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Needs Analysis of Social Media Marketers

Abstract: *The ever-growing e-businesses across the globe have totally changed the landscape of business conventions that have been followed and rooted at the core of business activities for cons. Now the focus of business leaders is not just to develop the products but also its marketing. Since e-business reigns in the digital world; thus, the tactics which are being used should be digital and advanced to keep up with the pace. It follows a myriad of features such as user-friendly website designing, attractive picture selection, responsive web pages, and customer services to effective content writing. An online survey via emails was distributed among the digital business officers who responded to the changing needs of the online communication strategies that can help teachers equip their students with those needs, in the long run, to successfully manage their businesses. A total of 122 responses were received in order to analyze the specific needs of digital media marketers. Some of the factors, such as effective communication and giving importance to customers, were some of the important needs of digital marketers.*

Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Defining Needs Analysis](#)
- [Type of Needs Analysis](#)
- [Deficiency Analysis](#)
- [Literature Review](#)
- [Research Questions](#)
- [Methodology](#)
- [Data Collection](#)
- [Results Analysis](#)
- [Conclusions](#)
- [References](#)

Key Words: Interactive Digital Media, Specific Needs, Social Media Marketing, Communication Needs, Technology

Introduction

English for specific purposes (ESP) marks its special distinction from English for general purpose (EGP) due to its precise approach to addressing the actual needs of the learners. Firstly, needs are identified then they are segregated in accordance to the degree of need of learners' professions. Courses are designed to equip the learners with the tailored tools which have been developed and customized to the specification of learners' professional and career needs. ESP stands on the pillars of needs analysis.

It lays emphasis on weak areas of the learners which means the problems learners face while executing their professional and career tasks; thus, it provides convenience for teachers to work on those weak areas of learners that have been identified while conducting a needs analysis research.

Communication is the key factor in sustaining a business of any nature, be it online or physical. It is widely reported in research that a lot of communication courses are taught at the graduate level. With the technological pace, business interaction has also shifted its paradigm

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to online communication. The interactive messages streamed by the company should build on another for the productivity of the purchases. To influence and propel the sales, multiple stages of communication are required to advocate and propel the customers to the end stage. Marketers should not only be careful with what kind of meaning is conveyed through the message but also they should analyze if that message is able to accomplish its target. Previous literature has also presented the use of digital media mediums such as search history, display features, social media platforms, different marketing channels, offline WOM, and so on ([Mayzlin et al., 2014](#)). Use of all the social media marketing channels effectively can decide the future of short-term sales and long term brand building. (Maltin,2015)

Consumers interact with the brands in a myriad of manners and ways but still, there is a linear sequence that they follow. Customers want to stay updated about the functioning of their favorite brands. There are times when they feel the urge to compare the brand with different international brands. They evaluate the minor details about the functionality of the brand to build trustworthiness and language is one of those factors. On the basis of mentioned factors, they decide how much they will be willing to pay to that brand. They assess the brand after the purchase and engage in communication with the brand after the purchase, and on the basis of post-purchase communication, they become a loyal customer. Some digital marketing strategies involve SEO content on websites. Search engine optimization can help the websites position themselves higher in search results. When customers enter a keyword for the product that they want, that website would be referred to by Google on top; hence, bringing traffic to the website. These are key factors in reaching out to new customers and reaching the target market that the company wants to influence. Although messages have a direct impact on sales of any company, but e-wom (word of mouth) has a significant effect on sales as it is one of the leading factors which can make a change in customers' behavior and intention to buy. Amplification is achieved when "content is shared, either through organic or paid engagement, within social marketing channels,

thereby increasing [their] word-of-mouth exposure." ([Shift, 2015](#)). A tremendous amount of customers have reported that they are hugely interested in positive reviews and most of their buying intention is controlled by positive word of mouth. Another study was conducted in which 81% of the consumers invested a lot of time in reading the reviews of the product of their choice before purchasing it.). So, brands utilize social media tactics to increase their sales ([Mangold & Smith, 2012](#)).

Research Problem and Rationale

Although online business development managers are argued to have their own needs, there has not been much work seen on the SEO and use of the right words. Due to this, ESP researches fall short of this area in terms of analyzing the real language needs of social media business development Mangers. When the real language need of learners is not identified, it causes the courses to go invalid as well as null and void because no significant learning is gained out of those taught courses.

