

CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER

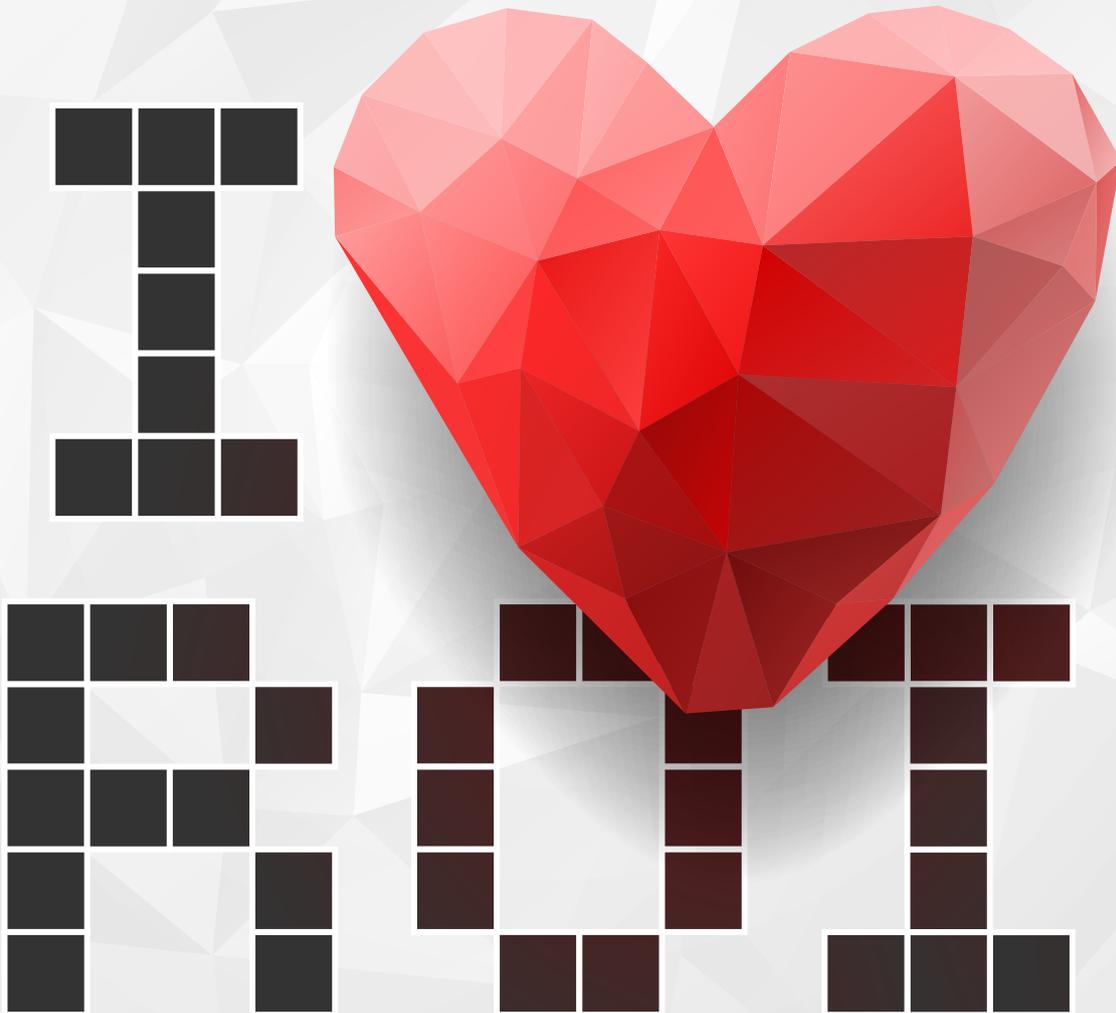
CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY FOR EXECUTIVES

ALSO INSIDE:

The Most Decadent
Print Magazines

How (Not) To
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Reddit's Alexis Ohanian
Talks Content Karma



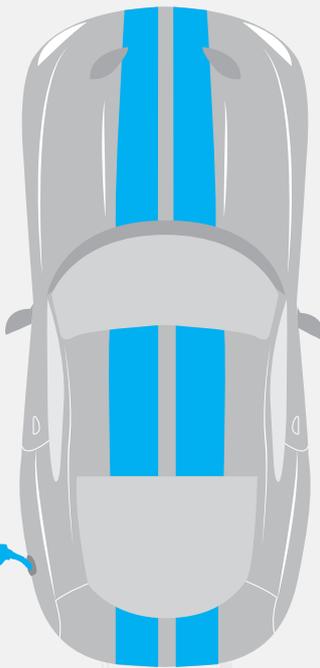
IT'S TIME TO COMMIT TO MEASUREMENT

FEBRUARY 2014

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CONTENT MARKETING INSTITUTE



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Counterpoint: Do Less, Not More

The average enterprise brand uses 17 different tactics to distribute original content and that number is growing by the minute. Blogs, enewsletters, white papers, podcasts, tweets ... and now even Tumblrs and Vines.

The content marketing gurus out there will tell you your brand needs more—much more content in all shapes and sizes—to be successful.

And brands are listening. Approximately 60 percent of North American marketers are increasing their investment in content marketing over the next 12 months.

While brands of all sizes distribute more content through more channels, they are not finding content salvation ... at all. The proof? Almost six in 10 marketers believe they are not effective at creating and distributing content to attract and retain customers.

Maybe the Answer is Less, Not More

Let's take a look at the greatest media brands of all time:

Wall Street Journal –

Before going multi-channel, the WSJ dominated the print channel.

ESPN – Before becoming the leading sports media source on the planet, they focused on dominating cable TV.

The Huffington Post – Today, The Huffington Post is everywhere—events, magazines and more—but it started by taking a leadership position as an online destination.

Inc. Magazine – Yes, Inc.com is great ... but Inc. made its reputation as a print magazine.

TED – TED started with the 15-minute big idea conference. Not until after it took off did it expand into podcasts, blogs, education

interesting and helpful video content for its banking customers. It's working.

River Pools & Spas out of

Before any of these successful media brands began experimenting with new channels to distribute content, it dominated one channel ...

initiatives and more.

Today, each one of these brands leverages almost every available channel, but it didn't start that way. In each case the road to dominance began with a single channel.

Let me repeat that a different way: Before any of these successful media brands began experimenting with new channels to distribute content, it dominated one channel consistently over time.

This is exactly the opposite of what the majority of brands do today with their content. I'm not saying that telling your stories 50 different ways in 50 different channels is wrong. But the greatest consumer and business-to-business media brands of all time started very simply: focusing on one channel, with a targeted, helpful message every month, week, day or hour.

So instead of endlessly filling content buckets in a dozen channels searching for effectiveness, maybe you should be choosing one. And this works for more than just media companies.

Jyske Bank out of Denmark invested in creating the most

Virginia created a schedule of blog posts answering its customers' questions on a regular basis. It's working.

I dare you to focus your content marketing on one content niche using one channel. I think you'll find the content salvation you are searching for.



Joe Pulizzi

Founder

Content Marketing Institute

@JoePulizzi





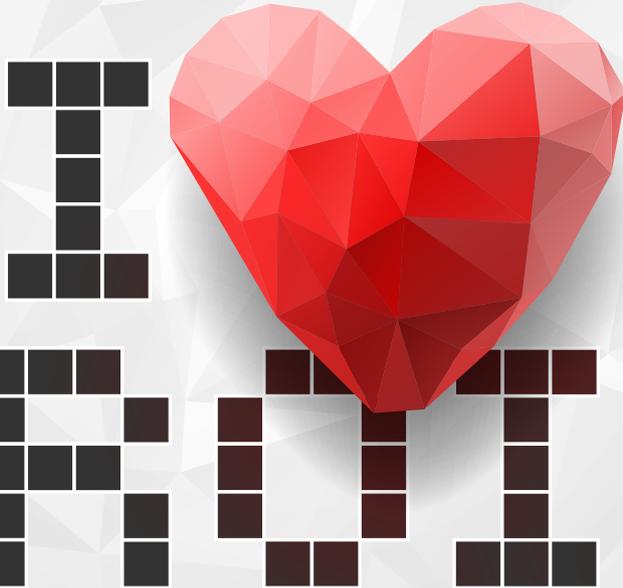
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FEBRUARY 2014

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@JoePulizzi

Getting ready for prawns and thongs as we head to Sydney for #CMWorld. (Don't smirk, it's Aussie-speak for shrimp and flip-flops.)



COVER STORY/SPECIAL SECTION

22 Find out which measurements matter for content marketers.

26 A new high-caffeine approach to analytics.



NOT FOR HIRE

34 Photographer Thomas Hawk talks about collaborating with professional artists.

14 **START-UP GUY**
Reddit's Alexis Ohanian dishes content karma.

20 **WEBINAR PLANNING**
Which format fits your needs?



16 **THE POWER OF SLOW**
An ode to print magazines.

CCO /// IN EVERY ISSUE

Power of Story	8	Tech Tools	32
Social Web	10	Expert Insight	38
Tactician.....	30	Idea Garage.....	40
		Marketoologist.....	42

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How Content Strategy and Content Marketing Are Separate But Connected

By Robert Rose

Full *mea culpa* here: Content Marketing Institute has been remiss in the way that we've covered the evolving practice of building and executing on a content strategy.

Sure, we've offered up some great thinkers in the space at Content Marketing World. But, here at CMI we haven't yet (at least, not to the extent that we should) fully embraced the advancement of content strategy or helped preach the distinction between the skill sets needed for content marketing and those required for content strategy. In fact, we've been guilty of using the terms "content marketing strategy" and "content strategy" interchangeably (we have resolved to be more clear on this moving forward.)

