

Social Media Content Marketing of English Language Institutes in Thailand

Pataraporn Sangkapreecha, Bangkok University, Thailand

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Abstract

The content marketing is the active participation of consumer in social media space that can distribute valuable content and drive the profitable target audience action. This research study aims to examine the presentation model and the type of content affecting user-brand page engagement in social media of English Language Institutes in Thailand. The content analysis technique was used to conduct a thematic analysis of the contents posted on Leading English Language Institutes Facebook fan pages. The findings showed the evidence of user-brand page engagement among variety of presentation models and the types of marketing contents. As regards how efficient content marketing is as (either direct or indirect) determinants of engagement, this finding points to a different effect of each type of post depending on the presentation models and types of content. Content marketing on Facebook fan page encourage user behavioural engagement. In particular, the results show that the most influential presentation model for the user-brand page engagement have to be interesting and present in various designs. Findings also indicate that the contents about curriculum, knowledge and activity provided to the page users are the most engaging content.

Keywords: Social Media, Content Marketing, Facebook, English Language Institutes, Thailand

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Introduction

English language is widely regarded as an essential human skill in today's world. It is one of the most dominating languages of the world which is having its impact on every aspect of life. Thai government has devoted considerable resources to its teaching in formal education. Learning English language in Thailand is considered as the compulsory subject in all levels and accorded the highest status compared to other foreign languages. However, the outcomes have been shown with limited success in terms of achievement levels. The English proficiency of Thai people is still below standard. In 2017, EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) showed Thailand had low a proficiency in English skills was ranked 53rd out of 80 countries, which classified the country as having a very low English proficiency with an EF EPI ranking of 49.78 (Om Jotikasthira, 15 November 2017). It has become apparent that only learning English in the English classroom may not be enough.

English Language Institute in Thailand's domestic expansion has in recent years been inflated by rising demand for English language training, freer movement of trade and labour in the Asean Economic Community (AEC), and the current boom in tourism and hospitality. Two international brands of English Language Institute have played an active movement. Wall Street English, Thailand's largest premier provider of English language training courses for students and adults with a 35 percent market share in 2017. In Thailand, Wall Street English has produced around 190,000 graduates over the past 15 years (The Nation, 6 March 2018). The British Council is the UK's international organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It has been in Thailand since 1952 and currently established 6 offices in Thailand; 5 in Bangkok and 1 in Chiang Mai. It is stated to develop relationships between UK and Thailand and creating opportunity through work, education, examinations, the arts and society (The British Council, 2018)

Social media content marketing (SMCM) play a significant role in brand reputations as it is currently the main medium for the consumers to gain the information about the brands. Especially in this digital era, the content marketing is the active role of consumer participation for sharing and active in online media space that become their interest. Facebook is the dominant social medium and currently the world's most successful site, with more than 1.45 billion active users on a daily basis (Statista, 2018), a greater number than even Google users. Due to the vast number of members on Facebook, English Language Institutes utilise it as a platform for connecting a large pool of existing and potential consumers and as a significant tool for brand management.

This research study thus aims to examine the social media content marketing on Facebook fan page of Thailand's premier provider of English language training courses. It mainly analyses the presentation model and the type of content affecting user-brand page engagement. The attribution of this research would be crucial for any English Language Institutes in Thailand to acknowledge good content marketing in order to attract more customers to visit their Facebook page, follow the update news and finally repeat the purchase.

Social Media Content Marketing and User Brand-Page Engagement

The content marketing is the active participation of consumer in social media space that can distribute valuable content and drive the profitable target audience action. Content marketing has become a very widely used catchphrase over the past few years. It has become increasingly important for marketers to find ways to reach customers outside of traditional advertising that many consumers no longer trust (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2016).

Conveying value propositions consumers do not dismiss is a key function of marketing. Social media has changed the way in which these value propositions can be received. Social media content is considered a varied collection of text, images, and videos posted and share social media platforms (Schivinski & Dabrpwslo, 2015). The careful presentation of social media content allows brands to tell a unique and compelling brand story (Gensler, Volckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013). Also contributing to this brand story is the content created and shared by consumers.

According to Kujur and Singh (2017), almost 94% of all businesses having a marketing department have created an online presence and actively engage with consumers on at least one of the four major social networking site, especially Facebook. Having high numbers of followers on Facebook fan page is important, however, it is more crucial for businesses to have engaging interactions with these followers to build and nurture relationships. The understanding of the underlying consumer reasons for engaging with brands via social media, and the contents that impact engagement, can potentially add additional insight as to how to improve customer experiences and strengthen relationships (Kwon, Kim, Sung, & Chan, 2014). Furthermore, understanding elements of engagement via social media could offer insight to brands on how to best communicate with the newer (digital) generations of customer.

Facebook presents a unique need for consumer engagement. Prager (2014) explains if a brand wants their posts to appear prominently in the followers' news feeds, the company brand needs to be engaging their audience, essentially their page follower needs to be liking, commenting on and sharing the brand's posts. Previous literature on the context of Facebook fan pages has empirically analysed the response of page users to brand posts. Much of the research examined general content, rather than brand-specific content. For instance, Sabate et al. (2014) and Luarn et al. (2015), amongst others, examine how the content type (among other characteristics) of a brand page directly impacts on the popularity of that brand page as indicated by the number of likes, comments and shares on the Facebook fan page.

