Is Content really King?

The effect of online information quality on the buyer-seller relationship

Master Thesis

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1:   Introduction

The emergence of the Internet was a development with a big impact on our daily lives (Hoffman, Novak & Venkatesh, 2004). It is used to communicate with others, to purchase products and services, to plan vacations, as a source of entertainment, etc. But one of the main advantages of the Internet is the availability of information on a vast variety of topics (Rieh, 2002; Herrera-Viedma, Pasi, Lopez-Herrera & Porcel, 2006). People use the available information to decrease their risk during their purchase decision- making process (Mitchell, 1995; Mitchell, Davies, Moutinho & Vassos, 1999; Kim & Lennon, 2013; Flanagin, Metzger, Pure, Markov & Hartsell, 2014). They however have to be critical towards the information that can be found on the Internet. The vast amount of available information forces people to be selective (Rieh, 2002). Moreover, in the digital world anyone can publish content (Herrera-Viedma et al., 2006). Bill Gates (1996) wrote an online essay on the matter, and he even went so far as to say that "(…) the Internet is the multimedia equivalent of the photocopier". By that he meant that all material published on the Internet can be copied and distributed at low cost to virtually anyone. Therefore, people need to make judgements about the quality and the reliability of the information they find on the Internet.

Research streams relating to the Digital Era

How people make those judgements is a topic that has already been researched quite extensively. An important digital marketing research stream for instance points out that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is perceived by consumers as reliable and therefore used frequently to make purchase decisions (e.g., King, Racherla & Bush, 2014; Chaterjee, 2001; Xia & Bechwati, 2008). Another research stream regards the effect of trust and satisfaction on e-commerce purchases. These variables have also been studied in relation to online information quality (e.g., Kim, Ferrin, Rao, 2008; Lee & Chung, 2009; Alam & Yasin, 2010) and the outcomes of the studies prove that online information quality significantly influences online consumers' trust and satisfaction. A third route of digital marketing research that has already been explored, concerns the subject of social media. Studies show that social media is increasingly being used as an information source and users apply credibility measures to evaluate the quality of the information found on these networks (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Westerman, Spence & Van der Heide, 2014; Kim, Sin & He, 2013; Kim, Sin & Tsai, 2014). These research streams are important

because they develop a better understanding of the new reality in the marketing world: the Digital Era. Moreover, marketing practitioners can use the research to develop marketing programs that are suitable to the digital world. However, the majority of the studies conducted in the previously described research streams took place in a Business-to-Consumer (B2C) setting. This is unfortunate for the Business-to-Business (B2B) marketers, because the B2C environment differs from the B2B environment.

Difference between B2C and B2B

According to Lothia, Donthu and Hershberger (2003) business-to-business customers are usually more involved than business-to-consumer customers. The involvement of B2B customers has various causes. Firstly, products bought in a B2B context are often customized to the specific buyer's needs (Sharma, Krishnan & Grewal, 2001; Madhavaram & Hunt, 2017). Without the proper levels of customer involvement, customization cannot take place (Du, Jiao & Tseng, 2006). Hence, product customization and customer involvement go hand in hand. Secondly, it is unlikely that B2B customers make impulse purchases (Brown, Bellenger & Johnston, 2007). B2B buying decisions are usually made by a buying center, which requires discussion among the members of the buying center, resulting in group decisions (Johnston & Bonoma, 1981). Thirdly, the risk levels in B2B buying are higher than in B2C buying (Brown, Sichtmann & Musante, 2011), due to the fact that organizational purchases not only involve personal risk, but also involve risk for the organization as a whole (Mudambi, 2002). Another difference between B2B and B2B buying is that B2B purchase cycles are longer than B2C purchase cycles (Järvinen, Tollinen, Karjaluoto & Jayawardhena, 2012). Due to all these differences, the dynamics in the B2B buyer-seller relationship differ significantly from the B2C buyer-seller relationship. Therefore, B2C research addressing digital marketing cannot simply be transferred into a B2B context.

Changing circumstances in B2B marketing – power to the people

The difficulty of transferring B2C digital marketing research to a B2B context is a problem for two reasons. Firstly, the circumstances in B2B marketing have changed. Before the rise of the Internet, B2B selling used to happen almost solely through sales people who proactively approached their – potential – customers and provided them with the information they needed to make a purchase decision (Adamson, Dixon &

Toman, 2012). But when the Internet started to become a regular platform that people used as a source of information, the sales environment changed rapidly (Jones, Brown, Zoltners & Weitz, 2005). The internet is a platform that provides easy access to transparent information, it provides customers with more choices and alternatives than ever, and it gives the customer control over the point of contact and the transactions (Constantinides, 2008). As a result, customers do not necessarily need the sales representative to tell them the solution to their problem. According to Constantinides (2008) the power has quite literally transferred to the people (a.k.a. customer). Adamson et al. (2012) confirm this view by stating that nearly 60% of a typical B2B buyer journey has already been fulfilled before the customer in question contacts a firm. These changes in the B2B buying and selling processes are enabled by the marketing departments. They are the ones who provide the online information and the channels that allow the customer empowerment. Because online content is becoming increasingly important in the B2B buying process, marketing strategies need to be adapted accordingly (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). It is as Baer (2012) says in his blog: "All companies now find themselves in two industries: the business they are actually in, and the publishing business". This transformation increases the pressure on the B2B marketing people (Wiersema, 2013).

Insufficient amount of B2B digital marketing research

The second part of the problem relates to the amount of available research on digital marketing in a B2B context. The amount of research that regards B2B digital marketing does not seem to be as extensive as the amount of research regarding B2C digital marketing (Avlonitis & Karayanni, 2000; LaPlaca, 2013; Wiersema, 2013; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). Take for instance the topic of social media. It has received a lot of attention in the literature and it is supposed to hold a big promise for marketing. However, in a B2B context social media have entirely different implications and applications, but that barely comes to light in all the research (Jussila, Kärkkäinen & Leino, 2012; Järvinen, Tollinen, Karjuluoto & Jayawardhena, 2012; Wiersema, 2013). Naturally there are a few themes in B2B digital marketing that have received some attention. One of those themes is the buyer-seller relationship in a digital context. Deeter-Schmelz and Kennedy (2002) employed the perspective of the buyer and studied the Internet as a communication tool used by buyer and seller. Their research

highlighted the Internet as a tool for information gathering and sharing during the buying process. Bauer, Grether and Leach (2002) investigated the factors that play a role when building relationships with customers over the Internet. They found that trust, commitment and satisfaction are of great importance in an online environment. The factor trust has also been researched in connection to brand equity in online business relationships (Jevons & Gabbott, 2000). The conclusion of their study is that online trust and brand equity are interrelated, but more research is needed to determine exactly which factors are of importance. While the academic world has since given some attention to this topic and the body of research on the matter has certainly increased, it still does not seem to be enough. Practitioners are actively participating in the digital world, by writing blogs, participating on social media, employing content marketing strategies, but many of their endeavors fail (Weber, 2009). This is not surprising, considering the outcome of the Järvinen et al. (2012) study. They researched the use of digital and social media tools in the B2B sector and one of their main conclusions is that B2B marketers lack the knowledge to employ effective digital strategies and exploit all the opportunities the Digital Era provides. This view is confirmed by Wiersema (2013, p. 704) who reports that companies that operate in a B2B context are "unsure about which elements are essential to the digital marketing process and which digital strategy they should follow".

Research questions

One of the most important challenges that marketers in the Digital Era are facing, concerns the topic of customer insight (Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlström & Freundt, 2014). The applications of the Internet allow marketers to use the available data to track the customer throughout their buyer journey. As such, big data has become an important topic of research (e.g., Chen, Chiang & Storey, 2012; Tirunillai & Tellis, 2014; Erevelles, Fukawa & Swayne, 2016). But creating meaningful customer insight from the vast amount of available data proves to be difficult (Leeflang et al., 2014). That is why this study is aimed at providing a better understanding of the online evaluations made by the buyer of the digital age. We take the perspective of the individual professional customer as we explain how the information quality of a blog (abbreviated from weblog) provided by a firm (from here on called the seller) contributes to their professional relationship. Specifically, we study how the information quality of a blog influences the buyer's trust

in the seller, the buyer's perception of the reputation of the seller, the buyer's satisfaction with the seller, and the buyer's perception of goal congruity between the seller and himself. We will determine the importance of these factors in the buyer-seller relationship, if and how these factors contribute to a buyer's attitude towards the brand of the seller, and which behavioral outcomes play a role. Moreover, we will take into account the effect of the customer's risk-aversion in his or her decision-making process. We will do so by answering the following research questions:

1. *How does the information quality of a business blog affect buyer-seller relationship quality?*

This research question is divided into four sub-questions:

1a. How does the information quality of a business blog influence the trust a buyer has in a seller?
1b. How does the information quality of a business blog influence the buyer's perception of the reputation of the seller?
1c. How does the information quality of a business blog influence the buyer's satisfaction with the seller?
1d. How does the information quality of a business blog influence the perceived goal congruity between buyer and seller?

2. *To what extent does a buyer's risk-aversion affect the relationship between online information quality and the quality of the buyer-seller relationship?*
3. *How do the determinants of the buyer-seller relationship quality (trust, reputation, satisfaction and goal congruity) influence the attitude of the buyer towards the seller's brand?*
4. *How does the buyer's attitude towards the seller's brand impact the buyer's behavioral outcomes?*

Research contributions
We propose that the outcomes of this study are of importance for both marketing theory as well as marketing practice. First, we respond directly to calls for research that

emphasize the implications of online information access on buying behavior in a B2B context (Wiersema, 2013). We contribute to the marketing literature by providing new insights about the buyer-seller relationship in a digital context. This is accomplished by researching the impact of business blogging in the form of an experiment. To our knowledge the impact of blogging as perceived from a buyer's perspective on the relationship between buyer and seller has not been researched before in a setup similar to ours. Second, testing the moderating effects of risk-aversion will tell researchers and practitioners more about the links among online information quality, the quality of the buyer-seller relationship and the importance of risk as perceived by the buyer. Third, in addition to extending B2B marketing theory, the results of this study offer managerial implications for strategies towards online content and insight into the customer of the Digital Era.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. In the next section the theoretical background of the constructs under investigation will be discussed and a conceptual model will be introduced. The third section depicts the method that was used to conduct the research. In the fourth section the results of the study will be described, and the final section contains the conclusions resulting from the analyses as well as a discussion of the results.

2.   Conceptual background & theory development

This study determines the effect of the independent variable information quality on the buyer-seller relationship quality *as perceived by the B2B customer.* Because a buyer-seller relationship often takes the form of a partnership, communication is an important aspect (Williams, Spiro and Fine, 1990; Parsons, 2002). As previously discussed, the Internet has changed the communication process between buyers and sellers (Obal and Lancioni, 2013). According to Day & Bens (2005) it has become the main channel for communication between B2B buyers and sellers. Moreover, the World Wide Web is one of the main sources of information, which is why nearly 60% of a typical B2B buyer journey has already been fulfilled before the customer in question even contacts a firm (Adamson et al., 2012). The importance of providing information online was already predicted by Bill Gates in 1996 when he wrote an online essay on the subject and gave it the title: "Content is King". This title has since been used as a mantra among online

marketing practitioners and they have put great emphasis on creating and developing a vast amount of online content. The great importance that is put on creating online content is causing an increasing in the usage of corporate blogs to reach the customer and provide the information customers are searching for (Singh, Veron-Jackson & Cullinane, 2008). It is a way for firms to show their expertise on a certain topic. However, there are some challenges that accompany business blogging. One of those challenges is the amount of blogposts required to develop a relevant and interesting blog. Research shows that, in general, the more blogs a company writes, the bigger the impact (Kolowich, 2015). But writing blogposts takes time and resources, and one of the problems in B2B digital marketing is the lack of human resources with the capabilities to effectively contribute to digital marketing (Järvinen et al., 2012). Firms that are actively trying to develop a successful blog therefore have various company employees contribute to blogposts (Lee, Hwang & Lee, 2006) and sometimes invite guest bloggers to participate and write blogposts (Gudema, 2015). While this might be an effective way to develop more content – hence the "Content-is-King-mantra" – it is not far-fetched to assume that the quality of the blogposts varies with the different people contributing. Therefore, the combination of the independent variable information quality and the dependent variable buyer-seller relationship should prove to be logical and interesting. Before exploring the dimensions of this combination further, we will first provide an in-depth discussion of the concept of information quality and the buyer-seller relationship construct.

