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The Truth About Content Marketing Agencies

Have you noticed the recent proliferation of content marketing agencies? In truth, the trend line has been rising for years. With bigger budgets devoted to content development, organizations of all stripes are jumping in to get a piece of the action, including:

- Pure content marketing agencies, also called custom publishers
- Advertising agencies with newfound appreciation for branded storytelling
- Traditional media companies (e.g. The Wall Street Journal Custom Content Studios)
- PR organizations, social media agencies, research organizations
- Direct marketing agencies moving from “offers” to “engagements”
- SEO companies shelving the SEO business in response to Panda and Penguin
- Web content, user experience and digital agencies

All are battling for content marketing dollars, some with legitimate budgets and some with a pile of Monopoly money.

Even with all these choices, brands have it tough. At the Content Marketing Institute, we field multiple calls, emails and inquiries each day asking for content help, and here’s what we’ve learned: There is good help out there, but it’s hard to tell the partners from the posers.

Let me share some truths about how smart brands can discern experts from shysters:

1. Look for agencies that market with content.

I hear it all the time: the “shoemaker’s children’s shoes” conundrum.

Whether it is a lack of resources or a lack of patience, agencies offering content marketing services rarely produce epic content. Before you hire any content marketing agency, ask to see the work it has performed on its own behalf.

2. Most SEO agencies don’t know jack about content marketing.

Search engine optimization is an incredibly important top-of-the-funnel tactic, but it’s not the main show anymore. I had a recent conversation with an SEO executive team and they were seriously contemplating taking the entire company in a new direction ... to content marketing. Why? Aside from the fact that pure SEO budgets are drying up, they felt the value they used to provide to customers simply wasn’t there anymore. Hundreds, if not thousands, of SEO agencies are in the same position. If you hire a former SEO shop, be sure your content marketing program goes beyond top-funnel considerations.

3. Most agencies are less concerned about strategy than they are about execution.

Want to hear a dirty little secret to which content agencies subscribe? “Give away the strategy to get the execution.” I was guilty of this in my former role. I would give away strategic insights to win the content project. Why? Planning lasts a short time, while execution can last forever. And because it was undervalued, strategy-oriented marketers were rare.

This is still true today. Even if you hire an agency only to execute, ask for a sample of an executable content marketing strategy from it as well. You at least need to test

whether the agency understands the strategic argument for—and more importantly, against—content creation.

4. Most agencies still see content marketing as a campaign.

Content marketing is not a campaign. A campaign can be the result of a content marketing approach, but in and of itself, it is not content marketing. Most agencies aren’t built for consistent, long-form content creation and distribution. They’re built for speed; for great creative that makes an immediate, short-term impact. Compare this to what it takes to create content marketing efforts like Procter & Gamble’s Home Made Simple or AMEX’s Open Forum: day-in, day-out content planning and production evolving over a long time with the goal of attracting and/or retaining customers.

Be wary of any agency pitching you a “campaign” over a “program.” There is one thing that’s certain with any campaign: It has an end date. Not so with content marketing.

And now you know. Good luck and select wisely!



Joe Pulizzi
 Founder
 Content Marketing Institute
 @JoePulizzi



Check out our list of content agencies:
<http://bit.ly/CMAgencies>





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JUNE 2014

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Just three months until Content Marketing World. Anyone who out-oranges me gets respect. And looks kinda ridiculous. Ridiculously hot that is. #CMWorld



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INFLUENCER MARKETING

A look at top IM solutions.



WINNING TALENT

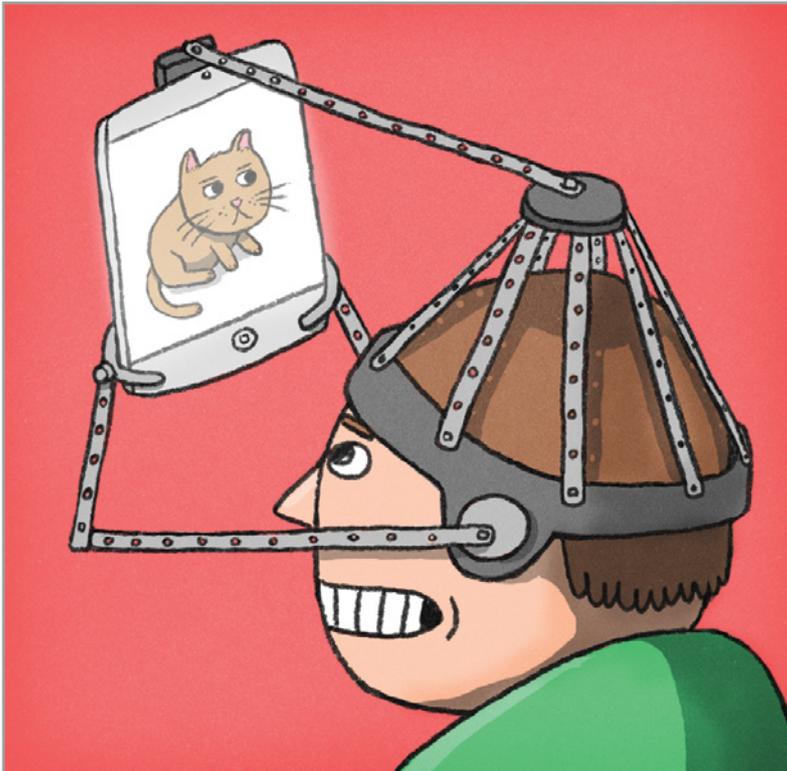
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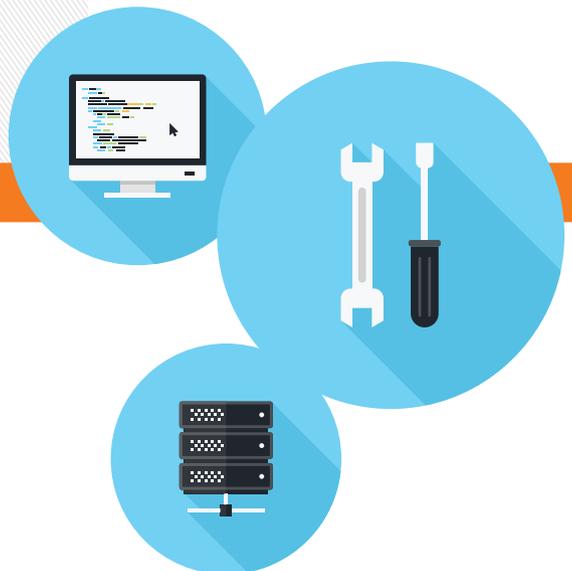
12 WEARABLES

Mobile's next frontier is much closer than many realize. Is your brand ready?



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RECRUITING BRAND INFLUENCERS

Think an influencer program requires too much effort? Discover the top tools marketers use to make their influencer marketing more effective.

By Anna Ritchie

Think your company needs an influencer marketing strategy? I'd argue you likely already have one.

