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Dabblers Beware

One of my favorite movies of all time is Major League. It's the story of the woeful Cleveland Indians baseball team making it to the playoffs against all odds. At one point in the movie, Indians manager Lou Brown says to his team, "The local press seems to think that we'd save everyone the time and trouble if we just went out and shot ourselves."

Great motivator, that Lou Brown.

Why is this relevant? Every time I look at our latest research, I think about Lou's line.

You see, one of the most surprising insights from this year's research is about marketers' level of commitment. Just 21 percent of for-profit content marketers in North America say their organizations are "extremely" committed to content marketing.

This is important because according to our research, those 21 percent were also the most strategic, most mature and most successful with their content marketing approaches. Commitment level predicts content marketing success.

You may ask what the other 79 percent are doing? The data essentially says, to put it bluntly, most are wasting everyone's time.

Look, you either commit to content marketing or you don't. If you commit to it, chances are good that over time you'll succeed. If you don't commit, you probably won't succeed.

(And nearly one third of the marketer's in our study say they are "somewhat" committed to content marketing ... what the heck does that mean? You're either pregnant or you're not, right?)

If you're fully committed to the practice of content marketing. Great. Move along.

If you're not, and you are still creating all these blogs and podcasts and white papers and e-books, odds are you're in for a whole lot of pain down the road.

To quote another one of my favorite movies, Shawshank Redemption, "Get busy living, or get busy dying." With content marketing, it's all or nothing. Dabblers need not apply. ☞

Yours in content,

Joe Pulizzi
 Founder
 Content Marketing Institute
 @JoePulizzi

21%

of for-profit marketers in North America say they are extremely committed to the practice of content marketing.

(2017 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends, Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs)



Commitment level predicts content marketing success.



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DECEMBER 2016

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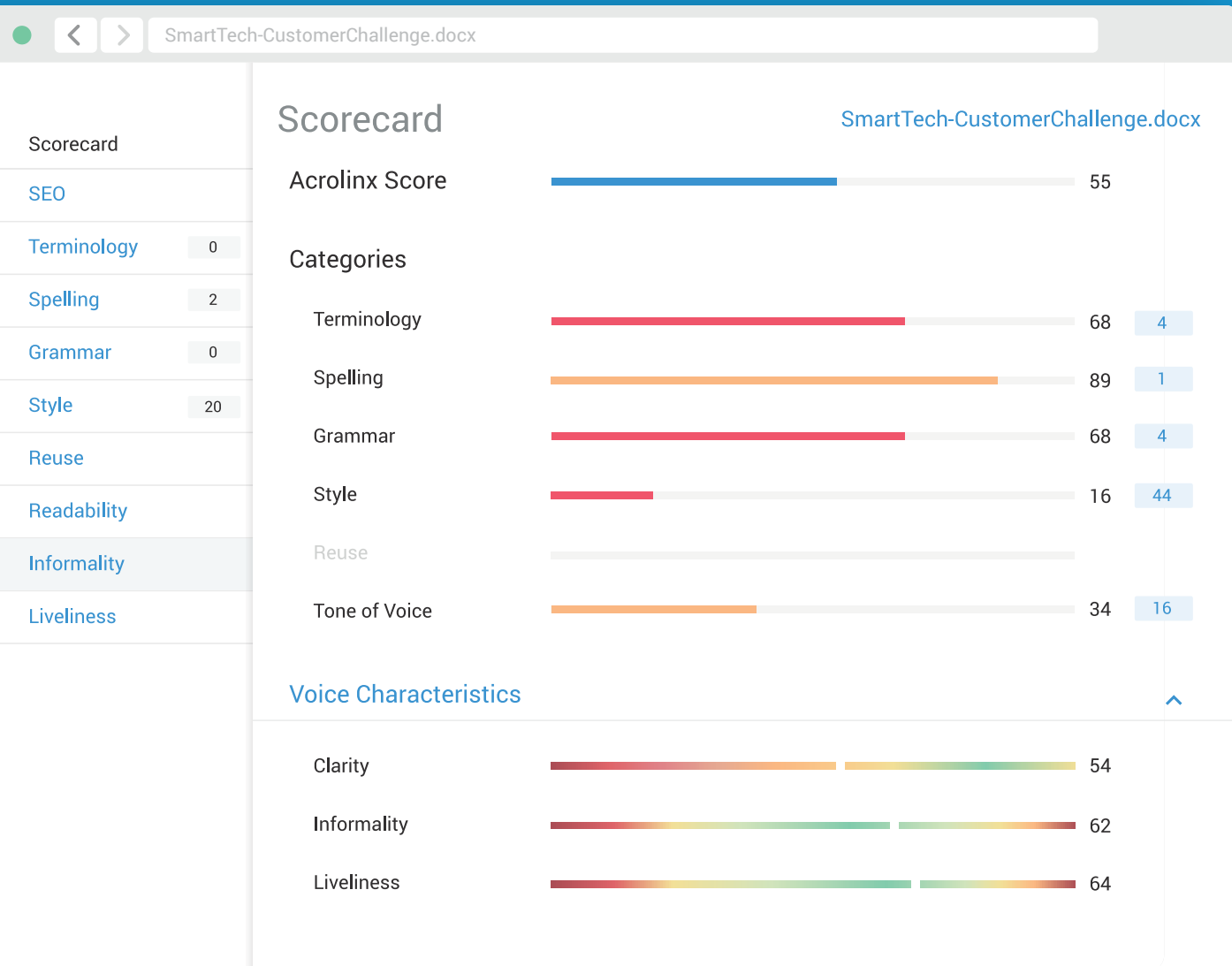
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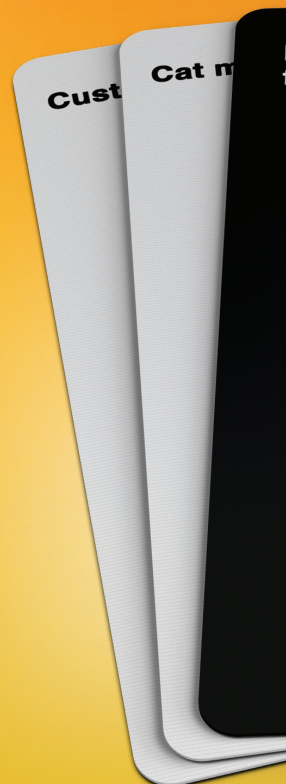
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...lling stories with
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Marketers rely on _____
for new content ideas.

LOST ART

Need more engaging, authentic content to fill your editorial calendar? Unleash the power of human conversations.

Stephen Dupont

Where should content marketing leaders go to refuel and refresh their content marketing program? Having conducted hundreds of customer interviews over the years on behalf of my clients, I find the raw, unfiltered perspectives of customers provide powerful, new insights.

I'm not talking about gathering quotes for a customer testimonial; I'm suggesting creating a steady stream of conversations that can inspire your content marketing program.

There are many ways to gather customer input to feed a content marketing program. Because we want to be efficient with our time, many of us often turn to technology, such as the online form builders, online surveys and omnibus studies, to gather input. But, when we use technology to gather customer input, we often miss three critical ingredients: depth, context and emotion.

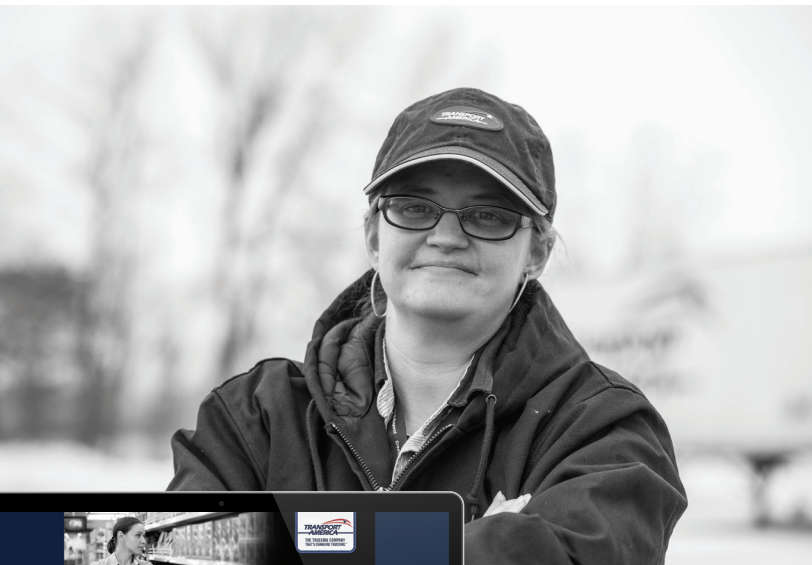
Go to the source

Effective content marketing is about mining and sharing stories that matter most to your brand's core fans. It's about sharing the emotions and drive behind those stories—that's what people love to read, listen to or watch.

