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Content Marketing
2015

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juntajoe Joe Pulizzi
Will you hire a CCO this year?
If so, tweet me via @Junta42.

CONTENT MARKETING
2015

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Heavy hitters share their insights about what's ahead.

content. curation

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Is higher ed training graduates for real jobs in marketing?

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LinkedIn and the New Age of Influence

By Todd Wheatland

How this social network is rewiring the talent pool.

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Chief Content Officer magazine is for YOU, the content marketer.

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CONTENT MARKETING INSTITUTE

WHAT'S ONLINE

www.contentmarketinginstitute.com

Justify Your Content Marketing Investment

The *2012 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends* research report is out! Find out how marketers are spending their content budgets, which tactics are most popular and marketers biggest content challenges. Also, learn about the "confidence gap"–a term we use to describe the ambivalence marketers feel about certain content marketing tactics. For example, 74 percent of marketers use social media to distribute content, but only 50 percent believe it is effective. What's that about? We'll explain this paradox, plus a whole lot more.
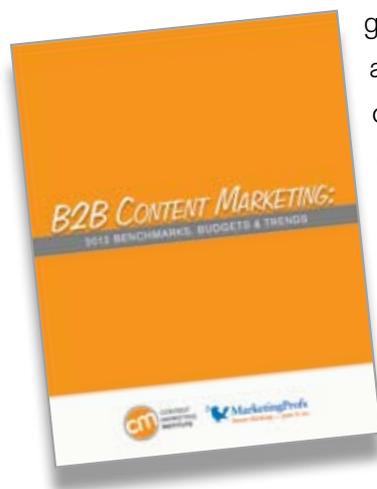
Download the full report:
http://dlvr.it/17S59k

20 Women Who Rock
Content Marketing

Joe Chernov from **Eloqua** bemoans the dominance of men on content marketing "influencer" lists. To correct the problem, Chernov's put together a rocking list of the smart, influential women of content.
http://dlvr.it/17S59n

Roles of the
Content Marketing 'Engineer'

A content engineer ensures your content reaches the right customers at the right time by leveraging monitoring and analytics. Read why it's a critical role on your marketing team. **http://dlvr.it/17S59w**

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JOE PULIZZI talks to Scott Maxwell, founder of Boston-based venture capital firm, OpenView Venture Partners, about content marketing and why the web needs better 'plumbing.'

Joe Pulizzi: Few venture capital firms are experimenting with new media and content marketing to the degree you're doing it at OpenView Partners and OpenView Labs. Tell me how that came about.

Scott Maxwell: We focus on companies within two specific sectors and a specific stage in the investment cycle. Since those companies can be anywhere in the world, we have difficulty finding them. We did a lot of research and made a lot of phone calls to identify and reach out to target companies. What we now do with content marketing is flip that dynamic, helping our target market find us and understand who we are.

The content marketing strategies we use on the OpenView Labs site came about because I read your book, *Get Content Get Customers.* The ideas you talked about really resonated for me, and we began encouraging our portfolio companies to adopt content marketing.

It wasn't long before we realized that if we were telling our portfolios' companies to use content marketing, then we needed first-hand experience ourselves. We began with a company blog. Then we introduced the **OpenView Labs** website, where we blog, publish videos and podcasts, and produce a series of e-books. OpenView Labs has been a great proving ground for us, helping us experiment with content marketing so that we can guide our portfolio companies to do the same.

J: There are so many sites dedicated to venture capital and tech startups. How do you stand out?

S: Our audience is very narrowly focused. We are writing about ideas for expansion-stage software and technology companies only. The set of issues they face is fairly unique. One of the important roles we play for that audience is not only publishing original content, but also curating all the content that's out there on the web and filtering it to find the best examples for our audience.

J: Most people don't think of financial services as very advanced in new media. What in your own background led you to embrace content marketing and digital media within an industry that's usually thought of as a laggard?

S: The best way to describe myself is somewhere between an engineer and a teacher. I began my career in the '80s as a mechanical design engineer, designing robots. I went on to get a PhD in mechanical engineering in order to become a professor. The academia career didn't happen because, in truth, with my background there were so many commercial opportunities for me. I went to **McKinsey** to hone my business skills, and then spent a lot of time in financial services, first for **Lehman Brothers** and then **Putnam Investments**. I ended up moving to venture capital because a friend asked me to join him. For me, venture is the perfect intersection of technology and financial services. What's more, it's an engineer's dream to test out ideas and to experiment—and both of those qualities are highly valued in venture capital. Essentially, we are engineering businesses.

As far as why my background translates to having insights about digital media in particular. I would say that I'm not a digital evangelist by any means. I really just like and pursue what works. I'm willing to take a new idea, test it out, experiment and see how it fits together with other ideas.

TALKING
INNOVATION
with Joe Pulizzi

J: Your content marketing team for the OpenView Labs site is small, but I happen to know they are very media-savvy. Tell me how you identify and attract the best talent.

S: We are especially good at recruiting tech-savvy employees because of the channels we use to find them. Our **LinkedIn** searches, for example, help us identify individuals who are extremely active in tech, not just those who say they are. It's an important distinction.

J: In this issue we are talking all about Content 2015. What do you think the field will look like in three years?

S: What we really need is a lot more automation and more prediction in marketing and digital media. Currently there is a huge amount of manual work involved in posting blogs and identifying others to follow. All of the "plumbing" of the web will need to become more automated over time. There are companies who are already providing solutions to this problem, such as **Dlvr.it**, but we still need a lot more intelligence built in to all the social media activities we engage in so that companies can scale their social media and content activities.

The question I also hope gets answered in the coming years is how to achieve one-to-one content marketing. What I mean by that is, if your company is targeting various markets, and each of your target companies has multiple user or customer types (e.g. IT versus human resources), how can you deliver the right content to the right person at the right time? It's a complex but very important problem to solve.

How a small team generates big-time content.

In just under two years, OpenView has attracted 10,000 subscribers to its weekly newsletters for senior managers. How does the team keep the machine humming at top speed? Amanda Maksymiw, content marketer at OpenView, shares five key tactics with the Content Marketing Institute:

1. **Make it a valuable resource:** Instead of just touting our company news, we focus on providing valuable ideas and insight in every newsletter. We rely on our in-house experts, as well as a rich roster of outside thought leaders for content and expert interviews.

2. **Target low-hanging fruit:** Reach out to your employees, partners and existing customers to explain the value of your newsletter, and give them an easy way to subscribe.

3. **Create valuable content "assets":** Develop longer, in-depth, higher-value forms of content—such as webinars and e-books—that warrant registration, then use the registration form to promote the newsletter.

4. **Make your content easy to share:** Target your existing subscribers to help expand your network. For example, offer "share this" links so that subscribers can forward content to colleagues and friends without leaving your page.

5. **Work with key influencers:** Get influencers on board to participate as writers, and ask them to share their submissions with their networks.

6. **Get inside support:** Do you have an active sales or recruiting team? Are people on the phones selling your product day in and day out? Need I say more?

