



Cooperative Education Report

TITLE: How Content helps international organizations like the Middle Way Meditation (MMI) cater to its global audience?

Written by

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4th Year- II Semester

**This Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Cooperative Education, Faculty of Business Administration
Academic Semester 2/2017
Siam University**

Title: How Content helps international organization like the Middle Way Meditation (MMI) caters to its global audience?

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We have approved this cooperative report as a partial fulfillment of the cooperative education program semester 2/2017

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Project Title: TITLE: How Content helps international organizations like the Middle Way Meditation (MMI) cater to its global audience?

Credits: 5

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Degree: Bachelor of Business Administration

Major: Marketing

Faculty: Business Administration

Semester / Academic year: 2/2017

Abstract

This internship was completed in The Middle Way Meditation Institute (MMI), which is a well-known for organizing meditation retreats in Thailand. It is widely acknowledge for its mission to spread peace in the world through inner peace.

The main objective of this report is to analyze the importance of content marketing in the context of digital marketing. To gain more international visitors in the retreat and provide more reliable and resourceful content for creating a bond with the consumers.

Therefore, proper content marketing plan is executed in order to bridge the gap between marketing and content marketing. Timely updates on the digitalized platform have been done bridging the gap between the company and the customers. This had led to more traffic on the website and more bookings for the meditation retreat through internet. Also, the social media posts, blogs and emails were regular and informative updating the consumers about our retreat program.

Keywords: meditation, digital medicating, social media

Acknowledgement

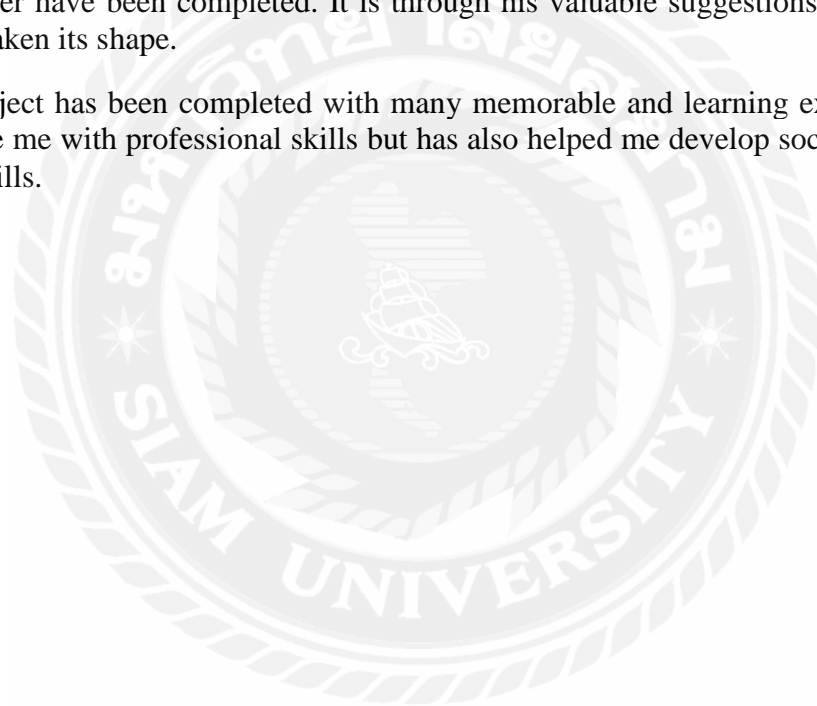
First of all I would like to express my gratitude towards Siam University and Kathmandu College of Management for creating the environment to pursue our skills in an external environment through co-operative education.

Secondly, I would like to show my indebtedness towards the entire Middle Way family for welcoming me into their workspace and providing me a platform to showcase my skills and teach me more things related to my studies. I would forever be grateful towards my supervisor Miss. Nittaya Limlert and Mr. Kosal Ley for being kind, supportive and guiding me throughout my co-op tenure.