Defining Needs Analysis

Despite a lack of consensus among researchers as to which could be an exact definition of ESP as well as what should be the factors to be incorporated into the definition. However, as a basic explanation, it could be defined as a combination of "needs" and "analysis". "Needs refers to the essentials without which one can't survive, just as a need for food, shelter and cloth, while analysis indicates the process of identification of those needs in order to resolve them, Hutchinson and Waters (1987).

Type of Needs Analysis

Needs analysis has evolved over time, giving rise to different approaches. There is not any clear cut demarcation of the approaches, but there are some points in which all scholars take pride. Some of these are Deficiency analysis, Sociolinguistics model, Learning-centered approach, Target situation analysis (TSA), and Present situation analysis (PSA).

Deficiency Analysis

Deficiency needs analysis, as per [West \(1994\)](#), refers to taking measures to cope with the

learner's present and target situation requirements. It also assists in prioritizing the areas that deserve more attention so as to enable learners to become proficient in the desired skill. For example, if an agent's job involves negotiations with clients and customers, so his need is to acquire/polish his speaking abilities, he should have specific registers in his repertoire related to the domain of his job so he can utilize them while interacting with his customers. Similarly, a content writer would be more interested to know about the pros and cons of summarizing contents in consideration of Google algorithm. The most successful pizza vendors are those which are placed first by the algorithm of Google- and not those who bake the most scrumptious and cheesy pizzas.

Sociolinguistics Model

Perhaps the pioneer model which has learners centered approach thus best suited to ESP research. It is designed and formulated in accordance with the requirements of learners' needs by Munby (1978). This model emphasizes that merely a drilled knowledge of grammar is not enough. Language is not an isolated process. The process incorporates social context and community with equal significance. The material selection, design and development are in the best view of learners' targeted needs. There have been several other worth mentioning models made under the guiding paradigm of the sociolinguistics model such as Architecture Cognitive Theory, Dual Coding Theory and The Constructivists.

Needs Analysis for the Present Study

Needs analysis is divided into two complementary approaches but here, TSA (Target Situation Analysis) will be focused more. These approaches are accepted as the most feasible ones in the context of ESP (Blue, 1991; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Jordan, 1997; West, 1994, 1997). TSA will be helpful in the diagnosis of real needs that will lead to designing the best remedial courses for learners' needs.

Literature Review

Importance of Clients and Brand Awareness

It is a confirmed fact that English is of global

importance and it is not only about a person's writing skills through which they can achieve good competence rewards; rather, communicative competence is one of the top-notch factors in achieving good competence in English. This new focus on communicative competence has taught individuals to use the English language creatively. It is not about what you say but how you say it. Sometimes we can change the situation and make the other person feel important just by changing certain words. Words have the power to get attracted to the other person. The use of polite words such as modals, sorry, and positive adjectives can really make the other person feel important. There has been a lot of research in the domain of business communication and the effective tactics to deal with the customers. However, there has been a minimal amount of research on how to propel sales by attracting customers to the brand. This can only be achieved by focusing on ever-increasing use of social media. The current research gets its support from Smith's fives in digital marketing. The first "s" represents the seller and it includes all types of sales, whether it is online or offline and employs strategic tactics to have customer enlargement. The second "S" is speaking which is deeply integrated into sell. In order to sell something, a dialogue needs to be created which will give exposure to the customer about the mechanism of the brand. The third is serving, which makes the shopping for the customers easy. The website should explicitly shed light on all of its policies and methods of transactions and domains in which it works so that clients can save their time and energy. The role of this "S" in digital marketing is to keep the customer in the center of the universe. The third "S" is save which basically ensures that time, money and energy can be saved if there is proper organization of the content and how that organization increases trust through transparency. The role of the company is not just to provide information on the website but also to bridge customer-manager dialogue to build trustworthiness (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer & Johnston 2011, p.17). Lastly, sizzle is the key technique through which a brand should get into the shoes of its clients. To generate consumers' trust and trustworthiness, the companies should run internet campaigns in order to collect their

consumer's personal information and analyze consumer related information e.g. their likes and dislikes, their preferences and professions. [Maleki Minbashrazgah et al. \(2021\)](#) state that if a brand provides all the information about its product covering every dimension will enhance the interest of the customers and it is more likely that people would refer that product of the particular brand to their friends and family.

