposed to replicating B2C strategies in digital content marketing. The current study attempted to address this need by developing a bespoke set of guidelines based on an extensive theoretical and empirical investigation.

The discussion in this chapter outlines the derivatives from the study in the forms of conceptual modelling of the literature identified in the review in chapter two and predominantly addressing the research questions at the onset. The chapter then progresses to discussing the managerial implications, implications to researchers, the limitations of the study and most importantly three key future research directions. The managerial implications also indicate potential impact to KIBS entities as a whole and outlines a key guidance criteria based on the research study, to strategise KIBS specific content marketing. More future research directions are also comprehensively presented in the appendices section.

Firstly, taking into consideration the review of past literature in Chapter two, it was revealed that this study resulted in the development of an integrated conceptual view of general and KIBS specific factors driving engagement and diffusion of digital content. The literature review outlines the overall ecosystem of digital content consumption and engagement.

These findings initially identify the antecedents of content consumption in Stage 01, which derives the key drivers of why online audiences prefer to view and consume content i.e :

preference to scroll through content on social media channels such as LinkedIn or Facebook feeds. The antecedents are derived from the generic research conducted predominantly by Ho and Dempsey (2008), Berger and Milkman (2012, 2013) and Yuki (2015) who explore the social psychology elements driving online consumer behaviour in-depth. These findings were gathered in line with the study conducted by Keinänen and Kuivalainen (2015), where the authors identified that social media use in the B2B context has a significant relationship with antecedents driving personal use of social media.

The second level of interaction which is desired by content publishers is essentially the stage in which a member of the online audience opts to actively engage with a piece of content. For instance, reach and conversions are at an optimal level if the member inquires further on services through a comment on a published post, or opts to share the post with his/her network or, comments on or reacts to content shared by the company (Syrdal and Briggs, 2018). O'Brien and Toms (2008) illustrate engagement in the perspective of four stages which include 1) the point of engagement, 2) the period of engagement, 3) disengagement, and 4) reengagement. However, in the case of B2B entities, the stages of engagement have not been empirically explored, thereby leaving the said perspective as a lucrative future research direction.

Essentially, Katona and Sarvary (2014) identify users of B2B social media in categories of employees, customers, industry experts, and other general consumers. Of these categories the authors identify that in the B2B context, 98% remain as spectators, while others remain as critics and creators. This inherently indicates potentially low engagement levels from B2B audiences given their contextual need for engagement which can be relatively lower than within the B2C sphere. The authors identify the need for digital content marketing to be considered a strategic value addition to B2B companies as opposed to a mere promotional tool, as social media marketing specifically can be used to increase brand awareness, humanize B2B companies, establish companies as thought leaders, and connect with customers, prospects, and industry influencers, and potentially even increase sales (Yoon et al, 2018). Given the aforementioned link between private and business use of social media, the above views on prioritising social media marketing may prove to be beneficial within the KIBS sphere (Keinänen and Kuivalainen, 2015; Wang, Pauleen & Zhang, 2016).

In line with the comprehensive literature review conducted to address the stated research questions and derive conclusions to the topic at hand which is : Selling vs. Helping : Exploring the ideal digital content steering strategy for optimal online customer engagement in Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS), a few key findings emerged. Primarily, the literature review displayed the gap in synthesised literature in terms of KIBS and digital content marketing. In the case of addressing the first research question, it was discovered that past research brought together key internal and external drivers of digital content consumption and engagement in a general sense in addressing RQ1, in the forms of personal-self related factors and external message related factors such as message format, framing and content origin. In addressing the second research question on factors driving KIBS content diffusion, past literature further indicates contextual factors such as user centricity, brand conversation facilitation and content tonality among others as potential KIBS specific diffusion drivers (Berger and Milkman, 2012; Katona and Sarvary, 2014 and Yuki 2015 ; Kumar, Rajan, Gupta, & Pozza, 2019).

Leading to the empirical experimentation and content analysis phase of the current study, the key finding which emerged was the absence of academic research on digital content marketing strategy in the KIBS sector. This was methodically revealed in the initial analysis on the historical evolution of KIBS and digital content marketing literature. While the two streams have gained a conducive body of literature over the years and especially post 2016, the two streams have not been researched in one another's context and no literature overlap has been observed, hence confirming the need for the present study.

In order to derive academic evidence which could potentially offer insights to address the research questions, owing to the absence of direct literature sources, applicable theoretical insights were derived from general B2B research studies conducted in relation to digital content engagement and social media marketing. Given the contextual overlap of the KIBS sector with the overall B2B sector, these theoretical assumptions were taken into consideration in order to form a foundation on the current academic premise on the topic. Primarily, the studies pertaining to professional versus personal motivators of digital content consumption by Keinänen and Kuivalainen (2015) and Noguti (2016) were used in forming the basis from the aforementioned B2B literature. The author derived an integrated framework of antecedents and drivers of digital content engagement to form an overall guideline on the factors creating engagement in the B2B sphere and therefore the KIBS sector. In summary it was found that three key areas which

pertain to internal antecedents, external antecedents and motivators to general and KIBS content engagement form the basis for the ideal KIBS content steering strategy (Berger and Milkman, 2012 and Yuki, 2015). The following conceptual visualisation was therefore developed by the author to illustrate the overall literature review findings:

5.1 Integrated conceptual view of facilitators of general and KIBS specific content engagement and diffusion

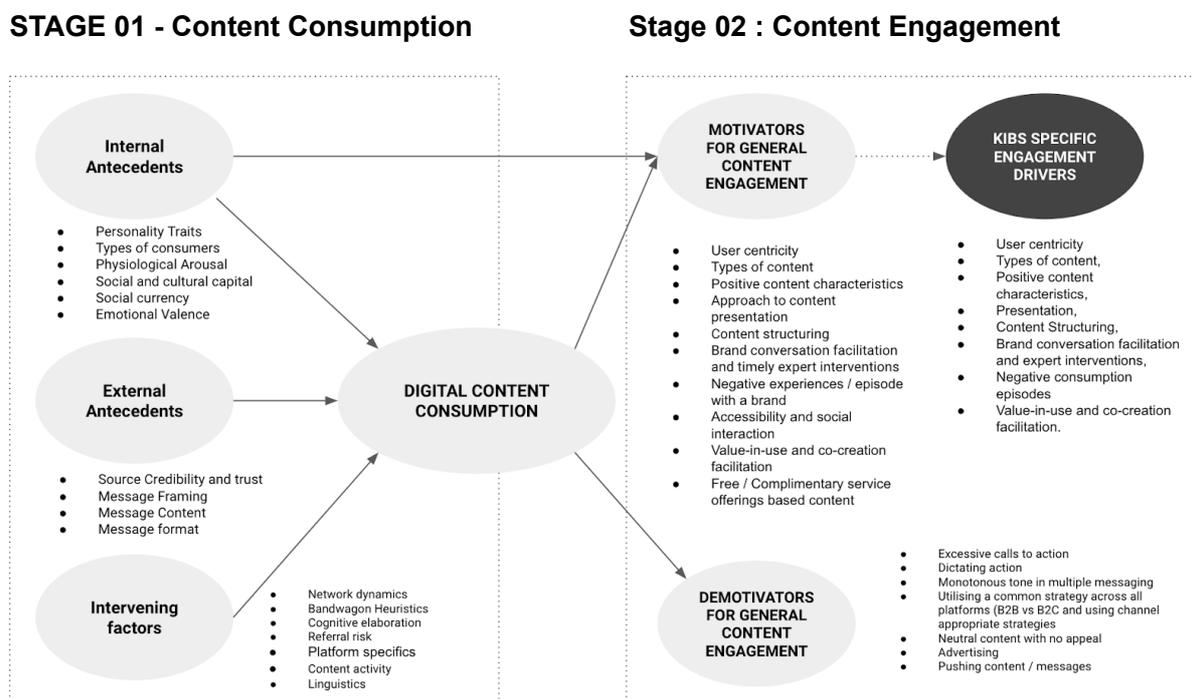


Figure 14 : An integrated conceptual diagram providing a summary of the findings

The internal antecedents refer to those factors internal to a person which drives primarily content consumption and thereafter, leads them to engage and associate with content. Theoretical explorations by Belk (2014) on the digital self set out to explore internal motivators in the form of how the physical self constraints do not apply to the virtual self, thereby offering more leverage to project desired selves online through engagement and interaction with content. External antecedents are factors beyond the control of the customer, and those associated with the content developer and disseminator with regard to various aspects of the

message incorporated within the content, which evoke consumption and engagement explicitly discussed in the work of Berger and Milkman (2012) and Yuki (2015). Lastly, the pivotal elements pertaining to engagement motivators in the KIBS specific context have been illustrated in “KIBS specific engagement drivers”. These factors are deemed to be the key engagement motivators for KIBS specific online content, based on the available literature sources on B2B digital content engagement. It can be observed through past literature that regardless of context, drivers of digital content engagement and consumption remain generic in terms of the internal and external motivators. It can be assumed that due to the inherent blurring of lines between official and personal uses within SNS that both these aspects come into play in a unified manner to influence online engagement behaviour.

In the specific context of KIBS niche digital audiences, the motivators which have been extracted perform specific roles in content related only to KIBS entities and only once the internal and external antecedents have played their parts in garnering attention. These KIBS factors therefore can be viewed as secondary influencers to engagement and also can be assumed that engagement may occur in the absence of these factors given the strength of the primary tier of internal and external motivators (Khan and Vong, 2014 and Ho and Dempsey, 2008). The above conclusions are derived from past literature as the most relevant and applicable theoretical insights which address the current gap in research on the ideal content steering strategy for KIBS environments. Taking into consideration the above conceptual view and the empirical data retrieved from the current study, the following implications have been presented in order to address the key research questions.

5.2 Discussion of findings:

5.2.1 RQ1 - What factors facilitate digital content engagement?

In addressing the factors which facilitate digital content engagement, in the perspective of the theoretical review, a set of internal and external antecedents were identified through conceptual modelling to be analysed via an empirical analysis. This consisted of a two-pronged empirical study with phase I being a qualitative content analysis followed by phase II where a field experiment was conducted to add to the confirmability of findings.

Key elements from the conceptual model pertaining to message related factors such as content format, framing and type were taken into consideration in the empirical investigation. The results indicated visual formatting, combined and singular framing and FGC with user involvement as the key themes which drive engagement. These have been identified in the key theme table in the findings section which resulted from the qualitative content analysis (Refer : Table 25).

5.2.1.1 Visual formatting

Theoretically, past empirical explorations have been scarce in comparative research on the effects of content formatting on engagement. However, platform specific explorations have taken place previously, such as the study on YouTube engagement and diffusion behaviour by Khan and Vong (2014). As a key finding, visual formatting was highlighted across the current study as widely utilised and garnering higher passive and engager attention. Overall visual formats such as videos and images were seen to evoke higher physiological responses in the forms of ‘thumbs up’, applause and other reactions. Noguti (2015) in his exploration of post language and user engagement in online communities highlights the influence of text-based versus image-based content in generating engagement in a language specific context. In the current scenario, this has been observed first hand as the performance of purely text based versus visual content has had a clear disparity in generating engagement. The views are reinforced by the study and indicates a potential relationship between visual formats and engagement levels.

Interactive and non-interactive status updates as a form of singular formatting was only observed in the Facebook content of RS_03. However although widely unused, it was observed that when combined with a utilitarian framing approach such as answering a specific user centric question, status updates may generate effective audience engagement.

While visual formats inspire higher engagement, RS_03 has also illustrated the potential of status updates in garnering user engagement in specific instances. This perspective remains largely unexplored in past literature, however, the phenomenon indicates a lucrative formatting approach which may be scarcely employed by KIBS firms at present but can be optimised in future efforts. The conciseness of text based status updates may cause more traction. Alongside that it was also observed that Facebook text updates in recent years have been

empowered in larger and more graphic enabled fonts and backgrounds for users, which may influence more impressions. This is certainly worthy of more exploration and validation with continued incorporation into content strategy in the KIBS context. Identifying physiological responses to these various visual and text based stimuli in the KIBS context will offer more empirical evidence to compare with prominent past theoretical findings on the influence of emotional valence and other such factors on content diffusion (Berger and Milkman, 2012).

5.2.1.2 Combined and singular framing

Reinforcing the findings of Yuki (2015), the study revealed higher engagement levels for utilitarian content and its diffusion potential. However, assertive content when combined with collaborative elements within content were observed to be equally and more effective similarly. Syrdal and Briggs (2018) in their thematic analysis of engaging content revealed the potential of utilitarian content as a generator of engagement preceded by humor and newsworthy content. In the current context, these framing approaches were not identified however, the findings on the utilitarian content elements were observed.

Framing approaches remained limited to the specified codes which were derived from KIBS content as per the content analysis procedure in the current study. However, both combined and independent utilisation of the available framing approaches in the current context remained effective.

The process of having multiple framing approaches beyond two did not produce significant engagement levels during the qualitative content analysis, therefore no positive or negative relationship can be observed between the number of framing approaches utilised and the level of engagement via reactions, comments and shares.

5.2.1.3 FGC with user involvement

All posts subjected to analysis inclusive of the field experiment was firm generated, therefore no user generated content was available for analysis. This projects a potential connection to the impact of internal antecedents and dynamics of professional social media use in contrast to personal use in the context of the developed contextual model. The categorisation of FGC and

UGC were coded as per the findings of Susarla, Oh and Tan (2016) with regard to content origin. Majority of pioneering authors identified engagement for Firm Generated Content in the past. User generated content has scarcely been explored other than in the context of user interaction with firm generated content.

In terms of user involvement however, passive usage and the availability of tools and options for passive participation in social networking sites were seen to impact the engagement levels of the posts. User involvement was highest in the form of passive engagement across all empirical investigations in the study thereby confirming the same. While KIBS entities analysed projected these results, past literature illustrates a 1:1 ratio of likes and shares indicating that within the B2B sphere, expressor, passive participation and engager interaction may differ vastly within sub-sectors. The previous case on Maersk line (Katona and Sarvary, 2014) illustrates this phenomenon from the same premise of assessing performance of organic posts as the current study (Katona and Sarvary, 2014).

However, in the current context the results of the analysis concluded that firm generated content was effective in garnering user engagement. While no user generated content was present for analysis, this was not observed as a factor hindering user involvement. A key theme which was observed during both phase I and II of the study is the active participation of users on FGC. Therefore it can be concluded that FGC drives user engagement in terms of digital content in the KIBS sphere. Exploring the comparative influence of UGC however in the KIBS context may further be required to establish a wider perspective for practitioners.

