CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY FOR EXECUTIVES
February 2016

CCO
CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER

THE CONTENT STRATEGY ISSUE

STRUCTURED CONTENT 101

WEB OPTIMIZATION: MISTAKES TO AVOID

UPGRADE YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY

Turn your content pieces into a well-organized system
Learn how from **Cleveland Clinic** content team

Intelligent Content Conference March 7-9

ALSO INSIDE: TRANSLATION & LOCALIZATION TECH GUIDE

Documenting Your Content Marketing Strategy ... and Your Content Tilt

To stay on top of content marketing trends, subscribe to Joe and Robert Rose's weekly podcast, **PNR: This Old Marketing**. *http://cmi.media/pnr*

Need more detail about documenting your content marketing strategy? Check out this amazing guide that will help crystallize your thinking on this. http://cmi.media/36questions

Research conducted by Dr. Gail Matthews from Dominican University of California shows that people who write down their goals, share them with a friend, and send weekly updates to that friend were on average 33 percent more successful in accomplishing their stated goals than those who merely formulated goals.

We see this in content marketing as well.

According to the 2016 Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs research, those companies that document their content marketing strategy are *significantly* more effective over those that do not.

Doug Kessler from Velocity Partners says it more simply: If you do not write down your content marketing strategy, it doesn't exist. Unless you document it—and share it with your marketing team—you don't value the practice. It's that simple.

Yet, according to our research just 32 percent of marketers document their content marketing strategy. This is eerily similar to the overall success rate for content marketing, which sits at around three in 10 organizations.

All this begs the question: What exactly does a documented content marketing strategy include? The essential building blocks include key issues such as understanding business goals, identifying your audience, defining content types, outlining a channel plan and documenting how you will monetize your content. But there's one key ingredient most plans *don't* include ... and I'd argue it's one of the most essential and challenging elements of your content marketing strategy.

The Content Tilt

No matter what industry you hail from, what niche your product or service occupies or what region you market to, you have competitors nipping at your heels. They are all trying to get attention using content marketing just as you are. Maybe you publish better quality content; maybe you have data scientists on staff who know just how to juice that content ... but a mob of wannabes and also-rans is waiting to unseat you.

How do you ensure you stand out? How can you elevate your content such that it's nearly impossible to mimic? I call it the *content tilt*. Your "tilt" is not simply the topic area you choose to influence, but your particular personality and point of view on that issue. Consider Australia's Ann Reardon, baking royalty of YouTube. There are millions of videos on YouTube about baking. Reardon, however, makes cakes that beg for attention; whether it's her Snickers-bar cake (a bread loaf-sized candy bar) or the rainbow unicorn cake (it's as psychedelic as it sounds), Reardon knows her YouTube audience wants weird and seemingly impossible.

The content tilt isn't only for B2C brands, and isn't reserved for those that get attention using in-your-face tactics. Consider PwC, the global financial consulting firm. It publishes a series of email newsletters called 10Minutes. Readers can subscribe for certain content streams of the 10Minute series (e.g., risk, governance, tax). Each email arrives with a promise: We will teach you what you need to know on a single, critical business issue, and we promise it won't take more than 10 minutes. That's a genius content tilt. PwC understands its audience members need intelligent, mission-critical information on complex business topics, but they don't have time for long-form content. The newsletter is designed to aid skimming, and is always short and to the point.

Something in your story—whether your personality, your point of view or even your information design (such as is the case with PwC)—has to be materially different to make an impact and build a loyal audience. I give you that challenge for this year: Explore and uncover your content tilt. It will separate you from the wannabes and also-rans.

Yours in content,

Joe Pulizzi
Founder
Content Marketing Institute
@JoePulizzi

CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER

FEBRUARY 2016

WHAT'S ONLINE

IN EVERY ISSUE

TACTICIAN

GET ORGANIZED

THE CONTENT STRATEGY ISSUE

FEATURES

WWW.CONTENTMARKETINGINSTITUTE.COM

WHAT'S ONLINE

PNR: THIS OLD MARKETING PODCAST

Big Brands Move Away from Prime Time

Joe and Robert talk about GE's move away from prime-time advertising and toward branded content. Plus, what exactly is "homeless media" and what's the risk for media companies and brands?

http://cmi.media/PNRepisode108

REPORT

B2B Content Marketing: 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends – North America

See how B2B content marketing is evolving and learn what the most effective markers are doing differently.

http://cmi.media/B2B2016

TWITTER CHAT

#CMWorld Twitter Chats

Join us every Tuesday at Noon Eastern to talk about content marketing topics.

http://cmi.media/twitterchats

JOE KALINOWSKI

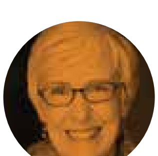
Is Design Mostly Dead?
DIY Design Versus Hiring a Pro

http://cmi.media/DIYvsPro

DANIEL HOCHULI

Search vs. Social Media:
How Audience 'Intent' Can Affect Performance

http://cmi.media/audienceintent



MARCIA RIEFER JOHNSTON

Template: Try Out a Customer Journey Map

http://cmi.media/journeymap

CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER

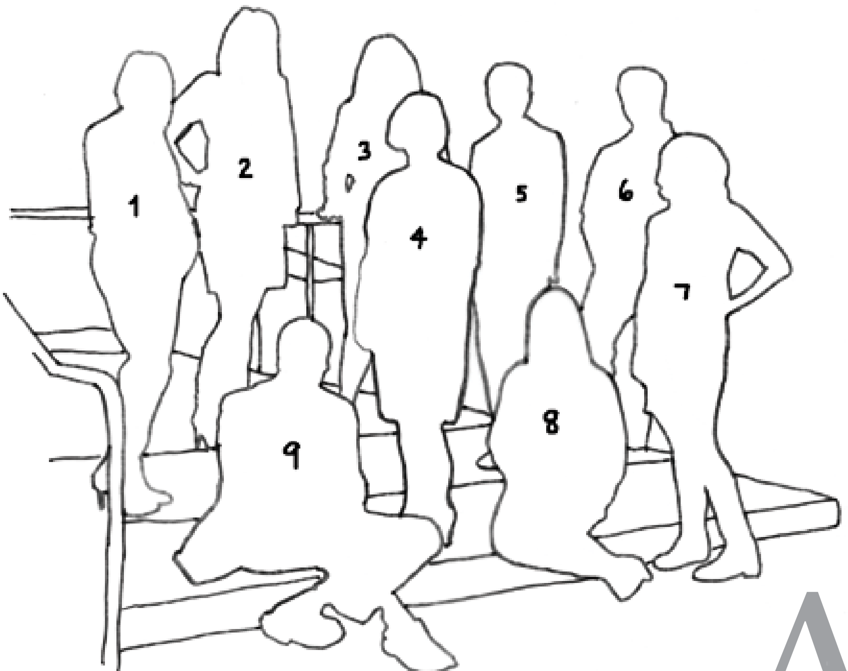
GET ORGANIZED

THE CONTENT STRATEGY ISSUE

Brand Guidelines to the Rescue

How a brand-guide initiative called OnBrand helps Cleveland Clinic tell a clear, consistent story across its hundreds-strong team of content collaborators.

Natalya Minkovsky



The Cleveland Clinic Brand Team

1. Stephanie Petrucci
2. Nicole McClain
3. Kaye Spector
4. Amanda Todorovich
5. Mary DaRif
6. Tyler Maddox
7. Michelle Tackla Wallace
8. Libby Melhus
9. Brian Gresh

Ask most people to define "branding," and they'll be quick to mention the logo, or a brand's look and feel. But branding is much more than a swoosh, swirl or any other visual fingerprint. Branding is about how an organization is perceived by its customers. And content (e.g., tone, voice, word choice) is an integral part of branding even if regularly overlooked in the excitement of a rebranding initiative.

At **Cleveland Clinic**, a global health care provider, the brand guide is elevated to new heights. Many organizations have public style guides and press kits. Countless others have internal editorial guidelines. Cleveland Clinic's comprehensive microsite, **OnBrand,** supports the complex requirements of a content-powered brand. The site offers expected identity

Why a Brand Guide for Content Marketers?

Cleveland Clinic relies on hundreds of writers, designers and subject-matter experts to inform a global audience about chronic diseases, health-care innovation and emerging health topics. With such a huge stable of contributors, the brand needed a centralized resource to help the team convey a coherent tone of voice and visual style.

OnBrand is not simply a brand guide nor the requisite "history of our company" found on most websites. OnBrand serves the need of the content-focused organization, arming internal and external publishers with the tools and guidelines they need to tell Cleveland Clinic's story.

The entire Cleveland Clinic content team is involved in managing OnBrand. Writers provide updates to AP Style and Cleveland Clinic data, designers supply new images and style guidelines, and the brand manager reviews the whole for consistency before making updates to the site.

assets (e.g., logos, color palette) and style guide; but OnBrand takes it further. From detailed writing guidelines for its hundreds-strong army of content creators to media-rich facts and figures for external influencers and the media, OnBrand is a model for content marketers aiming to scale their efforts.

What makes OnBrand unique? Most organizations have one set of brand assets for outsiders (think press and influencers), and another more closely guarded set of guidelines for internal content creators. Cleveland Clinic understands that to be a content-fueled brand, you must set these assets free. Far from circumscribing who can be a content creator, Cleveland Clinic is intent on expanding that definition. Behind the effort are Amanda Todorovich, director of content marketing, and Brian Gresh, executive director of multi-channel content marketing at Cleveland Clinic. The duo manages the team responsible for OnBrand, which was launched in late 2012. A core internal team collaborated with an outside design firm to write content, gather assets and create the site map. From initial stakeholder discovery sessions to taking the site live, the process took five months.