Think of it this way: Have you ever invited analysts or industry experts to write a guest piece of content or speak at an event? Have they contributed quotes to a case study or white paper? These interactions are the fundamental elements that, when compounded and amplified, become the driving force behind a successful influencer marketing program. And I bet it's already happening within your organization.

Influencer marketing, unfortunately, tends to fall to the bottom of marketing priority lists because as budgets tighten and priorities creep, the notion of a truly robust influencer marketing program can seem too complex or intangible to launch.

INFLUENCER MARKETING

is a term that gets used in a variety of ways. For the purposes of this article, I'm defining influencers as people who have an established credibility and audience; they are able to persuade others by virtue of their trustworthiness and authenticity. Influencers can be bloggers, customers, industry experts or even celebrities.



Note that advocates are not necessarily influencers. Advocates may truly love your company or products (and even share their opinions with others), but advocates don't have industry credibility and/or the reach required to be influential with large numbers of your audience.

ONE THIRD OF ORGANIZATIONS
ARE INVESTING IN CONTENT MARKETING,
AND THE MAJORITY PLAN TO INCREASE
SPEND THIS YEAR.

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“Marketers are moving away from programmatic content development and embracing an 'always on' collaborative approach—creating strong content all the time in partnership with influencers.

Influencers are a powerful resource because they are trusted, have targeted audiences, and are available to help feed real-time marketing initiatives.”

HOLLY HAMANN, co-founder and CMO of TapInfluence

Lean Teams Need Powerful Tools

Fortunately, many tools exist that enable even the leanest of teams to reap the benefits of influencer marketing. Below you'll find categories of tools you may want to consider as part of a future influencer marketing strategy, as well as a representative list of tools within each category. These are but a few of the plethora of available tools to help throughout all stages of your influencer marketing. From content development to influencer selection, distribution, measurement and more, these tools can help you take your influencer marketing from zero to 60, or 60 to 100.

BUCKET 1: CONTENT CAMPAIGN

These are comprehensive platforms that can help manage the entire influencer marketing program process. From identifying influencers, to conducting outreach, helping create and deploy content assignments, and tracking results, these platforms are typically connected with a community of influencers and can provide you with tools to create, curate (i.e. build hubs and widgets), distribute and monitor your programs efficiently and in varying levels of support.

These include companies such as:

TapInfluence • Bzz Agent • Markerly • Inluitive Social Chorus • ivy worldwide

BUCKET 2: DISCOVERY & CONNECTION

There are people uniquely positioned to influence your audience and communicate your brand's value to their communities. You just need to find them. These tools can help you search and find key influencers based on topic



WANT A FULL LIST OF INFLUENCER TECHNOLOGY TOOLS?

This article mentions just a handful of companies in the influencer marketing space. To add another tool to our list or learn about other options, visit our List.ly about influencer marketing technology. <http://bit.ly/InfluencerListly>

Or check out the **Complete Guide to Influencer Marketing: Strategies, Templates and Tools:** <http://bit.ly/influencercontentmarketing>

searches, see their influence ratings (like a Klout score) and even connect you with the influencer so you can take next steps. Technologies in this category range from basic (e.g. social listening tools) to advanced algorithms that search and rank influencer content for you.

These include companies such as:

Visible Technologies • CMP.LY • Commun.it • Trackr Little Bird • GroupHigh • Insightpool

BUCKET 3: DISTRIBUTION

Your amazing influencer content will need a strong distribution strategy—whether you want to amplify the content you've co-created with your influencers, publish content you've received from influencers or even distribute content you've discovered unsolicited.

Here are a few of those tools available:

InPowered • GaggleAMP • HubSpot • Buddy Media

No matter whether you require just one influencer marketing tool or multiple tools working in concert, let this last piece of advice guide you through your technology consideration: Clearly identify your goals before considering what types of influencer marketing programs or tools you want. Do you want advocacy? Lead generation? Website traffic? A specific and targeted focus will ensure that you, and your tool providers and influencers, are best set up for a successful program.

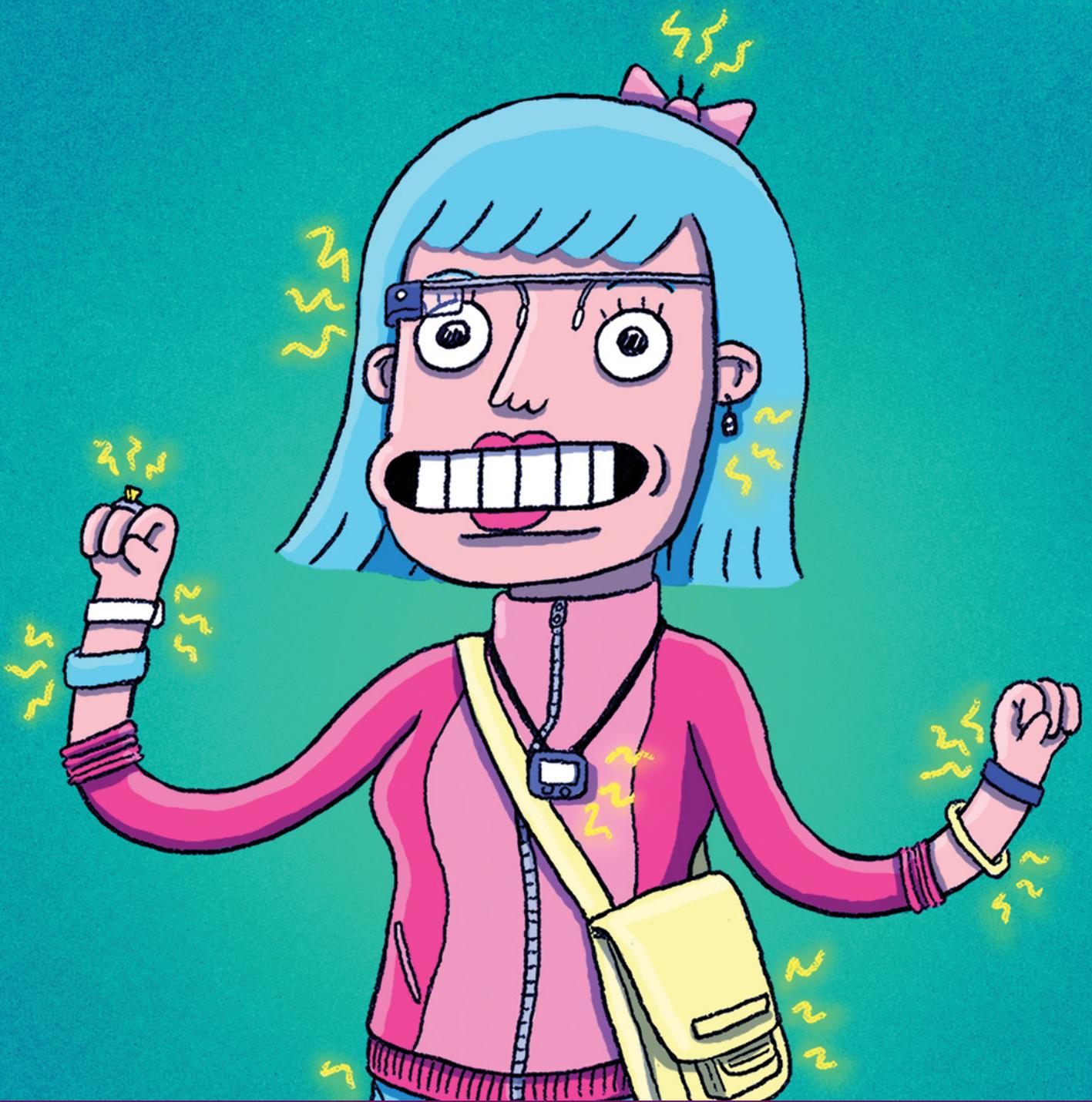


Anna Ritchie is a content marketer specializing in community-building, social media and digital storytelling. Follow her @apritchie.