5.2.2 RQ2 - What factors facilitate content diffusion in the KIBS context?

In light of the above generic drivers to content engagement which have been identified in the analysis, a few key themes emerged from the current theoretical and empirical study with regard to key factors driving diffusion in KIBS content.

5.2.2.1 Dominant framing categories driving diffusion within the KIBS sphere

A key finding in terms of coding procedure highlighted that, as opposed to prominent past theoretical explorations by Syrdal and Briggs (2018) and Berger and Milkman (2012),

humorous, awe inspiring and other such high physiological response evoking framing categories were scarce in being used to drive diffusion in KIBS content. In the case of KIBS content it was found that the key framing approaches widely used by the sample group, were limited to Informative, utilitarian, assertive, expressive and collaborative content. This indicates a reluctance by the sample group to deviate to multiple framing approaches and also include humor and more informal framing approaches. Syrdal and Briggs (2018) in their research emphasises the higher appeal of humorous content while Berger and Milkman emphasize on similar factors including utilitarian content, however, within the KIBS context, past theoretical investigations were only validated in the potential of utilitarian content in driving engagement.

A potential cause for this may be the nature of the entities at hand in itself. These entities were observed as opting to project a professional image in the majority of content and refrained from projecting any other tonality which could dilute the brand. Essentially offering services to other businesses and requiring higher levels of value co-creation and customer participation in comparison to other B2B sectors, professional brand projection may be adopted to influence more objective oriented user interaction (Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2012; Bagdoniene & Kazakeviciute, 2009 and Baumann et al, 2017; Petri & Jacob, 2016).

5.2.2.2 Dominant content themes driving diffusion within the KIBS sphere

The key themes which emerged with high diffusion indicators include; assertive content in image format, Utilitarian content in video format, Assertive and collaborative posts in image format, Informative content in Link + Image format, Utilitarian + Collaborative posts in video format and Informative and utilitarian content in video format. Categorically, these themes were segregated as below to depict motivators for KIBS content diffusion and addressing RQ2:

5.2.2.3 Singular framing in visual formats

As per the analysis it was revealed that, in the KIBS context, diffusion potential in the form of engager participation was observed significantly through comments and shares in utilitarian content presented in video format. It was also observed that passive participation was experienced more in the forms of likes and reactions in the case of assertive content in image formats. Katona and Sarvary (2014) in a pioneering B2B digital content study identify instances

where imagery and links were widely utilised for content formatting. This strategy was found to be effective as per the authors and the current study reinforces these past theoretical findings. Yuki (2015) and Berger and Milkman (2012, 2013) also indicate that physiological responses may be more significant in motion or static visual content as opposed to text based content.

5.2.2.4 Dual framing in visual formats

Informative content in Link + Image format, Utilitarian + Collaborative posts in video format and Informative and utilitarian content in video format were derived as the key themes driving KIBS diffusion in the case of dual framing. Higher engager participation was observed for content in which a utilitarian purpose was present, in the forms of comments on LinkedIn and both comments and shares on Facebook (Yoon et al, 2018).

The findings reinforce past theoretical concepts on common framing approaches presented by Ordenes et al (2018) and Susarla, Oh and Tan (2016) where the listed framing approaches are initially identified in literature. General content framing was observed to have more framing approaches within content however, the KIBS sphere was observed to be limited to a specific set of framing approaches in common across participants.

This may indicate a fear of undesirable brand associations and the need to adhere to more functional and hedonic and overall more valuable content to increase fan-page participation (Jahn and Kunz, 2012). Past literature identifies the potential of such content to also enhance interactivity among the fans of the page thereby creating more user generated brand centric content subject to higher diffusion.

5.3 Managerial Implications (For KIBS entities and their stakeholders)

In practice, the study offers KIBS entities and functional staff theoretical and empirical evidence on the need for developing bespoke strategies for digital content marketing and avoiding replication of B2C strategies for effective engager participation enablement. Furthermore, the need for specialised skill and resources in developing context specific content strategies may also be required and can be considered as a lucrative investment for the future for these entities. The study could also assist by indicating platform specific approaches which may be

required by KIBS entities in the case of various Social Networking sites. This is required as behaviour across different platforms will be different in each case, however in the KIBS context this phenomenon requires empirical exploration beyond the current study which may be inconclusive in this regard.

In terms of tactical planning, the current study offers a wide variety of insights in terms of independent formatting, framing and content development strategies while also indicating response levels by the key user categories which can be used as a foundation for a collated performance measurement framework in future. Overall based on the findings, the following guideline has been developed for use for the KIBS sector to develop effective content marketing strategies:

5.3.1 Content and platform strategy

It is identified as highly impactful to have a **customised digital content strategy** for KIBS entities based on the type of audience and sector in which it operates. Similarly various social media platforms may require various approaches to initiate user involvement. This can be considered by independently analysing the platforms and content performance. The overall strategy requires an approach which maintains emotional valence, novelty and innovation to garner higher engagement rates and also to alleviate monotony and overcome clutter related barriers. This is well illustrated by Katona and Sarvary (2014) in their case study on Maersk line and its benchmarked performance on social media as previously discussed.

5.3.2 Content format

It is advisable to predominantly focus on visual content formats in terms of presenting content, and in the case of Facebook, interactive status updates can be brought into the content format strategy as an alternative to the mix. Primarily, images and videos have proven to be highly effective in generating engagement, out of which in various instances, the format should be chosen as per the framing approach.

5.3.3 Content framing

Primarily, the objective of the digital content strategy is to maximise engager participation. In the case of KIBS entities, as per the study, a mixed approach to content framing was observed as most effective across the content dissemination plan. More impactful engagement outcomes may be experienced by predominantly utilising the ***utilitarian and informative framing approaches with visual content formats***. As per the empirical data derived from the study, higher engager involvement was viewed for this stream of content. In terms of maintaining traction and active presence, ***Assertive and collaborative content with visual content formats also can be used***, as this format was observed to generate higher passive engagement in the KIBS context. In order to capture all types of categorical user presence therefore in terms of passive participants, expressers and engagers, the above approaches alongside a mix of singular framing approaches such as utilitarian, assertive and informative approaches within the tactical mix of the content strategy may prove to be most effective.

5.3.4 Tonality

In terms of content tone, unless in the case of contextually relevant news sharing such as market trends which may project negative outcomes, it is advised to maintain a majority of positivity in content. Sadness or neutral tone with scarce emotional evocation has been proven as ineffective in the majority of studies by pioneering authors in related literature. In practice and as per the current findings, positive tonality was viewed as a successful strategy.

5.3.5 Content structuring

While content structuring projects minimal direct influence on engagement and do not precede internal and external drivers of engagement, it can be observed that appropriate captioning of content is required especially considering the preferred consumption trends for visual content.

5.3.6 Brand conversation facilitation

Taking into consideration the overall findings of the research, it should be noted that “direct selling” may not be impactful with these entities, therefore it may be important to ensure that in order to facilitate brand conversation it is critical to present contextually relevant content which seeks to assist the audience with useful insights while also enabling higher network exposure through socializing oriented content.

5.4 Implications for researchers

An exploratory approach was utilised in the current study in order to derive higher levels of accuracy in the findings. Primarily the work of Doran et al (2015), Li et al, (2018) and Hsieh and Shannon (2005) was used as the basis for the qualitative content analysis and coding development.

The qualitative content analysis approach which has been utilised can be replicated alongside the confirmatory field testing experiment for future researchers. A highlight in this regard is the use of organic data as opposed to the use of promoted content and paid advertisements, which are deemed to offer more reliable audience engagement insights.

A key focus for future researchers in this stream would be the extensive ethics focus taken in the current study as sensitive corporate data was used for analysis. The confidentiality spectrum needs to be considered end to end in future research efforts inclusive of maintaining complete anonymity.

A further future consideration is the reciprocal offer for participants which was developed to stimulate participation. This process can be further replicated for a larger sample group, however, it is also advisable to rely on personal referrals for recruitment with niche KIBS groups.

The adoption of a learning approach from phase I to phase II is a key highlight in the case of methodological contributions. The study of past content to devise the ideal field experiment strategy which could yield desired outcomes in a more reliable and accurate manner is a

replicable approach. In the case of the field experiment further, it is also observed that usage of impressions as a basis for statistical testing may prove to be inconsistent, therefore, it is ideal to use the number of visitors.

5.5 Limitations

Multiple limitations were experienced during the study. Primarily from the larger population, only a very small sample group has been able to be tested due to information security concerns despite a comprehensive ethics process. It was observed that unless introduced by a trusted mediator, recruitment of participants was challenging. Therefore, a wide cross section of KIBS sectors are not included in the study and only a fraction of sub-sectors participated.

The study also empirically investigates only a segment of the conceptual model developed in terms of empirical testing, therefore many other complementing factors such as the intervening factors and demotivators require future empirical investigation (Khan and Vong, 2014; Alhabash et al, 2014; Scholz et al, 2017; Hayes and King, 2019 and Kim, 2018). Primarily, the factors of internal antecedents also require research focus especially in relation to factors such as the influence of personal self in the KIBS context as per the theoretical foundations suggested by Belk (2014). Further limitations were experienced in exploring behavioural influences of social currency and social capital driven engagement motives in the KIBS context (Yuki, 2015; VanMeter, Grisaffe & Chonko, 2015).

Limited channels were subjected to analysis as all participants were only active on two social networking sites and had data pertaining to user engagement in these sites. It was observed that all participants commonly utilised only two channels which included LinkedIn and Facebook. However, RS_01 and RS_02 were observed to have a presence on YouTube, Twitter and Instagram although the data and audience were insufficient for analysis and was eliminated as equal ground was required to be met during the analysis for all three participants. Within the channel data, a further limitation was the contrasting focus on platform leveraging by the participants, where some participants focused majorly on LinkedIn while others focused on Facebook. The results therefore may indicate substantial disparities.

In terms of framing approaches it was observed that the approach to presenting content only contained a limited set of content framing approaches among the volunteering participants which omitted a few key approaches evoking high physiological arousal such as humour, entertaining and awe inspiring content. Given the nature of the entities and relevant niche digital audiences this factor may not be essential, however given the significant link between personal and professional social network site usage, it may offer new insights and potential new directions to the current findings.

5.6 Future research directions

A plethora of future research directions have emerged from the study, as a result of it being a pioneering research focused on synthesising academic perspectives on KIBS and digital content marketing. However, the following three key future research directions are identified as the top priorities for further research through the findings and literature review:

5.6.1 Expanding synthesised theoretical and empirical research on a wider cross-section of KIBS sub-sectors

It has been observed that KIBS related literature is relatively in its infancy as a research stream on its own therefore, it may be further needed to explore this aspect prior to exploring digital content marketing in each of these sub-sectors. However, the current study examined three KIBS sub-sectors. Although this may be sufficient to commence empirical explorations, in order to establish the validity of the guidelines and answers to research questions and to unravel further dimensions to this new perspective, it is pivotal to expand research across many more KIBS sub-sectors.

These may include financial services, human resources and also information technology and automation related areas for an initial approach. Wider sectoral explorations may validate or contradict elements of the conceptual view, which will strengthen the foundations for the future in terms of synthesised KIBS and digital marketing literature and in refining the strategic guideline offered previously.

5.6.2 In-depth exploration of behavioural trends and dynamics specific to KIBS digital audiences (In relation to content consumption, engagement and diffusion)

A key drawback which was further observed was the lack of theoretical and empirical academic investigation on KIBS specific audience dynamics in an internal antecedent perspective. It is pivotal to first identify the concepts of content engagement and content consumption in the context of KIBS digital audiences and their psychological behaviour. While fragmented evidence is present on general B2B audience behaviour, it has been evident that context specific data is scarce. These findings are reflected in the section pertaining to internal antecedents in the conceptual diagram in the forms of digital self, social currency and social capital.

Although the current study provides an insight into potential behavioural dynamics of a few KIBS sub-sectors, the findings cannot be generalised across all sub-sectors and also cannot be confirmed in an internal antecedent perspective. It was observed that platform related differences and content presentation related differences are already persistent among the limited participant group in this study. Therefore, it may be required as a priority to also analyse in-depth through both qualitative and quantitative research on how these audience members engage as individuals. Categorical exploration can be pursued in this regard by using research questions such as (1) What social currency factors drive content engagement in terms of passive participation in the financial services sectors? (2) What are the behavioural dynamics of engagers when consuming content in the Informations Technology sector?.

The above potential research questions may offer invaluable insights on how various types of user groups behave and the related dynamics in the various contexts. These studies can be replicated across multiple sub sectors.

5.6.3 Exploration of the influence of intervening factors and demotivators of content engagement in the KIBS sphere

A further important research direction is exploring the impacts of intervening factors on KIBS content engagement and diffusion. Past literature identifies multiple findings on bandwagon

heuristics, network overlap and other such intervening factors and its general impact on engagement, consumptions and diffusion, however, in the KIBS context, these factors remain largely unexplored. It is pivotal to direct future academic attention in this regard as they may carry a significant impact on how the audience engages with content. In general practice, it has been observed that KIBS is a sector which largely works on referrals, this phenomenon was evident when recruiting participants as referrals were the most successful recruitment technique. This indicates a significant level of dependence and trust among known individuals within the specific sub-sectors and also across sub-sectors. As niche and close networks are observed in this scenario, it can be anticipated that there may be a cascading effect of the same phenomenon on digital content engagement and consumption, therefore, this may be a lucrative future research direction.

Furthermore, it can also be observed that demotivators to content engagement need to be considered within this sphere as a priority to shed academic focus on. While exploring the factors driving content engagement it is also important to explore what factors may potentially demotivate engagement which may include excessive calls to actions and sales pitching as per past literature. A field experiment such as the one conducted in the current study may be applicable for such scenarios while a qualitative content analysis approach may further offer valuable insights by dissecting content for terms and phrases which may dispel engagement.

While these remain the three key future directions which may offer valuable insights in furthering this synthesized space, Appendix One elaborates on a plethora of extended future research directions which can be pursued by future researchers. (Refer Appendix 01).

5.7 Conclusion

Digitalization and the introduction of SNS ushered in a significant paradigm shift in business and consumer interaction within the last decade. The previously physical interaction based relationships have now migrated to a predominantly online based ecosystem, which has proven to be a positive shift in most aspects. However it is also challenging in some circumstances E.g : lack of control on viral diffusion of misinformation or negative consumer experiences, with a brand, product or service.

The current study set out to explore two key research questions, these consisted of the below:

- (1) What factors facilitate digital content engagement?
- (2) What factors facilitate digital content diffusion in the KIBS sector

These two questions were succinctly answered through a comprehensive theoretical review, the development of an integrated conceptual visualisation of key concepts embedded in past literature and a two-pronged confirmative empirical study.

