

Startups: Building a Brand through Content Marketing Strategies

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About the Author

Zhanna Petersen has 10 years of experience in journalism and communications in Russia. After graduating from the Altai State University, she stayed in her native city in Siberia, Barnaul, and worked first as a correspondent in local media and then as a communications professional at the Altai governor's communications department. Then the author moved to Moscow to challenge her career in news reporting in the leading Russian news agency, RIA Novosti, where she worked as a correspondent and later as a chief of the regional correspondent network. After moving to the USA for family reasons, Zhanna decided to expand her knowledge in the communications field beyond one country and culture. That prompted her to begin the Strategic Communication program at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota in 2015 to earn a Master of Arts degree. Her goal is now to continue her professional career in communications in the United States.

Executive Summary

This paper investigates what digital brand content consumers found most appealing and engaging with a brand and prompts them to get more connected with this brand and its products. It focuses on recommendations for new businesses on how they can articulate about themselves through the digital content without having to buy third party advertising. In an attempt to discover content marketing strategies that receive most favorable attitudes among consumers, a literature review and primary research were conducted.

Based on the **review** of academic and applied literature, three hypotheses were developed. These hypotheses were built employing the concepts from the persuasive communication theory, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, as well as key factors of engaging brand content described by content marketers.

Our **primary research**, qualitative in-depth interviews with 20 consumers, intended to test our two hypotheses regarding people's attitudes toward product promotion through content marketing as well as investigate people's expectations from the brand content and online product search behaviors. Our third hypothesis focused on people's attitudes toward the brand content based on its format was suggested for future research.

Findings indicated that people's attitudes to the brand content depend on how information is presented. Consumers highly involved in the product look for referral to specific products on the brand website or blog while consumers with low interest might be more skeptical about the product promotion in the brand content and accept it if it appears as a recommendation, not as an attempt to sell a product. Also, while learning

about products online, people value conciseness, simplicity, novelty, expertise and genuineness in the brand content. Additionally, while consumers prefer trusted retail websites to learn about products (including reading customers' reviews), they undermine the usefulness of e-newsletters.

The key **recommendations** to new businesses which attempt to build their audience through digital content strategies include: 1) the brand-building platform should have a "voice" to be more trusted and personalized; 2) the new business should know its audience: people follow or subscribe to the brand's platform when it has a subject-matter that means something to them and when they can benefit from it; and 3) reference to the specific products may attract customers highly involved if it sounds as a recommendation or an option that works for audience's needs, not as an attempt to push a product.

Limitations of this research do exist since it uses a qualitative research method and a small sample size. However, the current findings can be used to design quantitative research with results that may yield external validity since they can be generalized to broader populations.

Introduction

The number of new businesses in the U.S. continues to grow since it's low point in 2010 largely due to the recession. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, in 2015 there were over 680,000 new business establishments compared to 560,000 in 2010 and 720,000 in 2006 - before the U.S. economy was hit by a recession. At the same time, more than half of startups failed in the first four years, mostly because of incompetence and lack of managerial experience (Small Business Trends, 2016). Mostly relying on personal savings for initial funds, startups need to seek new ways to promote their brands on a budget. According to Forbes (2013), the term "startup" is described slightly different. Some experts think that to be a startup, it should be a recently established business and be within certain revenue, profit and employment numbers; while others see key attributes of a startup in being recently established (up to ten years) with fund raising for continued growth (Startup Explore, 2014).

Pulizzi (2016), the founder of the Content Marketing Institute, suggests that new businesses can succeed by marketing online ultimately becoming the expert resource that attracts the right audience without having to buy advertising on someone's platform. The ability of small businesses to become powerful in attracting massive audience is supported by Gallup's survey (2016) that showed that 68 percent of Americans in 2016 have "greatly" and "quite a lot" of confidence in small businesses. It's second among 15 institutions included in the ranking - behind military but before police, church, medical system, etc. Whereas, only 18 percent of Americans have strong confidence in big businesses being second-to-last in the ranking and outpacing only Congress. Interestingly, the number of people who are confident in small businesses increases

every year (compare to 63 percent in 2012) while less people are getting confident in big businesses (from 21 percent in 2012).

Scholars and content marketers who study brand building in the digital age point out that more and more large and small businesses are engaging in content marketing although they are still struggling with choosing the right digital platform and creating content that truly engages their customers and delivers good results for the company (Pulizzi, 2012; Tiago & Verissimo, 2015; Aaker, 2015; Bresciani & Ewing, 2014; etc.). While case studies in literature point to factors that content marketing is getting popular because of its accessibility, low costs (compared with traditional advertising) and high potential to build a loyal audience directly (Pulizzi, 2012; Bresciani & Ewing, 2014; etc.), only few authors have empirically examined what content marketing strategies are most effective. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to employ concepts from the persuasive communication theory, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, to explore what kind of brand content can engage customers and form their favorable attitudes toward this content and, subsequently, toward a brand generated this message.

Thus, the research question of this study is to examine **the relationship between what content marketing strategies a startup uses online to build its brand and consumers' attitudes toward this brand.**

The **larger purpose** of this paper is to explore what types of brand content may prompt consumers to come back to a brand-building platform or subscribe to it via email as well as to buy a product from this brand. In other words, this study aims to expand our understanding of the concept of effective content marketing strategies that can help

create a successful brand by forging relationships directly with customers and, thus, building a massive audience that trusts its messaging and, thus, its products.

Literature Review

Content Marketing Strategies

A content marketing strategy is defined as “creating and distributing relevant and valuable content in order to attract, acquire and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience - with the objective of driving profitable customer action” (Pulizzi, 2013a). The key concepts of content marketing are subscription, which means focusing on retaining targeted customers; developing compelling and useful content; and consistently delivering the content (Pulizzi, 2013b). Although 90 percent of all companies employ some form of content marketing, many of these companies aren’t really doing content marketing because they think of content as “a one-time campaign” or “a product pitch” (Pulizzi, 2012). At the same time, content marketing is “a long-term game” to build trust with an audience by creating content that drives action such as an email subscription, a social share or a return visit (Weisz, 2016). Content marketing in addition increases brand awareness and drives conversations (Morrison, 2016).

Pulizzi (2016, p. 87) has determined the most popular content types: articles or blog posts (or content-based websites); textual stories in e-newsletters; videos; reports or white papers; webinars/webcasts; and podcasts. Harries (2017) describing “the top winning content marketing tactics” has extended this list to social media content; illustration/photos; infographics; online presentations; content hubs; digital magazines; mobile apps and virtual conferences.

Authors agree that the choice of the platform that has the strongest potential for a brand, both large and small, depends on its business goals. Moreover, digital content should be embedded in business and marketing units (Harris, 2007; Aaker, 2015; Pulizzi, 2016, p. 85). However, based on a survey of 170 marketing managers, Tiago & Verissimo (2014) have found that brands plan to invest mostly in social networking sites (81 percent) and e-mail marketing (65 percent). Half of respondents (50 percent) claimed that digital advertising is a priority area for investment. At the same time, only 18 percent of managers planned to invest in blogs. In their opinion, this is one of the least important areas of planned investment regarding digital marketing.

While content marketers and scholars agree that creating content, which actually engages customers and prospects, is the number one hurdle, there are few empirical studies that have examined relationships between brand content and customers' engagement and attitudes. However, numerous theorists and practitioners support the claim that digital content marketing can be influential (Pulizzi, 2012; Chang, Yu, & Lu, 2015; Ahmad, Musa, & Harun, 2016; Aaker, 2015). Consumers are engaging in twice the amount of content online year-over-year leading up to a buying decision (Pulizzi, 2012). People are suspicious of traditional advertising and prefer trustworthy friends, or even information coming from strangers online (Chang et al., 2015). Digital platforms allow the new phenomenon in business strategies as two-way communications between companies and their consumers (Ahmad et al., 2016). Digital platform is a powerful device for building brands and strengthening relationships because it can engage both people and community. Digital platforms allow content to be rich and deep and can target an audience often down to the level of an individual (Aaker, 2015).

To explain why, as mentioned earlier, creating engaging content is the major hurdle, scholars have pointed out that in the new media landscape - crowded and fragmented - people consume multiple media simultaneously and dilute their attention (Figure 1; Bresciani & Ewing, 2014).

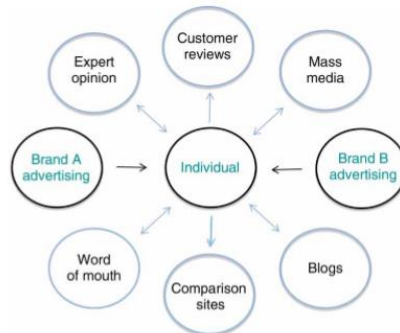


Figure 1.

On the other hand, companies often fixate on “digital” as a single entity, when actually there are many dozens of forms that digital can take (Aaker, 2015). Or they jump blindly into social media and chase “likes” on Facebook (Bresciani & Ewing, 2014).

As mentioned previously, there are few empirical studies that have examined relationships between brand content and customers’ engagement/attitudes. Moreover, these studies have focused mostly on social media marketing *without* examining other digital content platforms. Based on this research and several practice papers, this study indicates a few key factors of engaging brand content.

It finds a “sweet spot.” Pulizzi (2012) has found out that most average content marketers fail by going too broad with their content focus; a key would be to target a super niche category. The brand-building platform, for example, a website or blog, should be centered on a customer’s “sweet spot,” interests and activities about which customers are intensely involved (Aakar, 2015). For example, the “sweet spot” could

involve car racing, a craft, traveling, healthy living, etc. The brand should have an active role as a shared-interest partner, mentor, colleague or friend. Pulizzi (2013b) has suggested that content should focus on information that addresses the pain points of buyers; it helps customers or prospects accomplish a desired task. Along with that, consistency in identity as well as originality and novelty in communication are essential for content strategists to build trust with customers. A company should be easily recognized and should not be mistaken for anyone else's (Eggleston & Lellis, 2017). Holt (2016) stated that to stand out on social media companies should create content that is relevant to novel ideologies flowing out of cultures set by social media users - as "digital crowds now serve as very effective and prolific innovators of culture." Tafesse's study (2014) has proved that brand generated content on social media with a high level of consistency (in tone and look) and novelty (newness or uniqueness of information) resulted in a higher audience response. Facebook posts that had these characteristics garnered a higher number of "likes" and "shares."

It cannot sell. The content should be far removed from the brand's offering, and there shouldn't be any hint of "selling" (Aakar, 2015; Weisz, 2016). Moreover, when the brand is completely removed from the story, stories are shared at a significantly higher rate (Pulizzi, 2012). Along with that, content marketers see native advertising, or sponsored content (the paid placements), as an opportunity for entrepreneurs to monetize their content by posting content about their sponsor's products and services. Pulizzi (2016, p. 255) sees native advertising as "educational, informative, helpful, or interesting" content that doesn't sell but works for audience's needs - what is attributed to content marketing as well. Thus, characteristics of content marketing and native

advertising overlap (Figure 2), and their impact on consumers as well as understanding, which one is more effective, need to be further investigated (Weisz, 2016). At the same time, Morrison (2016) shows results of the research, which indicates that content marketing has a better overall return on investment than native advertisement. One of the reasons is that native ads must be “branded”, which can be a real turn-off, for example, for social media audiences.



Figure 2.

Visual presence. Using involving visuals and animation can add energy to the content (Aakar, 2015). An online content employing only text is less vivid than an online content employing a combination of text and images. At the same time, text mixed with images is less vivid than a combination of text and videos (Tafesse, 2014). However, his hypothesis that brand post vividness will result in a higher audience response was only partially supported during testing, discovering that brand posts featuring videos possess greater electronic word-of-mouth or share more often than posts with text and images or only text, while not affecting the number of “likes.”

It should be entertaining. The brand content type (style) can be a potent driver of consumer engagement and attitudes (Tafesse, 2015; SanJose-Cabezudo, Guitierrez-Arranz, & Guittierrez-Cillan, 2009; etc.). Tafesse (2015) summarizing studies based on

the uses and gratification theory, has defined three major types of content: *entertaining* content, which offer the audience an enjoyable pastime; *informational* content, which informs the audience about product attributes; and *transactional* content such as price promotions, loyalty programs and distribution points, which in turn reward the audience with economic value. His study has shown that entertaining brand posts are slightly more likely to be “liked” on Facebook than the more serious content involving product and price information. Pulizzi (2013b) and Aakar (2015) have suggested that when possible, brand content should be entertaining. At the same time, if a fun idea isn’t in line with how the traditional company operates, the idea may confuse customers and fall flat (Eggleston & Lellis, 2017).

In short, most content marketers and scholars believe that digital tools and platforms are worthless without content marketing strategies that include creating consistent storytelling content, if possible entertaining, that resonates with an audience’s interest area. Simultaneously, there is a lack of academic literature to empirically investigate how brand content information is processed and what attitudes are thereby formed.

On the other hand, there are multiple theorists including recent scholars who use the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion to account for how advertising information is processed and how attitudes are formed towards these messages (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann 1983; SanJose-Cabezudo et al., 2009; Fortunato, 2015; Chang et al., 2015, etc.). Moreover, the ELM model is one of the most used psychological theories in academic literature implied for advertising messages (SanJose-Cabezudo et al., 2009). On the contrary, there were no empirical studies found that would investigate

how *this* theory can be applied for content marketing strategies, probably because of the novelty of the topic.

Processing Persuasive Communications and Forming Attitudes

Next, this study considers how concepts from the ELM model such as the central and peripheral routes of persuasion, high and low involvement, and attitudes may be applied for content marketing strategies. Also, we overview recent research papers that have attempted to go beyond the basic postulates of the ELM model to understand which advertising messages are most effective.

Petty et al. (1983), who have formulated the ELM model and implied it for advertising messages, have proposed that the central route to persuasion works more effectively when an individual's involvement in the communication situation, or the elaboration likelihood, is high. Thus, a customer who is considering purchasing a product (high involvement) will scrutinize the product-relevant information in an advertisement and is most likely to develop a favorable attitude if its issue-relevant arguments are perceived to be cogent and persuasive. Conversely, the peripheral route should work better when an individual is less motivated to perceive messages, or when the elaboration likelihood is low. In this case, a person is not interested in purchasing (low involvement); therefore, he examines a message quickly and instead focuses on simple cues such as the expertise or attractiveness of a brand endorser, speaking or writing style, images, or music in the background, etc. Thus, attitudes, which are defined as "learned global evaluations of an object that influences thought and action" (Perloff, 2014, p. 71), can be formed accordingly - through the central or peripheral processing routes (Petty et al., 1983; SanJose-Cabezudo et al., 2009; etc.). Moreover, attitudes

formed through central processing are more likely to persist over time and tend to be more resistant to change than those formed through peripheral cues (Petty, Haugtvedt, & Smith, 1995).