Information Quality

The independent variable used in this study is information quality, specifically information quality in an online context. Online information quality can be defined as "the customers' perception of the quality of information presented on a Web site" (McKinney, Yoon & Zahedi, 2002, p. 299). Information quality is a multidimensional construct that has already been researched extensively (e.g., DeLone & McLean, 1992; Jeong & Lambert, 2001; Lee, Strong, Kahn & Wang, 2002; Li & Lin, 2006). There does however not seem to be a lot of consensus amongst researchers regarding the contents of the concept (Savolainen, 2011). Knight and Burn (2005) provided an overview of no less than 12 widely accepted information quality models from various researchers with different categories, dimensions and approaches. Determining which model best fits our

study is therefore an undertaking that deserves consideration. We chose the model developed by Hsieh, Kuo, Yang and Lin (2010) for two reasons. First, their model was developed to evaluate blogs. Since this is a similar set-up to our study, the model was deemed appropriate. Second, the Hsieh et al. (2010) study is based on the model developed by DeLone and McLean (1992). This is an information system success model that has been widely accepted, empirically tested and is regarded the basis of information quality research. A statistic that proves the relevance of the DeLone and McLean (1992) model is that at the time of writing (July 21, 2017) the DeLone and McLean (1992) paper has been cited 10,615 times according to Google Scholar. Their model dictates that information system success depends on two variables: information quality and system quality. System quality is a variable that measures the performance of the system that delivers the information, which is in our case the blog site (Delone & McLean, 1992). The system quality evaluations take place on a technical level, which was not deemed appropriate for our study. As previously stated, our study is aimed at providing a better understanding of the online evaluations made by the buyer of the digital age. We use the perspective of the individual professional customer as we attempt to provide marketing practitioners with better insight into mechanisms that play a role during a typical journey through the online world. It is our objective to deliver business marketers suggestions as to the digital strategy they should follow with regard to the content they develop and publish. The system quality evaluations do not contribute to these goals. For instance, one of the system quality dimensions measures the accessibility of the system. According to Hsieh et al. (2010, p. 1438) accessibility regards the "speed and stability of access and the availability of the blog at all times". The speed and stability of access is for a big part dependent on the internet connection provided by the user and the infrastructure of the Internet available to the user (Singla, Chandrasekaran, Godfrey & Maggs, 2014). A firm providing a business blog could indeed attempt to influence the Internet conditions available to their target group, but this would be a much larger undertaking that would have to include various parties. It is therefore not relevant to this study and it does not align with the goals of this study. The same objection applies to the usability dimension. Hsieh et al. (2010, p. 1438) define usability as "(…) the extent to which the blog is visually appealing, consistent, and arouses curiosity". To some extent the design and layout of the blog is in the hands of the firm providing the content. For instance, whether or not an image is added to a post

entirely depends on the content publisher's choice. However, a lot of choices regarding design and setup of blogposts are determined by the Content Management System (CMS) used, such as the popular CMS WordPress, or the platform Ghost. Therefore, we chose to only partially include the Hsieh et al. (2010) model. Solely the variable information quality and its dimensions are taken into account, while the system quality variable is excluded.

Information quality dimensions

As previously stated, the information quality construct is multidimensional. The Hsieh et al. (2010) model applied in this study incorporates four dimensions of information quality, namely: understandability, reliability, scope, and usefulness. The understandability dimension evaluates the blog user's perception of the extent to which the information is easy to comprehend and whether or not the information is up-to-date. The reliability dimension concerns the accuracy and credibility of the information presented to the blog user. The dimension scope relates to the depth and breadth of the information in the blog, and lastly the usefulness dimension concerns the relevance of the information to the blog user. Although the Hsieh et al. (2010) research provides a factor analysis showing that these dimensions are indeed conceptually different, it is noteworthy that they do impact each other. For instance, a blogger could try to improve the scope of his or her post by adding information and could in doing so unintendedly impede the perceived usefulness due to decreased relevance. The interrelatedness of the dimensions will be taken into consideration during the next phases of this study.

The buyer-seller relationship

The advantages of stable buyer-seller relationships have been well established in academic literature. According to Ellram (1995) fertile buyer-seller relationships make for lower risk, access to technology, more cooperation, increased knowledge and information sharing. It allows firms to stay ahead of the competition (Parsons, 2002). Moreover, research shows that gathering new customers can be up to five times more expensive than maintaining relationships with existing customers (Bauer et al., 2002). Reasons enough for companies to invest in the development of high-quality relationships with their customers, and for academics to research the dynamics of the concept. The buyer-seller relationship has already been studied from various perspectives, with different approaches, and with different underlying theories. One of

the conclusions rising from the vast amount of research is that the buyer-seller relationship dynamics vary with each buyer and each seller and that unifying all of the constructs and existing work is a complicated undertaking. Providing a definition for the concept of buyer-seller relationship quality is therefore a complicated task. There are almost as many definitions of the concept as there are studies on the matter. What most researchers do agree on is that buyer-seller relationship quality is multi-dimensional construct, and the dimensions included reflect on the nature of the relationship (Hennig-Thureau, Gwinner & Gremler, 2002). In this regard we find the view of Jap, Manolis and Weitz (1999, p. 304) useful, as they explain that the various buyer-seller relationship dimensions can be described as "evaluations of various aspects of relationship – attitudinal, process and future expectations". Exactly which dimensions are included in a researchers buyer-seller relationship quality definition is determined by the perspective from which the construct is studied. In the following paragraphs we will explain our reasoning for including the dimensions *reputation, trust, goal congruity and satisfaction* as determinants of relationship quality.

Behavioral vs. social approach

Cannon and Perreault (1999) made a significant contribution towards clarification of all the buyer-seller relationship research by providing eight types of relationships that can be observed in practice. These types are: 1) basic buying and selling, 2) bare bones, 3) contractual transaction, 4) custom supply, 5) cooperative systems, 6) collaborative, 7) mutually adaptive, and 8) customer is king. Cannon and Perreault (1999) classify business relationships based on business actions and behavior. The relationships may vary in terms of the amount of cooperation, the amount of exchanged information, the extent to which exchanges are a part of contractual agreements, etc. Although the work of Cannon and Perreault (1999) provides a clear and robust framework, and is regarded an important stepping-stone for buyer-seller relationship research, it is not the type of framework that is useful to our study. Cannon and Perreault (1999) explain in their paper that they chose to ground their framework behaviorally, but that the classification would be different if they had chosen an approach that pointed out the social dimension of the buyer-seller relationship. We would like to use the approach that highlights the social aspects of the buyer-seller relationship for two reasons. First, the social aspects

are of crucial importance in order to be able to provide insight into the mechanisms that come into play when a seller wants to develop a high-quality relationship with a buyer. If we were to choose a behavioral approach we could determine which behavior was taking place, but we could not explain why the behavior would occur. Second, our research is aimed at the buyer-seller relationship in an online context. Previous research has shown that social aspects, such as trust and satisfaction are of even bigger importance when interactions between buyer and seller take place on the Internet (Jevons & Gabbott, 2000; Bauer et al., 2002; Luo, 2002; Hong & Cha, 2013). Therefore, our research is focused at the social aspects of the buyer-seller relationship.

Buyer-seller relationship dimensions

In determining which dimensions of the buyer-seller relationship should be included in our buyer-seller relationship quality operationalization, we evaluated various definitions and conceptual models from previous research. Table 1 provides an overview of these studies.

Table 1.   Summary of relationship quality definitions

Author(s)	Key dimensions
Bauer et al. (2002)	Commitment, satisfaction, trust
Rauyruen and Miller (2007)	Service quality, commitment, satisfaction, trust
Parsons (2002)	Commitment, mutual goals, relationship benefits
Huntley (2006)	Goal congruity, commitment, trust
Selnes (2006)	Trust, satisfaction
Wilson (1995)	Commitment, trust, cooperation, mutual goals, interdependence/power imbalance, performance satisfaction, comparison level of the alternative, adaptation, nonretrievable investments, shared technology, summative constructs, structural bonds, social bonds
Morgan and Hunt (1994)	Commitment, trust
Dwyer and Oh (1987)	Satisfaction, trust, minimal opportunism
Johnson, Sakano, Cote and Onzo (1993)	Satisfaction, cooperation, relationship stability
Powers and Reagan (2007)	Reputation, performance satisfaction, trust, social bonds, comparison level of the alternative, mutual goals, power/interdependence, shared technology, non-retrievable investments, adaptation, structural bonds, cooperation, commitment

The majority of the studies we evaluated have three dimensions in common: *trust, satisfaction and commitment.* Therefore, these dimensions seem a logical choice. There is however one important aspect of the buyer-seller relationship that has not yet been discussed and that influences our choice of dimensions for the buyer-seller relationship quality construct. That aspect concerns the fact that buyer-seller relationship do not appear fully-grown at a certain moment, but they develop over time.

Buyer-seller relationship development process

Wilson (1995) developed a framework consisting of five relationship stages that buyer-seller relationships go through. These stages are: 1) partner selection, 2) defining purpose, 3) setting relationship boundaries, 4) creating relationship value, and 5) relationship maintenance. We aim our study at the early stages of the buyer-seller relationship development process, for two reasons. First, Bauer et al. (2002) state in their study that it proves difficult for firms to gather new customers through the Internet. Therefore, providing more insight into the early stages of the process is useful. Second, we expect the influence of information quality on the buyer-seller relationship development process to be the biggest in the early stages. Cognitive dissonance theory (Aronson, 1969) dictates that is unlikely that a buyer will change his or her opinion towards a seller when subjected to a blog with information of low quality if that buyer is already in a well-establish relationship with the seller. The buyer in an established relationship has most likely already decided to trust the seller and is committed to his or her choice for the firm in question (Powers & Reagan, 2007). He or she will not readily change his mind based on one blog with information of low quality. Therefore we choose to focus at the early stages of the buyer-seller relationship.

The buyers-seller relationship dimensions in the early stages

Powers and Reagan (2007) determined in their study that the importance of buyer-seller relationship dimensions varies throughout the various stages of relationship development. They found that commitment, although a common variable in many buyer-seller relationship quality operationalizations, does not contribute to buyer-seller relationship quality in the early phases of the relationship. As a result of this finding, we decided to exclude the commitment dimension from our operationalization of buyer-seller relationship quality. Moreover, Powers and Reagan (2007) determined that goal

congruity is the most important factor in buyer-seller relationships and its importance is the biggest at the early stages of the relationship. We therefore included goal congruity as an additional dimension of our buyer-seller relationship operationalization. Furthermore, following the Bennett and Gabriel (2001) finding that reputation is an antecedent of important relationship dimensions, implying that reputation is of the greatest importance during the early stages of the relationship development process, we included reputation as the fourth dimension. In summary, we define buyer-seller relationship quality as the degree to which a buyer perceives a seller's *reputation* as favorable, *trusts* the seller, is *satisfied* with the seller and perceives his *goals* to be in *congruence* with the seller's goals.

