

Branded Content - Strategic Marketing Tool and its Impact on Consumer

Branded Content - Ferramenta Estratégica de Marketing e seu Impacto no Consumidor

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Abstract

In our contemporary world, information reproduces rapidly and invasive messages are not well accepted. The disputed attention between multiple screens and the new way of consuming content reduces interest in traditional commercials and requires companies to reinvent their form of communication. Thus, advertainments emerge as an alternative way of bringing a richer dialogue between brands and customers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand how Branded Content is perceived and how the degree of product and / or brand exposure throughout exposure affects consumers. To answer the study question, semi-structured, personal interviews were conducted with the target audience of the brands presented, which use the internet to watch videos. During the research, three videos were presented, with different approaches and degrees of brand exposure. The purpose of the presentation was to understand the different perceptions of the consumer during their exposure to the content. Through interviews it was possible to identify consumer behavior patterns, who use YouTube as their main source to watch online videos and seek entertainment through them. The search for the fulfillment of the needs of esteem and self-fulfillment was evidenced in the research as main motivators of purchase. Consumers have shown that they are not bothered by the great exposure of the product when it is integrated into content and well contextualized. When the brand appeared only by signing the content and without product insertion, there was some difficulty in brand awareness. The format that least pleased and generated the most discussion was when the brand used emotional appeal. While they liked the video's overcoming story and understood the values the brand was trying to associate with, the perception of the brand was negative. Consumers saw the use of the story as an appealing strategy for selling the product.

Keywords: Branded Content. Advertainment. Marketing Positioning. Consumer behavior.

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Resumo

No mundo contemporâneo as informações se reproduzem de forma acelerada e as mensagens intrusivas não são bem aceitas. A atenção disputada entre várias telas e a nova forma de consumir conteúdo reduz o interesse pelos tradicionais comerciais e exige que as empresas reinventem sua forma de comunicação. Surgem, assim, os *advertainments* como forma alternativa de trazer um diálogo mais rico entre marcas e clientes. Assim sendo, o objetivo deste estudo é compreender como o *Branded Content* é percebido e como o grau de exposição do produto e/ou marca ao longo da exposição afeta os consumidores. Para responder a pergunta de estudo, foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas, pessoais com o público-alvo das marcas apresentadas, que utilizam a internet para assistir vídeos. Durante a pesquisa foram apresentados três vídeos com diferentes abordagens e graus de exposição da marca. O objetivo da apresentação foi compreender as diferentes percepções do consumidor durante sua exposição ao conteúdo. Por meio das entrevistas foi possível identificar padrões de comportamento dos consumidores que usam o YouTube como principal fonte para ver vídeos on-line e buscam o entretenimento por meio destes. A procura pela realização das necessidades de estima e autorrealização foram evidenciadas na pesquisa como principais motivadores de compra. Os consumidores mostraram não se incomodar com a grande exposição do produto quando ele está integrado ao conteúdo e bem contextualizado. Quando a marca apareceu apenas assinando o conteúdo e sem inserção de produto, houve certa dificuldade de percepção da marca. O formato que menos agradou e gerou mais discussões foi quando a marca usou o apelo emocional. Apesar de gostarem da história de superação apresentada pelo vídeo e compreenderem os valores com os quais a marca tentava se associar, a percepção sobre a marca foi negativa. Os consumidores viram o uso da história como uma estratégia apelativa para a venda do produto.

Palavras-chave: *Branded Content*. *Advertainment*. Posicionamento de Marketing. Comportamento do consumidor.

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1 Introduction

In our contemporary world, the internet, the social networks, and other forms of information sharing bring much more options to the consumer. He now has the power of choice rather than being held hostage by a few channels. The consumer goes from a passive to an active position, searching and creating content. Brazilian consumers have been looking for more media content options, using different media simultaneously, and increasing their use of the internet. We perceive such behaviors by the increase of the consumption of videos on the Internet in relation to TV.

According to the Video Viewers Survey conducted by the Provokers Institute (2018), the growth in web video consumption from 2014 to 2018 was 138%, while TV growth in the same period was only 13%. We realize the dynamism in communication when consumers have their attention divided and disputed between two screens: only 18% say they have their attention focused exclusively on TV while watching (Provokers, 2018).

This data show that now, the consumer has more choices in terms of content and when to watch it. In this way the traditional commercial breaks lose strength and relevance. In this scenario, platforms for sharing audiovisual content, such as YouTube and on-demand services brought by innovative companies such as Netflix, Net Now, Prime videos, among others, appear on the internet. In this movement, the public ceases to be a mere spectator and takes on new roles as producers and disseminators of information.