Use of Persuasive Linguistic Measures and Emotional Appeal

The spoken discourse includes interactive collaborations and negotiations in order to transfer thoughts or convince the other party. The purpose of spoken discourse lies under two domains "transactional" and "interactional ." Transactional discourse is basically message oriented rather than listener oriented (Nunan, 1989: p.27). News broadcasts, descriptions, narrations, and instructions are some of the core domains in which transactional discourse is utilized ([Richards, 1990](#): 54- 55). Hence, transactional speaking involves a sequence in which the information has to be imparted to avoid any ambiguity in the deliverance of the message. However, some conversations are interactional with the aim of building a dialogue. It plays a vital role in the avoidance of any communication breakdown ([Yule, 1989](#): p.169. Moreover, both the types of speaking are deeply integrated into each other i.e. a person utilizes transactional discourse to use interactional discourse. [Kingen \(2000: p.218\)](#) states that persuasive language involves persuading the other party to agree with your point of view, satisfying the other person with your arguments, thus influencing their choices and preferences. Canale (1984) puts forth a communicative competence framework that includes Grammatical competence, sociolinguistics competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. In social media, sociolinguistics competency and grammatical competence are of prime importance. The logical sequence of the information can increase brand awareness across the globe. It can make the customers conscious of how the brand is working, keeping in view the customers' requirements which ultimately brings the customers closer to the brand. Social media

marketing channels are used widely by all kinds of business because it comes at cheaper rates, a huge number of users are active on social media websites these days, and most importantly, it is cost-effective ([Zhang et al. 2017](#)). The message, striving to reach and grab the attention of the audience, should have a good design and clear language. The valuable content of the message is something simple, meaningful, attractive, new, and exciting. If these tactics are effectively implemented, the receiver is more likely to read and think about the message. Communication should not be monotone and should be tackled according to the context in order to avoid all kinds of communication barriers. Small personalized messages and humorous messages can also be effective but they should not deviate from the original set of information. Even the size of the message is also of huge importance. Messages that are too short can be taken as not so serious, but too long texts are difficult to concentrate on. If there is a dire need to add more information to the document then the extra information can be relocated in a separate document or on a different page, it can also be conveyed via visual representation in order to drive consumer's interests (Hollier 2016).

Effective Communication

Some applied linguists have shifted focus from the outcome of instruction, that is, the knowledge and skills to be gained by the learner, to the processes through which knowledge and skills might be gained. It was then discovered that specific functions along with the notions would result in enhancing communicative language skills, which gave rise to the development of process-oriented views. Students should be provided such an environment where their goals are organized and targeted towards enhancing their communication skills is a more effective way of learning a language since it provides a purpose for the use and learning of a language other than simply learning language items for their own sake. Both task-based and procedural activities work hand in hand to stimulate learning. In both approaches, the content consists of the specification of the tasks and activities that learners will engage in the class. Communicative language teaching has gained momentum in

recent times because of the fast-paced, digitalized world where all kinds of businesses are run digitally. Communication has thus become a prime factor in the sustenance of digital businesses.

Social media marketing enables the customers to engage in communication with each other and the marketers; hence, it gets exposure to the mechanism of the particular brand. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Myspace, Google Plus, Snap Chat, Flickr, and LinkedIn etc. are amongst the top notch social media platforms which are popular amongst the young generation as well as adults. Customers can share their queries on the brand's page. This channel clears the confusion on the part of the marketer and customers and brings them on the same page through effective communication. The language used in order to interact with the customers plays a pivotal role in generating the sales of any company. Thus, the marketers using effective communication strategies follows the 7 C's of communication i.e. completeness, which provides all necessary information, and answer all questions asked with that also provide something extra if desirable; another 'c' is conciseness which makes the speaker eliminate wordy expressions, include relevant material and avoid unnecessary repetition; concreteness teaches specific facts and figures, put action, choose vivid and image-building words; consideration means to consider the listener and use the pronouns such as 'you' instead of 'I' and 'we' and also emphasize positive and pleasant facts, clarity promotes to choose precise, concrete and familiar words and construct effective sentences and paragraphs; courtesy is the most important of all which teaches the speaker to exercise tactfulness, thoughtfulness and appreciativeness, it also makes the speaker utilize a kind of language which exhibit respectfulness and chooses to use nondiscriminatory expressions, and lastly correctness which is indicative of use the right level of language, check accuracy of figures and facts, and maintain acceptable writing mechanics. [Lee \(2005\)](#) states that 71.6% of employers demand communication skills as a top-notch requirement for the boost sales of their firms. Moreover, 66% of employers looked for good interpersonal skills in their