One of the things I often discuss in workshops, and with CMI's clients, is the distinct need for content strategy within the *approach* of content marketing. Specifically, I point out how many agencies are doing themselves a disservice by throwing a skilled content marketing planning expert into a content strategy project, and vice versa. Additionally, as enterprise marketing organizations reorganize themselves with strategic management of content as a centralizing force, we see managers start to feel lost because they have a skill set that's specifically suited to one practice over the other.

In short: Content strategy and content marketing are two very

different practices.

Are they related? Absolutely, and there's usually significant overlap. But as we plan budgets and activities for the remainder of 2014, it's well worth outlining where the differences lie, so that we can resource our strategies effectively.

Magic markers and fine pens

When asked to explain the difference between content strategy and content marketing, I usually turn to my stand-by metaphor: *Content marketers draw on the wall with magic markers, while content strategists use fine pens.*

But this simplification is merely a starting point to describe the distinctions. Content marketing is, after all, a means of *marketing*. Content marketers draw and develop the larger story that our organization wants to tell, and focus on ways to engage an audience, using content so that it changes or enhances a behavior—something CMI has always stressed in our definition of content marketing.

So at its heart, content marketing is a *marketing* strategy—an approach that uses content to deepen our relationship with customers.

Content strategy, on the other hand, delves deeper into (in Kristina Halvorson's words) the "creation, publication and governance of useful, usable content." It seeks (in my words) to manage content as a strategic asset across the entirety of the organization. In fact, on his website, content strategist Scott Abel wonderfully states it as one

of his company's main missions: *"Your content is your most valuable business asset. Let us show you how to manage it efficiently and effectively."*

In the beginning of Erin Kissane's book, *The Elements of Content Strategy* (which is really good, by the way), she quotes Rachel Lovinger, *"Content strategy is to copywriting as information*

.....

Content strategy and content marketing are two very different practices.

.....

architecture is to design."

As a content marketer who's had his feet in both approaches for the last decade, this really resonates with me. It's not unlike Ahava Liebtag's take on the differences. In a wonderful post on the topic, Rebecca Lieb refers to Liebtag's definition of content strategies as being about repeatable frameworks, and content marketing as being about *building relationships*.

Or, consider Rahel Bailie's view of content strategy. She believes it includes: *"... the planning aspects of managing content throughout its lifecycle, and includes aligning content to business goals, analysis, and modeling, and influences the development, production, presentation, evaluation, measurement, and sunseting of*



content, including governance.”

Onward, content marketing

To use an extremely simplified and surface-level explanation, the content marketer addresses the “whys,” the content strategist addresses the “hows,” and together they work out the “whats” and “wheres.” The content marketer draws the story and plans the channels that will be used to develop the customer relationship with the brand. The content strategist ensures that story, language and management processes work consistently and efficiently across multiple teams, languages and every publication the brand leverages. Yes, the two approaches are different, but whether they can be implemented and executed by the same person (or team of people) in your organization is another matter.

Muddled definitions aside, consider this advice:

If you are an agency: Whether

you are an SEO agency transitioning into content marketing or a full-service agency adding a content marketing practice to your suite of services, please recognize that there is a distinction. I’ve seen too many agencies that are simply throwing the title, “content strategist,” at someone whose responsibilities would be much better served by the title, “content marketing strategist.” They are not the same thing—and your clients will be better served if your agency respects the differences and/or offers both categories of service.

If you are a brand: If you are putting together teams and processes to create facile management of content as a core marketing strategy—employ both. Don’t assume that a marketing team that knows how to tell compelling, engaging stories understands all the intricacies of content strategy (they might, but it’s exceedingly rare.)

And, don’t assume that the content strategist managing the consistency and hierarchy of your technical documentation knows everything about content marketing.

If you are a practitioner: Know what you are passionate about, and pursue that practice with all your heart. Most of the best content strategists I know really don’t want to be content marketers—and vice versa. As a content marketer, I couldn’t admire content strategists more. What they do, quite frankly, mystifies me most of the time. On every marketing team I have the pleasure of working with, I adore having a content strategist there who will help make sure we don’t blow the place up.

Robert Rose is the chief strategist for the Content Marketing Institute. Follow him @Robert_Rose.

What the Experts are Saying:



LISA TRAGER

@lisalt

In my experience, agencies and clients have difficulty budgeting and understanding the value of a content strategist, let alone hiring for both roles. Heck, think how long it took to get UX to have a place at the table alongside creative.

Most of the work I do as a content strategist requires identifying ways to engage an audience, using content so that it changes or enhances a behavior, as well as figuring out how content will be developed, maintained and governed. In general, much less time and fewer resources are scoped to achieve the latter.



MARGOT BLOOMSTEIN

@mbloomstein

Content strategy and content marketing aren’t the same—but because strategy is nothing without execution, we need to acknowledge and fund both parts of effective organizational communication.

Content marketing without up-front and ongoing strategy can flail, favoring big hits over sustainable evolution. But content strategy without execution is an equally questionable investment. Content marketing isn’t the only way to execute on content strategy (see also editorial content, instructional content, training, governance, etc.) but without some point of execution, our work is theoretical at best.



LAURA CREEKMORE

@lauracreekmore

I like to tell people that content strategy can be used in content marketing, but it’s also used in other areas (e.g. product development, customer service, operations to name a couple) that get far afield from marketing. Perhaps the names of these two fields are an unfortunate accident (in that they sound so similar), but it’s helpful to everyone to clarify what we mean.

#Hashtagology

An etiquette guide for this newest form of punctuation.

By Jonathan Crossfield

It took a while, but Facebook finally succumbed to the hashtag in June 2013. Now this humble little symbol can connect conversations on Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, Google+ and Pinterest.

Its impact on modern culture—even on our language—is so large that the American Dialect Society declared hashtag as Word of the Year in 2012.

But try explaining hashtags to someone who has never used them and it isn't as easy as you might

think. So welcome class to #hashtagology 101. Settle down and open your textbooks. Please stop talking in the back. After all, that's what the hashtag is for ...

A Hashtag History

In 2007, Twitter was a fast-moving stream of disconnected 140-character comments. It was possible for anyone to search Twitter for keywords, but whereas many tweets may contain the same keyword, not every tweet was about that keyword.

Some users brought order to this chaos by adopting a system from Internet Relay Chat networks—the hashtag. This began merely as a way for users to label tweets with a particular theme, group or topic.

In 2009, Twitter updated its system to make hashtags clickable, returning a search for all tweets containing the term. What started as an informal workaround among users became an integral part of the platform.

However, the hashtag has evolved into far more than a labeling system.

The Hashtag and Language

When someone tags a tweet as #FirstWorldProblems, is she making it easy for you to find all the whining, post-modern middle classes in one click? Or is she using the hashtag as a self-referential comment on her own tweet?

Ending a tweet with #FTW (For The Win) is far more about adding a shorthand punch to the air than it is about grouping celebratory tweets into a single conversation.

And people intentionally create new hashtags every day that make no sense beyond that one specific update. These are not mistakes. People are using hashtags to add extra layers of meaning to their messages.

Continued on page 12

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Continued from page 10

A hashtag can convey irony or sarcasm, suggest emotion or mood, pose an answer to an implied or rhetorical question or even directly contradict the actual tweet. The effect can be humorous, provocative, informative or mysterious. And it can do some or all of these simultaneously.

Just think about that for a moment. A new form of punctuation has joined our language, the use of which can enhance or transform the meaning of a sentence. That's pretty mind-blowing.

The hashtag packs so much extra information and implied meaning into so few characters that it's easy to see how it could only have risen to prominence on Twitter.

Social media word games are a great example of this multi-layered meaning. For example, #OneLetterMissingTV serves not only to label the conversation for people to follow, but provides the instructions for the game: suggest a TV show that would be quite different if just one letter were missing. My favorite is "Tar Trek. The ongoing adventures of a group of council roadmen" from @LeeAHarris.

No wonder some people can be confused by the various nuances of this linguistic marvel. However, if your marketing involves social media, you need to be fluent in the language. Misinterpreting a message or using hashtags incorrectly can make your brand seem as out of place as your uncle's inappropriate dancing at a wedding.

When Hashtags Go Bad

Just like domain names, hashtags suffer from the same problems that arise when any sequence of words is run

together without spaces.

Margaret Thatcher's death in April 2013 provoked a huge amount of online discussion. She was a highly controversial and polarizing figure in British politics, so it wasn't surprising for one of the most popular hashtags to become a trending topic.

#nowthatchersdead

If you live in the United States and read that sequence of letters, Margaret Thatcher may not pop into your head. You certainly wouldn't be alone if you thought it actually read # Now That Cher's Dead.

Confusion for many fans, and I'm sure a pretty weird day for the superstar singer.

Choosing the right hashtag is crucial if you don't want to lose control of the message. Or worse, invite ridicule.

Someone in British singer Susan Boyle's PR agency obviously thought a hashtag promoting her new album launch would be a good idea, and #SusanAlbumParty would seem to make sense.

That is, until the lewd bum jokes started under the hashtag #susanalbumparty.

Always run your hashtag ideas past fresh eyes to spot these traps.

Marketers and Hashtags

Hashtags present a fantastic opportunity for marketers to identify social media conversations relevant to their business and get their content in front of the right people.

Always check the hashtag first to see how much

CHATTER EXPERTS WEIGH IN ON HASHTAGS.



KIM FERREIRA
@kimferreira821

For a more mature/professional audience, yes, one simple hashtag is perfect. However for a younger audience, the hashtag is a way to have fun. You can use more of them and make them longer ... even use them as a punchline. Younger audiences see them as an extension to the story and a way to express themselves.