The advent of social networks and the emergence of on demand platforms allow the interaction of viewers in real time. Through this functionality, consumers constantly expose brand opinions and product reviews, generating increasingly rich and collaborative exchanges with their brands of interest. In this way, the audience becomes stronger and more present in communication. Hegarty predicted (2011, p. 6) that “[...] without understanding the basics of engaging, entertaining and thrilling the audience, digitization will not help, but will destroy you faster.” For this reason, companies are facing the challenge of adapting to this new dynamic of interaction. It is necessary to establish a new language so as not to create a gap between brand and consumer that no longer wants to be interrupted by advertisements that are invasive and do not attract their interest.

Companies then seek a way to keep in touch with their audience, communicate their values and their image, without being intrusive, but aggregating. The intention is to maintain a relevant and positive contact with the consumer. We can call the problem that brands go through today Herbert Simon's Attention Economy (1971, p. 40-41), which warns: “Wealth of information creates poverty of attention, and the need to allocate that attention efficiently amidst the abundance of information sources that can consume it.” In this context of entertaining and attracting the attention of the audience, we realized the effectiveness of this association in the Popeye case in the 1930s.

The spinach-eating character generated a 30% increase in consumption of this vegetable in the United States. In this case, we identified the beginning of the use of entertainment to dialogue with the public and communicate values of a product. In the future, this technique would be applied to brands, emerging what we call today branded content. Today, we seek through relevant and compelling stories (popularly called storytelling) to thrill viewers. Brands understood that to capture consumer attention, they need to entertain them. Branded content demonstrates a change in brand thinking that was initially focused on media and quantity, and today aims to qualitatively highlight what it can offer to the public (Weiss, 2014).

Bringing in relevant stories that reflect their values and image, companies create a more spontaneous and deeper interaction with their target. Unlike product placement or advertising strategies, the brand here is not a protagonist but a producer of the piece. Branded

content has been around the world for over a decade and has an association with BCMA (Branded Content Marketing Association), which has been operating across Europe, Australia, Asia and the United States for thirteen years. This association finally arrived in Brazil only in 2013, with BCMA South America (ADMIN BCMA, 2013) and places Brazil as a focus on content production by companies. Trend in the United States where, according to Rockcontent (2015), 93% of companies bet on this marketing tool, branded content is growing in Brazil. Today it is estimated that 69% of companies have embraced entertainment content, investing 25% of their money in content production (Rockcontent, 2015).

Since 2016, there is an increasing growth in the Brazilian segment, with agencies focused exclusively on this communication such as Content House, ASAS and the creation by IAB Brasil of the Branded Content committee in 2018. Even with all this exposure The tool is new to the country and has a lot of potential for exploration and growth.

Branded content on the other hand is not meant to end traditional advertising. While advertising is focused on sales, branded content is geared toward building brand image and approaching your consumer through stories that reinforce your values. Social media and today's diverse content creation platforms leverage this movement by helping brands get closer to their audience, and communicate with it, as branded content can be made available in the form of articles, eBooks, videos, and more.

As it is still a new concept in brand promotion strategy, there are many issues that are discussed about the production of these stories. For example, we can cite the following debates: the adequacy of the insertion or omission of the brand in the content, its real impact on the consumer and the resistance of some brands to produce content that is not primarily intended for sale. Thus the following question arises: How does the consumer perceive the brand that makes use of branded content and how does it react to the insertion of this brand in the content? Considering branded content as a new marketing strategy used by companies, the study aims to understand how consumers perceive the brand within the content produced by brands. In addition, the study seeks to find out what impact the content has on consumers, and how the presence of the brand in the content affects their perception. We conducted this search through three branded content cases with different levels of brand presence in the content. We use the case of Greenday Juices, where the product does not appear in the piece; the series made by the brand Santa Amália, in which the product appears discreetly; and Teresópolis Beer, where the product is one of the protagonists of the series.

In order to achieve the proposed objective, secondary objectives were developed to help the general objective to be achieved: 1) Identify if the consumer responds differently to the appearance levels of the product within the content; 2) Analyze if the viewer can understand the values and image that the brand intends to pass with the displayed content; 3) Discuss the viewer's acceptance and interest about the content produced; 4) Explore consumer perception of brand after exposure to content.

This study is important because the proposal of branded content is different from the most known forms of communication. This new tool brings a revolution in the way companies relate to their target. Understanding the differences between branded content and traditional tools such as product placement, merchandising, and traditional advertising can bring relevant insights to this growing market. Even though branded content can be produced in the form of articles, e-books, videos, and other formats, served on multiple platforms, this study will focus only on your video productions, especially those aimed at online platforms. To illustrate and narrow our field of analysis, three cases were approached. The first case concerns a piece produced for the Sucos Greenday brand, aired on the Internet in May 2015, in honor of Mother's Day, called "Mother's Care". In this case, the brand produced content without product exposure. The goal was to communicate with mothers, create identification and generate information about different types of care. From a brand standpoint, the proposal

is to associate with nature and maternal care and affection in all its forms. “Moments to Share” is the campaign produced by the pasta brand Santa Amália that served as the secondary objective of the study. The series of five episodes, aired in 2016 on the brand's social networks and on the GNT website, aimed to spread remarkable moments of real people, showing that Santa Amália is always present in the family. In these pieces the brand has a supporting role and appears when the characters prepare recipes to celebrate in family.