7. **Consider push-pops or modal windows:** While many hate modal windows, we believe the much-maligned pop-up can be a valuable tool. We use it with care, experimenting with messaging and style. Our most popular (i.e. highest converting) pop-ups include testimonials from existing subscribers and photos of people. To date, 30 percent of our subscribers have joined through pop-ups.

▶ To find out more about OpenView's newsletter strategy, and learn specific tips and tricks, visit: dlvr.it/171lml

TECH TOOLS

VIDEO TOOLS

"Check out Wistia. Their metrics are amazing for online content."

Kyle Daigle, (@kdaigle)
Director of Product Development,
Geezeo.com

Wistia.com
Using Wistia, an online video hosting application, you can learn exactly at what point in your video you're boring your audience—and other helpful measurement tidbits.

"Collect and curate videos on a particular topic and present them in a single location."

Courtney Wallin, (@rvnewsnet)
Producer, RVNN.tv

Magnify.net
Merge videos from multiple sources and present them on a free channel. With an upgrade, you can integrate curated videos into your existing website, plus gain SEO support and analytics.

ALSO...

Your Own Show Awaits

Content Marketing World 2011 attendees were treated to this advice from film director-turned-podcaster, Kevin Smith: "Get it on wax." He was referring to producing your own radio show, but did you realize how easy it is to produce a video show? Shira Lazar (@shiralazar) built **Partners Project**, a YouTube talk-show channel featuring rising YouTube video stars. In the process she's become a star of sorts in her own right: Lazar was honored as one of *Fast Company's* "Most Influential Women in Tech."

▶ To submit your TECH TOOL
techtools@contentinstitute.com

DEPARTMENT EDITOR
Katie McCaskey provides content marketing, content strategy and commercial writing services. She is passionate about content that empowers people to renew the built and natural world. She is an "urban escapee" based south of Washington, D.C., in historic Staunton, Va.
Follow her on Twitter @KatieMcCaskey or at www.katiemccaskey.com.

CONTENT MARKETI

2015

Content experts weigh in on what's ahead. Consider this fair warning.

WE ASKED:

- Content Marketing 2015: Where are we headed?
- Tech 2015: What technologies will change the field?
- Company 2015: Which companies 'get it'?
- Personal 2015: How will we change as marketers?

Stan Woods
Managing Director
Velocity Partners

CM 2015

In the last 12 months particularly in the United Kingdom—there's been a greater focus on analytics. The content marketing ninja of 2012 and beyond is someone who knows what great is, but also understands through analytics how to measure it and optimize it. Currently about 80 percent of our clients are using tools like **Marketo** and **Eloqua**, whereas in 2008 only 10 percent were. In 2008, the career path of a senior marketer was getting further and further away from execution. Today, it's swung back the other way. The most successful senior marketers are rolling their sleeves back, diving in and experimenting. They are like experimental scientists.

James Gross
Co-Founder
Percolate

CM 2015

Many brands have spent the last two to three years acquiring an audience. The problem now is: What do you give these people? Brands struggle to create content at a social scale.

We are perplexed that the form factors for publishing haven't changed, even though we've become such a mobile world. We do see small changes, such as the new Twitter IOS5 integration, **Twitter** is trying to wrap as much meta data in to the iPhone and iPad operating systems as possible, allowing you to publish more easily. It gives you the ability to grab, react and curate a piece of media from where ever you are on the iPhone. We think all mobile publishing should be this simple.

Rebecca Lieb
Digital Marketing & Media Analyst
The Altimeter Group

CM 2015

I recently interviewed 57 content marketing experts and practitioners from major US brands, most from the Fortune 500, and asked what they plan to do in the future related to content. Every single company we spoke to plans to increase its investment in content, going deeper to explore new channels, recommit themselves to existing channels and understand how content marketing can support its other marketing activities.

We are seeing tons of interest in video. Video is the number one activity marketers plan to expand in the future, which we see as a commitment to visual storytelling. The number two area of interest is mobile. That makes sense given the incredible explosion in the tablet market. By tablet, I'm talking about iPads and e-readers.

Tech 2015

Mobile is changing the field already. Mobile is more and more within the reach of marketers, technologically speaking, and more and more within the reach of consumers. When the iPad launched, it was a $700 device. The Kindle Fire brought the price down to $200. And recently **Barnes & Nobles** announced that subscribers to the *New York Times* and *People* will receive a free Nook. Mobile is fast-becoming a critical channel.

Michael Stelzner
CEO and Founder, Social Media Examiner
Author: *Launch!*

CM 2015

We're going to see smart companies become online magazines, embrace competitors and essentially build a massive publishing infrastructure on the Internet. A great example is **Proctor & Gamble** with its *Man of the House* site. There aren't too many out there right now.

Tech 2015

For location-based businesses, you cannot underestimate mobile. We're going to see content delivered up in the geo-physical space, allowing people to get relevant content when they are in a particular spot. The concept is called augmented reality and it allows you to turn on the camera in your phone and, using geo-location, receive content based on where your camera is pointing. You might be standing outside **Starbucks** and a coupon comes up for **Peet's** across the street.

Self 2015

Marketers need to realize it's not about the sale and rethink our motivations for doing things. Instead of spurring people to buy or get into a lead funnel, marketers need to spur people to become evangelists for their company, community and products. If you can empower an evangelist, that person can reach people you can never reach.

Bill Flitter
CEO/Founder
Dlvr.it

CM 2015
What's next? Filtering the noise. Remember: noise is relative. Noise is just a lack of relevance. How do we connect consumers to relevant content and answer their questions? Right now the push is all about creating content, but is all that content being created really addressing your customers? Are your customers discovering what they need, when they need it?

Tech 2015
I look to **Google** for the future of content technologies. Google signaled a transformation from search to discovery with Google+. Social over the next few years is going to be about the transition from searching to discovery—specifically, discovery through friends.

Now that we are "always on" and "always connected," we're moving from the idea of a pond (do it once and pray that Google picks it up and indexes it) to a stream (always on, always moving). Consumers are stepping into the stream at different points in the day. How does it change the way marketers think about content?

Company 2015
AJ Bombers (a restaurant chain based in Wisconsin) is a great example of a small company that uses content marketing with incredible sophistication. Its problem: "How do we get customers in the door in a Sunday afternoon?" Answer: Use a "swarm badge" on **FourSquare**. AJ Bombers doesn't have time to create beautiful blog posts, so its digital center is FourSquare. Many marketers think of a content marketing strategy as blogging or video, but it can be as simple as Twitter and FourSquare.

David Meerman Scott
Marketing Strategist and Best-selling Author
Latest title: *Newsjacking*

CM 2015
It's what I've been talking about for the last year: Real time. It's about instant. I see so few content marketers who truly understand the power of an instant blog post, an out-of-the-gate video, a fast update to a website. In my experience, most content marketers still have a campaign approach to content marketing. There's nothing wrong with that. It's not either or. But there's a big opportunity to take advantage of what's going on right now, this instant. Being able to create a piece of content (a blog post, for example) that drafts off the news that's breaking at that moment—it's a tremendous opportunity and few companies do it.

Self 2015
The biggest hurdle marketers face is this: You need to recognize no one cares about you, your company or your product. We marketers tend to come at things from an egotistical perspective, but customers don't really care. They care about themselves and solving their own problems.