INFLUENCER MARKETING SOFTWARE FOR BRANDS

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WEARABLE TECH

Mobile's next frontier is much closer than many realize.

Is your brand ready?

By Erin Rodat-Savla • Illustrations by Brad Jonas

For marketers still neck deep creating a mobile strategy, contemplating yet another hard-to-grasp, disruptive and hyped-up technology may make their head pound. But welcome to wearables, declared the next big thing everywhere in the press and by plenty of digital marketing heavyweights.

I'm no tech wallflower, but grappling with this one hurts. On the one hand, smart "everything" seems inevitable—a natural extension of existing trends like mobility, personalization and location-based information. (Of course my coat will have embedded computers someday.) On the other hand, so much of what I'm hearing still seems like some distant sci-fi promise ... or just plain ridiculous: Turn off the house lights just by thinking? Get diet help from my undergarments?

But with wearables seemingly bearing down on us all, how can we adopt a pragmatic but open frame of mind for this new category? To get some reasonable handle on it, I turned to someone closer to the front line ... and far more comfortable with the current ambiguity of the market.

“You’ve got at least six months before early adoption of wearables takes off.”

Redg Snodgrass, co-founder of technology accelerator Wearable World (see sidebar on page 14), offers modest reassurance: “The good news is your budget allocation is safe for 2014. You’ve got at least six months before early adoption of wearables takes off.”

A self-described tech optimist, Snodgrass says the market is accelerating even faster than he anticipated. “I’ve never seen people more excited about the promise of the technology. They’re even more excited than they were about the iPhone App Store. It’ll only be 12 to 18 months before we begin to see massive adoption ... and start including the wearables topic in interviews for junior- to middle-level marketing hires.”

Erick Schonfeld, executive producer of DEMO, IDG’s emerging technologies conferences, offers a similar forecast, underscoring that different wearable categories are developing at different rates. “If it’s Fitbits and Nike Fuel bands, wearable tech is already hitting the mainstream today. If it’s Google Glass, it’s still an open question whether the masses will ever adopt it. I see industrial and business applications gaining traction first for Glass over the next two to three years.”

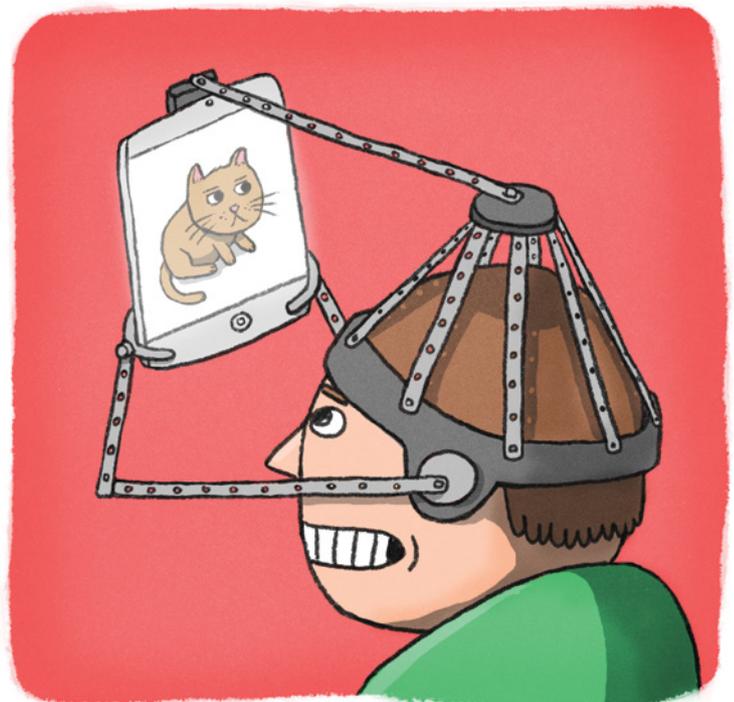
While Google Glass is the nearly eponymous example of wearable devices, the market is exploding with consumer, enterprise and industrial gadgets and applications. Health-focused or “quantified-self” wearables like Fitbit help us measure our daily life, capturing data on steps taken, calories burned and even sleep patterns. Watch-like bands like Samsung’s communicate with your smartphone and its portfolio of apps to give you at-a-glance connectivity. Fujitsu

recently announced tag- and gesture-reading gloves for use in enterprise or industrial environments. And dozens of new gadgets are sprinting out of the gate, many funded by Kickstarter campaigns. Ski goggles display speed, altitude and descent within your field of vision. Even a ring can unlock your front door.

What they all have in common is simple: items you can wear that happen to have computing power. Their potential impact on our behavior and expectations is far more complex. As a feature in *WIRED* magazine recently explained, the newest wearable devices aim to reduce “the time between intention and action,” going so far as the day when “the device knows what users want before they want it.”

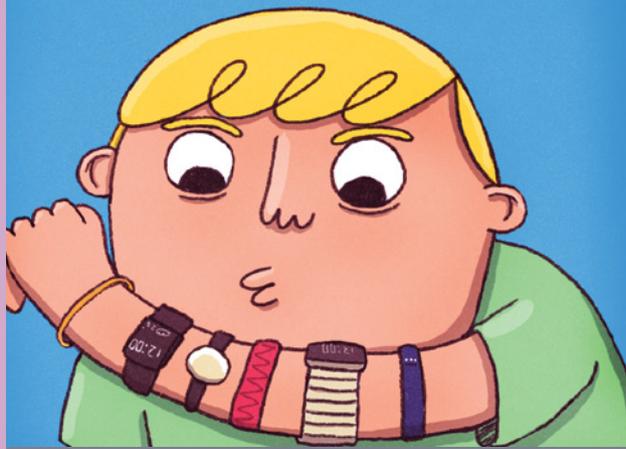
Marketers urged to experiment.

Given how quickly the wearables market is developing, Snodgrass believes marketers need to carve out a small amount of budget now to do what he calls micro-tests. “Focus half of your mobile team on trying to understand and explore how this new market works. At the least, the market share for mobile will flow naturally into the market share for wearables.”