ERIKA HEALD
@SFerika

I often see marketers use Twitter chat hashtags attached to content promotion messages that are somewhat off topic to the community. If you want your content to be well-received when using a community hashtag, you need to have a solid understanding of that community's topics of interest, which is usually the result of participating in (or at least listening in on) that community.



SHAUNA CASTORENA
@WhiskeyChick

We post the original headline to social with the broadest hashtag, then later post leading questions with more drilled-down hashtags, still limiting to one hash per post. Social media is a real-time experience ... if a person doesn't catch the first post in your stream then you can get him later with the next one.

Choosing the right hashtag is crucial if you don't want to lose control of the message. Or worse, invite ridicule.

activity it receives, the sorts of content people share and how well (or otherwise) such content is received. Not every conversation is welcoming to marketers. Is brand content shared or ignored? Or criticized? It's advisable to only use a couple of hashtags in a post, so choose wisely.

However, resist the temptation to intrude too heavily on any conversation. It's no more appropriate to spam the hashtag with offers or self-serving content than it is anywhere else. Interaction still matters so don't post and run either. Posting to a single group too often or repetitively can turn a community against you, so it's best to avoid using hashtags with bots and automated systems.

Hashtags are also the glue that holds many cross-platform competitions and campaigns together, making it easy for followers to submit content to be aggregated and displayed elsewhere, as discussed in my last column.

However, always remember that the hashtag belongs to the community, even if you created it yourself. You can't censor or control how others will use it, so be sensitive to situations that could fuel a hashtag backlash.

Qantas discovered this in 2011 when it launched a social media competition with the hashtag #QantasLuxury in the middle of a controversial union dispute. At its height, 51 tweets per minute were sent containing the hashtag. The vast majority ridiculed or criticized the airline, creating a highly visible and wide-reaching PR disaster.

Hashtags #FTW!

Used well, hashtags can be immensely powerful marketing tools. But as the wise uncle of Peter Parker once said, "With great power comes great responsibility." Like any tool, we should treat them with respect, care and plenty of consideration.

Above all, the power of the hashtag should never be underestimated. This once rarely used character on the keyboard is rapidly becoming one of the mightiest punctuation marks in history.



Jonathan Crossfield's part copywriter, screenwriter, blogger and journalist—and has won awards for his writing on digital marketing and his over-opinionated blog, Atomik Soapbox. Find him @Kimota.

More tips on how to use hashtags in your social media content: <http://bit.ly/hashtagology>



KATHY BURNS-MILLYARD
@KBurnsMillyard

Too many hashtags in one post obscures the message. It's like trying to read a book with the lights flickering on and off; you have to go back and slowly pick through it to make some sense of it.



CRISTIN RIFFLE-LASH
@nxanalytics

I often find hashtags at the end rather than including mid text to be repetitive and to force truncation of the actual content within the tweet. If you're selective the tweet doesn't lose meaning by tagging as you go. But limit to one to three total and switch up in subsequent tweets.



STONEY DEGEYTER
@StoneyD

Hashtags used as part of a #sentence make the sentence more difficult to read. My preference is to see them used at the end of whatever statement being made. #enoughsaid.



ANDREA HOYMANN
@Frau_Hoy

One important thing to consider (and to avoid disaster) when creating a hashtag is timing, and the way the brand is perceived in public versus what we think it stands for. Some infamous examples include the hijacking of #qantasluxury a day after the entire fleet was grounded and the #McDStories debacle.



STARTING GUY

On a book tour for *Without Their Permission*, Alexis Ohanian (co-founder of reddit) shared how his “blueprint for aspiring entrepreneurs” relates to marketers and advertisers. His motto and mandate: Make things people want.

*Alexis Ohanian, as told
to Robert Rose*

TIP

Tom Friedman has a clever title in talking about globalization (i.e. *The World is Flat*) ... but the Internet is much flatter than the world could ever be. As a technology, it is just transferring ones and zeroes. It is instant and vast, and connected to every single human being who has a connection. It is going to make it much easier for people bring great ideas into the world. That's why I wrote the book: I just want to see people achieve their maximum level of awesome.

At the same time, the Internet has a lot of noise. We have some good tools for finding the signal ... **reddit**, Twitter, Facebook. But they are not perfect. Some people are going to have a lot of success building other platforms that help us discover what is interesting to us ... what is good and what is cool, and what is new and funny or what have you. But it's really on us to always be making good stuff.

Only your mom is really going to care about what you've made. Everyone else has to be convinced.

If we focus on adding value to people's lives, I really do believe that things that should have an audience will.

Somewhere out there there's someone who spent her life obsessing over staplers. (I'm making this up, of course.) There's probably a community of people who love staplers ... vintage staplers. There is someone out there who, by all accounts, should be able

to actually make a living being an authority on this particular thing. If there's a community out there for it, the Internet will be pretty good at connecting her to the people who obsess over staplers. She could be the Anna Wintour for the stapler world. It sounds absurd, but this stuff is happening right now.

I don't actively use Pinterest, but enough friends of mine have used it for planning weddings and told me they've stumbled upon amazing curators that have been world changing with how helpful they were. With the flattening of the Internet you will absolutely see more of these niche communities rise up and sustain creators, sustain tastemakers in a way that just wasn't possible before. Content creators a generation ago were limited to people who had all the resources. Today, someone really can just start taking photographs and three years later be one of the most viewed photographers in the world; see *Humans of New York*.

Right now the mechanisms for monetizing are crude. **What users really want is to reward the tastemakers, the creatives, the curators, for the great stuff they do.** It's going to inspire other entrepreneurs to say, "Let's do better than banner ads and referral

links."

I'm an investor in a platform, **Patreon**. They've looked at Kickstarter and said, "What if we could find a way to get people to subscribe to creatives and tastemakers who they really like and just pay them money to produce original amazing content every week?" Jack Conte of **Pomplamoose** is already getting \$6,000 per video based on crowd-funded contributions—with subscriptions that start for as little as a dollar. It's cool to me because it's a new approach to monetization that is not at odds with the user base.

Native advertising (sponsored content) is not the end game ... but at least it is getting advertisers in the right mindset, which is, "Make things people want." Advertisers need to think this way. They can't get away with being lazy. We've been advertising the same way for a hundred years, but the 20th century playbook just can't last in a world where users have ultimate power. The back button is the enemy. We have to be better than a cat photo. I think of that when I wear my marketing hat and ask, "How do I get people to love Hipmunk or reddit or any of this stuff?" If you're not actually creating something that people want, they're going to go right back to cat photos. They're going to ignore you or worse, they're going to

reddit, decoded.

The social news and entertainment site Alexis Ohanian co-founded in 2005 has more than 80 million unique monthly visitors and 4.7 billion monthly page views. Redditors (reddit editors) up-vote and down-vote content, thereby deciding what content makes it to the front page on the site (the so-called "front page of the Internet"). Content is also organized into topic areas called "subreddits." Over time redditors accumulate points (called karma) if their content, links or comments are upvoted. More karma, more influence.

Reddit is perhaps best known to non-redditors for the site's live AMAs or "Ask Me Anything," in which a famous or infamous person invites users to ask anything in a fast-moving conversation among thousands. Bill Gates's AMA, for example, spawned 27,000 comments. But AMAs also include those who simply capture the imagination, such as Allena Hansen, who was severely mauled by a bear but managed to drive herself to get help. The conversations can be both touching and absurd, but because of reddit's up-vote/down-vote methodology even massive threads like these are easy to navigate.



CONCONTENT

Print magazines have an unparalleled ability to keep readers rapt. Yet too few brands leverage the sensory experience print provides. Here we highlight five of the boldest and most beautiful brand magazines from European brands.

By **Nenad Senic**

Research shows people browse magazines for an average of 25 minutes. Can you imagine your customers or business partners spending that much active time with your brand? Heaven, right?

But too often, custom magazines use print pages to sell products and ideas rather than tell engaging, brand-neutral stories. These five standouts from Europe uphold the image of the staid custom magazine.

FOR PRIVATE CLIENTS Bespoke

Grant Thornton
An instinct for growth

ISSUE 13 | SUMMER 2012

What to do about Europe?
Strategy and perspective for investors

Realistic returns
20th Century art is looking good

Tax mitigation
How to navigate the new rules

The chic shall inherit the earth
When it comes to legacies, pets win prizes

Bespoke, Grant Thornton

Bespoke isn't what you might expect from Grant Thornton, a leading financial and business adviser in the United Kingdom. The custom print magazine recently featured a story on the dogs of the super rich, putting a well-groomed poodle on the cover (editors explained, it's a "valuable insight into human nature.") Leading business journalists offer the magazine's editorial features, lightly peppered with columns from Grant Thornton specialists. Based on its early success, *Bespoke* now includes weekly digital content and vodcasts.



Neuburger, Neuburger GMBH & CO.KG.

Liver cheese—which is neither liver nor cheese—is as sexy as bologna, right? An 80-year-old family business on the Austrian-Czech border decided to give it the glamour treatment with a lifestyle print magazine devoted entirely to liver cheese. Believe me when I say *Neuburger* magazine is among the most high-end magazines you'll ever read. Each issue delivers stunning photography and up-to-the-minute design on eye-catching gloss paper. Imagine a closeup of bologna's meat-cousin splayed across a magazine spread. Sound unappealing? *Neuburger* makes it sizzle.



you and me, Deutsche Telekom AG

Employee magazines have a bad reputation for uninspired top-to-bottom communication, typically beginning with the bland CEO interview. A multiple-award-winning magazine, *you and me* is different. It doesn't report canned company news; it's a monothematic magazine and each issue discusses an emotion or activity like fear or love. And the magazine's editors are unafraid to wander in to more uncomfortable conversations. The goal: To create a strong sense of community among employees—a critical tactic for a brand that considers talent a strategic asset.