Simply put, it's about being more human rather than relying on mechanisms that gather lots of data but offer little in terms of emotion.

This hit home for me over the past year while working on the content marketing program for a major U.S. trucking firm, which wanted to attract and retain more qualified drivers.

When you're putting out a monthly newsletter with four stories, along with a social media campaign featuring daily Facebook posts, you're going to run out of gas if you rely on remerchandising existing marketing content.



RECLAIMING CONVERSATION

In her most recent book, psychologist and MIT professor Sherry Turkle argues that we're communicating more than ever, but at the expense of deeper, more meaningful conversations. She makes the case for unscripted, open-ended human exchanges—and how the lost art of conversation makes us more collaborative, empathic and insightful at home and work.



Instead, we went to the source: the 1,700 truck drivers who drive those 18-wheelers across the continent.

Sure, it's easy to ask in an online survey or a Facebook post, "What are your favorite trucking songs?" or "Is the greatest trucking film of all time Smokey and the Bandit?" But to uncover deeper insights, we needed phone and face-to-face interviews with real drivers who haul loads of packages, parts and products all over the United States and Canada. We regularly interview more than a dozen drivers a month, with each conversation lasting an hour or more.

When you take that much time to talk to people, you become a witness to their stories and gather real-life, substantive details that make content come alive.

For a recent story, we talked to three women truck drivers about how they got into trucking, the unique challenges women drivers face, and what keeps them going. In our interviews, we listened to how many of these women were seeking a better life, how they were surprised that they were as good at driving as other male drivers, the confidence they gained as drivers, and how the trucking company they worked for (our client) supported them.

We learned from one female driver, a single mother with three kids from Chicago, how she made the leap from working as a manicurist to realizing her dream as a truck driver. (Her father was a truck driver and many people in her life had told her she couldn't cut it as a driver.) From another, we learned that she and many other women don't want special treatment from their male counterparts; they simply want to be respected as drivers.

These kinds of stories, posted on the trucking company's blog and distributed through its monthly newsletter, demonstrate why this particular trucking company is a great employer for women drivers.

Our company has taken this same approach with HVAC and refrigeration technicians, fishing boat owners and outdoor adventurers, among many other consumer groups. You will not gain the same level of insights from an employee-engagement survey or a focus group.

The bottom line: The brand experience begins the moment a potential customer searches online for information to fulfill a need or solve a problem. By the time the prospect is ready to pick up the phone, email a representative of your organization or walk through the door of a retailer, that individual already has gone through 80 percent of the sales funnel. Those companies still on the list are the organizations that provided the greatest value with content.

In my experience, the surest way to deliver valuable content is to go back to the very customers who got you there, understand why they remain loyal to your brand and how they're using your company's product or service, and then share their experience with those entering the buying process.

Stephen Dupont is the vice president of public relations and branded content for Pocket Hercules. Follow him @stephendupont.

ONE SIMPLE WORD

If you want more authentic, relevant content, you need to do one thing: Ask.

Pick up the phone. In this high-tech world, we rely too often on texts, social media posts and email. Marketing is about creating two-way conversations with customers. If you want to fuel your content marketing program, the most efficient way to do that is to pick up the phone and have a conversation with a customer, business leader or influencer. One-to-one conversations help you uncover context to create more powerful content.

Listen in. Many organizations have customer service departments or call centers where consumers can order products or call about warranty issues. These calls uncover how customers feel about your product/service and how your organization treats its customers. Take an hour or two to listen in and make sure others on your team take turns doing the same. Consider including outside resources such as agencies and freelance writers.

Form an advisory panel. Newspapers and magazines create advisory panels to source new ideas and brainstorm with a publication's editorial staff. Use this concept to generate story ideas for your company's content platform. Working with other departments (e.g., sales, engineering, HR, customer service), form small groups representing niche audiences. Host face-to-face meetings at least once a year with these groups to gather ideas for owned, earned and paid media programs.

Go to where the super fans gather.

Motorcyclists go to Sturgis in August. Electronics and computer fans head to the Consumer Electronics Show in January. Birding enthusiasts go to Joppa Flats every January. Truck drivers drop by Walcott Truckers Jamboree in July. Nearly every interest or industry offers a time and place where its most die-hard enthusiasts enjoy gathering and sharing stories. You should be there too to understand what makes super fans tick.



Get out from behind your desk. Don't be afraid to leave your desk and visit with a customer on his or her turf. See the impact of your organization's products or service in person. If you represent a trucking company, go visit a truck stop. If you work for an industrial equipment manufacturer, take a tour of a plant. If you represent a fishing lure company, call up a local fishing club and ask if you can come to a meeting.

Invite customers to co-create with you.

For a well-known binocular manufacturer, we provide samples of the company's product to climbing, hiking and backcountry guides in exchange for photos demonstrating how to use the product in the field (actually, on the side of mountains). This program not only fuels our client's social media channels, it lends its content authenticity and saves significant content-creation time.

Seek out the "rejectors." If you want to take your efforts farther, consider interviewing those who chose a competitor's product or service. You will likely learn something new from those who learned about your product/service but chose a different path.

Nurture your credibility. Many organizations publish white papers or conduct webinars with the intent of establishing their employees as experts in a particular industry or subject matter. Go a step further. Nurture relationships with outside experts and quote them in the same white paper (or other piece of content). For a client that develops information security software systems, we made it a practice to interview and quote up to three outside experts in its white papers—whether from customers, related nonprofits or government agencies. Doing so elevates everyone's credibility, including your internal subject-matter experts.



*Learn more: Go beyond analytics to give customers content they crave.
<http://cmi.media/crave>*



HELLO? IS THIS THING ON?

Is anyone actually searching for your content? Read on for practical advice about creating headlines and content people seek and want to read.

Arnie Kuenn

It doesn't matter what your content team has fallen in love with, what you think is the next hot topic or what products you want people to know about: if your target customers aren't looking for the type of content you're producing, you're already losing the organic search game.

I've noticed content marketing success has nothing to do with how exciting your industry is, the skill of your writing or how many keywords you fit in the content. Content marketing success depends more on thoughtful content ideation, as well as framing the content's headline, meta description and tags to be attractive to search engines based on existing or even future queries.

Our team at Vertical Measures is almost tired of hearing me say, "Double-check your title and make sure people are looking for that in search engines." Google and Bing won't recognize your brilliant colloquialisms or ground-breaking data that you believe is so vital for content consumers to see. Instead, search engines are designed to match results based on relevancy, which makes creating content with search top of mind a top priority.

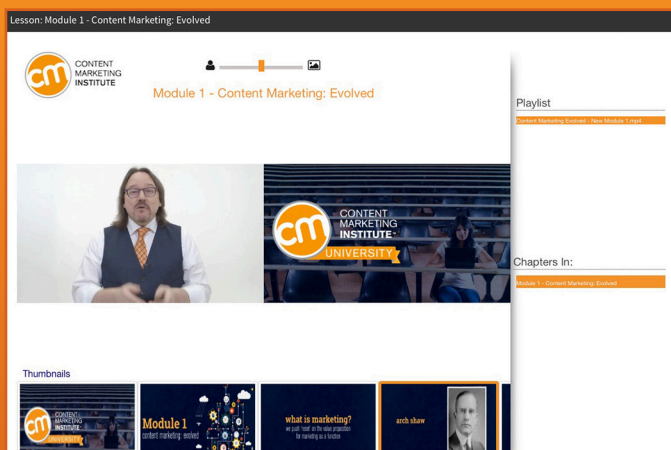
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ASK YOURSELF, 'WHAT QUESTIONS DO I GET EVERY DAY?'

Besides combing through social media profiles to see what your customers are curious about and using search tools to gauge popular topics, use the wealth of knowledge from your employees to spur ideation.

Ask your staff what questions they get asked every day. Include anyone who talks to prospects or clients—from customer support members to sales reps.

Have a chat with your market research analyst to dig through company studies and surveys, identifying what your customers are most concerned about.

Look through the data from a chat feature on your website; it maybe be an information gold mine.

Talk with those who worked your booth at your latest trade show to see what topics were most prominent in conversations.