Information quality & reputation

One of the activities that buyer's employ during the early stages of a buyer-seller relationship is the search for information (Moriarty & Spekman, 1984). The buyers search for information on the product or service they are interested in, but they also search for different possible partners. They use the information they come across to decrease their risk during the purchase decision- making process (Mitchell, 1995; Mitchell, Davies, Moutinho & Vassos, 1999; 2013; Flanagin, Metzger, Pure, Markov & Hartsell, 2014). An important variable that influences the buyer's purchase risk is the reputation of the seller (Kim & Lennon, 2013). During the early stages of the buyer-seller relationship the partner in question is new and untested, which makes the firm's reputation even more important (Wilson, 1995).

Reputation represents a buyer's perception of the characteristics and capabilities of the seller (Money, Hillenbrand, Day & Magnan, 2010; Powers & Reagan, 2007). It is related to a buyer's quality expectations (Castriota & Delmastro, 2012). The buyer's perception of the characteristics and capabilities of the seller are partially determined by the buyer's value judgements derived from the information he or she reads during his or her information search (Yoon, Guffey & Kijweksi, 1993). Since information is a determinant of reputation, it can be expected that the quality of the information provided, is of significant importance. If a buyer is presented with bad-quality information, it is likely that his value judgements about a seller will be negative (and vice versa). Therefore, our first hypothesis is:

H1: Information quality has a positive impact on the seller's reputation

Information quality & trust

The concept of trust in an industrial buying context has already been researched extensively (Selnes, 2006; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Dwyer and Oh, 1987). Therefore, a lot of definitions of the concept exist. Most definitions of trust involve a mention of the belief that one party will handle in the best interest of the other party. That however does not cover the entire meaning of trust. Doney and Cannon (1997) provide a useful and complete operationalization of the concept in their study. They argue that trust consists of two dimensions: perceived credibility and benevolence. The first dimension, perceived credibility, focuses on the buyer's belief that the seller's word or written statement can be counted on (Doney & Cannon, 1997). The second dimension, benevolence, is defined by Doney & Cannon (1997, p. 36) as "(…) the extent to which one partner is genuinely interested in the other partner's welfare and motivated to seek joint gain". Trust is increasingly important in an online context, because one of the characteristics of the Internet is high uncertainty (Pavlou, Liang & Xue, 2007). Hoffman, Novak and Peralta (1999) explain in their study that a lot of online customers do not engage in relationships with selling parties, because they do not trust them enough. High information quality has the potential to reduce sellers' feelings of uncertainty, because it provides consumers with the belief that a seller is competent and credible (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013), and positively influences the perceived reliability of a website. Since one of the dimensions of trust is credibility, information quality is an important condition for creating trust. Therefore, the second hypothesis is the following:

H2: Information quality has a positive impact on the buyer's trust in a seller

Information quality & satisfaction

Much research has already been conducted on the relationship between online information quality and satisfaction. Ghasemaghaei and Hassanein (2016) reviewed 113 papers that investigate the relationship and they find that only three of those papers report a non-significant relationship between online information quality and satisfaction. Wilson (1995) provided a definition of the concept satisfaction that is both useful and clarifying. He states that satisfaction is: "(…) the degree to which a the business transaction meets the business performance expectations of the partner."

(Wilson, 1995, p. 338). The operative word in this definition is expectations. Research that contains the variable satisfaction is very often combined with the expectation-disconfirmation theory (e.g., Bearden & Teel, 1983; Johnson, Anderson & Fornell, 1995; McKinney et al., 2002; Hsieh et al., 2010). According to this theory, satisfaction is achieved when expectations are fulfilled and dissatisfaction is a result of unfulfilled expectations (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982). Moreover, when expectations are exceeded, satisfaction will increase. Usually, buyers use the available information on the Internet to determine what they can expect from a seller or from a product/service. It helps them to make better decisions (Ghasemaghaei & Hassanein, 2016). We therefore assume that the expectations of buyers who come across information of high quality will be fulfilled or exceeded, and that the expectations of buyers who come across information of low quality will be unfulfilled. Hence, our third hypothesis is the following:

> *H3: Information quality has a positive impact on the buyer's satisfaction with the seller*

Information quality & goal congruity

Most companies want to be perceived as a source of quality, because it has favorable outcomes such as customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and a greater chance of organizational success (e.g., Cronin, Brady & Hult, 2000; Ulaga & Chacour, 2001). It is therefore an important goal amongst marketing managers (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Day, 1994; Slater & Narver, 2000). Similar attraction theory dictates that people prefer companies that share goals that are similar to their own (Byrne, 1971). In other words, buyers that value quality will look for quality in the sellers that they engage with. The concept describing this process is called goal congruity. Wilson (1995, p. 338) defines goal congruity as "the degree to which partners share goals that can only be accomplished through joint action and the maintenance of the relationship". Not only the shared goals itself are important, but also the belief of one party that the other can help them to achieve their goals (Powers & Reagan, 2007). A way for companies to show their capabilities and prove their quality is by providing high-quality information. Buyers searching the Internet for firms that can provide them with the products and services they need, make judgements based on the information they find. Their attitude towards a certain seller is at least partially determined by the quality of the information they come across (Peng, Fan & Hsu, 2004). Consequently, a firm that provides high

quality information is expected to be trusted sooner to share a buyer's goals of quality and will be perceived as more qualified to help a buyer achieve his goals than a firm that provides information of low quality. Therefore, our fourth hypothesis is:

> *H4: Information quality has a positive impact on the goal congruence between buyer and seller*

The moderating effect of risk aversion

In a business-to-business context risk aversion is an important variable, because B2B buyers not only experience risk that affects them personally, but there is also the risk to the organization to consider (Mitchell, 1995). A bad decision made by an organizational buyer can have consequences for the buyer's reputation within an organization, but can also lead to losses and other unfavorable consequences. As previously stated, an important strategy that business buyers employ to reduce their purchase risk, is information gathering (Mitchell, 1995). The main source for information gathering has become the Internet (Herrera-Viedma et al., 2006). However, the Internet might not always be a risk-free environment, because virtually anyone in the digital world can publish content (Herrera-Viedma et al., 2006). The credibility and reliability of the information that buyers come across is therefore not guaranteed. Risk aversion, or an individual's attitude towards taking risks (Meertens & Lion), is a personality trait that determines how much risk and uncertainty a person is willing to accept. In an uncertain situation, a risk-averse person will choose the safest option. Given the uncertainty pertaining to information found on the Internet (Pavlou et al., 2007), we expect that a person with the tendency to avoid risks, will be less inclined to trust a seller, to perceive his reputation as favorable, to be satisfied with the seller and to perceive goal congruence between himself and the seller, because it takes more to convince a risk averse person than it takes to convince a risk-taker (Ehrlich & Maestas, 2010). Therefore, our fifth hypothesis is:

> *H5: A buyer's risk aversion moderates the relationship between information quality and buyer-seller relationship quality*

Buyer-seller relationship quality & brand attitude

B2B brands are valuable, because they influence the decision-making process of buyers (Brown, Zablah, Bellenger & Donthu; Backhaus, Steiner & Lügger, 2011). They are

therefore an important determinant of organizational success (Berry, 2000). Paul Peter and Olson (2010, p. 128) define attitude as "(…) a person's overall evaluation of a concept". Adapting to this definition, we define brand attitude as a buyer's overall evaluation of a brand. An attitude is formed by the attitude holder's beliefs. The more positive those beliefs are, the more positive a person's attitude will be (Paul Peter & Olson, 2010). A buyer's belief that a seller will handle in his / her best interest (= trust), that a seller has high-quality characteristics and capabilities (= reputation), that the business performance expectations will be met (= satisfaction) and that the seller shares his / her goals and will help him / her to achieve the goals in question (= goal congruity) should according to the mechanisms of the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) lead to favorable attitude. Thus, our sixth hypothesis is:

> *H6: Relationship quality has a positive impact on a buyer's attitude towards the seller's brand*

Behavioral outcomes

The Theory of Reasoned Action, developed by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), dictates that the behavioral intention to perform a certain behavior is the single best predictor of the actual behavior. In the context of our study, the following three behavioral intentions are relevant: 1) intention to reuse, 2) purchase intention and 3) intention to recommend. First, the intention to reuse. Generally speaking, buyers move through various phases when they develop a relationship with a seller (Engel, Kollat & Blackwell, 1973; Wilson, 1995). During these stages, they usually visit a selling firm's website more than once, in order to determine whether or not the firm is a suitable candidate and to obtain more information (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). Consequently, a buyer's intention to reuse a website or blog is an important outcome variable relating to the development of buyer-seller relationships in an online environment. Second, the purchase intention. Naturally, every firm operating with the goal to make profit, needs customers to purchase their products or services. Thus no further explanation is needed to illustrate the relevance of this outcome variable. Third, the intention to recommend. Word-of-mouth is an important source of information for buyers in the process of making a purchase decision (e.g., King, Racherla & Bush, 2014; Chaterjee, 2001; Xia & Bechwati, 2008). Therefore, a buyer's intention to recommend a certain seller and thereby creating positive word-of-mouth is of great importance to sellers. Based on the Theory of Reasoned Action,

dictating that a buyer's intentions are determined by his or her attitude, we expect a buyer's overall evaluation of a selling brand to positively impact his or her behavioral intentions. Hence, our seventh hypothesis is:

> *H7: A buyer's attitude towards the seller's brand has a positive impact on the behavioral outcomes intention to reuse blog, purchase intention, and intention to recommend*

Conceptual model

The aforementioned hypotheses lead to the conceptual model depicted below in figure 1.
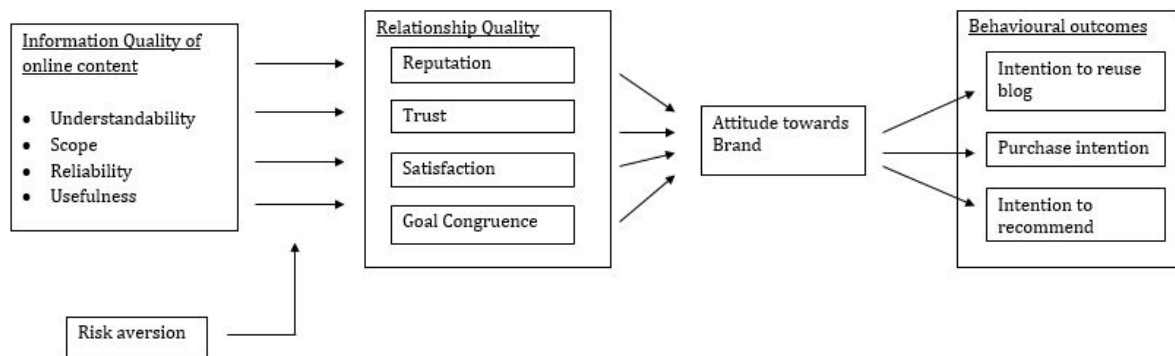

Fig. 1 Conceptual model

3: Research Method

In the following section the research methods used in this study will be discussed. The study had a between subjects experimental design. The unit of analysis was the individual professional marketer. The respondents were randomly assigned to an experimental condition, either a high information quality condition or a low information quality condition.