Through this platform I would like to thank Mr. Chanatip Suksai and Dr. Maruj Limpawattana who have been guiding us through day 1. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts and time put by my academic advisor Mr. Worapoom Sangkaew without whom this report would ever have been completed. It is through his valuable suggestions and advices that this report has taken its shape.

This project has been completed with many memorable and learning experiences. It not only did provide me with professional skills but has also helped me develop social, technical and interpersonal skills.

Sweanta Lama



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Company Profile



Figure 1: MMI Logo

The Middle Way Meditation Institute or MMI is a global non-profit educational organization that promotes and develops world peace through inner peace. It serves people of all ages, races, religions and faith, and offers inner peace education via several training programs for youths, adults and organizations, based on spiritual and scientific confluence. It is dedicated to the development of inner peace education through mental and spiritual confluence. It also organizes various cultural activities to promote peace and unity among people of different races, nationalities and religion. (mmi)

The ultimate aim of The Middle Way Meditation Institute is to meditate for true happiness and forge everlasting peace in the world at large.

Its mission is to bring **World peace through Inner Peace.**

Currently MMI organizes various meditation retreat programs, 3 day retreat programs and 7 day retreat programs are the standard retreats it organizes with set dates throughout the year. Other programs are organized according to the request of the people who want to practice meditation.

Apart from these it also organizes daily online meditation classes for people who are interested to practice meditation.

Another project that MMI currently is doing is the peace mission. Currently in the 2nd edition for this year, the peace project aims to send volunteer in 6 continents to celebrate world peace: USA for North America, Brazil for South America, Spain for Europe, Mozambique for Africa, Australia for Oceania and Philippines for Asia. Volunteers participating as peace makers are trained in Thailand for one month and they are sent to peace mission for 11 months in the mentioned continents.

There they help in organizing and preparing for the peace event the light of peace which are already in the book of world records, for raising awareness about the need to have inner peace. Also through the center in the different continents, they organize meditation classes and have inner peace clubs in the community to create more importance on having inner peace.