Literature shows that the ELM research model can be applied for different online platforms and marketing strategies. In an experimental study, Lin, Lee, & Horng (2011) have found that shoppers with a high need for cognition (high involvement) were more influenced by review quality coupled with an understandable, fact-supported argument (the central route in formatting attitude). Shoppers with a low need for cognition (low involvement) were more influenced by the specific number of online reviews (the peripheral route).

Based on the ELM model postulates and content marketing literature, we proposed the following hypotheses:

H1: *Brand content with issue-relevant arguments achieves favorable attitudes among consumers under high involvement but less favorable attitudes among consumers under low involvement when this message is heavily focused on the brand's core product.*

H2: *Brand content with issue-relevant arguments achieves favorable attitudes among both consumers under high and low involvement if the core product is removed from the message.*

In other words, under high involvement, “*what is said*” is more important; under low involvement, “*who said it*” would be the key. (Perloff, p.196) Applying to the brand content, we propose that when the brand content pushes a company's offering, even if content is informative, functional or interesting, the brand content is perceived as

coming from an “advertiser”; but if the product is removed from the story, the content might be perceived as being issued from an “expert or mentor” and consequently, receive favorable attitudes from a larger number of people.

Extending the ELM model. Petty & Cacioppo back in the 1980s tried to go beyond the basic principles of the ELM model. For example, in their research (1983), they have shown that a presence of celebrity endorsers in advertising (peripheral cues) can impact the attitudes of customers, whether highly involved with a product or not. Slater & Rounder (2002) have stated that “a clean distinction between central and peripheral processes is no longer discernable.” More recent researchers, who have attempted to feature the most efficient advertising in the rapidly changing world of digital technologies and social media, have pointed out that relying only on a logic-based argument (central cues) or only on an emotional attribute appeal (peripheral cues) might result in a missed opportunity to engage consumers (SanJose-Cabezudo et al., 2009; Fortunato, 2015; Chang et al., 2015, etc.).

Particularly, SanJose-Cabezudo et al. (2009) have proposed that even though the ELM model indicates that highly involved consumers focus on central arguments - information about the advertised product, their attitudes may be impacted by peripheral cues, more specifically, in what manner, whether serious or amusing, the content is presented. Fortunato (2015) has proposed that high-involvement product category consumers could find a brand association (a peripheral cue) both meaningful and persuasive. If a consumer views the arguments of a competitive brand similarly, an appeal based on a brand association could be an extra factor in the consumer’s final decision about which brand to purchase. Linking social media marketing with the ELM

model, Chang et al. (2015) have found that post popularity can persuade social media users - highly involved or not - as it works through *both* central and peripheral routes. Also, the aforementioned study has shown that such message characteristics like: post popularity, argument quality and post attractiveness all reinforce the usefulness of social media posts, which, ultimately, become more favored among social media users.

Based on recent studies extending the ELM model and content marketers' suggestions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: *Entertaining brand content achieves favorable attitudes among both high and low involvement consumers.*

To optimize our research, we will focus on testing the hypotheses #1 and #2 and suggest the hypothesis #3 for future research.

To summarize, while there are many theoretical studies using the ELM model to analyze advertising messages, there are no studies found that would apply this theory to content marketing. In short, determining whether our hypotheses are supported should provide an empirically-based understanding as to why some content marketing strategies are effective or not. To test our hypotheses #1 and #2, we will compare attitudes of both consumers under high and low involvement toward brand generated content, and then link these findings to academic literature and content marketing publications. Additionally, to understand what types of brand content generate consumer interest online, we will gather some information from consumers about their online search behaviors and, thus, their preferences and expectations regarding brand content.

Method

To gather data for this study, one-on-one intensive interviews were conducted with 20 people in June 2017. The intensive, or in-depth interview, a qualitative technique is used to elaborate data concerning respondents' attitudes, opinions, feelings and experiences (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013, p.142) that may otherwise be difficult to uncover (Keller, 2013, p. 310). During interviews, we asked participants about their online search habits as well as showed them two samples of 200-500-word brand generated content to discover their attitudes towards this content. Moreover, the in-depth interview method extended our ability to measure people's attitudes not only by using a five-point Likert response scale but also asking follow-up questions based on each respondent's answers.

To ensure that the results were not product specific but rather reflected people's attitudes toward content marketing strategies more generally (Sela, Wheeler & Sarial-Abi, 2012), we decided to collect data related to two product categories. Out of 20 participants, 10 people were interviewed about their online search habits for beauty and personal care products, which include cosmetics, haircare, skincare and other segments. Then these 10 respondents were provided with two samples of brand content relevant to this product category. The other 10 people were asked about vitamins, minerals and supplements and, consequently, shown two samples of the corresponding brand content.

These specific product categories were chosen because both markets, beauty and personal care as well as vitamins and supplements, continue to experience steady

growth as adult consumers year after year allocate more spend to these categories (Intel, 2016 & 2017). Thus, we suggested that people would be willing to talk about the products that they actively buy.

Description of Sample

Interviews were secured from 10 beauty and personal care product consumers (females) at the age of 20 to 43 years with a high school diploma (a college student) to a master's degree attained. The other 10 respondents (3 males and 7 females), who were asked about their online search habits for vitamins minerals and supplements, were between 23 to 45 years with an undergraduate school degree (associate or bachelor's) to a graduate school degree (master's or doctoral) attained.

To test our hypotheses, we wanted to make sure that we interviewed both customers under high and low involvement.

According to Intel (2014), usage of most anti-aging products largely peaks among women aged 25-44, suggesting that younger women aged 25-34 are taking a more proactive approach while older shoppers (35-44) are more likely to be engaged in the category as regular users. Thus, for interviews about beauty and personal care products, we selected two samples with brand content regarding anti-aging skin care and showed these samples to 5 females up to age 25 (low involvement) and 5 females aged 36 to 43 (high involvement).

While interviewing about vitamins, minerals and supplements, we showed two samples of brand content about children's vitamins to 5 people with little kids (high involvement) and to 5 people with no kids (low involvement).

Respondents were recruited by using the researcher's network (residents of Minnesota, New Jersey and Kansas) as well as asking people randomly on the University of Minnesota campus in Saint Paul, MN, and in Starbucks in Edina, MN. Most interviews were done in person; three interviews were conducted online using a conferencing application. Participants were asked to self-report if they shop for products in the aforementioned categories. The average time for each interview was 12 minutes. Participation was voluntary, and there was no reward for participating in the study.

While attitudes and opinions expressed by small and nonrandom samples may not be regarded as established and generalized to broader populations (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013), however, the results secured identified the range of possible attitudes towards brand content as well as the pattern of possible online search behaviors.

Measures

To understand what content marketing strategies can be more successful based on people's preferences regarding brand generated content, the interview started with a broad question about interviewees' online search behaviors: "Where do you search for information about beauty and personal care products/vitamins, minerals and supplements?" To demonstrate brand recall, consumers are asked to retrieve the actual brand element from memory without given any related cue (unaided awareness) (Keller, 2013, p.312). Traditional models of advertising rely on ad awareness and recall in order to demonstrate that advertising has been effective in communicating its message (Heath, 2000). Based on that, the following questions were asked: "What specific brand websites/blogs do you use to search for information about beauty and personal care products/vitamins, minerals and supplements?"; "What brands/bloggers related to

beauty and personal care products/vitamins, minerals, and supplements do you read or follow on social media?"; "What e-newsletters related to beauty and personal care products/vitamins, minerals and supplements do you receive?" and "What platforms do you use to read online reviews about beauty and personal care products/vitamins, mineral and supplements?" Each of these four questions was followed by a question: "What elements do you pay attention to when you read....?"

Consumers' attitudes toward brand content. To test our hypotheses #1 and #2 and measure people's attitudes toward brand generated content, participants were shown two samples one after another. A sample of brand content without mentioning an actual product was shown first; then the content heavily focused on a brand product was presented. Actual articles and blog posts from content-based websites generated by startups were presented as these following content types have been considered as most popular in order of usage (Pulizzi, 2016, p. 88). Anti-aging articles were found on the websites of two successful beauty startups founded in 2013 - Stella & Dot's (its skincare brand Ever, <https://www.everskin.com/>) and Beautycounter (<http://www.beautycounter.com/>). Both were named as "upstarts to watch in 2017" for "democratizing beauty and catering to consumers who wish to customize" (Mohan, 2017, Fast Company). Figure 3.

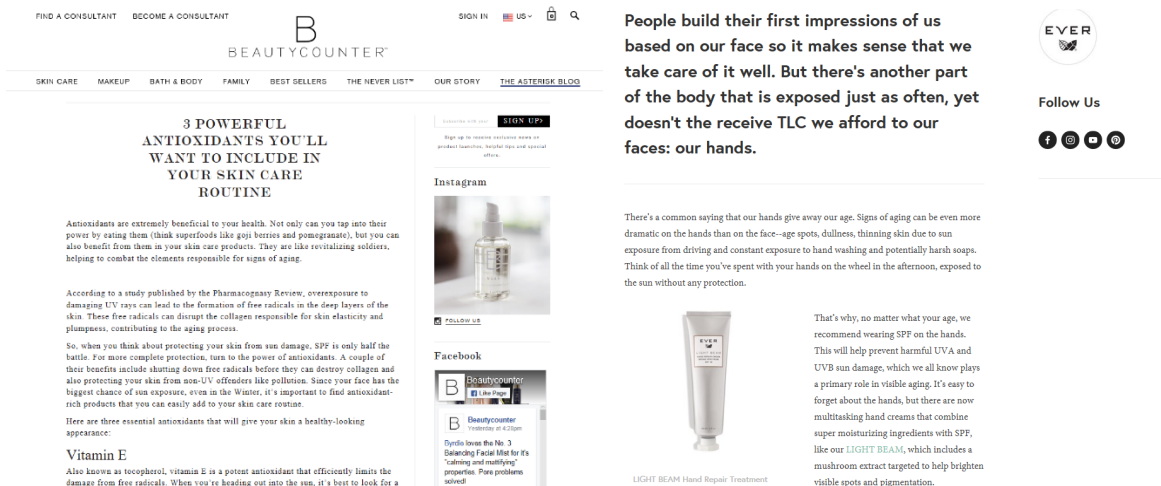


Figure 3. Samples (beauty and personal care). See Appendix.

The content about kids' vitamins was found on the website of SmartyPants Vitamins (<https://smarpantstvamins.com/>), a 7-year-old Californian startup with only 30 people employed that was estimated to generate \$16.7 million in sales in 2016 (Hoover's, 2017). Heavily focused on community and content marketing, SmartyPants Vitamins was named among the best entrepreneurial stories in 2015 (Scott, 2016, Inc. Magazine). Figure 4.

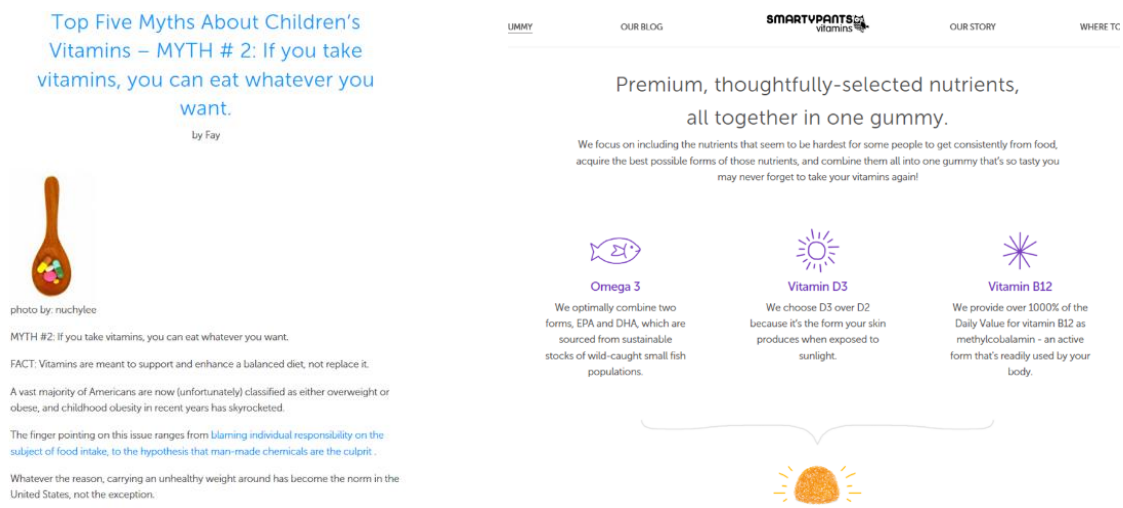


Figure 4. Samples (vitamins, minerals and supplements). See Appendix.

Four questions measuring interviewees' attitudes toward brand generated content were designed based on a literature review regarding consumers' attitudes toward advertising (Sela, Wheeler & Sarial-Abi, 2012; Eren, 2013; Feng, Fu & Qin, 2016). The question: "Was it easy to understand what this article was about?" measured the cognitive aspect, or the level of understanding of the brand content (knowledge). The question: "Do you like this article?" measured the liking aspect of the content. Finally, two questions: "Do you feel that you intend to read this website again?" and "Do you feel that you intend to buy a product on this website?" measured the impact of a brand content and consumers' intentions (expectation of behavior: reading intention and buying intention). Respondents assessed all items on five-point Likert-type scales ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) and then explained their choices.

Results

All key findings, which can be used to understand most effective content marketing strategies that may form people's positive attitudes toward a brand as well as increase their purchasing intentions, were coalesced into two categories: 1) what main digital assets people use to look for information about products; and 2) what elements people pay attention to while reading content about products delivered by a brand, social media or reviews. Additionally, analysis of participants' responses regarding two brand content samples was conducted to test our hypotheses.

People do online research to learn more about products. All participants except for one do online research to learn more about benefits and disadvantages of beauty products or vitamins before buying them. However, while looking for vitamins

and supplements, half of the respondents in the vitamin group (5 people) also go for information to experts they know in-person and trust, - their physicians, pediatricians, pharmacists or holistic doctors (homeopaths and naturopaths). A participant explained, "My doctors are in favor of nutritional supplements, and I like to talk about the science behind it." The other source of information mentioned by 7 people from both groups is family and social circle of friends and acquaintances. A participant said, "I prefer learning about beauty products online, but consider the experiences and recommendations of my family and friends more credible and convincing." Also 3 people said that they subscribe to print magazines that help them look for ideas what beauty products or vitamins they should try. Only 1 person admitted that sometimes she gets a beauty product from a TV commercial.