The third campaign analyzed was about the brand of beer Teresópolis. A nine-episode web series, aired on the brand's YouTube channel, which began in May 2016. The content featured a relaxed narrative and talked about a competition between well-known chefs who made recipes using the brand's different types of beer as an ingredient. The purpose of the series was the dissemination of the brewery's little known labels.

From this clipping, it is possible to understand how the consumer receives these messages and how the degree of product exposure affects him. The sample of this research was limited to men and women, from classes A and B, consumers of audiovisual content on the Internet, between 25 and 54 years old.

This strategic decision is justified by the following facts: (i) this share reaches the average age of highest consumption of Facebook and YouTube, according to survey YouTube Insights (2017); (ii) according to YouTube Insights (2017), 68% of YouTube consumers belong to classes A and B; (iii) this segmentation is in agreement with the target audience of the brands used in the cases presented, thus, the results are based on the opinions of those that the brands aim to impact.

2 The Branded Content Consumer

This section presents and discusses conceptual aspects and studies related to the theme of this study, which served as the basis for the analysis performed. The section is divided into four parts to discuss the concepts of: consumer perception and behavior, digital marketing, product placement and branded content.

2.1 Consumer perception and behavior

The study and analysis of consumer behavior is essential for companies to succeed. The concept of marketing tells us that it is “the science and art of winning and retaining customers and developing profitable relationships with them” (Kotler, 1999, p. 155). In turn, for companies to gain and maintain a relationship with their consumers, they need to know them, understand their behaviors, their needs, their feelings, just as we do with the people with whom we relate. According to Peter and Olson (2010, p. 5), “consumer behavior involves people's thoughts and feelings, and the actions they take during the buying process.” For Kotler and Keller (2012, p. 164) consumer behavior is “the study of how individuals, groups and organizations select, buy, use and dispose of goods, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants. ”

This behavior is very dynamic and brands must keep up with these changes in their consumers' thinking, acting, evaluating and feeling to maintain their ties and develop lasting relationships.

Several factors influence a consumer's buying behavior: cultural, social and personal.

The motivation that drives consumers to buy can be explained by some theories such as Freud, Herzberg and Maslow. Among them the most widespread is Maslow's, for him there is a hierarchy of needs that motivates us and they can be physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-fulfillment. Once motivated the person is ready for action, which is influenced by their perception, learning and memory. These steps are influenced by the persons experience,

the interpretation of the information received, how they feel about the stimuli, and what they have stored from experiences and associations that do with what their memory brings them. From this knowledge gained about its audience, the brand seeks to develop a marketing strategy to "[...] increase the chances of consumers having favorable thoughts and feelings about a particular product, service, brand ..." (Peter & Olson, 2010, p. 12)

All of these aspects that concern the individual are extremely important in the buying process, as is the environment in which they are inserted. The environment stimulates people, directly influences culture, society and personal aspects such as their personality, self-image, values and lifestyle. In this study we have to analyze the importance of these environmental changes and their impact on consumer behavior.

We can observe, over time, some environmental changes that strongly influenced the buying process of consumers, thus guiding the repositioning of many brands. Examples include raising awareness of the environment, creating room for green marketing, and then a greater concern for ingested foods, making brands healthier, creating differentiated, gluten-free, lactose-free products.

Today we are going through several increasingly accelerated changes, such as communication. Change in communication (globalization) can be considered an environmental change that affects people's culture, lifestyle, society and psychological, thus altering the entire chain of consumer behavior.

Thus, brands need to be constantly recycling and understanding the changes that their target audience is going through, so that they can adapt their strategies to the new behaviors of these consumers.

2.2 Digital marketing

With increasingly rapid changes in communication, the relationship between brands and consumers is undergoing major transformations. These change not only the channels available for brands to reach the consumer, but also what is expected of them and how they communicate, that is, their relationship.

Consumers today are increasingly demanding and the digital world creates an agility of communication that makes brands present 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in people's lives. We notice a major change in consumer behavior, where in a global environment such as the internet provides, we deal with too much information, which causes inattention. To overcome this barrier, brands must seek to reach consumers and communicate with them in a meaningful way so that they can catch their attention rather than intrude on programming and become unwanted. "In light of this, agencies strive to create the most outrageous advertisements to grab consumer attention, and all they need to do is deliver relevant content" (Vaz, 2011, p. 99).