Materials

In this study the respondents were asked to read a blog before answering the questions in the questionnaire. This blog was adapted from a blog written by Edwin Vlems, naturally with his permission. He is a well-known B2B marketer in The Netherlands who writes successful blogs that are posted on his own website (https://edwinvlems.com/) as well as on various popular online marketing platforms, such as Marketingfacts.nl. The subject of the blog used in this study was the so-called McNamary Fallacy related to marketing Key Performance Indicators (Vlems, 2016). It was therefore aimed at an

audience of marketing / communication professionals. The fictitious marketing agency "Marketingbureau Impact" functioned as the seller in our research setup. A logo was designed and a description of the fictitious marketing agency "Marketingbureau Impact" was created. The logo as well as the description of "Marketingbureau Impact" can be found in Appendix B. The choice for a fictitious marketing agency was deliberate, because we could through this setup be sure that there would be no pre-existing associations with a brand that would influence our results.

The blog used for this study was adapted to fit our research design. Two versions of the blog were created: a version with high information quality and a version with low information quality. The version with high information quality was almost identical to the original blog written by Vlems (2016), because this blog was deemed an appropriate representation of the information quality generally presented in a blog post, if not higher. The second version however, was altered significantly in order to create the low information quality condition. The following methods were used to decrease the information quality in the blog:

1. The information about the author of the blog was removed in order to reduce credibility. According to Metzger (2007) the identity of the author contributes to the credibility of online information. Therefore, removing the author's name and picture should influence credibility negatively.

2. The writing style was altered by changing the active writing style in the original version to a passive style in the second version of the blog. Bostian (1983) determined that an active writing style influences the understandability of information positively. Hence changing the writing style to a passive one should decrease the perceived information quality.

3. In as many cases as possible words were replaced by more difficult synonyms in order to decrease understandability even more.

4. The scope and usefulness of the information were manipulated by removing relevant information regarding the topic of the blog and inserting irrelevant information.

Pre-test

The two versions of the blog resulting from the previously described methods of influence on information quality were tested to determine whether the manipulation was successful. Each version was shown to a randomly assigned group of respondents. After reading the blog, the respondents were asked to fill out a questionnaire that contained the Hsieh et al. (2010) items for understandability, reliability, scope and usefulness. The items used in this pre-test can be found in Appendix A. Respondents were randomly assigned to a condition (either high information quality or low information quality), and of the 34 filled out questionnaires 3 were only partially filled out, hence removing these responses from analysis. Due to the removal of the partially completed responses, the respondents were not entirely equally distributed amongst the two experimental conditions. 17 respondents were attributed to the high-quality condition, resulting in 14 respondents for the low-quality condition. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether or not the two groups differed in their evaluation of the information quality presented to them in the blog (see Appendix A, Table 13). The outcome of the ANOVA analysis was that, at a significance level of .05, only the dimension *understandability* differed significantly between the two groups. The dimensions *reliability, scope* and *usefulness* did not significantly differ between the two groups. Therefore, the initial conclusion was that the manipulation was not successful. There are however some significant drawbacks pertaining to this conclusion and to the pre-test itself. First, in order to carry out a reliable ANOVA test, 30 respondents per group should be obtained (Cohen, 1988). In this pre-test 31 respondents in total participated, hence a lack of sufficient respondents for a reliable ANOVA. Second, the average response time was 5 minutes and 47 seconds. This raises doubts as to the diligence of the respondents. Factoring in the amount of words that the two versions of the blog contained (922 vs. 711 words respectively) and the average online reading speed, which is 181 words per minute (Ziefle, 1998), it is doubtful that all the respondents took enough time to read the blog and be able to answer the questions in a representative manner. Third, as previously discussed, the information quality dimensions are interrelated. Inserting irrelevant information to reduce usefulness, might very well increase a respondent's perception of scope. It is for these reasons that we cannot establish with certainty that the manipulation was successful, but it also does not necessarily mean that the two versions are indifferent.

In order to increase the chances of successful manipulation, a second round of alterations to the versions of the blog took place. The final two versions of the blog can be found in Appendix B. Due to time constraints we were not able to conduct a second pre-test to determine the success of the second round of alterations. We therefore added a control question to the final measurement instrument, measuring the perceived information quality.

Data collection & sample

The target population of this study was marketers, communication specialists and consultants and business professionals otherwise interested in marketing. This population was chosen because the developed materials are relevant to this audience. The questionnaire was distributed as an anonymous online survey and respondents were directly and indirectly approached. Two renown online Dutch marketing platforms (Marketingfacts.nl and b2bmarketeers.nl) spread the invitation to participate in the study through their social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), hence the indirect approach. Also, a total of 193 marketing / communication specialists were approached via e-mail invitation. The e-mail addresses were gathered through their LinkedIn profiles, hence ensuring that they belonged to the target population. Arguments pertaining to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were used to persuade respondents to participate. The invitation to participate offered respondents a possibility to be informed of the results of the study. The results can help the respondent in their day-to-day practice as a marketer, which constitutes the intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Also, respondents were offered a chance of winning a €25,- voucher from the Dutch retailer Bol.com, hence the extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The complete text used to introduce the questionnaire to the respondents can be found in Appendix C.

The marketers participating in the study were briefly introduced to Marketingbureau Impact before starting the questionnaire. Also, they were primed to achieve a certain level of involvement, resembling the real-world situation of B2B buying as much as possible. Respondents were asked to imagine having to conduct a list of marketing agencies that could support them in their marketing activities. They were told that this

list had to be presented to their colleagues. In doing so, we ensured that respondents would attribute time and effort to evaluating Marketingbureau Impact, because even if respondents were not personally looking for a marketing agency, they would make an effort because it concerned their colleagues (Gottschalk & Mafael, 2017). The text used to prime the respondents can be found in Appendix C.

A total amount of 89 questionnaires was filled out by the respondents. 19 of these questionnaires were only partially filled out, resulting in 70 usable responses. Respondents were randomly attributed to one of the experimental conditions. Again, due to the removal of the partially completed responses, the respondents were not entirely equally distributed amongst the two experimental conditions. 40 respondents read the blog with high information quality and 30 respondents read the blog with low information quality. Of the total amount of 70 respondents, 42 respondents were male and 28 respondents were female. Their mean age was 32.6 years (SD = 10.0). The respondents' educational level ranged between lower secondary education and scientific education, and the most common educational level was higher vocational education. The respondents are active in 9 different industries, namely: consultancy (9), construction, installation and infrastructure (4), financial services (4), wholesale and retail (15), ICT, media and communication (16), industry (6), education and training (3), personal services and non-profit (2) and business services (11). These attributes did not differ between the two experimental groups.

Measurement model & scales

The scales used to measure the variables in the measurement model are depicted in table 2. A complete description of the questions including the items described in table 2 can be found in Appendix C. The overall internal consistency of the scales was good, since applying the George and Mallery (2008) rules of thumb results in three excellent scales (above .9) and four good scales (above .8). However, the internal consistency of the reputation scale is questionable: $\alpha = .62$. Analysis shows that the removal of item 3 results in an acceptable reliability level: $\alpha = .70$.

Table 2.   Scales and reliability of the variables included in the measurement model

Variable	Type of scale	Adapted from	Reliability

		Author(s)	Cronbach's Alpha
Information Quality	4 items, seven-point Likert scale. Anchors: strongly disagree – strongly agree	Hsieh et al. (2010)	.710
Satisfaction	4 items, seven-point semantic scale. Anchors: pleased-displeased, sad-happy, contented-disgusted, dissatisfied-satisfied	Ganesan (1994)	.884
Reputation	4 items, seven-point Likert scale. Anchors: strongly disagree – strongly agree	Ganesan (1994)	.620
Trust	8 items, seven-point Likert scale. Anchors: strongly disagree – strongly agree	Doney & Cannon (1997)	.864
Goal Congruity	4 items, seven-point Likert scale. Anchors: strongly disagree – strongly agree	Huntley (2006)	.871
Brand Attitude	4 items, five-point evaluative scale. Anchors: good-bad, dislike very much – like very much, pleasant, unpleasant, poor quality – high quality	Mitchell & Olson (1998)	.855
Intention to reuse	4 items, seven-point Likert scale. Anchors: strongly disagree – strongly agree	Aziz & Kamaludin (2015)	.911
Willingness to recommend	2 items, seven-point Likert scale. Anchors: strongly disagree – strongly agree	Huntley (2006)	.977
Purchase intention	4 items, seven-point semantic scale. Anchors: unlikely-likely, improbable-probable, uncertain-certain, definitely not-definitely	Li, Daugherty & Biorcca (2002)	.959
Risk aversion	7 items, seven-point Likert scale. Anchors: strongly disagree – strongly agree	Meertens & Lion (2008)	.818

We subjected the ten multi-item scales to a factor analysis to determine model fit and the validity of the constructs. We conducted a Common Factor analysis using the Principal Axis Factoring extraction method, because our objective is to identify underlying factors. We performed the factor analysis in 3 phases, because our sample size is not large enough to include all variables in 1 factor analysis. Phase 1 contained the items for the constructs Information Quality and Risk aversion, phase 2 contained the items for the constructs Satisfaction, Reputation, Trust and Goal Congruity and phase

3 contained the items for the constructs Brand Attitude, Intention to reuse, Intention to recommend and Purchase intention. The results of these analyses will be discussed in the following section.

Factor analysis phase 1: Information Quality and Risk aversion

Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant $(\chi^2 (55) = 272.96, p < .000)$ indicating that there is sufficient correlation between the variables and factor analysis is an appropriate statistical method for this phase of our study. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the strength of the relationships among variables was adequate (KMO =.71), therefore allowing us to proceed with the factor analysis. The Common Factor analysis showed an initial solution with two factors that had an eigenvalue bigger than 1 (Appendix C, Table 14). These two factors together accounted for 53.12% of the variance. Because we wanted to establish discriminant validity between the factors, we applied an orthogonal factor rotation using the Varimax method to interpret the factor solution. The factor matrix (Appendix C, Table 15) revealed a problem with the items Risk aversion 1 and Risk aversion 2. Both of these items did not have a significant loading on either of the factors and were therefore removed. After removal the percentage of variance that the factors 1 and 2 accounted for improved to 60.40% and the factor matrix, displayed below in table 3, showed no further problems.

Table 3.   Final Factor Matrix resulting from Principal Axis Factoring with Varimax rotation after removing Risk aversion 1 and Risk aversion 2

Scale items	Factors	
	1	2
Information Quality 1	-.01	.51
Information Quality 2	-.06	.79
Information Quality 3	.03	.64
Information Quality 4	.01	.60
Risk aversion 3	.91	.09
Risk aversion 4	.62	-.03
Risk aversion 5	.64	-.01
Risk aversion 6	.72	-.10
Risk aversion 7	.83	.03

To establish the validity of the construct, we will discuss the convergent and discriminant validity of the factors. The factor matrix showed that the items for Information Quality all loaded significantly on factor 2 and did not load significantly on factor 1. The items for Risk aversion all loaded significantly on factor 1 and they did not load significantly on factor 2. There were no observable cross-loading issues. Examining the rotated factor plot (Appendix C, Figure 3) confirmed that the items for factor 2 were closely related and on the opposite axis from the closely interrelated items pertaining to factor 1. We therefore concluded that both construct had sufficient convergent and discriminant validity.

To determine model fit, the residuals were analyzed. There were 13 non-redundant residuals with absolute values greater than .05, which was 36.0% of the total amount of residuals. A model that has a good fit should have less than 50% non-redundant residuals that are greater than .05 (Yong & Pearce, 2013). Therefore we concluded that our model fit the data of phase 1 well.

