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Content Marketing Elements for Search Advertising

Rūta Repovienė

Kaunas University of Technology, K. Donelaičio st. 73, LT-44249, Kaunas
E-mail: ruta.repoviene@gmail.com

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Abstract

The author analyzes the possibility of using content marketing elements for search advertising from marketing experts and searchers' perspective. The first part of the paper deals with the theoretical insights into the concepts of content marketing, search advertising, their effect and synergy. The second part is qualitative research on a theoretical model of content marketing elements. The possibility of using those elements and modifying the theoretical model are provided in the third part of the paper. Research results revealed that content marketing elements can be used for search advertising and that they affect search advertising. Conclusions and directions for further research. are provided in the paper.

Keywords: content marketing, search advertising, effective search advertising.

Introduction

Organizations understand the importance of digital marketing in our developing and dynamic environment (Khan, Siddiqui, 2013; Järvinen, Karjaluoto, 2015). Rancati, Gordini, Capatina (2016). Technology development and the use of the web have dramatically changed customers' expectations, needs and interests. They have many choices thus marketing specialists use various marketing strategies to increase website traffic (Haan, Moraga-Gonzalez, 2011; Szabo, Huberman, 2010; Khan, Siddiqui, 2013). Competition, the key mechanism of the market economy, drives organizations to provide such content that ensures effective advertising. It is evident that content quality affects interactivity and user involvement.

Content is king in fact is one of the most popular slogans in the digital economy. Companies focus on content and use new communication models that differ from those used in the past (Rancati et al., 2016). Many authors (Aspinall, 2013; Blank, 2014; Gagnon, 2014; Holliman, Rowley, 2014; Hanafizadeh, Yarmohammadi, 2015) emphasize that quality content attracts digital consumers, affects them, increases their trust, satisfaction, loyalty. Thus, content marketing, a new marketing strategy, has emerged. Content marketing is a powerful tool that various types of companies use on digital channels. Although the popularity of content marketing has been growing research on its use and effect has been lacking.

Research problem: *What are the possibilities of using content marketing elements for search advertising?* **Research object:** content marketing elements for search advertising. **Research aim**: to reveal the possibilities of using content marketing elements for search advertising. **Research methods**: scientific literature review and synthesis, qualitative research (expert interview, focus group discussion), data systematization, analysis, evaluation, generalization, comparison, abstraction.

Theoretical background

In fact, content marketing, one of the newest concepts, is as old as any other marketing paradigm but is still in the initial phase as a separate type of marketing and not all companies are making the most of it (Pulizzi, 2012; Aspinall, 2013). Literature and research on content marketing are still fragmented. Many articles focus on social media, digital marketing tools, changes in marketing but content marketing as such has not been discussed (Rancati et al., 2016). Only a few authors have provided a comprehensive theoretical concept of content marketing but its clear definition is still lacking.

Researchers differently define content marketing; "Content marketing attracts potential consumers and increases their engagement and empowerment through the creation, dissemination and sharing of free content, relevant, meaningful, va-

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luable and able to inspire confidence in existing and potential customers" (Kucuk, Krishnamurthy, 2007); "It is the creation and distribution of educational and/or compelling content in multiple formats to attract and/or retain customers" (Pulizzi, 2012); "Digital content marketing involves creating, distributing and sharing relevant, compelling and timely content to engage customers at the appropriate point in their buying consideration processes, such that it encourages them to convert to a business building outcome" (Holliman, Rowley, 2014); "Content marketing as a strategic marketing approach that focuses on the creation and distribution of valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and, ultimately, drive profitable customer action" (Content Marketing Institute, 2015). Having compared various definitions of content marketing (Kucuk, Krishnamurthy, 2007; Pulizzi, 2012; Holliman, Rowley, 2014; Content Marketing Institute, 2015) the author is stating that the concept is based on the assumption that a company providing its customers with valuable information can expect proper customer response.

However, content marketing is broader than the definitions above. Studies show that content marketing can be understood wider and related to other forms of marketing, such as online marketing, digital marketing, information marketing or even relationship marketing. This suggests that content marketing is an approach that focuses on the creation and distribution of valuable, relevant and consistent content. Azad, Aliakbar, Zomorodian (2016) point out that proper content marketing gives companies competitive advantage.