The theoretical review offered a sound foundation for empirical investigation by visualising the crucial elements and its potential relationships with regard to the current study. This conceptualisation was based on key extractions from past literature. Internal and external antecedents of content engagement and the potential KIBS specific motivators of content diffusion formed the basis of the visualisation by dissecting past literature and extracting key themes from pioneering authors. Complementing perspectives derived from literature with regard to potential demotivators of engagement and intervention factors were also comprehensively identified for future research.

The qualitative content analysis identified factors driving both general and KIBS specific audience engagement in the forms of message formatting, framing and content origin. The study delved into detail on content themes combining these factors and corresponding behavioural trends of passive participants, expressers and engagers to offer a comprehensive view on content effectiveness and its related dimensions.

Content diffusion in the KIBS sector was more aptly addressed by uncovering dominant framing approaches and key formatting and framing themes that have generated engager participation. It was revealed through empirical research that utilitarian content evokes significant engager level interaction with KIBS content, while assertive content evokes passive and expressive participation. The field testing experiment also generated results which are aligned with the findings of the qualitative content analysis. The results depicted a higher engagement trend for utilitarian video format content combined with a collaborative approach, while also reinforcing the effectiveness of assertive content when combined with visual formatting.

In the case of KIBS and all other commercial entities however, engager level interaction is viewed as more effective and purposeful, therefore utilitarian (helping) based content was observed as more effective. However it is also indicated that assertive (selling) based content is also effective, therefore a mix of these prominent approaches may be most effective for KIBS entities. However it is pivotal to maintain a majority of visual formatting as per the findings.

Therefore in addressing the research topic at hand pertaining to “Selling Vs. Helping : Exploring The Ideal Digital Content Steering Strategy For Optimal Online Customer Engagement In Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS)” it was found that “Helping” based content which is theoretically termed as ‘utilitarian’ content has been more effective in this regard while promotional and selling oriented content (Assertive) has also had significant traction but marginally less than utilitarian content. However, both methods have been proven as vital drivers for overall user engagement and content diffusion in the Knowledge Intensive Business Services Sector. These conditions and findings however, may have significant refining and moderation if the outlined key future research directions are further pursued in academia in this newly synthesized space. Exploring in-depth the intervention factors, demotivators and KIBS specific audience behaviour remain as detrimental determinants among many others of a more effective content strategy focused on leveraging audience participation and network contagion in the case of KIBS.

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Appendices

Appendix One

AUTEC approval letter

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

11 June 2019

Kate Jones
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Kate

Re Ethics Application: **19/127 Selling vs Helping: exploring the ideal digital content steering strategy for optimal online customer engagement in Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS)**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 10 June 2022.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation, then you are responsible for obtaining it. If the research is undertaken outside New Zealand, you need to meet all locality legal and ethical obligations and requirements. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries, please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,



Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: cpq0877@autuni.ac.nz

Appendix Two

Extended future research directions in tabular format

In addition to the three key future research directions which have been identified in Chapter five, the following table outlines further research directions which can be utilised by future researchers who wish to further the current study.

Section	Overview of directions	Potential Future Research Questions
Theoretical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall need for more synthesised literature with KIBS specific theoretical and empirical investigation ● Sectoral exploration of KIBS has been less in past research this is a good future research direction - maybe different models will be required for different niche sectors as in the case of KIBS ● Nature of engagement for B2B specific contexts have not been explored - this can be further investigated ● Most importantly the impact of engagement of conversion / business outcomes have also not been explored.- This will offer great insights in future - Study is done by O'Brien and Toms (2008) initially on this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploring contextual KIBS Settings : EX: Evaluating digital audience engagement behaviour with promotional / assertive content in the financial services sector. ● What are the types of digital content consumers within the KIBS sphere : exploration of how the KIBS audience behaviour intentions / types differ from other audiences ● Exploring relationships between high performing digital content and sales conversions in the KIBS sector : E.g: nature of business conversions / referral marketing from regularly engaged members of the audience
Empirical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploring the comparative dynamics of organic versus paid content ● Wider channel analysis ● The integrated model needs to be explored for validity in areas which were not tested such as in-depth aspects of internal antecedents, contingency factors, demotivators of engagement ● Replication of strategies across platforms 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the nature of engagement of a paid post versus an organic / unpaid post on Facebook of a KIBS entity? 2. Exploring the comparative performance of various content framing approaches on Instagram/Twitter/Youtube in the KIBS context 3. Image and video versus status updates in KIBS; exploring comparative

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KIBS Specific audience classifications, objectives of participation (E.g: percentage of spectators)are yet to be contextually identified - Further testing is required ● KIBS Specific diffusion patterns have not been identified ● Comparative qualitative performance and outcomes of paid versus organic data is required as only anecdotal evidence was available. ● Viral content diffusion in the KIBS sphere 	<p>user interaction and engager participation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What are the comparative effects of posting the same content across multiple SNS in the KIBS context? Are platform specific strategies required? 5. Paid versus organic content : The impact on sales / business conversions in the finance / HR (or other KIBS Sub Sectors) 6. Exploring the influence of social currency on content engagement in the KIBS sector 7. What is the impact of network dynamics and bandwagon heuristics on content engagement in the KIBS sphere? 8. The role of user centricity in KIBS digital content engagement 9. Field experiment on demotivators of content engagement in the KIBS sphere (Can also be framed into various sub-sectors of KIBS)
<p>Methodological</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analysis of data from a wider cross-section of KIBS entities will make the findings more validated in future ● Impression based statistical analysis can be further attempted as it was not successful here 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exploring the comparative impacts of engagement versus impressions on KIBS digital content 2. What is the impact of status updates as a content marketing strategy in KIBS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More formats can be included and tested for effectiveness within the same scope such as status updates in comparison to • absence of an integrated performance measurement system in SNS - Future research will be required on measuring cross-platform effectiveness more accurately 	<p>settings?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Developing a conceptual model / framework for assessing overall SNS performance for the KIBS Sector
Managerial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of comparative performance of entities which consider digital content marketing as a strategic initiative aligned with company strategy versus as a complimenting non-essential function • Comparative influence of dedicated resources in digital marketing on digital content performance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluating to approaches to content marketing strategy in KIBS entities - Comparative study on SNS performance of a company considering digital marketing as a strategic focus against an entity operating with it as a non-essential function

Appendix Three

RS_03 AUDIT REPORT

Below is a sample audit report generated for a participant as a reciprocal value offering for volunteering for the study. A detailed audit was conducted on the participant's social media channels alongside the presentation of an in-depth guideline on improving their presence as per the audit, based on the experience and skills of the primary researcher.

Three reports inclusive of the below were developed for the three participants as part of the qualitative content analysis and field experiment.

Digital Marketing Audit Report

RS_03 - Mortgage Brokers

Prepared by Marie De Silva - Digital Marketing Consultant

25th September 2019

Contents

1. General overview and key objectives	Page 02
2. The digital landscape in New Zealand	Page 03 - 06
3. Content Marketing Audit	Page 07 - 20
4. Social media performance audit	Page 21 - 31
5. Search Engine Optimisation and website external audit findings	Page 32 - 36
6. Overall recommendations to enhance digital presence	Page 36 - 39

1.0 General overview and objectives

The following document outlines the findings of the digital marketing audit conducted for RS_03 based in Auckland, New Zealand. The report was collated after a thorough analysis of the Facebook and Linked In presence of the company along with an external audit of the website and its online presence and optimisation.

Taking into consideration the findings from these channels, recommendations have been provided to enhance the digital presence of the company and to increase conversions and lead generation for business development.

It is important to note that in order to conduct the analysis data was obtained from organic traction observed in the channels as opposed to paid advertising results as the latter does not project an accurate summary of activity to base recommendations on. It is imperative to focus on growing audience organically and to minimise paid efforts to ensure sustainable qualitative outcomes.

Proposed digital marketing objectives :

The following four key objectives are proposed as the benchmarks in analysing digital performance going forward:

1. Increasing lead generation through the digital / social media strategy
2. Increasing organic following and engagement as opposed to leveraging paid promotions for sustainable digital audience growth
3. Development of a digital advocacy base for the organisation - Proposed on the basis that user-to-user engagement and brand advocacy is significantly more impactful than organisation to user.
4. Driving traffic to the website of the company as the hub of digital activity

It is advised to have key performance indicators in line with the above key objectives

2.0 The Digital landscape in New Zealand

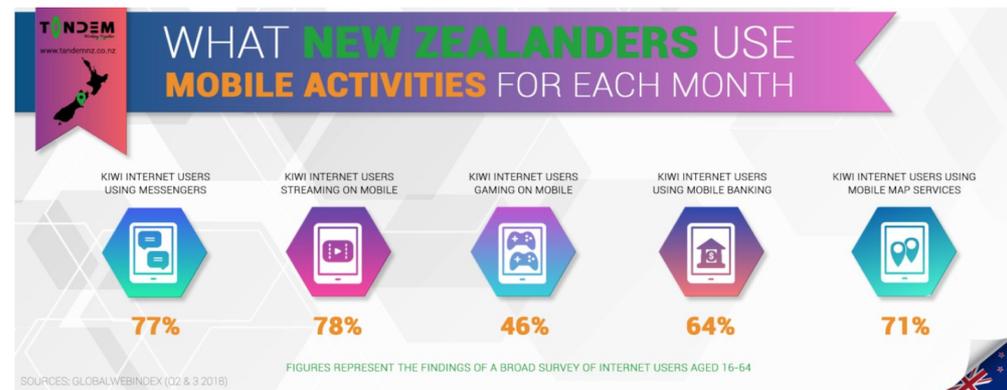
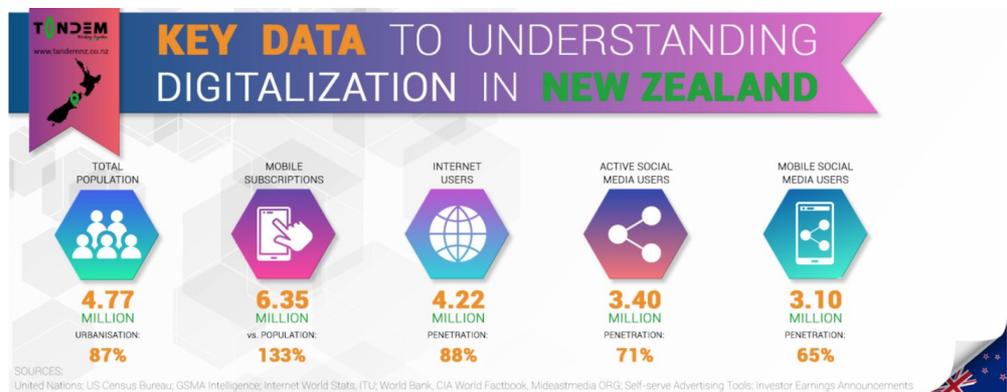
The below summarised findings are presented as a guideline on the trends which should be taken into account when the company devises its digital strategy. The points offer an overview of digital behaviour in New Zealand.

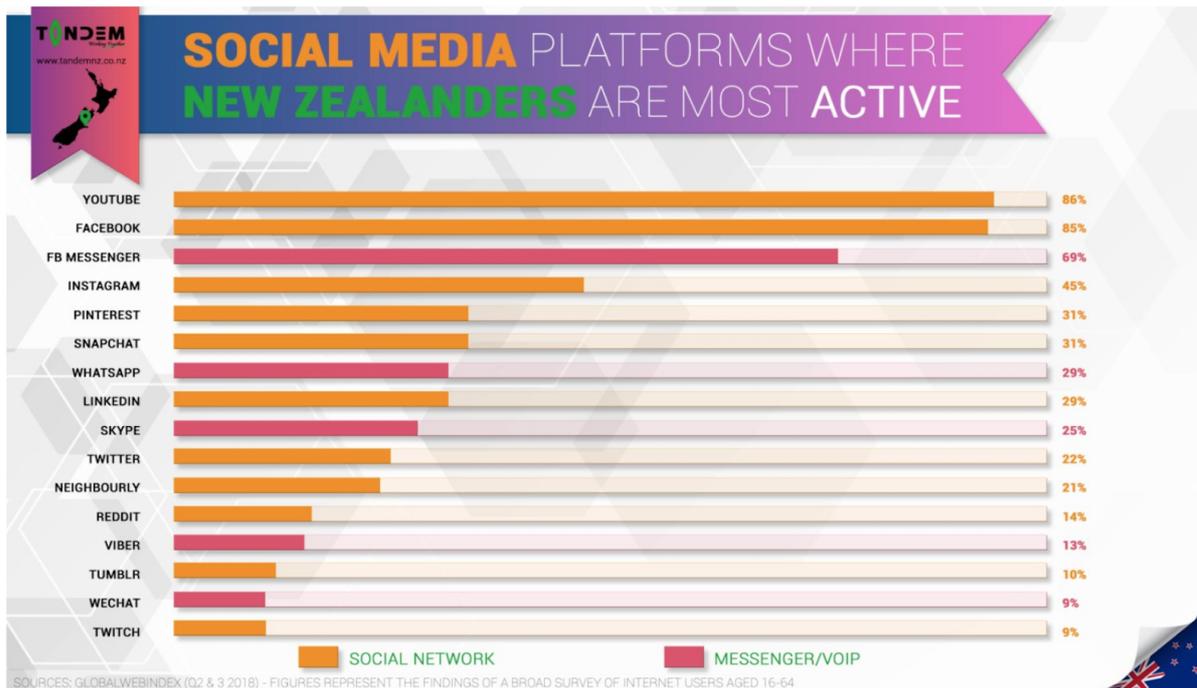
Internet penetration and e-commerce in New Zealand

The following statistics have been sourced from Tandem, UN and Global Web Index in order to provide an insight into the trends the company needs to focus on going forward.