Vid & Gib, Morela okulisti and Artros

Vid & Gib is published by two family owned medical centers in Slovenia dedicated to ophthalmologic and orthopedic care, separately. The lifestyle magazine's unusual design—two publications sandwiched together at 180 degrees—offers each dedicated space even while reaching the same audience. The magazine pays particular attention to questions patients share as they navigate their health decision-making process.

Nenad Senic is an award-winning brand editor and journalist, content marketer and custom publisher from Slovenia. He's also the European editor of *CCO* magazine. Follow him @nenadsenic.



ČiliChili, Vodafone Czech Republic

Czech Vodafone publishes among the boldest risk-taking custom magazines in the world: *ČiliChili*. (Ever heard of a brand-funded magazine publishing a story about the gay experience, complete with campy beefcake cover shot? I didn't think so.) The magazine is aimed at young, fun-seeking elite as an integrated sales tool. Three-quarters of Vodafone CZ customers confirmed *ČiliChili* helped them to make a purchase decision.

Our community discussed print's role in content marketing during a January #CMWorld twitter chat. Find out more: <http://bit.ly/PrintTwitterChat>



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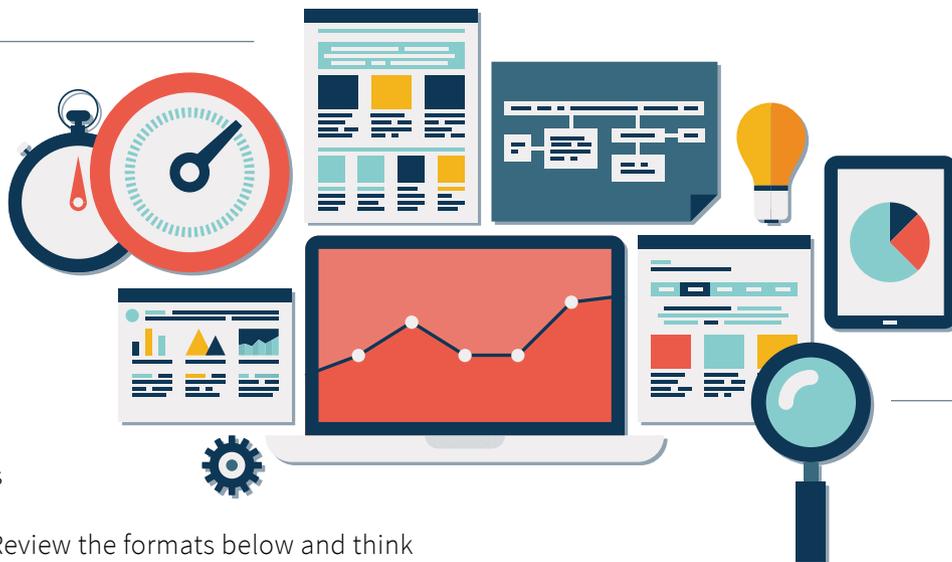
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WEBINAR PLANNING

WHICH FORMAT MAKES SENSE?



Do you choose a webinar format based on what makes sense or what's the easiest to pull off quickly? We thought so. Review the formats below and think seriously about which matches your topic and goals best. Want to explore a particularly complex topic? A single presenter may not offer enough depth or experience. Want to explore a controversial topic? Consider recruiting presenters who can talk off the cuff rather than stick like glue to the talking points.

LOWER PREP & PLANNING

LECTURE

A single expert presents rehearsed content and answers audience questions.

PRO: Easier to plan and prepare. Little training involved.

CON: Succeeds (or fails) based on individual's skills. Participants may be more likely to zone out if lecturer doesn't inspire, and less likely to participate in a Q&A session.

BEST FOR:

Platform for a well-recognized thought leader
Conveyance of technical or tactical knowledge

MEDIUM PREP & PLANNING

INTERVIEW

An interviewer asks questions of an expert or experts. Questions typically planned in advance to ensure session covers a relevant range of issues.

PRO: More engaging than lecture-style format, but still a highly controlled format. More likely to generate conversation from audience. Lower flop-risk if use multiple experts.

CON: More planning and training to coordinate multiple presenters.

BEST FOR:

Complex topics where more than one perspective adds depth
Presenters who prefer to rehearse content delivery

MEDIUM PREP & PLANNING

PANEL DISCUSSION

A moderator engages an expert panel in a less-rehearsed, more-conversational presentation.

PRO: More engaging format for audience. Conversation less likely to feel canned.

CON: More planning and training required to coordinate larger group. Also, requires a strong moderator to prevent experts from talking over one another.

BEST FOR:

Controversial or complex topics where multiple—even competing—perspectives improve learning
Presenters comfortable with on-the-fly speaking

ADVANCED SKILLS REQUIRED

SEMINAR

Prioritizes conversation from the audience over a lecture-style delivery. Seminar-style webinars are instructor-led, but audience conversation is considered as critical as instructor content.

PRO: Most engaging format for audience.

CON: Requires a highly skilled instructor with experience as a teacher and facilitator. Smaller class size.

BEST FOR:

“Need-to-know” vs. “nice-to-know” topics
Fee-based webinars, where students feel a more personalized approach

Find six key metrics to measure and maximize your webinar's success: <http://bit.ly/CCOwebinars>.

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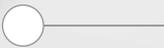
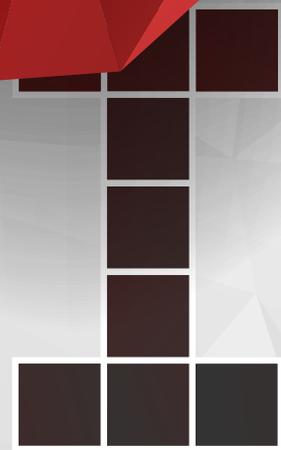
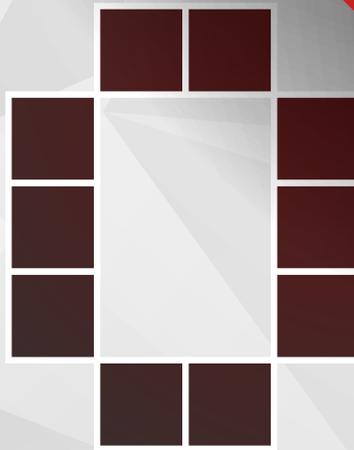
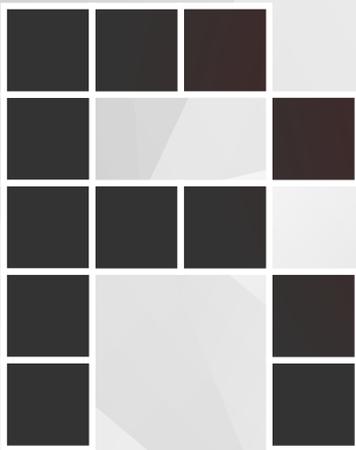
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IT'S TIME FOR CONTENT MARKETING TO MEASURE UP.

Given greater sophistication of technology and analytics, marketers must sharpen their skills and zero in on what measurements matter.

By Arnie Kuenn



The concept of content marketing has been around since 1895, the year John Deere started circulating its magazine, *The Furrow*. Since then many brands have proven the process works. But quantifying a return on investment (ROI) in the new frontier of online marketing can be challenging. There's rarely an immediate 30-day turnaround on investment, which creates confusion and no small amount of anxiety.

When content does take hold, however, the benefits can be very fruitful—and measure you must.

Before you drill down to measure the ROI of a specific content marketing asset, you need to examine and measure the value of your content marketing efforts as a whole. Marketing-related key performance indicators (KPIs) abound, but unless you understand which are important to your brand, you'll find it nearly impossible to measure success.

Useful content engages readers, and its value goes far beyond the cost of creation and distribution. Yet every marketer must ultimately speak the language of executives, so you need to prove value with metrics.

So what makes valuable content? Great content:

- ▶ **Presents a personality**, allowing your company to reach prospects and customers on a more personal level through interaction. Content can offer opinions and advice, but even more important is your willingness to respond to questions and honor requests—which allows people to relate to your content. Content then becomes a two-way conversation, rather than a one-sided advertisement.
- ▶ **Attracts clients and search engines** with high-quality, optimized content. Great content draws the attention of potential clients and wins higher ranking from search engines.
- ▶ **Builds loyalty and trust** by addressing questions and concerns with



If your CRM system and processes do not allow you to track a visitor all the way to end sale, it's imperative that you figure out how to fix this.

useful, lasting information. Content builds an audience and develops loyalty among its followers.

► **Establishes authority** through consistent, high-value information—the type that clients seek over time as a trustworthy source of intelligence on key issues.

While these value concepts are important to understand, they offer little extractable data to calculate ROI.

QUICK TIP 1:

CONTENT MARKETING is different from other forms of online marketing in that it does not always deliver ROI quickly. It may take weeks or months for a piece of content to be discovered by people and the search engines.

That's where consumption, lead-generation, sales and sharing metrics come into play. (These concepts are also described by Jay Baer of *Convince and Convert* in his post, "The 4 Types of Content Metrics That Matter.") Determine which of the following is important to your executive suite and start measuring these KPIs within your organization.