People use Google search to find products and Amazon to read reviews.

The study showed that the mostly frequently way to source information about beauty products and vitamins is using a Google search engine (12 respondents). People search for new products or what others are saying about products. A participant explained, "I do it all online, just google it and go over to the first website that popped up." It supports the statistics showing that Google consistently receives over 85 percent of all search engine traffic in North America (Gynn, 2017). Amazon as a search "engine" to shop for products is used by 7 people from both groups, - mostly to look for a specific product at a lower price.

Less than a half, 8 participants, from both groups go directly to brand or retailer websites to read a product description and check a price; 5 of them said that they also read product reviews on these websites (ulta.com, gnc.com, costco.com, sephora.com

and target.com). A participant said, “I often use Sephora’s website because it’s user-friendly and provides thorough information on all products. Contrary, the other respondent had an opposite view, “I know sometimes specific websites can be pushing; so, I try to avoid using them.”

In terms of getting information about efficacy of beauty products or vitamins, almost all participants (15 people) prefer other platforms rather than brand owned media. Particularly, 4 respondents from the vitamin group read some independent studies and industry expert recommendations (Pubmed (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/); the Environmental Working Group (ewg.org); WebMD (webmd.com), and the American Diabetes Association (diabetes.org).

Amazon is most frequently used as a platform to check out what other people think about beauty products and vitamins (15 respondents often or sometimes read Amazon’s reviews). Only 2 respondents said that they don’t read any reviews: one said that she is generally skeptical and doesn’t read reviews from somebody she doesn’t know; the other person prefers asking than searching online and mostly relies on recommendations at the brick-and-mortar stores.

Social media platforms (mostly YouTube, Facebook and Instagram) are more actively used by beauty product shoppers (8 respondents) compared to vitamin shoppers (4 respondents). Younger respondents in the beauty group tend to use social media more regularly (by following bloggers and vloggers) than older respondents. The 21-year-old participant said, “I watch YouTube because I trust them (*vloggers*). I think they are honest. I definitely try a product if they recommend it...I would say half of my makeup and beauty products came from YouTube.” At the same time, the other

respondent among younger beauty users mentioned, “I dislike advertisements on social media and don’t consider it a platform to learn about products...I’m on social media to talk to my friends, catch up on news or get inspiration - not to buy stuff or look at ads.”

Brand blogs and newsletters are the least popular sources of information.

Only three respondents read blogs from brands (Fullscript - fullscript.com/blog, Beautycounter - <http://www.beautycounter.com/know-everything/>, and the Weil Vitamin Advisor - <https://www.weilvitaminadvisor.com/blog>) but only one respondent buys products from the company owned one of these blogs. A respondent described, “Dr. Weil recommends that I take 10 pills a day. I think it’s too many...it seems that they are pushing pills. I’m reading this website just to get an idea what vitamins I should be taking.”

Although 13 respondents receive retail emails regarding beauty products, vitamins or other products, just 8 of them skim some of these emails largely paying attention to sales and coupons. One participant said, “I used to, but the amount of them was so overwhelming that I signed out of most of them.” The other participant said, “I don’t receive any newsletters even to see promotions or sales. I don’t like any promotions and the reason is because they are pushing the product I may not like.” Only 2 respondents receive newsletters with textual stories, not just promotional e-mails.

People look for key-words, genuineness of the content and reviews. While reading content about products, 15 participants from both groups pay attention to some key-words such as “ingredients” (6 respondents), “natural” (4 respondents), “effective” (4 respondents), “side-effects” (3 respondents) and “how to use” (2 respondents).

Also, 6 participants pay attention to the platform where they found information as well as a source and genuineness of the content. One participant in the beauty group said, “I usually look who are the people who give me a portrait of it. If they are just celebrities, it doesn’t convince me. I feel then that I need to find some doctor’s support too.” The other mentioned that it’s a “red flag” to her if a product is “super advertised” and it sounds like that it’s “the best thing in the world.”

The headline and first couple sentences catch interest of 4 participants. One respondent said, “I look for something that’s really a quick summary before going into it. Just quick heads-up, what it is about. I usually don’t look at things more if they don’t have very general description in the first few sentences. Or something eye-catching at least.”

Visuals are a key factor for 4 respondents. The explanation of one of the participants was consistent with the prediction of the ELM model. She said, “I’m usually paying the most attention to the visuals - then I look at the description, brand information, etc. I like the photos to be straightforward and show the product in some capacity... However, if I’m actively looking for a product, I don’t pay as much attention to the visuals and instead read the descriptions, reviews, instructions, etc. I’m already interested in the product at this point, so the image doesn’t play a large role in drawing me in. I notice how comprehensive the descriptions are and the customer ratings/scores.”

For 7 respondents, it’s salient if products are reviewed. Reading reviews, 3 participants pay attention to their number. One said, “If it has fewer than a couple hundred views then to me, it’s not well-tested or well-reviewed. It makes me more

hesitant to go towards it.” Negative comments turn away 2 respondents. Whereas, other 4 respondents said that they try to avoid reviews that are totally forward or totally against it but instead try to get a general idea of what people are saying. Additionally, 2 participants mentioned that they pay attention to where they found a review, whether it’s a trusted retail website or unfamiliar website/blog because the possibility that a review was paid undermined their trust.

Interestingly, only 3 respondents said that they pay attention to a price of a product when they read a brand or social media content about this product.

Hypothesis Testing

Participants were categorized as being under high and low involvement. In Table 1 and Table 2, the statistics of knowledge, liking aspect, reading intention and buying intention scores are summarized for every group.

The data in the **beauty and personal care group** showed that a brand content with no product promoted has similar favorable attitudes among both customers under high and low involvement. Whereas, brand content with heavily focused on a product has more favorable attitudes among older interviewees (high involvement) compared with younger respondents (low involvement). Therefore, hypotheses #1 and #2 were supported.

Table 1. Beauty and personal care.

	Sample #1 (with no product promoted)		Sample #2 (with a product promoted)	
	High involvement (36-43 years old) (n=5)	Low involvement (20-25 years old) (n=5)	High involvement (36-43 years old) (n=5)	Low involvement (20-25 years old) (n=5)
Knowledge	Mean=4.8	Mean=3.8	Mean=5.0	Mean=4.6
Liking	Mean=4.0	Mean=3.8	Mean=4.2	Mean=3.4
Reading intention	Mean=3.4	Mean=3.8	Mean=3.8	Mean=3.4
Buying intention	Mean=3.6	Mean=3.2	Mean=3.6	Mean=2.2

Sample 1. In terms of liking, this article received score 5 (“strongly agree”) from 3 participants in the subgroup 1 (high involvement) and score 4 (“agree”) from 4 participants in the subgroup 2 (low involvement). Two participants liked the informative title and beginning of the article. A respondent from the younger subgroup said, “The title is informative and doesn’t seem like click-bait, which is one of my biggest pet-peeves.” Additionally, three participants mentioned that this article is concise and with little scientific jargon (easy to understand).

However, this article received a few lower scores because it was lacking novelty (4 participants) as well as there was no reference to where these claims came from (2 participants). The intention to revisit this website is a little higher in the subgroup 2 (low involvement), but the purchasing intention is higher in the subgroup 1 (high involvement). The absence of visuals in the text impacted the intention to go back to this website (2 participants). The buying intention was impacted by the fact that this website

was unfamiliar (2 participants), and the article didn't promote a certain product (2 participants).

Sample 2. This article was easier to understand than the first one. This article received the highest score 5 ("strongly agree") among 4 participants in the subgroup 1 (high involvement). These participants mentioned that this article had a good topic (a reminder about hand care) and was simple and straightforward. All of them noticed that this article advertised a product but considered it as a recommendation. A participant said, "They are clearly offering a product, and I'm fine with it. I wouldn't need to do an extra step to find a product that I need...The second article was a little bit more unique..., and it reminded me of my hands because I'm usually concerned mostly about my face." However, the average score was significantly lowered because of one participant provided the lowest score 1 ("strongly disagree"). In her opinion, "it was targeting emotions of women toward fear of aging."

Contrary, 3 participants from the subgroup 2 were skeptical about this article resulted in lower scores 2 ("disagree") and 3 ("undecided"). They mentioned that it was not convincing and pushing the product. Only one participant gave this article 5 ("strongly agree") explaining that the length of the article and pictures was a good fit. As expected, the intention to revisit this website was higher, and the intention to buy a product was significantly higher among the participants in the subgroup 1 (high involvement). Two participants from the subgroup 2 (low involvement) gave 1 and 2 ("strongly disagree" and "disagree") because of the "pushy factor"; the other 3 respondents were undecided and wanted more details.

The data in the **vitamin group** showed that both samples of brand content, without a product promoted and with a product being pushed, received more favorable attitudes among people with no kids (under low involvement). Therefore, based on these results, hypotheses #1 and #2 were not supported.

Table 2. Vitamins, minerals and supplements

	Sample #1 (with no product promoted)		Sample #2 (with a product promoted)	
	High involvement (adults with kids) (n=5)	Low involvement (adults with no kids) (n=5)	High involvement (parents with kids) (n=5)	Low involvement (adults with no kids) (n=5)
Knowledge	Mean=5.0	Mean=4.8	Mean=5.0	Mean=5.0
Liking	Mean=3.2	Mean=4.6	Mean=4.4	Mean=5.0
Reading intention	Mean=2.6	Mean=3.8	Mean=3.4	Mean=4.4
Buying intention	Mean=2.2	Mean=2.6	Mean=3.6	Mean=4.2

Sample 1. Both subgroups found this article easy to understand. However, while the subgroup 2 (low involvement) was consistent with its favorable attitude to this article, the subgroup 1 (high involvement) had conflicting attitudes toward it. Particularly, this article was worth of the highest score 5 (“strongly agree”) according to 2 participants from the subgroup 1 (high involvement) due to its good arguments. However, other 3 participants in this subgroup gave only 3, 2, or 1 (“undecided”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree”) because, in their opinion, the article didn’t delve into the issue and didn’t hit the point right away. Contrary, the subgroup 2 (low involvement) was in more favor of this article with scores 5 or 4 (“strongly agree” or “agree”) because

it was informative, concise, straightforward and clear to them. Accordingly, the intention to revisit this website and purchase a product on this website was higher in the subgroup 2 (high involvement).

The low interest to go back to this website in the subgroup 1 (high involvement) was driven by the observation that this article was very generic and didn't teach anything (2 respondents) and that it was more opinion-driven than science-driven (1 respondent). The buying interest was low in both groups because they want to learn more about this brand and their products (6 participants). A participant from the subgroup 1 mentioned, "I wouldn't buy based on the article or make it my regular place to go. I feel there are a lot of companies that try to get into a blogging thing to add value to their products. But they don't try very hard."

Sample 2. This piece of content was found to be easily understood by all the interviewees.

In terms of liking, this brand content received favorable attitudes in both groups. Four respondents in the subgroup 1 (high involvement) gave higher scores to it versus the first sample or said that they liked the second sample better, - mostly because it was more specific, straightforward, and descriptive (5 participants) as well as was laid out nicely (3 participants).

Unexpectedly, the entire subgroup 2 (low involvement) gave this sample the highest score 5 ("strongly agree") in terms of liking (the average score was a little bit higher than for the first sample). Interestingly, 3 respondents in the subgroup 2 (low involvement) mentioned that this brand content was clearly selling kids' vitamins but it didn't negatively impact their favorable attitudes. Particularly, the second subgroup

mentioned a good lay out of the content or presence of pictures and graphs (4 respondents) as well as that it was straightforward and self-explanatory (4 respondents). A participant said, “I also find appealing that it’s clear that it’s an advertisement for a specific brand.” Even though the average scores for reading and buying intention were lower in the subgroup 1 (high involvement), all participants in this subgroup said that they would consider purchasing a product presented in the article.

Conclusion

In summary, our hypotheses #1 and #2 were partially supported: they were upheld by results revealed from the beauty and personal care group but failed during testing in the vitamin group probably because our samples presented for this group didn’t consider all the factors that could affect people’s attitudes toward the brand content. However, data from the vitamin group aligned with the main postulates of the ELM model as well as correlated with recent studies attempting to extend the ELM model.

In the **beauty and personal care group**, the data showed participants under high involvement (women at the age of 36-43) expressed positive attitudes toward content regardless if it advertised a product or not. Contrary, three younger respondents (women at the age of 20-25) found the article with a focus on a product less appealing because it marketed a product.

In the **vitamin group**, respondents under high involvement (parents with little kids) expressed much less favorable attitudes toward a sample with no product advertised compared with respondents with no kids, but similar favorable attitudes towards a sample promoting a product. The attitudes toward the first article were mostly

influenced by its argument quality and level of novelty. Four participants found this article unconvincing and uninformative. As predicted in the ELM model, the argument quality has a significant effect on people highly interested in the topic, - who are taking the central route in formulating their attitudes and purchasing intentions. Whereas, participants with no kids liked the article mostly because it was short, concise and brought up a good topic about healthy eating without too many details. The brand content clearly advertising kids' vitamins received high scores among both groups: participants from both subgroups found this content appealing because of visuals, graphs and a good lay out (peripheral cues) as well as because it explained clearly how vitamins work (an argument quality, central cue). These results are correspondent with more recent studies about the ELM model showing that attitudes of highly involved consumers focused on central arguments may be also impacted by peripheral cues as well as attitudes of lowly involved consumers can be impacted by a quality of argument (SanJose-Cabezudo et al., 2009; Fortunato, 2015; Chang et al., 2015, etc.).

Practical Implications

The literature and interview results including brand content demonstration help answer our research question and indicate the possible best digital content marketing practices to build a startup brand. Particularly, in this section, we listed some observations and insights regarding people's online product search behaviors and information delivery preferences. Additionally, this section describes what types of brand content may drive a target audience to revisit or subscribe to a brand-building platform and generate consumer interest to brand products.