Schonfeld concurs, saying marketing teams will benefit from some wearables-spurred experimentation—even if it doesn’t yet lead to integrating wearables in the strategy. “For quantified-self wearables, it’s all about the data. How can brands tap into that data or enhance it to actually deliver value to consumers? Glass is more experimental, but thinking about ways to market on a heads-up screen could lead to broader insights about mobile marketing in general.”

What should we be on the lookout for in these experiments? Based on Snodgrass’ view of the market, there seem to be four ways in which you’ll find you need to adapt your marketing strategies:



Market Maker: Wearable World

Through education, incubator and accelerator programs, and events, Wearable World aims to spur innovation and foster the business ecosystem necessary to make wearable technology grow. In less than one year, Wearable World has grown from three employees to 18, launched a wearables news channel, inspired Wearable Wednesday roundtables in multiple cities, and is working on its second annual conference, Glazed.

1. Make it (even more) glanceable.

Recently, a techie colleague of mine showed off his Samsung Galaxy Gear, and quipped that since donning the smart watch, digging out his iPhone feels like too much of a hassle. So, what's going to happen to all of your mobile marketing efforts when your audience considers today's most accessible device way too inconvenient?

Snodgrass calls these new mobile demands "glanceable marketing," requiring companies to winnow information and messages to even more relevant, useable information that comes across in less than two seconds. Companies like Wearably already offer subscription services to deliver "your news to any wearable device." But retooling the same email and newsfeeds to yet another format is the bare minimum a marketer will need to do to engage with customers through smart watches and glasses.

To do justice to wearable tech, marketers will need to consider questions like: What information would our customers consider "just in time" and when? What can our customers not do or not do easily because they're looking down at their phone instead of straight-ahead? And what are the visual elements of our service or product experience?

The real-estate company Trulia was an early experimenter with Google Glass. The company created a prototype application to imagine what house hunting can look like when viewed through smart glasses. The app notifies you when you are near a property that matches your search criteria (e.g. number of bedrooms, price, total square feet), lets you view the property listing through Glass, directs you to the location and contacts the listing broker if you need more information.

Snodgrass strongly encourages companies to conduct similar experiments, playing with the possibilities early and often, even if only in pencil sketches and brainstorming sessions.

2. Tap into location AND emotion.

While marketers are still learning how to leverage location-based marketing, wearable tech is now upping the ante. The ever-present technology will challenge marketers to develop "an EKG understanding of our end users," as Snodgrass characterizes it. The miniscule sensors embedded in smart clothing (as well as glasses, watches and jewelry) will read people's biological responses when purchasing (or not purchasing) and using (or not using) products and services. Responding to a customer's context may no longer simply be about her location, but about her emotional state.

Snodgrass looks forward to seeing smart clothing as a blank canvas for expression, with changeable designs controlled by the consumer or the brand using simple coding languages. "Imagine what that does to a branded experience for a marketer or for a content creator," he says. Questions for marketers to play with include: What is the optimal context and timing for my service? How does it depend not only on location and buying stage, but on time of day, proximity to other resources, activity or mood?

3. Integrate experience and create convenience.

As wearables proliferate, they will add to a vast universe of interconnected, smart devices. Snodgrass points out, "Google bought NEST Labs, (maker of the smart home devices, the Nest Learning Thermostat and Protect smoke alarm) for three times what they offered for Instagram. Google's bread and butter is advertising. What does that say about the priority and maturity of smart homes and smart ... everything?"

Far from delivering location-based coupons through your Glasses, this is where the true promise of wearable tech lies for marketers: combine the refined knowledge of both location and emotion with the Internet of Things to solve very specific problems, and create convenience.

Snodgrass offers a scenario: You have a meeting across town in 20 minutes. Traffic reports indicate the trip will take 35 minutes. What network of companies, devices and services can help alert you that you're running late based on your distance from the meeting, call Uber for a car, notify your colleagues waiting across town, and (because we can tell you're stressed) pre-order a drink? Calling this "convenience marketing," Snodgrass contrasts the efforts to create that kind of integrated experience to pushing promotional messages about your brand. "If you're able to deliver a service right when I need it, you're making my life easier. It's a convenience, and not seen as a marketing position."

During your experiments, ask:

- Where are the disconnections between our customers' worlds (online vs. offline, work vs. home) causing them unwanted delays or other struggles?
- What clicks and calls can I eliminate for my customer if I'm with them all of the time?
- How might the always-on connection increase our customers' expectations for a seamless experience, regardless of how or where they're interacting with us? What weaknesses might be highlighted as that happens?
- How else can this device connect to solve a problem or create convenience?
- How can I start to target and integrate their experiences across all sorts of contexts—location, emotion, buying stage, activity, etc.?

4. Get ready to interpret (even more) data.

Setting aside the inevitable questions of personal data and privacy, Snodgrass acknowledges that the grand promise of wearables depends on a Holy Grail of marketing: a team and plan that are able to make profitable heads or tails of data. (No company is broadcasting its intention to sell the data generated from wearables, but Snodgrass insists it's only a matter of time.) "Even if you have great analytics, you're still gonna need somebody on your team to be able to interpret what that means. Refining data is going to be even worse, because all of the data will be about a human being. So your people are going to be interpreting intent, when in reality, you just got a bad data set or misunderstood what it meant."

So, start simple ... but start.

At a time when the marketing function is already going through seismic shifts, it can be easy to glaze over this not yet fully formed tech category. Kathleen Schaub, vice president of IDC's CMO Advisory Service, helped bring me back to this harsh reality. For many CMOs, particularly those in B2B settings, wearables are still the bailiwick of techies doing "look-at-the-cool-future" conference talks. Schaub explains, "CMOs are facing enormous change tasks in the next few years ... absorbing some 78 categories of automation; getting whole companies to think like a customer; shifting from a media silo structure to one that is more systems-oriented and adaptive; integrating data, content and interactions into more holistic customer experiences; making marketing more accountable to the business and revenue generation."

Are CMOs really going to add wearable strategy to that list? Perhaps the very fact that the technology and its applications do still feel so sci-fi offers guidance: For marketers, this is the time to dabble in low-risk experiments and back-of-the-napkin brainstorming to ask some tough questions. What will an even slow rise of these sensors and devices—and (perhaps more importantly) the network between them—do to our customers' and clients' expectations? How will they add to the mounting pressure to be customer-driven and data-driven?

We all know how hard it is to change behavior. But that doesn't mean we won't have to adapt to changing behaviors.



Erin Rodat-Savla is a consultant and facilitator, helping organizations design smart, innovative engagement strategies. Find her @ersavla.

WEARABLE CONTENDERS

Google Glass:

In a category of its own, Glass is Google's two-year experiment in wearable tech. While still not widely available to consumers, Glass has helped Google test the market and make important refinements to Google Now—an intelligent personal assistant (i.e. voracious data gatherer) that will power the next generation of wearable tech devices.



Wearable Fitness Trackers:

Wearable fitness technologies have gained the broadest acceptance among consumers. The challenge is whether consumers will continue to buy limited-function devices when their smartphones can deliver a lot of the same value.