Protecting the brand asset

Far from a simple resource center to download logos or presentation templates, OnBrand answers the strategic "why" for those telling the Cleveland Clinic story or speaking for the brand.

The site offers an introduction to Cleveland Clinic, including the medical center's history, mission and vision, and "pride points." There is also the *Cleveland*

We are a big organization; there are countless uses of our brand every day by many, many departments. We can't police everything. The best way to reduce the number of brand violations is to educate different groups and maintain our OnBrand site as an easily accessible, go-to resource for the entire enterprise.

– Amanda Todorovich,
Director of Content Marketing at Cleveland Clinic

Clinic Narrative, a long-form description to help content developers tell a consistent story about the organization.

For those who just want the logo, fonts, color palette or photos to use in their materials, there's a section called *Get the Basics.* A different section called *Explore the Guidelines* includes detailed advice about design, writing, printing, web and mobile. Finally, a *Why OnBrand*?—the site's centerpiece—invites content collaborators to consider themselves caretakers of the brand.

Creating OnBrand wasn't a formal exercise. "We launched it because it was a problem," Todorovich says. "We are a big organization; there are countless uses of our brand every day by many, many departments. We can't police everything. The best way to reduce the number of brand violations is to educate different groups and maintain our OnBrand site as an easily accessible, go-to resource for the entire enterprise—and even our external vendors/partners."

The guidelines continue to evolve and are updated as new situations arise. It's also important to maintain the site to feel fresh, Todorovich says. A team of writers and designers collectively identify what is needed. OnBrand tells a story about what the brand means and the implications of going off-brand.

The brand guidelines are available to everyone at OnBrand.ClevelandClinic.org, making them accessible to partners as well as those within the organization. To educate internal users, OnBrand is prominently featured on the intranet, and Todorovich and her team do education pushes to internal audiences. The team's brand manager spends a lot of time not only maintaining the brand guidelines, but also leading meetings with heavy users to educate them about the brand. As with any large organization, there are always new people to onboard and educate.

Mary Darif, Cleveland Clinic brand manager, does double duty as a project manager. "It's not just her job to protect the brand," says Todorovich. "Everyone should be a brand ambassador." That message is carried from the CEO on down: Dr. Delos Cosgrove has standards in the way he communicates with the

Having strong, enforceable brand guidelines gives the content marketing team more freedom to focus on content quality and exploring new opportunities to reach their audiences.

The Elements of a Brand Guide

Your organization should customize your brand guidelines to address your particular challenges and needs—one size does not fit all—but these are the global elements every brand guide should cover:

Logo usage
Rules for using your organization's icon and name (logo type), as well as the tagline, if you have one as part of your brand identity.

Design styles
Information about the color palette, fonts, photography, infographics, illustrations and other visual elements.

Writing guidelines
Rules related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, usage and best practices for writing for the web. Guidelines also need to address how writers should refer to your organization and any sub-brands in different contexts. Information about voice, tone and word choice can also be incorporated—provide examples when applicable.

Web design
Guidelines for designing and maintaining websites, including colors, web fonts, images, iconography and specific elements such as buttons, banners, features, accordions and tabs. Include information about mobile-design standards when applicable.

Print design
Layout specifications for commonly used collateral, such as brochures, posters and mailers. If there are rules for printers to use and how to choose paper, include them in the guide.

Branding Definitions

"A brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another. If the consumer (whether it's a business, a buyer, a voter or a donor) doesn't pay a premium, make a selection or spread the word, then no brand value exists for that consumer."
–Seth Godin

"Branding is the art of aligning what you want people to think about your company with what people actually do think about your company. And vice versa."
–Jay Baer

"The intangible sum of a product's attributes: its name, packaging, and price, its history, its reputation, and the way it's advertised."
–David Ogilvy

"Brand is the image people have of your company or product. It's who people think you are."
–Ann Handley

enterprise. "Having the message come from leadership helps the team enforce the brand standards," Todorovich says.

Having strong, enforceable brand guidelines gives the content marketing team more freedom to focus on content quality and exploring new opportunities to reach its audiences.

Telling stories together

Cleveland Clinic's content is created around three guiding principles; the information must be useful, helpful and relevant. This "sniff test" is applied to all content before it's published to ensure the organization is putting patients first. Is the information easy to understand? Would a patient talk about this topic with her friends, for example? Are there clear next steps (e.g., a phone number or link) for those who need a professional opinion based on the information? While evaluating content against the guiding principles is an art, not a science, data always plays a role. When a topic performs well, the team starts to think about other formats in which it can be presented.

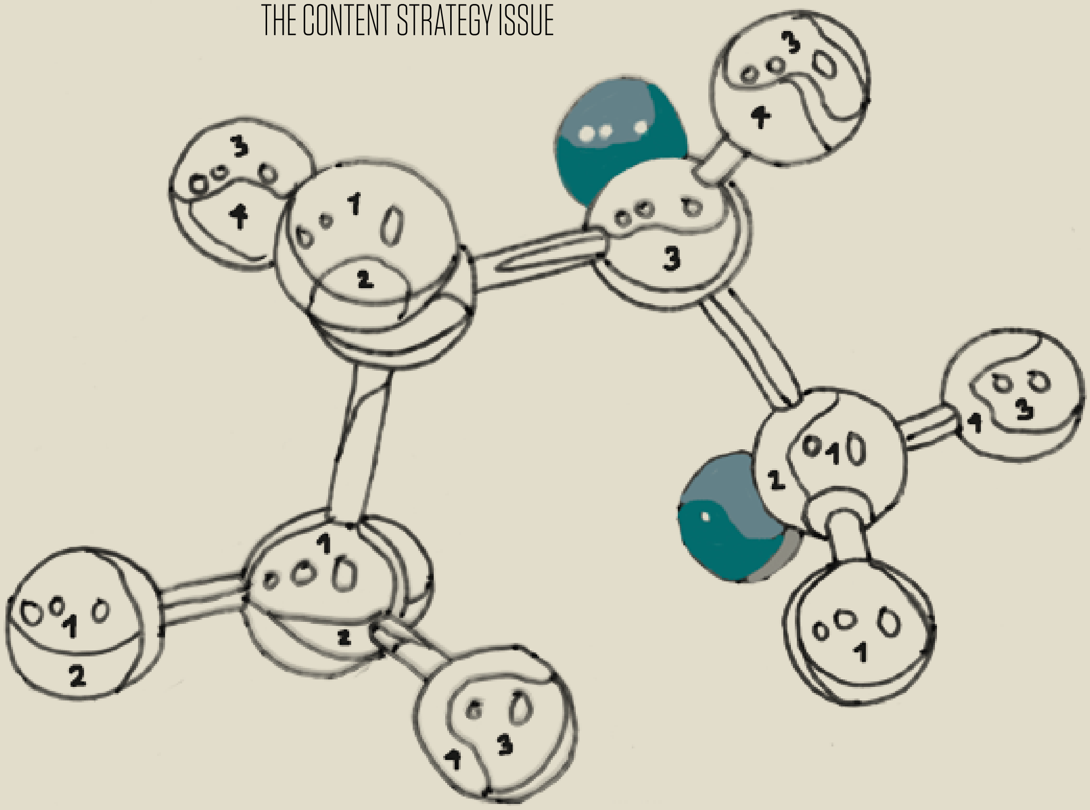
Gresh oversees the 20-person content marketing group as well as web and application development. "We have to accept that no one will succeed individually," he says when describing the organization's large and siloed marketing division. With the content marketing group responsible for both digital and print content, Gresh looks for other opportunities to evolve and integrate. Regular touch points with PR, communications and advertising are part of that effort. The team also works closely with physicians and other subject-matter experts. "How do we align all those teams together when content is the unifier, when we all have stories to tell," Gresh asks.

Educating content collaborators about the brand and providing a comprehensive brand guide empower creators to tell clear, consistent stories. As written in OnBrand, those stories "reinforce our message, build up our reputation, and connect with more people"—important content marketing strategy goals every organization is likely to agree on.

Why you need content strategy before editorial planning: http://cmi.media/StrategyBeforePlanning

"We have to accept that no one will succeed individually … How do we align all those teams together when content is the unifier, when we all have stories to tell?"

—Brian Gresh, executive director of multi-channel content marketing at Cleveland Clinic



Getting Started With Structured Content

Discoverable, adaptive and reusable, oh my! Learn how to make your digital content super flexible and findable using a concept called "structured content."

Natalya Minkovsky

You publish hundreds of content assets a year—everything from e-books and videos to blog posts and snackable social content. You "atomize" content, reusing and repurposing narrative content and visuals across overlapping projects. So far, so good.

Managing your content development and reuse on a case-by-case basis makes sense when you publish just a few hundred assets in a given year. Scale it to thousands (or tens of thousands) and the process gets seriously gummed up. When your production team tries to update hundreds of assets published in the last six months due to an unexpected regulatory change, they find keeping track of which assets need revision is cumbersome. Writers are frustrated because they know the company has reams of great content—if only the different pieces could be easily aggregated into a new content asset. And designers wish each new project didn't feel like a start-from-scratch endeavor.

Until recently, structured content was largely the domain of technologists and technical communicators. Technologists use the approach to solve large, complex business problems like pulling customer data into an automatic-invoicing application. Technical communicators

Until recently, structured content was largely the domain of technologists and technical communicators.

STRUCTURED CONTENT

WHAT IS IT?

Structured content is a technology-agnostic way of organizing and tagging content in consistent, predictable ways. Think of it as a way of enabling people and systems to take advantage of patterns across a body of content, making it easier to find, mix and match, and redeploy content components at a moment's notice to any device, channel or format.

What makes content structured?