Key observations and insights

- **The platform should have “voice.”** Although people often do online research about issues/products, they consider opinion of the people they know and trust: doctors, family and friends. Additionally, while people frequently use Google search engine to learn more about products, they go directly to retail websites if they are trusted. It implies that the brand-building platform should have a “voice” strengthening this platform to be more trusted and personalized. It corresponds with the industry expert recommendations that the brand should have an active role as a shared-interest partner, mentor, friend or colleague.
- **The importance of words.** People’s attitudes toward the content, both educational and promotional, depend on how information is presented. People value brevity and simplicity but at the same time novelty (newness or uniqueness) and emphasis on the focal point. In other words, brand content that is short, clear, informational and getting to the point is a big win.
- **Genuineness matters.** Promotion of a specific product through content marketing works better if it sounds as a recommendation or an option not as an attempt to push a product. Also, people like when it’s clear that the brand tries to sell something. At the same time, “overadvertising” (and using click-bait) or some underlying messages focused on manipulation of target’s emotions can result in skepticism or aversion to the content, platform and product. People interested in the topic/issue may look for referral to specific products in the brand website or blog as it offers the solution to the issue and, thus, makes their life easier. Focus

on educational, informative and helpful content that works first for audience's needs and then for selling a product can attract bigger audiences.

- **On the customer journey.** Even if brand content makes people want to buy a product, it's most likely that they will do more research first (compare with other brands, read reviews, etc.) before making a purchase especially if it's an unfamiliar digital platform. However, it's highly probable that the brand content that receives favorable attitudes motivates people to come back to this website to learn more about issues/products. The brand that is able to communicate through the content has an opportunity to build a massive audience.

Other observations and their implications

Product search behaviors

- People follow or subscribe to a website or blog when it has a subject matter that means something to them. It proves the literature findings that the brand-building platform should be focused on customers' interests or address their pain points.
- **Social media controversy.** Some people don't consider social media as a platform to learn about products; while others put their trust in social media influencers and pay attention to their recommendations. Scholars and industry experts describe social media content among winning content marketing tactics but also agree that the choice of the platform depends on its business goal. The choice of social channel also depends on where the target audience is mostly congregated. Overall, understanding what type of content the audience wants to get in this channel, what purpose this content can serve for the brand and where

on the customer journey this content fits can help a startup distribute its content on social media more successfully.

- Academic and industry literature showed that e-mail marketing and e-newsletters with textual stories are one of the most prioritized brand content types. Moreover, e-mail subscription is considered as one of the key concepts of content marketing. At the same time, our results revealed that people tend to sign up for marketing e-mails but they either don't read most of them or pay attention largely to sales and coupons. The inbox overflowed with marketed messages is found overwhelming and results in unsubscribing from unwanted emails or just ignoring these messages. Only e-newsletters that are really centered on people's interests (ideally, both educational and promotional) can result in a higher audience response.
- Online reviews are found as one of the most important communication channels. Even if people don't blindly believe what others say online and avoid reviews that are totally forward or totally against a product, they consider reviews as a more or less objective source that helps them find consensus about a product and its efficacy. Also, people tend to go for reviews on trusted retail websites. Additionally, the number of reviews also may be important as a product widely reviewed can be considered as more tested. Thus, adding product review to the website can be beneficial for the brand-building business.

Brand content expectations

- As predicted in the ELM model, people under high involvement are most likely to look for more detailed information about an issue/product than people with low

interest in it. Moreover, people may want to scrutinize a related topic even more to find the proof of a product's efficacy/safety if this product is purposed for their children, or if this product is purposed to address an issue (for example, an unbalanced diet because of some food intolerance or bad skin).

- People may look for different things when they do online research to figure out something (for example, how to be healthier or look better) and when they shop for specific products (for example, nutritional or beauty items). The presence of both educational (with referral to subject-matter experts) and promotional types of brand content on the brand-building platform may engage larger audiences.
- People have favorable attitudes toward the content that backs up what they believe but also provides new information. In other words, they want to agree with what they read but also benefit from it. A new brand should know the audience it creates the content for as well as find a niche and on what angle of the problem it focuses on.
- People expect that claims made about an issue/product to be evidenced and supported by the subject-matter experts or tested by individual experiences. The reference to the authoritative source or personal stories may make brand content seem more trustworthy.
- People pay attention to the catchy headlines but get frustrated if they are not supported by the rest of the content. Also, a quick summary of the issue/product with salient key-words in the beginning of the text can foster more favorable attitudes towards the content and platform delivering it.

- People highly and lowly involved in the issue/product pay attention to the lay out of the content. The brand-building platforms that have visuals, infographics and well-organized texts (with bulleted lists, etc.) may help grow e-mail subscription, a social share or a return visit.

Limitations and Further Research Implications

While interviews in this study revealed some interesting findings that uncovered people's attitudes toward brand content as well as their habits to search for information about products, the generalizable results should be further tested by using a quantitative method. The current results can be used to develop survey items about people's attitudes towards content marketing strategies to be able to generalize results to the larger population and possess external validity. Particularly, future researches can seek to survey their populations about people's online product search behaviors and expectations from trusted digital channels. These factors can help practitioners develop content marketing strategies that benefit the audience.

As stated above, we decided to test our hypotheses #1 and #2 regarding people's attitudes toward product promotion through content marketing but suggested our hypothesis #3 regarding people's attitudes toward the brand content based on its format for future research. Testing of the hypothesis #3 proposing that *entertaining brand content achieves favorable attitudes among both high and low involvement consumers* can be tested in the same way as our hypotheses #1 and #2 by showing samples with corresponding content to highly and low involved participants. However, to provide a more controlled test, mock-ups, not content from actual websites, may be a better choice to test our hypothesis #3.

Since e-mail subscription is one of the key concepts of content marketing but the possibility that e-newsletter would be ignored is high, further research is necessary to understand what messages in the e-newsletters resonate better and model a desired behavior.

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Appendix

Question Guide

Thanks for helping me by taking this interview! Your responses will be kept confidential, and participation is completely voluntary.

Questions about beauty and personal care products (10 people):

- 1) Where do you search for information about beauty and personal care products?
- 2) What specific brand websites/blogs do you use to search for information about beauty and personal care products?
- 3) What elements do you pay attention to when you read information about beauty and personal care products on these websites/blogs?
- 4) What brands/bloggers related to beauty and personal care products do you read or follow on social media?
- 5) What elements do you pay attention to when you read information about beauty and personal care products on social media?
- 6) What company e-newsletters related to beauty and personal care products do you receive? What elements do you pay attention to when you read these e-newsletters?

- 7) What platforms do you use to read online reviews about beauty and personal care products? What elements do you pay attention to when you read these reviews?
- 8) What is your age? What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

Sample #1:

- 9) Was it easy to understand what this article was about? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that it was easy to understand”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?
- 10) Do you like this article? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I like this article”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?
- 11) Do you feel that you intend to read this website again? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to read this website again”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?
- 12) Do you feel that you intend to buy a product on this website? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to buy a product on this website”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Sample #2: See questions above

Questions about vitamins, minerals and supplements (10 people):

- 1) Where do you search for information about vitamins, minerals and supplements?
- 2) What specific brand websites/blogs do you use to search for information about vitamins, minerals and supplements?
- 3) What elements do you pay attention to when you read information about vitamins, minerals and supplements on these websites/blogs?

- 4) What brands/bloggers related to vitamins, minerals, and supplements do you read or follow on social media?
- 5) What elements do you pay attention to when you read information about vitamins, minerals and supplements on social media?
- 6) What e-newsletters related vitamins, minerals and supplements do you receive? What elements do you pay attention to when you read these e-newsletters?
- 7) What platforms do you use to read online reviews about vitamins, mineral and supplements? What elements do you pay attention to when you read these reviews?
- 8) What is your age? What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

Sample #1:

- 9) Was it easy to understand what this article was about? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that it was easy to understand”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?
- 10) Do you like this article? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I like this article”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?
- 11) Do you feel that you intend to read this website again? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to read this website again”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?
- 12) Do you feel that you intend to buy a product on this website? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to buy a product on this website”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Sample #2: See questions above

Beauty and personal care products

Sample #1. Retrieved from (modified) <http://www.beautycounter.com/know-everything/3-powerful-antioxidants-youll-want-to-include-in-your-skin-care-routine/#more-6960>

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SKIN CARE MAKEUP BATH & BODY FAMILY BEST SELLERS THE NEVER LIST™ OUR STORY THE ASTERISK BLOG

3 POWERFUL ANTIOXIDANTS YOU'LL WANT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SKIN CARE ROUTINE

Antioxidants are extremely beneficial to your health. Not only can you tap into their power by eating them (think superfoods like goji berries and pomegranate), but you can also benefit from them in your skin care products. They are like revitalizing soldiers, helping to combat the elements responsible for signs of aging.

According to a study published by the Pharmacognasy Review, overexposure to damaging UV rays can lead to the formation of free radicals in the deep layers of the skin. These free radicals can disrupt the collagen responsible for skin elasticity and plumpness, contributing to the aging process.

So, when you think about protecting your skin from sun damage, SPF is only half the battle. For more complete protection, turn to the power of antioxidants. A couple of their benefits include shutting down free radicals before they can destroy collagen and also protecting your skin from non-UV offenders like pollution. Since your face has the biggest chance of sun exposure, even in the Winter, it's important to find antioxidant-rich products that you can easily add to your skin care routine.

Here are three essential antioxidants that will give your skin a healthy-looking appearance:

Vitamin E

Also known as tocopherol, vitamin E is a potent antioxidant that efficiently limits the damage from free radicals. When you're heading out into the sun, it's best to look for a sunscreen that also have powerful antioxidants.

Vitamin C

Essential for collagen biosynthesis, vitamin C has been proven to help to reduce the appearance of dark spots and create a more even-toned complexion.

Subscribe with your **SIGN UP >**

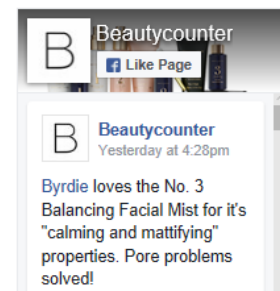
Sign up to receive exclusive news on product launches, helpful tips and special offers.

Instagram



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Green Tea

For the tea drinkers out there, you're probably well aware of the health perks of downing your favorite brew, but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy the antioxidant benefits from this leaf by applying it to your skin. This skin-conditioning agent works to calm redness and irritation.

If you want to give your skin and body the benefits of antioxidants from head to toe, don't just load up in the fruit aisle. For maximum results, include a topical application of antioxidants that help to fight UV damage, ward off the effects of pollution to your skin, kick free radicals to the curb, and leave your skin glowing.



POSTED: MAY, 26, 2017

Sample #2. Retrieved from <http://blog.everskin.com/skintalk/2016/10/6/aging-hands>



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SKIN TALK | BEFORE & AFTERS | SPECIALIST SPOTLIGHT



SEP 17

Aging Hands

People build their first impressions of us based on our face so it makes sense that we take care of it well. But there's another part of the body that is exposed just as often, yet doesn't receive the TLC we afford to our faces: our hands.



Follow Us



There's a common saying that our hands give away our age. Signs of aging can be even more dramatic on the hands than on the face--age spots, dullness, thinning skin due to sun exposure from driving and constant exposure to hand washing and potentially harsh soaps. Think of all the time you've spent with your hands on the wheel in the afternoon, exposed to the sun without any protection.



LIGHT BEAM Hand Repair Treatment

That's why, no matter what your age, we recommend wearing SPF on the hands. This will help prevent harmful UVA and UVB sun damage, which we all know plays a primary role in visible aging. It's easy to forget about the hands, but there are now multitasking hand creams that combine super moisturizing ingredients with SPF, like our **LIGHT BEAM**, which includes a mushroom extract targeted to help brighten visible spots and pigmentation.

Vitamins, minerals and supplements

Sample #1. Retrieved from <https://smartypantsvitamins.com/top-five-myths-about-childrens-vitamins-myth-2/>

Share



UNCATEGORIZED

Top Five Myths About Children’s Vitamins – MYTH # 2: If you take vitamins, you can eat whatever you want.

by Fay



photo by: nuchylee

MYTH #2: If you take vitamins, you can eat whatever you want.

FACT: Vitamins are meant to support and enhance a balanced diet, not replace it.

A vast majority of Americans are now (unfortunately) classified as either overweight or obese, and childhood obesity in recent years has skyrocketed.

The finger pointing on this issue ranges from [blaming individual responsibility on the subject of food intake](#), to the hypothesis that [man-made chemicals are the culprit](#).

Whatever the reason, carrying an unhealthy weight around has become the norm in the United States, not the exception.

What does this have to do with vitamins? We’re glad you asked.

We believe that too many people use vitamins as a magic bullet to cover for poor nutritional habits. They think they can live on fast food and pop a pill and magically have a balanced, healthy diet and life.

In the real world, a vitamin is meant to enhance a balanced diet, not replace it. A well rounded multi-vitamin can be your insurance policy against a poor nutritional meal once in a while. But it will never make you healthy all by itself.

Posted on August 15, 2011

Most Popular



The 5 Best Vitamins For Healthy Hair



Best Vitamins for Safe, Healthy Weight Control



Home



The Overdose Risks of Vitamins: Why Proper Dosage Matters



Organic Cane Sugar vs Other Sweeteners: How They Measure Up,



Fay

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Looks Like You Need a Pick Me Up

Our delicious all-in-one vitamin supplements are packed with the nutrients you need to live the good life.

[SHOP SMARTPANTS VITAMINS](#)

Sample#2. Retrieved from <https://smartypantsvitamins.com/why-our-gummy/>



Premium, thoughtfully-selected nutrients, all together in one gummy.

We focus on including the nutrients that seem to be hardest for some people to get consistently from food, acquire the best possible forms of those nutrients, and combine them all into one gummy that's so tasty you may never forget to take your vitamins again!



Omega 3

We optimally combine two forms, EPA and DHA, which are sourced from sustainable stocks of wild-caught small fish populations.



Vitamin D3

We choose D3 over D2 because it's the form your skin produces when exposed to sunlight.



Vitamin B12

We provide over 1000% of the Daily Value for vitamin B12 as methylcobalamin - an active form that's readily used by your body.



HOW MANY DO I TAKE

For kids, take four (4) gummies per day.
May be taken with or without food.



TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS

Beauty and personal care products

1) Where do you search for information about beauty and personal care products?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: Print magazines that I subscribe to like *Parents Magazine*, *Best Home Gardens*. And *Reader's Digest*... Well, I actually got one (*a beauty product*) from TV commercial. That works too for me. (*laughing*) I read online, but not much. Only beauty products' reviews. When I need something, I go and read reviews.