The fundamental premise of marketing has not changed, as corporate function still aims to meet present and future customer needs through mutually beneficial exchanges. However, the internet has provided a radical change in how the basic mission of marketing is accomplished (Sheth, Eshghi, & Krishnan, 2002).

The information technology revolution transformed marketing, just as television revolutionized advertising and consumer culture in 1941 with the first TV commercial in the United States. Unlike many professionals predicted a few years ago, investment in digital media has grown significantly and can pass the investment in traditional media, which does not mean the end of these. According to the survey Iab Digital Adspend (2018), the growth in 2017 compared to 2016 was 25.4%, making the investment in digital advertising correspond to one third of the total volume in the Brazilian advertising market. The division of these investments totals 14.8 billion in 2017.

2.3 Product placement

Product placement is an advertising tool that consists of inserting a brand and / or product into entertainment or editorial content. In Brazil it is common to be confused with merchandising, but it is a wrong association, since merchandising is the promotional action performed at the point of sale. Product placement as we know it today was widespread in 1982 with Steven Spielberg's E.T. In the movie, the character Elliot uses Hersheys' Reese's Pieces product to lure E.T. According to Exame magazine published September 13, 2010, the product's sales increased by 65%. In this tool we understand a way to present the product without interrupting the viewer's programming, is the beginning of the union between content that is not intrusive and the context in which it will be evaluated so that it generates a positive return for the company and the content. . In Brazil, we can see many cases of product placement in movies and soap operas, mainly. The practice of inserting commercial messages in the editorial of the published material has been around for a long time and began in the 1930s with American cinema through the insertions in the films. Producers realized it was a great resource to help cover part or sometimes all production costs (Calazans, 1992, p.71 apud Lawall, 2013 p.10). It is important to note that in the product placement tool, the brand enters only with the purchase of space in the content being produced. Unlike in the case of branded content, where the brand is the protagonist of the piece.

2.4 Branded content

Branded content can still be considered a new term. Be careful not to confuse it with terms like advertainment, content marketing, product placement and distinguish it from commercials and sponsored content. Branded content differs from more traditional forms of advertising, because in this tool the brand is not simply inserted into content as in product placement. It also does not sponsor existing content, as we see in sponsored content. In branded content the brand is the producer of content, which unlike traditional commercials, aims to entertain the viewer, focusing on the content, the message, to spread the brand.

“Advertainment brings entertainment values to brands. Integrate brands in entertainment in the form of TV shows, movies, games, among others. Creating entertainment experiences and gaining notoriety and value.”(Borsanelli, 2007, p.27).

Thus advertainment encompasses branded content, product placement and sponsored content. In turn, content marketing refers to a marketing strategy focused on creating and disseminating value through content.

Creative solutions are present in marketing to link what the brand has to say with what the consumer wants to hear. Marketers have great interest in these creative strategies for their importance in getting results. These strategies impact the message recipient differently, and are more likely to increase the opportunity, motivation, and ability to process information from an advertisement (Maclnnis, Moorman, & Jaworski, 1991 apud Ashley, & Tuten, 2014 p.1). Creative solutions may have some consequences and may be differentiated primarily by emotional / transformational or functional / informative goals. In general, branded content, because it does not focus exclusively on the product, but rather on content, often seeks to create identification between the consumer and the brand image. Of course, it is necessary to observe the characteristics of the product when choosing the best strategy. According to Johar and Sirgy (1991), more significant consumer value products tend to respond better to brand image stimuli, while functional appeal has a better response to utility products. In the age of social networking and communication, people increasingly pay attention to their relationship with others, even virtually. Brands start to relate to consumers through Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, just as people relate to each other. Then there is a

growing need for brands to create a voice, an identity, position themselves and show consumers their value. In this mission the production of content becomes essential and the importance of branded content and its dissemination is growing. Branded content has therefore proven to be a central strategy for many brands as it is the best non-intrusive way to connect them with the audience, bringing meaning and humanizing brands through what is relevant to people (Weiss, 2014).

3 Method

For this study a qualitative exploratory research was made, which aimed to investigate a new phenomenon in search of knowledge to make it clearer. For this, data collection was done in two steps. In the first stage, a preliminary investigation of the subject was conducted through studies on branded content to understand the gaps that could be explored. In addition, an informal investigation into people's knowledge of the term was conducted. This first step aimed to clarify and identify the objectives of the study, as well as the ideal approach to be used in the interviews (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2009).

In the second stage of the study, personal interviews were conducted with video users on the Internet and demonstration of video examples in order to understand their reactions, feelings and understanding of the exposed content. In-depth interviews can reveal deeper information and promote a free exchange of information (Malhotra, 2010).