Fitbit Flex
Jawbone Up
Shine Fitness Tracker



Watches:

Wearable tech watches are often designed as smart phone extenders, allowing users to see messages and caller ID without taking out their phones—and are the category where fashionistas are making their mark.

Metawatch Frame
Pebble Steel
Samsung Galaxy Gear & Gear Fit



Jewelry:

While still in its nascency, wearable tech jewelry offers highly targeted functionality, such as the NFC Ring, which unlocks doors and mobile devices.

NFC Ring



Visit CMI's Slideshare channel for a step-by-step marketer's guide for experimenting with wearables.
<http://bitly.com/WearablesSS>

Switching Off the Auto-Pilot

If your social media is mostly or entirely automated, you're missing the point of having a social media presence in the first place.

By Jonathan Crossfield

I have a rule. Actually, I have many rules, but you don't need to hear the ones concerning black jelly beans or why tequila is no longer allowed in our house. The rule that's relevant to this column is about Twitter, and although it may seem arbitrary, it's about maintaining certain standards.

When I follow someone, if I receive an automated direct message a few minutes later to thank me, I unfollow immediately.

Harsh, you think? Reactionary? Unnecessary? Yet I'm not the only one. I've met many social media users, both professional and otherwise, who distrust, criticize or actively unfollow accounts that use automated direct messages (DMs.)

And I've yet to meet anyone who appreciates the gesture.

The practice is in decline, partly because many people were so vocal in their dislike of them. There are plenty of blog posts and articles already advising against them, so this isn't another of those.

Instead, I mention automated DMs as a familiar and commonly despised example of how automating your social media activities can backfire.

Think we can't tell when your tweets, updates or DMs are automated? Oh yes we can. So, knock it off!

asking a question about the link it just shared—only to be ignored. Fine, not everyone has time to reply to every tweet. But when I notice the account never replies, retweets or engages with anyone, but merely shares its own content or brand messaging on an endless loop, I may conclude pretty quickly that there's actually no one behind the curtain. Even the wise and wonderful Wizard of Oz stuck around to pull the levers behind his automated illusion, ready to intervene appropriately should the unexpected happen.

Using automation for good, not evil

Automation is never a replacement for genuine social media interaction, but it can enhance it.

Tools such as Buffer allow you to supplement your real-time activity with retweets and shares to Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn without resorting to flood-or-famine bursts of activity. Instead of sending a series of retweets and shares all within a few minutes as you review your various streams, Buffer allows you to space these updates throughout the day on a flexible schedule.

Sometimes certain messages absolutely, positively have to go out at a certain time. Scheduling these mission-critical updates means everything goes out as planned, even if that meeting runs over or last night's curry has you trapped in a cubicle at the crucial moment. Used in these ways, automation and scheduling are a precaution, a guarantee of things happening on time. But it isn't an alternative to turning up.

Being in the moment

That now famous Oreo tweet during the 2013 Super Bowl (15,861 retweets and 6,506 favorites) has been called one of the greatest marketing tweets of all time. But it would never have happened if the Oreo social media team opted to schedule and automate the tweets in advance of the big game.

The "dunk-in-the-dark" tweet was successful because it showed the Oreo team was right there in the moment with the rest of the crowd, joking and reacting to the events on the field.



Is there anybody there?

If your social media is entirely or mostly automated, then your business is missing the entire point of having a social media presence in the first place.

Social media is a conversation. It takes two to be social, after all. Anything else is just broadcasting a pre-recorded message, and no one ever described television or radio as a social medium.

It is frustrating enough to reply to an account—maybe

You can't fake that kind of real-time authenticity.

The Oscars hashtag is also a regular target for brands looking for maximum social media exposure. 2014's "night of nights" saw a single star-studded selfie from Ellen DeGeneres nearly crash Twitter with 2.5 million retweets. (It was taken and shared on a Samsung phone, major sponsors of the Oscars. Coincidence? You decide ...)

NASA also capitalized on the 10 Oscar nominations for Gravity; a film that threw space debris, satellites, George Clooney and eventually the entire planet at Sandra Bullock to try and stop her ever making another romcom.

The space agency reacted enthusiastically as the movie won each of seven golden Ken dolls—not something you can predict and schedule in advance—while sharing incredible images and genuine space-age facts with the hashtag #RealGravity. The result? Thousands of retweets and plenty of enthusiastic engagement from an audience rediscovering its awe of space exploration.

Contrast those examples with the shellacking some brands received for their automated and unimaginative tweets during last year's Oscars. Or the hatred directed at brands for scheduling a flood of generic promotional tweets that filled people's streams during the London Olympics opening ceremony.

Scheduling social media updates to an event hashtag is like leaflet-bombing a large party. Or worse, a major unfolding tragedy.

'I am not a number!'

Guy Kawasaki received plenty of criticism in 2013 for leaving his high-volume auto-tweeting spambot machine running as the Boston Marathon tragedy unfolded across social media.

Kawasaki, as well as some other high-profile marketers,

Social media is a conversation. It takes two to be social, after all. Anything else is just broadcasting a pre-recorded message, and no one ever described television or radio as a social medium.

... ..

prefers to view social media as an automated rolling newsfeed for his blogs and other marketing messages. He claims this is no different to CNN or many other media outlets with their tickertapes of automated social media updates.

Of course, when people do turn to social media for real-time rolling news coverage, an automated marketing newsfeed looks an awful lot like an avalanche of spam. Even on a good day, this newsfeed approach just doesn't feel like social media marketing to me. It treats the audience as mere numbers on an analytics report, where churn doesn't matter as long as the sheer weight of automation can keep volumes growing with an acceptable percentage of click-through.

And this is why I unfollow accounts that thank me with an automated DM and a plug for their new ebook. It tells me I'm part of an aggregated number on a spreadsheet, not an individual person worthy of engagement. It hopes I will enjoy their tweets when it will never give me the courtesy of reading mine.

Most of all, it appreciates my click of the "follow" button without ever appreciating me.

And that's just not how this game is played.



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

CHATTER

WHEN IS SOCIAL MEDIA AUTOMATION OK?



ARDATH ALBEE
@ardath421

I'm sure many will disagree, but the answer is never. The ability to automate social media is what allows marketers to treat social media as a blasting tool rather than a dialogue. What if a world event takes place that makes your post insensitive, yet it goes out anyway? That's on you. Social media is human interaction in a real-time stream. It's not like scheduling a send into someone's email that can sit there until the person gets to it.



VINCENT ABBATE
@copywritervince

I can't believe the words "social media" and "automation" appeared in the same sentence. With all due respect, anyone who believes it's practicable needs to step away from the Internet and stick to outbound marketing.



TOD CORDILL
@todcordill

Automated scheduling can be very useful; automated replies can be terrible. A significant part of the social media conversation is broadcasting curated content that is useful, interesting or entertaining to your audience. Using automation tools can optimize the timing so it is more likely to be seen and therefore be useful. I would never use automation tools for automatically responding to a direct message or mention. This will come across as insincere at best and inappropriate or even disastrous in some cases.