Kirsten Knipp
Marketing Director
Hubspot

CM 2015
I foresee a continued focus on quality. Over the last five years, marketers have figured out that content is the core engine that drives search on the web. But as more companies become publishers, there's a real need to ratchet back the volume and increase quality. At Hubspot we are encouraging our customers to do this. In other words, "I'm attracting eyeballs to my site, but are they the right ones?"

Personal 2015
Marketers need to become more analytical. More and more marketers need to go back to Excel 101 and Testing 101. They need to refine their ability to look at data, extract what matters and "pivot table" it. They need to be able to say, "When I talk about topic ABC on my blog, it generates three times the traffic and two times the leads." This is not a natural step for marketers—especially those who have been marketers for a long while.

April Dunford

Author of RocketWatcher.com

VP Marketing, Huawei Enterprise

CM 2015

So much content today is tailored to the US market, even though a lot of revenue growth is coming from other regions, such as Asia, Africa and the Middle East. I believe we will start to see content that is customized to the needs of those markets. Again, it comes down to delivering value. Those customers have different problems and the purchase cycles are different, therefore the content we need to deliver to them will be different.

China is a great example. For many technology companies it represents a massive and fast-growing market. Content marketers face a challenge in that purchase cycles are different in China, the sales ecosystem is different and the tools that people use online are very different. There is a misconception that there is little social media use in China. In fact, they are heavy social media users—but the tools are different. **Twitter, Facebook** and **YouTube** for example are inaccessible in China but **Weibu, RenRen** and **Youku** offer many of the same features and are hugely popular in China. There is a huge opportunity for content marketers who have a deep understanding of the Chinese market to take advantage of Chinese social media to reach customers.

Tech 2015

Obviously there is an ever-increasing focus on measurement and monitoring, to ensure that we are tying results back to our business objectives (and more specifically, revenue). I hope that this will help us get away from producing crappy "click-bait" that might drive short-term traffic and eyeballs but doesn't result in any revenue.

Mark Chatow

VP of Marketing
Servio

CM 2015

What we are seeing now is content post-**Google Panda**. Panda put into black and white that content has to change. It's not about throwing anything you can on your site. You need to create content that's engaging and unique, and ultimately shareable and linkable.

In the future, I see the intersection of two big ideas: The massive demand for content, that by its scale just can't be created and managed in-house. At the same time, there's the massive change in how Google search is ranking you based on what it considers relevant. The challenge is not only create to create an SEO plan, but execute it at a large scale.

Tech 2015

The big change ahead will be the new technologies that allow marketers to achieve seamless integration of existing content systems and labor. That means researchers, writers, editors, subject matter experts, legal—all the in-house and out-sourced inputs needed for content—interact seamlessly and finished content flows back into your content management system.

Ardath Albee

CEO

Marketing Interactions, Inc.

CM 2015

Today marketers look at their activities in a compartmentalized fashion. Lead nurturing is over here. Blogging there. E-book over there. All these things are considered in pieces. Marketers need figure out how to integrate everything into a cohesive whole rather than focusing on "this marketing campaign" or "that webinar."

We also have to become more accountable about how we measure things. Which leads to one of the biggest challenges in marketing: How to measure performance from a comprehensive perspective? How do you get beyond "last touch" attribution? Marketers need to be able to say, "this entire program is effective," rather than "this particular piece of content drove this number of click throughs." It's about managing the entire buyer experience, not just adding up the activity.

▶ To read our full interviews with content marketing experts, visit: dlvr.it/171lnq

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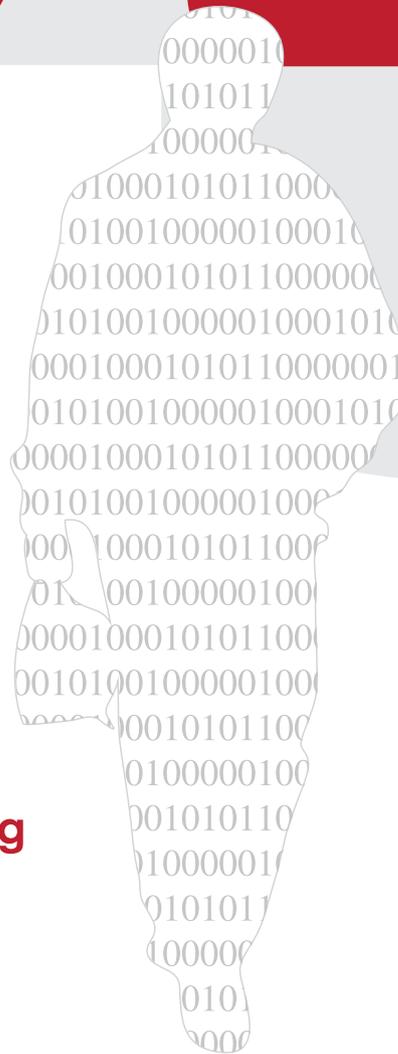
Careers in marketing— particularly digital media, content marketing and analytics—are growing. Why are US universities failing to graduate marketable digital natives?

By Rand Schulman

US higher education—long a source of pride and differentiation across the globe—is undergoing a true crisis of value and identity. Pundits wonder whether universities are the next "bubble" of the US economy, and university students are questioning whether their high-priced education and gargantuan debt loads—up 47 percent after inflation from 10 years ago—will position them for a college-worthy career.

▶ Marketing students are taught about targeting, segmentation, the "4Ps," classic operations, testing and business analysis. Their work product translates to the bottom line, but too few marketing students are given rigorous, cross-disciplinary training in writing, analytics and technology.

▶ Engineering students invent products and processes that can be observed, measured and optimized. Too few schools make the link from engineering to digital media.

LVE?

"Our customers want marketing professionals who can measure and optimize marketing effectiveness—and the demand for those roles are essentially doubling annually," says Alex Yoder, CEO of Web Trends, and director of The Oregon Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. "The amazing thing is this: despite a slow economy, the supply in these marketing roles is just not there."

Says Jim Sterne, chairman of the Web Analytics Association, "The need for analysts and content engineers who can determine the value of content is so great that our association's online courses have been steadily sold out since inception in 2006. When times are good, companies invest in tools and systems. When times are tough, they invest in people who can optimize those tools and systems."

The market needs well-trained content savants.

Put simply: US universities are not adequately training students to meet the needs of business in some of the most sought-after areas of marketing: social media, content marketing and content analytics. Clearly an imbalance exists between skills taught in classrooms and the skills sought in the marketplace—and this imbalance is only accelerating by the rapid pace of change in technology and product innovation.

Nowhere is this more evident than the schism that exists in many universities between business schools, schools of engineering and English departments.

▶ English, journalism and communications students are taught to express themselves in words, but are rarely trained about optimizing content for business value—a central tenet of real-world business writing.

We need to think about creating a new curriculum that addresses the new, multi-disciplinary needs of the marketplace. We need to train writers who are savvy about digital content and adept using technologies that optimize their work in real time. We need marketers who are top-rate communicators and who understand that high-quality content is a new core competency in marketing. And we need to call upon curriculum from engineering—methods in measurement and optimization—to train marketers and English majors.