1. Widely recurring content types having the same set of elements or attributes—for example, every article starting with an introduction and ending with a conclusion, and
2. Consistent application of metadata to those elements or attributes in a content management system.

As content strategist Rachel Lovinger explains in a report for Razorfish, "Simply put, digital content needs to be free to go where and when people want it most. The more structure you put into content the freer it will become."

CONTENT MODEL

WHAT IS IT?

A content model is a representation (typically a drawing or spreadsheet) of the structure of various content types to be used within a project and the relationships between those content types. Think of it as a way to catalog raw ingredients and document how those ingredients combine into multiple content "recipes."

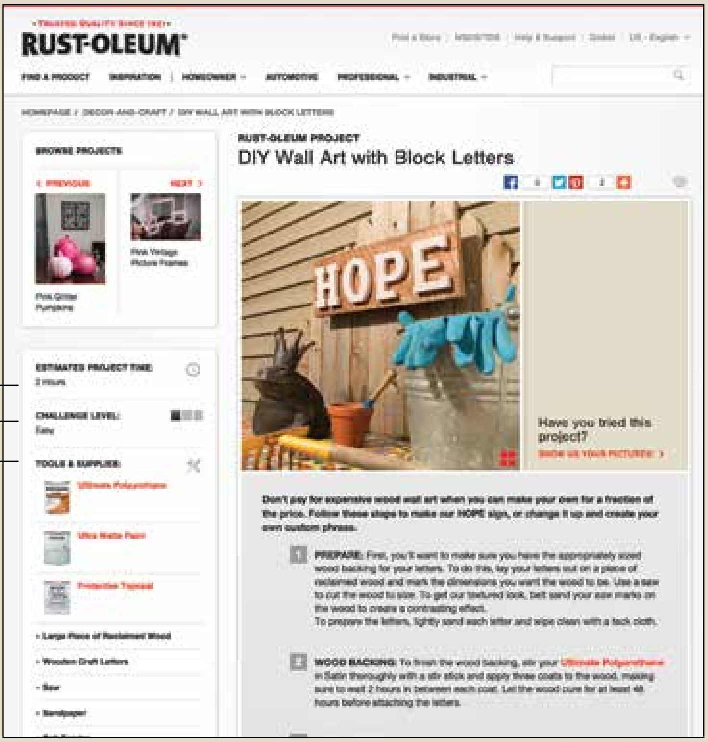
use it to make product documentation manageable. Today, more and more marketers are discovering the utility of structured content as a way to scale their content marketing efforts. Think of it as a methodology that enables customers to find your content more easily online and employees to redeploy it more efficiently into multiple formats and media types. In combination with a strong content marketing and editorial strategy, structured content is an essential building block.

To understand the principles of structured content, it's easiest to explore a core component—the content model. In layman's terms, the content model is a way of defining and cataloging raw ingredients (e.g., content attributes and interdependencies) and detailing how those ingredients combine into multiple content "recipes." Because content modeling can be tackled in small, manageable increments, it's an excellent introductory activity for an organization overwhelmed by a large volume of unstructured, uncategorized content.

The level of detail in the content

Rust-Oleum: Structured Content in Action

The marketing team at Rust-Oleum publishes content that fits its DIY homeowner audience (e.g., *how to stain your back deck*) and crafting aficionados (e.g., *applying gold enamel to a serving tray*)—two very different groups. The company uses structured data to ensure that the right content is served up to the right audience at the right time. Each "project" content asset includes a narrative and images, and is encoded with metadata—such as challenge level, estimated project time, project type and products required to complete—ensuring that site visitors experience a stream of content that fits their specific interests and needs.



Ready to learn about other content strategy methods? Read about how to set up an effective content re-use strategy: http://cmi.media/BigBang model is up to you; you can use a diagram, spreadsheet or other format that works for you and your team. The important thing to remember is the content model should support your strategic priorities and be tailored for your audience.

Structured content in action

How does it work in the real world? The marketing team at Rust-Oleum publishes content for its DIY homeowner audience (e.g., how to stain your back deck) and crafting aficionados (e.g., applying gold enamel to a serving tray)—two different groups. The company uses a structured content methodology to ensure that the right content is served up to the right audience at the right time.

Each project's content asset includes a narrative and images, and is encoded with metadata—such as challenge level, estimated project time, project type and products required to complete. Site visitors experience a stream of content that fits their interests and needs. A clear, consistent set of web content templates also makes publishing and reuse straightforward and efficient.

Rust-Oleum has seen a 150-percent increase in organic search results since the company's new website launched, says Lisa Bialecki, senior director of integrated communication. The team customized its content management system to increase emphasis on metadata; the company even hired a copywriter with experience creating metadata for a product catalog to help Rust-Oleum's content perform better in search engines and with its DIY audience on Pinterest.

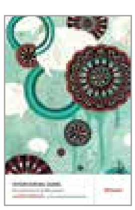
Don't be afraid to roll up your sleeves and get started with structured content. "No model survives first contact with real content," advises technologist and content strategy advocate Cleve Gibbon. "So go ahead and break your models. Test them by running various scenarios using real content. Inspect, then adapt your models because that's design. This kind of model design is best done early and often."

Once your organization sees some practical examples of the structured content model in action, ideas and enthusiasm for solving more business problems with structured content will grow.

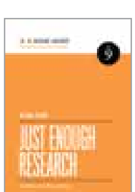
Natalya Minkovsky is a content strategist who lives and works in Washington, D.C. Follow her @hejhejnatalya.

Resources for Conducting Impactful Research

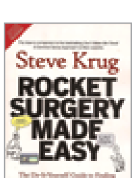
Usability.gov



Interviewing Users by Steve Portigal



Just Enough Research by Erika Hall



Rocket Surgery Made Easy by Steve Krug

Let Qualitative Research Inform Your Content Strategy

Go beyond analytics to give customers the content they crave

Melissa Eggleston

Imagine you recently redesigned your company website and are looking at your site analytics. You notice visitors are spending much more time on one of your revamped pages. A small, satisfied smile crosses your face and you feel a sense of relief. Thanks to your efforts, people must be more engaged and are happily spending more time on your site.

Wrong.

You actually don't know what's going on with that page. The metric without context isn't informative.

People could be happy with the page or they could be frustrated and spending way too long trying to find what they need.

Time on site, website traffic, types of visitors, exit rates and other metrics tell you what is happening on your website. This is valuable behavioral information. But why it is happening?

Numbers leave out context. Focus on the people behind the numbers to get the full story of what's going on.

ENTER QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research examines what your numbers mean. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations for behaviors. It can offer in-depth perspective on how people operate, and any related historical, cultural, social or other influences that affect decisions.

While analytics show you what is happening, qualitative research aims to determine why it is happening.

Empathy, the key to great UX, increases as we learn about those we serve. Understanding the reasons behind behavior—the why—helps you put yourself in your audience's shoes. This leads to smarter decisions about content.

Learning user motivations and problems, you can discover pains and opportunities that analytics can't show you. For example, you can see where and how your website is frustrating users or what content they hope for on a certain web page.

Qualitative research also helps validate or adjust your personas. It can also help you facilitate the buyer's journey by understanding the key questions your content must address along the way.

APPROACHES TO CONSIDER

Many marketers are familiar with focus groups, which can be helpful but have limited utility. You don't always get honest opinions in a group nor do people accurately describe what they do or would do. Why not consider these other research approaches to gain important—even game-changing—insights.

Usability testing examines a way to see how easy it is to use a website, app or other software. A person completes tasks while being observed in person or on video by a researcher. The session is usually followed up with interview questions.

When I conducted usability tests on a yoga studio website, I learned what annoyed users—the verbose text, the homepage carousel and the lack of clarity about location of events. I also made a surprising discovery: Nearly all users felt intimidated by the images of people doing yoga on the website, saying things like, "These people don't look like me."

Conduct usability testing to:

- Find out if people can do common tasks successfully
- Uncover any frustration or confusion related to your language or design
- Discover how satisfied people are with your website or app

In-the-field interviews create a more casual atmosphere than formal interviews. They are conducted with people in their natural environments—typically home, work or school. Going to their turf increases comfort and offers you context you might otherwise miss.

Sometimes the best interviews are done on the go. "How did you get him to tell you that?," asked a university communications director after a student divulged personal information about his concerns prior to enrolling. The insights came only after we'd walked around campus for 30 minutes, peppering him with lighter questions. We confirmed similar concerns in other interviews, which in turn informed our message architecture on the website redesign.

Noticing your research participants' environment also provides insights to the challenges they face such as noise and interruptions. The atmosphere that people are in often influences how they use your website or product.

Use in the field interviews to:

- Increase the comfort level of the research participants
- Understand the environmental challenges they encounter
- Discover needs that people are unable to articulate

Direct feedback gives people a chance to provide information to you directly—something too few websites offer. An easy and common way to receive feedback is via a well-designed contact-us form.

However, you can also ask for direct feedback at the end of a piece of content. For example, the Usability.gov website provides articles and downloadable templates related to user experience; then at the end of a page, it asks: "Was this page helpful?" with "yes" and "no" options provided. Whichever option you choose, you are also asked to check off relevant explanations or provide your own answer.

This is one simple way to get qualitative information—at the perfect time—to supplement your website analytics.

Use direct feedback to:

- Give people a way to tell you about a problem or need
- Ask for feedback at the moment of satisfaction or frustration
- Show you are concerned about meeting user needs

A SUCCESSFUL COMBINATION

Combine both quantitative data and qualitative data to inform your content decisions. Don't make decisions based solely on quantitative data as you may misinterpret what it means. Alternatively, qualitative data reflects patterns but can be skewed by a small group. Consider a customer who continually posts her case for a change on your Facebook page; one squeaky wheel should not drive your decisions.