Weigh in with your opinion online:
<http://bit.ly/SMAutomationOK>

TECH TOOLS

SOCIAL INFLUENCERS SHARE THE TOOLS THAT HELP THEM KEEP THEIR EDGE.

What translation services or tools do you favor?

ELSA

A handheld translation device is making all of the difference for our international clients at the Red Lion Anaheim. The ELSA device (from RTT Mobile) provides access to 180 languages at the push of a button. Using cell phone technology, ELSA offers instant connectivity to a live translator, making it the next best thing to having a translator standing there to decode both sides of the conversation. In the first week of use, we were able to resolve a communication with a Japanese group and the meeting planner ending up booking more business with the hotel as a result.

Submitted by **Pam Scott @redlionhotel**



Globalization Partners International

Globalization Partners offers the highest quality translated content, which in turn delivers higher tracked conversions for our clients. Its portal incorporates real-time statuses on current projects, quality assessment questions and technical implementations. Its translation memory service scrubs previously translated content for new updates on a page. It also allows for additional translations to be set up without redoing the entire page, which can be very costly.



Submitted by **Dianna F. Kersey @diannakersey**

Translate Media

Translate Media works well for multilingual social monitoring that we require for our international social and digital advertising campaigns. It has both the language expertise you would expect from a global translation agency and the marketing know-how to help implement campaigns.

Submitted by **Steve Evans @netnatives**



TranslateMedia

InWhatLanguage

InWhatLanguage earns my business for Japanese, French and Spanish translation for using native-speaking translators and a multi-step quality assurance process to ensure both linguistic and cultural accuracy. Royce Leather has over 50 product videos and InWhatLanguage localizes scripts, records voiceovers, implements subtitles, and transcribes audio and video files.

Submitted by **Billy Bauer @royceleather**



Cloudwords

We operate in 200 languages in 30 countries on all seven major mobile platforms. Cloudwords allows us to keep pace with our constant release cycles, while ensuring we communicate to our users in the right tone consistently across markets. A huge portion of our growth is overseas, so we need quick, high-quality translation of our app, website, app store descriptions, email communications, and more. Being able to leverage our own translation memory provides the speed and quality our brand demands.

Submitted by **David Jones Shazam**



DEPARTMENT EDITOR

Ann Gynn trains others to create successful content marketing or works directly to get the job done on behalf of her clients. Her high school nickname, Editor Ann, still rings true today (decades later). Follow her on Twitter @anngynn or www.content-marketing-coach.com.

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

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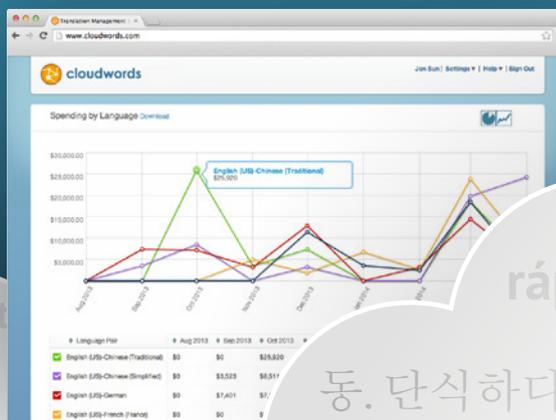
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THE CONTENT MARKETER AND THE MARKETING TECHNOLOGIST

THE NEW PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIP FOR
AN AGE OF EXPERIENTIAL CONTENT.

BY SCOTT BRINKER

CONTENT MARKETING IS EVOLVING QUICKLY.

First, it's growing in scale. As quality content proves to be one of the most effective assets in modern marketing, organizations are developing a near limitless appetite for producing it. As brands truly become publishers, the size of content teams and the volume of work for which they're responsible are expanding rapidly.

Second, it's becoming much more sophisticated. Nurturing programs use marketing automation and website personalization technologies to algorithmically target and sequence content—and the configuration of those software applications becomes a part of the storytelling arc. At the same time, content is becoming more interactive. It's going beyond passively consumed articles

and videos into app-like experiences that respond to user behaviors and input.

Third, it's facing ever-greater competition. As more and more companies engage in content marketing, the noise in search and social channels continues to grow. It is a cacophony, and rising above it—to make your content stand out from the crowd—requires greater cleverness and creativity. It's not about who's the loudest, but who's the smartest.

A common thread that spans these challenges: technology. Managing a large content team at scale, implementing more sophisticated content-driven experiences and inventing novel ways to break through the noise are all aspects of content marketing that can be aided by technology.

So does this mean that every content marketer needs to become a technologist too?

THE MARKETING TECHNOLOGIST

Last year, Joe Pulizzi wrote an article, "12 Essential Roles to the Future of Content Marketing." These roles included chief content officer, managing editor, director of audience and influencer relations. He also included a role that was very different than the others: chief technologist.

You might think that sounds like one too many chefs in the kitchen. But as Joe said, "Don't think of [these] as new job titles, per se, but rather as the core competencies that need to be accounted for across the enterprise."

The chief technologist role is an example of a new kind of hybrid professional known as a "marketing technologist." Marketing technologists can be either tech-savvy marketers or marketing-savvy IT people. They can be either self-taught power users and hackers or formally

trained computer scientists and IT managers. But they share an intuitive appreciation for how software works and are passionate about applying that knowledge in the service of brilliant marketing and remarkable customer experiences.

Marketing technologists are adept at configuring and operating the many different varieties of software that are entwined in marketing today. They often serve as the bridge between non-technical marketers—who need to harness these software-driven capabilities in their work—and the providers of that software: software vendors, digital agencies and IT departments.

Of course, not every marketer needs to become a marketing technologist. But having one on your team dramatically improves the leverage that the rest of the marketing department is able to achieve with technology.

This is increasingly true for content marketing.

BACK-OFFICE TO FRONT-OFFICE

How exactly can marketing technologists affect content marketing outcomes?

First, as marketing departments turn into full-blown publishing units, they require new processes and systems to scale efficiently. A marketing technologist can help configure and operate basic publishing infrastructure, such as WordPress or other content management systems, digital asset management, project management and workflow tools, and more specialized content marketing management software such as Curata, Kapost, NewsCred and Skyword.

Second, marketing technologists can help with orchestrating the delivering and tracking of content marketing programs through marketing automation platforms and more personalized customer-experience-management website platforms.

They can make sure that tracking codes are properly in place for all the different channels through which content is being promoted. They can configure A/B testing and optimization services. They can set up and adjust analytics software, pull raw data into a spreadsheet for lightweight

data-science analysis and run ad-hoc queries on customer databases. They can debug technical issues such as duplicate CRM records and email deliverability.

In many ways, marketing technologists manage the plumbing through which the water of content marketing flows. And while the content itself ultimately gets top billing in winning customers—as it should—you don't want the plumbing to get backed up.

But increasingly, the marketing technologist role is working with software for more than just smooth back-office marketing operations. A new generation of content is now emerging that does more than present content for visitors to passively read or watch. Content can now be delivered in interactive formats, such as with Ceros and Uberflip. It can be integrated into marketing apps that engage visitors with choices in a wizard-like fashion, evaluators, quizzes, calculators and more.