Focus on creating content that helps present solutions to the queries your targets are posting online. Look at questions in comments of content to inspire follow-up posts. Share your content marketing goals company-wide, and empower team members to share ideas as they come with your content team.

What I see, more often than not, is a title and content that are totally going to fail (unless you have a promotion budget, but more on that later) because people are not searching for what you've created. Don't let the hours of work you've done go to waste. Learn how to create content people are searching for.

Use content ideation to give customers what they want

You know content marketing plays a significant role in influencing buyer decision because it lends credibility to your brand, increases brand awareness and can generate more leads or sales. Synchrony Financial, formerly GE Capital Retail Bank, conducts an annual Major Purchase Shopper Study and found 80 percent of shoppers aiming to buy something in excess of \$500 begin their research online—a 20-percent increase from the year prior.

The study also found consumers spend an average of 79 days learning their options through research before committing to a major purchase. Your content should be in front of them during their extensive information-gathering. By using content to offer valuable information, consumers begin to trust your brand, and when it comes time to make a purchase decision, your company will be top of mind.

To match your content with what people are searching for, it's essential to do your own research, using keyword tools and social sites to learn more about your customers. Content ideation should be paired with methods such as:

- **Keyword research**, using search engine tools like Google AdWords, Bing's Keyword Research Tool, KeywordTool.io, AnswerThePublic.com and Ubersuggest.io,
- **Search of question-and-answer sites** such as Quora and Yahoo! Answers to see what people are asking regarding your industry, and
- **Moz's Open Site Explorer tool** to see what kinds of successful content your competitors are creating based on other sites that link to them.

Organize your ideas with an editorial calendar to keep content production consistent and the content itself fresh and interesting. If you're wondering how to create editorial calendars, there are many inexpensive tools on the market. Group similar ideas so you're able to space the schedule for articles and blog posts on similar topics.

PRO TIP: Before you commit to writing a post, take the title you have in mind, enter it into a search engine and look at the results. Do you see a substantial number of results with the same title or a title that's very similar? If the answer is yes, you may want to move onto your next idea unless you feel confident you can create a much better piece of content than your competitor. If you don't see a lot of results for that title, you have just found the content gap we all search for. Publish away. After you create the content, check the final title one last time before hitting publish; it may have been changed during the editing process and you want to stay unique while still remaining searchable.



Ditch methods that lead to an organic search abyss

One of the easiest ways you can penalize yourself in search engines is to create a headline (and content) that is:

- **Missing relevant keywords that relate to the content ... keywords people are searching for.** It's better to be straightforward when it comes to headlines since search rewards keywords over cheeky copywriting.
- **Unclear about the content.** A witty title doesn't get people to click. Searchers never see it because it likely won't show up in relevant results, and if it does, they'll choose a headline that sets clear expectations.
- **All about self-promotion.** People who aren't familiar with your products or services and are not actively searching for them have no chance of seeing your content.

Unless you are lucky enough to have a viral piece of content on social media, there are really only two ways for people to find your content: organically in search results or via paid promotion.

Promote your content

If you've followed the above steps, congratulations. You're on your way to boosting organic reach through targeted, relevant content. If you simply want to blog about whatever you fancy but still expect readership, you'll need to have a large enough budget to promote that content.


Paid promotion can be effective if done correctly, but just like everything else it requires a plan and a budget. It does not require a lot of money—sometimes just a few hundred dollars can make a big difference—but you do need to determine the best outlets for your promotion. Is it LinkedIn? Facebook? Bing? Native advertising platforms? Determining that is outside the scope of this article, but it's an important element to your marketing success.

Rev the engines

Whether you're starting a new content marketing strategy or need to give your methods a facelift, don't forget that excellent content marketing is both art (creation) and science (SEO and amplification). Make sure to:

- Use content ideation to power your editorial calendar.
- Write search engine friendly headlines, meta descriptions, tags and content.
- Amplify your content in social media channels, email newsletters, webinar slideshows and paid search campaigns.

And be patient. Organic results don't happen overnight. Last year, Content Marketing Institute founder Joe Pulizzi said content marketers experience what technology research firm Gartner calls the "trough of disillusionment" when they don't immediately experience the sensational results they expect.

Follow all these steps, then give it time. Believe in the process, trust your audience and continue to publish relevant content that people are actively searching for. 

Arnie Kuenn is the founder of content marketing and SEO agency, Vertical Measures. Follow him @ArnieK.



HOW TO WRITE A KILLER HEADLINE

Besides integrating keywords that directly relate to the content and what your target consumers are searching for in a headline that is around 65 characters or less, follow these best practices. Based on a sample of more than 3.3 million paid link headlines by marketing platform Outbrain, here's what can make your next headline more clickable.

- **Add a descriptive bracket:** Headlines that included a bracket summarizing the content type (e.g., [infographic] or [slideshow]) performed 38 percent better.
- **Use the word "who":** The study also found headlines that include the word "who" achieved a 22 percent higher click-through rate.
- **Announce photography inclusion:** Headlines including the word "photo(s)" performed 37 percent better.

Content marketing and social scheduling tool CoSchedule has more ideas based on its Headline Analyzer tool:

- **Solve a problem with a "how to":** Searchers typing in questions to learn a skill responded well to content that offers answers.
- **Turn your post into a list:** Give content consumers an expectation of how many items they'll be digesting while still leaving plenty of room for keywords.
- **Answer a question:** Since searchers often type questions into search engines, your headline might perfectly match what they're typing.

WINNING THE RUSH TO SCALE

As marketers hurry to create personalized customer journeys, they feel immense pressure to design the right technology stack. Take a step back to evaluate your current situation and future needs before investing in the next shiny, new object.

Kathy Baughman

CMOs want to automate as much of content operation as possible and believe achieving scale is a matter of deploying the right platform and tools. The result? Platform proliferation. According to Chief Martech founder

Scott Brinker, the number of marketing technology solutions has doubled since last year and will soon surpass 4,000. A recent Forbes study reports CMOs are overwhelmed by the amount of technology choices and confused by vendor claims that their platform can do it all. Before investing in more technology, they want to optimize what they already own.

Here are five things to consider before investing in the next bright, shiny object:

Find a content strategy partner with no horse in the race.

Before attacking technology, nail other aspects of content operations, such as:

- Understanding the needs of all members of an organization who influence the buying process for specific-use cases
- Clearly defining your publishing processes; developing the necessary skills and institute governance
- Architecting your content so it can be sourced, targeted, distributed and reused across many programs, channels and devices

Many platform players offer strategy services. They recognize that their platform will only perform as well as the strategic framework it supports. Their work, however, focuses on optimizing their own platform and the integration of its partners. While this is valuable and necessary, few create an overarching strategy that considers the needs and

behaviors of multiple buyers at multiple points of the decision journey. The templates they provide often do not consider interdependencies of multiple buyers in the content modeling process. That said, end-to-end solutions providers are more likely to help clients address enterprise strategy before addressing technology, so consider them as a good resource.

Working with an objective third party helps ensure that counsel is more far-reaching and is not viewed through the lens of a specific platform or set of partnerships. (Disclosure: My firm, ComBlu, provides enterprise content strategy counsel. You can find these services, however, from many third-party sources including digital agencies, CX firms and independent consultants.)

The strategy part of the process often gets truncated in the rush to get a tool or platform that can solve all pain points. But not all pain points can be solved with a platform. A recent Forrester study, *From Priming the Pump to Engaging Buyers*, points out that it takes time to scale. First you must design the right processes, implement organizational change and align functions.

In the absence of an enterprise content strategy, lines of business or functional organizations often try to jumpstart the content optimization process. Many of these efforts fail to thrive because no one connects the dots between these separate initiatives to uncover systemic issues and problems. Leadership is needed to map an enterprise approach. Once the strategic roadmap is complete, the organization has a map for content operations and data for selecting the right tools.

Schedule a workshop that mows down the weeds and tidies the landscape.

Workshops are a great venue for gaining stakeholder agreement on enterprise content strategy and

its underlying infrastructure. The best workshop facilitators take time to understand your specific business objectives, aligned content mission and where your organization sits along the content maturity lifecycle. Conversation at the workshop should focus on executing the overarching content strategy and dissecting what the organization needs for a high-functioning publishing competency. This spans everything from skills and organizational assessment to governance and supporting technology.