What's behind the cliques?

The silos at work in academia also have been a serious stumbling block for businesses, but in recent years many organizations have revisited their org charts to fix the misalignment between marketing, engineering and creative. Five years ago it was common to divide the roles of content creation and business measurement—the classic left-brain vs. right-brain gap. Yet any enlightened business will tell you today that creativity without conversion is a big fat zero. Many have not only created better cohesion between the two disciplines, but have appointed roles such as chief revenue officers, chief content officers and content engineers—all intended to bridge the gap between creative, technology and business analytics. There is even talk that in some

A New Major: Content Engineering

1. A capstone class defines the discipline and the core tenets of content engineering.

2. Building-block classes in writing, statistics, analytics, market research and consumer behavior, quantitative decision-making, marketing, digital media and technology are each seen through the lens of content engineering and taught by professors who are committed to the concept.

3. A one-semester, hands-on training in a content lab allows students to put their education to the test with real-world challenges. Corporations can go to the lab to innovate solutions, and, I propose, fund the lab itself.

4. An intensive internship program gives students credit for working within companies and testing their knowledge in the real world.

organizations that the CMO serve as a proxy financial officer, sitting in front of his integrated marketing dashboard, making ROI decisions on social, mobile, web and cross-channel campaigns in real time.

To be fair, some university professors recognize the trend and have taken positive steps to become more cross-disciplinary. Reports Eric Sonstroem, English Department chair at the University of the Pacific, "I'm pioneering a course in our English department this semester that focuses on content engineering, teaching the latest tools of analysis, analytics and optimization alongside traditional business writing and marketing techniques. I'm determined that my students really understand how content works on the web, how it can be tested and measured, and how you can act on the data you get back."

Yet within the US university system, such cross-pollination remains the exception.

"With the onslaught of 'digital everything' in the last decade plus," says Terri L. Bartlett, president of the Direct Marketing Educational Foundation, "it's no wonder our corporate and academic institutions are caught off-guard. The sooner we face this issue, the sooner we in America can do what we do best: innovate and collaborate. That's what I'm betting on and what our organization is counting on."

What's being done?

Some universities and their business partners are indeed looking for ways to leverage their current curriculum towards a higher technological quotient. They see the need to produce graduates with the skills geared for today's competitive environment. Yet teaching "internet marketing" classes—most often a minor re-

packaging of traditional marketing—is a quick fix when we need an earth-moving overhaul.

Recently at SXSW in Austin, I sat on a panel with an ad agency CEO to debate the question "Is too much math killing creativity?" The crowd was heavily weighted toward creatives, but when polled, these attendees overwhelmingly said, "no." They agreed that numbers need to be assigned to all words and messages, and that conversions need to be tracked through the sales funnel, from the very first level of engagement all the way through to conversion to revenue. Most importantly, attendees agreed that marketers, bloggers and journalists need to be compensated on measurable results. The emerging paradigm in the news/media industry supports this. Organizations like AOL/Huffington Post, Google and Demand Media are equal content and analytics powerhouses.

We need to establish a new major: content engineering.

Perhaps cross-pollination is not enough. Why not create a new major that spans existing schools and subjects, yet adds a modern shine to the old school plaque? I would propose a content engineering degree that leverages the existing curriculum and talent in business, liberal arts and engineering, but also remains adaptable to train students in new competencies as the market changes. In other words, a degree in content engineering need not be revolutionary, but rather a synergy created by existing assets.

We need to create a stronger culture of measurement in higher education, one that is market-based and rewards innovation. Anthony P. Carnevale, director of The Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University, has called for a fundamental shift in thinking about the way students are educated. He writes, "The old model, where you go to college and then go out and find a job, is largely outmoded. It needs to be replaced with a new model, in which college years are spent explicitly preparing for an occupation."

Innovation is part of the US DNA, and has been for centuries. Today, our institutions of higher education are moving at a glacial pace, not keeping up with corporate demand for high-tech skills. Maybe the high-energy heat of market demand for digital sophisticates can "melt" the slow rate of change in higher education?

Rand Schulman is a managing partner at Schulman Thorogood Group and executive in residence at University of the Pacific. In 2005 he was named a Top 100 BtoB marketing executive by *BtoB Magazine* and is regularly quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Investor's Business Daily*, *BusinessWeek*, *AdWeek* and *Advertising Age*, among others. He is a founder and past board member of the Web Analytics Association and a trustee with the Direct Marketing Educational Foundation. Rand advises a number of investment banks, private equity and venture capital firms and universities about sector shifts and opportunities in new media and marketing.

DIAGNOSIS

Love the Funnel

Reorganize your content and calls to action for superior conversion.

By Andy McCartney

Marketers spend plenty of time creating content and executing tactics to drive traffic. Now it is time to turn a higher percentage of that traffic into tangible business. One way to improve conversion rates is to engage with visitors and prospects at all stages of the decision cycle, not just when it is time to "contact sales." Enter intelligent digital self-service and the "content engagement zone."

Nine out of 10 marketers use content to engage with prospects, but the percent of "readers" who become "customers" is woefully low. Why? Marketers with SEO-mania love to focus on traffic ("821 people viewed my homepage today!") but fail to move prospects into and through the funnel.

> **"Nowadays people don't want to talk to sales until they are much further along their decision cycle, so intelligent digital self-service is imperative."**

Engage in funnel management.

Marketers are fairly adept at driving traffic to a company's online assets, particularly its "master website." But once the traffic has arrived, the tools and techniques used to engage, capture and convert are limited and largely ineffective. Digital funnel management is foreign to most companies, even though it's an essential competency needed to produce strong ROI from marketing investments. Generating 25, 50 or even 100-plus percent more business from digital traffic is absolutely possible with appropriately placed content plus innovative conversion tactics and tools.

Create a 'content engagement zone.'

How to overcome these limitations? Create a content engagement zone that integrates all your content, offers intermediate steps before purchase or human contact, and automates some aspects of marketing and sales. This zone is so much more than a contact-us form—it should include all the possible options for prospects to connect with your company. In essence, the engagement zone allows visitors to select a next step and, in doing so, identify themselves to you. Herein lies the most depressing conversion stat of them all: only 2 to 3 percent of websites earn the respect of visitors such that they identify themselves, become named contacts and enter the funnel. Some companies use landing pages and microsites to drive specific calls to action, which is to be recommended, but whenever there are multiple possible next steps, I recommend the application of an engagement zone.

Rather than try to explain in words what an engagement zone is, take a look at a three examples from the real world.

Consider **MikeWittenstein.com**. When visitors click on the "Take Action Now" orange button on the top right of each page, an engagement zone appears. Seven menu options provide pathways for visitors to seek more information and consider a next step.

Banyan Capitals (banyancapital.com) and **Personifeye** (personifeye.com) feature similar engagement zones. Tying automation behind this type of engagement-and-capture solution enables more targeted self-service, greater relevance of content as selected or delivered to visitors, and ultimately

greater yield out of the bottom of the funnel. If designed correctly, you can connect with visitors and prospects no matter where they are in the funnel and decision cycle. Start simply, then consider adding more sophistication (e.g. marketing automation, lead scoring, drip/nurturing, etc.) over time.