Creating these interactive content assets—experiential content—often requires new kinds of software to be added to marketing's growing technology stack. To tap the full potential of these platforms, it often helps to have a basic understanding of computer programming to be able to easily assemble the rules and logic by which you want your content-driven marketing app to behave.

Developing such experiential content is ideal work for marketing technologists. And in partnership with other marketers who are developing the content within these new app-like experiences, they can forge the kinds of creative campaigns that break through the competitive noise.



Scott Brinker is the co-founder and CTO of ion interactive and author of the Chief Marketing

Technologist blog. Find him @chiefmartec.



For a list of other essential content marketing roles, and what they do, visit:

<http://bit.ly/EssentialRolesCM>

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A CONTENT MARKETING TECH LESSON FOR THE CCO

Content marketing isn't just about text, images and video; it's about capturing people's attention across multiple viewing experiences. Selecting the right set of editorial workflow tools will ensure your content is ready for deployment across any channel.

content team wants to edit a blog post before it goes out or review each tweet for the day, is Microsoft Word the right tool to pass that string of text around a workgroup? Is email the right sharing mechanism? Surely your blog post or tweet is part of a much larger portfolio of interrelated pieces of content, managed in real time and released in a coordinated manner.

By Joe Bachana

If your company produces content at scale, you already know this well: Successful content marketing depends on effective collaboration during the editorial workflow process. And like it or not, content creators and editors want to work in the tools built specifically for their jobs. Writers use Microsoft Word, designers lean towards the Adobe Creative Suite, video producers use Adobe Premiere, Avid or Final Cut, and so on. No matter what any tech vendor tells you, your team isn't going to write or edit online in a rich text editor (RTE). Sure they'll copy/paste into the RTE, but the work will get done in Word (or any number of composite content applications available in the marketplace).

That begs the question: If your

SELECT A WORKFLOW MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

If it's true your content creators need to collaborate with others to edit and approve content—including creating associations with a variety of other content types such as images, video, social links, etc.—then your team needs a platform that supports and facilitates editorial workflow across a number of diverse stakeholders.

Content marketing technology that manages editorial workflow (i.e. production) must offer a way for content creators to collaborate effectively—minimizing wait times between editorial stages and maximizing opportunities for parallel processing of content components. This workflow must also be integrated



directly with the very desktop tools that each content creator already uses, as opposed to forcing the creator to jump out of the application he or she is using to log workflow tasks in some Web interface. What's more, the outcome of this workflow needs to be a version of a piece of content that is stored in a media-neutral format so that it may be output in any digital channel (as well as print, where appropriate) dictated by your marketing campaign.

Newspaper editors, broadcast news producers and magazine publishers all have had decades of experience with workflow platforms so that their staff can collaborate in parallel over great distances and in short time frames. It is precisely this kind of technology and expertise that today's modern brands need in-house to wage successful and nimble content marketing campaigns.

While vertical markets like broadcast or news media have their own software vendors to help manage workflows for various content types, content marketers require even more—an editorial workflow platform that works with all content types and channels. As you interview content marketing vendors and evaluate their editorial workflow capabilities, you must ask vendors to present their solutions for workflow within different contexts—video, image management and textual workflow (both article form and tweet length.) And you must be sure vendors demonstrate how their solutions work

with the very tools that your content producers already use at the desktop.

CHOOSE A CONTENT REPOSITORY.

The content repository—alternatively called a content management system or content warehouse—is where your content is stored in a media-neutral format for reuse and repackaging (i.e. taking pieces of content like videos, slideshows, articles or even social links and associating them to a given publication or campaign.) If your organization were a manufacturing firm, think of the repository as the warehouse where you store all of your intellectual property, neatly organized for quick retrieval. Your manufacturing floor is your workflow management system, which may be creating just-in-time content, or your organization may create content well in advance, to be stored for reuse in the future.

This content repository has several important characteristics:

▶ Supports your organization's taxonomy

The content repository must allow organizations to define properties and assign them to stored content. These properties can include information about digital rights, as well as the content's physical attributes (e.g. file type, size, frame rate.) The content repository should be customizable to allow an organization to define sets of categorical terms—called controlled vocabularies—within your brand's taxonomy.

CCOs need to understand the

importance of semantically enriching content, either against a predetermined schema or ontology, or even just to capture an emerging trend on the Web. Most brands today have spent considerable time defining key phrases to appeal to customers and to index properly on the major search engines. A content marketing platform must allow an organization to define a set of controlled vocabularies that can be used to tag content of all types. That metadata must remain with the content throughout the workflow process. Once it's filed in the content warehouse, it's ready to be published.

▶ Offers digital asset management functionality

Even if your organization manages just a small library of assets, money and effort went into creating them and those assets need to be protected. Assets need to be backed up for reuse (this is less a technology consideration as it is a digital asset management [DAM] governance policy.) And your DAM systems should work in tandem with governance policies to ensure that your digital intellectual property is quickly findable, reusable and secure.

DAM is an underlying technology that lets organizations manage digital files, including images, photos, logos, designs, videos, interactive objects for content marketing. This DAM functionality either should be a part of the content repository or more commonly integrated between a DAM

and a content repository.

Finally, DAM systems help organizations store media assets in a media-neutral format. By doing so, organizations can call upon the DAM technology to render the asset in whatever format a media channel dictates. These DAM solutions typically work with technologies that can convert assets from their raw format to the format needed for a particular output.

► Offers multi-channel delivery

Another crucial part of the content marketing platform is its ability to deliver content to multiple channels.

Multi-channel content delivery is less about a single technology than a collection of black-box technologies used to deliver content to the respective channels associated with a marketing tactic. For instance, marketers use technologies from Adobe such as InDesign Server or Digital Publishing Suite to deliver content to print and tablet, respectively. Other targeted delivery technologies are available for newsletter, social, video and website publishing are available on the marketplace. If your content marketing platform vendor does not make these multichannel technologies, they likely have integrated their content repository with multichannel products that are available on the marketplace.

TIE ALL YOUR CONTENT TOGETHER

With content types stored in media-neutral formats for reuse, you must now create associations among your content types, or “package” the content in accordance with the dictates of a campaign.

For instance, if an organization wants to come out with a special issue magazine, an associated website and tablet app, a Facebook page, and associated feeds to Twitter or Instagram, these different pieces of content (articles, images, galleries for the site, video or



WORKFLOW SOLUTIONS

Choose content technologies that allow content creators to use tools with which they are most comfortable in that stage of the editorial process; CCOs must refrain from using proprietary tools that lock content into formats that are not reusable.



Ensure you are semantically enriching your content, either against a predetermined schema or ontology, or even just to capture an emerging trend on the Web.



Prepare and store media (e.g. text, images, video, interactive objects) for omnimedia use. This is one of the great obstacles most marketing organizations face. While CCOs don't necessarily have the technical expertise to understand all dimensions of the issue, you must work in partnership with IT so that content is properly stored for reuse across channels.

other rich media, associated site and social text, links, etc.) would be stored within a central repository.