Looking at qualitative and quantitative data together can set you on the right track for happy customers.

Melissa Eggleston is a content strategist and UX specialist. Follow her @melissa_egg.

Bananas for Research

"All roads lead back to talking with customers," explains Gregg Bernstein, research manager at MailChimp, the email marketing service. Based in Atlanta, MailChimp's growing team of qualitative researchers gathers insights to improve its products and accompanying content.

In September 2015, the company launched its MailChimp Pro feature that lets customers dive deep with data analytics. It can test up to eight variations of an email campaign, track delivery in real time and stop campaigns if you discover a typo. Qualitative-user research played an important role in content development related to this new feature.

"First, we had to determine who was likely to make the purchase decision, was it the email designer or the CMO," Bernstein shared. "Then it was crucial that we described the product in the language that person would use."

His team interviewed potential MailChimp Pro customers in the customers' offices and on the phone. They listened to the language customers used and learned about the work environment. Researchers also examined how competitors described themselves in industry publications.

The insights gained from the research influenced the positioning of the new feature, but findings also affected how-to articles and other help support documentation.

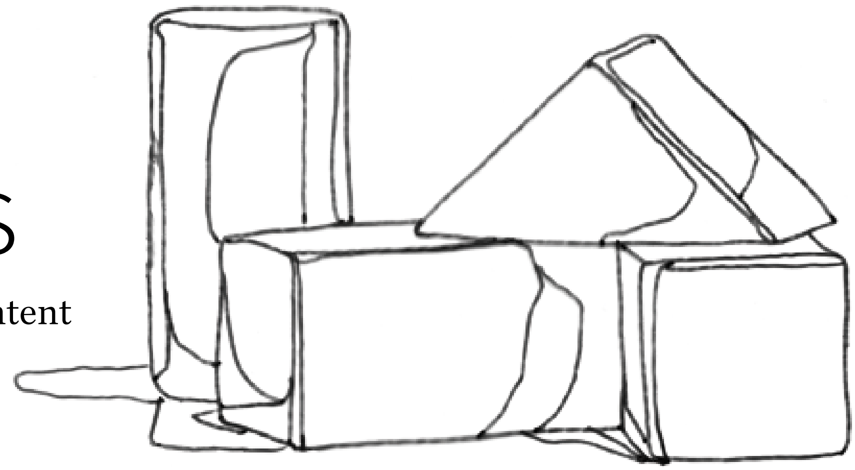
"We have to understand our customers and their context to make things easier for them," explained Carrie Heffner, a MailChimp researcher with a content strategy background. "For example, it's hard to know how to group the content for a help site without knowing the mental model of the people served."

With both qualitative and quantitative research as guides, MailChimp has more than 9 million customers. The company continuously strives for improved UX by understanding the why behind the numbers.

Key Terms

Essential building blocks of content strategy for marketers

Michele Linn



While marketers typically focus on creating content that helps an organization build an audience, content strategists typically concern themselves more broadly with managing content as a business asset across the enterprise throughout the content life cycle.

Read on to get a glimpse of the key content strategy principles, tools and methods—the building blocks of content strategy—that forward-thinking marketers should have on their radars this year and beyond. Each term is coded with the particular benefit(s) it offers to content marketers (CoRES). To decode the meaning of each, see the sidebar.

CONTENT STRATEGY: WHY SHOULD A MARKETER CARE?

Foundation for remarkable customer experiences

A happier audience ...

Co

CONSISTENT EXPERIENCE
No matter which channel your audience visits (owned or not), they recognize your content and know how to interact with it.

R

RIGHT CONTENT TO RIGHT PERSON AT RIGHT TIME
Imagine a world where your brand's best content is delivered to the right person every time.

A happier marketing team ...

E

INTERNAL EFFICIENCY
Understand who is responsible for what so efforts are not duplicated and the right people are involved.

S

SCALABILITY
Create a content methodology that helps you reuse and publish more of your best content and retire what's not working.

User experience

Co R E S

User experience is how someone interacts with your content, especially on a website or a mobile app. While marketers are great at creating content, websites are not often designed so readers can find the right content. Content strategy addresses the shortfall—and many of the building blocks presented here are mission critical to provide your audience with an exceptional experience.

Content inventory

Co R E

Your content inventory lists each piece of content across all of your channels. Why bother? Seeing your entire content ecosystem, you can decide what to keep, update or remove. (Less content often is better as you want your audience to stumble upon the best version of your brand.)

Content audit

Co R E

The audit takes your inventory a step further and analyzes which content is working (and which isn't) so you can create more of what works. The audit may also surface hidden patterns (for example, "We've published a dozen articles on a single topic; let's assemble those into a more comprehensive guide.")

Content model

A content model documents the structure of various content types to be used within a project, and it maps the typical relationships among those content types. For more information, see the article on page 13.

Metadata

Metadata is data about your content that describes what it is (think categories and tags in blog posts). As content marketers, we would typically use metadata to make our content is more easily discovered by our target audiences and to help our own teams create connected content collections and identify future content needs.

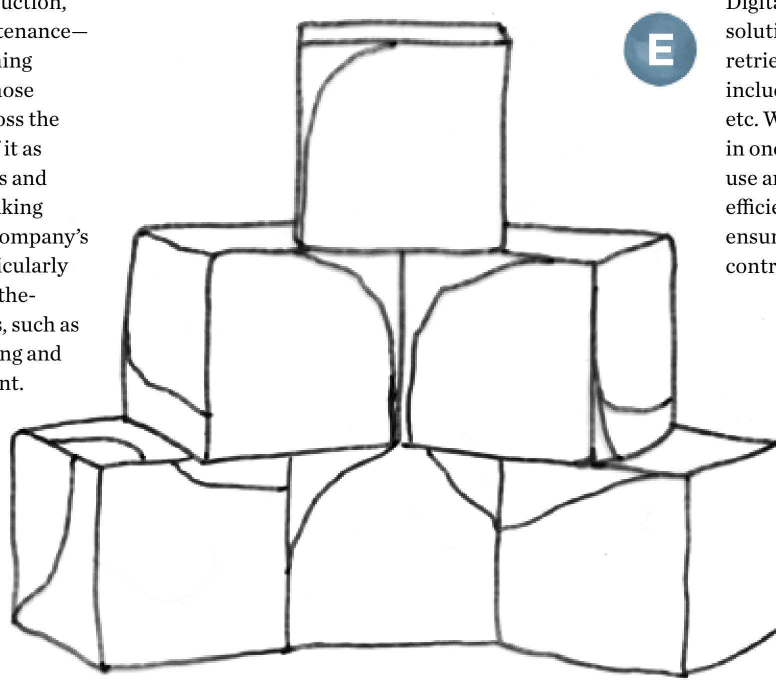
Go deeper: Get your metadata primer here: http://cmi.media/Metadata101

Digital governance

Digital governance formalizes which members of your digital content team are responsible for all the various aspects of content creation, production, distribution and maintenance—and creating, maintaining and communicating those content standards across the organization. Think of it as a way of assigning roles and responsibilities for making decisions about your company's digital presence—particularly important for behind-the-scenes responsibilities, such as procedures for revisiting and refreshing older content.

Digital Asset Management

Digital asset management solutions store—and retrieve—everything including text, images, videos, etc. With all of your content in one place, your team can use and reuse content more efficiently; plus a DAM helps ensure you minimize version control and inconsistency.



Tone and brand voice

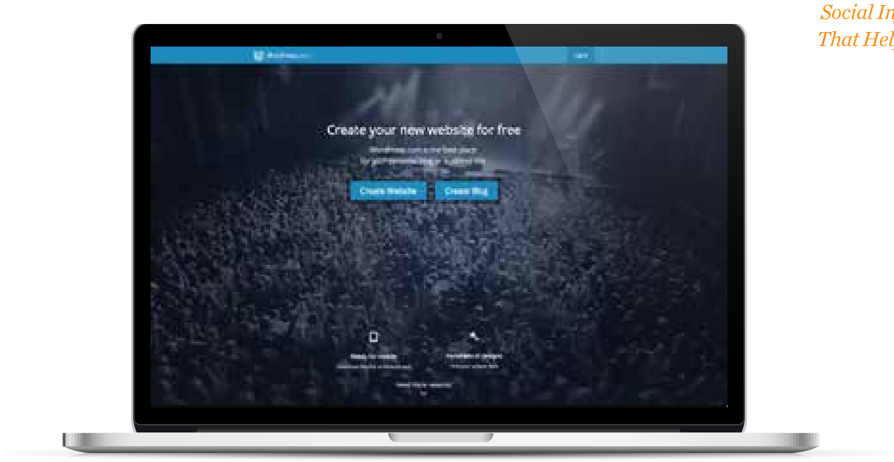
What personality do you want your content to convey across all channels? (It's a mammoth challenge because many organizations have multiple content silos.) Whether your organization uses a small, bootstrapped content team, or a globally dispersed, multi-team approach, articulating your tone and brand voice across all channels is imperative.

Content life cycle

Content is a business asset that should be managed as carefully as any product (the process does not stop after the product is launched). Life-cycle planning requires schedules for revising and retiring content. More than just an internal business process, life-cycle planning ensures that your customers never stumble on old or inaccurate content.

Social Influencers Share the Tools That Help Them Keep Their Edge.

To submit your TECH TOOLS ideas, contact techtools@contentinstitute.com.



What is your favorite CMS?

WORDPRESS

WordPress is so easy that even a newbie can use it. What makes it great is how much control it gives to the user. You can code any part of WordPress to function the way you want. You have access to all files and folders. WordPress as a CMS is backed by an amazing open-source community, which keeps it bug free and updated.