1.2 Organizational Structure of “The Middle Way Meditation”

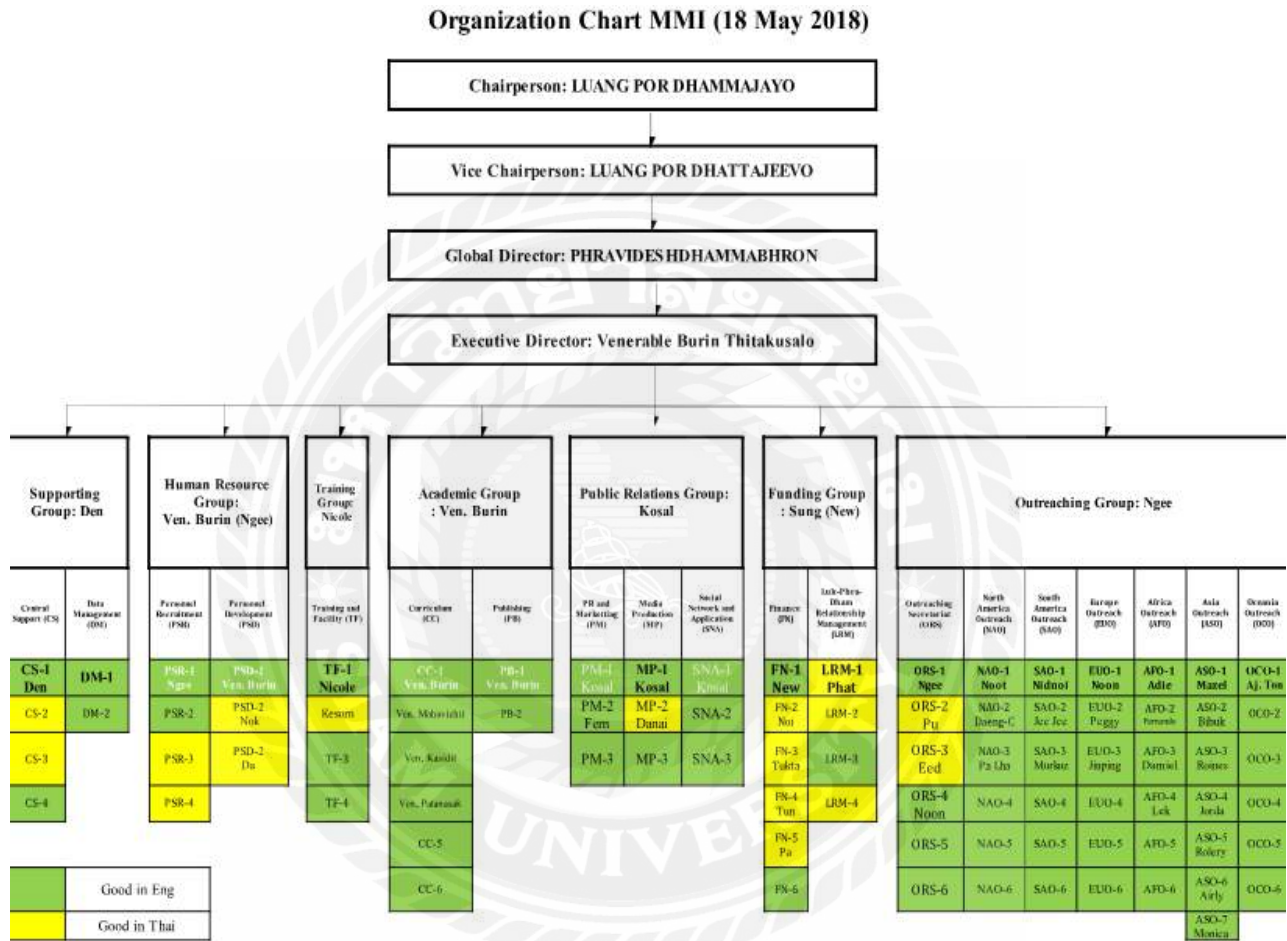


Figure 2: Organizational Structure

1.3 Statement of the report

The aim of The Middle Way Meditation Institute is to promote and spread peace in the world through inner peace, through the power of meditation. To spread this powerful message of promoting world peace they organize meditation retreats which are open to people from all over the globe of every caste, culture and religion. Since the establishment they have been getting interested participants to join their retreat from word of mouth, their official website and goodwill they have carried throughout the years. They have been promoting their retreats

through social media, official website, international events and YouTube channels and print marketing.

However, for an international reach a good content marketing is required which would illustrate the language and understand the backdrop of the different backgrounds and portray the message in a convincing way, to convince the people to come and join the retreats. Currently in the organization there is not a specific position for a content manager, all the aspect of the content are looked upon by the marketing department which is not enough. Also, updates of blogs and social media content were not done on a regularly basis which was creating a gap between the customers on maintaining the regular interactions.

In response to this aspect, content executive was assigned as the project for my cooperative education. The main aim of this cooperative education would be to fill in the gap between content and marketing and plan and create a more viable way through which our product would be more visible to the aligned consumers.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This report shows the experience working as a marketing intern and the applying all the knowledge accumulated as a BBA marketing student.

The main objective of the study is to fill in the gap between content and marketing and plan and create a more viable way through which our product would be more visible to the aligned consumers. The project is to reduce the gap between marketing and content creation as currently the organization lacks in content department.

1.5 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the study is the reduced gap between content creation and marketing which results in more customer engagement through the MMI website and a wider market to promote the retreat.

Apart from these regular updates in track and more clients to participate in the retreat.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

As the organization, The Middle Way Meditation Institute is a not-for profit organization the marketing budget allocated was not enough to carry out adequate digitalized marketing. The total budget used in digital marketing was:

(Rough Figures)

- 1) \$99 in email marketing and landing page marketing
- 2) Google ads \$300 per month
- 3) Facebook and Instagram ads \$50
- 4) With some proportion of the amount spent in YouTube advertisements

Considering these it was difficult to allocate exact amount into the different platforms. The content had to be planned beforehand which gave a very little time to put the plan in action. Plus

with changing day it was difficult to come up with new content ideas and newer varieties of options.