Consider using a QR code to draw visitors directly into your engagement zone from the print world.

A word of warning: Respect the wishes of your visitors regarding how they would like to be contacted—and do not turn over their information to the CRM or sales team until credibly qualified (as agreed by marketing and sales). Nowadays people don't want to talk to sales until they are much further along their decision cycle, so intelligent digital self-service is imperative.

Connect your zone to social media and promotions.
Once you have your engagement zone in place, take the next step and engage your prospects from any digital location, including your blog, social media channels, thought leadership publications, emails, online ads and QR codes.

Andy McCartney is a broadly experienced digital management consultant, trainer and marketing practitioner who has spent the last 25 years consulting and collaborating with hundreds of companies of all sizes in Europe and North America. He is founder and CEO of DigitalConverts, a marketing solutions provider focused on helping organizations generate credible ROI from digital investment.

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Linked in® and the
New Age of Influence

You're likely missing the point of this social climber. (And no, this is not another shlumpy article about how to use LinkedIn Groups.)

By Todd Wheatland

You get **LinkedIn**. You've built out your profile, extended your connections to a large number of people you've never met, joined groups because you weren't already getting enough spam each day, created and/or answered patently false questions, and posted self-promotional status updates.

You've read a bunch of articles like, "The Top 5 Things B2B Marketers Need to Know About LinkedIn" and "How LinkedIn Can Make You Feel Sexy Again." But you still think you're missing something.

Well, you are. You're missing what everyone else is missing too, for now.

From sourcing to recruiting.

LinkedIn changed the way companies fill jobs not by making it easier to recruit, but by making it easier to source. And there's a difference.

Sourcing is the process of generating names of possible candidates for a specific role; recruiting is all the high-touch stuff that follows. LinkedIn already did the sourcing part so well that it had trouble monetizing its offering. The "free" product—the number of profiles anyone could source free of charge or for a small fee— was already so stunning a resource for professional recruiters that it was hard to convince people to pay $5,000 for a recruiter's license.

Then suddenly, between 2009 and 2010, LinkedIn's hiring solutions revenue rose 178 percent to $65.9 million. Seemingly overnight, it created something entirely new, something uniquely possible from its place in the market. Here are the pieces it pulled together:

The database.

Enormous candidate databases and job boards like Monster and Career Builder were here long before LinkedIn. However, LinkedIn redefined the concept of sourcing when it became the default professional networking database—the place where it's socially acceptable to brag about yourself even while you're not looking for work. Recruiters no longer needed to pay a job board for access to its candidate database because LinkedIn was the de-facto networking hub.

The social network.

While it lacks the share-everything frequency factor of **Twitter** and **Facebook**, LinkedIn has 120 million-plus registered users. Of those who use it, over two-thirds access it multiple times a week. Given its revenue makeup, LinkedIn thinks of itself more as a SaaS company than a social network—but make no mistake, a social network it definitely is.

The algorithm.

Matching tools, which score candidate databases against open jobs, have been around for over a decade. Using artificial intelligence and parsing tens of millions of resumes (and their histories of job progression), these tools seek to predict an idealized level of skills and experience that should lead to a specific next job. Matching tools are more widespread than you think, and today are used by corporations, staffing companies and major job boards alike.

But what LinkedIn can do, alone at this stage, is take all your resume data and test inferences not only about your work history, but with whom you connect and what you ask/share/comment.

More importantly, LinkedIn no longer needs to take your word for it. Your resume as it currently exists holds less and less credibility. Just as **Klout**–love it or hate it–is trying to see beyond your easy-to-boost number of Twitter followers, LinkedIn will try to validate your suitability for opportunities based on your broader social presence.

Forget about how many people you're connected with. LinkedIn will determine not just how many but how influential? Are you connected with the experts in your field of work? How likely are these experts to view, comment on or share any of your network activities? Have they recommended you? And have they written a ton of references for other people, or was yours one of very few?

Your resume as it currently exists hold less and less credibility. Just as Klout–love it or hate it–is trying to see beyond your easy-to-boost number of Twitter followers, LinkedIn will try to validate your suitability for opportunities based on your broader social presence.

There have been many attempts at trying to visualize this sort of influence/connection model, including LinkedIn's own InMaps (I've included an image of mine here). In late October 2011 **Google** hinted at where it might be taking this when it first introduced Ripples.

It's easy to be deceived by the simplicity and pretty colors of InMaps and Ripples. But just imagine what it all means when additional layers of information about your connections and how you interact with them are inserted into this model. Suddenly, you see candidates very differently.

How likely is it, for example, that someone educated in Atlanta, whose work experience is with a large corporation (for three years), who does not read or share any tech-related news articles with his or her network, and who has no influential contacts in San Francisco, is going to be successful working at a startup?

LinkedIn's gold mine is in helping us see and understand these connections and interactions. And you can be sure LinkedIn is developing products right now that package this information in ways useful to recruiters.

YOU
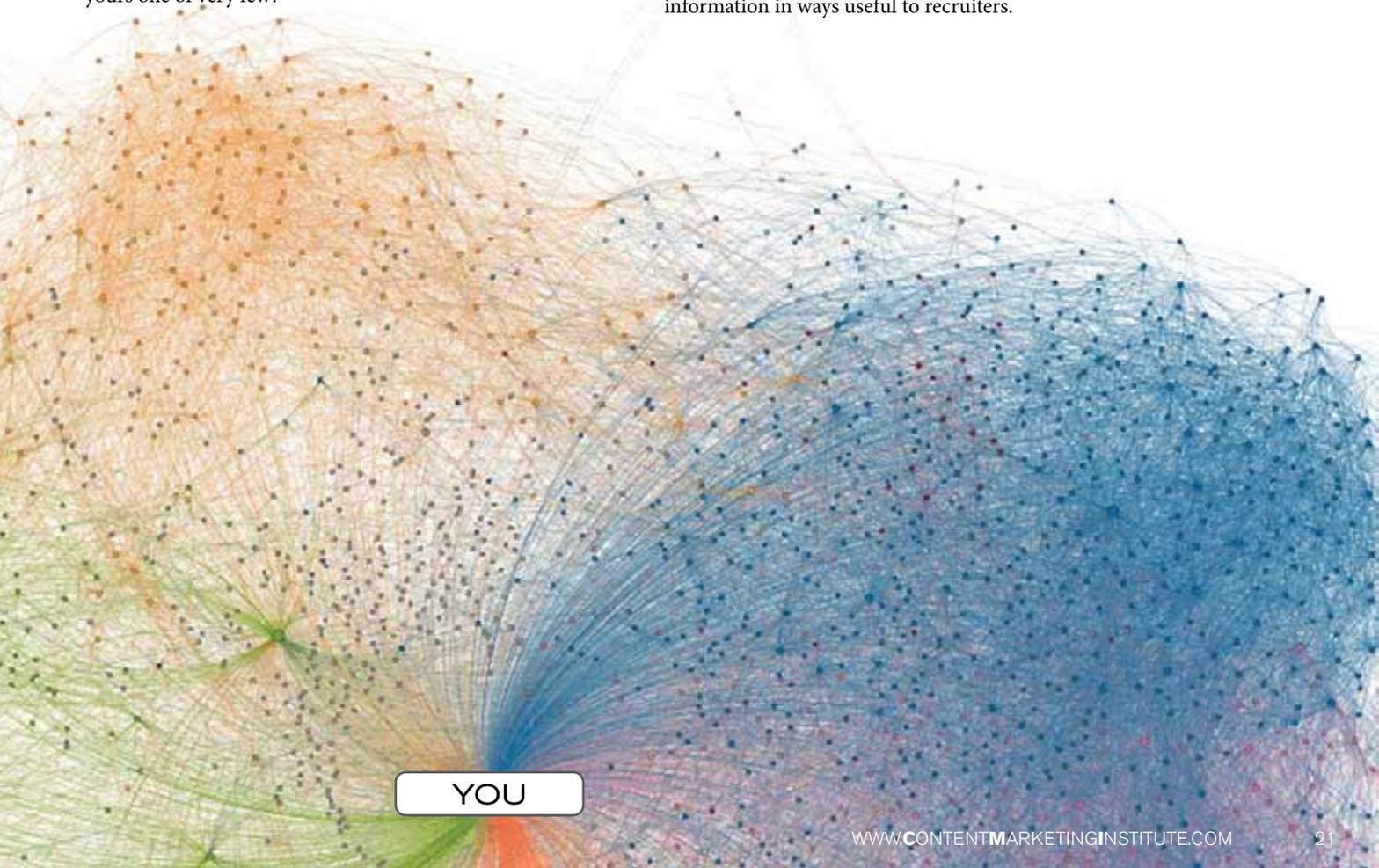
How LinkedIn Peers into Your Digital Soul