For the first stage of information gathering, a preliminary stage, we considered information obtained in lectures on the subject, varied articles and informal conversations in order to investigate the general knowledge on the subject.

In the second stage of the study, a non-probabilistic sample of 17 people was selected by the accessibility or convenience sampling criterion, in which the researcher selects the individuals to whom they have access and who are part of the universe (Gil, 2008). This criterion is accepted in exploratory studies as it does not require a high level of accuracy. Individuals within the group to which the interviewer has access were selected because they fit the profile of the previously defined target audience.

In the second stage of the exploratory research, the main data were collected, individual and personal interviews were conducted. In this case, the researcher presents himself / herself to the investigated person and asks him / her questions in order to obtain data that are of interest to the research (Gil, 2008). Considering that the objective of the research is subjective, such as identifying behavior patterns, meanings and reactions of respondents, a qualitative approach was used by the nature of the study itself.

Thus, each interview was conducted individually, based on a script of semi-structured questions so that respondents could talk more freely about the topics covered. Participants were asked about their buying behavior in order to understand the motivations and relationships they establish with brands and products. Three videos were presented and served as the basis for capturing reactions and reflections on the branded content format and the number of brand appearances within the content. Interviews, with an average duration of 40 minutes, were held in Rio de Janeiro, during May and June 2019, according to the availability of each participant.

In the data analysis of a qualitative research, the focus is to exploring the set of opinions on the subject under investigation, identifying the different homogeneous groups of opinions and beliefs within the social segment analyzed (Bauer & Gaskell, 2017). To identify not only what is homogeneous but also what differs within that social environment. To perform this analysis, the data categorization, inference, description and interpretation procedures were applied according to the methodological procedures identified by Bauer and Gaskell (2017), classifying the answers obtained in exclusive and exhaustive categories. The

definition of categories was developed based on the literature reviewed in this study and divided as follows: for the initial part of understanding the motivation of consumption, the categories seen in the Maslow pyramid were used. For the second part of the interviews, the survey sought to understand what key factors respondents consider when choosing a brand. Responses were grouped into five categories: price, quality, third party referral, brand image, and learning. From these, analyzes were made on consumer responses and hypotheses were constructed. These topics served as the classification principle - being recommended for research without explicit and non-standard hypotheses (Gil, 2008).

4 Results

The group of respondents consisted of 17 persons, five males and 12 females, aged 26 to 53 years, belonging to classes A and B. In the survey six people from class A, four from class B1 and seven of class B2 were identified, classified by Criteria Brazil 2015 (ABEP) that uses the survey of household characteristics for economic segmentation. The names of respondents have been hidden to maintain their privacy.

In order to validate the participation of respondents in the survey, and also understand what they were looking for when consuming videos on the Internet, respondents were asked about the consumption of videos on social networks. They were also asked if they would accept recommendations for similar content across the platforms used. Then questions were asked about consumer behavior in general in order to better understand the profile of these consumers and how they relate to brands. This information helped create a more complete consumer profile, assisting in understanding their reactions, perceptions and opinions that were investigated later.

All 17 survey participants claimed to watch videos on the internet. The main platforms mentioned were YouTube and Facebook, with YouTube being the most prominent. The biggest motivation for watching videos online is the search for entertainment. Sometimes the informative objective was pointed out accompanying the entertainment. Rarely have they claimed to watch informational videos exclusively. When asked if they accepted recommendations from similar videos, all participants said they had already accepted at least once.

This range of questions sought to understand buying behavior and how respondents relate to brands. Initially, they were asked to respond about their purchasing motivations based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The concepts were exposed to them and they could hardly choose just one category.

A tendency was identified among those who mentioned the esteem category as the biggest motivator: this is usually accompanied by the self-fulfillment category. Another trend observed was that respondents who chose the basic categories said they were not very consumerist people.

What I consume, I consume because I need it [...]. I don't go out eating right and left, I eat when I need it and what I need most are basic necessity items. (Interviewee 17).

Still on consumption, the survey sought to understand the main factors that respondents take into account when choosing a brand. Responses were grouped into five categories: price, quality, third party referral, brand image, and learning. In the brand image group, "brand image" was considered to mention features such as responses in which respondents commented on: identifying with the brand, about the brand having social responsibility or liking the packaging.

What makes me choose between two brands is 100% branding, that's all. Man when I don't have the brand I'm used to, it stresses me out, and the first time I bought that brand may have been because the packaging is prettier, the brand looks nicer, and I tend to be very loyal and very loyal. (Interviewee 16).

Respondents' responses were well divided. The price and learning categories presented the highest number of citations. However, the quality and brand image categories were not far behind. Respondents cited more than one category in their responses, such as Interviewee 3.

Social responsibility, what the brand gives back to the community is a factor that helps me choose which brand to buy too, besides the price. (Interviewee 3).