It has not been clearly defined what quality content is. Several researchers (Awad, Ragowsky, 2008; Chasser, Wolfe, 2010; Gagnon, 2014; Abel, 2014; Creamer, 2012; Schuinanii, Wangenheim, Groene, 2014) mention a variety of features that arouse interest in consumers and motivate them to take actions. These features can be considered as separate content marketing elements. In her previous work, the author has identified seven features that characterize high quality digital content: relevance, informativeness, reliability, value, uniqueness, emotions and intelligence (Pažeraitė, Repovienė, 2016). In her opinion, content marketing elements depend on technology development and its use.

Some authors (Blank, 2014; Halevi, O'Hanlon, 2016) stress that content, despite its type, should be interactive and communicated using various platforms and channels. Nowadays customers are able to control many marketing communications and relationships due to digitalized markets, and companies are re-discovering the power of active digital communication with customers (Lieb, 2011). Moreover, Kucuk (2012), Singh (2016) add that such digitally empowered customers can easily initiate and organize anti-consumption movements and affect the consumption market. ICT development provides people with enormous possibilities of seeking, gathering, publishing and sharing content and experiences in unprecedented ways.

These particular possibilities are evident in social media advertising. The Interactive Advertising Bureau announced in its report for 2016 that search engines are one of the most frequently used search tools. Researchers (Guerini, Strapparava, Stock, 2010; Compton, 2011) highlight that the main purpose of social media advertising is to reach a target audience using keywords. Thus, every day potential customers collect information from the web, and businesses communicate with them. Seeking to effectively reach customers it is important to know their search habits and what search engines they use. Relying on that information companies can optimize their websites by creating useful content and carry out paid advertising campaigns (Weller, Calcott, 2012; Patel, 2015). Search advertising is one of the ways of driving traffick to the company's website, it is also an excellent tool for providing initial information.

Vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, style of an ad matter much (Zimmerman, 2012; Compton, 2011). According to Felton (2013), the headline of an ad is very similar to the news headline in the mass media. The main text of an ad is usually descriptive, in the form of monologue or dialogue. Usually its purpose is to motivate the reader to take action. As Bertrand, Karlan, Mullainathan, Shafir, Zinman (2010) note, an ad performs an informative and representative function.

Search advertising leads searchers to a particular website, allows companies to collect data on customers, understand their needs and thus improve content (Guerini et al., 2010). Search results are automatically evaluated. Halevi, O'Hanlon (2016), Holliman, Rowley (2014) say that businesses, seeking to achieve good results, should improve communication with customers and use various avenues for content marketing. Thus, content marketing and search advertising are linked.

The author proposes the following theoretical model of content marketing elements for search advertising (see Fig. 1).