employees. [Sievert and Scholz's \(2017\)](#) research elaborated on the importance of social media communication which works hand in hand with the acceleration functioning of the company and assists in propelling the sales. Effective word of mouth is the key asset of any brand. If the communication is carried out strategically and carefully on social media websites and feedback of the customers is handled intelligently, it can generate tremendous sales. Satisfied customers are the assets for any organization because the satisfied customer spreads positive word of mouth, which enhances brand awareness ([Groeger, 2016](#)). Clear content creation can eradicate a lot of confusion from buyers' minds hence saving customers' time. If a client has a few complaints about the brand, solving those problems and bridging the communication with the client is the foremost duty of the company. Moreover, the content used should be well structured and not pushy or aggressive. Besides utilizing written information, companies are now utilizing pictures and videos. The blogs on the websites with pictures and videos are more memorable, associative and interesting. For example, some online retailer shops, such as [Sreejesh et al. \(2020\)](#), state that interactivity and effective communication builds clients' trust in a brand. [Alalwan \(2018\)](#) asserts that for brands that do not work on their communication tools, their clients do not develop trustworthiness in their brands and are not inclined to share information about the brand with their friends and family. Advertisements with emotional appeal have an enormous effect on the sales of any brand. [Jung \(2017\)](#) stated that advertisements that exhibit an emotional appeal have a greater chance of generating sales because it is highly probable that people will share that content more in their circle as compared to the content with a dry approach.

Research Questions

The present study was designed to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What is the English language proficiency of e-business development officers?
- 2- What are the language skills and activities much emphasized in ESP classes for social media/ e-business development officers?

- 3- What English language skills do ESP and e-business development Managers/ Team leaders perceive as the most important for social media/ e-business development officers?
- 4- What are the perceptions of the managers regarding the ESP course in assisting them in delivering desirable results?
- 5- What are the specific communication needs of social media marketers?
- 6- What are the specific e-language needs of social media marketers?

Methodology

Research Paradigm

Positivism as a research paradigm has been employed in the present study because it is quite understood that specific needs should be addressed on the basis of actual information given by the stakeholders. A total of 122 respondents from ibex global and ibex international were invited to participate in the survey.

Instrument Development

A questionnaire as an instrument was utilized in the present research study and was adapted considering the objectives of the current study. Factors (Effective Communication, Access to Information, Emotional Appeal, and Importance of customer, Google Algorithm, persuasive language, oral communication) were measured using three items each. A five-point Likert scale was utilized to measure the constructs (scores ranged from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”, with the “neutral” score = 3). The survey was formulated only in one language. The internal consistency of the survey instrument was checked during the pre-test to have reliable results. Three items had to be deleted as a result (EF2, EF5, and EMO2). Consequently, all other items were ready to be used. The questionnaire was adapted from [Wu et al. \(2017\)](#). The alpha for the scale was .91 ([Wu et al. 2017](#), p. 662).

Data Collection

The convenience sampling technique was utilized to collect the data. Later on, the snowball technique was also used to increase the response rate. The data were collected through an online survey. The participants invited to fill in the survey were the managers at IBEX national and IBEX international, having sound knowledge of social media marketing.

Results Analysis

An online survey via emails was sent and requested to be filled in by BDMS, so its findings can assist in identifying and designing the courses that are compatible with their specific needs. A total of 100 responses have been taken to investigate the specific needs of digital media marketers. Some of the factors like SEO (Search engine optimizations), using the right words skills, and effective message deliverance in writing and speaking have received a tremendously positive response from the respondents of this survey.

Some of the questions related to effective communication deliverance and content writing in the specification of the Google algorithm received tremendous responses from the respondents, with almost 76% agreeing to it (Mean 2.06 and SD 1.309). It gives a niche for designing courses that will cater to the needs of business development officers to catch the attention of the Google algorithm. Google algorithm has sophisticated and accurate internal calculations when it comes to ranking websites. The words that are attractive to the Google algorithm are those which are widely used across the internet. For example, If PSL (Pakistan super league) is happening in Karachi, then words related to cricket will come upon it as the trending words. If any marketing content is successfully written in consideration of those trending words, the results would be desirable because a natural slope has been created and results will go triple folds.

Q1. Does Writing Content in Consideration of the Google Algorithm Will Catch more Eyeballs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes, it does	56	56.0	56.0	56.0

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No, it does not	6	6.0	6.0	62.0
May be	16	16.0	16.0	78.0
To some extent, yes	20	20.0	20.0	98.0
Neutral	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Another question, as mentioned below, is also signifying a dire need for social media marketers to get their staff equipped with the skill of using the right words for effective message deliverance. The responses received from BDM and BSO clearly indicate desirability to take up this course. The course will address BDMS' target situation

needs. This skill is not only proven to be beneficial for sales growth but also it will help to grow the business multi-fold. This skill will also be of great use for creating brand awareness. Products BDMS who have this skill enjoy more business and help them to retain reliability of their company and brands. (Mean = 3.26 SD =1.09).