Chapter 2: Literature reviews

2.1 Main theory and concept applied alongside with the given job descriptions

The rise in digitalization has caused uproar in the marketing community. With every company trying to adapt to the new techniques and tricks of the digitalized marketing form most of them miss the soul of digital marketing, “the content”. Trust of the customers is what business thrives for and it is delivered by “content”. According to a study 78% of consumers prefer to know a company via articles rather than ads and 70% believe that organizations providing custom content are interested in building good relationships with them. (IMA) Content communicates and creates an instant bond with the consumers. It educates the consumer about your products and services and creates an environment for communication.

As indicated by Gartner’s glossary the utilization of computerized advances to change a plan of action and provide new revenue sources and more value creating opportunities is digitalization. “The way towards a computerized business”. (Forbes, 2018) Digitalization is the new form of business performance.

Digitalization have just been depicted as 'a term that hopes to get a flow change in Internet-related research, consolidated as approaches to manage the web as enlightening file'. Using this as a starting stage, this paper positions propelled media techniques as a methodological approach that combines online data, while moreover including other open and electronic long range informal communication stages, for instance, Instagram, Vine, Twitter, and giphy, Periscope, and Facebook among others. Propelled media methods moreover contacts database investigate, data made by sensors, drifts and self-administering automobiles. Contemporary research interfacing with cutting edge media systems depends on the 'computational turn' where 'computational strategies is dynamically reflected over different requests, including articulations of the human experience, humanities and humanistic systems, which use advances to move the essential ground of their thoughts and speculations'. (taylor and francis online, 2016)

From your site itself to your web based marking resources - advanced promoting, email advertising, online leaflets, and past - there's a tremendous range of strategies and resources that fall under the umbrella of digitalized marketing. Also, the best advanced advertisers have a reasonable picture of how every benefit or strategy bolsters their all-encompassing objectives. Despite different organization structure or what it offers in the market digital marketing is compatible for any industry. It identifies various factors that can help your business grow out more like recognizing the market segment, and creating a reliable promoting strategy. (hubspot, 2016)

Gone are the days when the messages people got about your products or your organization began from you and involved exactly what you required them to know. Digital media has made any information accessible from any point wherever and whenever they require it. With easy means of communication it is easy to know what other people think of your brand as well. Consumers are more likely to believe and rely on the opinions of their friends, relative, peers and the media rather than what you are projecting the image of the company. People today need a brand that they can trust, they can relate to and that defines who they are. (sas)

It is important to know the various flows of channels done through digital marketing. The business can only run for long term if it knows what the customer wants and needs. They need to understand the consumer behaviour and needs to maintain the interest of the consumer in the business. Just knowing the target market is not sufficient enough, the organization should know how to communicate with them through which means to keep them interested, for this the company should analyse through which medias the information should be flowed and how and when and what would the consumers react through the different means. Customer engagement is the key towards long term business success. (sas)

Social Media is bringing the world closer and smaller. In terms of business, social media marketing has opened a new path to how marketing can be done. Thanks to easy accessibility of social Medias people now can share their views and experiences about certain products or services. According to Evans (2008), “when the internet really started to take off, consumers started to tune out those carefully crafted messages and take more control over how they voiced their experiences with products and services. From websites to blogs, to forums and message boards, conversations have had more influence on what others buy, subscribe to and believe is valuable than any marketing message could manage.” (msc)

Any company will represent it in a positive light but today consumers tend to look for the opinions and reviews provided by other users. Negative word of mouth spreads like fire and plays a huge role in contemplating the decisions made by the consumers. Marketers today need to be aware of the crucial nature of the social media and the power it has given to the consumers to create an image that they have drafted themselves.

Content marketing in simple terms is providing relevant and resourceful information solving the problems or introducing a new product or service through the characteristics of the product to the consumers. From big Fortune 5 companies to small scale businesses, they all develop and execute content marketing to increase the sales, retain the existing customers and save the cost of the company. These are the key reasons why content marketing is useful for every company.