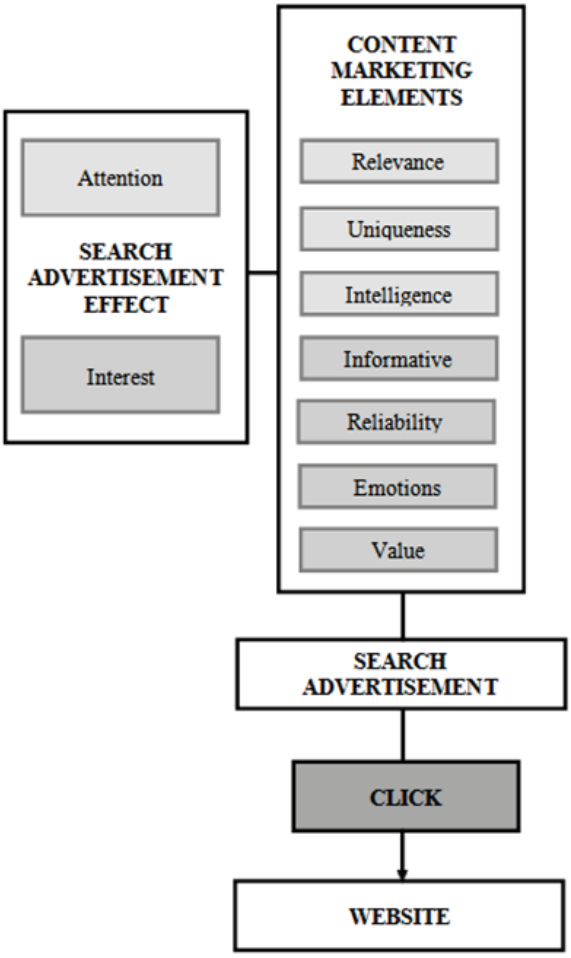

Fig. 1. Theoretical model of content maketing elements for search advertising (author's own creation)

Firstly, search advertising, according to Clow, Baack (2013), Szabo, Huberman (2010), should be effective, therefore content should provide sufficient information about a particular product. It is advisable to use a cognitive message strategy or the classical AIDA model (Pomranky, 2015): capture the attention of a target audience and arouse interest (Szabo, Huberman, 2010; Blake, Tadelis, Nosko, 2015; Haan, Moraga-Gonzalez, 2011). Secondly, there are separate content marketing elements that enhance attention and interest (Awad, Ragowsky, 2008; Chasser, Wolfe, 2010; Creamer, 2012; Gagnon, 2014; Abel, 2014; Schuinanii et al., 2014) and urge the searcher to take action, i.e. to click on an active link and access the company's website, thus, high quality content should be provided in a n ad.

Seeking to develop a practically applicable model, research was carried out.

Research design

Scientific literature review provided a deeper understanding of how content marketing elements can be used for search advertising. Seeking to reveal the applicability of the designed theoretical model qualitative research was carried out. Google AdWords, the most popular online advertising program, was chosen, expert interview and focus group discussion were carried out, collected data were compared and analyzed.

The purpose of expert interview was to identify experts' opinion on the use of content marketing elements for search advertising. 5 subjects, marketing experts were interviewed (see Table 1). 5 is a minimum recommended sample size for qualitative interview-based research (Libby, Blashfield, 1978; Nielsen, 2000). All respondents consented to being identified.

Table 1

List of interviewees

No.	Name, surname	Company	Position, experience in years	Duration of interview
1.	Domas Ruzeckas	UAB Interneto reklamos biuras	Digital marketing specialist, 2 years	15 min.
2.	Julius Žalenekas	UAB Interneto reklamos biuras	Head of digital marketing department, 4 years	20 min.
3.	Eglė Kiltinavičiūtė	UAB Interneto reklamos biuras	Copywriter, 2 years	14 min.
4.	Rimas Bendoraitis	UAB SEO lyderis	Specialist, 7 years	15 min.
5.	Dr. Gytis Melnikas	IĮ EFI projektai	Creative director, 25 years (6 years in digital marketing)	By e-mail.

Sampling criteria: 1) position in the company (at least a manager), 2) education (at least a Bachelor's degree), 3) work experience in digital marketing (at least 2 years).

A semi-structured questionnaire allowed the respondents to provide insights into:

- Search advertising effect
- Content of an ad

- Content marketing
- Effect of separate content marketing elements

The questionnaire was designed taking into account the research aim and the structure of the theoretical model.

The purpose of focus group discussion was to identify respondents' on the use of content marketing elements for search advertising. Sample size: 8 subjects. Demographic data: 3 employed students, 1 student and 4 employees, by gender – 6 women and 2 men, aged 20 to 29. Discussion conducted by the author of the paper lasted one hour, was recorded and focused on:

1. Search query
2. Search engines, search habits
3. Content marketing elements

Collected data were grouped, summarized, analyzed, the link between content marketing elements and search advertising was found, the opinion of the focus group and the experts was identified and, on that basis, the theoretical model of content marketing elements was modified.