Factor analysis phase 2: Satisfaction, Reputation, Trust and Goal Congruity

Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (χ^2 (190) = 916.05, $p < .000$) indicating that there is sufficient correlation between the variables and factor analysis is an appropriate statistical method for this phase of our study. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the strength of the relationships among variables was strong (KMO =.83), therefore allowing us to proceed with the factor analysis. The Common Factor analysis showed an initial solution with five factors that had an eigenvalue bigger than 1 (Appendix C, Table 16). These five factors together accounted for 74.10% of the variance. Again, orthogonal factor rotation using the Varimax method was used to interpret the factor solution. The factor matrix (Appendix C, Table 17) showed a problem with various items. The item 'Satisfaction 4' cross-loaded on factor 1 and 2 and the loading on factor 2 was negative. 'Reputation 1' cross-loaded on factor 1 and 3 and the loading on factor 3 was negative. 'Reputation 2' had the same problem as 'Reputation 1'. 'Trust 1' cross-loaded on factor 1 and factor 2. 'Trust 2' did not have a significant loading on any of the factors. 'Trust 8' cross-loaded on factor 1, 3 and 5. And lastly 'Goal Congruity 1' had a significant negative loading on factor 4 as well as a

significant positive loading on factor 1. The application of oblique rotation with the Oblimin method resolved many of the problems.

Table 4. Final Factor Matrix resulting from Principal Axis Factoring with Oblimin rotation

Scale items	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Satisfaction 1	.36	.01	.05	.59	-.08
Satisfaction 2	-.01	.11	.17	.69	-.25
Satisfaction 3	-.04	.12	.02	.82	.17
Satisfaction 4	.07	-.07	-.07	.89	.11
Reputation 1	.19	.09	-.15	.07	.56
Reputation 2	.13	.16	-.28	.20	.40
Reputation 4	.44	.05	-.03	.23	.10
Trust 1	-.13	.82	-.02	-.00	.01
Trust 2	-.01	.08	.22	-.04	.43
Trust 3	.08	.55	-.14	.14	.15
Trust 4	.01	.50	-.06	.18	.26
Trust 5	.27	.72	.05	.01	-.09
Trust 6	.05	.85	.06	-.03	.03
Trust 7	.15	.82	.03	-.01	-.08
Trust 8	.12	.00	.84	.17	.16
Goal Congruity 1	.85	.04	.09	-.01	-.12
Goal Congruity 2	.66	-.06	-.20	.09	.24
Goal Congruity 3	.74	.12	.07	.00	.05
Goal Congruity 4	.73	.13	.09	.03	-.01

From table 3 we concluded that all problems pertaining to cross-loading issues and negative loadings were resolved. The solution however, was still somewhat surprising. Based on the theory we expected there to be four factors representing these items, but according to this solution there are five factors. Especially factor 3 stands out since it is only represented by 1 item, namely 'Trust 8'. Since this solution did not contain any cross-loadings, discriminant validity of the constructs is established, but the convergent validity of factor 3 is doubtful. We will analyze this further in the next stage of this study where we conduct a Partial Least Squares model.

To determine model fit, the residuals were analyzed. There were 25 non-redundant residuals with absolute values greater than .05, which was 14.0% of the total amount of residuals. A model that has a good fit should have less than 50% non-redundant

residuals that are greater than .05 (Yong & Pearce, 2013). Therefore we concluded that our model fit the data of phase 2 well.

Factor analysis phase 3: Brand attitude, Intention to reuse, Intention to recommend and Purchase intention

Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (χ^2 (91) = 1064.99, p < .000) indicating that there is sufficient correlation between the variables and factor analysis is an appropriate statistical method for this phase of our study. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the strength of the relationships among variables was strong (KMO =.89), therefore allowing us to proceed with the factor analysis. The Common Factor analysis showed an initial solution with three factors that had an eigenvalue bigger than 1 (Appendix C, Table 18). These three factors together accounted for 80.45% of the variance. Again, orthogonal factor rotation using the Varimax method was used to interpret the factor solution. The factor matrix (Appendix C, Table 19) showed a problem with three items: 'Intention to reuse 3' cross-loaded on factor 2 and factor 3, 'Intention to recommend 1' cross-loaded on all three factors and 'Intention to recommend 2' also cross-loaded on all three factors. Also, the item 'Intention to reuse 2' loaded significantly on factor 1 and factor 2, but the difference between these two loadings was bigger than .2. Therefore, 'Intention to reuse 2' was not labeled a cross-loader. In an attempt to resolve the cross-loading issues, another method of rotation was applied, namely the oblique rotation with the Oblimin method. Unfortunately this did not resolve the issues with the previously mentioned items. Therefore, the items 'Intention to reuse 3', 'Willingness to recommend 1' and 'Willingness to recommend 2' were removed from further analysis. After removal the percentage of variance that the combined factors accounted for improved to 82.70%.

Table 5.   Final Factor Matrix resulting from Principal Axis Factoring with Varimax rotation after removing Intention to reuse 3, Intention to recommend 1 and Intention to recommend 2

Scale items	Factors		
	1	2	3
Brand attitude 1	.31	.20	.78
Brand attitude 2	.41	.32	.61
Brand attitude 3	.20	.31	.72
Brand attitude 4	.26	.16	.60

Intention to reuse 1	.23	.86	.31
Intention to reuse 2	.49	.68	.22
Intention to reuse 4	.25	.86	.29
Purchase intention 1	.82	.32	.33
Purchase intention 2	.89	.25	.32
Purchase intention 3	.75	.21	.34
Purchase intention 4	.86	.28	.28

Table 5 shows that the items 'Brand attitude 2' and 'Intention to reuse 2' could both possibly have a problematic cross-loading. However, removing these items would result in a model that would explain our data worse, and therefore the items were still included for further analysis. The table shows that factor 1 is mostly determined by the items pertaining to purchase intention, factor 2 is mostly determined by Intention to reuse and factor 3 is mostly determined by brand attitude. We therefore conclude that convergent validity of our model is sufficient, but the discriminant validity might not be since 2 items show cross-loadings. We will analyze this further in the next stage of this study where we conduct a Partial Least Squares model.

To determine model fit, the residuals were analyzed. There were 3 non-redundant residuals with absolute values greater than .05, which was 5.0% of the total amount of residuals. A model that has a good fit should have less than 50% non-redundant residuals that are greater than .05 (Yong & Pearce, 2013). Therefore we concluded that our model fit the data of phase 2 well.

Statistical tests

To determine whether or not the manipulation of the information quality construct was successful, an independent sampled t-test was conducted. Secondly, descriptive statistics were used to assess the variables included in the analysis. Third, Partial Least Squares modeling was applied to evaluate our conceptual model. Last, a MANCOVA analysis was performed to determine whether or not the variable Risk Aversion moderated the relationship between Information Quality and Trust, Satisfaction, Reputation and Goal Congruity.

4:   Results

Before proceeding to the statistical analyses, we will report the descriptive statistics of the variables used in our study. Table 3, depicted below, shows these statistics.

Table 6.   Descriptive statistics of variables: mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range	Min.	Max.
Information Quality	4.21	1.21	-.53	-.22	6	1	7
Satisfaction	3.97	1.12	.19	-.70	6	1	7
Reputation	4.22	.93	-.00	.30	6	1	7
Trust	4.40	.78	.14	.21	6	1	7
Goal Congruity	4.19	.89	-.13	.35	6	1	7
Brand Attitude	3.10	.76	-.32	-.14	4	1	5
Intention to reuse	3.49	1.47	.17	-.90	6	1	7
Willingness to recommend	3.32	1.32	.11	-.55	6	1	7
Purchase intention	3.23	1.25	-.11	-1.04	6	1	7
Risk aversion	3.96	1.01	-.14	-.40	6	1	7

George and Mallery (2008) state that skewness and kurtosis values between -2 and +2 are considered acceptable to prove normal distribution. From table 3 it can be observed that all variables meet this criteria. Therefore, the variables are assumed to be normally distributed.

To determine whether or not the manipulation of the materials was successful, a *t*-test was conducted. The *t*-test for Information Quality with factor Version showed a significant difference between the information quality of version 1 and version 2 (t (68) = 3.69, p < .001). Version 1 contained higher information quality (*M* = 4.63, *SD* = 1.05) than version 2 (*M* = 3.64, *SD* = 1.18). Therefore, the manipulation was successful and further analysis of the model is appropriate.

To determine the results of our study, Partial Least Squares (PLS) modeling was applied, using *ADANCO* 2.0.1 . We analyzed a model, containing the variables Information Quality, Trust, Satisfaction, Reputation, Goal Congruence, Purchase Intention and Intention to Reuse. Intention to Recommend was not included in the PLS model, due to the results of the factor analysis described in the previous section. A visual representation of our model is shown in figure 2.
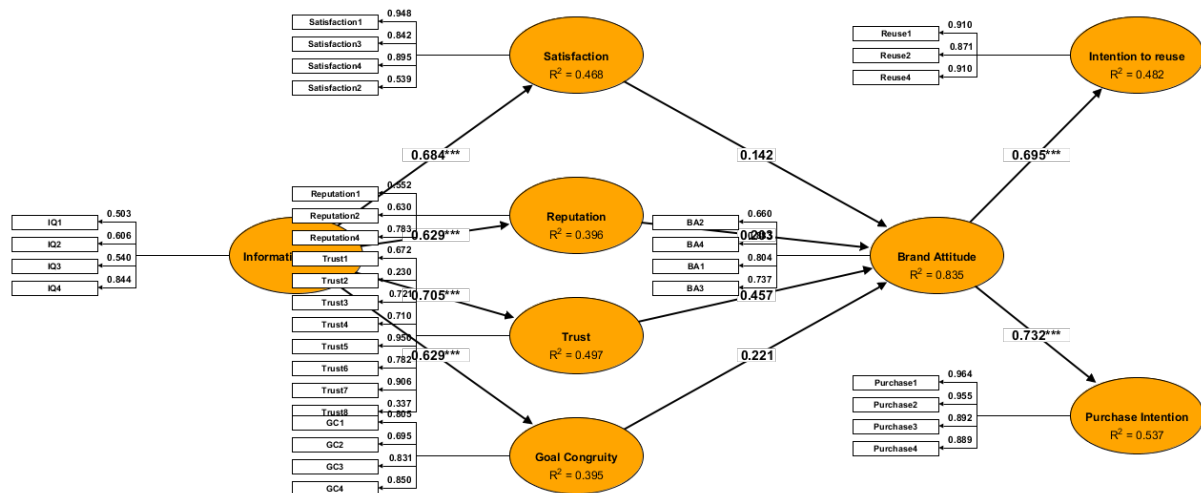
Fig. 2 Measurement Model

The model was assessed by evaluating the reliability, validity and discriminant validity of the constructs.

Table 7. Reliability of the constructs in the base measurement model

Construct	Jöreskog's rho (ρ)	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Information Quality	.72	.73
Satisfaction	.89	.89
Reputation	.70	.70
Trust	.88	.87
Goal Congruity	.87	.87
Brand Attitude	.86	.85
Intention to reuse	.93	.92
Purchase intention	.96	.96

In the early phases of an analysis, values of .70 or higher are regarded as acceptable for Cronbach's alpha. This means that Cronbach's alpha is sufficient for all eight constructs. The same rule applies to Jöreskog's rho. All values in our study met the threshold. We therefore concluded that the overall reliability of the construct in the base model was sufficient.