MUHAMMAD SAAD KHAN, CLOUDWAYS, @INVINCIBLESAAD

I think that WordPress should be your default CMS option—you need to have a very good reason not to use it. As well as being able to work just as well (if not better) than other CMS systems, the advantages WordPress gives you include the ability to change agencies easily, no ongoing licensing costs, and regular updates to functionality and security.

DAMON RUTHERFORD, DIGITATOR, @DIGITATORUK

PERCUSSION

We use Percussion to manage the 204 microsites within our main website. It lets us create custom themes and designs, and apply scripting specific to individual websites or share them across the system. Percussion makes it easy to set and maintain permissions, create new sites, decide which design pieces will be locked within a page, and insert custom coding or widgets.

DEBBIE LYN JONES, NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY, @DEBBIELYNJONES

OCTOBER CMS (octobercms.com)

The free, open-source October CMS has a lot of advanced features that might not be friendly to non-coders, but after a steep learning curve you're able to customize the system in ways a WordPress user could only dream of.

ALEX BERMAN, INSPIREBEATS, @ALXBERMAN

WEBPOP (webpop.com)

Webpop is a good choice for the way it offers distinctly separate client and developer interfaces. This allows clients to enjoy a simple, easy-to-use administrator panel to manage and update website content, while web developers still have access to all the options they require to maintain and expand the site.

ANDREW OSBORNE, CLARKE INC., @CLARKE_INC

DRUPAL (drupal.com)

Though 98% of our websites are built on WordPress, from a purely content management perspective, Drupal is my favorite. It makes it easier to find content quickly when you have a large site. I also like the concept of "views," which allow you to take snippets of content from one page and publish them automatically across others pages of the site.

BEN LANDERS, BLUE CORONA, @BENLANDERS

CONCRETE5 (concrete5.org)

concrete5 is one of the lesser-known open-source CMS, but its context editing make it a dream to work with for non-technical users. If you're logged in and see something you want to change on your page, just click on it and it becomes editable. No more back-office admin interfaces. For a developer, it couldn't be more flexible—almost anything can be overridden and it has a great plugin API.

JOB BROWN, ROMAN BLINDS DIRECT, @INTERIORGOODS

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.

Read more from Jonathan Crossfield: http://cmi.media/crossfield

The Social Media Numbers Game

(Is Your Social Media Content as Popular as You Think?)

Marketers use a variety of metrics to collate, crunch and calculate how their content performs in social media. Metrics such as shares, retweets and views are often the easiest and most obvious to gather, but they maybe the most deceptive and unreliable when evaluating whether your content is genuinely making a difference.

Jonathan Crossfield

The marketing industry has a terrible habit of devaluing perfectly serviceable words and phrases by turning them into vaguely defined whiffle-dust. These buzzwords might add impressive-sounding sparkle to a strategy, but they usually conceal the lack of any genuine substance capable of driving measurable business outcomes.

"Engagement" particularly irks me. Engagement used to mean something. It meant capturing and holding attention. It meant interaction. It meant getting the message across. All of these are important steps on the way to a conversion or bottom line business goal.

But somewhere along the way, engagement became the goal instead of the journey. Along with the equally nebulous "awareness," "engagement" often ranks high among the stated content marketing goals in each Content Marketing Institute research report. And too many marketers attempt to measure these goals with metrics that don't necessarily indicate anything of the sort: web traffic, clicks, likes, tweets and opens.

According to The Fournaise Group, 76 percent of marketers use the wrong KPIs and metrics to assess the effectiveness of their strategies. The same research revealed that most marketers still consider marketing effectiveness to be about awareness (74 percent) and/or engagement (71 percent). Of those, 86 percent believed engagement was a form of conversion.

"… these marketers believe that their Engagement KPIs actually prove they generated more business for their organization, even though they can't really (and unequivocally) link these Engagement KPIs to actual business and P&L-related results.".
—The Fournaise Marketing Group

OK, so engagement metrics don't prove a business outcome. "Likes" don't necessarily correlate to a sale. Thousands of views don't automatically equal a positive ROI. But these metrics still provide valuable feedback about our content, helping us improve and optimize … right?

Well, only if those numbers can be trusted.

Shares do not equal reads

By the time this article appears, Twitter will have removed share counts from its widgets, buttons and API (meaning your other tools won't be able to access Twitter-share counts either).

Twitter's announcement in September prompted plenty of discussion about the implications for marketers. After all, a popular (and easy) metric would disappear overnight. Yes, Twitter has its own analytics platform, where you can log in and view various metrics related to your own Twitter activity, and people may have devised other workarounds by the time you read this. But does this really matter? How useful was that share count to us anyway?

According to Twitter, not very useful at all.

"The tweet button counts the number of tweets that have been tweeted with the exact URL specified in the button. This count does not reflect the impact on Twitter of conversation about your content—it doesn't count replies, quote tweets, variants of your URLs, nor does it reflect the fact that some people tweeting these URLs might have many more followers than others."
—Michael Ducker, group product manager, Twitter

So the share count was never an accurate measure of social engagement with our content.

You might think an inaccurate measure is still better than no measure at all. If one post has twice the shares of another, surely we can assume it performed better. Right?

Maybe not. Chartbeat handles real-time traffic measurement for sites such as UpWorthy. In 2014, Chartbeat did extensive research into sharing behaviors and content effectiveness. CEO Tony Haile discussed the findings in an article for Time.com.

"We looked at 10,000 socially shared articles and found that there is no relationship whatsoever between the amount a piece of content is shared and the amount of attention an average reader will give that content."

It's worth reading the full article, if only for the skewering of so many social media marketing myths with what the data really shows us.

Numbers don't lie; they just don't tell the truth

Here's another dodgy social media engagement metric. Unless you've prevented it in your settings as I have, videos automatically and silently start to play as you scroll through your Facebook newsfeed. The video may only be on your screen for a few seconds as you slowly scroll past or pause to read the update underneath, but three seconds of silent streaming is enough for Facebook to count it as a view.

Alternatively, YouTube only counts a view after approximately 30 seconds, thereby reducing the risk of the numbers becoming contaminated with accidental views or bounces. So now we have different networks measuring the same content in wildly different ways.

Already any reliance on these numbers seems flawed. But even 30 seconds doesn't necessarily indicate whether a video is successful. Your five-minute tutorial might seem a runaway success with thousands of views, but do you know how many of those stuck it out past one minute? Two? What percentage of your viewers made it to the end? Where in the video did most people lose interest? For these numbers, you need to click on the analytics button located beneath your video on the YouTube site.

Facebook also provides more detailed video metrics for page admins who want to crunch those numbers. Yet, I wonder how often that headline number—views—still makes it into reports sent to bosses and clients to justify so-called engagement (invoice attached)?

While hundreds of shares or views are definitely preferable to tens of shares or views, these counts tell us nothing about how many people genuinely paid attention right up to the last line or final frame of your content. These numbers certainly don't tell us how many understood and were persuaded by the message, let alone acted on it.

Other than the split-second action of hitting a button, these counts don't measure any action relevant to the business outcomes your CFO cares about.

What are you really measuring?

Social shares and view numbers are similar to email open rates or search rankings; they reflect your ability to distribute your content, but not whether the content itself achieved its purpose.

UpWorthy measures content engagement as *attention minutes*, and has even released sample code for marketers to adapt and integrate into their own platforms. Meanwhile, Medium's key metric is the similar total time reading, or TTR, derived from a number of data points including scroll positions. These are measures related to the activity of reading the content and paying attention, not sharing. Medium and UpWorthy care less about whether you shared their content and more about whether you read it!

We should take Twitter's cue to become less reliant on engagement metrics such as share counts. Let's stop hiding behind numbers that we know are flawed, inaccurate, inconsistent, open to abuse, and ultimately meaningless in assessing the quality or effectiveness of our content and social media activities. Let's all agree to stop taking these various social media metrics out of context, attempting to assess one thing by measuring another. Of course, we must keep sharing, but we should never confuse social media distribution with content effectiveness.

DEPARTMENT EDITOR

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

Ready to learn more? Find out how to make every piece of content SEO friendly. http://cmi.media/SEOFriendlyContent

9 Website Optimization Mistakes Even Smart Agencies Make

Kathryn Aragon

Marketers have always relied on testing. But let's be honest; it's probably only in the last few years that they've begun discussing conversion rates rather than golf scores over beers.

And yes, I've got the data to back that up. According to Econsultancy, in the last five years, the number of companies using A/B testing has more than doubled. Two-thirds use A/B testing, making it the top optimization method in practice today. Compare that to five years ago, when only a third of businesses was testing.

You might say it's the golden age of conversion optimization. Cool thought, I know. And it sounds like it should benefit businesses across the board. But that's not what we're seeing.

Whenever any tactic becomes a "thing," it gets adopted by newbies and wannabes. Beware. You could be paying good money for website optimization services from an agency that just learned last month how to run a test.

The truth about testing

The truth is, conversion rate optimization (CRO) is hard. You can't learn it in a month, and you won't be an expert until you've done it for years.

Let me say that again: It takes YEARS to become a pro.

Lots of agencies are making mistakes without even knowing it because they're so new to the game. Here are some of the mistakes I see most often:

1. Best-practices landing pages

A best practice is NOT the same thing as conversion rate optimization. PPC agencies, SEO agencies, UX and UI people—they're all claiming to do CRO.

But calling something CRO doesn't make it so. Here's what Brian Massey told me the other day:

"Here at Conversion Sciences, we've stopped doing best-practices consulting because it's so unreliable. Even if someone asks for it, we won't sell it to them. As brilliant as we are, when we implement best practices, we'll be wrong on half of them. Every audience is different. You have to test to know what's working. Period. End of story."