Research findings and discussion

Expert interview. The respondents said that when an ad draws their attention they click, that paid search advertising distorts primary choices, that it is the easiest way to collect information. They named several ways how search advertising can be enhanced, for example *I think that the effectiveness of search advertising can be improved by providing only high quality information when the company knows its customers' habits and captures their attention* (D. Ruzeckas). The following question focused on the content of an ad. The respondents named several features of an effective ad: a unique text, special offers, a search query link to the website, information presentation, emotional appeal, the use of the latest trends, response to the user's problem. They were grouped into: the value of the form and the value of the text. One expert said that content marketing is useful, that organic search is more valuable than paid: *Good quality content improves organic search results and helps SEO increase conversion but poorly correlates with paid search advertising* (G. Melnikas). The remaining questions focused on the effectiveness of content marketing elements for search advertising. The respondents said that content relevance, uniqueness and intelligence increase visibility. Relevant ads provide needed information, unique – capture the searcher's attention, intelligent – help the company gain a competitive advantage. These three content marketing elements affect search advertising but did not name any particular element as most important since they are of not equal importance. According to them, the use of emotions can give a positive result, for example *All marketing is based on emotions. The user chooses by using his mind and buys by using emotions. All sales are carried out through direct or indirect emotions* (R. Bendoraitis), the needs of a target audience should be taken into account. To sum up, the theoretical model can be put to practice, content marketing elements make search advertising effective but the effect of each element is different, the decision to use one or another element should be based on a the needs of a target audience.

Focus group discussion. The respondents said that they access the web every day, search for information, collect it for work and pleasure, it is part of their life (see Table 2).

Table 2

Searching the Internet and using

Question	Answer
How often do you access the web?	Every day (8 respondents)
What is the purpose of your access?	For work and pleasure (8 respondents)
Do you collect information?	Yes (5 respondents) No opinion (3 respondents)
How do search for information?	Use keywords (6 respondents) Use other ways (2 respondents)

They differently understood what a quality ad is, said that it plays a huge role, that information should be accessible, credible, not all could say how often they click on an ad, said that companies use ads for attracting searchers and thus gain a competitive advantage (see Table 3).

Table 3

Search engines, search habits

Question	Answer
What search engines do you use?	Google (8 respondents) Yandex (2 respondents)
How many websites on average do you visit in your search query?	2-3 (4 respondents) Do not know (4 respondents)
Does the number of visited websites depend on the amount of money you are going to spend?	Yes (6 respondents) No (2 respondents)
Do you recognize Google AdWords?	Yes (6 respondents) No (2 respondents)
What do you notice in search systems?	Information above (7 respondents) All information (1 respondent) Do not pay attention (3 respondents)
Do you read an ad?	Yes (5 respondents) Only its headline (3 respondents)
Which ads do you click on?	Relevant to search query (7 respondents) No answer (1 respondent)

The respondents could not clearly say which content marketing elements draw their attention, emphasized that they click on quality ads relevant to search query, that they notice those ads that are placed at the top of the website, are unique, creative, innovative, crafted using advanced technology, not packed with too many offers, slogans, their content is relevant to search query, credible, valuable (see Table 4).

Table 4

Content marketing elements

Question	Answer
Should an ad be relevant to your search query?	Yes (8 respondents)
Should it provide valuable information?	Yes (5 respondents) No (3 respondents)
Should an ad be informative?	Yes (4 respondents) Yes, but sometimes (4 respondents)
Should information be credible?	Yes (7 respondents) No opinion (1 respondent)
Do you pay attention to the uniqueness of an ad?	Yes, if the headline is unique (7 respondents) No (1 respondent)
Should an ad include many keywords?	No (6 respondents) Does not matter (2 respondents)
Should an ad stimulate emotions?	No (8 respondents)

According to them, not all content marketing elements have a similar effect, emotions, for example, can have a negative effect, they highlighted the importance of information relevance and credibility.

Discussion

The respondents, both experts and focus group, were of a similar opinion on the use of content marketing elements for search advertising, they said that these elements affect search advertising but differently evaluated the importance of each of them, thus, the theoretical model of content marketing elements was modified (see Fig. 2).

Firstly, the effect of search advertising was included. According to theoretical insights, the purpose of search advertising is twofold: to draw attention and arouse interest but the aim of this qualitative research was not to identify which elements cause this effect.