Participants should include a cross-functional group of first-line managers who need to work as a team to optimize and scale content operations. Suggested participants include:

- Marketing leaders of specified business units
- Marketing, social and digital marketing managers
- Marketing tech specialists
- Customer experience specialists
- Distribution and sales leaders
- Owners of core digital, social and mobile selling systems—including CRM and targeting analytics
- Compliance representatives
- Sales operations and sales enablement program managers
- Business analysts
- Corporate communications and PR staff
- Creative services team members

The goal is to get people who may be working diligently but potentially at cross-purposes to co-create a future state—creating and distributing engaging content that supports the full-experience lifecycle. Workshop deliverables should include a shared vision of where your organization needs to head, with detailed, prioritized action plans.

Turn the marketing stack into a maypole.

An arcane spring ritual involves children dancing around a maypole. Each child

grabs a ribbon and wraps it around the pole. If the marketing tech stack serves as the maypole, then each ribbon represents a distinct buyer's journey. Wrapping the journey around the tech stack creates a more contextual view and allows the team to visualize requirements to deliver content strategically and ultimately to scale. It illustrates why it's so important to first understand the journey (or multiple journeys) and what is required to distribute content experiences in a relevant way along the journey. It also helps to eliminate or turn off unnecessary functionality.

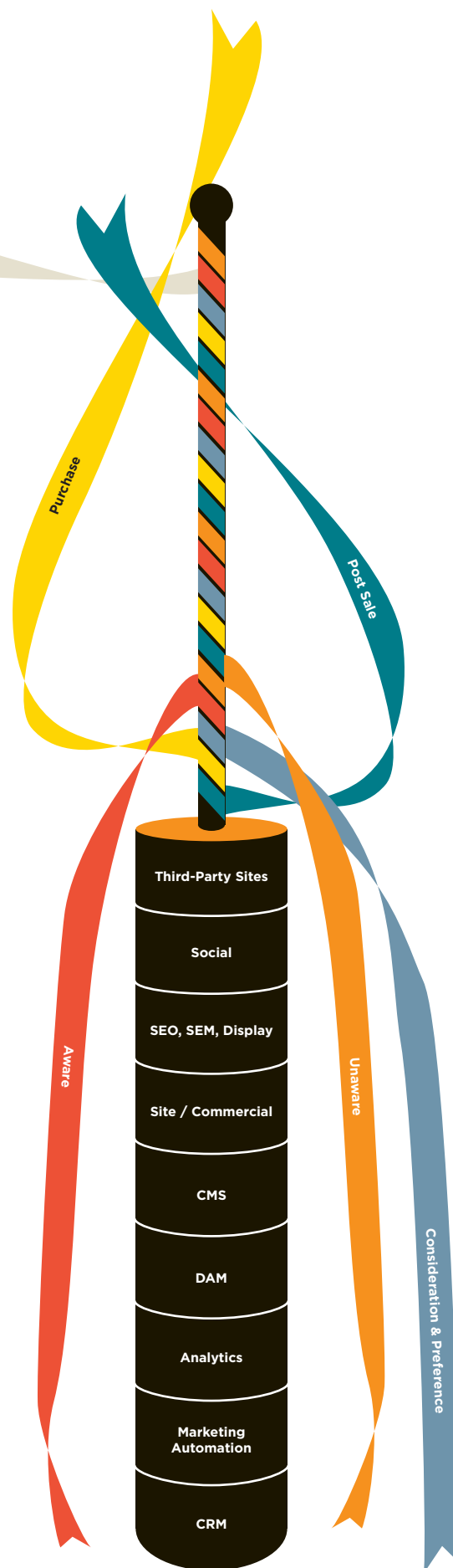
Ultimately, the organization needs a highly intelligent, near-total automation of the content supply chain. The goal is to create an open architecture that supports dynamic message delivery, and allows you to plug in new components that support new content types, social channels or consolidated profiling.

Shop your closet before buying a new outfit.

Optimizing what you own before adding more components or complexity increases performance and allows better resource allocation. One of the biggest problems cited by CMOs in the Forbes study was their desire to eliminate the redundancy and carrying cost of too many platforms.

Once you really understand the technology you own and determine your additional needs to automate operations along defined journeys, meet with vendors and get their insights. This is when vendor strategy teams can add real value. Share your vision and roadmap, and have them map your needs against their platform, including tightly integrated partners. It's highly possible that some of your existing platforms have new functionality or contain functionality that is not turned on. Some vendors may have made acquisitions to provide broader coverage or developed highly integrated strategic partnerships.

Before having a conversation, create



a scorecard. Approach this as if you are shopping a new platform, and look at your existing technology through a new lens. If the vendor suggests migrating to a newer version, make sure you know what is involved and how the migration could impact overall experience and performance. Most importantly, how will it impact the back-end integration with other nodes of your tech stack?

Once you have a clear view of the potential of existing technology, identify gaps. The important thing is to get the most from what you have without getting bogged down in a legacy system that will never do what you need. It's a balancing act, especially with hundreds of new entrants every year into the category. Each is trying to make the case as to why you should jettison what you have and buy new.

If the vendor promises that crucial functionality is on its roadmap, pin down the representative. Ask status of planned functionality, and determine if it has been field tested. Vendors don't want to

lose a sale or licensing renewals so they often will present a rosier picture than what reality is. View with skepticism statements such as, "Our roadmap is fluid, so if you have a big priority we'll put it in front of the line." This is not how it works.


When the bright shiny object makes sense.

Once you know how to optimize the platforms you own, you can start strategically backfilling. Use your blueprint as a guide for reviewing new tools. Here are a few things to consider:

- Is it a tool or a platform?
- Can you live with it out of the box or is there a lot of customization in your future?
- What does it need to integrate with?
- Will it support your strategy roadmap now and into the future?
- Can it fulfill more than one set of requirements?
- How difficult is adoption?

- Is the company well-funded and capable of issuing new versions to keep the tool relevant?
- Is the seller a vendor or a partner? Either is fine, depending on how much assistance you need.
- When dealing with multiple solutions, who owns the integration?

Establishing filters upfront helps eliminate the bright shiny object syndrome.

Scaling takes time and requires an overarching strategy and infrastructure that is right-sized for the task. Cultural due diligence, the continuous upgrading of skills and obsession with the customer's developing POV always trump technology. That being said, modernizing the tech stack for today's publishing organization is a must. Success requires the guidance of a leader with both a marketing and publishing mindset that establishes the right processes and then lets stakeholders work effectively to execute. 

Kathy Baughman is the founder and president of content strategy firm, ComBlu. Follow her @ComBlu.



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Adobe
IBM
IgnitionOne
OpenText
Oracle
Saepio
SAP
Salesforce
Teradata

ANALYTICS/ LEAD SCORING

According to Adobe's Digital Distress study, there's a significant gap (47 percent) between perceived importance and actual performance of marketing measurement. So if you're losing sleep over the effectiveness of your organization's analytics, you're not alone. But what's a marketer to do? Explore your options for taking lead scoring to the next level. Thanks to the latest advances in machine learning and predictive analytics, companies can take advantage of thousands of signals to identify your best customers.

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Alexa	Google	MarketBridge	Webtrends
AppDynamics	Infer	Mintigo	Signal Labs
Chartbeat	Kissmetrics	Neustar	
Clicky	KnowledgeTree	Piwik	



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eTrigue
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HubSpot
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Infusionsoft
LeadLander
LeadSquared
MarketBright
Marketo
Maropost Marketing Cloud
Net-Results
ONTRAPORT
OpenMoves
Oracle Eloqua
OutMarket (formerly Vocus)

Pardot (part of Salesforce)
Sales Engine
Salesforce Marketing Cloud
Salesfusion
SAS Customer Intelligence
SharpSpring
IBM Marketing Cloud
SimplyCast
StrongView
Vision6



Campaign Monitor



MEASUREMENT

How to Measure Performance to Improve Your Content Marketing <http://cmi.media/measurement>



SEO

7 Reasons Why Keyword Phrases Aren't Dead for SEO and Content Marketing <http://cmi.media/keywords>



CUSTOMER DATA SOLUTIONS

As attention is divided among more screens and more channels, customer data solutions are becoming increasingly intelligent when it comes to delivering real-time, omnichannel personalization. Tapping into the power of big data, businesses can target in more relevant and meaningful ways—and reap the rewards. Gartner predicts that by 2018 organizations fully invested in personalization will outsell those that aren't by 20 percent.

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CrowdSource
Dell Solutions
Demandbase

GoSquared
LiveRamp
LookBookHQ
NetProspex

ReachForce
Rocket Fuel
SAS
ZoomInfo

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MEASUREMENT



Prove Your Content Is Driving Revenue <http://cmi.media/driverevenue>

SAS



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Social Media Rhetoric: It's All (Ancient) Greek To Me

It isn't the size of your audience that counts but how they respond to your message. Let's look past the data, keywords, hashtags and image filters to consider the rhetoric that underpins everything. I bet Aristotle would have had a blast on Twitter ...