- As at 2018, it was observed that the internet penetration rate in New Zealand was 88%, and the most critical element here is the mobile subscription rate and 71% of the population in the country being users of social media and 65% being mobile social media users.
- In terms of consumer behaviour over 80% of the population rely on digital information prior to making purchase decisions.
- Youtube, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn can be identified as the top 05 channels in which users are active with 86% being on YouTube and 85% on Facebook. This trend has been consistent in the past years and shows the key channels which can be utilized for low cost - high impact marketing.
- New Zealanders appear to want to be connected more than Australians. As of January 2019, 21% of users have used voice-initiated search, and this is predicted to grow with a third of internet users in New Zealand are using three or more devices to access the internet each week.
- 15 to 24-year-old Kiwis spend over six hours a week online via their smartphones, compared with the overall average.
- Kiwi women are more prone to online shopping and searching prior to engaging with suppliers / sellers (This is also reflected in the reach statistics derived from the Facebook page analytics of the company)

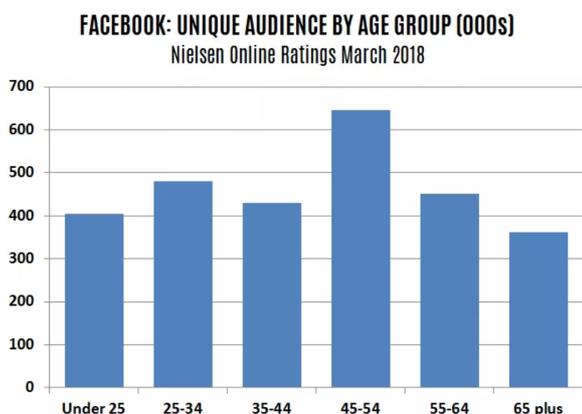
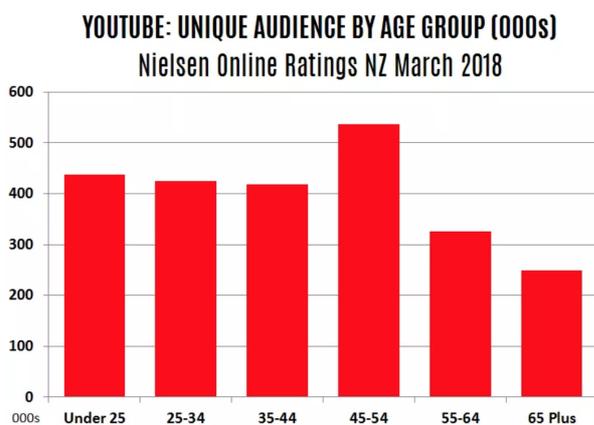
- 90% of Kiwis between age 18 and 39 are on social media. According to Nielsen Online Rating report of 2018, Facebook alone reaches 61% of Kiwis in a typical month.
- It is immensely essential for business owners to ensure that their websites and apps work across multiple platforms if they want to ride this growth market. Users will only stay on a mobile website so long as it gives them a good user experience. Young metropolitan consumers are more likely to use their mobiles for online shopping than older demographics. Adolescents between the age group of 15-24-year-olds spend over 6 hours a week online on their smartphones.



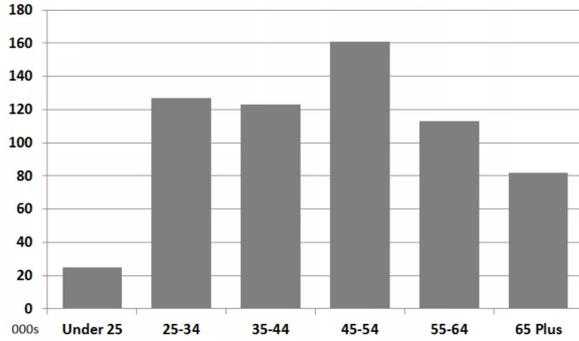


Age group wise social media platform penetration

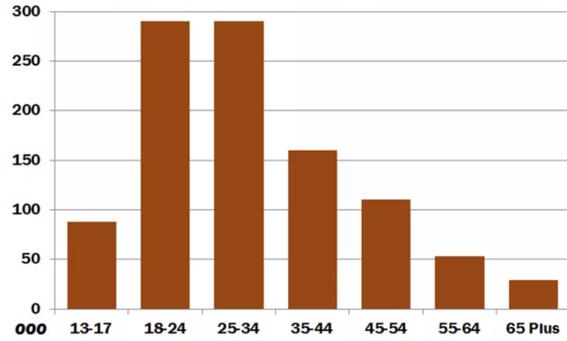
The above graph displays the channels where most of the population is active in terms of social media, however, it is also imperative to delve into the age wise platform penetration to analyse the impact on the social media and digital activity of the company. The following statistics selected from Socialmedia.org.nz offers a comprehensive age-wise breakdown of social media channel usage in the top 05 channels.



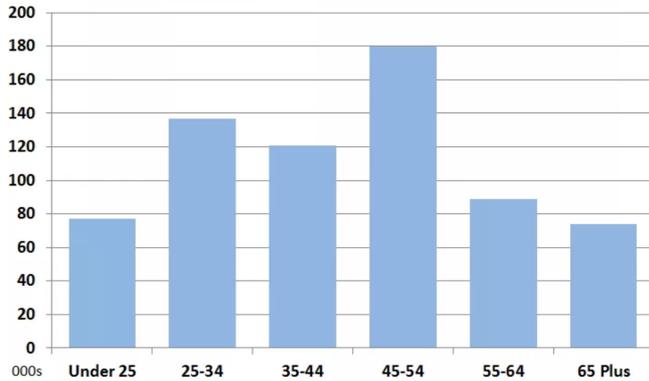
LINKEDIN: UNIQUE AUDIENCE BY AGE GROUP (000s)
Nielsen Online Ratings NZ March 2018



INSTAGRAM: UNIQUE AUDIENCE BY AGE GROUP (000s)
Instagram data NZ March 2018



TWITTER: UNIQUE AUDIENCE BY AGE GROUP (000s)
Nielsen Online Ratings NZ March 2018



In all channels it can be observed that the 25 to 54 age group is active. Primarily this group also includes the targeted clientele / potential clientele for the company, therefore presence across all these channels will leverage digital presence largely and also aid bringing more volumes of traffic to the website for lead conversion.

3.0 Content Marketing Audit & Recommendations

In order to conduct the content analysis, Facebook and LinkedIn posts with the highest reach were selected to be analysed alongside some posts which have not performed at ideal level.

3.1 Facebook page Content Analysis

The following dataset was obtained from the company page insights in order to develop the audit summary and offer recommendations placed below the same. Posts with over 100 people reach were selected for the analysis and corresponding rates of reactions, engagements and video views were explored. The items highlighted in blue represent the key posts which gave rise to the audit findings and subsequent recommendations.

Date of publication	Content Format	Message content / Tone	Post clicks	Overall engagements	Positive trends		
					People reach (Posts >100)	3-second video views	Reactions, comments & shares
4th October 2017	Link (Humor based image)	We're seeing quite a few first home buyers getting quick and easy mortgage pre-approvals from their bank, and then having big problems at purchase time! NOT COOL! Here's our advice on how to get around	1	2	385		1
4th April 2018	Link (Utilitarian)	We've got some fresh meat on the blog - WHY SO MANY FAILED AUCTIONS? What buyers and sellers need to be asking... Take a read	9	9	135		0
23rd April 2018	Video - Shared from third party (utilitarian)	Always funny seeing yourself on screen! Had a chat to Jack last week on TVNZ Breakfast about pulling together that first home deposit... and with 10%, even.	42	60	275	153	18

23rd April 2019	Link - Shared from third party (utilitarian)	So, what's changed in pulling a deposit together? Stuff recently asked us a few questions - https://www.stuff.co.nz/.../how-to-get-a-deposit-together-to-...	21	26	233		5
18th June 2018	Link - Own (Utilitarian)	Toyed with the notion of packing up in Auckland and heading to a smaller town? More lifestyle... more budget for a house... less traffic?! We reckon there's quite a bit more to ponder before you make the leap.	24	28	154		4
15th August 2018	Link - Own (Utilitarian)	We're often asked if we have crystal balls that we use to see the future. Sadly not (or we'd be off buying Lotto tickets), but we do have something that's just as good for making predictions. Here's how:	2	6	114		4
21st August 2018	Link - Own (Utilitarian)	The question of whether it'll get easier to buy your first house is one that I'm asking myself after a recent email from a client. They're thinking it's better to wait it out and see what happens. Frankly, I think they're crazy. Here's why:	3	4	143		1
23rd November 2018	Link - Own (Utilitarian)	We've written about the issue of consent before. It's a biggie. Holds up the very best of house sales - and the problem's definitely not gone away. In fact we reckon banks are getting even tougher on unconsented works. Here's what you need to know...	9	13	116		4
28th November 2018	Link - Own (Utilitarian)	What's your opinion on first home buyers buying brand new homes? Seems everyone's got an opinion on that at the moment! And it's left us wondering what the big issue is... Here's Cam's take.	6	7	110		1
1st December 2018	Link - Own (Utilitarian)	Prep can make the whole experience of buying your first home soooooo much easier. Here are our tips on getting all your ducks in a row.	2	5	122		3
6th December 2018	Image	Lovely Christmas gift from an awesome law firm we deal with. Cheers!	8	10	143		2
18th December 2018	Image	House build complete! Congrats Kelly and Tim, now you can move out of the caravan and sleep in a real bed!! CH	7	11	187		4

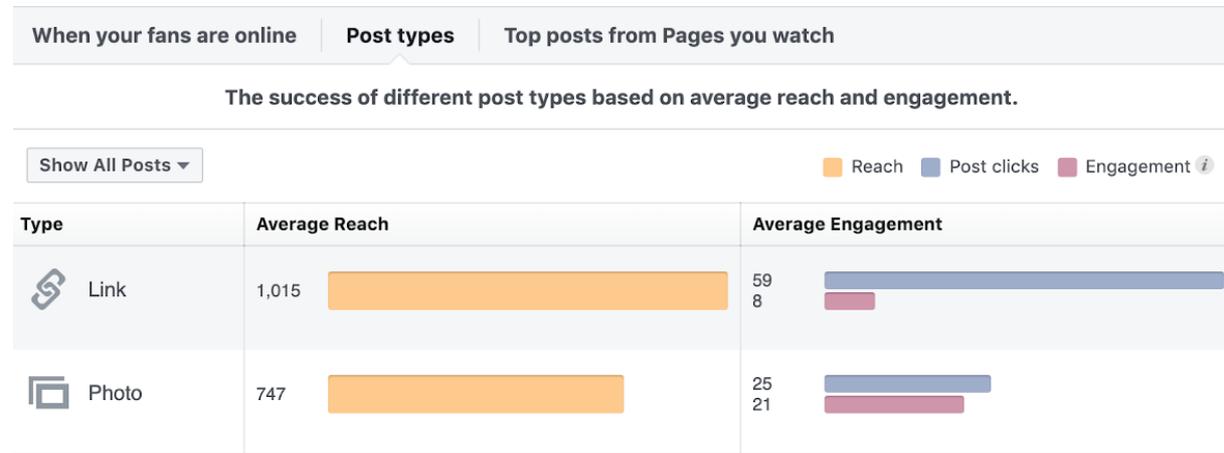
11th January 2019	Link - Shared from third party (utilitarian)	All first time buyers face a steep learning curve. Have a read of this article. All really good tips here from people who have recently climbed it. #firsthomebuyers #learningcurve #mortgagebroker	10	12	176		2
22nd January 2019	Video - Interactive and utilitarian	Have you got a mortgage question or property buying question that you just can't find an answer for? Throw it down in the comments section and Cam will answer it for you! #aucklandmortgage #mortgagehelp... See more	141	192	864	395	51
25th January 2019	Video + 3rd party collaboration	Changes to bank behaviour mean the cash flow from your portfolio could be about to harden. And it's got nothing to do with CGT, RTA, ringfencing etc etc	42	56	287	157	14
30th January 2019	Video	Paying your mortgage off quickly isn't rocket science. You only need to know 3 things.	64	89	271	186	25
31st January 2019	Update	The \$24,000 flat white If you work in the city and grab a coffee every day for about \$4 and you have a mortgage, you're not gonna like what I'm about to say. If you swapped the caffeine hit for a mortgage hit you'll find that you could reduce the total interest bill on your mortgage by \$24,000. And you'd pay the mortgage off about 2 years quicker. Don't worry, I'm no saint. I still drink coffee (and eat smashed avocado). I just know what it's costing me.	57	77	456		20
11th February 2019	Status update	On being Dedicated: When you're saving for a house (or saving for anything, actually), it's natural to wander off. To lose focus. The target can seem so big!	8	15	188		7

13th February 2019	Status update - Informative	<p>What if you pretended, just for a little while...</p> <p>What if, you acted as if.</p> <p>What if you pretended you owned a house already and had to meet the payments on a humungous mortgage?</p> <p>What if you added together your current rent payment plus your KiwiSaver contribution plus your other savings (you are saving, right?)</p> <p>What if that formula demonstrated that you can actually afford that humungous mortgage (and therefore be able to buy a house)?</p> <p>It takes effort to do this calculation. But not much effort.</p> <p>FACT - If you can do this and do it for a while then the bank is more likely to consider your loan application favourably.</p> <p>PS – the payments on a \$600,000 mortgage at say 5% interest over 30 years are \$3220/month. Try doing the sums and see what your result is.</p>	7	8	168		1
20th February 2019	Video	<p>This week a bank told us that their turnaround times were slow. Not great news but I don't 'name and shame', they all suffer this problem sometimes. The moral of the story is that when buying a property, you need to allow time for things that are beyond your control.</p>	20	33	220	112	13
4th March 2019	Image	<p>Very pleased with the office tweaks completed over the weekend! Fantastic art has always been on the walls and now a bit of greenery etc to soften things and improve the working environment.</p> <p>Thanks to Helen Shaw and her team at Picturebook Interiors for doing a lovely job.</p>	49	72	270		23

20th march 2019	Video	<p>Pain Point: bank statements (live demo)</p> <p>Getting your paperwork to us can be a pain.</p> <p>We need it in a specific format, up to date and all at once so we can pitch you in the best possible light to the bank and get a quality loan approval for you.</p> <p>The good news is that we've got this cool portal which helps solve the problem and can deliver all those statements to us in under 2 minutes.</p> <p>Cam goes through a live demo using his own bank to show you how it works.</p>	50	62	208	121	12
28th March 2019	Status Update	<p>Does it sound scary when you hear people saying "there are downside risks to mortgage rates"?</p> <p>Don't worry. It means your interest rate isn't going up.</p> <p>Hell, it might even drop.</p>	2	3	166		1
17th April 2019	Status update	<p>Tony Alexander, economist, BNZ</p> <p>"Inflation has just come in less than expected for the March quarter (making perhaps ten years of downward inflation rate surprises now), and that means borrowers are likely to enjoy additional interest rate falls soon".</p> <p>Don't fix too long peeps. Three year rates look cheap today but if Tony is right they could look expensive by Christmas 2019. CH</p>	0	2	141		2
15th May 2019	Link - Informativ e	<p>Long time, no post! But, this is definitely a topic I want to talk about...</p> <p>Just what does broccoli have to do with interest rates 🥬 🥬 🥬 ?! Or more directly, do banks need to refresh their thinking when it comes to lending restrictions and inflation? I reckon so...</p>	10	15	179		5