Secondly, informativeness was replaced by relevance because informativeness was of insignificant value. Quantitative research was carried out on the remaining five content marketing elements. It was found that relevance, uniqueness and intelligence have a positive effect on search advertising. Two other elements, information credibility and emotions,

were evaluated differently: according to the experts, emotions have a positive effect but according to the users – a negative effect, thus emotions were marked as having a negative effect. The focus group said that information credibility is one of the most important content marketing elements but the experts were of the opinion that credibility is tested when the searcher visits the website. According to them, it does not affect search advertising therefore it was marked as having a neutral effect.

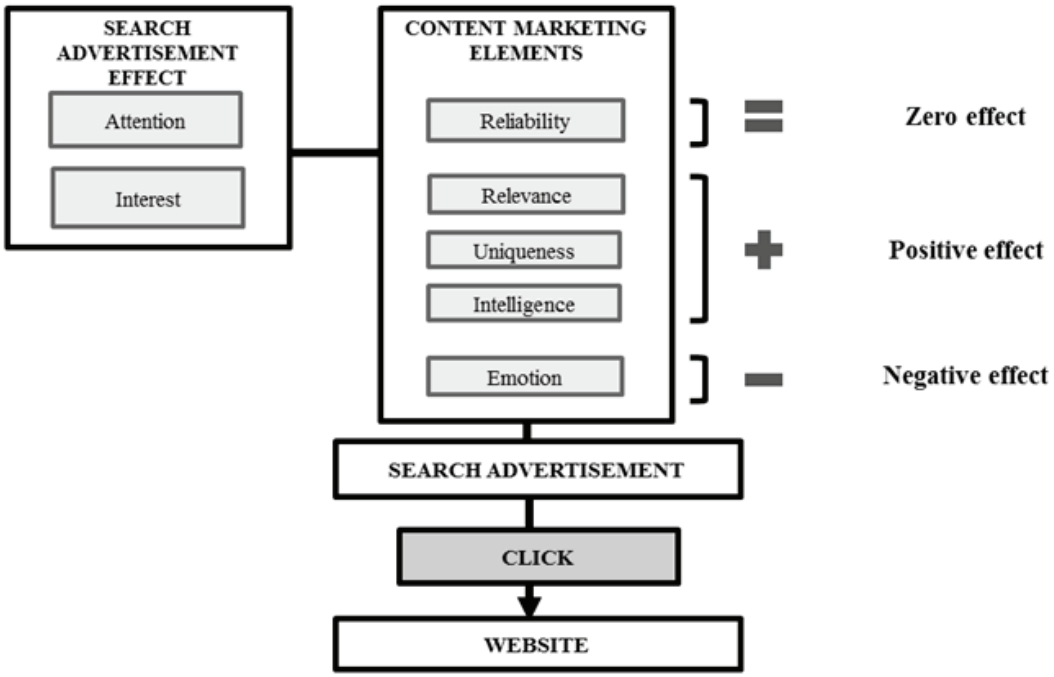

Fig. 2. Modfified theoretical model of content marketing elements for search advertising (author's own creation)

Research results show that content marketing elements can be used for search advertising although the effect of each of them is not clear therefore research should be expanded and several hypotheses tested:

- H0: Credibility has no effect
- H1: Relevance has a positive effect
- H2: Uniqueness has a positive effect
- H3: Intelligence has a positive effect
- H4: Emotions have a negative effect

Those hypotheses should be tested in quantitative research, a case study should be carried out to improve the model.

Conclusions

The role of the Internet is huge in company-consumer interaction. Over the past years digital marketing has transformed, various forms have evolved. One of the latest trends in marketing is content marketing. The use of content marketing elements for search advertising is one of straight-forward ways of gaining an advantage and successfully competing in the market. They can improve the effect of different digital channels upon the customer. Because of its novelty the effect of content marketing elements has been insufficiently researched.

Comprehensive theoretical analysis revealed that the concept of content marketing is based on the assumption that when a company provides valuable information it can expect a valuable response. 7 important content marketing elements were identified: relevance, informativeness, reliability, value, uniqueness, emotions and intelligence. One of content distribution channels is search advertising. Search advertising and content marketing complement each other, thus, content marketing elements can be used for search advertising. It was proved that content marketing elements included in the theoretical model affect search advertising and the model can be put into practice. High quality content appeals to the searcher and, as a result, that increases the effect of advertising. Qualitative research revealed that the respondents, experts and focus group, hold a similar opinion on the use of content marketing elements for search advertising but have different opinion on the effect of each of them, thus, the theoretical model of content marketing elements was modified. Research should be expanded, and the model should be tested in other contexts.