Jonathan Crossfield

In social media, the audience pulls the strings. Most of the time, our social media activities are designed to encourage the audience to pull strings that favor us—amplifying our content or spreading our message—but if the audience doesn't agree with what we have to say or sees an opportunity for mischief, we can quickly lose all control.

While many marketers focus on reach and engagement, none of that matters if the message contained within our content doesn't resonate with the audience.

Of course, there have always been people who are particularly good at holding an audience, getting them to agree and persuading them to act. This was just as true two-and-a-half-thousand years ago, when the philosophers of ancient Greece began to analyze and document how the most effective communicators would routinely win the audience.

greatest student, Aristotle—one of the most influential philosophers in all of Western thought and the key figure in any discussion of the rules of persuasive language: rhetoric.

Rhetoric is a massive topic with hundreds of documented techniques, concepts and descriptors. Yet even the basics of Aristotelian rhetoric can help marketers assess and deconstruct their successes and failures in social media communication.

Why? Some questions can't be answered with data. Why does one message resonate while another provokes a backlash? Why can one brand get away with a particular campaign while another might crash and burn with the exact same idea? Let's deconstruct just such a rhetorical disaster.

The taxi industry versus Uber

It's 2015. You're the association representing the taxi industry in Melbourne, Australia, and customers are flocking to Uber. What do you do? If you're the Victorian Taxi Association, you briefed your PR agency to run a social media campaign. The YourTaxis.com.au website launched in September 2015, inviting people to share their taxi experiences, alongside a social media campaign with the hashtag: #YourTaxis.

Unfortunately the audience was only too keen to share stories of rude cabbies, stinking cars, even abuse and assault.

A rhetorical toga party

Socrates would have thought the internet an abomination. Then again, he thought the written word was a step too far; arguing it would lead to knowledge by rote, not reason. We know this because his student Plato wrote down the first Socratic dialogues (oh, the irony).

While Plato was certainly more open to new media than his tutor, he still believed the written and spoken word should be dedicated to the pursuit of pure logic and truth, devoid of style and persuasion. Not so his



A SOCIAL MEDIA RIDE GONE VERY WRONG

The Victorian Taxi Association in Melbourne launched a campaign to celebrate the joys of taking a cab. No, really.

There were also plenty of complaints about a taxi system that is inefficient, often doesn't turn up and routinely ignores complaints and feedback.

The campaign also backfired massively as many tweets used the hashtag to compare the negative experience of catching a cab with the far more positive experience of catching a ride with good ol' Uber. Instead of the taxi industry winning customers back from the ride-sharing interloper, this campaign probably did far more to boost its rival by highlighting numerous reasons why people were making the switch.

The campaign had a good distribution strategy, targeted the right places to reach the intended audience, was well funded and had measurable outcomes, but these were all processes and numbers. Strip all of that away and the rhetoric at the heart of the campaign was fundamentally flawed. And if the message is out of step with the audience no amount of processes and numbers can save it.

Why should I listen to you?

Aristotle identified three appeals of rhetoric, sometimes called the three proofs. These appeals can be likened to three ingredients that should inform all of your content, seasoning your messaging and communication to your audience's taste.

The first appeal is *ethos*: the appeal to authority, sometimes called the appeal to credibility. In short, it's why you should listen to me and trust what I have to say.

Our perception of the messenger changes our perception of the message. We're less likely to listen to somebody who we believe has a different agenda, can't demonstrate sufficient expertise on the topic or—on an even more basic level—is simply “not like us.”

For your message or content to work, there has to be some common ground or alignment between you and the audience. There has to be mutual respect. If not, this has to be addressed first or the audience will simply reject what you have to say.

The poor reputation of the Melbourne taxi industry—illustrated by the hemorrhaging of customers to Uber and, one would assume, the internal consumer analysis, complaints and feedback—should have indicated that any campaign or message from the taxi industry would be treated with great skepticism and even hostility. Acknowledging this negative reputation up front might have led to a different insight and a campaign focused on repairing the trust that had been lost.

Back up your claims

Logos is the appeal to reason and was Aristotle's answer to Plato's concerns that rhetoric was all style and no substance. *Logos* means you still need to back up claims with appropriate evidence and reasoned argument.

A perfect example of everyday *logos* would be a courtroom. Two sides argue a case based on the same evidence and the same established facts. Yet each interprets those facts and suggests alternative explanations or context to argue a different version of truth: guilty or innocent.

Just as in the courtroom, you have to address and ideally refute the counter arguments put forward by the other side of the

debate. If you understand the audience and have researched the viewpoints they might hold about the topic—something social media makes easier—you'll know what the likely objections or criticisms may be to your message. Then you can address these objections up front within the content: “Some people might say ... but our evidence shows ...” Otherwise, plan how to respond to the likely reactions in advance, scripting various responses so everyone is prepared to answer the hardest questions and handle the curliest of criticisms.

It's also a good idea to have someone perform the job of devil's advocate. Let that person review your content or campaign ideas to identify the worst possible reactions it might receive once released into the unforgiving wilds of social media. This person should see your message or content fresh, without the context of the planning meetings and internal discussions, just as your audience would. (After all, your followers don't get briefed on your strategic intentions.) Then evaluate the risk and either change tack or prepare how you might respond just in case.

The #YourTaxis campaign was completely unprepared to handle the criticisms and extremely negative feedback. It offered boilerplate responses that thanked people for their feedback alongside vague promises that this time they would listen. At no point did the campaign or messaging even attempt to address the genuine and specific criticisms put forward by the audience.

Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry

While *logos* appeals to the minds of the audience, *pathos* aims for their hearts. It might sound counterintuitive, but *pathos* may be the most powerful of all three appeals as our decisions and reactions are far more emotional than they are rational.

This may be why, in the absence of anything more constructive to say, the #YourTaxis campaign went all in on an emotional appeal. At an industry conference before the launch of the #YourTaxis campaign, the agency explained the strategy would “... build on the emotional connection Melburnians have catching a good ol' cab.”

Of course, the social media audience did have a strong emotional connection to taxis—a negative one. Where this blatant appeal to *pathos* failed was in completely ignoring how the audience felt about the taxi industry. You can't persuade an angry person to be happy without first addressing the cause of the distress.

All of this was obvious to Aristotle back when a social audience was limited by how far your voice could carry. Today, a single tweet can reach an audience that spans continents, yet the art of appealing to that audience is too often forgotten. Instead of focusing so much on reach, shouldn't we pay more attention how our message will be received?

Don't answer that: it's rhetorical question. ☞

DEPARTMENT EDITOR



Jonathan Crossfield is an award-winning writer, blogger and journalist. Find him @Kimota.

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EMMA

Emma gives me all the tools I need to achieve my goals: a drag-and-drop editor for seamless design, an intuitive segment builder so I can target the customer who will be most receptive to my messaging, and top-notch automation tools to keep things running with just the click of a button.

JAYME BROWN, GOLDBLOX, @JAYMETWEETS



MAILCHIMP

I eventually settled, and gratefully so, on MailChimp. I manage 10 email lists with automations. The drag-and-drop design features make the email look clean. I can preview before sending to make sure things look great on all devices. I can schedule distribution according to the best time for the subscriber's location, send emails to groups and segments, and otherwise deliver the right content at the right time.

JASMINE POWERS, J POWERS MARKETING & PUBLICITY,
@JASMINEPOWERS



litmus

LITMUS

We use Litmus to test all of our email campaigns, including links, images, subject lines and load times, before sending, and it provides feedback. It's proven to be an extremely effective and profitable tool. It enables us to optimize for an array of 50 apps and devices. Perhaps the most useful feature is the spam-filter checker.

TOM BROWN, SHIPLY, @SHIPLY



MARKETO

I love Marketo's tracking capabilities that allow us to capture URL information to determine the source of an application on our site. It also has great email-specific features such as segmentation based on business rules and industry, which are helpful when we communicate to customers in different stages of the buying process and different industries.

STACY CAPRIO, ACCELERATED GROWTH MARKETING,
@STACY4STARTUPS



KLAVIYO

KLAVIYO

Klaviyo puts revenue and sales first and foremost. We send a lot of content and promotion emails. We wanted something robust so we could see just how much in sales any given mailing generated. Klaviyo integrates nicely with Shopify, easily tracks user behavior, and has dramatically improved our understanding of which stories sell.