Table 7. Validity of the constructs in the base measurement model assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Constructs	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Information Quality	.41
Trust	.50

Satisfaction	.68
Reputation	.44
Goal Congruity	.64
Brand Attitude	.60
Purchase Intention	.86
Intention to reuse	.81

If the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is higher than .50 the constructs are considered to be unidimensional. From table 5 we observed that the AVE values for each construct are higher than .50, except for the constructs information quality (AVE=.41), trust (AVE = .50) and reputation (AVE = .44). It is not surprising that the AVE value for the construct Information Quality is too low, because as described in the previous sections of this study it is a multi-dimensional construct. We will assess the construct further by analyzing the indicator loadings, but for now the Information Quality construct is accepted in our study. Trust was at the threshold, so our preliminary conclusion was that the validity of the constructs in the base model is acceptable, except for the construct Reputation.

Table 8.   Discriminant validity of the constructs in the base measurement model
assessed through the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT)

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Information Quality								
Satisfaction	.66							
Reputation	.60	.68						
Trust	.68	.65	.72					
Goal Congruity	.63	.72	.80	.70				
Brand Attitude	.67	.73	.80	.85	.81			
Intention to reuse	.60	.77	.61	.58	.63	.69		
Purchase intention	.47	.57	.58	.58	.65	.73	.68	

In order for the constructs to have discriminant validity, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) should be under .85. From table 6 we concluded that all variables meet the threshold, except for the HTMT value for Brand Attitude*Trust (HTMT = .85). Because the HTMT value for Brand Attitud*Trust was exactly the threshold value, we concluded that overall discriminant value for our model was established even though one of the HTMT values did not meet the threshold.

To determine whether or not all indicators should be included in the next phase of the research, the indicator loadings were assessed.

Table 9. Indicator loadings

Indicator	Information Quality	Satis- faction	Repu- tation	Trust	Goal Congruity	Brand Attitude	Intention to reuse	Purchase intention
IQ1	.50							
IQ2	.61							
IQ3	.54							
IQ4	.84							
Satisfaction1		.95						
Satisfaction1		.54						
Satisfaction3		.84						
Satisfaction4		.90						
Reputation1			.55					
Reputation2			.63					
Reputation4			.78					
Trust1				.67				
Trust3				.72				
Trust4				.71				
Trust5				.95				
Trust6				.78				
Trust7				.91				
GC1					.81			
GC2					.69			
GC3					.83			
GC4					.85			
BA1						.80		
BA2						.66		
BA3						.74		
BA4						.88		
Reuse1							.91	
Reuse2							.87	
Reuse4							.91	
Purchase1								.96
Purchase2								.96
Purchase3								.89
Purchase4								.89

An indicator should have a loading of ≥ .50 in order to be a relevant and meaningful part of the model. From table 7 we concluded that all the indicators met this threshold and should therefore be included in the next phase of our analysis.

The second step in our Partial Least Squares Model analysis was reviewing our structural model. In the following section we will discuss the size of the direct effects, the indirect effects and the total effects.

Table 10.　　Path coefficients

Independent Variable	Dependent variable						
	Satisfaction	Reputation	Trust	Goal Congruity	Brand Attitude	Intention to reuse	Purchase Intention
Information Quality	.68	.63	.71	.63			
Satisfaction					.14		
Reputation					.20		
Trust					.46		
Goal Congruity					.22		
Brand Attitude						.69	.73

In table 10 the sizes of the direct effects are displayed. Generally speaking, coefficients bigger than .35 are considered a strong effect, coefficients bigger than .15 are considered a medium effect and coefficients bigger than .02 are considered a small effect. A few conclusions were drawn from table 14. First, Information Quality has a strong, positive effect on Satisfaction, Reputation, Trust and Goal Congruity. Second, Satisfaction has a small effect on Brand Attitude, Reputation has a medium-sized effect on Brand Attitude, Trust has a strong effect on Brand Attitude and Goal Congruity has a medium-sized effect on Brand Attitude. Last, Brand Attitude has a strong effect on both Intention to reuse and Purchase Intention.

Table 11.　　Total effects

Independent Variable	Dependent variable						
	Satisfaction	Reputation	Trust	Goal Congruity	Brand Attitude	Intention to reuse	Purchase Intention
Information	.68	.63	.71	.63	.69	.48	.50

Quality			
Satisfaction	.14	.10	.10
Reputation	.20	.14	.15
Trust	.46	.32	.34
Goal Congruity	.22	.15	.16
Brand Attitude		.69	.73

From table 11 it can be concluded that the total effects of Information Quality, Satisfaction, Reputation, Trust and Goal Congruity differ from the direct effects. These differences are due to the indirect effects displayed in table 10.

Table 12.   Indirect effects

Independent Variable	Dependent variable						
	Satisfaction	Reputation	Trust	Goal Congruity	Brand Attitude	Intention to reuse	Purchase Intention
Information Quality					.69	.48	.50
Satisfaction						.10	.10
Reputation						.14	.15
Trust						.32	.34
Goal Congruity						.15	.16

From table 12 an important conclusion was drawn. Information Quality has a strong, indirect effect on brand attitude as well as Intention to reuse and Purchase Intention.

In order to determine whether or not the variable Risk aversion has a moderating effect on the relationship between information quality and Trust, Satisfaction, Reputation and Goal Congruity a MANCOVA analysis was performed. Box's test of Equality of Covariance Matrices was not significant ($p = .32$), therefore ensuring that the variance-covariance

matrices are the same for both groups. The main effect of information quality was not significant (p = .66) and therefore further analysis was not possible.

5:   Conclusion and discussion

Conclusions

The first question that we aim to answer with our study is: how does the information quality of a business blog affect the buyer-seller relationship quality. We hypothesized a positive relationship between information quality and a buyer's trust in the seller (h1), information quality and a seller's reputation (h2), information quality and the buyer's satisfaction with the seller (h3) and lastly, information quality and the goal congruity between buyer and seller (4). Our results showed strong support for the 4 hypothesis and they were therefore accepted. Our results confirmed findings of previous studies that demonstrated a positive relationship between online information quality and trust, satisfaction, reputation and goal congruity (e.g., Lai, 2006; Bliemel & Hassanein, 2006; Shih, 2004; Chang & Chen, 2008; Beldad, De Jong & Steehouder, 2010). However, most of the previously conducted studies on the relationship between online information quality and trust, satisfaction, reputation and goal congruity took place in a business-to-consumer setting. Our study responds to the call for more research regarding organizational buying behavior as explained by Wiersema (2003). From his study it is clear that more insight into organizational buying behavior is necessary, considering the changed circumstances in marketing due to the rise of the Internet. Wiersema (2003) posed the question how we could increase our knowledge about the factors influencing organizational buyer behavior, and from our study it is clear that online information quality is one of these factors, thus adding to the theory on organizational buying behavior in the Digital Era. The second research question posed in this study is: to what extend does a buyer's risk aversion affect the relationship between online information quality and the quality of the buyer-seller relationship? Our hypothesis was that a buyer's risk aversion would moderate the relationship between online information quality and the determinants of the buyer-seller relationship. We did not find evidence to support this hypothesis, and therefore *h5* was rejected. The third research question posed in this study is: how do the determinants of the buyer-seller relationship quality (trust, reputation, satisfaction and goal congruity) influence the attitude of the buyer

towards the seller's brand? Our hypothesis was that the determinants of the buyer-seller relationship would affect the buyer's attitude towards the selling brand positively. The results showed that the dimension trust indeed influences a buyer's attitude towards a selling brand positively, but the expected relationships between reputation, satisfaction, goal congruity and brand attitude were not confirmed by our results. Instead, our results showed a strong, indirect effect of information quality on brand attitude. This finding is in line with previous studies, indicating a positive relationship between information quality and brand attitude (Hoffman & Novak, 1999; Ghasemaghaei & Hassanein, 2016). We therefore conclude that information quality not only impacts the buyer-seller relationship, but also positively affects a buyer's attitude towards the selling brand. The fourth question that we aim to answer with our research is: how does the buyer's attitude towards the seller's brand impact the buyer's behavioral outcomes? The results show a positive effect of brand attitude on both intention to reuse and intention to recommend. Moreover, information quality also impacts the two behavioral outcomes positively. These findings are in line with previous research in which a positive relationship between online information quality and behavioral intentions was found (Ranganathan & Ganapathy, 2002; Ghasemaghaei & Hassanein, 2016). The variable intention to recommend was not included in our structural model due to results of the factor analysis, and we can therefore not conclude anything pertaining to this variable. The main conclusion deriving from our study is that online information quality has a big impact. It affects the buyer-seller relationship, it affects a buyer's brand-attitude and influences the behavioral intentions of a buyer. Attention should be paid to this variable in theory and practice. It is as Baltes (2015, p.117) states: "with the creation of valuable content you build interest that transforms into lasting relationships".

Managerial implications

The main implication or our study is that attention should be paid to the information quality that firms provide on their blogs and their websites. Our research shows that it pays to develop a business blog of high quality, because it allows firms to build strong relationships with their customers. Not all the content that marketing departments develop and share can be of the same quality, since in most case various people contribute (Lee, Hwang & Lee, 2006; Gudema, 2015). Nevertheless, firms should develop a certain standard that their content needs to uphold. If attention is paid to the

understandability, reliability, scope and usefulness of the information that firms provide, favorable outcomes can be achieved. Furthermore, our study shows that it is important for the marketing department to not solely focus on communicating the hard product and service attributes, such as price and functionality, but also pay attention to intangible aspects like trust and reputation. For instance, if firms would allocate their online marketing efforts at least partially to develop the trust of their customers, the position of their brand in the head of their customers would improve.

Limitations

We should interpret the results of our study with caution due to several inherent limitations. The respondents to our study work in nine different industries, and therefore one could conclude that the results are applicable in various industries and under different circumstances. However, the sample size is relatively small (N = 70) and it is doubtful that 70 respondents from 9 different industries depict a representative picture of all B2B industries. Furthermore, due to the small sample, the statistical power of our analyses is not ideal. The results from the factor analysis, resulting in the removal of the variable 'Intention to recommend' prove this point. If the sample size were bigger, the model would have been more robust. Additionally, our study was designed so that our respondents only had one point of contact with the seller and had to base all their judgements of the seller on this one point of information. As previously discussed, this does not reflect reality, since normally people would use more information to evaluate a seller. Lastly, our study took place in the context of marketing, since the subject of the blog relates to marketing and our respondents were marketers. Therefore, our findings might not hold for other industries.

Further research

Much research could be conducted on the topic of business blogging and the consequences of online marketing efforts. An interesting route of research could be to investigate the other factors that determine online content success. For instance, one could assume that not only the information quality of the provided content is of importance, but also the engagement value of a blog or the valence (i.e., whether a blog is positive or negative). The relative importance of the various factors could be assessed, which would provide marketing professionals with valuable new insight. Also, the effect of online information quality could be tested in a setting in which respondents are

exposed to a certain level of information quality over a prolonged period of time. This would mimic the real world reality and would therefore provide important additional insight. It would be ideal if this setup could include actual behavioral responses instead of solely the intention to perform a certain behavior, thus proving the importance of information quality.

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Appendix A: Pre-test Questionnaire & Results

Scales pre-test

Understandability:
1. Easy to read
2. Easy to understand
3. Clear in meaning
4. Time stamped
5. Continuously updated

Scope:
1. Complete
2. Sufficient
3. Covers a wide range
4. Detailed

Reliability:
1. Current
2. Accurate
3. Credible

Usefulness:
1. Applicable
2. Related
3. Valuable

Results statistical analysis

Table 13. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between low-quality information and high-quality information

	df	F	p
Understandability	1	5.14	.031
Reliability	1	.52	.475
Scope	1	.33	.568
Usefulness	1	.16	.694

$p < .05$

Appendix B: Materials

Description and logo Marketingbureau Impact
- Translated from Dutch – The marketing agency Marketingbureau Impact is a full-service agency. They operate in online marketing as well as offline marketing and they can deliver services varying from (web-)design to branding.