Q2. Agents Should Get Trained for Using the Right Words?.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	11	11.0	11.0	11.0
Disagree	15	15.0	15.0	26.0
Neutral	20	20.0	20.0	46.0
Agree	45	45.0	45.0	91.0
Strongly agree	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

One of the needs that were identified during the survey was customer engagement needs and language aspects which are related to this is a juvenile language that gives comic effect to the content which is being posted online. It also

points to the need for training for agents so as to enable them to use interactive language so their customers are engaged in the marketing campaigns. (Mean = 2.85, SD = 1.04)

Q3. In Your Own Opinion, which of the Following are the Most Important Factors for an E-business?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid frequency of posts	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
Content material	15	15.0	15.0	30.0
Engagement of the customer (i.e. customer service)	43	43.0	43.0	73.0
Online promotions	24	24.0	24.0	97.0
Posts timing	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Usually, the agents start their career at the entry level right after intermediate and graduation. Their English language skills range from poor to excellent. The degree of their English skill determines their future growth. Speaking skills with British and American dialects have widely been demanded by BDMS as there's a consensus

among BDMS that it makes the agent reliable in the mind of the client/customer. The world is now witnessing another form of racism which is called Asceticism. People are judged by their way of talking, so this area is also proved to be a gray part of the research for ESP teachers to work on. An agent who's been working as a loan officer, so

vocational training for the common vocabularies used in the domain of his job is highly desirable to BDM. Teachers can incorporate behaviorist

and communicative paradigms for designing this training. (Mean 3.29, SD 1.008).

Q4. How Important is Agent Accent While Interacting with Customers Via Phone?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very important	22	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Important	27	27.0	27.0	49.0
	Moderate	21	21.0	21.0	70.0
	Not important	13	13.0	13.0	83.0
	Neutral	17	17.0	17.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

ESP puts more emphasis on language skills, so activities are of this kind and these activities should not get confused with any other skills related to personality development skills. The degree of need depends upon the nature of the job. One skill that is highly demanded in one section may be of less significance to the other section, even of the same organization. What was so surprising is that writing content in accordance with the Google algorithm is of critical importance for BDMS and the receptive skills are of less significance as per this research. Since e-business is spontaneous so decisions are to be made on the spur of the moments sometimes

there isn't enough time to proofread so BDMs demand those specialized trained professionals who will pull out the tasks which are being assigned to them for generating sales.

Emotional appeal has also found its place in one of the top demanded needs of BDMs. They were of the view that brands that fail to establish emotional appeal with its customers do not enjoy long-term business relationships with the customers, so messages and content which are being sent to the customer should have this factor as well. A significant number of people respondents positively responded to this question in our research with mean = 3.10 & SD = 1.115

Q5. How Important Emotional Appeal Factor in Content Development is in Customer Engagement?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Disagree	31	31.0	31.0	34.0
	Neutral	33	33.0	33.0	67.0
	Agree	31	31.0	31.0	98.0
	Strongly agree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

This leads to another successive need of BDMs which is persuasive writing skills. With 70% ration of strong agreed. (Mean 1.22 SD = 1.09)

Q6. Persuasive Writing is Highly Demanded Skill

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Disagree	15	15.0	15.0	23.0
	Neutral	22	22.0	22.0	45.0
	Agree	46	46.0	46.0	91.0
	Strongly agree	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

account to observe the pattern of consumers' choice and affiliation of clients with the brand.

Limitations

However, the study has certain limitations. The participants were made to fill out the survey online, and there might be some confusion for the participants in filling up some of the indicators, so there are chances of error from respondents. Thus, the self-administered questionnaire may eradicate this problem. SEM has been utilized in order to extract the frequency of each item. SEM does not infer the causation of factors; therefore, future researchers can work on causal modeling to further validate the results.

Future Research

Future research can be conducted with causal

relationships as to which factors have a direct and significant impact on the sales of the brand. In the future, keeping in view the needs of BDMs explored in the present paper, material and syllabus can be developed. The data was only collected from one organization; thus, it can create problems in generalizations of the results. Limited factors were explored in this research only related to social media platforms; in the future, other platforms like physical businesses can also be targeted. Factors such e-wom and content curation have not been explored; therefore, in the future, their causal relationship to brand awareness can be explored. Future research can also be conducted on the needs analysis of SMIs as they play a vital role in brand awareness.

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