CONSUMPTION METRICS

Use web analytics from programs like Google Analytics to reveal consumption metrics, which show the value of your content efforts. KPI metrics may include total visits, unique visits, downloads, time-on-site, cost-per-visitor and bounce rate. The key here is to look for measurable data that can help you determine how often content is consumed as well as the path readers follow to find that content. For example, maybe a visitor came to your site to read a blog post, then followed a link to your services page, then clicked to your about-us page, then filled out a contact-us form.

These metrics are directly tied to the value of your investment. It's likely your other marketing channels are hitting certain baselines such as cost-per-click or cost-per-action; look for similar ways to attribute content marketing

value as you would with paid search or other marketing campaigns. A wide array of website metrics can be used as key performance indicators of content. Ensure your site is set up to measure them and look at data weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly for an accurate representation of the return on your investment.

LEAD-GENERATION METRICS

One way marketers attribute leads to content is by using lead-capture forms (even restricting a piece of content to those who complete it.) The form may ask for name and e-mail address to sign up for a newsletter or it may request even more information. It's up to you and your team to close this lead, but the content itself acts as the carrot. The second way marketers attribute a lead to content is by tracking the originating source of a lead. A visitor may happen across a great video you developed and fills out a lead form. That content was consumed and helped produce a lead.

No matter the method, it's important to set up your site with the correct goals to track and measure leads and attribution. Cookies can also track visitors on your site and indicate which pages they viewed prior to filling out the form—even if they don't do so on their first visit. Ensure your site is set up to track these events and understand the value each lead provides to your company.

If a piece of content costs \$3,000 to produce and you spend \$4,000 to promote it, your total investment is \$7,000. Say each lead you get has a value of \$70; to break even on your investment your content piece must generate 100 leads. If you have never determined your lead-value price it's highly recommended you do so.

QUICK TIP 2:

CAN'T MEASURE IT ALL? Then focus on web traffic and leads (or revenue) first. If your content is generating more traffic, leads and revenue, then all the other metrics are secondary.

SHARING METRICS

Social media metrics are less easily quantified as a dollar value but are still important. Social networks generate traffic for your content assets (and tie in to consumption metrics, among others.) But how can you really determine the value of a “like” on Facebook or a “+1” on Google? These social points are certainly important—but in a discussion about ROI, it’s hard to assign a dollar value.

Social profiles provide value for customer relationship management, customer service and customer engagement, among other purposes. The particular sharing metrics important for the ROI discussion depend on your chosen KPIs. For example, you may focus on referral traffic and conversions on your site, or simply gain an understanding of how consumers share your content, which provides value in other areas. When thinking about the return on your content investment, don’t ignore sharing metrics, but take care not to overvalue them either.

SALES METRICS

The true dollars and cents of content marketing come from sales metrics. While the rest of the metrics mentioned here are important, sales metrics are the easiest aspect of the ROI equation to understand.

Review close rates. I don’t just mean conversion rates on your site, but actual sales close rates as reported in your CRM system. Sales conversion rates are an excellent tool for proving content marketing ROI, affirming your prospects are turning into paying customers. If your CRM system and processes do not currently allow you to track a visitor all the way to the end sale, it’s imperative that you figure out

how to fix this. Ensure your system can track what path a visitor took to fill out a lead form and transfer that data to your CRM system or sales software. This should help you to see over time what type of content consumption is important to that final sale. For example, is it how-to videos, white papers or product comparisons that seem to influence the sale?

If your CRM system and processes do not allow you to track a visitor all the way to end sale, it’s imperative that you figure out how to fix this.

With data in hand, you can attribute value to the content pieces that helped to close that sale. You can attribute project revenues and profitability of that customer to the content responsible for bringing the customer in. In many cases that type of data is hard to track down, so value isn’t so easily correlated to a single asset. Don’t let these types of loose ends continue to hamper you; start tracking the information and make informed observations on the ROI of your content marketing.

ADDITIONAL METRICS

Consider other cost-savings related to content marketing—savings that may not be easy to capture in your KPIs. For example, leads from content (such as a

potential client downloading a free guide in exchange for his contact information)

are better-qualified sales leads. Less time is spent actively pursuing the sale because your prospects sought you (and are further along in the consideration cycle.) Your customer service costs may also come down. Online FAQs or other resource pages can quickly and effectively answer many questions tying up customer service reps. Take a hard look at your business and determine how content marketing can make a positive impact on your bottom line, as this can factor in the overall cost effectiveness and success of a content marketing strategy.

Content marketing has proven time and time again to be a valuable asset to any marketing plan, and with proper strategy and implementation proving the ROI to executives in the business can be accomplished. It may take some time but once tracking is set up, you’re sure to see your investment pay off. ■



Arnie Kuenn is the president of Vertical Measures and author of *Accelerate! Moving Your Business Forward Through*

the Convergence of Search, Social & Content Marketing. He’s a frequent speaker at conferences like Content Marketing World, PubCon, SMX, AMA, Inbound and the ASU Cronkite School of Journalism. Find him on Twitter @ArnieK.

INVESTIGATIVE ANALYTICS

A CAFFEINATED APPROACH TO SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS

By Don DeLoach

Two-hundred-million active **Twitter** users send 400 million tweets per day. Six-hundred-thousand pieces of content are shared on **Facebook** each minute. Seventy-two hours of video are uploaded to **YouTube** every minute.

The ever-growing streams of social media data hold the secrets you need to reach and engage your customers. Yet, according to a *Harvard Business Review* study, only 12 percent of companies using social media believe they are using it effectively.

To date, social media analytics focused on the content of posts—the actual text of a tweet, for example—to measure consumer opinion. While sentiment analysis is important, companies also need to dig deeper into the data to glean *actionable insight*. Whether companies are trying to engage better with customers, improve brand awareness or boost lead gen, intelligent social media analysis is critical. And to get there, companies are increasingly embracing a new approach: investigative analytics.

EVOLVED ANALYTICS: ASKING ITERATIVE, OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Data analysis is no longer just the domain of the CIO and IT. Data-driven decision-making is the realm of marketing, sales and business development—anyone who has a stake in the organization's and customers' success.

However, traditional analytic tools don't let users interrogate the fast-moving, highly diverse types of high-

Continued on page 28

The Next Generation Content Marketing Platform



NEWRAINMAKER.COM/PLATFORM

Continued from page 26

volume social data. As data connections and dependencies grow exponentially, it's no longer possible to capture actionable information in a rigid set of KPIs and canned reports. To manage content, brand and customer engagement in a social world, companies should consider performing richer, real-time data analysis—with (it's true) far fewer resources.

Enter investigative analytics, where users ask a series of quickly changing, iterative questions to figure out why something did or did not happen, and determine how to optimize a particular outcome. Compared to traditional analytics, which lack flexibility because they are tied to rigid KPIs and reports, investigative analytics yield insight into questions that haven't even been dreamed yet.

For example, traditional analytics may help companies answer a question like, "How many leather handbags did we sell via Pinterest last week?" Investigative analytics ask more meaningful questions, combining social media with other data points (e.g. campaign information, click-throughs, conversions, etc.), to enable more flexible data interrogation.

An investigative analytics series of questions may follow a path like this:

- ▶ "Where are we getting the most sales conversions on leather handbags?" The answer: 25 *specific* Pinterest boards provide the most leads.

- ▶ "Is there a particular product-marketing image those 25 Pinterest boards are using?" (E.g. Is it a static image with lots of white space, or a woman modeling it at a chichi restaurant? Is it black or vibrant red?)

- ▶ "Are we selling to a younger demographic when a specific color bag is pictured?"
- ▶ "Is there a common conversion thread for consumers who paused a video ad but then resumed play? Did they convert better or worse than those who never paused the video?"

- ▶ "Do more targeted consumers convert from a mobile device?" If yes, figure out how to optimize the campaign for mobile users.

This open-ended process of investigative analytics allows anybody looking at the data to constantly evolve

the questions they ask and query data in real time regardless of data volume. As a result, companies can figure out how to develop customized campaigns that deploy the right messages via the most receptive channels. Not only will they be able to increase efficiency of campaigns and how they target consumers with content, but they also will uncover up-sell targets and inform product development roadmaps as consumer preferences are revealed.

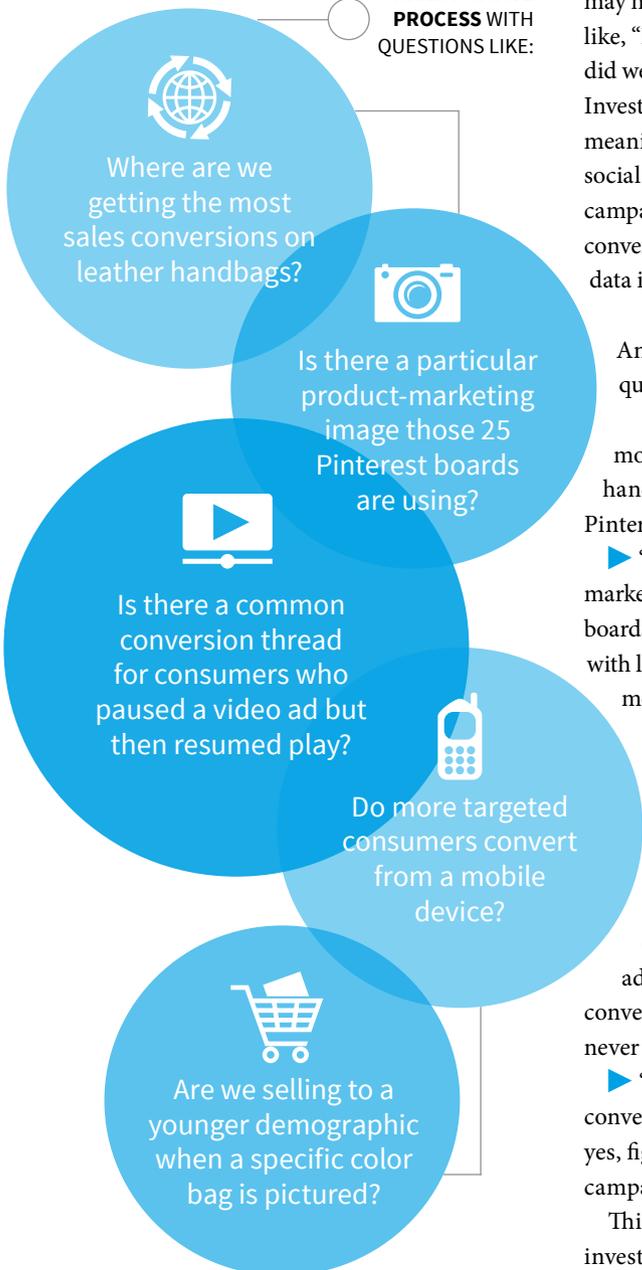
NAVIGATING INVESTIGATIVE ANALYTICS

Following are key considerations to put investigative analytics into action:

1 Embrace "frictionless inquiry." Investigative analytics are all about frictionless inquiry, where the path between the question and answer is void of rigid structure. Frictionless inquiry depends on ad-hoc query capabilities and simple analytic tool administration. So, when you reach the "aha" moment, you'll have all the information you need to ask the next question or dig deeper into data, without having to call IT or the help desk to create a new query.

2 Define, but don't limit your universe of data points. The lines between web, social media and advertising analytics are blurring as these modalities become more and more interdependent. To uncover and respond to consumer insights, it's critical to analyze when and where a consumer said something, what else he was talking about and what he *did* as a result. This correlation between engagement and conversion requires attention to a slew of data: demographic background; geospatial and time tracking; which social network and device was used; who opened a video, who paused it, who resumed watching after the pause. While it's important

START THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS WITH QUESTIONS LIKE:



to determine the data points you can mine, it's equally important to always add and refine.

3 Ask why, not what. Gone are the days of simply knowing what happened in a campaign. Today, you can—and need—to know *why*: patterns of behavior or insights to capitalize (either in the moment or in the future). With investigative analytics there are no wrong questions. Instead, by letting the results of your ad-hoc queries drive the next question, you'll be asking the right ones.

4 Take advantage of trending topics. To benefit from trending topics, it's essential to extract intelligence—whether it's A/B split testing or consumer likes and dislikes—from social networks as soon as it's generated in real time. Can we increase

engagement if we push out another tweet two hours after it posts? Five hours after? *Five days* after? Insights gleaned through investigative analytics help you take immediate action to optimize social engagement and drive further traffic and revenue.

5 Don't ignore historical data. Take advantage of real-time data, but don't forget the past. For example, it's important to know if historically you've been successful with pushing a contest out on Facebook on Wednesdays followed by successive tweets on Friday so that you can replicate your success. Year-over-year trends are also important when planning for annual events, such as Black Friday shopping.

By harvesting the massive amounts of social media data with the power

of investigative analytics, businesses will be able to determine exactly what people want, when they want it, and through what social network—which results in true competitive advantage. ■



Don DeLoach is CEO of Infobright, a high-performance investigative-analytic database provider. He is active in community service, and is a director on the board of the Illinois Technology Association and the Juvenile Protective Association in Chicago. Find him on Twitter @deloach7kw.

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The Next Content Revolution is Upon Us... and This Time It's Global

By Sarah Mitchell

Here's an eye-opener: Less than 6 percent of the world's population speaks English well enough to conduct business. And many who speak English don't know how to read it. In fact, 96 percent of consumers do not live in the United States.

Scott Abel, consultant and content futurist, explains, "Many of us treat the worldwide web like the Ohio web or the American English web. Marketers are overwhelmed and unprepared to produce content for a global audience."

Abel believes there's tremendous opportunity for brands to reach consumers once unreachable due to geography and language. The view is shared by author John Yunker, who claims the global market for international domain names (IDN) is greater than 2.5 billion people (and most are not native English speakers).

"We're inching closer to a linguistically local Internet, in which people no longer have to leave their native languages to get where they want to go," Yunker writes on his Global by Design blog. "This is a positive development for making the Internet truly accessible to the world."

So how can CCOs prepare?

The first and obvious solution is to get your content professionally translated. While online translation tools like Google Translate make it easier to reach a larger audience, they will not capture the nuances of language, such as colloquialisms, humor and cultural sensitivities. A professional translator can ensure the trust you've built for

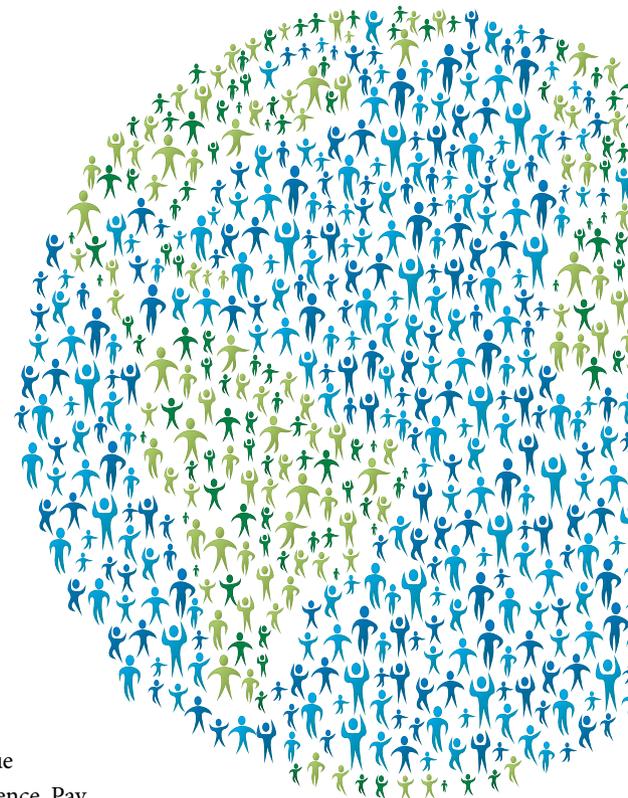
your brand is not damaged by awkward missteps.

Next, understand the cultural differences of another country, going beyond simple political correctness. According to Rohit Bhargava and Paolo Nagari, it takes a principled approach to develop content to attract a global audience. They urge content marketers to view language as only part of the solution to creating global content. "It's important to value the local point of view," says Bhargava.

To do so, take into consideration a broad scope of cultural differences. While seemingly minor, certain off-cue remarks can alienate your audience. Pay special attention to such details as colors, holidays, religious references, sports, fiscal years and even superstitions—missteps will signal you are an outsider.

For example, white is the color associated with death in China, so the traditional white-wedding imagery of Anglo countries may flop. Football in America is different than football in Europe, and different yet again to the football game played in Australia. Even a seemingly innocuous sentence like, "October is the time when most companies lock in plans and budgets for next year," sends the message to your global audience you don't understand how their business runs.

"The big question is how do you apply your global mindset to create



As globalization takes hold in business, so too must it infiltrate every part of your content marketing strategy.

content that works across cultures without building a huge team or relying on just translations," says Nagari. His view is that most brands can ensure the global integrity of their content by engaging local subject matter experts to review everything before it's published. Unless you're a mega-brand like Coca-Cola, building a large team

is unnecessarily expensive since your core message is likely to remain unchanged from country to country.

It's time to develop a healthy respect for the consumer living outside of your local boundaries. American marketers are often perceived as xenophobic in their content, a trait not tolerated in other markets. Unfortunately, the same is true of most other countries. As globalization takes hold in business, so too must it infiltrate every part of your content marketing strategy.

Sarah Mitchell is a content marketing consultant at Global Copywriting. She develops content marketing and community engagement strategies for clients in a variety of industries. Sarah lives in western Australia and frequently speaks on topics related to content marketing and social media. Follow her on Twitter: @globalcopywrite.



LINGO LESSONS FROM DOWN UNDER

If you're coming to **Content Marketing World Sydney (31 March - 2 April)**, you'll encounter plenty of Australian words and phrases that probably may not make a bit of sense. Here's a handy guide to some of the more popular phrases you may hear in a business context. You're on your own for the rest.

- She'll be right** – Don't worry, it will all work out
- Chuffed** – Emotion meaning happy or delighted
- Rug up** – Put on warm clothing (a blanket is sometimes called a "rug")
- Sunnies** – Sunglasses
- It's carked it** – Anything broken beyond repair or something that has died
- Feeling crook** – Not feeling well, sick
- Flat out like a lizard drinking** – You're busy
- Having a blue** – Having an argument
- Gone walkabout** – When something's lost or someone can't be located
- Larrikin** – A good-natured rowdy, low on culture, big on fun
- Mate** – Friend or colleague of either gender
- Strewth** – It's the truth
- Fair dinkum** – Honest, genuine
- Arvo** - Afternoon
- Going for a pint** – Drinking a beer, usually at the pub

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NOT FOR HIRE

Photographer Thomas Hawk speaks to CCO magazine about how brands can collaborate with professional artists to generate authentic content, and why some companies still manage to flub it.



Thomas Hawk's hauntingly beautiful—and often gritty—photography is admired across the world. He calls himself a “photography factory” and aims to capture 1 million photos before he dies. Among his favorites are images of American cities, particularly those in various states of decay. “I think people will want to go back in the future and remember a different type of America; a place that was unique to their timeframe.”