In the current research, the interest focuses on the social-behavioural dimension of consumer engagement, known as "consumer behavioural engagement" or "consumer engagement behaviour". Specifically, in the case of a Facebook fan page, users' behavioural engagement is manifested through their active participation in the functionalities Facebook offers (Luarn et al., 2015): clicking, liking, commenting and sharing behaviours (Wallace, Buil, & de Chernatony, 2014), which is termed "user brand-page engagement".

Methodology

The content analysis technique was used to conduct a thematic analysis of the contents posted on Thailand's Leading English Language Institutes Facebook fan pages, including Wall Street English (www.facebook.com/wse.thailand/) with 1,430,030 user followers and The British Council (www.facebook.com/BritishCouncilThailand/) with 198,618 user followers. These two English Language Institutes are the top brands which is the best exemplars we can learn from by studying their content postings. Gaining insights from what the most popular brands are posting is crucial to learning how to effectively market to users on Facebook fan pages.

Three months (June – August 2017) are a sufficient period of time for this study since it is long enough to see a variance in presentation models and contents of Facebook posts. The number of posts resulted in a total of 435 Facebook posts for analysis, 253 posts from Wall Street English and 182 posts from The British Council. The units of analysis were the presentation model, the type of content, the user brand-page engagement, regarding the number of “like”, “comment” and “share” of the posts on the Facebook fan pages.

Results

The presentation models and user brand-page engagement

The results of this study revealed that both English Language Institutes posted 3 presentation models: “Text”, “Text + Photo” and “Text + VDO”. The model of “Text + Photo” was the most frequently posted and this presentation model received the highest engagement from the Facebook fan page users. This is due to this “Text + Photo” presentation model was interesting and presented in various designs, such as using cartoon photo, real photo with colorful pattern and text.

Table 1: Reported Presentation Models and Number of Engagement

Presentation Models	Total Number of Engagement	Wall Street English		The British Council	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Text		-	-	3	1.65%
Like	27			27	
Comment	6				
Share	0				
Text + Photo		210	95.45%	158	86.81%
Like	87,797	9,891		77,906	
Comment	3,435	1,510		1,925	
Share	1,008	522		486	
Text + VDO		10	4.55%	21	11.54%
Like	1,747	362		1,385	
Comment	72	18		54	
Share	481	39		442	

The type of contents and user brand-page engagement

Both English Language Institutes posted 6 types of content on their Facebook fan pages. The types of content are the information about “Curriculum”, “Tips”, “Knowledge”, “Activity”, “Quote” and “Important Date”. The content about “Activity” was the most frequently posted. The results also revealed the highest “Like” engagement from the Facebook fan page users were the content about “Curriculum”, followed by “Knowledge” and “Activity” respectively. However, the content about “Activity” received the highest “Comment” engagement from the page users.

Table 2: Reported Type of Contents and Number of Engagement

Type of Contents	Total Number of Engagement	Wall Street English		The British Council	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Curriculum		30	0.24%	47	0.06%
Like	42,686	711		41,975	
Comment	81	7		74	
Share	643	35		608	
Tips		49	0.40%	0	0%
Like	1,900	1,900			
Comment	21	21			
Share	194	194			
Knowledge		36	0.29%	76	0.09%
Like	25,071	1,575		23,496	
Comment	63	31		32	
Share	383	174		209	
Activity		77	0.63%	59	0.07%
Like	18,609	4,762		13,847	
Comment	3,295	1,416		1,879	
Share	221	110		111	
Quote		26	0.21%	0	0%
Like	1,055	1,055		0	
Comment	1	1		0	
Share	43	43		0	
Important Date		2	0.02%	0	0%
Like	140	0		140	
Comment	0	0		0	
Share	4	0		4	
	94,410	12,255		82,413	

Conclusion

This research paper reaches to the significance social media content marketing as it is an outstanding strategy for English Language Institutes. The findings showed the evidence of user-brand page engagement among variety of presentation models and the types of marketing contents. As regards how efficient content marketing is as (either direct or indirect) determinants of engagement, this finding points to a different effect of each type of post depending on the presentation models and types

of content. In particular, the results show that the most influential presentation model for the user-brand page engagement have to be interesting and present in various designs. Findings also indicate that the content about English Language training course, useful knowledge and interesting activities provided to the page users are the most engaging content.

In summary, by way of a general conclusion, an overall analysis of the results obtained in this study allows us to state that any posts ultimately affect engagement either a greater or lesser degree. Content marketing on Facebook fan page encourage user behavioural engagement. It is a must device for all organizations to educate, inform or entertain their target audience or prospects by creating attention or causing behaviour that results in leads, sales or advocacy. Through the social media platforms, the organizations are able to engage with their consumers and built active interaction among them. While social media content marketing tends to be less expensive than other forms of promotion, it still requires investments of attention and action. Social media offer a plethora of opportunities for marketers to communicate with consumers in ways never before possible, executives should not be hesitant to invest time and money in social media efforts.

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