22nd may 2019	Image	Do the mahi, get the treats. (Appreciation from clients post)	32	53	217		21
9th July 2019	Status update	<p>What would Noeline say?</p> <p>A customer came to me today and asked "should I refix now at 3.79% or should I wait for rates to fall some more?"</p> <p>There is talk of interest rates continuing to drop and maybe settling around 3.5% in late 2019.</p> <p>Falling rates are a possibility, for sure. Instead of taking a good fixed rate today, you could certainly wait for the bottom to arrive.</p> <p>But it might not happen either.</p> <p>The cost of waiting is 1.21%</p>	17	24	201		7
12th July 2019	Link - Informativ e	So, how low do you think interest rates will go? Here's our take on the where interest rates are headed and just what happens when they bottom out.	12	14	166		2
5th August 2019	Link - Shared from third party (utilitarian)	<p>Rookie mistake.</p> <p>There could be more to this story than meets the eye but the takeaway is clear - get some advice before you sign up.</p>	41	44	234		3
28th August 2019	Link - Informativ e	Interest rates have fallen, and now bank stress tests have finally dropped too, which makes owning a home just that bit easier... but just how much easier?!	9	9	117		0
4th Septem ber 2019	Link - Shared from third party (utilitarian)	<p>5% deposit on a first house!</p> <p>Looks like it's back. There will be some detail to get your head around. But in general terms this will be helpful to many of you. We'll report back as the situation develops...</p>	54	73	250		19

Post Type performance



Video performance

Page | Inbox **16** | Notifications **8** | **Insights** | Publishing Tools | Ad Centre | More ▾ | Settings | Help ▾

Top videos > HIGHEST-PERFORMING VIDEOS BY MINUTES VIEWED FROM 01/08-14/09 ⓘ

Video	Published	Minutes...	3-sec video views
Do you really need 20% deposit to buy a house? 2:27	● 13/02/2019 22:23	1.7K	4.3K
Two tips to get you bank ready 2:49	● 22/01/2019 17:28	945	2.8K
Why is no one buying kiwibuild houses? 2:34	● 14/02/2019 12:57	634	809
This weeks been busy! 1:48	● 28/02/2019 17:30	395	1.3K
Mortgage Q&A time 0:49	● 21/01/2019 11:06	125	395
Pain Point: bank statements (live demo) Getting your paperwork to us can be a... 3:22	● 19/03/2019 14:13	121	121

Video	Published	Minutes...	3-sec video views
	11:06		
Pain Point: bank statements (live demo) Getting your paperwork to us can be a...	19/03/2019 14:13	121	121
The secret to paying off your mortgage - part 1	29/01/2019 20:00	94	186
Landlords: about to get a cash flow crunch?	24/01/2019 09:00	91	157
Get prepared, do it early	19/02/2019 16:32	90	112
Lending Lowdown - Going Guarantor	09/08/2015 16:07	13	8

SHOW 10 MORE

3.1.1 Facebook audit summary and recommendations based on above

Element	Description	Audit summary	Recommendations
Content Framing (Tone and appeal)	Analysis of content appeal in terms of tone taken to present the content to the audience	As per available data it can be observed that most commonly informational and utilitarian appeals have been used to present content on the Facebook and humor has been used scarcely. However highest conversions in terms of 'post clicks'. While the humorous approach has brought in reach (>100) sustainable conversions have been observed in	It is therefore recommended to continue usage of utilitarian / informational content in the majority of the posts (80%), however in order to also bring in an element of differentiation, humor can be used alternatively for engagement.

		utilitarian and informational content appeals	
Content Format	This audit element seeks to identify which content format is appealing more to the audience of the business Ex : Imagery, Videos, Links	Current analytics project that visual content is more engaging - Videos and images are more appealing to the audience as per the post analytics and Links are ranked third in order of engagement impact.	Taking into consideration that the current content formatting strategy is effective, it is recommended to maintain the same. An important element is also to enable captions in the videos as a great percentage of mobile video viewers tend to watch videos on mute and read the captions / narration.
Posting Frequency	The number of posts issued by the administrator on the company page per month	Currently it can be observed that the company maintains a 2 - 5 post frequency per month however the frequency of posting has no impact on content performance or conversions	Ideally 5 posts per month given the audience of the company would be ideal to maintain. Although there is a common notion that higher posts garner higher attention on Facebook and LinkedIn this may impact negative reactions therefore it is important to maintain a healthy and engaging posting frequency. In terms of Twitter however, 2 - 3 tweets per week will be impactful
Third party presence	Linking of third parties in posts, cross sharing posts from other parties and	During the analysis it was observed that third party linked content has better	In terms of the audience of the company, it is ideal to get customer

	involvement of other parties in content - These could include media outlets, news channels, interest groups in the context of real estate in Auckland etc.	reach and engagement E.g: TVNZ Breakfast Segment with high post click rate >40	testimonial content more frequently distributed which endorses services in a non-promotional manner. Most videos on the page currently are projected as company to audience, it is advised to build an audience to audience relatable context through short case study videos (Max 2 -3 minutes).
Negative engagement / comments	Negative engagements refer to actions in terms of post hiding, spam reports and page unlikes.	In the sample group above and overall posts it was observed that negative engagement was minimal therefore no critical action is required in this aspect	In order to maintain the low negative engagement rate and to increase the positive organic following, recommendations given in the above and below areas can be followed.
Interaction (Building advocacy and the C2C channel)	The involvement of the audience in the post and enabling a community around the brand and service experience	Highest engagement and post clicks have been observed for the interactive post which was published in Q&A format. These can be taken further and lead generation can be improved through establishment of an online community around the brand and the service offering.	It is recommended to further use the element of interaction more frequently in posts and these can also be coupled with videos as a content format inviting participation.

3.2 LinkedIn page Content Analysis

In terms of the LinkedIn presence, the following data was derived. Taking into consideration the comparatively lower presence on the channel, activity with relatively higher impressions were analysed as below.

Update title	Type	Created	Impressions	Video views	Clicks	CTR	Reactions	Comments	Shares	Follows	Engagement rate
Owning a home in NZ just got easier – or did it? All followers	Link - Website	8/28/2019	12	-	0	0%	0	0	0	-	0%
A-M-L-C-F-T: Find out what it means to me All followers	Link - Website	8/21/2019	5	-	0	0%	0	0	0	-	0%
House prices & interest rates down, but getting a mortgage still a challenge All followers	Link - Website	7/25/2019	13	-	0	0%	0	0	0	-	0%
What happens when interest rates bottom out? All followers	Link - Website	7/11/2019	6	-	0	0%	0	0	0	-	0%
What have interest rates got to do with the price of broccoli? All followers	Link - Website	5/15/2019	9	-	0	0%	0	0	0	-	0%
FIRST HOME BUYERS: GETTING YOUR DUCKS IN A ROW All followers	Link - Website	11/29/2018	13	-	1	7.69%	0	0	0	-	7.69%
First Home Buyers: Why all the backlash over buying brand new?! All followers	Link - Website	11/28/2018	15	-	0	0%	0	0	0	-	0%
The issue of consent: Always a deal breaker All followers	Link - Website	11/22/2018	15	-	0	0%	0	0	0	-	0%

3.2.1 LinkedIn audit summary and recommendations based on above

In the case of the LinkedIn channel, the following is recommended

Element	Description	Audit summary	Recommendations
Content Framing (Tone and appeal)	Analysis of content appeal in terms of tone taken to present the content to the audience	Primarily content with informative and utilitarian appeal has been utilised	The current framing is suited for the platform
Content Format	This audit element seeks to identify which content format is appealing more to the audience of the business Ex : Imagery, Videos, Links	Current analytics project that primarily text based content has been used with the inclusion of own and third party links.	The same formatting techniques in Facebook also applies to LinkedIn although tone is more formal. It is advised to promote content with video and imagery more for engagement on this platform
Posting Frequency	The number of posts issued by the administrator on the company page per month	Currently it can be observed that the company maintains a 2 - 3 post frequency per month however the frequency of posting has no impact on content performance or conversions in the same manner as Facebook	Ideally once again 5 posts per month given the audience of the company. It is most important to deliver meaningful engagement in this case with information. E.g: usage of more posts such as the one highlighted in the above table displaying a 7% approximate Click Through Rate / Conversion rate
Third party presence	Linking of third parties in posts, cross sharing posts from	No direct third party impact was observed	The same strategy of having customer testimonial content

	<p>other parties and involvement of other parties in content - These could include media outlets, news channels, interest groups in the context of real estate in Auckland etc.</p>		<p>more frequently distributed which endorses services in a non-promotional manner will be beneficial for LinkedIn as well. Also linking posts with credible sites which have higher following in the sector is recommended.</p>
<p>Negative engagement / comments</p>	<p>Negative engagements refer to actions in terms of post hiding, spam reports and page unlikes.</p>	<p>In the sample group above and overall posts it was observed that negative engagement was minimal therefore no critical action is required in this aspect</p>	<p>In order to maintain the low negative engagement rate and to increase the positive organic following, recommendations given in the above and below areas can be followed.</p>
<p>Interaction (Building advocacy and the C2C</p>	<p>The involvement of the audience in the post and enabling a</p>	<p>With comparatively less activity on the channel, C2C</p>	<p>In line with the above customer testimonial suggestion, It is</p>

channel)	community around the brand and service experience	relationship building and connections have been limited.	recommended to further use the element of interaction more frequently in posts and these can also be coupled with videos as a content format inviting participation. Short videos on client experiences, or text based testimonials / graphic based will also be impactful. Ensure that the third parties are tagged in the post.
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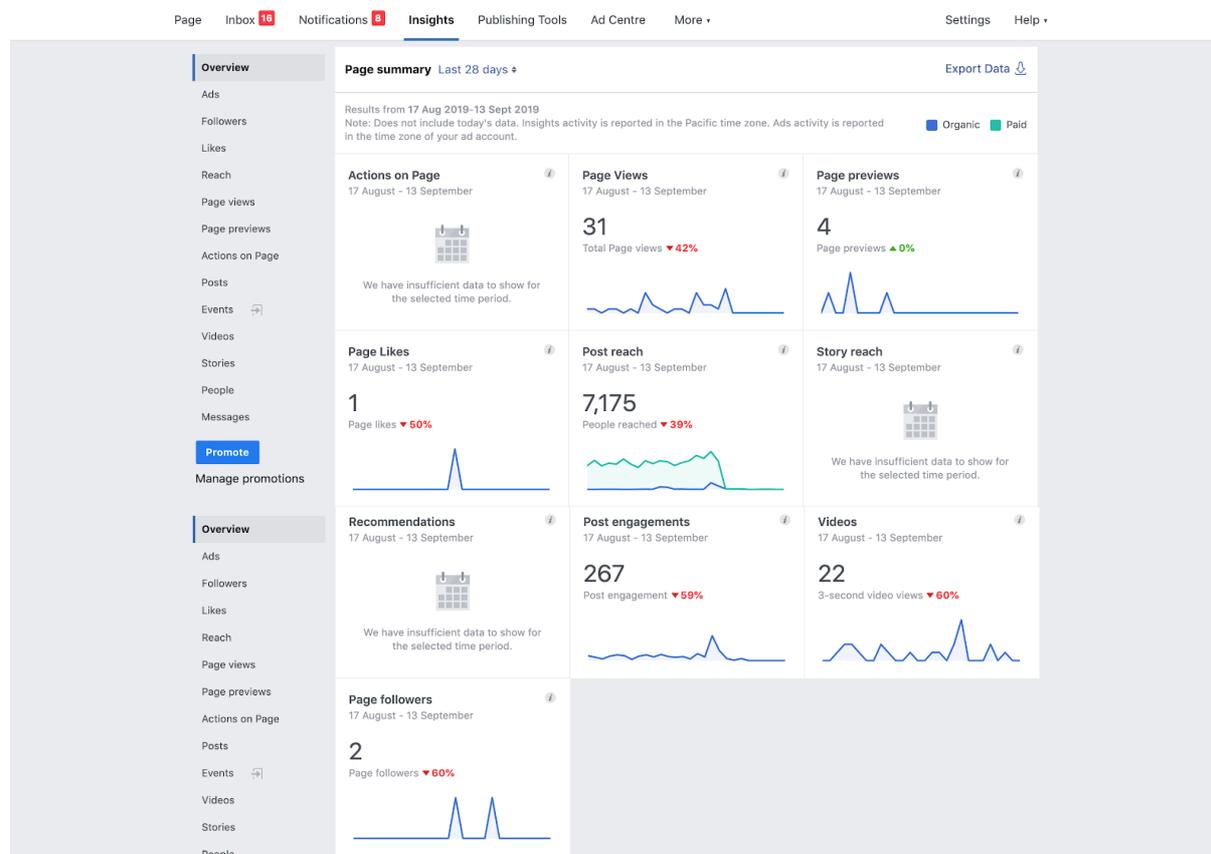
4.0 Social media performance audit

The following section outlines the critical elements of reach, engagement and other performance metrics related to the two key social media channels of the company. The reports have been derived from Facebook and LinkedIn to assess the overall presence of the brand on digital media.