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Repovienė, R.

Turinio marketingo elementų taikymas paieškos sistemose esančiose reklamose

Santrauka

Sparčiai besikeičianti ir modernėjanti informacinių technologijų aplinka daro vis didesnę įtaką įmonių veiklos rezultatų efektyvumui ir vidinių darbo procesų organizavimui. Dabartiniame pasaulyje, kai vartotojas turi platų pasirinkimą, kokį produktą įsigyti, įmonėms yra ypatingai svarbu sukurti ir realizuoti stiprias marketingo programas, kurios padėtų išsiskirti iš konkurentų visumos (Järvinen and Karjaluoto, 2015; Rancati, Gordini and Capatina, 2016). Viena iš naujausių marketingo rūšių yra turinio marketingas. Jis susiformavo siekiant sudominti vartotojus. Šiame straipsnyje analizuojamos galimybės taikyti turinio marketingą paieškos sistemose esančiose reklamose ir galima turinio marketingo elementų įtaka šių reklamų paveikumui. Darbo tema aktuali tiek teoriniu, tiek praktiniu lygiu. Darbe nagrinėjama su mažai ištyrinėta ir nauja sritimi – turinio marketingu – susijusi teorinė medžiaga. Žvelgiant praktiškai, tema aktuali, nes reklama paieškos sistemose yra populiariausias skaitmeninio marketingo kanalas. Šiame tyrime išsikelta mokslinė problema formuluojama taip: kokių yra galimybių taikyti turinio marketingo elementus paieškos sistemose esančiose reklamose?

Teorinėje darbo dalyje aptariami moksliniai darbai, susiję su turinio marketingo koncepcija, turinio kūrimu ir paskirstymu, paieškos reklamos poveikiu ir šių dedamųjų derinimu siekiant geriausių rezultatų. Literatūros apžvalga atskleidė tai, kad vis daugiau autorių (Aspinall, 2013; Blank, 2014; Gagnon, 2014; Holliman and Rowley, 2014; Hanafizadeh and Yarmohammadi, 2015; Azad, Aliakbar ir Zomorodian, 2016) pripažįsta, jog skleidžiamo turinio ir informacijos kokybė yra virtualaus produkto patrauklumą lemiantis faktorius. Tai paskatino turinio marketingo, kitaip tariant, naujos marketingo rūšies, atsiradimą. Nors straipsnyje nagrinėjami turinio marketingo apibrėžimai (Kucuk and Krishnamurthy, 2007; Pulizzi, 2012; Holliman and Rowley, 2014; Content marketing institute, 2015) skiriasi, mokslinės literatūros turinio marketingo tema analizė leidžia apsibrėžti pagrindinę turinio marketingo koncepciją: turinio marketingas remiasi prielaida, kad įmonės, vartotojams suteikusios kokybiškos vertingos informacijos, gali tikėtis pelningo klijento atsako. Remiantis moksliniais darbais (Awad ir Ragowsky, 2008; Chasser and Wolfe, 2010; Gagnon, 2014; Abel, 2014; Creamer, 2012; Schuinanii, Wangenheim and Groene, 2014) ir ankstesniais autorės tyrimais (Pažeraitė and Repovienė, 2016), straipsnyje išsiskirtos septynios kokybiško turinio savybės, kurios gali būti traktuojamos kaip atskiri turinio marketingo elementai: unikalumas, vertingumas, aktualumas, patikimumas, emocijos, informatyvumas ir sumanumas. Reklamos, esančios paieškos sistemoje, analizė (Weller and Calcott, 2012; Blake, Tadelis ir Nosko, 2015) atskleidė, kad šis kanalas gali būti puiki priemonė turinio marketingo sklaidai, nes pagrindinė paieškos reklamos nešiklių idėja yra leisti reklamuotojams rodyti turinį tik atitinkamai tikslinei auditorijai remiantis kontekstiniu taikymu. Tai taip pat leidžia daryti prielaidą, kad turinio marketingo elementų naudojimas gali sustiprinti paieškos reklamos poveikį (Pomranky, 2015; Szabo and Huberman, 2010; Blake, Tadelis and Nosko, 2015; Haan and Moraga-Gonzalez, 2011), susidedantį iš dėmesio pritraukimo ir susidomėjimo, paskatinti teigiamą vartotojo veiksmą – paspaudimą. Teorinė analizė baigiasi sudarytu teoriniu turinio modeliu, demonstruojančiu marketingo elementų įtaką paieškos sistemoje esančios reklamos paveikumui.