Every good marketing activity relies on a good content to be more attractive and stand out from the rest of the competitors. In today's scenario where digital marketing is taking over the world, content marketing is a very important part in any process of marketing that is dispatched.

Content is part of all forms of marketing. It should be reliable and relevant. It is used in social media marketing, SEO, PR, inbound marketing and content strategies. Content marketing is not just merry selling the products; it creates a story, it's interactive and creates an experience for the consumers making them loyal to the brand.

And content is the key to making your targeted audience understand the message you are trying to convey to them through your marketing activities. The content used in the marketing messages should be relevant to the objective you aim to achieve as only then consumers will have the reaction that you had expected prior to sending out the message. Nowadays, with the rise of digitalization sellers and buyers are prone to use more online channels and digital means of communication which means they communicate through text, pictures, diagrams, sounds and videos which is content. Less face to face communications are taking place putting more emphasis on content developing and marketing to create and sustain relationships between the

business and its customers. Hence, content marketing in one way has become integral to customer relationship management as in this age of digitalization content helps create customers, communicate information to them and also to sustain them.

During my internship in the MMI I was involved in marketing activities that were related to the theories talked of above; digitalization, digital marketing, social media marketing, content marketing and customer relationship management.

Like many other organizations MMI too have evolved with the times and digitalized many aspects and operating areas of its business. Being an international organization it has benefitted with the advancement of communication technology because it can connect with its branches, sister organizations and customers through the internet. The existence of the application ecosystem helps MMI's departments in various areas of operations.

The internet has now become synonymous with social media as the power of communicating across the globe was first made simpler by social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. MMI also uses these mediums of communication as vehicles to connect with the customers, send out information about new events and let the world know what MMI is up to on a regular basis.

To sustain the digital ecosystem being implemented by MMI there needs to be content that are in sync with the information we are providing to our connections. These connections are mostly focused on developing customer base and fulfilling the company vision, hence, content marketing and customer relationship management become inter-related and vital to the marketing objectives of MMI.

MMI is involved in various projects worldwide which would mean we have to communicate with various customers worldwide, similarly MMI engages in marketing activities that targets a global audience which would require MMI to build relationships with customers for higher customer lifetime values. The organization scores high levels of customer satisfaction through its positive vision of spreading world peace through inner peace. Happy customers then go on to spread positive-word-of-mouth which gets MMI more customers.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Roles and responsibilities assigned by company

Position: Marketing Intern

Since the beginning of the internship realizing my potential as a content marketer I was assigned with filling the void between content and marketing activities. I was a contributor in all marketing related activities of the company venture by the name of 'The Middle Way' which includes social media, print media and direct marketing activities.

This included designing and planning content for MMI websites, blog post, social media updates and email campaigns. Both online and offline materials were required to be flowed through different channels to promote the content. Daily, weekly and monthly planning and posting of contents on designated timings needed to be planned and updated on regular basis.

Also as many travel websites published about our retreats, checking the contents published and making sure it was relevant was my responsibility and contacting different travel websites to publish our articles when necessary. As we directly received inquiries from the consumers, I was responsible to clear their doubts about any queries and following up with them.

Apart from these I used to assist in other departments of the organization when required.

3.2 Project details

How content helps international organization like The Middle Way Meditation (MMI) caters to its global audience? My main aim would be to fill in the gap between content and marketing and plan and create a more viable way through which our product would be more visible to the aligned consumers.

The project is to reduce the gap between marketing and content creation as currently the organization lacks in content department. New ideas for content are to be implemented on daily basis and creating the content through research of the proper target market for more optimum results. Various online marketing tools such as mailchimp, MOZ, SEMrush etc. were used daily to keep interact and keep track of the website.