But to say Hawk is revered for his art is only partially true. He's also an avid blogger who writes about a wide range of issues, including new media, technology, creative commons and copyright law. With a massive fan base across **Flickr** and **Google+** in particular (more than 6.5 million followers), Hawk is sought by brands to photograph events and locations, and share images with his audience. But Hawk cautions: Don't ask artists to shill your story.

By Clare McDermott
Photos courtesy of
Thomas Hawk



a win-win; they provide something to the photographer and, again, it doesn't have to be about money.

I've had companies before say, "We'll give you \$6,000 if you write three blog posts about this lens." I have no interest in that. But if you can provide me access to create interesting content, I'm all for it.

How should a brand approach an artist?

It can be as easy as just reaching out, but you've got to be careful. I'll get blind emails saying, "We want you to promote our stuff." It sounds very commercial and it's a turnoff. There are brands that do it well. Scott Monty at Ford, for instance, does a wonderful job as the head of social media. Scott has built relationships with a lot of artists, so when you get an email from him with a request, it's a very friendly and welcome email. Rather than cold-pitching bloggers, photographers or artists, brands would have a lot more success if they designate someone to build the relationship.

CCO: How do you work with brands outside of traditional photo licensing agreements?

Hawk: I've had a lot of inquiries over the years to shoot specific commercial things, and I'm not interested in that so I've turned down almost all of that work. I really want to shoot what I want to shoot.

I'm not in it for the money. What I'm interested in more than anything is access. When **JBL** [the premium speaker and audio company] sponsored the music festival Coachella last year, they gave me a press pass and I was able to get all these photographs of great bands. **Dell** asked me to fly out and shoot the Austin City Limits Music Festival. I wouldn't have had that level of access without its corporate sponsorship.

I don't want to just go shoot some random boring event; but if there's some unique opportunity (for example, I love live music) or access to something

that I wouldn't have otherwise as a photographer, I'll do a lot of that. I don't get paid for those. I don't ask for money. Typically they only cover hotel and airfare.

Any other interesting ways that you see brands work with artists aside from live events?

I'm seeing more and more brands asking photographers to create authentic content. I went to Detroit with **Ford** and shot the North American International Auto Show year before last. I also went and shot the **Cosmopolitan Hotel** before it opened and flooded pictures all over Flickr. How often do you get to shoot a completely empty multi-million-dollar casino? The brand gets a lot of really nice photos on Flickr and other platforms, as well as a built-in social network. When people do searches for the Cosmopolitan Hotel, they see images that look really good. If it works out, it's



Essentially, brands have to think creatively and figure out how to work with an artist beyond “Here’s some cash.” They need to think about what they can bring to the artist, what kind of opportunity or collaboration.

You archive your photographs on platforms like Flickr and Google+ at a rate that’s somewhat staggering. (Nearly 90,000 on Flickr to date.)

My primary objective with my own work and art is to distribute it as widely as possible in the world. The Internet is one big distribution source, and it allows me to connect directly with millions of people. Before, you had to rely on gatekeepers and curators—whether a gallery owner, museum curator or whatever—and it was very difficult to achieve a mass audience and following. Now it’s so much easier.

Are you partial to one photo-sharing social network versus the others?

I was very vocal and very critical of Flickr for many years, primarily because I saw so much potential for Flickr and no innovation all the years **Yahoo!** owned them. Since Marissa Mayer joined Yahoo!, Flickr has become a major turnaround story. I’ve grown from one of Flickr’s biggest critics to one of its biggest fans. Markus Spiering, the head of product at Flickr, has done tremendously positive things since he’s taken over.

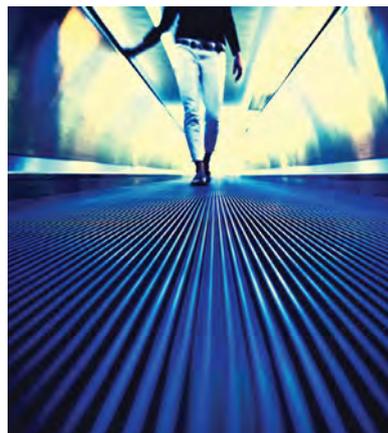
I do love Google+. It’s probably my favorite social network right now, especially for imagery. Photography is one of the most engaging types of content on the web. It’s super easy to go down a page and “+1” 10 photos. It takes a bit longer to read an article and decide if you want to “+1” it. Imagery, because it moves so quickly and you can say so much

very simply, appeals to our desire to see beautiful and interesting things.

Google has recognized that.

I also love what **Facebook** is doing. If you think back of where Facebook has been, three years or so ago photos were tiny little postage stamp size things on Facebook. Now, look at them. With the Instagram purchase, they understand the power of photography. Even **Twitter** had said recently it’s going to make photos bigger and better.

Photography is becoming a language unto itself. People talk back and forth to each other with photos, even more than words.



“Photography is one of the most engaging types of content on the web. It’s super easy to go down a page and ‘+1’ 10 photos.”



LESSONS FROM THOMAS HAWK

Don’t ask an artist to shill your brand. Purely promotional collaborations won’t be of interest to established artists. Instead, offer access—be it to a music festival, a new city or an off-limits location. **Virgin American** offered Hawk travel expenses paid to Toronto. The result: Stunning photos of Toronto that both Virgin and Hawk are proud to share.

A great collaboration benefits brand and artist. When the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Las Vegas asked Hawk to photograph on location before it opened to the public, Hawk jumped at the chance to capture the massive, empty casino. The result: Hundreds of beautiful and unusual images flooding social media leading up to the hotel’s opening.

Build long-term relationships. The best way to understand what an individual artist may be willing to do is to get to know them. Cold requests may be viewed with skepticism. Explains Hawk, “Scott Monty at Ford has built relationships with a lot of artists, so when you get an email from him with a request, it’s a very friendly and welcome email.”

Create or Curate?

A look at why original and curated content drive up leads, and how to use both in concert.

By Rachel Foster

When it comes to generating leads, is it more important to create original content or curate other people's content? My answer is do both.

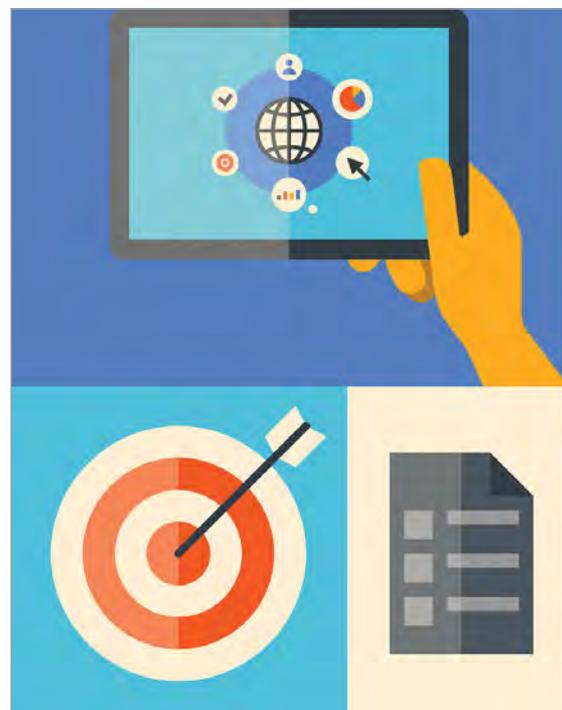
Original content creation is vital to attract high-quality leads and turn them into customers. With original B2B content, you can:

Align content with specific campaigns and your target audience's exact needs: This may be difficult to do if you rely on sharing others' content.

Increase your opt-ins: Yes, curating content can raise your brand awareness and bring more visitors to your website. However, in most cases (unless you get creative, like what was done in the example cited later in this article), you will need original white papers, reports, webcasts, or other original B2B content to get those visitors to complete your opt-in forms.

Improve your SEO: The more original content you create, the more likely your target audience will be to find you when they search for content. With curated content, you have some opportunities to improve your SEO, but most of the SEO benefits will go to the person who created the original content.

Engage customers throughout the entire sales cycle: Though curating content can be particularly useful when you are trying to bring early-stage leads to your website, as the sales cycle progresses, you will need more original content to help position your business as a trusted advisor — and the ideal solution for your customers' problems.



You own your media: All the original content you create is yours to use, share, and repurpose as often, and in any format, you'd like, without having to worry about copyrights and attributions.

Curating content — i.e., sharing content that others have produced — may seem counterintuitive if you're looking to draw more qualified leads to your website. After all, much of the content that's of interest to your target audience will belong to your competitors, and you don't want to send potential customers to the competition! However, if done right, content curation can help you increase your opt-in rates and generate more leads.

If done right, content curation can help you increase your opt-in rates and generate more leads.

First understand that the process involves more than just re-tweeting a good article. You must put your own unique spin on others' content by commenting on it, or by framing the discussion around the reasons your audience should find the information valuable.

One of the best examples of content curation I have seen was a DigitalSherpa webinar called *Curating High Conversion Content Without a Single Original Thought*. If you look through the slide deck for this webinar, you will see that every piece of information was something the presenter, Adam Japko, curated. Impressive.

Also impressive was how DigitalSherpa used this curated content to get people to opt in to its list and attend a webinar.

Here are a few more ways you can use curated content to increase your B2B conversions:

Create a weekly video, podcast, or blog post roundup of the best industry news that you've found on the web: Include opt-in forms for your premium content on the web pages where you host these roundups.

If you come across a report or study that is relevant to your target audience, write a blog post that highlights some of its key findings: That way, instead of sifting through a massive report, your audience can read your post to get a quick overview of the findings that matter the most to them. Just be sure to link to the report's landing page and not give away any information that the report's publisher wants people to pay for.