Siekiant atskleisti turinio marketingo galimybes paieškos reklamoje ir patikrinti teorinį modelį buvo pasirinkti kiekybiniai tyrimo metodai: ekspertų interviu ir focus grupės diskusija. Gauti duomenys buvo analizuojami taikant bendruosius mokslinius tyrimo metodus: sisteminę analizę, palyginimą, vertinimą ir apibendrinimą. Ekspertų interviu metu (5 ekspertai; 6 atviri klausimai) buvo siekiama sužinoti skaitmeniniame marketinge dalyvaujančių specialistų nuomonę apie turinio marketingo galimybes, leidžiančias pagerinti paieškos reklamos paveikumą. Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, kad teorinis modelis yra susijęs su praktika. Ekspertų nuomone, turinio marketingas gali būti naudojamas paieškos reklamose. Pasak jų, turinio marketingo elementai gali daryti įtaką paieškos reklamos paveikumui, tačiau kiekvieno elemento įtaka yra skirtinga. Paveikesniais ekspertai laiko dėmesio pritraukimą lemiančius elementus. Tarp ekspertų vyrauja du po-

žiūriai į paieškos reklamos paveikumo gerinimą: techninis ir turinio. Interviu metu išryškėjo kelių elementų ir pagrindinių marketingo principų derinimo svarba. Siekiant nustatyti, kurie iš teoriniame modelyje pateiktų turinio marketingo elementų yra paveikiausi paieškos reklamos atveju, buvo pasirinkta focus grupės diskusija (8 respondentai, kuriems 20–29 m.; 3 klausimų grupės). Diskusijos metu respondentai prisipažino, kad informacijos paieška yra kasdienybės dalis, o informacijos kokybė ir vertingumas – rodikliai lemiantys jų veiksmus internetinėje erdvėje. Vartotojų nuomone, ne visi turinio marketingo elementai yra paveikūs, o kai kurie, pavyzdžiui, emocijos, gali daryti netgi neigiamą įtaką. Paveikiausi elementai yra turinio aktualumas, unikalumas ir patikimumas. Diskusijos metu taip pat išryškėjo ne tik paties elemento, bet ir jo pateikimo formos svarba.

Atlikti kokybiniai tyrimai atskleidė, kad turinio marketingas ir atskiri jo elementai gali būti naudojami reklamose, esančiose paieškos sistemose. Tyrimų rezultatai sudarė prielaidų teorinio modelio verifikacijai. Atliktos korekcijos apėmė paieškos reklamos poveikį ir atskirų turinio marketingo elementų įtaką jam. Nors teoriniame modelyje atskiri elementai buvo priskirti skirtingoms poveikio stadijoms, kokybiniai tyrimai atskleidė, kad šis skaidymas yra netikslingas. Remiantis tyrimų rezultatais, buvo pašalinti du turinio marketingo elementai: vertingumas ir informatyvumas. Kiti penki elementai buvo išskirstyti pagal jų daromo poveikio tipą: neigiamą, teigiamą ir neutralų. Šis skirstymas ir gairės leidžia suformuluoti hipotezes, kurios ateityje gali būti tikrinamos kiekybinių tyrimų metu. Tyrimus taip pat būtų galima plėtoti siekiant atskleisti atskirų turinio marketingo elementų derinių įtaką ir nagrinėjant turinio marketingo elementų taikymą kituose sklaidos kanaluose.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: turinio marketingas, paieškos reklama, reklamos efektyvumas.