Agencies fall into the best-practices trap. They hear something is working on another website, and adopt it, no questions asked. If a landing page built on best practices gets the results you're looking for, call it dumb luck.

> RED FLAG
>
> **Optimization Best Practices**
>
> Brian Massey, founder of Conversion Sciences, no longer uses best practices consulting because, in his words, "It's so unreliable … As brilliant as we are, when we implement best practices, we'll be wrong on half of them. Every audience is different. You have to test to know what's working. Period. End of story."
>
> For example, a best practice says videos are good and sliders or carousels are bad on the home page. Sliders distract visitors, are hard to read, yada, yada, yada. Not so, according to a DeviceMagic case study, published by VWO.
>
> The DeviceMagic test pitted a slider against a video to see which would work better on the home page. The team was pretty sure sliders were a better fit for their purposes, but it knew better than to make the change without testing. The verdict? The much-maligned slider was the clear winner. Conversions from home page to sign-up page increased 35 percent and subsequent signups increased 31 percent.

2. Tests for the wrong things

When you rely on hearsay rather than data, it's easy to make another mistake: testing the wrong things.

Some agencies try to shave expenses by cutting out the data-collection tools—things like click testing, heat maps and user-session recording tools. As a result, they don't have the data to make smart decisions about what to test. These agencies pick something out of the blue to test instead of using analytics to figure it out.

In other words, they're testing for the sake of testing.

Science should be based on hypotheses, not guesses or busy work. So you should ask, if your tests aren't based on data, what's the point?

Alex Turnbull, Groove's founder, gives a great example of this. He lists some tests that are often considered "easy wins" (e.g., slightly changing the listed price or changing the color of a button); but for Groove, he says, those tests were pointless.

Typically, those tests are the first tests newbies try to run, not because they're relevant to the website or the audience, but because they seem like easy wins. Remember: Trust the data, not someone else's results.

3. Reliance on self-reported data

Data is important. But you can't depend on just any data. Self-reported data—such as responses from focus groups, user testing, surveys and forum feedback—is gathered from people's stories, not their behavior.

The problem is people lie.

They may not mean to, but they do. If you ask them how they spend their money, they give a best-case scenario or what they wish to be true. Not the absolute truth. Compare their answers to your analytics and you get another story. The real story.

That's why we don't put much stock into self-reported data. Qualitative data (self-reported) is great for generating hypotheses, but it needs to be validated with testing.

The Perils of Poor (Read: Zero) Testing

Costing £150 million ($226 million), the U.K.-based major retailer Marks & Spencer website redesign took two years and led to an 8 percent *decrease* in online sales. Based on the fact that the project took two years, it's a fair guess that most decisions were made from self-reported data plus the design team's own opinions. It's unlikely A/B testing was involved because testing delivers incremental changes rather than one massive change.

DigitalTonic says it well in its analysis of the failure: "Drastic changes can never be monitored meaningfully and you won't be able to separate the variables that are causing the positive or negative impact on conversions. With testing on your current site prior to redesign, you will hit a local maxima meaning that you have optimized the site as best as you can in its current incarnation. It's at this stage that you would take the learnings and move towards the global maxima with the redesign process."

Here's where you need to be careful: A lot of agencies (especially UX and UI) redesign a site using only self-reported data. A true conversion scientist uses analytics and split testing to verify assumptions before deciding they're true.

4. Lack of understanding the scientific process

Agencies are time-and-materials companies. They bill by the hour. Understandably, they want every hour of their employees' time to be accounted for and assigned to a winning project.

The problem: This focus on the bottom line can dampen results.

Scientists need time to be curious, follow their hunches and understand the reason things are happening. A successful agency needs to give them that time, even if some of those hunches turn out to be pointless. In the long run, it's cheaper to eliminate hypotheses early, before testing. In other words, a few hours of analysis beats two weeks of testing every time.

True inspiration requires time. Time to follow dead ends. Time to dive into the data. Time to think and ask questions. If your agency doesn't allow that, be aware, you're probably not getting the best results.

5. A completely done-for-you model

This one sounds more like a premium service than a mistake. But when it comes to CRO, it reads more like a mistake.

Some agencies believe they have more job security if they make the client completely dependent on them. So they do it all—collect the data, make the hypotheses, and, supposedly, deliver results. Alone. There's no collaboration with clients, which means they're only using half the information they should be using to create hypotheses.

Here's the thing: The best results come when the agency and client work together. The agency has the expertise to collect the data, but the client has the intimate knowledge of the customer. It takes both. If your agency is doing everything for you, it may be creating issues rather than solving them.

6. Failure to influence the client culture

Similarly, some agencies appear to collaborate with the client, but they draw the line before influencing client culture. In reality, there's a huge advantage to having an agency work so closely with you that it changes the way you do things.

True collaboration involves getting together on a frequent basis and discussing ideas. Over time, you begin to see the thought process that goes into each website optimization effort. You begin to understand how to make decisions based on data and to value the insight numbers can give you.

When that happens, whether you consider yourself a numbers person or not, you're hooked. That's the point at which you stop making random marketing decisions. Instead, you call your agency and ask what data needs collecting and when you can start testing. (Congratulations, you're a conversion geek!)

7. No CRO staff

This is a biggie. An agency that doesn't staff for CRO shouldn't offer CRO. The best conversion scientists are skilled in two areas: They're good with numbers and they're excellent communicators.

Getting high marks in high-school math isn't enough. Conversion scientists are masters of data and statistics. They know when numbers are reliable and when they're not. So they know how long to run a test and when the results are statistically valid. They know when the math is bad, which means you can be sure you're getting positive results.

Being good with numbers isn't everything. Great conversion scientists are also excellent communicators. All too often, web developers are recruited to do analytics, and sure they understand the numbers ... but not much else.

It takes a conversion optimizer to turn data into stories. Frankly, that's where the magic happens.

At Conversion Sciences, the team members spend much of their time going through the numbers to tease out the stories. If there's a hole in the plot, they design a test to figure out what's missing.

The goal is to find the story in the data—and tell that story well.

If you think about it, conversion optimizers are really fortune tellers. They predict the future based on the data your site gives them. Is your agency converting analytics to customer stories? If not, you may be dealing with web developers rather than conversion optimizers.

8. No test before going live

Professionals test and validate everything before going live. That avoids costly mistakes like Finish Line's 2012 web redesign, which cost the chain around $3.5 million in sales and a huge hit to its reputation. Four days before Black Friday, Finish Line launched a freshly redesigned website, supposedly planning to "reinvent the shopping experience." Instead, customers complained about lost orders and other technology glitches, and Finish Line had to revert back to the old design just prior to the holiday shopping season.

Granted, that level of mistake isn't likely for smaller brands, but bad usability can still impact reputation and profitability.

My guess is a brand agency was responsible for that redesign. It would have been smarter to work with conversion optimizers, who understand how to use data to decide on incremental changes, validating each one before moving on to the next.

9. Rookie mistakes

Since CRO is now a "thing," everyone and their office cat offer website optimization services. Most don't know the difference between conversions and sales, which means they're making a lot of mistakes.

Now don't get me wrong. We all make our fair share of junior mistakes when we're starting out—things like delivering results without statistical validity, not analyzing traffic enough, and the like.

But this is the golden age of conversion optimization. Don't you want pro results?

Again, not everyone who claims to be a conversion optimizer is. Unless your team is experienced and has a structured approach for improving conversions, it is likely making some mistakes that could be easily avoided—if the team was more experienced.

Bottom line: Mistakes are more common than not. That's because website optimization is hard work. If you want to get the big results CRO promises, you need an agency that has the experience and know-how to do it right. Period.

Kathryn Aragon is the director of content for Mirasee. Follow her @KathrynAragon.

This article was originally published in longer form on the Conversion Scientist blog.

DAILY HABITS

We asked some of the most prolific, influential content creators we know about what daily habits get them off on the right foot each day.

I run or walk the dog every day and that's when I go through a lot of ideas and challenges that I have. It's my quiet time to think. I carry my phone with me and write myself notes while I'm doing it. That protected time each morning helps me focus. Without it, my day is off-balance.
Lisa Bialeki, senior director of integrated communication, Rust-Oleum

One daily habit I've enacted for our team—and there is a noticeable difference since we've started it—is that everyone, no matter what role, goes into a social-listening platform every morning and sees how consumers are talking about our products. We look at top tweets, top posts, and any blog or news articles out there. Everyday. It usually doesn't fluctuate wildly, but you do see over time how people talk about your brand. And tracking all that content gives us inspiration, and ideas for reuse and repurposing.
David Rodgers, senior digital marketing manager, ShurTech Brands

Very simply: I don't immediately open email when I get to work in the morning. Instead, I put together a list of the things I need to focus on that day. On email you're just reacting to a bunch of stuff happening around you, so it puts you in reactive mode. If you begin your day that way, you're stuck in that mode all day. By quietly writing down a few things I want to focus on for that day—or that week—it sets the tone for the day.
Dusty DiMercurio, head of content marketing, Autodesk

At least once a day I send content to a copy editor. It took awhile to figure out copyediting wasn't a luxury but a complete necessity for both productivity and quality. It's especially useful when on a tight deadline. My copy editor finds all those inconsistencies in tone and style I usually only recognize once I've put distance between the writing and the review.

I send absolutely everything for copy editing including blog posts, proposals, strategy documents, transcripts of podcasts, video scripts, newsletter copy, and articles submitted to print publications. Even things already published online get reviewed because you can retrofit edits.
Sarah Mitchell, director of content strategy, Lush Media

Daily habit? That's tough because my wife and I live like gypsies, so I long for daily habits. I long for the monotony of doing the same work, week in and week out. (I realize it's a champagne problem.)