JONAH BLISS, EVELO ELECTRIC BICYCLES, @JONAHBLISS



bananatag

BANANATAG

Bananatag helps me track outreach e-mails. It tells me if and when the recipient opened my mail and clicked any of the links. It keeps my statistics to calculate the conversion ratio of my sent mails. Overall, it helps me keep track of every outreach.

FORREST WHEATEY, FANTASTIC REMOVALS, @FORRESTWHEATEY



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Not only is Mad Mimi considerably cheaper than popular tools, it also has useful features like themes, which help us create visually appealing emails for our subscribers. As our database has grown, I'm really pleased that we chose Mad Mimi as they are much more affordable and have all of the features that we require.

MAX ROBINSON, ACE WORK GEAR, @MAXROBI07230476

DEPARTMENT EDITOR



Ann Gynn trains others to create successful content marketing or works to get the job done on behalf of her clients. Follow her @anngynn.

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Fear and Trembling

Tamsen Webster, executive producer of TEDx Cambridge and public speaking strategist, says stage fright leads marketers to miss huge opportunities to differentiate themselves. Read on for practical tips plus a big dose of confidence to quell even the most extreme public-speaking jitters.

Cathy McPhillips

CCO: Why is public speaking so important?

Webster: Nobody else can be you. When you speak, you're the only one who can speak. Other people can write for you. Other people can produce content for you. Nobody else can speak for you. When it comes to finding your niche, it's an unparalleled opportunity for others to understand what makes you an individual (or what differentiates your organization). What your business stands for, what you stand for, how you interact with people, how you hold yourself, how you present that information ... all of it speaks volumes going way beyond the words you use.

What if you don't have great speakers in house to represent you?

Any well-crafted piece of spoken communication can overcome fault in delivery. A lot of people focus on how smooth or polished somebody is in their delivery, and they think that's the thing that makes them effective. Entertaining does not equal effective. Comfortable doesn't equal effective. Effective means saying something that can directly

benefit another person and explaining how to act on the information. Your skill set enables this, not your “gifts” or “talents.” Of course there are things that people can do to improve their delivery. Delivery weaknesses are fixable except one: Not believing what you say.

Get somebody to speak about something they’re passionate about, or something they believe deeply in, and they’re wonderful.

For someone who’s inclined to be jittery or who isn’t experienced, are there certain formats that work best?

Different people have different preferences for the form of speaking they feel comfortable with. There’s a word I love: consonance. It’s a synonym for congruent or integrity, but I like it because it’s the opposite of dissonance. Dissonance happens when we’re not comfortable with something that we’re saying—and our audience feels this. I’m explaining this because it’s important for a speaker to figure out what forms of speaking are the most consonant for them. If you prefer to lecture, seek out that type of opportunity. If you relish a back-and-forth conversation, look for that format. If you are best when you are answering questions, seek that out. When organizations have a call for speakers, suggest another format if you are not comfortable with what they describe. It doesn’t mean they’ll always accept it, but you can at least try building on your own strengths.

If you really like talking and interaction with somebody but your communications team constantly puts you up as a talking head, your dislike for that format is going to show. Try to get rid of that barrier to good communication.

What advice can you offer to improve your visual delivery?

If there is visual support, you should prepare it last. Any great talk should be crafted in such a way that slides are not necessary. I believe that wholeheartedly, 100 percent. Whatever you want to say, you must create the talk as if you didn’t have visual support. I’ll get to what some of those creative things can be, but here’s why that’s so critical.

Technology fails. If you are reliant on your slides to deliver your message, you don’t even need to be there in the first place. This is an irreplaceably great opportunity for you to be in front of other people and uniquely you ... and that’s terrifying for people, which

is why they like to hide behind slides.

Also, because technology fails, always have a handout at the ready. It can save you if your slides go dark.

If you plan your talks as if you didn’t have any visual supports two things happen. One, you automatically simplify the talk. You simplify it to a point where people can actually process it. We put so much information into our slides that we are killing people’s ability to absorb any of it. We like to bury ourselves in these statistics that visual information helps people retain knowledge. That’s true if it’s a single thing—not 78 slides over the course of 45 minutes. You are battering people with information that they cannot absorb.

Without the slides, you automatically simplify. If I don’t have a slide to show you then I have to think about how to talk about this in a way that you can picture it in your head. The process is like building a house. First you lay a foundation, which is essentially your domain of authority, what you’re passionate about and what problem in the world that you can solve. Then you begin to frame out the house.

All that said, visuals can add incredibly powerful mnemonics and memory devices to the things you say, if used correctly. When there is a slide for every point you make or a visual for every single idea, it is the visual equivalent of speaking in monotone. The brain cannot process that point A is significantly more important than point B because visually they are weighted equally. For less important points, don’t treat (them) visually or if you do, use only text or something simple. For your major big points, treat those with a full-bleed image or the like. Whether you explain it or not, subconsciously your audience will pick up that this was a big point.

Also: use your visuals in an engaging way. Tim Riesterer talks about white boarding and flip charting—and specifically drawing in real time. It’s more concrete and gives you immediate authority because you aren’t just relying



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Any great talk should be crafted in such a way that slides are not necessary.

on slides. It has to be in your head in order to drive it. Plus, people get more mentally and intellectually engaged because they start to try to guess where you're going. They try to complete what you're saying in their heads.

Any other storytelling tips?

I used to work for a company called Oratium and we talked a lot about the power of neural networks. The concept is, you take the same idea and plant it in multiple parts of the brain at the same time.

If I tell you, in this moment, imagine a pink elephant with a scary clown on its back juggling sharks ... you have an image in your head. You have never seen that combination of things, I hope, in your life. Yet, the minute I start to tell you a story, you can see it. A colleague tells a story about how he came back from a weekend trip to find his college roommate had disassembled the dryer in the driveway. He tells the story because it's linked to a point he's trying to make. Everyone who listens to that story pictures the disassembled dryer. You just do. That's part of why storytelling is so powerful.

If you have a story, try to add sound to it or have a mental image illustrate a point. All of those reinforce your

message. In one of my talks I explain the concept of cognitive dissonance. I use a recording of a Mozart piece called A Musical Joke, which is written to be dissonant at the end. It's a way to point out that others can hear when something doesn't sound right even if they can't quite explain why. And by the way, there's a black screen up when I do that. Why? Because I want people to listen.


In presentations, try to create an experience to communicate a particular point. Sometimes it's going to be a full multimedia extravaganza. Sometimes it's going to be lights and sound. Sometimes it's just the human voice telling a story. The best speakers understand that if you do the same thing all the way through your presentation, you're weakening your point. Great presenters figure out how to mix and match—whether by a demonstration, using a whiteboard, playing a video clip, etc. If I'm talking about lessons from TEDx or demonstrating what works well, I use a short clip from a great TED talk on how to use one paper towel. I will take four and a half minutes of my own presentation and dedicate it to that video because there's no better way for me to land that point. Showing videos, by the way, if they're short enough, also

resets people's ability to pay attention. It changes the format.

What's behind the fear of public speaking?

People fear the physical reaction they experience on stage. Most people do have a physical reaction, which is normal. Most stage fright is related to those initial moments. We're pack animals. We're not designed to have all eyes turn towards us. That's a really uncomfortable sensation. True and debilitating stage fright stems from not understanding that reaction is normal.

I had a panic disorder for 17 years. I literally had panic attacks onstage and had to figure out how to get past it because for me, the message was more important than any discomfort I felt giving it. That experience informs my belief that anybody can do it.

In addition to fearing the uncomfortable physical reaction of getting up on stage, people also become afraid when they don't feel familiar enough with the material or when they're speaking outside their domain of authority. My approach to coaching is grounded in the message. Focusing on your message takes the pressure off any delivery anxiety. By working through your message and practicing it repeatedly, by the time you deliver it, you know it inside and out. Once you take that factor away, everything that's left is just tweaking. 

Cathy McPhillips heads up marketing for the Content Marketing Institute. Follow her @cmcphillips.



Why So Jittery?

Tamsen Webster says stage fright has two principle causes.

First, people fear the physical manifestations of nervousness. Sweating, trembling, flushing and a knotted stomach are all normal reactions to stage fright, but those who are most paralyzed by the fear worry those reactions are not normal.

Second, people fear they don't have the knowledge or expertise to speak on a particular topic.