Many professionals still view LinkedIn as a glorified digital Rolodex. Others point to LinkedIn Groups as the "energy drink" of web-based networking. Todd Wheatland argues that while these areas are LinkedIn's most well-known assets, the true power and future growth of this talent sourcing behemoth is related to analytics. LinkedIn will give employers a way to find out if you really are as good as you say you are. How?

1. Your social circle: How well connected are you? Even more importantly, how influential are your connections within your industry and competency area? The relative power of your social circle can distinguish true players from posers.

2. Digital regimen: So you say you're passionate about user experience and information design? Are you reading content online related to these topics? Sharing relevant news with friends? Commenting on breaking news? Attending events?

3. Original content: Are you not only a follower but also a publisher in your field? Do you create original content about a specific area of interest? How closely is that content followed by others?

4. Geographic emphasis: You may say you're willing to relocate, but if you're 55 years old and have lived in Des Moines your whole working life, is a job in Silicon Valley a good fit? LinkedIn can make judgments about geographical fitness before recommending a candidate.

5. Bonus points: Certain attributes can earn "bonus points" for candidates. For example, a recommendation from an influential individual who does not normally write testimonials could result in bonus points.

The new age of influence

There is an awful lot happening in the LinkedIn space. Dozens of companies are in the race to crack recruiting on Facebook, but regardless of what happens on that front, two major trends will shape LinkedIn's direction:

1. The growth in free agency: 44 percent of active employees in the United States are now in non-traditional categories (i.e. temporary, contract, part-time, etc.). While the non-recessionary level would be closer to 30 to 35 percent, this is still a large and growing part of the working population. Think about the effect on resumes. Rather than a linear progression through a career, the reality for many is much closer to a skills-based evolution with different projects building up experience (and connections.) Improved skills and connections are the currency of the new job market, and job seekers will prioritize projects based on what skills they will gain and with whom they will work. A traditional resume will increasingly be a very poor template to demonstrate competency in the future.

2. The rise of "expert:" As more people become disconnected from traditional work opportunities, the need to market their own expertise is becoming paramount. Increasingly, people realize that the creation and curation of content relevant to their networks and target markets are key to their future work opportunities.

It's this second point that is the most interesting indication of LinkedIn's future development. Experts need to be able to promote their content, share and comment on others' content, bring interesting stories to their networks, ask and answer questions, join networking groups and attend events.

The really interesting idea—and one fundamental to the way I see LinkedIn's future developing—is what is the value of all that interaction? What are the metrics and measurement of influence?

A bunch of companies—Klout, Peerindex, EmpireAvenue and Crowdbooster among them—are innovating like crazy, trying to determine who is influential online, and on what topics. They are easy to make fun of, and in some instances, manipulate. But like it or not—and a lot of long-term bloggers most definitely do not—they provide the answer for organizations that are asking: If the "old" media is dead, and all this "new" media has replaced it, who do I need to work with to get my message out?

LinkedIn already made changes to the way users' skills can be aligned into niche topics, and in how influential people are deemed to be (within LinkedIn) on certain topics. What remains unclear is whether LinkedIn can attract a large enough proportion of the activity that experts undertake more diffusely on the "web across platforms like Quora and Focus to dominate the space of "grading influence."

With these three elements—the database, the social network and the algorithm—all existing together, LinkedIn is quietly dominating the evolving market of talent sourcing.

But the future goes well beyond these three elements. The future of LinkedIn is tied to the growing importance of experts in a free-agent economy, and to the increasing need among these experts not just to create content, but to curate it, share it and distribute it as a way of connecting with potential employers. Employers will no longer rely on your resume, but on your entire digital footprint–a trend LinkedIn is perfectly positioned to determine in the future.

LinkedIn is a window into the changing nature of employment, and how it facilitates and supports this change will ultimately define its success.

Todd Wheatland is the head of thought leadership at Fortune 500 workforce solutions company, Kelly Services.

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A CONTENT STRATEGY FOR YOUR CAREER

Yes, you need it no matter how secure you think your job is.

By Bernie Borges

A CAREER CONTENT STRATEGY OFFERS A WAY TO STRENGTHEN YOUR POSITION AND PERSONAL BRAND

Have you ever been fired or laid off? Do you aspire to a role that still seems a distance away? A career content strategy offers a way to strengthen your position and personal brand. Using content marketing as a personal branding strategy, you can meet influential people in your field, prove your intellectual mettle to colleagues and develop yourself as a key player in a particular niche.

In fact, I believe a self-focused content strategy can make the difference between a fine-but-unexceptional "B" career path, and fast-paced, self-directed "A+" journey.

Envision (and behave like) your future self.

A career content strategy begins with goal setting (no different than in business). Once you have long-term and short-term goals defined, consider the types of content that will support your goals. For example, if your goal is to be a CEO, what are the short-term stepping stones to brand you as a future CEO? I suggest you behave as a CEO today through your content strategy.

Identify the topics in your industry that people care about and develop your content plan around them. If you don't have a thought-leadership blog, create one. Even if you only blog two or three times per month (because you're busy), it's more important that you create quality content, rather than quantity.

Commit to two content assets.

Sticking with the "I want to be a CEO" example, identify the qualifications of the CEO you aspire to become and commit to two content assets that can help you hone those skills. It's well known that blogging is a powerful content asset, but you should choose one additional publishing tactic to diversify your digital brand. For example, you may seek out speaking engagements or guest article contributions (such as this one). Consider writing a book or e-book. Don't focus on monetary gain, rather focus on personal branding through your content. You may even consider a dedicated website (your-name.com) or a newsletter such as Paul Dunay's Buzz Marketing for Technology to aggregate and leverage your portfolio of content.