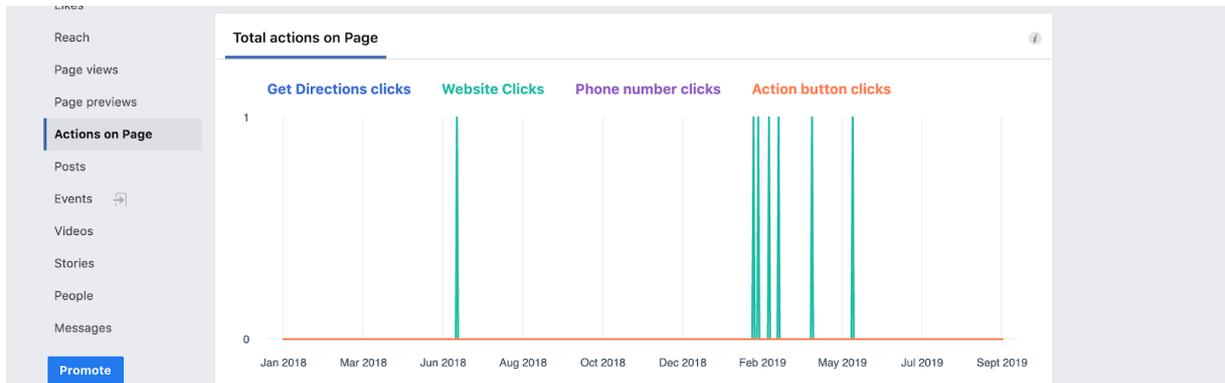
4.1 Facebook Performance Audit

Key reports on performance derived from the Facebook page insights for analysis have been embedded below for reference. Based on the same, a summary of the analysis and recommendations have been provided below the reports:

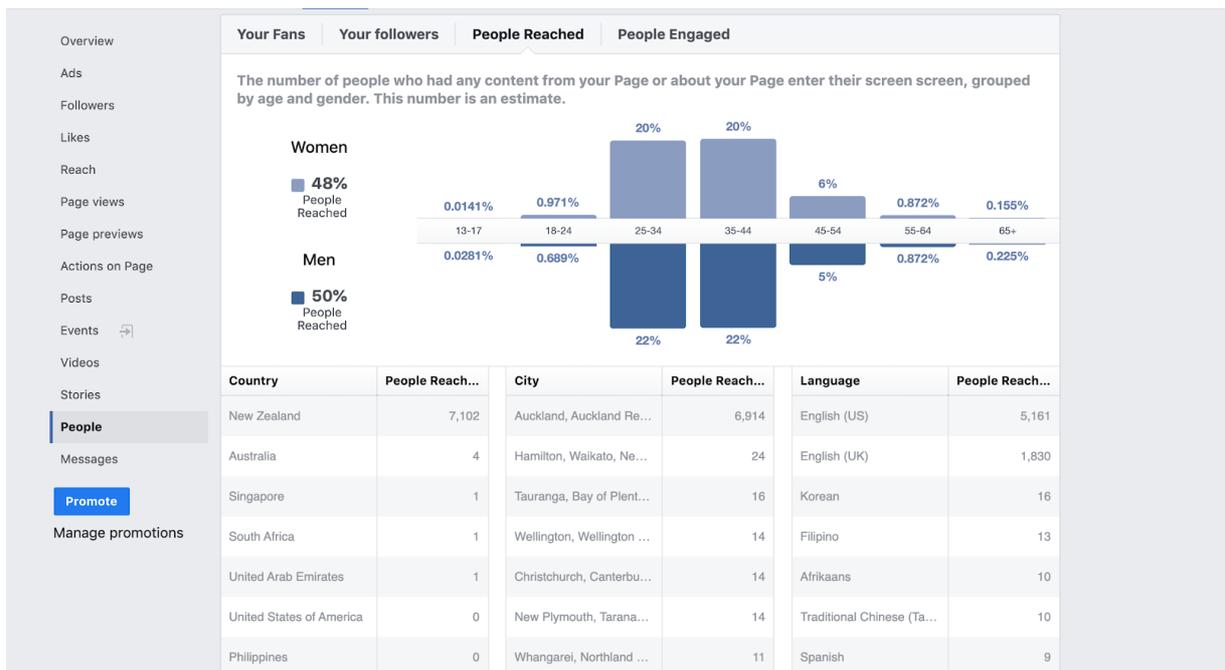
Facebook page overview



Actions on Page



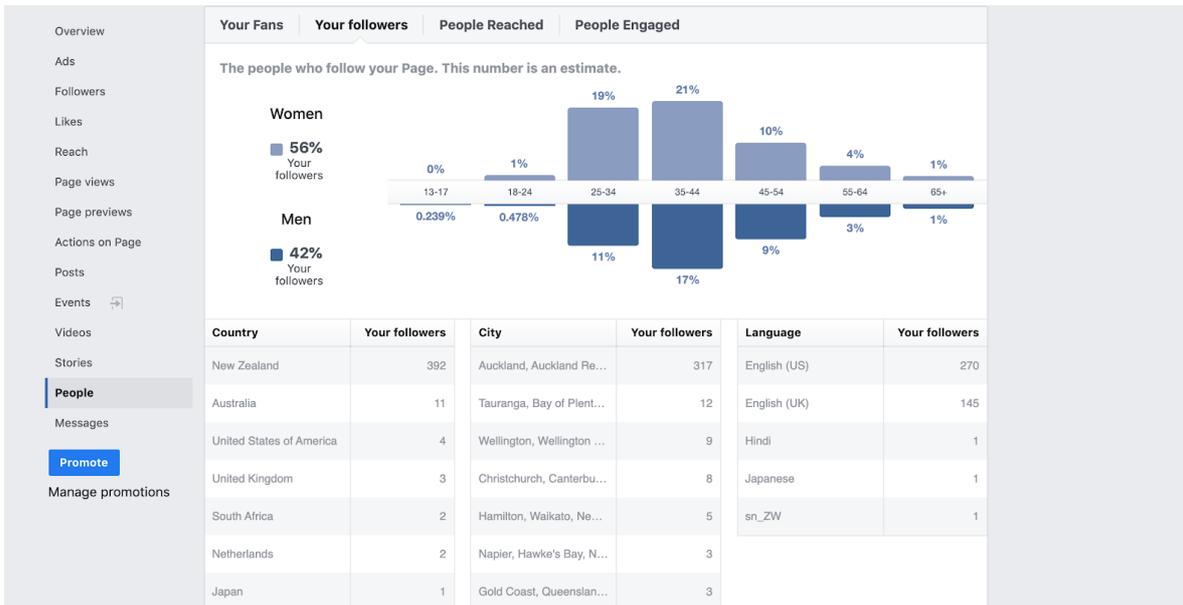
Reach



Fans



Followers



Recommendations

Overall Developments Required:

In terms of overall page analytics it can be observed that actions of page needs improvement along with improvements in reach as there is a decline / minimal activity in these areas which are key benchmarks for the platform in terms of business goals. An increase in page followers and post engagements are also required to elevate the current stagnant nature of the page.

Fans and Followers analysis

Taking into consideration the above analytics, it can be observed that geographic targeting and reach is as expected for the company with a majority of followers and fans and followers being from New Zealand and predominantly Auckland, and also having exposure in other countries such as Australia and the UK.

Based on this data, the targeted age group which could be potential clients has also been achieved which is within the age group of 25 - 54. Majority of both segments being females resonate with industry statistics on digital presence in New Zealand, therefore it can be concluded as a verified follower base, which can be further enhanced through the suggestions provided on content and also below suggestions on organic networking and isolated paid promotions

Organic network building

In order to enhance performance, a key mechanism which can be used is personal connections. In order to build organic audience traction the following tactics can be employed as per preference and capacity

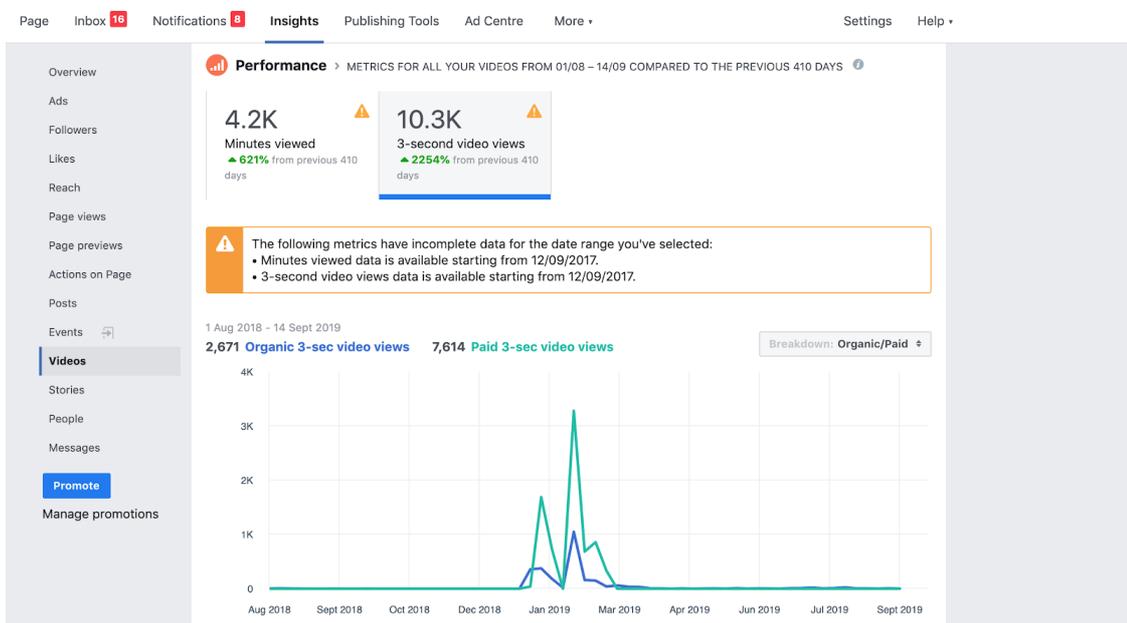
1. **Personal network leveraging** - Inviting your personal networks to like the page and share content. This can be carried out by all staff in order to grow the followership of the page.
2. **Offer incentives for sharing a post** - Another method which can be utilized is for instance a once a month promotional campaign which offers a reward for those sharing a post with their network. It could be a free 10 minute chat on their mortgage related queries for the first ten shares or any such promotional method which would be more applicable for the company and its context
3. **Developing hashtag campaigns which has viral potential** - E.g: Developing a campaign with a hashtag as #mysuccessstory or any other trending hashtag and inviting your audience to share their experience on how they succeeded in a challenging situation within the context of the services provided by the company.

Paid Promotions

Ideally, it is advised that the majority of focus is maintained on organic traction building as this is more sustainable and the audience is verified as actual valid profile holders who can engage with company content.

Post boosting for 1 - 2 qualitative content pieces based on desired objectives may be suitable to be carried out.

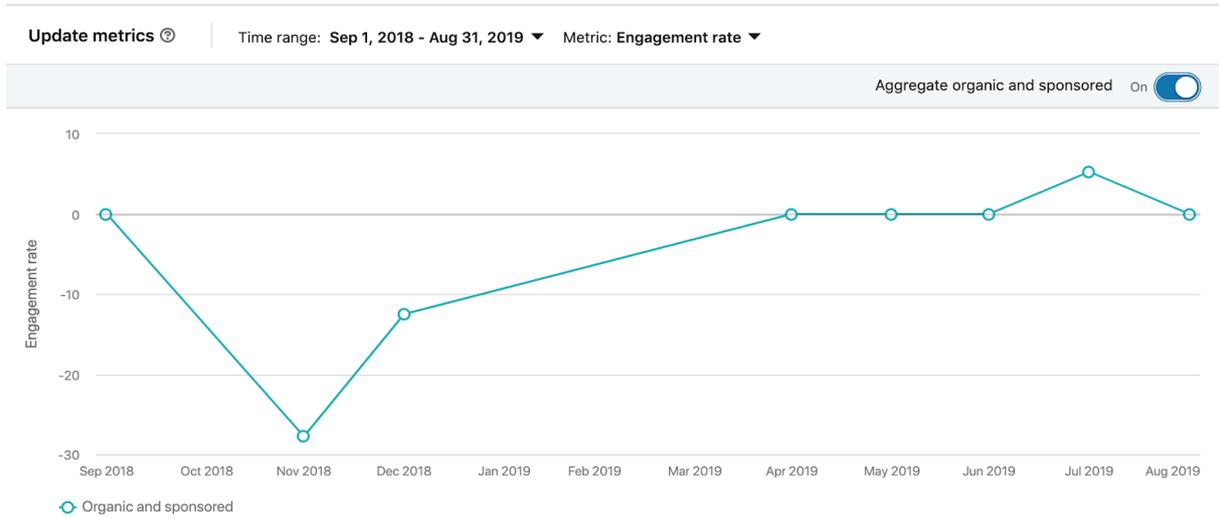
Organic Vs. Paid video views



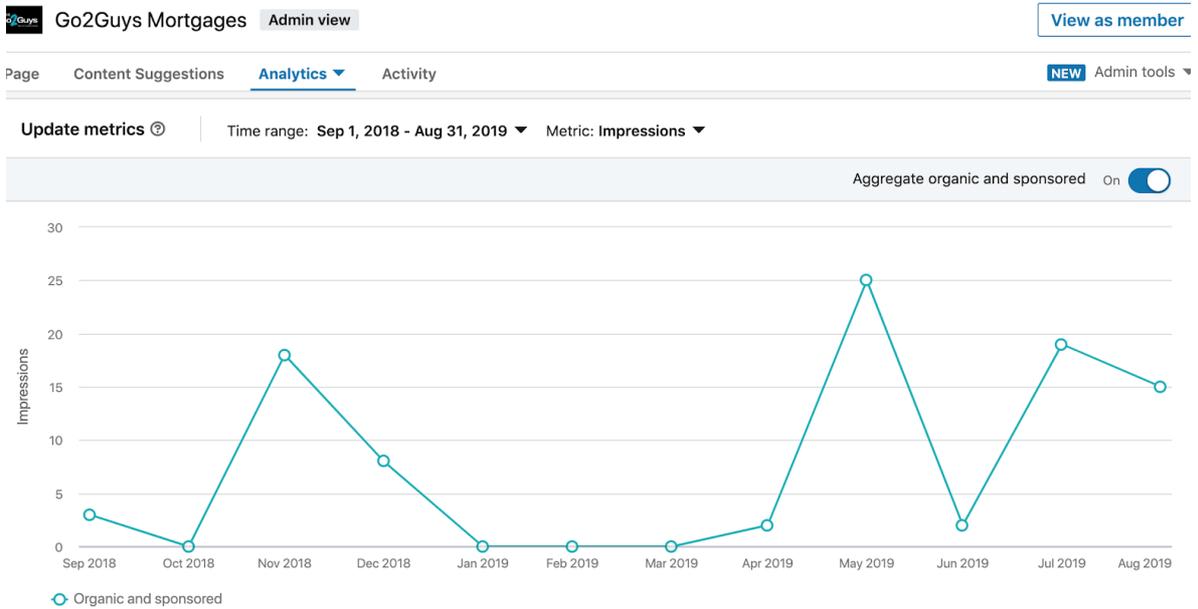
The above insights report was derived to display the comparative lower engagement of videos with the organic audience which further confirms the recommendation to predominantly focus on organic networking for sustained engagement.