In her coaching practice, Webster underlines the importance of practicing and mastering the message. She explains, "Focusing on your message takes the pressure off any delivery anxiety. By working through your message and practicing it repeatedly, by the time you deliver it, you know it inside and out. You've already anticipated any opportunity for the audience to reject it. You may still feel those nervous flutters, but you won't worry about what you're going to say."

A FRESH APPROACH TO CONTENT MARKETING



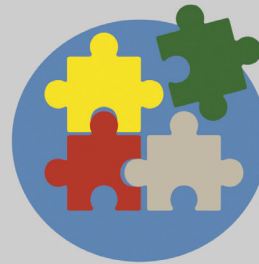
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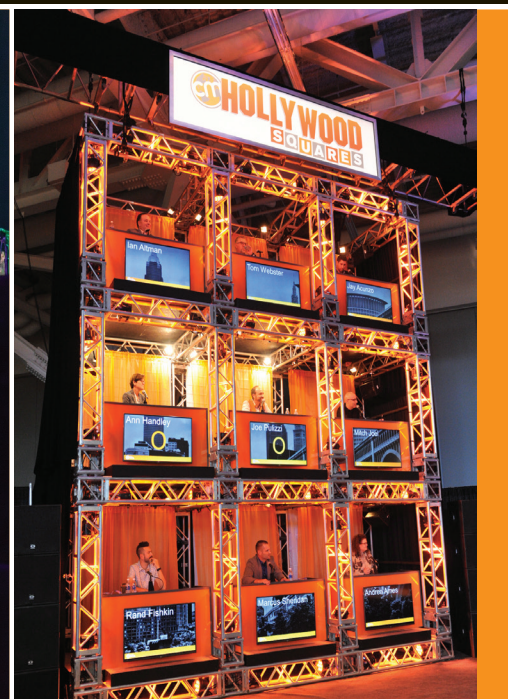


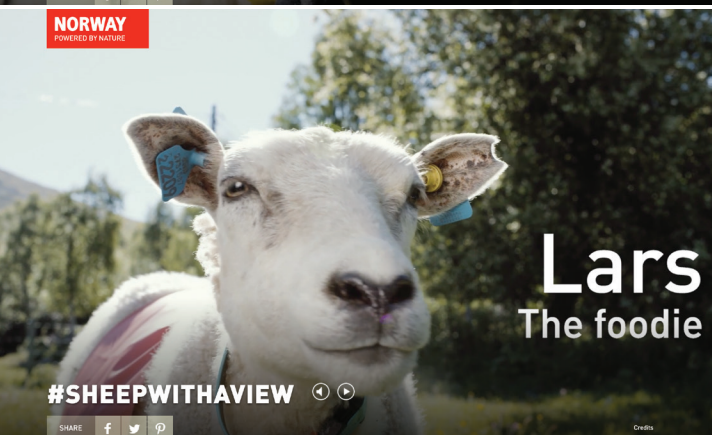
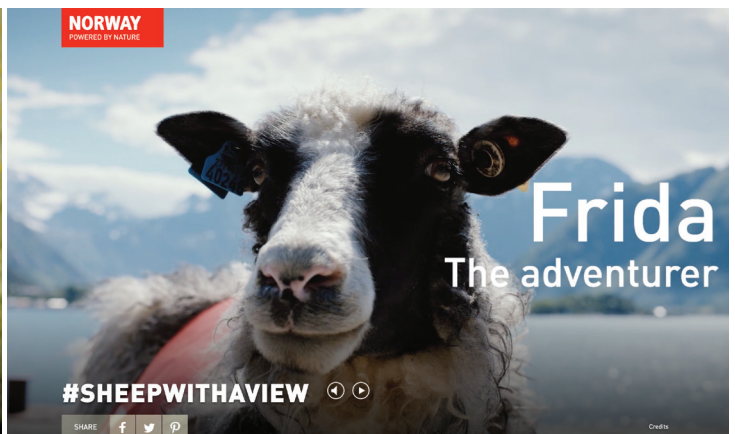
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What a View!

To charm prospective tourists into visiting Norway, Frida, Erik, Kari and Lars roam the Scandinavian nation's scenic fjords, forests, mountains and beaches. Want to follow along with their adventures? Check out Norway's tourism website for breathtaking photos and videos or join them on social media. There's Kari exploring the picturesque fishing village of Hamnøy. There's Lars enjoying the scenery in Rondane National Park. Frida seems especially fond of sunset mountain hikes. Oh, did we mention that Frida, Erik, Kari and Lars are sheep?

Each year, more than 2 million sheep are released across Norway to graze across its landscapes. For its #SheepWithAView travel guide,

Visit Norway selected "four of Norway's finest woolly wanderers to show us around, giving us their unique view of Norway—after all, these intrepid explorers see more of the country's vast natural and cultural beauty than anyone else, so who better to take us on a tour." Want to get to know where each sheep is at any given moment? Check out the interactive map on the Visit Norway website or tap the location of the latest Instagram post. We dare you to join Frida, Erik, Kari and Lars on their Norwegian adventure and walk away without any desire to go on a rejuvenating nature hike.

‘DO THE DROP’ WITH RICOLA

Ricola wants to position its products as an everyday wellness option, not just something to use when you're feeling under the weather. To support the marketing pivot, Ricola launched the Daily Drop, a web-based app that provides users with a wellness report that incorporates location and environmental data combined with a simple self-reported health status. Using data from AccuWeather and Eventful, the marketers behind the Daily Drop also built an algorithm that pulls in Twitter data related to cold, flu and allergies trending in the app user's area.





HUMANS OF NEW YORK + HEADSTRONG PROJECT

Brandon Stanton, the photographer behind the street portraits and interviews known as **Humans of New York**, has the unique ability to capture the quirks, heartbreaks and joy of ordinary residents on the streets of New York City. Since the project's inception in 2010, Stanton has moved beyond his home turf, traveling around the world to collect photo-based stories, including profiles of pediatric cancer patients and their families, as well as Middle Eastern migrants and refugees. In a recent series, Humans of New York featured personal, moving stories from clients and trauma clinicians of the **Headstrong Project**, an organization that provides free mental health care to veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. At the end of the series, Humans of New York also launched a crowdfunding campaign, and fans raised more than a half million dollars for the Headstrong Project.

Want advice about collaborating with artists? Read our interview with famed photographer and blogger, Thomas Hawk. <http://cmi.media/artist>



ROMEO, MEET JULIET_BOT

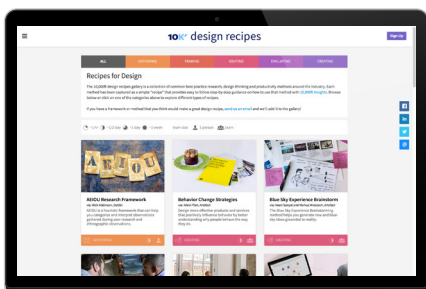
Are you a Shakespeare fan who's always wanted to know what Juliet was thinking about right before she met Romeo? To promote its production of *Romeo & Juliet*, the **Shakespeare Theatre Company** created Juliet_Bot. Theater-goers were invited to enter a short Facebook Messenger conversation with Juliet_Bot as she gets ready for the fateful party where she met Romeo; unsurprisingly, modern Juliet relies heavily on emojis in her rant about being pushed into marriage. After successfully completing the conversation, participants were given a promotion code for discounted tickets to the production.

Cats Against The World

If you've ever played Cards Against Humanity, "a party game for horrible people," you know a dark sense of humor is a must. And if you have a dark sense of humor and an affinity toward cats, well, have we got the game for you. California pet-adoption center **SOXrescue** describes Cats Against the World as "a parody game for horrible people ... who LOVE CATS." While players need to own or buy a Cards Against Humanity deck to be able to use the 36 Cats Against the World cards, SOXrescue is careful to state that its game is an unofficial expansion pack not affiliated or partnered with Cards Against Humanity. One-hundred percent of the profits go toward saving the lives of homeless and sick cats in California.

YUM! RECIPES FOR CREATIVITY

10,000ft makes "software for creative thinkers," and now the company wants to help creatives solve their design problems. The 10,000ft Design Recipes gallery is "a collection of common best practice research, design thinking and productivity methods around the industry." Each method is captured as a recipe-style article that provides step-by-step guidance on how to use that method to uncover project insights, from empathy mapping to feature prioritization. Users can explore different recipes by categories like ideating, creating and evaluating, and can filter by time to complete and team size. Launched to engage users with the company's 10,000ft Insights project collaboration product, gallery content is curated by the 10,000ft team, and users are invited to submit their own frameworks and methods to be added to the gallery.