Create a content sharing partnership: When you curate content, you should do so without expecting anything in return from the person whose content you are sharing. However, sometimes it's a good idea to partner with someone else who shares your target audience, and agree to curate each other's content.

Another big benefit of content curation is that it doesn't take as long to create original content. This allows you to publish on a more regular basis and stay top-of-mind with your audience.

In summary, while creating original content and curating content are both good tactics that can bring you more leads, you will get the best results if you do both.

Rachel Foster is an award-winning B2B copywriter (copywritertoronto.com) who helps technology marketers create content that drives action. Find her on Twitter @CopywriterTO.

Download our 43-page guide that details 12 content curation technologies:
<http://bit.ly/ContentCurationTools>



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IDEA GARAGE

A CONTENT SMÖRGÅSBORD.

APP REVIEW: CLOZE

Named among the top free apps of 2013 by *PC Magazine*, **Cloze** is the answer to feeling frazzled by your expanding social networks. But whatever you do, don't call it a social media aggregator ... it's a lot smarter than that.

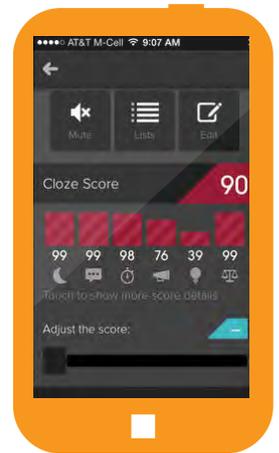
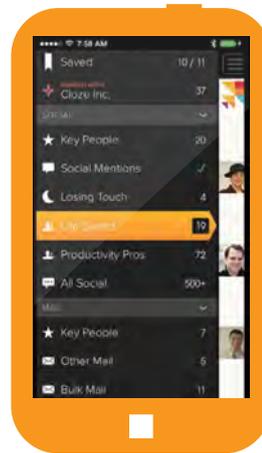
The app pulls in content from email, Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, grouped by individual. Even better, it organizes all these updates into easy-to-scan lists like "Key People," "Life Events" and "Social Mentions."

As you scan past the chatter, choose to archive updates or save them for later.

HERE'S THE BEST PART: Over time, you can program the relative value of people in your network, dialing up those you want to keep your eyes and ears on and dialing down those who clutter your social screen. Want to zero in on one individual? See that person's contact info (assuming you're connected) and social chatter across the three big channels.

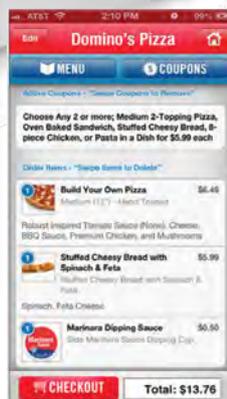


The company just released a second app for enterprise: **Circulate**. The tool allows marketers to package content for company employees to share with their networks. Why rely only on marketing to distribute content when your employees—particularly subject matter experts—have the connections you're looking for? Both Cloze and Circulate are elegant solutions for a messy problem.



WHERE'S MY PEPPERONI PIE?

Sometimes great content is simply about utility. The **Domino's** app lets you order through your phone (good), watch your pizza progress from raw ingredients to oven (not essential, but fun) and then follow your pizza as it meanders through your neighborhood en route to your house (awesome). More. Please.



DEPARTMENT EDITOR

Natalya Minkovsky is a writer and content strategist who spends a lot of time thinking about grammar, plain language, open-source technology, taxonomy and user-experience design. Find her @hejhejnatalya.

LAUGHING AT YOURSELF

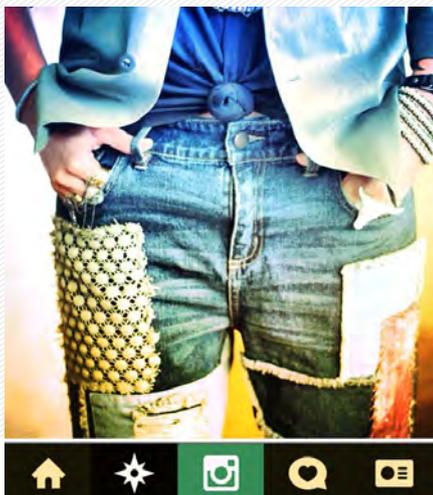
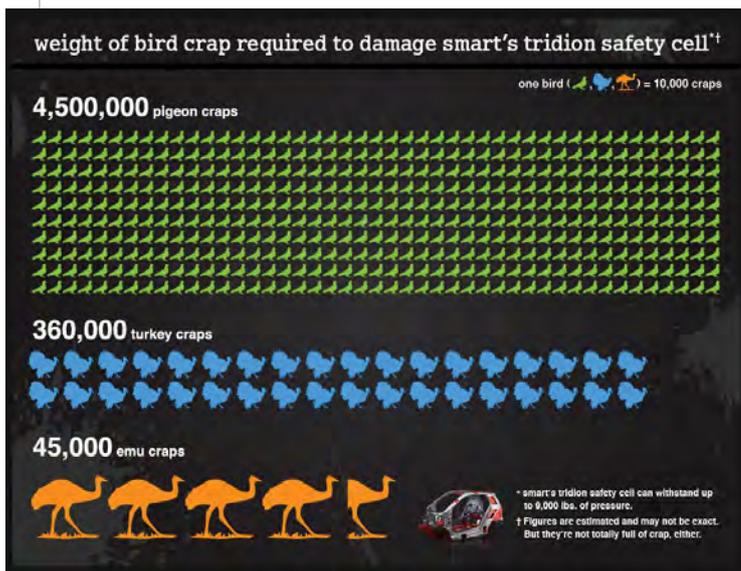
For some brands, fielding jabs from customers is a treacherous business—and most stay far away from egging on the conversation. But an intrepid few manage to turn awkward moments into humor. Here are our two all-time favorites:

Smart, the teeny-tiny car produced by **Daimler AG**, wasn't miffed when Clayton Hove tweeted, "Saw a bird had crapped on a Smart Car. Totaled it." Instead, it hit back with math—and a funny infographic—to prove it would take 4.5 million pigeons to total it.



Bodyform, a UK feminine hygiene company, watched as a funny rant on Bodyform's Facebook page blew up in popularity over 48 hours. In it, a man named Randy complained to Bodyform, "I must ask why you have lied to us for all these years. As a child I watched your advertisements with interest as to how at this wonderful time of the month that the female gets to enjoy so many things ... bike riding, roller coasters, dancing, parachuting. [sic] Why couldn't I get to enjoy this time of joy and 'blue water' and wings!?"

In response to Randy's post, Bodyform created a seriously hilarious fake-apology video called "The Truth." Amazingly, the video took just eight days to produce and post, and to date has garnered more than 5.5 million views. It beautifully manages the fine balance between funny and earnest.



WHY NOT ASK?

When **Free People** ships jeans to customers, it includes a little card printed with the hashtag #MYFPDENIM, along with instructions to post a jean-wearing selfie to Instagram. The photos show up in FP's Instagram gallery (boasting 860,000+ followers), as well as the brand's website. Given the brand's popularity with millennials, it's the perfect, simple ask.

Is Your Content Bedtime Story Worthy?

By Tom Fishburne



Most branded content wouldn't pass the bedtime story test. Yet there's never been a better time for brands that can tell a story well.

Brands are rapidly embracing the potential of branded content to blur the lines between advertising and entertainment. It seems every week I hear the expression, "Content is king."

It's true content marketing holds great promise to create communication genuinely worth sharing. Yet in creating it, we should remember consumers don't necessarily want content. They want stories. "Branded content" and "content marketing" are insider terminology used by marketers. It's up to us to make the content into something meaningful.

On the branded content bandwagon, too often marketers emphasize on quantity over quality. Content

is commonly treated like a commodity. Consumers skeptically sniff out mediocre branded content from a mile away, and it's only a matter of time before they learn to tune it out as readily as other forms of advertising.

That is, unless we create content that's truly meaningful to the audiences we are trying to reach.

Do your audiences ask for your content? Do they clip it out and tack it on to their cubicle wall or office door? Do they share it with everyone they know? Would they miss your content if you suddenly stopped publishing?

We recently created a cartoon series about the confusing health insurance market for an insurance company called HealthMarkets. Health insurance is a hot topic right now, but consumers must wade through piles of

marketing messages, including an explosion of branded content. We designed the cartoon series not to shill products, but to illustrate the confusion many people feel as they weigh their options. The visuals gave voice to people's real frustrations. The marketing message came second.

"Branded content" and "content marketing" are insider terminology used by marketers. It's up to us to make the content into something meaningful.

There's a branded content lesson in the classic 1983 movie, "A Christmas Story." Nine-year-old Ralphie tunes in to his favorite Little Orphan Annie radio show, waiting impatiently to crack the show's secret message with a Secret Society decoder pin. He's hopeful for a good story. When he finally cracks the secret message, he discovers it says, "Be sure to drink your Ovaltine." Ralphie stares at the message blankly and says, "Ovaltine? A crummy commercial? Son of a ..."

Branded content too often falls as flat as that Ovaltine promotion. Our top content marketing goal is to ensure our content never comes across as a "crummy commercial."



Tom Fishburne is Marketoonist and founder of Marketoon Studios, a cartoon studio that helps businesses like Kronos, Baynote, Motista and *Wall Street Journal* reach their audiences with cartoons.

Follow his cartoons at his Marketoonist blog or @tomfishburne.

Looking for great examples of branded content? Download the Content Marketing Playbook: 24 Epic Ideas for Connecting with Your Customers: <http://bit.ly/CMlplaybook>



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– Francis Underwood, *House of Cards*



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