4.2 LinkedIn Performance Audit

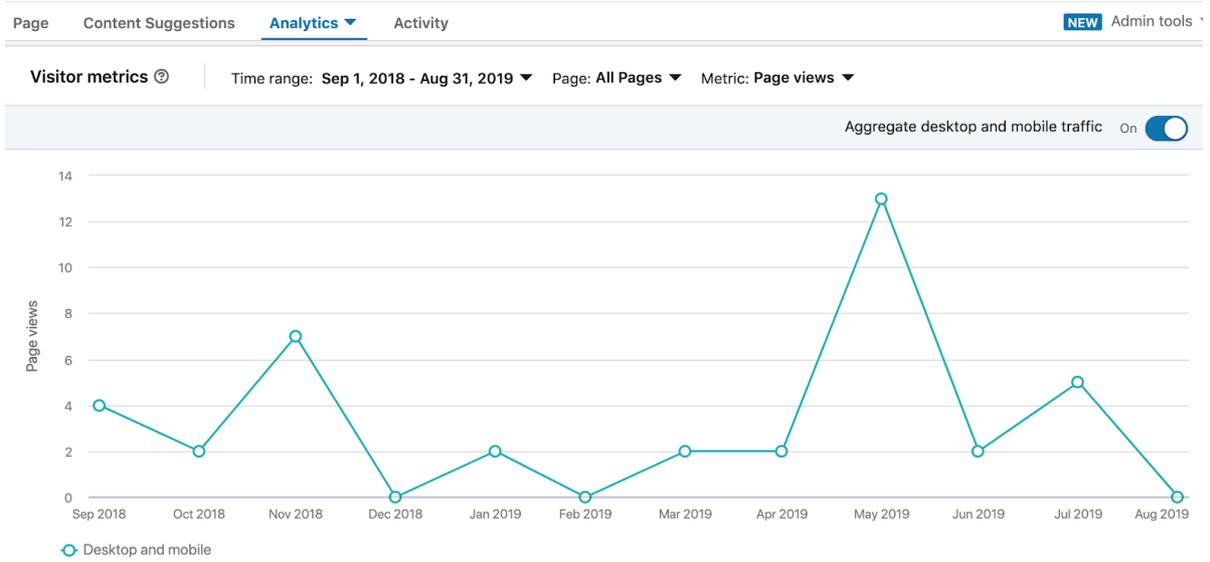
Engagement Rate - marginal Incline depicted in the past 12 months



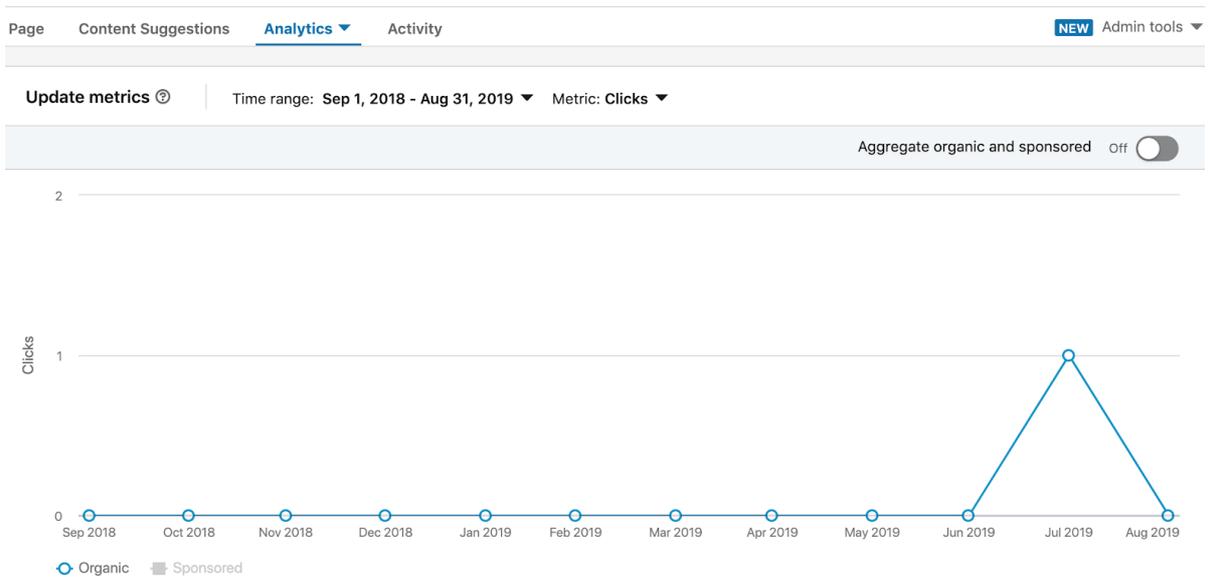
Impressions



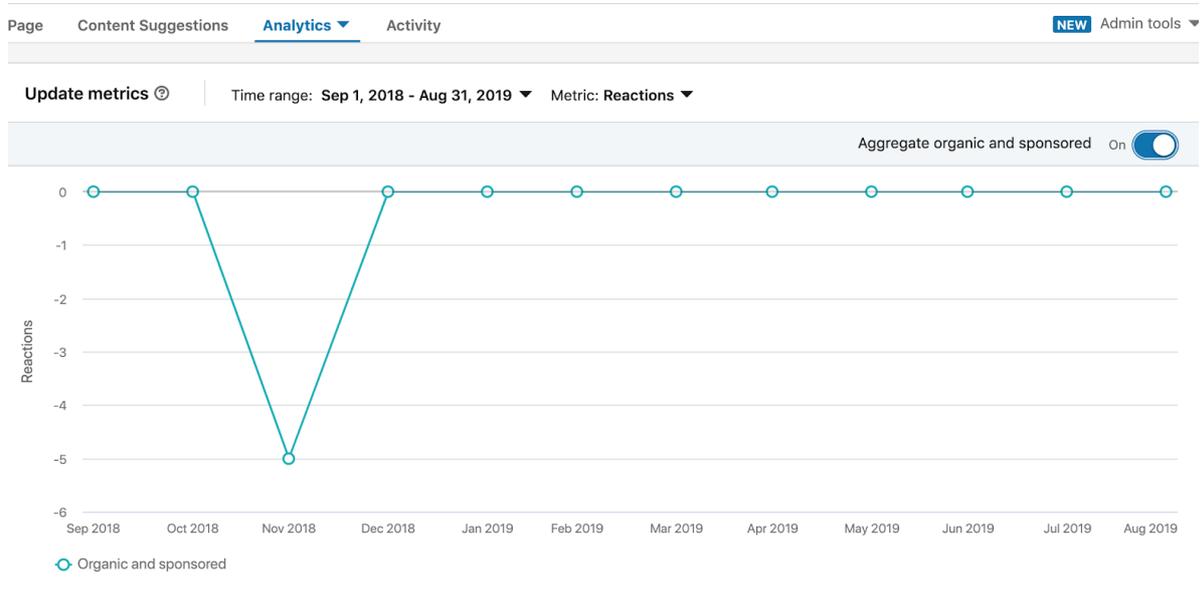
Page Views



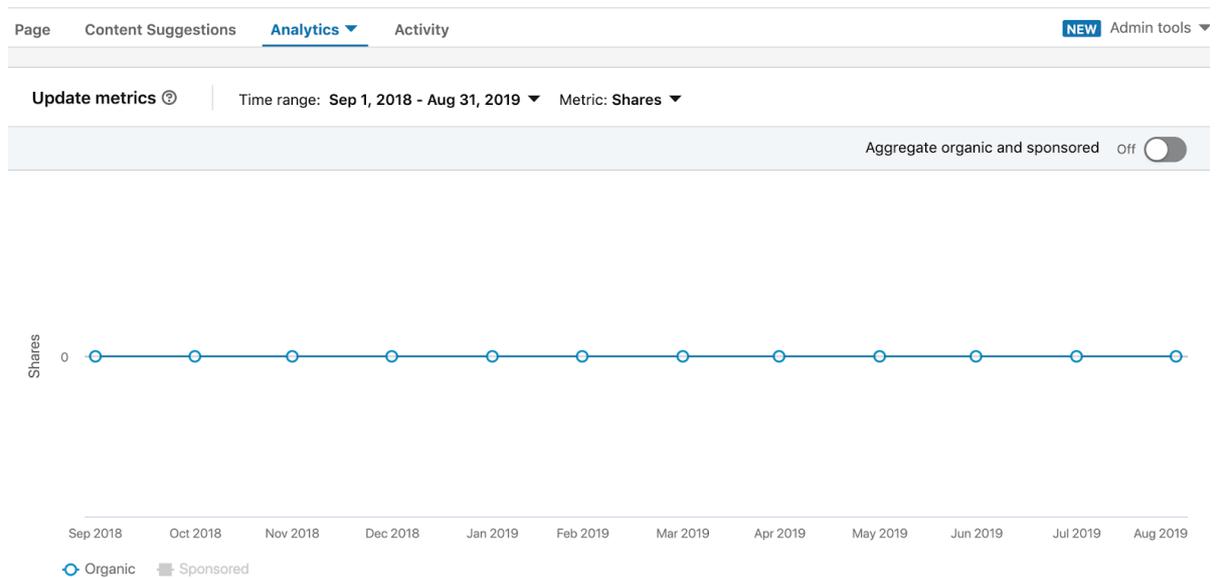
Clicks - Actions on page are very low - Critical issue



Reactions - Further clarifies minimal engagement



Shares - Further clarifies minimal engagement

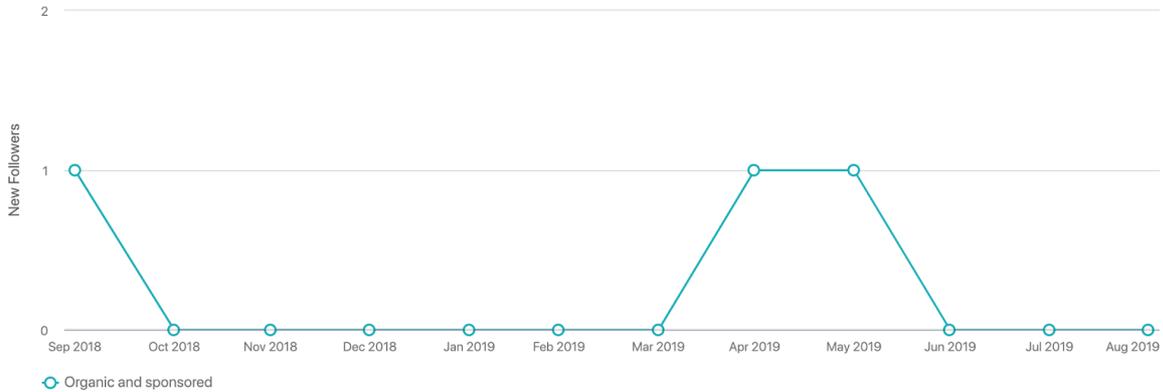


Followers - Requires attention to grow presence on LinkedIn

Follower metrics

Time range: Sep 1, 2018 - Aug 31, 2019

Aggregate organic and sponsored

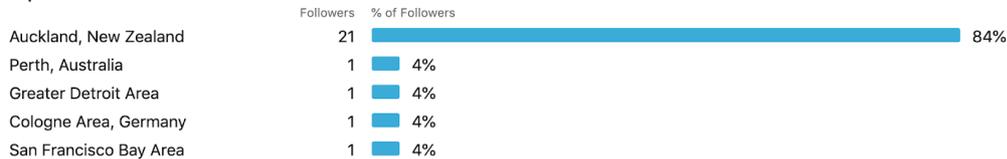


Data was analysed for the past 12 month period where it was observed that activity on the company LinkedIn page has been minimal owing to lower content and engagement strategy utilised to leverage the opportunities on the platform. However as of July 2019 the engagement rate has displayed a peak. Follower demographics for the page are as follows:

Follower Demographics

Data for: Location

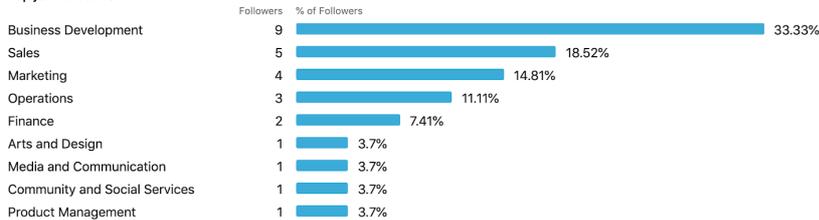
Top locations



Follower Demographics

Data for: Job function

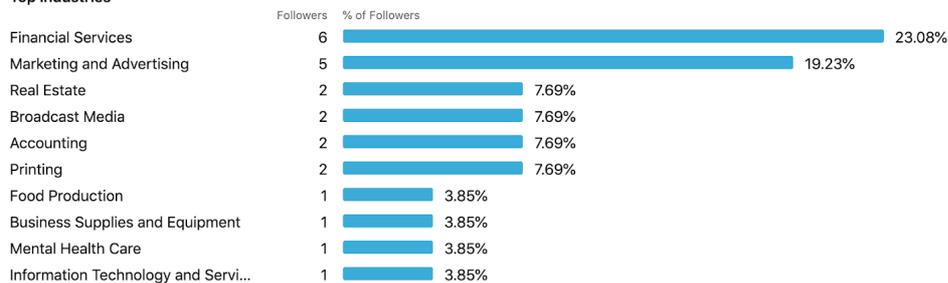
Top job functions



Follower Demographics

Data for: Industry

Top industries



Recommendations

Taking into consideration the above reports, overall it can be observed that the LinkedIn profile despite being active for the past 12 month period has not been leveraged to its full potential. The following therefore is recommended.

Connect / send invitation to like page to personal networks

In order to build traction and gain followers it is firstly advised to utilise the same tactic as suggested for the Facebook page and invite the personal connections of all staff members to like or connect with the page. Page invites have been enabled recently for some accounts, if this feature is not available, you can proceed with connecting or sending messages to key contacts to engage with the page.

Scheduled content publication

In order to maintain traction on the page it is required to post a minimum of 4 qualitative updates on the page per month. This can be included in the scheduling calendar recommended for the overall strategic approach.

Share video and imagery

In most posts as discussed in the content analysis stage ensure that mostly visual content is published.

Hashtag usage

In all posts, ensure that you utilize 3 - 5 trending hashtags in the context of company services to leverage community presence on LinkedIn.

Referral network building

Request for third parties such as clients to post (if they are willing) on some activity with the company or provide recommendations on the services given by the company. They can tag the company on LinkedIn and it will be displayed to all their networks which exponentially increase reach for the company page.

Use interactive posting

As done previously on the company's Facebook page, it will be ideal to use an interactive engagement strategy on LinkedIn as well. Use posts which invite engagement from potential clients or existing clients on pre-existing pivotal / burning issues related to company services. This will invite discussion and also visibility for the page.

Effective response plan

While it is essential to invite engagement it is also imperative to maintain traction by constantly monitoring and ensuring that responses are given to all engagements in the form of comments or reactions. It is not only sufficient to be active on the company page but also be active on follower pages where you engage with their content and offer them value in return for them patronising your page.