Participant 2: Lately, I've been more concerned about what's in my beauty and personal care products, so I've been looking at the Environmental Working Group website (<http://www.ewg.org/>) for ideas on what is safer. This is probably my main place and then I've started using safer beauty products (<http://www.beautycounter.com/>), so I've got information from it too.

Participant 3: I don't really have a lot of time to look for information. I would probably use Google to look up information if I was concerned about, for example, sunscreen or if I was curious about something related to hair products.

Participant 4: Normally, I do not search for beauty products since I already know what brands I like and I just go directly to their websites or stores.

Participant 5: Mostly Amazon and probably once in a while at the store.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: I prefer learning about products online, but consider the experiences/recommendations of my family and friends more credible and convincing. Usually I talk to my sister for advice since she reads a lot of beauty magazines and blogs. Sometimes, I stumble upon new products on Instagram and might do a Google search to learn more and see what others are saying. If I'm looking for a specific type of product, I'll search a retailer's website (such as Sephora) - mostly paying attention to product reviews and brand descriptions.

Participant 7: Usually, the Internet. That might be a factor, but I don't use a lot of beauty products. So, the few that I do, I tend to try and look at them a little.

Participant 8: Online. Amazon. There are a few blogs.

Participant 9: A lot of times, I just google it and whatever website comes up but I do enjoy Amazon a lot just because it's people's experiences and they give a rating and they talk about it. I know just from my statistical knowledge that they are biased just because usually people leave reviews when they are really good or really bad. So, I do take that into account but generally those are places where I look.

Participant 10: Mostly online. I do online research first. I watch a lot of YouTube videos like reviews, beauty bloggers. Then if I think something is good, I can hop online too on the actual websites and get reviews from actual customers. So, I do mainly YouTube and a retail website, and then if I want to go an extra mile, I'll go and check it out in person at the store.

2) What specific brand websites/blogs do you use to search for information about beauty and personal care products?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: Nothing in particular. I don't use particular websites or YouTube channels that people go to. Just occasionally when I need something. I don't have too much time.

Participant 2: I've already mentioned that.

Participant 3: No, I don't really look at any blogs or websites.

Participant 4: My favorite one is Ulta (<http://www.ulta.com/>), and that's where I buy most of my beauty products. I wish I could have more time to do some more research but at the present time I don't really.

Participant 5: No. Just Amazon.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: I often use Sephora's website because it's user-friendly and provides thorough information on all products. I have a hard time trusting random websites and blogs since I know companies often pay bloggers to post about their products (which seems a bit dishonest). I'd rather seek information from people and websites I trust.

Participant 7: I don't really use specific websites. It's kinda I look at the whole thing, google...and then I look at reviews too. If my family uses it or if I know somebody who does, I ask them too. I know sometimes the specific websites can be pushing; so, I try to avoid just using them. So, when I see "ad" while googling, I try to avoid it.

Participant 8: Blogs?... Yeah... Like Instagram or there are some ranking websites... sometimes there...

Participant 9: I don't have specific brands I enjoy. I don't really care to go into that company's website and find what else they have going because I tend to go of what other people say. So, if I know anybody who has a really good hair product or something, and I will ask, 'What would you recommend?', and then I will try it. If I like it, I'll keep it. So, I don't really look through websites.

Participant 10: I have mainly two big websites, the products that I use: Loreal (<http://www.loreal.com/>) and Maybelline (<https://www.maybelline.com/>). And also, Ulta

(<http://www.ulta.com/>). They are more general because they have everything, but I go to the direct website for the product.

3) What elements do you pay attention to when you read information about beauty and personal care products on these websites/blogs (key-words, visuals, promotions, entertaining format)?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: I definitely look for products that meet my needs. Of course, price, but also quality is important to me. First of all, I look for something that doesn't have much chemicals, more natural. And also, I see if a product is effective, for example, if a moisturizer moisturizes well. It doesn't matter if it's an entertaining or serious article. Although I guess I prefer a serious one. *(laughing)*

Participant 2: I guess what I pay attention to is...Well, now more than any time before, ingredients and kinda what their processes are for making things and regulations.

Participant 3: *(Not relevant)*

Participant 4: I read about ingredients. Sometimes, I read reviews. Just what a product does. I try to cover all the aspects of the product.

Participant 5: How a beauty product stays on the skin. How it covers the skin, if it blends well with my natural color. Then allergy...if it can cause allergy.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: If I randomly come across a product, I'm usually paying the most attention to the visuals - then I'll look at the description, brand information, etc. I like the photos to be straightforward and show the product in some capacity. For instance - I don't care for images of a random spa-goer sitting in a face mask...the product should be the focal point in the photo! However, if I'm actively looking for a product, I don't pay as much attention to the visuals and instead read the descriptions, reviews, instructions, etc. I'm already interested in the product at this point so the image doesn't play a large role in drawing me in. I notice how comprehensive the descriptions are and the customer ratings/scores (when available).

Participant 7: I think I usually look at what is actually in the product, how much it's been researched, who are the people who give me a portrait of it. If they are just celebrities, that doesn't convince me. I feel I should find some doctor's support too. But then my family gives me more sway. *(laughing)*

Participant 8: *(Not relevant)*

Participant 9: *(Not relevant)*

Participant 10: Images for sure. Price is another thing I look at. I want to save a penny or two. *(laughing)* The number of ratings is also very helpful, which correlates with reviews.

4) What brands/bloggers related to beauty and personal care products do you read or follow on social media?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: I don't follow anybody on social.

Participant 2: Facebook, there are some blogs that I found like the TwinCities Moms blog (<https://www.facebook.com/TwinCitiesMomsBlog/>). I read different blogs and see what's interesting. Once I've found some that has a subject-of-matter that means something to me, then I subscribe or follow it.

Participant 3: I'm trying to think if I read anything related to beauty products on social media. I don't think that I do. I'm spending time on social media, but I'm looking at psychiatric nurse practitioner's stuff...but it doesn't show me beauty products at all.
(*laughing*)

Participant 4: At this time, no. When I have more time...I used to search for, for example, "clear skin" on YouTube and I saw a lot of related videos about what girls did with their skin and what products they used. And that's where I got the ideas what products to use. I used to do that but not in the last couple of years. But I didn't follow any bloggers, just searched randomly. I did a little bit about fashion for petite women; I found some interesting blogs of Asian women, and I used to read them.

Participant 5: I'm pretty bad with social media. (*laughing*) Probably YouTube, - mostly if I research about nail products. Once in a while, I read Facebook and Pinterest.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: I don't actively seek information about products on social media. Sometimes I'll randomly see celebrities endorsing products on Instagram, but I seldom find it personally relevant and consider it further. I dislike advertisements on social media and don't consider it a platform to learn about products...I'm on social media to talk to my friends, catch up on news or get inspiration - not to buy stuff or look at ads.

Participant 7: I don't, but I'm not on social media very much. I've got Facebook, but I don't go on there very often.

Participant 8: I'm following a few bloggers on Instagram speaking about beauty products. There are some updates, posts and some videos that show me how to do makeup.

Participant 9: Instagram definitely comes up because I just scroll and see so many people that advertise that stuff. So, I can say that for sure. Facebook has that too... I don't really follow blogs in general. There are just people...on Instagram...fitness models or something and they try a new product, really like it and then they are advertising it.

Participant 10: Mainly YouTube. It's my biggest.

5) What elements do you pay attention when you read information about beauty and personal care products on social media?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: I don't read but if I would... I would look for the quality and results people are getting.

Participant 2: I pay attention to a story that happened to someone using a product that has something harmful in it. So that kind of thing would draw me to learn more about it.

Participant 3: *(Not relevant)*

Participant 4: Before and after. *(using a product)* How to use the product...I just watch the video and if it's something helpful for me, related to me, I go for it and search for this product.

Participant 5: Mostly how to apply or how to use a product.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: Instagram is the only social platform I notice products on; so I mostly just pay attention to the picture. I may also click on links if they're included in the post and I'm genuinely interested in the product.

Participant 7: *(Not relevant)*

Participant 8: Related to my basic needs like a sunscreen. How to use a product, their recommendations, what ingredients and what function of a product...

Participant 9: The genuineness of how they come off: whether products are super advertised or not, what they actually have to say about it and what it sounds like, "the best thing in the world". *(laughing)* You know, there is no product that is best in the world. Things like that are red flags for me.

Participant 10: The number of views, but also, I watch YouTube because I trust I think they are honest. So, I just put my trust in them. I definitely try a product if they recommend it and whether it works or it doesn't. I would say half of my makeup and beauty products came from YouTube. I've just got my new facewash and I love it. It was recommended by someone who's been using that for years. And I said, "Ok". I watch random videos but also pay attention to titles and certain bloggers. There are probably

12 good vloggers. Casey Holmes (<https://www.youtube.com/user/itsbl0ndie>) and Tati (<https://www.youtube.com/user/GlamLifeGuru>). She is also on the other social as GlamLifeGuru. They are really big ones, have a lot of followers. Then I follow a few smaller ones. I can't remember their names.

6) What company e-newsletters related to beauty and personal care products do you receive? What elements do you pay attention when you read these e-newsletters?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: I don't receive any about beauty products. I do receive emails about kids' shoes. *(laughing)*... I'm looking for sales. I subscribe mostly to promotional emails about products that I buy regularly.

Participant 2: I get adds and notifications from the Environmental Working group and then from other companies that seem to be more on the safer products. Ingredients are a main thing.

Participant 3: I might be receiving newsletters. *(laughing)* My email gets so much stuff, but I'm not looking at them. I don't pay attention to them. I used to get Lancôme's newsletters. It used to be through Mypoints (<https://www.mypoints.com/>, *daily rewards program*), but they got away with good discounts. It used to be a good get like a \$50 Macy's gift card if you bought the Lancôme. Then they give you a free product as well... but when they got away from Mypoints, I don't do that anymore.

Participant 4: I used to but the amount of them was so overwhelming that I signed out of most of them. I paid attention just mostly to new products, sometimes sales. But even if they are sales, it doesn't mean that I would buy it. If I don't need a beauty product, that sales email doesn't help me... Or just out of curiosity, what's going on at that store.

Participant 5: I don't receive any newsletters even to see promotions or sales. I don't like any promotions and the reason is because they are pushing the product I may not like.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: I'm subscribed to Sephora but only read about half of the newsletters/offerings they send. Generally, the email subject grabs my attention and then I'll skim the message for large headers and bold visuals. I don't read much of the fine print or descriptions within the email itself. If I'm interested, I'll click through to the webpage to learn more. I usually notice prices and coupons included in the newsletter, too.

Participant 7: I'm a science major; so, I get some science stuff, but I don't think I get these.

Participant 8: I don't like those newsletters.

Participant 9: Amazon sends me a bunch of stuff for sure. It's just mostly promotional stuff. Since they send those to my email, I don't really look at them, but if they have a price or a release stated whether it's a new item or not, - that's kind of stuff that I look at. Like an ingredient list if they are any changes...I pay attention to the things like cruelty free and other stuff.

Participant 10: I don't get any...Oh... I get the *Uta Magazine*, an actual print version. Other than that...That's the only one just because I have a rewards card there but I don't receive anything else. Why? I don't know. I don't care to get all that email. I'm pretty up-to-date on these things and if I'm behind then I'm behind it. (*laughing*) Usually, it comes from YouTube too.

7) What platforms do you use to read online reviews about beauty and personal care products? What elements do you pay attention when you read these reviews?

Women, 30-43 years old

Participant 1: I read reviews on Amazon, but I don't think I bought any cosmetics from Amazon. Recently, I tried Target. I've got a promotional email, they had a new offer so I tried them. I was looking for a good skin moisturizer because my skin is kinda dryish. So, Target had a good promotion and I looked into what they offered and then read reviews from people on Target website. When I read reviews, I see people's reactions if they like it, and if it really works. I know that most of reviews are negative ones because when you are satisfied with a product, usually you don't write a review. When I'm not satisfied I write a review, but when I'm happy, I don't have time for it. *(laughing)* So, I don't really believe in everything that people write. I also try myself and if I like it, I will stay with this company. I would say I don't trust reviews that much as I trust myself. Stores often have samples and you can try it. I try it and if I like it, I buy it.

Participant 2: I guess I read reviews sometimes.

Participant 3: Let's see. *(laughing)* I go to Target, and if I have any questions I will ask the people who work at Target. I've got stuff in Costco because it was a coupon. *(laughing)* And for my hair products, I would probably ask a salesperson what he recommends. I guess I prefer asking than searching online.

Participant 4: I read them on the stores' websites. I don't buy beauty products on Amazon...I mostly go the store. There is a lot of reviews as well. Mostly Ulta...

Participant 5: Yes, mostly Amazon. I want to read people's opinion, even negative. If I find something at the other store, first thing I'll check is Amazon because it's worth the money and most of the time Amazon beats everybody.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: Mostly on trusted retail sites such as Sephora and Target. I find unfamiliar blogs and websites less convincing than those that I have a history of visiting or buying from. The possibility that a blog post was paid for by a company undermines my trust in the review...Sephora and Target present the product information clearly and

use simple images of the products. The no-nonsense/minimal aesthetic of these sites keeps me coming back.

Participant 7: Yes. When I'm looking at a personal review, I try to avoid people who are totally forward or totally against it because they are more on an opposite spectrum. And if it has fewer than a couple hundred views, then to me it's not well-tested or well-reviewed. So, it makes me more hesitant to go towards it. I look for something that's more tested.

Participant 8: There are some Amazon reviews, but I don't read a bunch of them. I read mostly about how good the product is.

Participant 9: Mostly on Amazon but if I google, beauty products always come up. So, I definitely look through those a lot, and I don't just read the good or the bad ones. I read everything, and I try to scroll through more than ten or twenty of them to get an idea of what people are saying.

Participant 10: YouTube and Amazon. I'm actually more getting into Amazon; I haven't been the biggest Amazon user, and now I start getting into it even for everything, and reviews are really helpful.

8) What is your age? What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: I'm 39. Bachelor's degree.

Participant 2: 41. Bachelor's.

Participant 3: I'm 36. Master's.

Participant 4: 38. Bachelor's.

Participant 5: I'm 43. Associated.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 1: I'm 25. Master's.

Participant 2: 24. Bachelor's.

Participant 3: I'm 20. High school. I'm a college student, a junior.

Participant 4: 21. High school, a college student.

Participant 5: I'm 22. High school. A college student (a senior)

Sample #1

9) Was it easy to understand what this article was about? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that it was easy to understand”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: 5 (“strongly agree”). It was easy to understand. It was a good one, short and to the point. I read a lot of articles like this in magazines that I subscribed to.