A second question was asked to understand how participants' values influenced their choice of products or brands. According to the answers, four groups were identified in relation to social and environmental awareness in consumption: strong, medium, weak and none.

From the answers we see a tendency of people to care about the behavior and image of companies, showing strong social and environmental awareness about the consumption. In this category, people seek to prioritize brands or causes that they value and stop consuming from those that go against their values.

[...] influences a lot, I do not buy clothes with any print, if I have in front of me a brand that refers to precepts and concepts that I agree and respect I prefer, such as those that are racist, or do animal testing I stop buying. (Interviewee 3).

Respondent 9 said they prefer to consume brands that sponsor events and produce interesting and inclusive commercials. For him, brand attitudes that he considers positive and negative affect his consumption. Even where we perceive a medium or poor awareness of social and environmental responsibility in consumption, respondents would cease to consume negative postures. The only group that was not affected at all by unresponsive corporate attitudes was none.

Actually, I would like to worry more, however the companies that usually have these scandals and almost slave labor and so on. They are usually much cheaper, for the same product as companies that do not have these scandals, so when I have money I opt for companies that are environmentally friendly, but when I am not, whatever. (Interviewee 8 - weak group).

4.1 Respondents' perceptions of featured videos

4.1.1 Video one

In the first video was presented the case of the brand of juices Greenday, a branded content, in mini-document format, produced for 2min52sec. The product was never exposed, the brand just signed the content (twice) and kept a watermark in the right corner of the screen. The theme approached was kindergartens, bringing as an example an initiative of two mothers.

In this first video, some interviewees found it difficult to identify the brand and / or product. Despite this, they pointed to the format presented as a commercial.

I think it's a commercial because of the aesthetics. The colors, the type of image and also because at the end the brand name appears. It's different, the content makes it look like a documentary, but it's a commercial for sure. (Interviewee 4)

The brand signature at the end was understood as why respondents identified the video as a commercial, even though the product was not quoted or shown. This approach caused some confusion for some people, as illustrated by interviewee 8:

I thought the content was cool, but I didn't see what the link with the brand, just for being nature?

Other testimonials also illustrate these statements:

Wow, but I was scared because I didn't know it was an advertisement, so in the end comes the brand. I thought, all this to convince me to buy a juice? Speaking of day care and stuff, but it wasn't to talk about it, it was to talk about consumption? But it's nice to see that there are people doing this nice job with children. (Interviewee 14).

Despite the difficulties in understanding the format, the response to the video was positive. Respondents were able to identify the values of early childhood education, nature, new ways of thinking with which the brand sought to associate.

They were asked if people would watch the video if they had found it on the internet, and the results were very divided. Part of the respondents said they identified with the content and that it would have caught their attention and therefore would have watched it.

I identified with the video and liked the content because it represents what I believe, the values and concepts of education, I am a teacher and I work with young children, so I found it very cool and informative. (Interviewee 13).

There were cases where, although not identified, showed interest in the content and therefore said they would watch it:

I found it interesting, would have watched if I had found it on the internet. Although I do not identify directly, it is a subject that I like this nature, not necessarily a home school for children, but I like juice and nature and found it beautiful. (Interviewee 3).

In cases where they say they would not watch, it was possible to link the fact to the person has not identified with the content. However, non-identification did not generate a negative response to the brand specifically. Respondents considered the brand image positive regardless of whether they identified with the proposed content.

My opinion about the brand is positive, it is not because I do not identify with the content they brought that my opinion is negative. They brought content, I didn't find it offensive and I don't even think they took advantage of someone's story to benefit. (Interviewee 12).

4.1.2 Video two

The second video presented to respondents was produced by pasta brand Santa Amália. The brand produced a web series branded content to highlight family values on the

motto “moments to share”. The 3min52sec episode bears the logo on the opening card, the product in the middle, as a product placement and packshot at the end.

Product identification and branding were easier in this case. Respondents were able to understand the insertion of the product and were bothered by it.

Respondents pointed to the commercial format for the piece, even identifying that its duration was longer.

Clearly it is a commercial, the only thing is that it is a little longer, but there is no doubt that it is a commercial. (Interviewee 4).

The video brings an emotional appeal with a family history of overcoming cancer. The story told moved many of the interviewees, who cried or said they were emotional, however the brand image was perceived in a negative way. Respondents expressed discomfort regarding the story chosen by the brand. Verbally they said they find it appealing to use a story of suffering on this occasion. As explained in the comments of respondents 15 and 14:

For me it has a negative image as much as I understood that they wanted to associate with family values, to be together, togetherness I found it very appealing and I know what this suffering is, so I didn't think it was cool. (Interviewee 15).