Identify risks and rewards.

There are risks to your career content strategy. Your content must be unique, otherwise you won't stand out. Your content must be consistent, otherwise you won't get noticed. You may encounter criticism from industry colleagues. Criticism may not be all bad, depending on how you handle it. Be respectful, genuine and engaging in criticism. Criticism can provide an opportunity to engage in a more visible conversation around a topic, which can fuel your personal brand–as long as you handle it gracefully.

Build your network.

I'm amazed by how many professionals overlook the importance of building a strong network. It's proven that having a strong online network even when you don't need it is far more effective than building your online network when you need it. A strong online network can support you in your content strategy by spreading your content and engaging with a wider audience. LinkedIn in particular–with its status-update feed that includes embedded links–offers the chance to promote your ideas among your network and share other relevant content.

Offline content plays a role.

So far, this article has focused mostly on creating an online (digital) content strategy in your career journey. Your offline content is also very important–and too often overlooked. The content you deliver through internal and external presentations, your email communication, how you conduct meetings, how you follow up with people, how you manage people and even how you criticize people are all part of your content. Yes, I'm referring to reputation management. The key is congruency. Your published content must be congruent with your offline content in order to be perceived as authentic and trustworthy.

A content plan benefits your career.

The benefits to having a content plan in your career journey should be obvious. Unless you're planning your retirement party next week your content is a form of currency in your career journey and should be managed with the same diligence you use to manage your money. At a minimum it requires consideration. In the best case, it calls for a committed plan that brands you so effectively that doors open that would not have otherwise opened were it not for your content strategy.

"Identify the topics in your industry that people care about and develop your content plan around them."

I ALREADY WORK 14 HOURS PER DAY.
How do I make time for a content strategy?

I've studied the mindset of triathletes to gain insight into how they do what they do. The average triathlete is 34 years. And, 75 percent of triathletes are amateurs. In other words, most triathletes have normal lives with jobs and family duties. So, how do triathletes train to compete in triathlon events? You won't like the answer. Most commit to grueling schedules that have them waking up a 4 a.m. to run, bike or swim before going to work. Most devote substantial time on the weekends to training. And, most hang out with other triathletes for inspiration and tips. If amateur triathletes can train for grueling competitive events, you can make the time for your content strategy. It requires a mindset and commitment that stretch us outside our comfort zone.

No excuses.

We live in a hypercompetitive world. No job is secure. I hope you believe that. Overlooking the strategic importance of a content plan in your career journey is very risky in the long run. It requires commitment, dedication and passion. So what's holding you back?

Bernie Borges is CEO of Find and Convert, an Internet marketing agency serving mid-size clients throughout the United States and Canada. Through BernieBorges.com, he delivers keynotes, live workshops and training for marketers, business development professionals and career seekers. Bernie is an instructor with the American Marketing Association, author of *Marketing 2.O: Bridging the Gap Between Seller and Buyer through Social Media Marketing* and founder of Career Central, an online community offering personal branding strategies for all professionals.

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content curation

A poorly understood content marketing tactic could be your most powerful community-building tool

By Susan McKittrick

We hear a lot about content curation these days. Some call it a top trend for 2012 and a must-see new technology for marketers. Others say it's a fad that can't hold a candle to creation of original content. Take a few minutes to understand what it is and the ways it fits into content marketing strategy. Then make your own decision about its role in your company.

A content curator assembles a quality collection of third-party and original content that is of keen interest to a particular audience, selects the best content for presentation, adds commentary valuable to the audience and publishes to the audience's preferred channels. Content curation tools use technology to facilitate these steps.

Marketers use content curation to establish a reputation as a trusted resource in a particular area, to build an audience (that eventually buys) above the funnel, and to foster interaction with a community of people who share specific interests. At a tactical level content curation also draws organic search traffic, provides fodder for nurture campaigns and informs marketers so they can intelligently participate in online conversations.

Using content curation to build the trust of a target audience.

You will find a good example of content curation in action at www.cmo.com. Curators of this website draw on top quality content created by others combined with their own original content to present, "digital marketing insight for CMOs." They feature "need to know" and "recommended for you" content along with selected other articles and news items of interest. After less than two years, the site draws 100,000 views a month and distributes its newsletter to 11,000 subscribers. Adobe, the brand behind the curation, demonstrates through the site that it "gets" digital marketing. It is building trust with an audience important to their success.

What tools do I need to become a content curator?

In its simplest form, content curation can be done with a Twitter account. You find timely, relevant content, add your two cents and tweet the introduction and link. However, using Twitter for curation will drain the time of already overburdened marketers and fail to deliver a customer experience that successfully builds the trust that retains a target audience.

An enterprise content curation tool will:

- Help you find the best content
- Make it fast and easy to select items and add commentary
- Provide flexibility in presentation and distribution of curated content
- Support the information consumer's experience, through personalization and navigation
- Report data marketers need to improve execution, demonstrate value and gain customer insight

Is content curation in your future?

Start with these questions:

In what topical areas do your customers need to stay current in order to succeed in their work?

In which of your customers' key interest areas does your company want to become a trusted resource?

How can content curation work in concert with other marketing tools and tactics to achieve your marketing goals?

Some of the enterprise content curation tools you'll want to consider are shown below. Each presents a different set of functionality tradeoffs so it is worthwhile to take a look at each of them to explore your own needs fully.

- **CIThread** .... www.cithread.com
- **Eqentia** .... www.eqentia.com
- **HiveFire** .... www.getcurata.com
- **Loud3r** www.loud3r.com
- **PublishThis** .... www.publishthis.com

Sue McKittrick, an analyst with Patricia Seybold Group, specializes in the technologies, processes and metrics that help B2B companies attract and retain profitable customers. She is expert in development of content strategies that draw customers' interest and content implementation through curation platforms, social media and nurturing programs.

▶ For more information on how others use content curation in marketing, download the Content Curation Evaluation Framework at: dlvr.it/171m5Z.