Blog version 1 – high information quality

Wat ik me dan afvraag: degene die de irritante pop-up heeft bedacht, heeft toch zelf ook een telefoon of ander apparaat waar die pop-ups verschijnen? Die moet toch weten hoe irritant het is? Erg vreemd.

Ik noem het marketingschizofrenie: we zijn als commerciële mensen in staat om overdag dingen te maken die we zelf 's avonds haten (of op zijn minst negeren). Advertenties, commercials, cold calls, noem het maar op. En ja ook pop-ups. Lastig te genezen blijkbaar, die schizofrenie. Google heeft besloten zelf maar de politie-agent uit te gaan hangen en sites met pop-ups te straffen.

Als ik met 'digital marketers' hierover discussieer, krijg ik telkens dezelfde reactie: "Het werkt toch, Edwin?" Als ik dan doorvraag, blijkt dat ze het bijvoorbeeld hebben over 'een verdubbeling van het aantal nieuwe abonnees ten opzichte van de situatie zonder pop-up'. Dat zal relatief heel leuk zijn, maar absoluut gezien irriteren ze nog steeds ontzettend veel mensen.

Want al gaat de 'conversie' dan van 0,1 naar 0,2 procent, er is nog steeds 99,8 procent die het niet wilde zien. Ik begrijp die 'het-werkt-toch'-redenering dus totaal niet. En dan is het heel plezierig om een term tegen te komen die je hierin bevestigt. Een term die aangeeft dat deze manier van denken al lang heel fout is: The McNamara Fallacy.

The McNamara Fallacy: een fabriek is geen oorlog

Ted heeft veel geld. Veel geld maakt mensen gelukkig. Ted zegt daarentegen dat hij depressief is. Maar wat hij zegt, is geen bewijs dat hij het ook voelt: depressie is niet te bewijzen. Ted is dus gelukkig.

Bovenstaande is in een notendop uitgelegd wat de 'McNamara' Fallacy is. Je ziet het bij veel marketers (en hun managers) terugkomen in hun wilde focus op KPI's. Zaken die we makkelijk kunnen meten, krijgen alle aandacht. Kwantificeerbaarheid en meetbaarheid zijn kernwoorden. Dat factoren die we niet zo makkelijk kunnen meten ook van groot belang zijn, wordt voor het gemak even genegeerd. Voor we hier verder op ingaan, zal ik uitleggen waar de term McNamara Fallacy vandaan komt.

Een van de redenen dat de Amerikaanse regering niet doorhad dat ze de Vietnamoorlog aan het verliezen waren, is dat ze op papier aan de winnende hand waren. Defensieminister Robert McNamara had ooit bij Ford gewerkt. Daar had hij geleerd het productieproces te volgen met eenvoudig meetbare getallen. Deze manier van denken zette hij door naar zijn werk voor de overheid. Hij definieerde succes in het geval van oorlogen vooral als het aantal doden bij de tegenpartij. Dat in een oorlog veel meer variabelen spelen die moeilijk meetbaar zijn, liet hij even in het midden: 'The McNamara Fallacy' dus.

Volgens psychologieprofessor Daniel Yankelovich gaat het op de volgende manier verkeerd bij kwantitatief ingestelde mensen als McNamara:

The first step is to measure whatever can be easily measured. This is OK as far as it goes.
The second step is to disregard that which can't be easily measured or to give it an arbitrary quantitative value. This is artificial and misleading.
The third step is to presume that what can't be measured easily really isn't important. This is blindness.
The fourth step is to say that what can't be easily measured really doesn't exist. This is suicide.

Herken je dit vanuit je eigen praktijk? Managers die roepen om KPI en ROI, terwijl jij roept over softe termen als imagoschade? Maar omdat jouw softe term moeilijk te meten is, wordt hij als niet relevant terzijde geschoven. De verdubbeling van de clicks is meetbaar, jouw geleuter over imagoschade niet (of moeilijk).

Imagoschade kan echter een groot probleem zijn. Gary Vaynerchuk, een bekende internetpersoonlijkheid en digitale marketer, kan hierover meepraten. In één van zijn conferenties vertelt hij hoe hij alle Samsung apparatuur weert uit zijn huishouden. Hij irriteerde zich dusdanig aan de internetbanners waarmee Samsung adverteerde dat hij het hele merk heeft afgeschreven. Een gevalletje waarin advertenties - die goed lijken te scoren op meetbare zaken als clicks, doorklikratio, enz. - een dusdanig negatief effect hebben op het imago dat het hele merk wordt verbannen!

Ik wil KPI-beluste managers daarom vragen te waken voor de fout die Robert McNamara maakte door onmeetbare variabelen minder waarde te geven dan meetbare, puur om die reden. Einstein (of was het toch William Bruce Cameron?) zei het al ooit: "Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts".

In die zin was de 'val' van McNamara geen nieuwe. Toch wordt hij dagelijks nog vele malen gemaakt. Zonde. Want bij mij is de behoefte om me bij nieuwsbrieven aan te melden inmiddels wel verdwenen.

Blog version 2 - low information quality
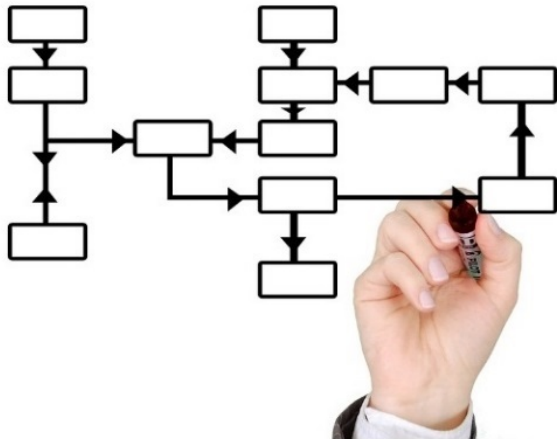
The McNamara Fallacy

Pop-ups die op telefoons verschijnen, worden door veel internetters als aangenaam ervaren. En dan gaat het niet eens over advertenties, maar met name om de nieuwsbrief pop-ups. Bij tijd en wijle verschijnen ze voordat de lezer nog maar één letter van de website gezien heeft. De vraag is: waarom vragen marketers er al zo snel om?

Een goede term waarmee deze ignorantie omschreven kan worden, is marketingschizofrenie. Commerciële mensen zijn in staat om overdag zaken te maken waar ze 's avonds een aversie tegen hebben. Advertenties, commercials, cold-calls, noem het maar op. Het blijkt lastig te zijn een remedie te vinden voor die schizofrenie. Google heeft besloten het recht in eigen hand te nemen en punitieve maatregelen op te leggen aan websites met pop-ups.

De discussie onder marketers levert steeds weer dezelfde respons op: "Het werkt toch?" Men bedoelt hiermee dat een verdubbeling van het aantal nieuwe abonnees is gerealiseerd ten opzichte van de situatie zonder pop-up. Dat zal relatief zeker zijn voordelen hebben, maar absoluut gezien is dit niet zo evident.

Onbegrip is dus inherent aan die 'het-werkt-toch'-redenering. Een term die deze foutieve gedachtengang beschrijft, is de McNamara Fallacy.

Ted heeft veel geld. Veel geld maakt mensen gelukkig. Ted zegt daarentegen dat hij depressief is. Maar wat hij zegt, is een bewijs dat hij het ook voelt: depressie is niet te bewijzen. Ted is dus ongelukkig.

Bovenstaande is in een notendop een verklaring van de 'McNamara' Fallacy. De McNamara Fallacy is afkomstig uit de Vietnamoorlog. Deze vond plaats van 1963 tot 1973 en is ontstaan vanwege Amerikaanse en Franse bemoeienis in Vietnam. Het land was oorspronkelijk een kolonie van Frankrijk, maar het wilde onafhankelijk worden. Amerika zag hierin echter een groot gevaar, vanwege de communistische neigingen die in het land werden vertoond. De Vietcong was de rebellenbeweging in Vietnam die ijverde voor Vietnamese onafhankelijkheid. Zij waren verantwoordelijk voor het aanvallen van een Amerikaanse

torpedobootjager voor de kust van Noord-Vietnam. Dit incident zorgde ervoor dat Amerika besloot to actief militair optreden in Vietnam. Op het hoogtepunt van de oorlog bevonden zich 543.400 Amerikaanse soldaten in Vietnam. Aan Vietnamese zijde vielen veel slachtoffers, onder andere door Amerikaanse inzet van chemische middelen als napalm. Desondanks lukte het de Amerikanen niet om de rebellenbeweging onder controle te krijgen. De regering Nixon (1969-1974) besloot mede onder druk van de publieke opinie tot geleidelijke terugtrekking van de Amerikaanse troepen. De Vietnamoorlog was een oorlog die Amerika verloor en waar niet graag aan wordt teruggedacht. Al met al wordt de oorlog door velen als een mislukking beschouwd.

De Amerikanen berekenden hun voorspoed in de oorlog aan de hand van het aantal doden bij de tegenpartij. Defensieminister Robert McNamara had ooit bij Ford gewerkt en daar had hij geleerd het productieproces te volgen met eenvoudig meetbare getallen. Dat Amerika verloor is dus gedeeltelijk te wijten aan een te positieve wiskundige benadering van oorlog. Kwantitatief ingestelde mensen als McNamara gaan op de volgende abusievelijke manier te werk:

The first step is to measure whatever can be easily measured. This is OK as far as it goes.
The second step is to disregard that which can't be easily measured or to give it an arbitrary quantitative value. This is artificial and misleading.
The third step is to presume that what can't be measured easily really isn't important. This is blindness.
*The fourth step is to say that what can't be easily measured really doesn't exist. This is suicide.*

Ook in de dagelijkse praktijk van veel marketers kan de McNamara Fallacy worden geobserveerd. Managers accentueren KPI's en ROI, terwijl de marketer softe termen als imagoschade onder de aandacht probeert te brengen. De softe term is moeilijk te meten en wordt vanwege dit obstakel vaak als niet-relevant aan de kant geschoven. De verdubbeling van clicks is meetbaar, maar de aandacht voor imagoschade niet (of moeilijk).

Nu is het terugverdienen van grote investeringen vanzelfsprekend van groot belang. In veel gevallen wordt maar een zeer klein deel (meestal 0 procent) van de enorme reclamebudgetten besteed aan het meten van de effectiviteit. Maar dan gaat het om grote bedragen.

In die zin was ook de 'val' van McNamara geen nieuwe. Toch wordt hij nog veel gemaakt. Dit is spijtig.

Delen Tweet 7 Share 0 Google + 0
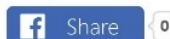
Plaats een Reactie

0 Reacties   Marketingbureau Impact   Inloggen

♡ Aanbevelen   ⤴ Delen   Sorteren op Beste

Start de discussie...

MELD AAN MET   OF REGISTREER JE BIJ DISQUS (?)

Naam

Appendix C: Questionnaire

Text used to introduce questionnaire (translated from Dutch)

Dear Marketer,

First off all, thank you for participating in my research regarding the usage of blogs in B2B marketing. Participation should take about 10 minutes. As a way to thank you for your time, you can take part in a raffle containing a Bol.com gift card worth €25! Leave your e-mail address at the end of the questionnaire to participate.

Because this research is conducted under the responsibility of the Radboud University I can assure you that your anonymity is guaranteed and your personal information will under no circumstance be shared with a third party.