I don't think it's nice to be associating this disgrace to one's life, no matter how much it overcomes, with pasta. If it was just a positive reinforcement, the type do not give up I would find it cool and more relevant, but the noodles in the middle of this content did not like. (Interviewee 14).

Despite the negative response to the brand, using family history was not the reason identified by most to watch the video or not. From the analyzed answers the respondents would tend not to watch the content because they do not consume this type of video on the internet. Among respondents who would watch the video on the internet, the motivator is the story told and does not mean that they have a positive brand perception.

I identified with the feelings of family, unity, I know the importance of this, I find the content very relevant, would have watched, because her story holds, you want to know more, but I thought the way it was done and they use it it was really bad. (Interviewee 12).

The values the brand wanted to pass were perceived by the respondents, the terms family and union had great repetition. Respondents who did not identify the values passed by the brand claimed that, because they did not like the content, could not make this association. An example was interviewee 17, who said he could not associate any value with the brand because he found what they were doing negative. Already the interviewee 11, despite imagining the desired goal, did not create this association: “I can even imagine what they want to pass values, but I could not think of these things while watching this video”. (Interviewee 11).

4.1.3 Video three

In the third case, the Teresópolis brand makes use of the branded content tool through the web series format in order to show the various brewery labels. The episode shown to the interviewees lasted 6min2sec. During this content, where the characters taught a recipe using

one of the beers as an ingredient, the product was widely exposed throughout the video. In addition, the brand also signed the beginning and end of the content.

In this piece all respondents easily identified the product and brand. However, they had difficulty associating with desired values. Participants said they did not know what values to associate, but they found it easy to find a goal: beer is not just for drinking, but can be present in other ways in people's daily lives. "I don't think it's a lot of values, I couldn't identify it, I think it's more to generate an interaction, but maybe you can do more with beer." (Interviewee 12).

When asked about the format of the video displayed, the "series" answer was virtually unanimous. Interviewee 16 even thought it was an existing show where the brewery had won an episode for her: "I thought it was cool for them to make an episode of this series aimed at a brand, I thought this idea was good because it didn't get boring or dull."

The overall opinion regarding the video and brand was positive. The format was well accepted for watching on the internet and two different motivators were identified for those who would watch: some identified with the content for liking to drink and / or eating, others were interested in the recipe.

4.2 General and comparative opinions of respondents.

After the three videos were presented, discussion points were raised to compare the three formats and understand what pleased and disliked. In seeking the opinion of what was common to the three cases, three main categories of answers were found: (i) indirect way of talking about the product, (ii) tell stories and (iii) present products. The most cited similarity was the indirect way of talking about the product, as the interviewee 10 reports: "they all tell a story, they don't just play the product as in a traditional commercial, show that they have a concern with the way they present the product or brand." The differences found between the videos were grouped into four categories called: (i) format, (ii) subject, (iii) stimuli and (iv) product exposure. In the format category, all the testimonials of those who saw a big difference in the purpose of the video were included, as in the interviewee 8's statement: "in videos 1 and 2 they are telling stories, while in video 3 he doesn't want to tell anything, he wants just entertain." In the stimulus category, comments were grouped that took into account the different appeals of the videos regarding emotions. According to respondent 1: "In the first, it has an informative character; in the second, an emotional appeal and in the third, it is already more for the humor, it aims to entertain". The product exposure category, as the name implies, grouped responses that saw the difference between videos by the degree of product exposure within the content. It was the biggest differential identified among the videos by respondents. Respondents preferred video three. Video one was also chosen by some, while the second video was not preferred by any respondent.

Finally, the group was asked what they thought about the video approach with low brand exposure (video one) and whether the large brand exposure in video three bothered them. The results showed that they do not bother with the large exposure of the brand when relevant to the context, they did not find it boring, despite the amount of product insertions:

It did not bother me because they were not forced, they only included in a context that already asked the product, it was clear from the beginning that it was not a beer you put in a recipe but a recipe that was made for that beer. (Interviewee 15).

When the brand was under-exposed (video one), however much they could only associate the brand with the content at the end or found it difficult to understand, they liked

the approach of this format. Interviewee 15 says that he liked the subtlety and therefore did not find himself forced or interrupted.

Although not a significant number, it was interesting to note that during the conversation, some respondents pointed out that they felt a little misled by the formats in which the product does not appear or subtly appears.

Although it's a subtler form, I think it's more aggressive, its wanting to stick the product in a person's head at all costs, you want to build that person-brand identification at all costs. You're enjoying a piece of content and out of nowhere you discover that it was not a documentary but a brand trying to sell her product. (Interviewee 4).

5 Conclusions

The study aimed to understand how the consumer perceives the brand that makes use of branded content and how he perceives the insertion of the product in the videos. The information obtained here can be very useful for producers, agencies and brands to better understand consumers' views on the content displayed and to identify the precautions to be taken so that they can pass on their values and create positive images with consumers.