Participant 2: 5 (“strongly agree”). I think it was clear. Oh, I know this company. They are big on fighting with strict regulations in a personal care and beauty industry, so it’s not just about creating products and selling them... It’s a neat company.

Participant 3: Yes, it was. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 4: Yes, absolutely. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 5: Somehow. 4 (“agree”).

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: 1 (“strongly disagree”). It was difficult to understand what products this article is promoting. The product names aren’t mentioned in any of the headers and the products aren’t pictured. Although the products are mentioned in the full article, the hyperlinked text is easily overlooked - especially during an initial skim.

Participant 7: Yes, fairly. I would say 3 (“undecided”). Because I’ve got a science background, some of those words were difficult or layman terms, but then at the same time, some the stuff was kinda quoted (5:00). I’m like, “Are you quoting it or you’re just saying that?”

Participant 8: Yeah, 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 9: It was very easy to read. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 10: Yeah. 5 (“strongly agree”).

10) Do you like this article? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I like this article”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: Yes, I do. 5 (“strongly agree”). The beginning is very good and engaging, and then information is right to the point. I think it’s good because people don’t like waste time reading something that are out of facts. I don’t like when it’s only about somebody’s experience, “oh, this is my experience, I do this, I did that.” ... I like this one because it’s straight to the point.

Participant 2: 5 (“strongly agree”). I like the fact that ingredients that can occur naturally. I like knowing about the effects that they can have on our skin and our health in general.

Participant 3: 2 (“disagree”). I feel like they are making scientific claims and I don’t feel like those scientific claims are actually evidenced to back up these claims. So, I felt like they were trying to make money of me. Like I need to buy a product.

Participant 4: I do like this article. 5 (“strongly agree”). b) The important information is clearly organized in several paragraphs. It gives me the solution of how to approach the problem but mostly because it’s complex information which is presented in quite a clear, precise and compact way in an easy language.

Participant 5: 3 (“undecided”). Basically, they give me some general information, but they don’t go deep enough what exactly I need to do. Everybody knows that he needs to keep the skin protected from UV. It tells me what vitamin C and green tea do but doesn’t tell me how to use it, and if it will be beneficial for my skin on a regular basis...It doesn’t tell me much.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: 4 (“agree”). I liked how succinctly the information was presented - there was little scientific jargon and it was easy to understand after an initial skim. The title is

informative and doesn't seem like click-bait (which is one of my biggest pet-peeves). The website interface is very clean and minimal - a big plus! I didn't give it a "5" because I felt like I had all of the information I needed after reading the title and 3 large headers for each antioxidant. There wasn't really a need to read the actual article since it didn't offer much new or interesting information beyond those items. I also would have liked to see pictures for each antioxidant or product mentioned - then it would be more visually appealing. At first, I didn't even notice specific products were mentioned in the article! Pictures of the products would help grab readers' attention and make it clear what they're promoting.

Participant 7: I would probably say 3 ("undecided"). There are some things in it that I'm, "hmm..." If there are some quotes, but it doesn't show me farther down where they found this quote, or who's the one who gave this quote. Yes, there is no source. I even didn't see who the author was; I could find him.

Participant 8: Yeah, 4 ("agree"). This is basically what I know. There is nothing new.

Participant 9: It's ok. I like it. I'll go with 4 ("agree"). Because it's just a text. So, you can see up above there are images, there are links going to Instagram... But there are no actual pictures of the product or the brand. I see the brand up here; it's the BeautyCounter, but they don't actually talk about specific products. It's a disadvantage because what they are saying here is that "you need to protect your face" but then it doesn't give me an actual product that is in relations of that. So, yes, I would like a product here so that that way I can take this article in and say, "Ok, now I have to make changes to my life versus just reading this article that is educational".

Participant 10: 4 ("agree"). It's helpful information. I heard that before that antioxidants are really helpful, but it's not necessarily you don't always know. I didn't choose "5" because it's hard when you are so young, it's hard to always believe in everything you hear. But I don't want to sway every bit of my decision, but I guess it takes more research too. I haven't done a lot of research on antioxidants. (*laughing*)

11) Do you feel that you intend to read this website again? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to read this website again”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: Yeah, 5 (“strongly agree”). If it has the same quality of articles.

Participant 2: Yes, very likely. 5 (“strongly agree”). What I like is that they have a blog and often it’s kinda short. This one is not a very long thing to read. Sometimes, you read something and it goes on and on, and you think, “Way, what did I just read?”. So, I like that it’s short and succinct. They pick out one thing to hit at a time, and they have tons of stuff.

Participant 3: Probably not. 1 (“strongly disagree”). I just feel like they try to sell me something. I don’t like when brands try to use scientific claims that I don’t really think that there is evidence out on those claims like the vitamin C preventing those sun spots. I don’t know. Maybe it’s true but I’m dubious that there is any good evidence from what I’ve seen.

Participant 4: Possibly. 4 (“agree”). Because it was pretty good.

Participant 5: Not really. 2 (“disagree”). I have to have some images. It’s very important to have images in the article, just reading is very appealing to me. I have to see colors, and this is just a text.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: 3 (“undecided”). Although it’s not clear what products are being promoted, the information about antioxidants is interesting. I’m more likely to revisit this website to learn about general beauty topics and trends than find/buy specific products. In a sense, they’ve camouflaged the advertisement too much – the products are so well well-hidden that they never become a focal point to the reader and are easily overlooked.

Participant 7: 3 (“undecided”). If it researched a little more, but since it’s not...

Participant 8: Sure. 4 (“agree”). It’s...Beautycounter...I don’t know this brand. I can research and find out more about this.

Participant 9: Yeah, maybe. 4 (“agree”). Once again, because of there is no picture and a lack of recommendations.

Participant 10: Yeah. 5 (“strongly agree”).

12) Do you feel that you intend to buy a product on this website? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to buy a product on this website”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: 5 (“strongly agree”). The thing is... I don’t know... Maybe I would if they promoted some product. But they didn’t mention any products; they just gave general information. I like this article and if they had something I would probably buy something. I like that this article gives me some general information and doesn’t push me to buy something... Oh, there is a link. I need to do an extra step

Participant 2: Yes, I do. 5 (“strongly agree”). b) I have products, and I really like the products. I think they are high-performing. I like that all their ingredients are safer and they won’t use the ingredients that are not safe.

Participant 3: Probably not. 1 (“strongly disagree”).

Participant 4: 4 (“agree”). Once I search and I find something that catches my eye and meets my needs, it’s possible.

Participant 5: 3 (“undecided”). Unless they have reviews that I could check out.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: 2 (“disagree”). I don’t feel they provided enough product information to convince me to buy anything. And again, the products never feel like the focal point. I felt more motivated to go buy green tea at the grocery store than to purchase the products.

Participant 7: If I was reading that article, probably yes. 4 (“agree”).

Participant 8: Hmm... 3 (“undecided”). Because I don’t know this website.

Participant 9: They really didn’t advertise anything... Yeah, maybe. 4 (“agree”). They seem they are knowledgeable people who actually do research but again it’s another

thing I was going to bring up: there is no information where they gathered their research that is kinda a red flag for me. Because you can just pull this information out of thin air... or pull out of a study that doesn't relate to anything... Yeah, just because of the fact that they are actually knowledgeable and care about of my skin.

Participant 10: Potentially. 3 (“undecided”). I guess I'll just do more research and really think about ways I could include these antioxidants in certain products.

Sample #2

13) Was it easy to understand what this article was about? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that it was easy to understand”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: 5 (“strongly agree”). Easy.

Participant 2: 5 (“strongly agree”). Yes. It tells you pretty much exactly what it is. It’s all about hands and sun protection on your hands.

Participant 3: 5 (“strongly agree”). Yes, it was.

Participant 4: Yes, it was. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 5: 5 (“strongly agree”). Easy to understand.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: 5 (“strongly agree”). Even at first glance without reading one thing, the photos gave me a clear understanding for what the article is about. The product is shown in all the photos and the top image clearly conveys what the product is used for.

Participant 7: Yes, but they didn’t give as much details as the first one. 4 (“agree”).

Participant 8: It’s very clear. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 9: Yeah, 4 (“agree”).

Participant 10: Yeah. 5 (“strongly agree”).

14) Do you like this article? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I like this article”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: 5 (“strongly agree”). I actually found new information for myself. Probably I knew about it but never paid attention. It reminds me that I really need to be focused on my hands that I forget (laughing). It’s true, absolutely true. I like that the beginning is engaging, and it’s true. (laughing) They are clearly offering a product, and I’m fine with it, but it’s good to know because they have something unique like a mushroom extract that is pretty cool. I never heard about that a beauty product can have a mushroom extract. I actually like this article more than the first one. The first one had some good information but it was not new to me. The second one was a little bit more unique because of a mushroom extract, and it reminded me of my hands because I’m usually concerned mostly about my face.

Participant 2: 5 (“strongly agree”). I think this one was even more simple. It’s really just pointing on one thing. I thought it was good. I guess I didn’t ever really think about sunscreen on my hands. So that’s also good.

Participant 3: 1 (“strongly disagree”). I don’t like it. I don’t like how it was targeting emotions of women toward fear of aging. I don’t like how it was pointing out, “you need to read about your hands and how they appear because people might look at your hands and started to notice you are aging”. It ends making women feel insecure about their age and also start to fear aging.

Participant 4: Yes, I like this article. 5 (“strongly agree”). I like a little background, knowledge building here. So kinda hook that catches my interest and introduces me to the actual problem that I might have with my hands and how to solve this problem. And it does a recommendation of a product. I like when information is neatly organized. I think both articles are good.

Participant 5: 5 (“strongly agree”). They did hit the point that we don’t pay attention to our hands much and forget most of the time to something that is exposed to the sun as much as our face or even more. It would be nice if they showed the comparison, what actually aging hands look like. I mean “before” using it and “after” using it. And you know what I may even buy that cream!

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: 5 (“strongly agree”). I liked that the article included a picture of the product being used and the product itself. It was clear the article was about the hand cream from the photos alone. The intro paragraph (in bold under the title) grabbed my attention and was short and concise. The article itself was also a nice length and only took a moment to read (I usually stop reading articles about products after the 2nd or 3rd paragraph so this was a perfect length). Nothing was really that unappealing, although I wished the first picture was moved down into the text instead of floating above everything - it wasn’t obvious at first that it was part of the article and not just a banner/advertisement on the site. Perhaps putting the title above the first photo would make the image seem more cohesive with the rest of the article content.

Participant 7: I like it less than the other one. So, I would say 2 (“disagree”). Because they didn’t go into as much detail and (*laughing*)...I can tell that they are marketing this other product. (*laughing*)

Participant 8: Maybe 3 (“undecided”). It’s basically very general. I’m not convinced why these ingredients are good; what they repair.

Participant 9: I like the other one a lot better. 2 (“disagree”). Because the other one is actually educational. It’s split apart; there is a bulleted text. Here they are talking about...As I told you, it’s like “that’s why no matter what your age is, we recommend you using this product”. Like you need an advertising background, like a voice. That’s one reason why I don’t like it as much. And while it does tell you what it does, I think it would be much a better idea to go with something like, ‘here are some recommendations and products that would accomplish this’. So, it’s too pushy.

Participant 10: Yeah. 5 (“strongly agree”). It’s a good topic. My mon doesn’t have wrinkly hands but you can tell her age... and as I get older, I do start thinking about that. I do start thinking about aging things. (*laughing*) I’m such a baby but...I do start think about it.

15) Do you feel that you intend to read this website again? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to read this website again”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: 5 (“strongly agree”). Yeah, probably. If I’m looking for a product, I would prefer if they had a product in the article; it would target me more. I wouldn’t need to do an extra step to find a product that I need. It would make my life easier. In magazines, they usually give me a sample, not necessarily I would buy it. I would look at the price and maybe compare products but it makes life easier because it gives me information and the product that fits a description.

Participant 2: 4 (“agree”). Yeah, I would look at it. Maybe I would subscribe.

Participant 3: 1 (“strongly disagree”). I like the first article better than this one. Just because talking about vitamins and antioxidants is an interesting concept. I do think there was some truth in that article... That was interesting that antioxidants are building up due to a damage from the sun. There was some science to that, but this one was just purely targeting women’s emotions.

Participant 4: Since this article introduced me to something that I didn’t really think so much, I think my number goes to a number 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 5: Probably 4 (“agree”). I might come back and check the other articles.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: 4 (“agree”). Yes – they transparently promote and offer information about the product without overwhelming the reader. Although I still want to know more about the ingredients and directions, they offered a clear rationale to buy the product. I would probably revisit the site if I was in the early stages of seeking a new product or beauty solution.

Participant 7: I would say 1 (“strongly disagree”) on this. Because I can tell that they are marketing to me...The other one at least attempted to give some things, some information... (*laughing*) This one is not even trying; they’re just trying convince me buy it.

Participant 8: Yeah, maybe. 4 (“agree”). It’s not so bad. (*laughing*)...but it’s too general.

Participant 9: 3 (“undecided”). I might if I came across it again but I wouldn’t seek it out trying to find it.

Participant 10: Yeah. 5 (“strongly agree”).

16) Do you feel that you intend to buy a product on this website? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to buy a product on this website”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Women, 36-43 years old

Participant 1: I do. (*laughing*) 5 (“strongly agree”). A mushroom extract sounds interesting. If a price is right, I probably would try it. Because it has what I need. It has SPF and a mushroom extract. Why not, never tried it.

Participant 2: 4 (“agree”). Well, I would wanna look at it, maybe a little bit more and learn more about it because I suppose I can use just a regular sunscreen on my hands.

Participant 3: 1 (“strongly disagree”).

Participant 4: Possibly, number 4 (“agree”). I’m interested in this particular product, but I want to learn more how different this cream with a mushroom extract would be, how much more beneficial it would be over just a standard cream with SPF. So, I would like to compare and analyze more.

Participant 5: 4 (“agree”). I want to see what the price is and how it works.

Women, 20-25 years old

Participant 6: 3 (“undecided”). Potentially – I still want to know more about the price, directions and ingredients. I’m unlikely to buy a new beauty product before reading a review of some sort; I need to know what others say about the hand cream before making a final decision.

Participant 7: 1 (“strongly disagree”). (*laughing*) Because of the way they’re trying to sell it; they just slip it in they’re not giving me an option, like, “here are the things you should be looking at...”

Participant 8: Maybe. 3 (“undecided”). I know what they are saying but I need more details.