I eat a good breakfast every day. I hate feeling like I don't have enough energy to get through the day. Whether I'm hiking all day or shooting a show or working in the shop or making love ... I like to have enough calories to burn.
Nick Offerman, actor, writer and at Content Marketing World 2015 keynote speaker

High-Utility Content

With complex decisions to make each year—from adjusting capital expenditures to figuring out the amount and timing of fertilizer applications—farmers must analyze reams of data to keep their operations running profitably. PotashCorp saw an opportunity to provide utility-based content that would not only inform farmers, but influence mission-critical decision-making.

Clare McDermott

CONTENT MARKETING AWARDS

PotashCorp recently won a Content Marketing Award for Best Mobile App/Utility.

Amplifying the Message

To ensure the right people find out about the online tools, PotashCorp uses social media to share educational content and take part in online conversations. Facebook ads help to amplify reach by targeting growers and agricultural retailers. And the team distributes content to agricultural websites and news venues to spawn additional earned exposure.

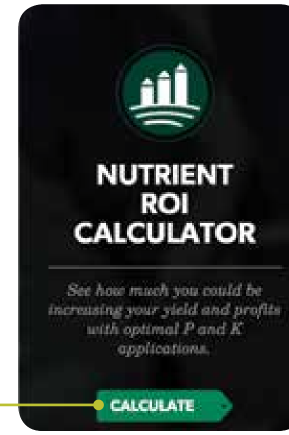
As the largest manufacturer of fertilizers by volume, PotashCorp was particularly hard hit by an industry-wide drop in fertilizer sales. In 2012, it experienced a sales decline of 18 percent in the United States driven by the cyclical nature of the commodity business. Agronomists at PotashCorp knew, however, that by saving money on potash (a naturally occurring salt mined from the earth), farmers were missing out on higher yields.

That calculus—figuring out how much additional fertilizer cost is worthwhile to increase yield and productivity—is a fairly complex problem requiring real-time data and analysis. In the absence of better information, farmers may opt not to apply potash for one or more growing seasons. Without it, crops still grow; but the soil loses its nutrients that are taken up by each harvest.

Working with its agency, **gyro**, PotashCorp developed a set of web-based calculators to help make complex, data-driven decisions. Explains gyro managing partner, Brian Peters, “What we wanted to do was to put empirical evidence in the hands of farmers. We wanted to treat farmers like the savvy businesspeople they are by arming them with tools to make more informed business decisions.”

PotashCorp hosts four web-based, interactive tools to support farmers’

A set of customizable calculators—part of a program called eKonomics—lets farmers conduct their own business analysis based upon factors like soil composition, fertilizer pricing and current yield.



real-time decision making. A Nutrient Removal Calculator asks farmers to enter current yield and fertilizer application to determine what degree current practices are depleting nutrients from the soil. A **Nutrient ROI Calculator** pulls real-time data about local fertilizer pricing, combined with farmers' inputs of nutrient balance and yield, to determine ROI on each ton of fertilizer applied. The site also includes a **Growing Degree Days Calculator** and **Rainfall Tracker**. The company also created a state-by-state nutrient balance analysis showing an alarming gap between the amount of nutrients being absorbed by crops and the amount being reapplied to the soil. This gap has led much of the nation's farmland to hit critically low nutrient levels.

"What we're doing is taking the methods soil scientists use and automating it in a web-based tool," says Robert Mullen, chief agronomist for PotashCorp. "If you're a farmer working 18 hours per day, it's unlikely you have time to read technical white papers and apply those insights to your own operations. With the calculators, we are taking scientifically sound information and methods, and making it very easy to use. Even more important, the information from the online calculators is actionable for farmers."

And because the tools are web-based, they are quicker to produce and update than an app. Adds Peters, "We're not asking farmers to download an app onto a mobile device, which speeds adoption."

Over 120,000 farmers visit the site each year and that number continues to climb. While no marketing activity can change the volatile nature of a commodity-based business, the program allows farmers to remove emotion from the buying process, which PotashCorp hopes will lead to more consistent application over time.

Content is Bigger Than Marketing

Now that marketing organizations are mastering the discipline of content marketing, it's time to introduce content's value to other parts of the organization ... and simultaneously grow our influence.

Sam Slaughter

Content marketing's moment has passed.

That's not to say it's any less relevant than it has been. In fact, every prediction I see (including a few made here) suggests content spend will grow exponentially over the next few years. And yet, marketing budgets make up only a fraction of the money spent on content by an organization in a given year. Content is the currency companies use to communicate with the world; the marketing department is just the tip of the iceberg. Content itself is where the real growth lies.

At my company, Contently, we have a content team dedicated to maintaining our two digital magazines, which we use to establish thought leadership, generate leads and build stronger relationships with our customers and potential customers. In that sense, we're a fairly textbook case of content marketing in action.

But earlier this year, the head of our sales team approached me with a proposal: Could the content team help with sales enablement?

The first thing I did was ask him what sales enablement was, terrified he wanted a bunch of editors bringing him coffee. Sales enablement, he reassured me, is actually about arming salespeople with the tools they need to close business better and faster—which includes content like PowerPoint presentations, capabilities videos and proposals.

Our content team already produces a gorgeous print magazine, he reasoned; why couldn't we put those storytelling skills to work creating sales brochures and product manuals? After all, a sale is about telling a story—one that convinces the customer your product is necessary to solve a particular problem. And if you can turn something as boring as a product manual into a compelling narrative, that story gets a lot more convincing. Turns out he was right. After some initial griping, the content team members realized they didn't mind working on sales content. The quality of our sales materials improved dramatically, and working closely with sales helped the content team come up with better story ideas for our magazines. It was, as they say in business school, a virtuous cycle.

It wasn't long before other parts of the business took notice. HR wondered whether we could use content to identify, recruit and train new employees. Could we show high-demand talent that our organization is committed to new ideas and helping our employees grow? Our reach and influence in marketing continued to expand across our organization.

With expertise in crafting storylines and engaging an audience, marketers are fast-becoming internal educators and influencers. Chris Johnson, co-founder of Uncubed, a startup whose online learning platform features digital skills courses taught by brands, explains the shift this way: "Brands built newsrooms in the first wave of content marketing ... In the next wave, they'll build schoolrooms."

Contently is just one example of a company leveraging content outside the marketing department, but I'm convinced we represent a growing trend. Content's spread shouldn't be surprising. It follows a similar pattern to the spread of digital media in the early 2000s, and to a slightly lesser extent that of social media later in the last decade. In response to these trends, most companies created what they called digital centers of excellence (COE) to focus on creating methodologies, tools and best practices that could be shared across the enterprise. What we're seeing now are companies doing the same thing with content.

The cross-enterprise content center of excellence
Building a multi-disciplinary content center of excellence (or its equivalent) is hardly simple. There are challenges related to collaboration, staffing, quality control, oversight, distribution and measurement—particularly because all the various incarnations of content exist in silos (e.g., sales, marketing, HR, customer service). The most successful companies tackle the challenge from the C-level—meaning the concept of content as an enterprise-wide asset gets full support from not only the CMO, but the CEO and chief technology officer, among others. To support the idea, some companies create entirely new internal departments, often run by a chief content officer; however, it's much more likely the onus of responsibility falls to the CMO. Those with the storytelling skill required to pull it off tend to work in marketing—especially in companies that have been investing in content marketing for a couple of years.

Managing quality control and oversight tends to require a technology solution—particularly when content creation is dispersed across a large organization. Getting a piece of content out the door requires many steps and many sets of eyes—a process that becomes more cumbersome in larger organizations. The person responsible for deciding whether a particular phrase sounds right is rarely the person who decides whether it's on-brand ... or whether it's legally compliant.

Getting all that great content into the hands of people who can use it might seem easy, but it's a massive challenge, especially in bigger organizations with entrenched silos. The most effective solutions usually involve some kind of cloud-based hub, where employees can log in and find the content they're looking for. Sometimes though, it's as simple as an email.

Finally, there's measurement—determining how content is helping each division work more effectively and more efficiently. I've noticed a lot of overlap between traditional content marketing metrics (things like number of readers, finish rate, or attention time) and metrics appropriate for non-marketing content. Many companies also lean heavily on production data—how many stories were created, how quickly were they approved, etc.—to determine how effectively they're scaling content across the broader company.