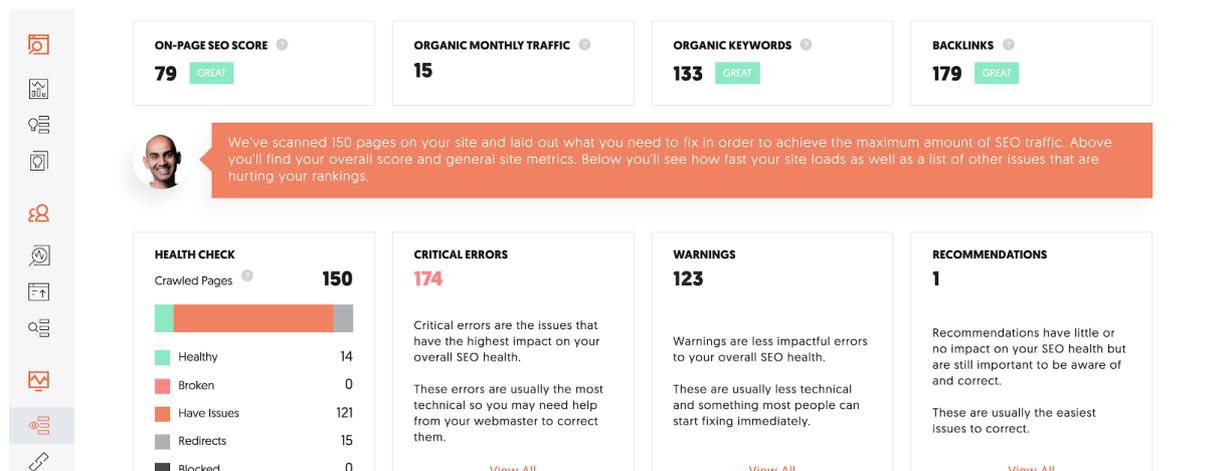
5.0 External web presence and basic SEO audit

5.1 Basic SEO Overview

A free tool by Neil Patel was utilised to gain an external approximate assessment of the web performance of the company. The following snapshots were taken from the report which can be obtained here for use by the web developer.

https://app.neilpatel.com/en/seo_analyzer/site_audit?domain=go2guys.co.nz&view=overview

Overall result



Critical Errors

NEILPATEL | EN ▼ Sign in with Google

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ALL ISSUES | **CRITICAL ERRORS** | WARNINGS | RECOMMENDATIONS

SEO ISSUES ANALYZED	DIFFICULTY	SEO IMPACT
32 pages have a low word count What is this and how do I fix it?	MODERATE	HIGH
4 pages with duplicate <title> tags What is this and how do I fix it?	MODERATE	HIGH
135 pages with more than one <title> tag What is this and how do I fix it?	EASY	HIGH
3 pages with a long loading time What is this and how do I fix it?	HARD	HIGH
0 issues with no sitemap.xml to optimize interaction with bots Learn more	MODERATE	HIGH
0 issues without a valid SSL certificate Learn more	MODERATE	HIGH
0 pages with duplicate meta descriptions Learn more	MODERATE	HIGH
0 pages have blocked meta tag robots or X-Robots-Tag HTTP header Learn more	MODERATE	HIGH
0 pages that use Flash Learn more	MODERATE	HIGH
0 pages with no <title> tag Learn more	EASY	HIGH

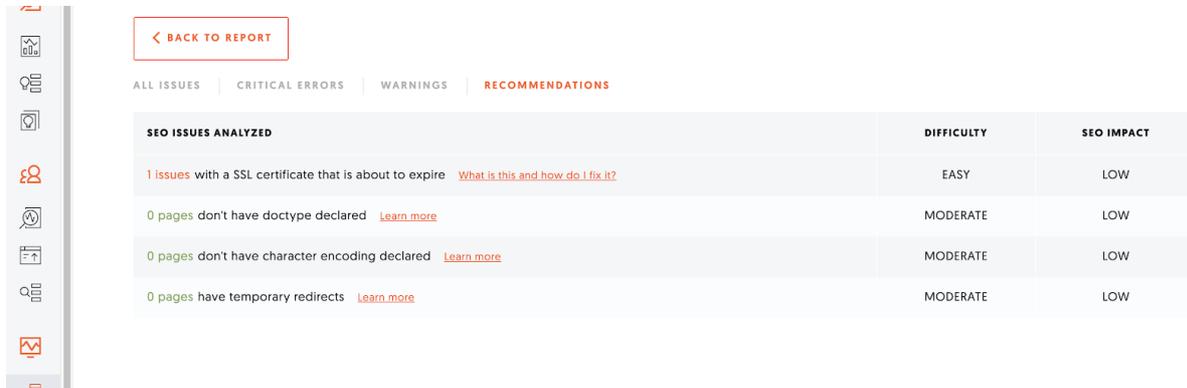
Warnings

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ALL ISSUES | CRITICAL ERRORS | **WARNINGS** | RECOMMENDATIONS

SEO ISSUES ANALYZED	DIFFICULTY	SEO IMPACT
95 pages with no meta description What is this and how do I fix it?	MODERATE	MEDIUM
1 pages with URLs that are too long What is this and how do I fix it?	EASY	MEDIUM
4 pages with a poorly formatted URL for SEO What is this and how do I fix it?	EASY	MEDIUM
16 pages with a <title> tag that is too long What is this and how do I fix it?	EASY	MEDIUM
1 pages with a <title> tag that is too short What is this and how do I fix it?	EASY	MEDIUM
0 pages without a H1 heading Learn more	EASY	MEDIUM
0 pages with gzip or deflate compression disabled Learn more	HARD	MEDIUM
0 pages have duplicate meta description tags Learn more	EASY	MEDIUM
0 pages returned 4XX status code Learn more	MODERATE	MEDIUM

Recommendations



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ALL ISSUES | CRITICAL ERRORS | WARNINGS | **RECOMMENDATIONS**

SEO ISSUES ANALYZED	DIFFICULTY	SEO IMPACT
1 issues with a SSL certificate that is about to expire What is this and how do I fix it?	EASY	LOW
0 pages don't have doctype declared Learn more	MODERATE	LOW
0 pages don't have character encoding declared Learn more	MODERATE	LOW
0 pages have temporary redirects Learn more	MODERATE	LOW

5.2 Business Listing and Reviews

Ranking

Ranking is among the first 20 business listings on Google.

Mobile accessibility

Information is comprehensive and offers mobile accessibility

Reviews

Reviews are lacking as there are only 3, given the demand for referral information in making high value purchase decisions, it is recommended to raise the third party reviews on an ongoing basis on Google.

5.3 Website performance - Google Developer Tools

PageSpeed Insights (PSI) reports on the performance of a page on both mobile and desktop devices, and provides suggestions on how that page may be improved.

PSI provides both lab and field data about a page. Lab data is useful for debugging performance issues, as it is collected in a controlled environment. However, it may not capture real-world bottlenecks. Field data is useful for capturing true, real-world user experience - but has a more limited set of metrics.

Performance score

At the top of the report, PSI provides a score which summarizes the page's performance. This score is determined by running Lighthouse to collect and analyze lab data about the

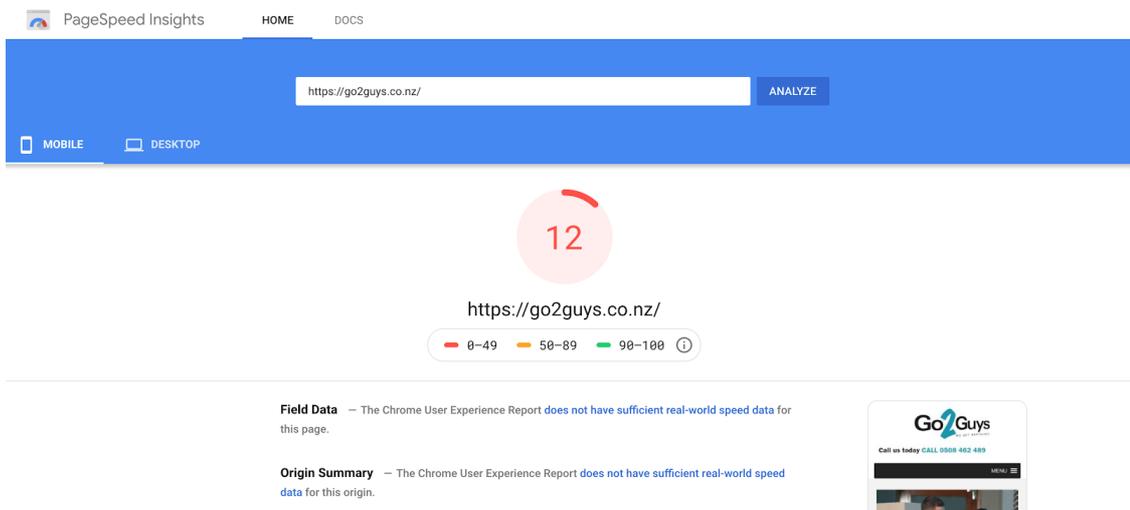
page. A score of 90 or above is considered fast, and 50 to 90 is considered average. Below 50 is considered to be slow.

Detailed report for site improvements can be obtained at:

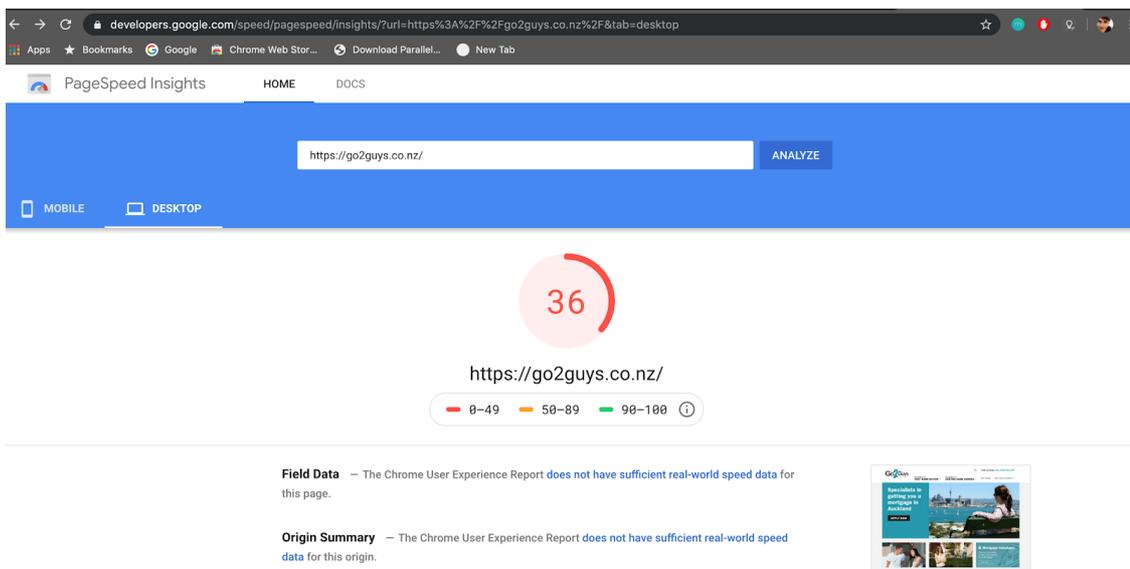
<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgo2guys.co.nz%2F&tab=desktop>

The current scores are as below:

Mobile performance score



Desktop performance score



According to the above reports, both aspects require attention therefore it is advised to have the website developer take into consideration the above factors and carry out any possible modifications to improve PSI scores and overall SEO performance.

6.0 Strategic Focus

Overall Recommendations

In addition to the channel wise recommendations, taking into consideration the overall digital / social presence and content analysis, the following is suggested:

(1) Implement an ROI focused digital media strategy

Objective and KPI based approach

It suggested to implement a full fledged digital strategy for the brand which will be focused on key performance indicators set against specific objectives which the company wishes to achieve. These could be in the form of conversions (Clicks to the website), leads generated through social media and web and also referral leads achieved.

Maintain central focus on website and improve the site and Google reviews

It is proposed to maintain the focus of directing traffic to the site as is, which is well achieved on the Facebook page through the sharing of links. The website will be the hub of all digital activity and it is also recommended to implement Google Analytics to measure performance of the site if it has not been done previously.

In order to bring the website to the top ten listings on Google Search (Currently the site is listed on page 02 of google results for the generic high value keyword - 'mortgage brokers Auckland') Alongside launching the full fledged social media strategy it is advised to improve site performance (based on reports such as those provided in section 05) and ensure its fully mobile responsive, and also increase Google reviews on an ongoing basis as there are very impactful when potential leads are searching for services online. As mentioned in the digital behaviour trends majority of clients search online for information on services and credible testimonials from third parties play a vital role in digital lead generation.

It is important however to remember that search result optimisation is a gradual process is dependent on how many clicks occur to the site, therefore it is important to drive as much traffic as possible through auxiliary channels to the website to increase visitors.

Expand digital channel presence to cover top 05 channels

As presented in the first section on digital statistics, it is recommended that presence be established on Twitter, YouTube and Instagram in addition to the current channels to ensure a presence in the top five social channels in the country. This will assist Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) as well as growth of overall digital reach and engagement.

(2) Implement tactical planning - Digital media calendar

Once the above strategy is in place it is recommended to implement a monthly tactical plan for the company which will project the incremental achievement of KPIs. The digital calendar can have all activities placed in it which would include direct mail, social media, blog posting (if implemented) and even advertising.

(3) Establish performance reporting schedule - Trends as well

It is also recommended to measure performance of the activity on a weekly or bi-weekly basis where key reports from all social media channels and Google analytics reports are reviewed against set KPIs. It is important to analyse on a routine basis the performance of content to ensure continuous improvement and sustained engagement.

(4) Ensure mobile responsiveness of all channels

Given the radical increase in the mobile based audience, it is advised to ensure the website and all mail campaigns or promotional material is mobile responsive where applicable.

(5) Organic audience growth focus

While paid campaigning can be used when required, it is strongly advised to keep core focus on driving organic audience growth. This can be achieved through the independent recommendations given in each area of the report pertaining to content and performance.

(6) Digital referral and advocacy growth for brand - Social and google reviews etc.

Last but not least, given the nature of the company it is advised that when driving content it will be most effective to include clients and other potentially credible parties in the

content. It is also advised as previously stated to consider online referral programmes which could include current clients e-introducing potential leads to the company.

Please ensure that the above information is treated as confidential and is not shared with any other party or channel without the knowledge of the author. It is only intended for use by RS_03.

Please contact Marie De Silva at 022 531 0030 for any inquiries or clarifications with regard to the document