DEPARTMENT EDITOR



Natalya Minkovsky is a content strategist who lives and works in Washington, D.C. Follow her @hejhejnatalya.

Need to make the case internally to hire a journalist? Get the facts online. <http://cmi.media/journalists>



WHAT CONTENT MARKETING CAN LEARN FROM JOURNALISM

Cameron Conaway

Content marketing list articles abound, most singing some version of the same trite stanza:

*Be a media company too,
and cut through the clutter.
Create content of value
and measure the numbers.*

This kind of advice is then infinitely repurposed, repackaged and redistributed. The result? Aisle after aisle of homogenous and frivolous content—like some kind of surreal supermarket where all canned goods have been replaced by a silkscreened replica from Andy Warhol.

I know you came here for nourishment ... but here's this.

All that monolithic advice feels artificial, even deceptive, and it leads many in the journalism industry to look down on those in content marketing. As they see it, journalism is an industry made of equal parts substance and flavor, while content marketing is one of fluff and blandness. "You're either a journalist or a content marketer," one journalist told me. "You can't be both."

My instinct was to vehemently disagree, to burst into a lecture about how journalism and content marketing need each other, but after a few deep breaths I came to see his perspective: Journalism is the noble god, content marketing is the ignoble fraud.

To the journalist who told me that, one is a public service, sharing the important human stories people need to know to better understand their world, while the other is an industry of click-bait wannabe

writers who are little more than company puppets.

Harsh, I know.

But it got me thinking: How can we build a bridge between content marketing and journalism? As I pursued journalism long before I moved into content marketing, here are five lessons (of many) that have carried over especially well:

1. Hustle

By this I mean hustle toward quality over quantity. It's far easier to hustle when you believe you're in a content factory—that place where speed trumps all else. But good journalists realize the importance of pursuing meaningful, authentic relationships. They work hard, beyond just creating content to create strategic win-win relationships with sources and, more broadly, with readers and writers in their field. This takes work, and it's made all the more challenging because it doesn't always feel beneficial or like it will ever pay off. But it is and it does.

Takeaway: Many in content marketing feel caught in a sprint to churn out more mediocre content than anybody else. Content teams treat readers as leads, paving the way for superficial relationships based on taking rather than trusting.

2. Know it takes a village

On any byline I've ever had, countless people behind the scenes made it happen. Journalists know that a single piece of content takes a team to create. I see many brands that tout "thinking like a media

"You're either a journalist or a content marketer," one journalist told me. "You can't be both."

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company,” yet don’t take the steps to build or structure themselves like one.

Takeaway: Even if you are the lone content marketer in your company, be sure to build an editorial process. Never run an article without getting at least the eyes of one trusted editor. And know that your team is far larger than simply that editor; it’s anybody who, even if years ago, in some way inspired your article. Reach out to thank them. You might find it fortifies your village by rekindling a valuable relationship for you both.

3. Read and research more than you write and share

If you’ve not watched the movie *Spotlight*, the Academy Award-winning film about how The Boston Globe’s investigative journalism unit uncovered the systemic child sex abuse by Roman Catholic priests in Boston, please go check it out. It’s a perfect, though harrowing, example of how the real work of writing and sharing happens long before the writing and sharing.

Takeaway: When developing your content marketing strategy or even an individual piece, factor the work it

I’ve met content marketers who felt unproductive when they spent an entire day reading up on the topic of their forthcoming article. Know this is not merely work; it’s the backbone that will help your content stand above others.

will take to read and research. I’ve met content marketers who felt unproductive when they spent an entire day reading up on the topic of their forthcoming article. Know this is not merely work; it’s the backbone that will help your content stand above others. If necessary, be sure to convey this to your manager or boss. Evernote can be helpful both as an organizational hub and as a way to show the work behind your work.

4. Don’t fold without a fight


It’s no secret that the journalism industry has taken a hit over the years. According to data from the American Society of News Editors, the number of U.S. newspaper journalists declined from 55,000 in 2007 to 32,900 in 2015. And we all know the pay-per-click advertising model isn’t faring much better. But the industry keeps finding ways to survive—whether it’s The Washington Post’s acquisition by Jeff Bezos, The Guardian’s move to create a branded content division or The Philadelphia

Inquirer’s transition to nonprofit status—they don’t fold without a fight.

Takeaway: Most content marketing efforts don’t fail, they end. This happens for a variety of reasons, chief among them being that around the one-year mark and even in the face of steady growth, the company decides its marketing resources are better spent elsewhere. Consider this a plea to hang in, to realize that just as hiring an employee is a long-term strategic move so is initiating a content marketing strategy. Want a short-term fix? Bring in a volunteer and run some ads. Want a sustainable business model? Invest in talent and content marketing.

5. Truly believe your audience comes first

We all know of the prestigious Pulitzer Prize, but it’s important to know a bit about the man it is named after. An immigrant from Hungary, Joseph Pulitzer revolutionized the American journalism industry in the late 1800s through a fearless form of journalism—one that advocated for the common man and believed the industry should be more about social responsibility than, as it had been, catering to the elites. He believed every story and indeed every newspaper should have immense societal value.

Takeaway: By now you’ve likely heard this content marketing mantra: Create valuable content by putting your audience first. But I believe the best, and perhaps only, way for content marketers to put audience first is to seriously believe their audience is first. Believe with the fervor that Pulitzer believed. He experienced the massive divide between the rich and the poor, and saw journalism as a way to address it. What are your audience’s needs and what tethers you to those needs enough to make you deeply care about trying to solve them? Answer that and you’ll be well on your way to creating valuable content. 



EVERNOTE FOR WRITERS

Cameron Conaway uses Evernote to distill research for articles into pieces that are easier to use once he begins writing. Here’s his three-step process:

1. Create a new notebook for each article. Title it with a short-phrase or long-tail keyword that best corresponds to what you want to drill down on in your article.
2. Begin research, making sure to use the Chrome plugin from Evernote to clip Notes. Only clip memorable quotes you think you will use. Evernote stores the original URL if ever you need to see the full page or site.
3. Once you’ve found enough sources, create a text Note, set Evernote to Card View, close out of your browser, and begin writing your article. With quick access to the distilled Notes from your sources on your left, and the text Note providing you a blank canvas to write, you can focus purely on the writing process.

Cameron Conaway was awarded the 2015 Daniel Pearl Investigative Journalism Fellowship, and his work has been supported by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting and the International Reporting Project. Conaway is the content marketing manager at Flow. Follow him @CameronConaway.



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- ▶ **Print edition** will be included via special section of June and distributed free of charge at **Content Marketing World 2017**
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- Company logo
- Contact information
- 250 words outlining why your company is a Content Marketing Leader
- 100 words for company overview/boilerplate
- Three 3" x 3" images
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- Online/social inclusion

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*You didn't ask for it, but we're
dishing it out anyway.*

In his column, Andrew Davis dishes out content marketing advice to unsuspecting targets. In this issue, Davis points the finger at you, dear reader.

You
Content Marketer
Every Company in the Universe

Dear Content Marketer,

Stop talking about engagement and awareness. Seriously, stop it.

Don't feel bad. You're not the only one. In the latest round of Content Marketing Institute research, almost 80 percent of B2B marketers and 74 percent of B2C marketers say they use content marketing to raise brand awareness.

Four out of five of us work toward an outcome that I can only describe as "fuzzy."

It's not that we shouldn't aim to influence brand awareness (and presumably measure its impact). And of course, we should continue to measure how many likes, shares, retweets and comments our content inspires as a barometer of what attracts an audience to our brand's content. Yes ... we should measure a lot of stuff.

Here's the thing: let's not report on it.

There's a big difference between measuring our tactics and reporting on our success. It's time we graduate to reporting numbers that won't cause our CFO and CEO to roll their eyes.

I'd argue this year's Content Marketer of the Year is unbelievably successful because she reports on her content's ability to increase margins. That's right, the Cleveland Clinic's Amanda Todorovich measures a ton of variables, but at the end of the day, she reports on the revenue she generates. That's smart marketing.

Let's understand the massive difference between measuring success and reporting on it.

Here's the deal: if you stop using the words "engagement" and "awareness" at every one of your marketing meetings, I'll buy you and your team a pizza. I guarantee the more you focus on affecting revenue, the more successful you and your content will become.

What do you say? Do we have a deal?

Whether you wanted it or not,
Andrew Davis

DEPARTMENT COLUMNIST



Andrew Davis is the author of *Town INC. Grow Your Business. Save Your Town. Leave Your Legacy*. Follow him @DrewDavisHere.



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