To support this study, a literature review on consumer behavior, digital marketing (which is very important in changing consumer and brand behavior) and the concepts of branded contents were made.

To answer the study question, personal semi-structured interviews were conducted with the target audience of the brands presented that use the internet to watch videos. During the research were presented three videos with different approaches and degree of brand exposure during the content to understand the different perceptions.

Through the interviews it was possible to identify behavioral patterns of consumers who use YouTube as their main source for watching online videos and seeking entertainment through them. We noticed a tendency to accept referrals from similar videos recommended by the platform, thus creating an opportunity to come up with videos produced by brands that are aligned with their interests.

The search for the fulfillment of the needs of esteem and self-fulfillment were evidenced in the research as main motivators of purchase. To choose a brand consumers rely on various aspects such as price, quality, experience, opinion of others and the image they have of the brand. These consumers are concerned about the social and environmental behavior of companies, but in a passive way, as they do not seek information about it. However, when in contact with this information, they are influenced by the posture adopted.

The format that pleased consumers the most was the Theresópolis brand web series, in which the brand was widely exposed. Consumers have shown that they are not bothered by the great exposure of the product when it is integrated into content and well contextualized. Even with a large exposure of the brand, they associated the format with a series and not a commercial. Finally, they had a positive impression of the brand by bringing them carefully crafted content that entertains them while informing them about the product's characteristics.

When the brand appeared only by signing the content and without product insertion, there was some difficulty in brand perception, but it was identified by the majority. In this format, opinions were divided on whether it was a commercial or a mini documentary. The lack of understanding of the format meant that when identifying the brand at the end of the video, some immediately associated it with a commercial, despite identifying the documentary character. There was a perception of the values the company wanted to pass and

a positive view of the brand. Even those who did not identify with the content liked the approach because it was unobtrusive.

The format that was last pleased and generated the most discussion was when the brand used emotional appeal. While they liked the video's overcoming story and understood the values the brand was trying to associate with, the perception of the brand was negative. Consumers saw the use of the story as an appealing strategy for selling the product. The way the brand was inserted in the video bothered the respondents, even if the product was only inserted twice - the first for 2 seconds during the content and the second for 5 seconds in the final pack. As one of the purposes of branded content is not to be intrusive (Weiss, 2014), we can say that the format of the brand Santa Amália, did not fulfill its goal. This may be related to the fact that respondents associate the format with a commercial more easily than the other cases analyzed.

The intention to tell stories and talk indirectly about the products was perceived by consumers in the three cases presented. Respondents were able to identify the differences in exposure of the product they were researching and the different informational or emotional appeals. Respondents were so sensitive to the level of exposure in each content that this attribute generated a category within the data analysis. This fact alone proves the relevance that the degree of brand exposure in content has in the way the viewer perceives the brand and activation as a whole.

The two most informative appealing videos had better results than video two, which has the strongest emotional appeal than the informative ones, thus corroborating the claims of Johar and Sirgy (1991) that products of more significant value to consumers tend to respond better to brand image stimuli, while functional appeal is better responsive to utility products.

As this is a recent practice, the results of this study can contribute significantly to the understanding of branded content, how it affects consumers and why it is gaining more and more fans in the world market. This information can be valuable to companies in various industries, advertising agencies, branded content or traditional producers.

The results of this study will be useful for companies that do not yet adopt such a form of communication, can learn a little more about this type of strategy. In addition, the brands covered in this study will be able to see how consumers reacted to the content produced, gaining valuable insight into the benefits and care they should have when opting for this strategy again.

The results to be achieved may also be useful for advertising agencies and producers, as they often deal with determining strategies to promote for the brands they serve. They will serve to illustrate to your potential clients the positive and negative aspects of the tool pointed out by this study.

Academically, the study is also pertinent considering the small amount of materials still produced on the subject.

The bibliographic review for the preparation of this study identified some issues already debated related to brand content, such as: the quality of the pieces produced, the effectiveness of the placement channels, the adequacy of the frequency of content production and the need for brands to be used. become publishers. However, little is said about the presence of the product and / or brand within the produced parts.

Finally, the results will also serve as an argument in favor of branded content against customers who are still resistant to the implementation of this tool, as it does not put the product in the foreground.

Since branded content still has a format considered new to the market, this line of study may have other developments. A quantitative study on this format is indicated so that it is possible to better analyze this trend, verifying the assumptions raised here, obtaining statistical data on the subject.

It is also proposed to understand how agencies, marketers, producers and brands view the format and product insertion in these videos in order to understand the current view of the producer market of these contents. For this, it is indicated the accomplishment of this qualitative study with the professionals of the area, promoting, thus, a complementary vision of the present study.

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