If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire you can reach me at
annieke.hoekman@student.ru.nl

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Click 'next' to start.

p.s. are you a student and did you end up at this questionnaire? Unfortunately you do not (yet) belong to the target group. You can leave the questionnaire by closing this tab. Nevertheless, thank you for your good intentions!

Dear participant,

You will be shown a blog. After having read the blog, you will see a few questions. Before you start reading the blog and start answering the questions, I would like to ask you to keep the following scenario in the back of your head:

The organization that you work for is looking for a marketing agency to support your organization in its marketing activities. You are therefore compiling a list of suitable marketing agencies to show your colleagues. During your online search for suitable agencies you read various websites, blogs, and other forms of content. One of the blogs you come across is written by the marketing agency Marketingbureau Impact.

Scales and items

Information Quality
The information in this blog is:
1. Easy to read
2. Accurate
3. Complete
4. Useful

Satisfaction
Describe your feelings towards Marketingbureau Impact after reading the blog
1. Pleased – Displeased (R)
2. Sad – Happy
3. Contented – Disgusted (R)
4. Satisfied – Dissatisfied (R)

Reputation
1. Marketingbureau Impact has a reputation for being honest
2. Marketingbureau Impact has a reputation for being concerned about their suppliers
3. Marketingbureau Impact has a bad reputation (R)
4. Most firms would like to deal with Marketingbureau Impact

Trust
Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements
Marketingbureau Impact:
1. Keeps promises it makes to our firm
2. Is not always honest with us (R)
3. Is genuinely concerned that our business succeeds
4. Is trustworthy

5. I believe the information that Marketingbureau Impact provides us
6. When making important decisions, Marketingbureau Impact considers our welfare as well as its own
7. I trust Marketingbureau Impact to keep my best interests in mind
8. I find it necessary to be cautious with Marketingbureau Impact

Goal Congruity
1. Marketing solutions proposed by Marketingbureau Impact are compatible with the mission of our organization
2. Our relationship with Marketingbureau Impact is of value to both parties: it's a win/win partnership

3. Marketingbureau Impacts capabilities are closely aligned with our marketing needs
4. When it comes to proposing marketing solutions, the goals of our organizations are consistent and compatible

Brand attitude

The brand Marketingbureau Impact is:
1. Good-bad (R)
2. Poor quality – high quality
3. Pleasant – unpleasant (R)

When it comes to the brand Marketingbureau Impact, I:
4. Dislike very much – like very much

Intention to reuse
1. I intent to use this blog again
2. I would be willing to visit this blog again
3. I feel this blog reflects most current trend(s)
4. I will reuse this blog again

Intention to recommend
1. I would recommend the Marketingbureau Impact's products to colleagues in other organizations
2. I would recommend the Marketingbureau Impact's services to colleagues in other organizations

Purchase intention

I would buy the products and/or services from Marketingbureau Impact:
1. Unlikely – likely
2. Improbable – probable
3. Uncertain – certain
4. Definitely not – definitely

Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. Please, don't think too long about your answer, your first idea is usually the best.
1. Safety first (R)
2. I do not take risks with my health (R)
3. I prefer to avoid risks (R)
4. I take risks regularly
5. I really dislike not knowing what is going to happen (R)
6. I usually view risks as a challenge
7. I view myself as a … Risk avoider – risk seeker

Results from factor analysis

Table 14.   Phase 1 Initial Eigenvalues, Percentage of Variance Explained, and
Cumulative percentage of Variance Explained using Principal Axis
Factoring

Factor	Initial Eigenvalue	% of Variance Explained	Cumulative % of Variance Explained
1	3.48	31.63	31.63
2	2.36	21.49	53.12
3	.95	8.64	61.76
4	.89	8.10	69.86
5	.80	7.27	77.14
6	.71	6.46	83.59
7	.63	5.71	89.30
8	.44	4.00	93.30
9	.33	3.01	96.31
10	.24	2.15	98.45
11	.17	1.55	100.00

Table 15.   Phase 1 Initial Factor Matrix resulting from Principal Axis Factoring with
Varimax rotation

Scale items	Factors	
	1	2
Information Quality 1	-.03	.51
Information Quality 2	-.09	.75
Information Quality 3	.01	.65
Information Quality 4	.00	.62
Risk aversion 1	.34	-.04
Risk aversion 2	.30	.36
Risk aversion 3	.92	.11
Risk aversion 4	.61	-.02
Risk aversion 5	.64	.01
Risk aversion 6	.73	-.06
Risk aversion 7	.80	.04
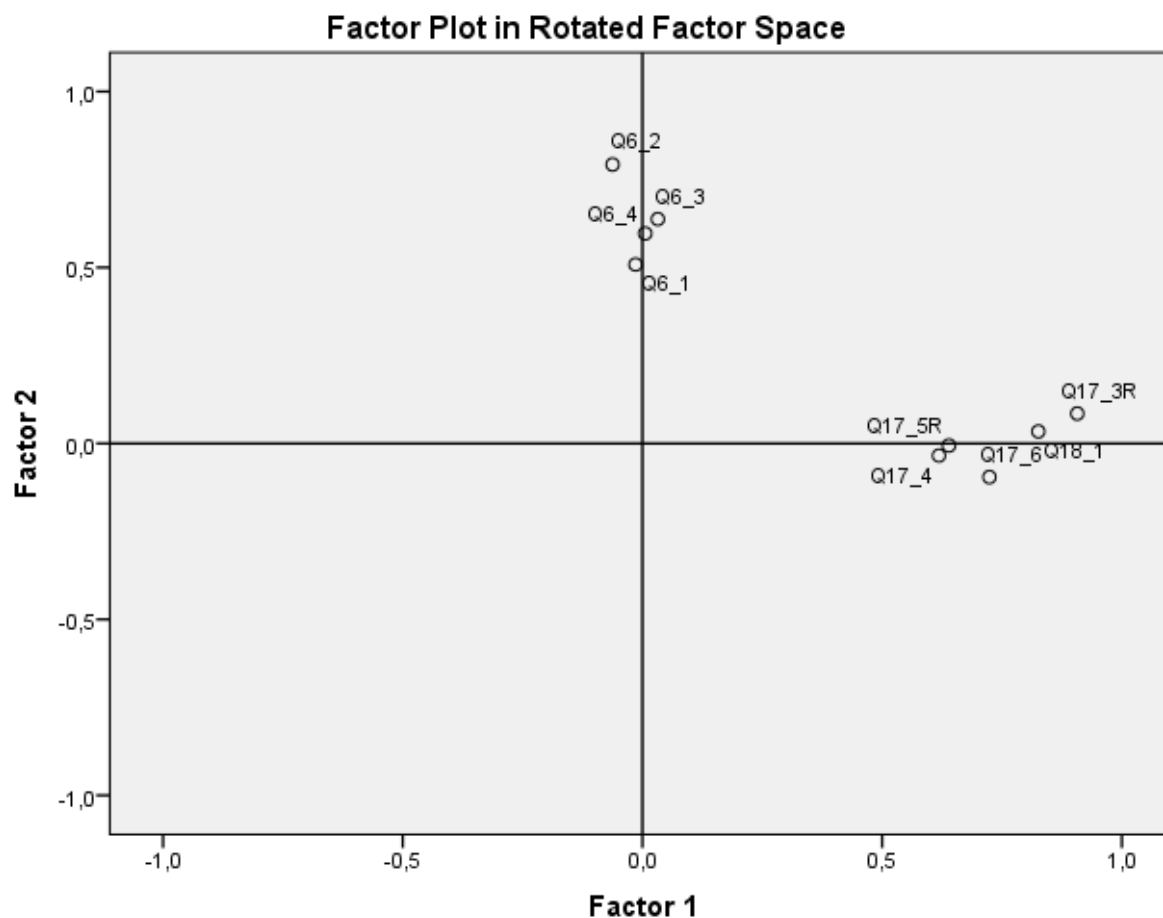
Fig. 3 Phase 1 rotated factor plot

Table 16.   Phase 2 Initial Eigenvalues, Percentage of Variance Explained, and
Cumulative percentage of Variance Explained using Principal Axis
Factoring

Factor	Initial Eigenvalue	% of Variance Explained	Cumulative % of Variance Explained
1	8.65	45.53	45.53
2	1.75	9.18	54.72
3	1.50	7.88	62.59
4	1.13	5.96	68.56
5	1.05	5.51	74.07
6	.71	3.75	77.82
7	.64	3.38	81.19
8	.57	2.98	84.17
9	.50	2.65	86.83
10	.45	2.39	89.21
11	.44	2.3	91.51
12	.33	1.74	93.26
13	.33	1.74	94.97

14	.23	1.23	96.20
15	.22	1.14	97.34
16	.20	1.06	98.40
17	.14	.71	99.11
18	.10	.53	99.64
19	.07	.37	100.00

Table 17.   Phase 1 Initial Factor Matrix resulting from Principal Axis Factoring with Varimax rotation

| Scale items	Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
Satisfaction 1	.75	-.38	.08	.07	-.10
Satisfaction 2	.51	-.31	.32	.24	-.16
Satisfaction 3	.78	-.24	-.01	.39	.02
Satisfaction 4	.74	-.42	-.09	.35	-.04
Reputation 1	.54	.13	-.41	.05	.28
Reputation 2	.56	.07	-.42	.11	.09
Reputation 4	.64	-.17	.10	-.09	.02
Trust 1	.58	.46	.10	.11	-.12
Trust 2	.25	.18	-.02	.05	.37
Trust 3	.70	.24	-.12	.09	-.06
Trust 4	.68	.25	-.11	.15	.05
Trust 5	.81	.26	.16	-.09	-.14
Trust 6	.74	.44	.14	.02	-.07
Trust 7	.77	.36	.17	-.04	-.15
Trust 8	.41	-.06	.66	.00	.47
Goal Congruity 1	.70	-.24	.07	-.42	-.05
Goal Congruity 2	.66	-.18	-.36	-.22	.05
Goal Congruity 3	.75	-.13	-.01	-.33	.03
Goal Congruity 4	.74	-.15	.04	-.32	.00

Table 18.   Phase 3 Initial Eigenvalues, Percentage of Variance Explained, and Cumulative percentage of Variance Explained using Principal Axis Factoring

Factor	Initial Eigenvalue	% of Variance Explained	Cumulative % of Variance Explained
1	8.85	63.19	63.19
2	1.34	9.59	72.78
3	1.07	7.67	80.45
4	.61	4.36	84.81
5	.49	3.48	88.29

6	.40	2.89	91.18
7	.35	2.48	93.66
8	.27	1.96	95.62
9	.20	1.42	97.04
10	.14	1.00	98.00
11	.13	.91	98.94
12	.07	.48	99.41
13	.05	.38	99.80
14	.03	.20	100.00

Table 19.   Phase 1 Initial Factor Matrix resulting from Principal Axis Factoring with Varimax rotation

Scale items	Factors		
	1	2	3
Brand attitude 1	.34	.20	.72
Brand attitude 2	.25	.17	.61
Brand attitude 3	.21	.31	.70
Brand attitude 4	.40	.35	.64
Intention to reuse 1	.24	.81	.29
Intention to reuse 2	.49	.70	.22
Intention to reuse 3	.14	.56	.52
Intention to reuse 4	.26	.87	.28
Purchase intention 1	.84	.32	.31
Purchase intention 2	.87	.25	.30
Purchase intention 3	.76	.20	.34
Purchase intention 4	.85	.27	.26
Willingness to recommend 1	.48	.50	.55
Willingness to recommend 2	.52	.52	.51