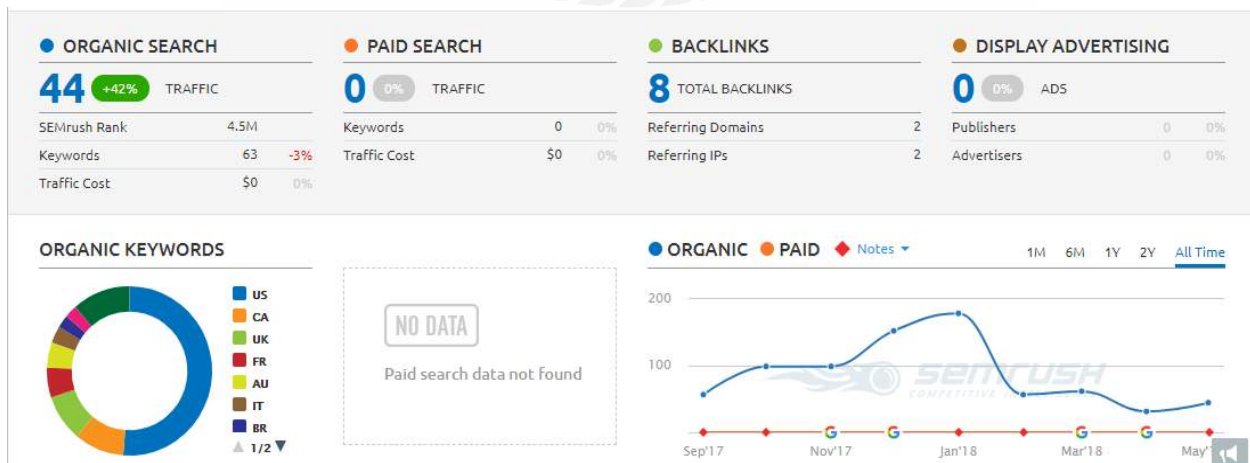


Figure 1: website traffic

root domain

7 of 10 queries available until 06/07

Domain Authorityⁱ 	Linking Domainsⁱ 6.1k <small>Discovered in the last 60 days 808</small> <small>Lost in last 60 days 152</small>	Inbound Linksⁱ 464.9k	Ranking Keywordsⁱ 21
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Discovered and lost linking domains

Total Discovered **+808** Total Lost **-152** Net **+656**

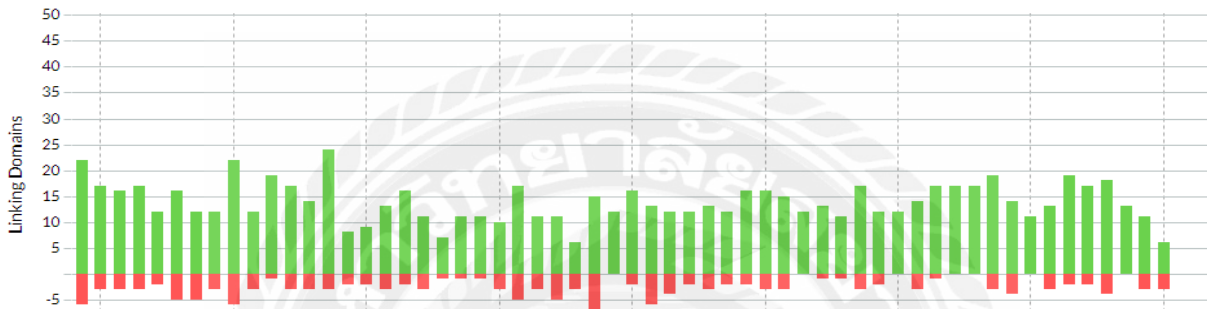


Figure 2: linking domains

1 - 50 Inbound Links

<input type="checkbox"/>	URL	Anchor Text ⁱ	PA ⁱ	DA ⁱ	Linking Domains ⁱ	Spam Score ⁱ	More Info
<input type="checkbox"/>	The 10 Best Meditation Centres and Re...	Visit website	37	74	1	1%	<input type="button" value="More Info"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	www.mdwmeditation.org redirect	[no anchor text]	33	28	113	--	<input type="button" value="More Info"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Top 10 Meditation Retreats Explor...	Middle Way Meditation Retr...	30	37	8	--	<input type="button" value="More Info"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	www.mdwmeditation.org/index.php redirect	[no anchor text]	26	28	13	--	<input type="button" value="More Info"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	mdwmeditation.org redirect	[no anchor text]	25	28	10	--	<input type="button" value="More Info"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Barcelona medita per la pau	Global Light for Peace 2017	25	46	0	1%	<input type="button" value="More Info"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Barcelona medita per la pau Catalunya...	Global Light for Peace 2017	25	46	0	1%	<input type="button" value="More Info"/>