Participant 9: No. 2 (“disagree”). Just because of the pushy factor. I feel like when people try too hard, that kinda reflects to me. If I like the product, I will buy it, and you just need to give me the information and I’ll decide, not like, “you should get this product, it’s amazing”.

Participant 10: I’ll go with 3 (“undecided”) again, but I definitely would be willing to go on this website and check it out and see what products could be interesting. I like this article more than the first one. I think aging is one of the biggest things. I feel I would be more interested in. I guess not now. (*laughing*)

Vitamins, minerals and supplements

1) Where do you search for information about vitamins, minerals and supplements?

Adults with kids 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): Internet. I would buy them from Amazon. I am a big Amazon person. I barely get out to the stores. Or I would just ask my doctor. I am a person who listens what a doctor says. The doctor says, "Use this" and I say, "Ok". So, I give my son the same multivitamin for three years. I took it and never research anything else. So, I just trust the doctor...I don't know if it's the best thing and I probably should've looked into if it's a good thing or whether... If I were taking any vitamins, it would be Centrum multivitamins.

Participant 2 (male): I try to pick brands that I recognize, companies that I trust. I get a lot of Costco vitamins, they are a quality stuff. And I read articles, like Dr. Weil's has a website (<https://www.weilvitaminadvisor.com/>), but his vitamins are really expensive. He has a survey, recommends what vitamins I should take. These vitamins will cost \$230 a month. I'm reading this website just to get an idea what vitamins I should be taking. I'm just curious. Then I can get other brands, not his super high-end brands.

Participant 3 (male): Online. Google would be my number one source.

Participant 4 (female): Online. I also have a friend who is a naturopathic doctor. I ask her sometimes too.

Participant 5 (female): My family doesn't take ton of supplements, mostly probiotics. We are going for information to our physicians. We selected our physicians because they are open to natural and homeopathic treatments. Specifically, our pediatrician is very holistic and focused on food and diet. I think he is unusual in that sense. My Ob Gyn also offers homeopathic or nutritional supplements rather than just prescribing medication to solve a problem. My doctors are in favor of that, and I like to talk about science behind it. But I go to Amazon to search for specific products at a lower price. So, I'm going online but just to make the purchase.

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): I do it all online where I search and go over the first one that popped up...I go to Amazon a lot too to search for GNC products. I do a lot of those.

Participant 7 (female): All over the place. (*laughing*) I've definitely fallen into a victim to the fad and looked into things before. Like, "Try this, try that." I used to get something through a holistic doctor, her website. My doctor is in Edina and I went to see her because there are certain things that I couldn't go over without a doctor helping me with. She prescribed me a few vitamins and different natural medicine. Her office is called Balanced Care (<https://balancedcarend.com/>). Her name is Dr. Katie. Yes, she owns a business. I like to go to *Self* (<http://www.self.com/>) and *Women's Health* (<https://womens-health.com/>). There are two big female health magazines. I do like reading a stuff on their websites a lot. I also will look on Google for more trusted websites. I look for medical websites or journals... A lot of times, articles pop up and they will be a weight watcher article, so they will advertise weight watchers at the end. I don't want it: I want something more objective. So, I do look at the source to make sure that it's more objective. So, I'm looking for someone who is not tied to the company.

Participant 8 (female): I google it. I take Calcium. Otherwise, from my parents, just whatever I learned growing up.

Participant 9 (female): I hardly-ever search for information by my own initiative. Normally, the way it works is that the doctor or pharmacist recommends something. Then, I read the information pamphlets, I ask around to see if someone I know has taken it and/or I Google it to find opinions.

Participant 10 (male): I'm not taking any vitamins at this moment.

2) What specific brand websites/blogs do you use to search for information about vitamins, minerals and supplements?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): Just Amazon because it has everything and a two-day shipping. My store that I go to is CVS and Walgreens. So, sometimes I might look at their websites.

Participant 2 (male): Centrum (<https://www.centrum.com/>) seems to be a good brand. I also get the Costco equivalents for everything.

Participant 3 (male): I buy a lot of this stuff from either Costco or Amazon. So, if I'm looking online, it would be looking some stuff on these websites. In terms of getting information about efficacy of these things, I read a couple of websites with scientific literature like PubMed (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed>) to look up at first studies. It's a place where you can search for medical research articles.

Participant 4 (female): I don't have specific sites I go to. Mostly about supplements...I just ask my friend, and she tells me which ones because she's done research online. So, I wouldn't say that I research it strongly. So, I'm looking at the specific brand, I just google it to see what others say about it like Costco has a giant container... just to see what people are saying...Like Amazon too. I look reviews on there...

Participant 5 (female): I don't go to specific websites. I can go to Whole Foods or Co-Op to find more information about nutritional products, but to the stores, not their websites.

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): Amazon and GNC (<http://www.gnc.com/>). I get so much stuff from Amazon because they have everything that I'm looking for...Also, they have reviews there too, and I always like to read reviews....and then GNC...I trust the brand. I think it's a very calling brand, it's one that is everywhere and pretty affordable too as opposed to the other specialty vitamin stores.

Participant 7 (female): When it comes to vitamins or the things like that, I'm just going to Fullscript (<https://fullscript.com/>). I do go on Amazon too. Usually, it's when I know what I want but I want it cheaper. (*laughing*) I don't always do this but I'm supposed to

eat a low-fat diet; so, there are certain things that are really hard to find at stores. So, I go on Amazon to find them online. It's cheaper to get bulgur there or something like that. I read some articles more on the diet health side of that...Random articles. It ranges between books and articles. I used to subscribe to *Self* magazine. That one was the only one that was consistent and then...(laughing)...I tried almost an every single thing that you can think of...And then just talking to doctors...My doctor recommended to follow nutritional guidelines. It's the National Association for Diabetes (<http://www.diabetes.org/>). It's pretty good even if you don't have it... I don't have it...But it's still a good way to follow to try stay healthy.... Because I cannot cook (laughing)... So, I'm looking what is healthy to eat and what I should be doing.

Participant 8 (female): No, just Google.

Participant 9 (female): No, I normally end up in forums because when I google these products, I am normally looking for opinions on them.

Participant 10 (male): *(Not relevant)*

3) What elements do you pay attention when you read information about vitamins, minerals and supplements on these websites/blogs (key-words, visuals, promotions, entertaining format, etc.)?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): Probably price is a big thing for me. I don't try to look for anything too cheap, but not too costly. So, something in the middle. Something that lists a lot of side effects, I would probably turn away from. Or I'm also looking at readings, rates. I look at what people say, and if a lot of people have negative comments on that, I'll go away right away.

Participant 2 (male): I've been taking the same vitamins basically for a while. I don't go crazy. Lately, I've just been trying to find all of them in Costco. The website that I read...For example, Dr. Weil recommends that I take 10 pills a day. I think it's too many. I'm just curious that there is a pill that I should be taking, but it kinda seems that they are pushing pills. I do take some vitamins but I basically try to eat healthy and get my most nutrition that way and then take pills that can help me out.

Participant 3 (male): Obviously, if you're reading scientific review articles, you read them for the information that contains whether these things are effective or this kind of things. I'm thinking about nutritional stuff we're buying for the kids, like multivitamins...I guess one component is what people talk about is the taste. If kids are going to like it.

Participant 4 (female): Some facts...I'm looking what they're saying about ingredients, food coloring... I'm just scrolling through people's reviews, and how legitimate they are and sometimes I delve further but it's really... absorption, sugar content, food coloring content.

Participant 5 (female): I'm looking for specific types of probiotics, PPU (*particles per unit*) and what specific level we're trying to reach in terms of a dose. My daughter was intolerant to dairy products for quite a long time; so, she had to take a Calcium supplement and as well as a vitamin D. We were making sure that we use a right level of dose for her to supplement that.

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): When they have pop-ups like the benefits, like most visible that you can see what it does. So, it summarizes in bold and then it goes into detail why they

it helps you out. I usually do a lot of research on stuff before I buy it. I see what the ingredients are; what it's supposed to do compared to similar products; I read reviews...If there are certain ingredients that the consumers are saying they are really good, I'm do more research to see what exactly these ingredients do.

Participant 7 (female): I found a lot of times they will hype articles up to make them look really appealing. That's what they are supposed to be doing...But I kinda look for the downsides of things, what the side effects of this are. My friends are really into this Herbalife thing but I read that people can lose their hair from it because people react differently to it. I also try pay attention to salt intake because it's usually extremely high when it's premed.

Participant 8 (female): *(Not relevant)*

Participant 9 (female): I would say key-words, I normally look for something very specific like side-effects, so I scan-read the text to quickly find what I'm looking for.

Participant 10 (male): When I search for other products, I look for something that's really a quick summary before going into it. Just quick heads-up, what it is about. I usually don't look at things more if they don't have very general description in the first few sentences. Or something eye-catching at least.

4) What brands/bloggers related to vitamins, minerals, and supplements do you read or follow on social media?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): Maybe WebMD (*webmd.com*).

Participant 2 (male): Oh, maybe the Food Babe; it's a Facebook thing (*https://www.facebook.com/thefoodbabe/*). It's not about vitamins but about healthy eating. She's got a webpage, Facebook, where she talks about all the harmful things in food. Also, I'm reading the Environmental working group website (*www.ewg.org*), but it's mostly about chemicals.

Participant 3 (male): Not really. I don't think so. When it comes to nutritional stuff, no.

Participant 4 (female): Not, about supplements. I know other people that do well with some research, and I use their research. Like my friend who is a naturopath. She's researched and read the statistics and the facts. So, I just call her.

Participant 5 (female): No. I'm reluctant to talk to somebody that I barely know. Just talking to our doctors.

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): Well, I'm probably the only person who doesn't have a Facebook (*laughing*). So, I don't use that. I do watch YouTube a lot actually, and if there are certain sites that I go to or that I follow on, YouTube recommend it, then I would look into it. Yes, I do. I watch reviews on YouTube as well.

Participant 7 (female): For social media, it's just a Facebook. My sister invited me to groups before and I can't tell you what they are called (*laughing*)...but just random things.

Participant 8 (female): Yes, I do. In general, I use Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat. These are main ones I use. Sometimes, I read information about nutritional products. Like Snapchat has different stories about different things and sometimes I look through it, but not often.

Participant 9 (female): I don't use social networks because it would be hard to find opinions on these products, I would probably have to disclose that I am considering taking them and I don't feel comfortable with that. If you consider forums social media, then, yes, I use them to find other people's experiences.

Participant 10 (male): *(Not relevant)*

5) What elements do you pay attention when you read information about vitamins, minerals and supplements on social media?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): First thing, I would look at the year when it was written. And again, a lot of pages that I'm looking at, like WebMD, have a lot of comments from other people. It's like a blog. I read their comments.

Participant 2 (male): *(Not relevant)*

Participant 3 (male): I read only people's reviews.

Participant 4 (female): *(No relevant)*

Participant 5 (female): *(Not relevant)*

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): Mainly recommendations. If people say that it works... Not necessarily so much taste, just how well it works that it does what it's supposed to do.

Participant 7 (female): I take social media a little less seriously. Because they usually try to sell me something. *(laughing)* When somebody sends me an article, I read it. Or if it's a newsletter, I read it.

Participant 8 (female): Pictures, I guess because I'm really a visual person. Anything that says natural or healthy. I should probably look at that.

Participant 9 (female): I don't normally read social media pages about nutritional products.

Participant 10: *(Not relevant)*

6) What e-newsletters related vitamins, minerals and supplements do you receive? What elements do you pay attention when you read these e-newsletters?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): I don't receive any newsletters.

Participant 2 (male): The Environment working group is sending me emails about water quality, pesticides in food... And Dr. Weil sends me emails also. The Environment working group talks about specific elements that are bad for you. So, if a title catches me, I will read it.

Participant 3 (male): I don't receive any. About other products? Sure. I'm getting ton of these things but I almost never read them. I do pay attention to if I get some things that seem to have a good promotion or sale going on. That's something that I pay attention to.

Participant 4 (female): I don't receive them. About other products? I try not to. My inbox has 4000 emails. *(laughing)* It's just such a subject-matter, - nutritional supplements. To me, it's something more medical, it's more than just a word-of-mouth. That's why I ask my friend because she is not a paid advertiser or a paid reviewer. I need something that my children adjust to. A little bit more than just, "or somebody on Facebook said that it's awesome."

Participant 5: I have a plenty of emails from companies but nothing related to nutritional supplements.

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): I don't receive any. About other products? Let's see... No. When I go shopping, they try to recommend other products, but I'm not receiving any, no... Oh, I guess I do. I'm receiving a GNC email. So, they offer me their stuff... I pay attention to sales. *(laughing)*

Participant 7 (female): I used to receive newsletters. There is a company that I don't think exists anymore, a public funded company called CanDo. It was through Fairview hospitals. I used to follow theirs, but I think they went under. They used to have newsletters about different techniques to be healthy and how I can stay active and why I should look into it and all nutritional factors.

Participant 8 (female): I'm receiving newsletters from my local Co-Op because I'm a member. I learn something about sales that they have. Other than that, I don't get any newsletters. So, if I look at them, it's mostly about sales.

Participant 9 (female): I'm not receiving any companies' newsletters about vitamins.

Participant 10 (male): I receive a few about other products. Related to electronics and medical products. I'm looking for organization (*of newsletters*), if they have headlines something like that. That's what I read first.

7) What platforms do you use to read online reviews about vitamins, mineral and supplements? What elements do you pay attention when you read these reviews?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): Amazon.

Participant 2 (male): I've just grab nutritional products at the store. I don't order a ton online. I think other people order more. I don't typically buy vitamins online but if I was going to, I would look at reviews. For Costco, I don't need read the reviews. I'm comfortable with them.

Participant 3 (male): Probably on Amazon. I'm buying from there mostly.

Participant 4 (female): Amazon mainly. I'm just looking for general consensus, general thoughts. Even when I was looking at the Costco brand, I was trying to understand if it was good enough, not necessarily if it's the best option. I just want to make sure that it doesn't have any bad things like food coloring. My daughter has a funny reaction to it...So, I just want to make sure that it's legit. You can get a general idea of a product based on numerous reviews. I used to search for some blogs because some bloggers do a vitamin review. Google used to have a drop-out that you could pick a blog, but they don't do that anymore. But you can search for "gummy bear vitamin by blog" and sometimes, Google would generate searches also for blogs. But you have to write "blog" next to it. Sometimes, it works. Sometimes, there is so much paid advertisement that you'll never get to a somebody's blog...No, I don't have specific bloggers...