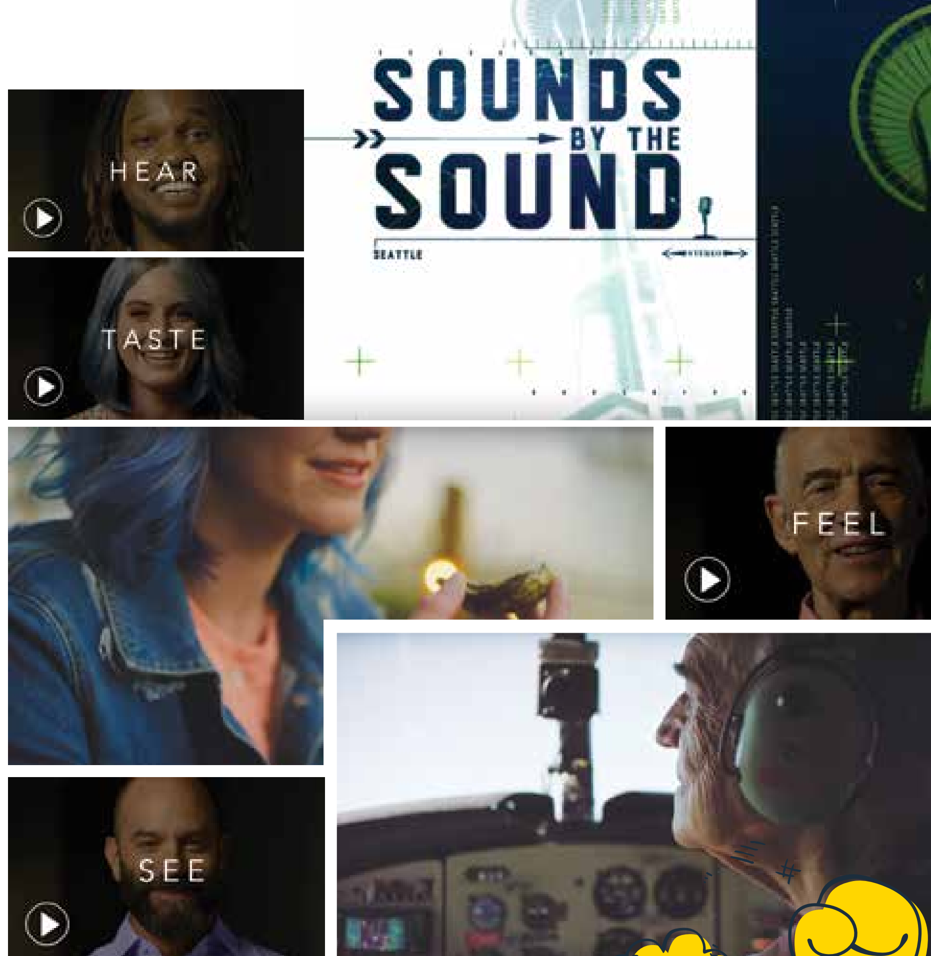
For marketing executives used to getting short shrift in sales and finance-driven organizations, content centers of excellence increase their exposure and influence outside their own division, and help make the case for marketing ROI. Yes, content marketing will continue to grow; but it's time for marketers to demonstrate content's value across the organization—and reap the benefits of their own content savvy.

Sam Slaughter is the vice president of content at Contently. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram @samslaughter215.

A content smörgåsbord.

GE Introduces Sci-Fi Podcast 'The Message'

GE is producing a science-fiction podcast series in an effort to raise its profile among a younger, tech-savvy audience. "The Message," an eight-episode podcast, follows the decoding of a 70-year-old message from outer space. Host Nicky Tomalin takes listeners into an encryption think-tank called Cypher. The cryptologists turn to a real ultrasound technology developed by GE to decode the messages. "It's science fiction meets real science," said Andy Goldberg, GE's global creative director. "The Message" is produced by GE in partnership with **The Slate Group**'s podcast network **Panoply**. In addition to the podcast itself, campaign content includes Cypher's company website and Nicky's blog.



Visit Seattle Partners With Revolt TV

Tourism agency **Visit Seattle** hired **Revolt TV**, the network owned by Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs, to create and run a weekly half-hour show, "Sounds by the Sound." The eight-episode series explores Seattle's music scene while showing off landmarks such as the Space Needle, CenturyLink Field and Chihuly Garden and Glass. "Seattle is a city with great culture, art and most importantly, music heritage," said Revolt TV's Brian Bloodgood. "So we are aligned to do this. Music is our DNA and it is in sync with our mission." Parallel to the TV series, Visit Seattle is also launching a video series, "First Takes," showcasing Seattle visitors describing their first visit to the city. All of the content is available online at visitseattle.tv.

AT BAT WITH GATORADE

To allow baseball fans to experience what it's like for a Major League Baseball player to step up to the plate, **Gatorade** created the 360° Bryce Harper Virtual Reality Experience, a three-minute video. Using **YouTube 360**, the viewer steps up to the plate as **Washington Nationals** star Bryce Harper with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning of a tie game. Created using a combination of real-action video and computer-generation imagery, Gatorade's video, should be viewed in the YouTube mobile app or the Chrome desktop browser. In one virtual at-bat, the fan can experience a walk-off homerun.

SOFTWARE WITH A STORY

You'll find lots of budgeting software options out on the market touting their features and benefits, but **You Need a Budget** (YNAB) bills itself as a way of life. Visit the website and you'll learn all about the YNAB method, which relies on four simple rules to change your relationship with money. Attend a nine-day class to understand the rules in depth or read about real people who took control of their finances. What we find refreshing is how lightly YNAB pushes the software itself. It's a refreshing, education-first approach to software marketing.

DEPARTMENT EDITOR

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

TECH GUIDE

Translation & Localization

Many large, global companies have small-to-nonexistent budgets for content translation and localization—even though they want (need) to reach an audience outside their primary language region. For English-speaking companies in particular, there's a belief that translation/localization is a nice-to-have, but not imperative.

What happens if your target market searches for information online in a language that is not your primary business language? It may be time to reconsider your effort and budget. Google search is multilingual (and the company offers detailed instructions for multilingual and regional content SEO.) Shouldn't your content be multilingual too?

The market is bursting with translation and localization services and tools, but for larger companies, you need a solution that will manage vendors, oversee projects, and integrate with your existing tech ecosystem.

Learn more about how to prepare your content for a global audience. http://cmi.media/GlobalAudience

acrolinx

cloudwords

in WHAT LANGUAGE

Lionbridge

Net-Translators

SDL

SMARTLING

straker TRANSLATIONS

TRANSPERFECT LEGAL SOLUTIONS

welocalize

FEATURES TO CONSIDER

These features are among the options to consider as you research translation and localization platforms and tools:

- Access to a wide range of time-tested vendors for both translation and localization, and the ability to access dozens of vendors at once to scale your efforts.
- Analytics engines that ensure your content is not just correct in each language, but readable (e.g. reading level, tone) and adhering to local style guides.
- Integration with your CMS, marketing automation tools, DAM tools, source control systems and CRM.
- Project management trackers and dashboards.
- Interpreter services when live support is required (e.g., app development support).
- The ability to plan and manage multi-language, global campaigns in one place.
- Machine translation when decoding quickly and automatically is of highest importance.

Captivate, Capture and Convert with the Brightcove Video Marketing Suite
Captivate customers, drive demand and increase conversions with the most comprehensive suite of video technologies built for the needs of the modern marketer. Trusted by more than 5,500 customers in 70 countries, the world's most admired brands power their video marketing with Brightcove.
brightcove.com/vms

CONTACT
Paul Casinelli, Director of Product Marketing, Digital Marketing Solutions, pcasinelli@brightcove.com

Marketing First – Helping Marketers Master the Art and Science of Digital Marketing
Marketo provides the leading marketing software and solutions designed to help marketers master digital marketing. Through a unique combination of innovation and expertise, Marketo focuses on helping marketers keep pace in an ever-changing digital world. To learn more about marketing automation, visit Marketo.com or email marketing@marketo.com.
marketo.com

CONTACT
marketing@marketo.com

License Your Published Content and Gain New Revenue
Wright's Media is a multi-media licensing company that works with publishers such as Mashable, Good Housekeeping and Geek Beat TV. We partner with brands to leverage their content and extend their brand through various marketing strategies and platforms. We take little things and make them a big deal. We were in the Content Marketing business way before Content Marketing was cool. Content ... it's what we do.
wrightsmedia.com

CONTACT
Brian Kolb, COO,
bkolb@wrightsmedia.com
Twitter: @wrightsmedia

Data-Driven Insights, Monitoring and Reporting for SEO + Social + Content
gShift is an all-in-one SEO, social and content analytics and reporting platform, which enables agencies and brands to make data-driven decisions. Track content-level metrics from hyper-local and mobile through to global perspectives for both brands and competitors.

gShift provides valuable insights on keywords including Not Provided, content marketing performance, social signals, brand/competitor backlinks, global/local/mobile keyword positioning, social keywords and content optimization. Custom dashboards can be configured for quick access to data for CMOs and others.
gshiftlabs.com

CONTACT
Crystal Wiltshire,
Senior Marketing Manager,
crystal.wiltshire@gshiftlabs.com

IDEA GARAGE

MARKETOONIST

TECH TOOLS

© marketoonist.com

UNSOLICITED ADVICE

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

More unsolicited advice from Andrew Davis: http://cmi.media/davis

In his column, Andrew Davis dishes out content marketing advice to unsuspecting targets. In this issue, Davis tells the senior vice president of marketing at **Delta Air Lines** to please stop sending the same survey over and over.

Tim Maples
Senior Vice President of Marketing
Delta Air Lines

Dear Mr. Maples,

Do me a favor: Stop it with the surveys. Or at least do something productive with them.

Don't get me wrong; I like Delta Airlines (as much as any other air carrier.) On the whole, your planes are comfortable, your flights are on time and your service is amenable.

I fly a lot. In the past year I've flown almost 500,000 miles. That's more travel than most people, but every time I step off one of your planes, you send me a survey. A quick check of my inbox for the year reveals you've sent me 83 surveys. Eighty-three.

In the early days of our flying relationship, I took the seven minutes out of my day to fill out your lengthy questionnaire (which included questions like: "Did you notice any particular scent in the jet bridge?").

Here's my question: What are you doing with all this data? I can't remember a single acknowledgment that the insights I provided are enhancing my flying experience.

You're not the only one inviting me to fill out surveys to help "improve my experience." I get surveys from hotels, car-rental agencies, shoe stores and restaurants. I recently received a three-minute survey from my barber.

If you're going to ask me to take seven minutes out of my day to fill out your lengthy questionnaire, I expect you to take seven minutes to explain how you're using my data to improve the Delta experience.

So here's the deal: If you tell me exactly how my survey responses are being used to improve your airline, I'll take the time to fill out the questionnaires. Otherwise, stop sending them.

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 @TPLDrew.

CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER IS THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CONTENT MARKETING INSTITUTE

CONTENT
MARKETING
INSTITUTE™
17040 Amber Drive
Cleveland Ohio 44111

Electronic Service Requested