Figure 3: International websites featuring MMI



127 Opened	12 Clicked	3 Bounced	2 Unsubscribed
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Figure 4: Mailchimp data

Top locations by opens

 USA	63	39.1%
 Thailand	19	11.8%
 Hong Kong	19	11.8%
 Singapore	10	6.2%
 United Kingdom	8	5.0%



Figure 5: Top locations by open

Chapter 4: Results and Discussions

4.1 Contribution of Student made during Internship

Assigned as a content marketing intern, I have fulfilled my duties in the best possible way. I've contributed many blogs to the MMI website which can be checked in mmipeace.org which has helped to increase more traffic in the website and created more awareness towards meditation. For many video projects we as a team would contribute many creative ideas for the video to be more reliable and resourceful. I used to create many social media post about the meditation retreat and make sure the updates were timely. Also I used to keep track of the data's that we collected during digital marketing for future references. As many international website used to publish about our meditation retreat, I used to make sure the content they published were genuine and reliable to the readers. In case of otherwise it was my duty to contact them by creating a new content and asking them to change or edit the content with the content provided by us.

Apart from the first hand duties, I used to offer my help in other departments in any events that used to be organized by the organization such as fund raising event, assisting the training team during retreats and volunteering in events.

4.2 Details of relative learning process and new knowledge received

This internship was a turning point in my life on both professional and personal level. Not only did it help in enhancing my professional skills but on a personal level to I got to learn a whole lot of new things.

I have learnt the importance of going digitalization in marketing environment and how important it is to put attention into small details. My knowledge on various tools such as MOZ, SEMrush, and Mailchimp has significantly grown and I have realized the importance of using such tools for effective and efficient marketing. As most of the clients participating in retreat used to come through online portals, it was important to maintain a healthy relationship and be efficient in answering any queries they had. I have learnt the lesson to be reliable and resourceful in a working environment and that even a single mistake could cost the company its brand image.

Apart from the main work I have realized the importance of working in a team and that every department in an organization is interconnected and plays a very important role in keeping the brand image of the company.

Through this internship I have come to know many people from different sectors and realized the importance of building up your network in a professional setting.

Internships play a vital role in building of the professional background of one and I am confident that through this I am prepared to be working in any organization as a full time employee.



Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Self-assessment as future professionals

According to the projects assigned by MMI regarding meditation retreats, I was exposed to content management as per my strengths specified during the interview process before being taken as an intern.

Being involved in content management such as business strategy drafting, content planning process and contacting international travel website, I would fit perfectly into roles that are related to business planning.

As a student, I took up marketing as my major and MMI classifies its marketing department as personnel who reach out in the market to find potential clients for the retreats who could understand the meditation and also spread the words about our retreats.

Therefore, a good marketer has to be good in communication skills, networking and approaching clients through meeting, presentation and contact. Since, I was exposed to this part of the marketing responsibility as a marketing intern I will have to gain more experience to see if I fit into this type of marketing role.

However, as a student of the marketing discipline and as per the age we live in, digital marketing has become a holistic approach in any business with each department and employee engaging in some form of marketing in his/her job role.

5.2 Comparison of practical learning v/s theory

There is vast difference between reality and theory. But both are equally important in its own terms. The theories that we learnt in college provided a base for the internship journey. But internship teaches us that no matter how right we apply the theory at the right time and right place we cannot always get the desirable result we want.

In a working environment you will get many chances to experiences where sometimes you'll succeed and sometimes you'll fail but the important part is how you will get to learn from your mistakes. All the experiences you get also differs from the different company as you need to work according to the values and the ethics the company follows, so one needs to be careful on planning anything considering the whether all the planning are done aligning the values of the company.

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