Participant 5 (female): No. I don't want to read reviews from somebody that I don't know. I'm generally skeptical.

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): As I mentioned, mostly Amazon and some bloggers on YouTube.

Participant 7 (female): Amazon. I get most of my review information when it comes to food...I do google it too and just read what people are saying about it.

Participant 8 (female): If I'm looking into nutritional products like probiotics or something like that, I google it and look into if it works for people. Just Google. Yelp has

reviews for restaurants, but I'm trying to think for products...I use Amazon Prime. I buy nutritional products on Amazon too.

Participant 9 (female): Reviews? Yes, that is mostly what I do. I don't have specific platforms I visit, I normally google the product and open some of the opinion forums and reviews that I find. I specially pay attention to side effects.

Participant 10 (male): Yes, I read reviews about other products. Amazon, products' websites, Google reviews. About electronics... everything I need for study: textbooks, reference books. Once again, when I read them... the first couple sentences is what I usually stand for... I usually read just to get a quick highlight and look-through.

8) What is your age? What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): I'm 38. Bachelor's.

Participant 2 (male): 45. Bachelor's.

Participant 3 (male): I'm 35 years old. PHD.

Participant 4 (female): 40. Master's.

Participant 5 (female): 41. Bachelor's.

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): I'm 32 years old. Associated in Arts.

Participant 7 (female): I'm 28. Master's.

Participant 8 (female): 26. Bachelor's.

Participant 9 (female): I'm 24. Bachelor's.

Participant 10 (female): 23. Bachelor's

Sample #1

- 9) Was it easy to understand what this article was about? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that it was easy to understand”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): It was easy to understand. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 2 (male): Yes, it’s easy to understand. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 3 (male): Yes. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 4 (female): Yes. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 5 (female): Yes. I understood what their point was. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): It was but...4 (“agree”). It took me a little while to figure out that it was for vitamins because, first, it seems that it was against vitamins. It was saying that they were not going to help you, but then I realized that it was for vitamins. (*laughing*)

Participant 7 (female): Yes, it was. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 8 (female): Yes. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 9 (female): Yes. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 10 (male): Yes, it was very easy to understand. 5 (“strongly agree”).

10) Do you like this article? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I like this article”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): 5 (“strongly agree”). Yes, I do. I think it was a good point that vitamins don’t take the place of eating healthy, they just support your diet. It’s not a quick fix, just take a pill and eating unhealthy. It’s a good argument.

Participant 2 (male): 5 (“strongly agree”). That’s kinda of what I believe. The more natural things are the better. Taking a bunch of pills...I have a buddy who is taking 15 pills a day. Just eat right and exercise. I’m taking multivitamins, vitamin B, C and then in winter D. And fish oil but not every day...This article backs up what I’ve always believed. There are so many fat people and they eat the wrong foods. I even don’t think that they are taking vitamins. They are just eating wrong food. Nothing can take the place of an active lifestyle.

Participant 3 (male): 3 (“undecided”). I think the underlying message is barely good, but I think the article was lacking in depth a little bit. It didn’t really delve into the issue. I think that the conclusion, the last couple of sentences of the article maybe undermine the general tone of the article. The article is sort about how obesity is a problem and you shouldn’t use vitamins to supplement that. And then they say, “well you can use vitamins to protect you against...” What are you trying to make?

Participant 4 (female): 2 (“disagree”). It’s a kind of common sense to me. Nothing new.

Participant 5 (female): 1 (“strongly disagree”). I don’t like the article. It leads with a fair amount of information that is not accurate before it gets to the point. It leads with a myth rather than the fact. I don’t like how this article is organized. I need to read that to the end to get the point. The sceptic in me was engaged immediately. *(laughing)*

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): 4 (“agree”). I saw that it was very informative. I think it seemed that it was trying to sell people on eating right as supposed to the actual vitamins, but it was informative of how you should eat correctly. I guess it didn’t really make me want to go by the vitamins because of that. (*laughing*)

Participant 7 (female): Year, I would pick 4 (“agree”). I think it’s concise; it’s fair. It obviously doesn’t go too far into details, but I think it’s good because a lot of Americans don’t want to read more that they have to...So, I think it’s pretty much just telling people like, “vitamins need to be paired with exercises and the diet”.

Participant 8 (female): 5 (“strongly agree”). b) Yeah. It’s very easy, straightforward. And I agree with it what I feel like it’s true.

Participant 9 (female): 5 (“strongly agree”). b) It was short and straight-forward. The myth-fact was very clear and helped understand the point of the article. The least appealing was that it didn’t mention any specific vitamins.

Participant 10 (male): Yes, I did. It was good. 5 (“strongly agree”). b) It was fairly short and concise; and they provided references to something else in the article.

11) Do you feel that you intend to read this website again? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to read this website again”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): 5 (“strongly agree”). Yeah. Unfortunately, I’m not as healthy myself, but I know that I want my son to be healthy so I would of course read other articles on this for my son.

Participant 2 (male): 3 (“undecided”). Not necessarily. It didn’t really give me any new information. I agree with it, but I don’t think I got anything out of it.

Participant 3 (male): 2 (“disagree”). Not, really. It feels like an opinion-driven piece while I intend to be more interested in reading more science-driven things. I thought that the message they are trying to make is actually more or less fact based but they didn’t use it to support their argument.

Participant 4 (female): No, 2 (“disagree”). I don’t like blogs or things that have common sense articles. You know when they have a headline that is really awesome, and you get there, and then, “Really, that’s what your article is.” No, it doesn’t teach me anything new. It’s very generic.

Participant 5 (female): Probably not. 1 (“strongly disagree”).

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): 4 (“agree”). Yeah, it was informative.

Participant 7 (female): I think I would. 4 (“agree”). Just because it’s so quick and it goes to the point right away. Especially, when it comes to this (*this topic*), I want to read something quick and don’t wait until the end to figure out what it’s about. (*laughing*)

Participant 8 (female): Yeah, probably. 4 (“agree”). It looks legitimate.

Participant 9 (female): 3 (“undecided”). I wouldn’t look for this website specifically again probably because I am not interested in nutritional products but if I google some products and I find it again, I will probably open it to check it.

Participant 10 (male): Yes, I would because this article was good. 4 (“agree”).

12) Do you feel that you intend to buy a product on this website? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to buy a product on this website”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): I have to look at the product. 3 (“undecided”).

Participant 2 (male): 3 (“undecided”). Well, if it was new information to me, I might think, “Maybe I should learn a little more and delve deeper in it and then maybe get to the point where it would be about whether I want to buy it or not”. I would possibly if I looked into the product, and it seems good and a good price.

Participant 3 (male): Probably 2 as well (“disagree”).

Participant 4 (female): 2 (“disagree”). I wouldn’t buy based on the article or make it my regular place to go. I feel there are a lot of companies they sell products and they try to get into a blogging thing to add value. And they don’t try very hard. (*laughing*) I guess I don’t know if want to buy something from them or not. If they have a product I want ... but again... if it’s an informational site. If this a place where I always go, I guess I will keep going back there but...

Participant 5 (female): No, 1 (“strongly disagree”)

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): No, 2 (“disagree”). As I said, it didn’t really motivate me to buy a product; it motivated me to eat correctly. (*laughing*)

Participant 7 (female): I would say something in the middle...3 (“undecided”). I think it would depend on what the product is. I think I need to read more to buy something. Or, they’re selling vitamins? (*laughing*) I probably wouldn’t buy something just because I don’t know more about it. I do know that there is a lot of people who’re talking about vitamins seem to say, “these certain ones are better for you, and those are not good for

you..." I'm a little bit more skeptical about buying vitamins unless I really know what I've got.

Participant 8 (female): I would say I'm unsure. 3 ("undecided"). Just because it's only about a myth. It's not about a specific product.

Participant 9 (female): 2 ("disagree"). Does this refer to any vitamin product? I wouldn't buy it, I would need more information about which vitamins and why should I buy them.

Participant 10 (male): Potentially...The article was good... 3 ("undecided").

Sample #2

13) Was it easy to understand what this article was about? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that it was easy to understand”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): 5 (“strongly agree”). It was about one gummy with three vitamins in it. I think it’s a great product.

Participant 2 (male): 5 (“strongly agree”). I’m all about to take a gummy if it got me everything and if it wasn’t expensive. We give our daughter gummies... Yeah, it was easy to read it.

Participant 3 (male): 5 (“strongly agree”). It’s not really an article; it’s clear what they are saying.

Participant 4 (female): Yes, it was easy to understand. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 5 (female): Yes. 5 (“strongly agree”)

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): Yes, it was easy to understand. 5 (“strongly agree”). That one I could tell that they were trying to promote the vitamin a little bit more.

Participant 7 (female): Yeah. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 8 (female): Yes, easy to understand. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 9 (female): Yes. 5 (“strongly agree”).

Participant 10 (male): Very easy. 5 (“strongly agree”). Because of the lay out. It was very concise; it had a flow to it.

14) Do you like this article? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I like this article”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): Yeah, 5 (“strongly agree”). I think it’s a great product for a kid. I like the organization, what was in it. Easy to understand.

Participant 2 (male): 5 (“strongly agree”). I like that it was specific about what’s in the vitamin. Most fish oil vitamins don’t tell you where the fish comes from, if it’s farmed or wild caught. And this one is wild caught. That’s what caught my eye. I like it that it gave me some knowledge rather than just saying, fish oil.

Participant 3 (male): I like it better. 4 (“agree”). It was definitely more visually appealing. I’m kinda torn because they are using more scientific framing to what they are trying to do. I feel very skeptical whether it’s just sort of “bla, bla, bla” ... And it doesn’t mean anything when you dig deeper. So, I don’t really know what to make of it. They are talking about Vitamin 3 versus D2 or B3 versus B2 and that this better because of this. Is it any really evidence that it’s true? Of course, you can say that. It sounds very impressive but I intend to verify that these kinds of claims.

Participant 4 (female): 3 (“undecided”). It’s laid out nice. It’s a nice piece of work. It’s an advertisement. I would need to further review or further research about an actual product.

Participant 5 (female): Yes. I like this better. 5 (“strongly agree”). The point is clear, it’s not leading me in one direction to pull me back in a different direction. Where they are going is very straightforward.

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): Yes, I did. 5 (“strongly agree”). Because not only they promoted a vitamin a little bit better, but it also said why. The other article said that you don’t really get nutrients that you need, but this article explains why you need a vitamin. You can

eat healthy and everything but sometimes, you don't store necessary nutrients. The second article explains that vitamins might help you.

Participant 7 (female): Yeah. 5 ("strongly agree"). They are clearly selling something... It's a good lay out. They answer all the important questions.

Participant 8 (female): Yeah. 5 ("strongly agree"). Because it's straightforward. It has a picture. It has good graphs. So, for visual learners, I think it's a perfect thing. For visual learners, it's a bit easier understand than the first one.

Participant 9 (female): Yeah. 5 ("strongly agree"). I like the graphic layout, and specially the explanation of each vitamin included in the gummy and the reason why they are included. I also like that it mentions the format of the product (gummy), its flavor and its recommended dosage. I also find appealing that it is clear that it is an advertisement for a specific brand. Finally, I like the picture of the kids playing, which is telling you that is a product specifically thought for them. I am missing a bit of information on why these are the right vitamins for kids.

Participant 10 (male): Yes, I do. 5 ("strongly agree"). The images are really helpful. Once again, point down to the central point.

15) Do you feel that you intend to read this website again? On a scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to read this website again”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): Probably, yes. 5 (“strongly agree”). It sounds interesting for my son. Those vitamins might be good ones to try.

Participant 2 (male): Sure, 4 (“agree”).

Participant 3 (male): I probably give more like 3 (“undecided”).

Participant 4 (female): 2 (“disagree”).

Participant 5 (female): Probably not. I wouldn’t be averse to it but...3 (“undecided”).

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): Hmm... If I was looking for vitamins or something... It was pretty cut and dry. If I was shopping around and didn’t want to read a bunch of information, I would probably come back to that one. So, I guess I would go with 4 (“agree”). As I said, the other one gives you a little bit more information; so if I just was doing some research to find out how to be healthier, I would probably go with the first article. But if I was looking for cut and dry...like what vitamin should I buy, then the second one would be more beneficial.

Participant 7 (female): Yeah, 5 (“strongly agree”). I think I would look to see if they have something for adults.

Participant 8 (female): Yeah, 5 (“strongly agree”). I like this better than the first article.

Participant 9 (female): 2 (“disagree”). I normally look for reviews so I wouldn’t be interested in an advertisement.

Participant 10 (male): I would probably go back on this website. 5 (“strongly agree”).

16) Do you feel that you intend to buy a product on this website? On the scale from 1 (“I strongly disagree that I intend to buy a product on this website”) to 2 (“disagree”) to 3 (“undecided”) to 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), what number would you choose?

Adults with kids, 2-6 years old

Participant 1 (female): 5 (“strongly agree”). I probably would because it has all the three vitamins that I want my son to have in a gummy form. It will be easy for him to take and get used to it on a routinely basis.

Participant 2 (male): I would say undecided (3). I would consider it. It would all be based on customers’ reviews and price.

Participant 3 (male): Probably more like 3 (“undecided”). It could be that after doing some independent investigation, this seems legitimate, and I’m serious about this kind of stuff.

Participant 4 (female): 3 (“undecided”). It requires more research...that’s just an advertisement. They said that they got their fish oil from wild-caught salmon. But there is a lot of issues with fake fish types and whether it was really wild-caught or was farm raised in from another country. I need more independent research on fish oil.

Participant 5 (female): 4 (“agree”). I would consider it because I like the way they presented the information.

Adults with no kids

Participant 6 (female): 3 (“undecided”). I don’t have kids. (*laughing*) Well, it gives me information... but I would probably... I like to search multiple places. So, I wouldn’t buy just alone on this site. I would look other sources as well. Because they gave me a good point to make me want to buy it but I never buy things just on reading one site alone. I always need to read the other one.

Participant 7 (female): I would say 5 (“strongly agree”). Yeah, if its website was this clear and explains ... Because they do explain this is to help you because you might not

get right food, “this is what it does; this is how you should take”... Yeah, it’s clear enough.

Participant 8 (female): Yeah, I think I would. 4 (“agree”).

Participant 9 (female): 4 (“agree”). I would probably consider it if I had kids but I’d have to talk to their doctor first or look for more information other than the brand’s advertisement, though.

Participant 10 (male): I would buy a product or something like this. 5 (“strongly agree”).