COLLAGE

DIY MOBILE APP:
NO CODING REQUIRED

If your organization's content marketing wishlist includes a mobile app, but your content marketing budget doesn't include a line item for coding one, AppMakr may be the answer. AppMakr is a free browser-based platform designed for making native iPhone apps using existing content and social networking feeds. Businesses can use the dashboard to style the app to match their brand, add content streams, test the app and publish it. The content can come from an RSS, Media RSS or GeoRSS feed. You also can populate photo galleries using Flickr or another image-hosting account. The product includes push notifications to alert your app's users when you publish fresh content.
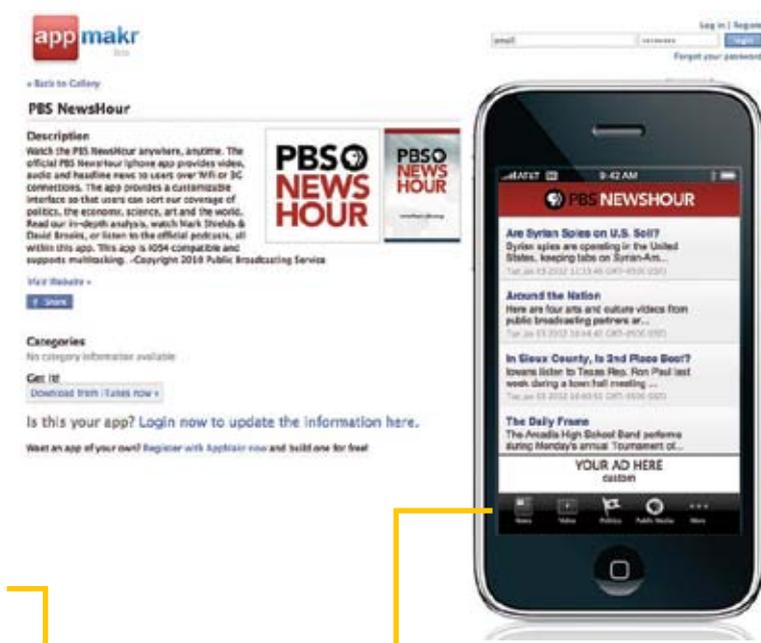
QR CODES...
IN SPACE

Looking for an unexpected place to fit a QR code? How about your rooftop? Management consulting firm **Phillips & Company** has launched a QR code service that allows businesses to transform their rooftops into marketing launchpads. Called **Blue Marble**, the patent-pending marketing service integrates a dynamic QR code into a physical site. Satellites orbiting the Earth photograph the image, making it accessible in navigation applications such as **Google Earth** and **Google Maps**.

To take advantage of the Blue Marble service, a business needs to have a "space-accessible profile"—a building, facility, landmark or other entity visible from the air or from space by satellite. When the code is integrated into the space-accessible profile, mobile users can access videos, coupons and other content while viewing the specific geographical location. Space: the final frontier (for outdoor advertising)?

WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS
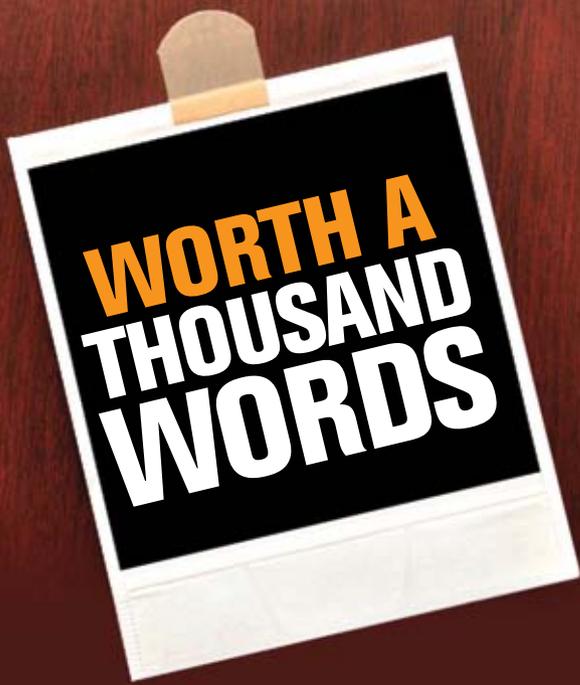
Embedding relevant images in content improves content performance–for some more than others–a new study shows. Conducted by search-driven media company **Skyword**, the study shows that improvement varies significantly by content vertical. Certain categories, like news, business and politics, benefit more than others, such as entertainment, where image libraries are frequently duplicated across the web. On average, total views increased by 94 percent if a published article contained a relevant photograph or infographic when compared to articles without an image in the same category. Search-optimizing image captions and metadata further enhanced content performance. The data comes from Skyword's content production platform, which measures the search and social performance of content.

DEPARTMENT EDITOR

Natalya Minkovsky (@hejhejnatalya) is a senior strategist and content strategy lead at **Rock Creek Strategic Marketing**, a branding and communications firm in the Washington, DC, metro area. She spends a lot of time thinking about grammar, plain language, open source and user experience.

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WEBCAM EYE-TRACKING GOES MOBILE

Publishers and advertisers, take note. By turning webcams into eye-tracking devices, start-up **GazeHawk** offers a cost-effective new way to track eye movements, generating heatmaps that show where visitors looked and what they saw.

The latest iteration of the product is eye-tracking for mobile devices, including tablets. As a complement to web analytics including page views and click-through rates, eye-tracking can reveal exactly what content is catching the reader's eye. GazeHawk's new capabilities deliver data on what headlines, images, ads and links mobile users are viewing and for how long.

From powerhouse magazine publishers to small businesses, knowing how content is being viewed on tablets can help shape decisions about both content marketing and advertising. GazeHawk has its own testers, but publishers, developers and agencies can recruit their own panels. The software is 100-percent opt-in; no video or recording can happen accidentally or without consent. Brands that have already worked with GazeHawk include **Mozilla** and **Millward Brown**.

CONTENT OPS

A COLUMN ABOUT DYNAMIC DESIGN AND CONTENT OPTIMIZATION.

Power Pathing:
Put an end to the era of dead-end assets.

By Bob Johnson

There are too many dead-end alleys that buyers wander down when they pursue digital content. In fact, at IDG Connect we find that over 25 percent lead nowhere. They fail to offer in-asset linkage to relevant content. Instead, buyers usually must back up to a navigation pane, review a non-descript list and play something akin to "go fish" to learn more.

When we do see links within assets, almost 50 percent lead to something generic or with a weak relationship. This type of filler food just slows down buyer momentum and makes them less likely to continue the buying journey–with you.

Pathing can be done most effectively by making sure that buyers can move in the digital direction they find most helpful from links provided in an asset. Take a look at one of your assets and confirm at a minimum that it is possible to:

- See another asset that relates to the same buying stage
- Drill down for additional depth or detail
- Move from an educational asset to hear the promotional story of how you can help

Don't add pathing links just for the sake of having something there. When we do see links within assets, almost 50 percent lead to something generic or with a weak relationship. This type of filler food just slows down buyer momentum and makes them less likely to continue the buying journey–with you.

After you cover the basics of effective pathing, consider other related assets that are based on the buyer's role as decision maker or recommender, and primary focus (which can be related to technical issues, business impact or financial impact). Such linkage increases relevance dramatically and builds a sense you understand the buyer's business. Anything you can do to enhance that sense is critical as "they don't understand our business" is a top three complaint buyers have about vendors today.

But how can you best manage all those links over time? It requires a content strategy that has each asset summarized with its type, focus, role, stage coverage, topical focus and stressed value propositions. Best to keep the information in a database to quickly identify those assets that must be modified as your content portfolio and offerings change over time.

The benefits of pathing are clear–greater engagement intensity and tendency to recommend or buy. IDG Connect buyer research shows that when buyers engage with three or more assets, spread over three or more points in time they are more than 30 percent likely to put that vendor on their short list. And we know what that means … money.

Bob Johnson is principal analyst and vice president of digital content optimization at **IDG Connect**, part of the world's largest technology media, event and research company.

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