Think of the workflow system as a place where editors and producers work to create the individual pieces of content, the content repository (with integrated digital asset management capabilities) as the general storage place for publication-ready visual assets, and the multichannel content repository as the place where all the elements of a marketing tactic are tied together for rendering to appropriate formats on a specific publication schedule.

BEWARE THE SILVER BULLET

In recent years vendor-driven terms like customer-experience management have surfaced to describe pre-integrated content marketing platforms. And these platforms purport to encompass workflow management, content management (with digital asset management), multichannel publishing, and analytics. A few vendors additionally say they have traditional marketing automation and marketing operations management functionality included in the platform. While some of

these vendor stacks are very promising, I urge you to look for a solution that can integrate deeply with the software tools that your various content contributors use to get their jobs done.

Also, if you happen to have in-house technology that already offers functionality described in this article, you may not need to replace those pieces. Some companies are doing quite well by integrating the best-of-breed technologies themselves or with trusted implementation partners.

The key, as always, is to document your solution requirements before looking at software. That way, you can be sure to map your needs to what is available in the software marketplace, then make decisions about what technologies you currently have that can continue to be used, what needs to be built and what can be purchased.



Joe Bachana is the founder of DPCI (www.databasepublish.com).



Choosing a marketing technology tool? Check out the 12 questions everyone should ask when making content marketing technology decisions.

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Social And Search: The Integration Imperative

Getting it right may be the difference between mechanical tactics and meaningful outcomes.

By Lee Odden

Optimized and socialized content is essential for reaching information hungry, multi-tasking audiences who are bombarded with new messages every day. For brands to be prominent on the search and social Web for their customers, they'll need to understand the best of each discipline and how to put them together.

SEO can deliver content-rich answers to buyers at the moment of need, and social media can provide the means to connect and engage. Both rely on content to achieve success.

While many marketers will debate what comes first (content vs. social media vs. SEO) the most practical approach is to use the tactics necessary for your target audience in order to “be the best answer” wherever customers are looking.

SEO is the condiment, not the sandwich

While SEO has traditionally been able to drive online marketing performance on its own, search engine updates to address content quality (Panda) and the more conversational nature of search behavior (Hummingbird)—along with the surging popularity of social networks—have changed the SEO landscape forever.

Think of SEO this way: If a customer-focused content marketing program is the sandwich, then SEO is the mayonnaise. It touches nearly

everything and enhances the overall flavor of the sandwich. But on it's own, not very appetizing.

Many SEO-turned-content marketers focus on creating content as a means to attract links. It reminds me of the early years of social, when brands used social networks and media primarily to attract attention and links, not to create true relationships, engagement or inspire transactions and referrals.

A simple comparison tells the tale: Having 500 optimized blog posts on every derivative of a 50-phrase keyword list that no one wants to read is no more useful than attracting 50,000 drive-by visitors to your site for 10 seconds each from Digg—as was popular several years ago. Focusing on superficial performance metrics only drives superficial tactics. Do you really want your marketing characterized as superficial?

Understanding the difference between mechanical tactics and meaningful outcomes is an important distinction when hiring content marketing professionals or a content marketing agency. It can mean the difference between a keyword hell of

thin content and a content portfolio that serves real customer interests and proudly represents what your brand stands for.

Optimize your opportunities

Search marketers are opportunists by their nature. Each time a major trend in online marketing emerges—from blogging to social media—SEOs have adapted and engineered their way to discover every possible workaround or tactic to create a marketing advantage. This opportunism has extended to content marketing as well.

Operating within the guidelines of quality marketing, such adaptability is a highly valuable perspective to take. However, when opportunism bleeds into manipulations outside the scope of search engine guidelines, the risks can turn out to be painful and sometimes disastrous to a business.

But here's the thing: Google is a battleground for SEOs. Those who have adapted successfully and have real, on-the-ground experience can become some of the most valuable marketers you will ever find. Your most valuable



Your most valuable hires (whether a marketer or an agency) will be both creative and analytical. Look for lateral thinkers—those who solve complex marketing problems through non-traditional, indirect and/or creative means.

hires (whether a marketer or an agency) will be both creative and analytical. Look for lateral thinkers—those who solve complex marketing problems through non-traditional, indirect and/or creative means. Those search engine optimizers still stuck on content marketing as “more fuel for keywords” and social media as “link building” should be avoided.

Social vs. SEO-focused content marketing

Whether you hire an agency with roots in social or one with roots in search depends in large part on your specific needs. [See sidebar: Social vs. Search: Who’s In the Driver’s Seat?] So, what should companies look for when considering content marketing hires or an agency selection?

Goals and accountability are essential for an optimized and socialized content marketing program to succeed. For an integrated approach, here are three of your most important considerations to ensure content performs for customers and your brand—and issues your in-house marketers and agencies should be able to speak about fluently.

1. Attract—How will the particular content object attract exposure? Will your content perform as part of an ongoing narrative? Will it be a part of a sequence? Will it be connected to other content objects through links, repurposing or curation? Where content is promoted on social networks will matter for attraction as much as what phrases and questions are used for search engine optimization.

2. Engage—How will the content object be meaningful to the readers such that they interact, react and respond to it? What context needs to exist for the content to be so relevant that it inspires action? Social media and search both play a role in developing the context for

SOCIAL VS. SEARCH: WHO’S IN THE DRIVER’S SEAT?

SEO-focused content marketing

- Tactical approach: more content equals more search presence
- Topics derived from actual search demand
- Keyword-managed content plans tied to performance
- Continuous cycle of performance improvement using search analytics
- Organic amplification is built-in to content creation
- Content promotion, link building and social promotion
- Good SEO is good user experience
- Technical optimization
- Performance is focused on search KPIs and conversions

Social media-focused content marketing

- Topics focused on brand and messaging
- Shorter form content: status updates, blog posts, image tiles
- Topics managed by social content calendar
- Social monitoring surfaces new, real-time content opportunities
- Amplification is often organic but increasingly paid
- Performance is based on views and engagement
- Conversion and ROI are more difficult to measure with confidence

engagement. When they interact with what they find, does the customer think, “Yes, that’s exactly what I was looking for,” or something else?

3. Convert—How will the optimized content object persuade the reader to take the next step? Each content object can play a role in guiding the reader from one stage to the next in a brand and customer relationship. From awareness to purchase to advocacy, conversions are happening at each stage whether it’s sharing socially, subscribing to a newsletter, downloading a white paper, signing up for a webinar, filling out an inquiry form or making a referral.

Within your content plan, think about how you can make these actions easy and intentional for the target customer. An optimized content plan means being accountable to discovery, how it’s best consumed and what

messages will inspire action.

Remember, content is the reason search began in the first place. Ensure your team takes an integrated approach to incorporating search and social media with your content marketing programs—and that both your internal team and agency are accountable for attraction, engagement and conversion. With that focus on accountability, the investment you make in high quality, optimized and socialized content will pay returns over and over.



Lee Odden is CEO of @TopRank Online Marketing and author of *Optimize*. Follow him @leeodden.



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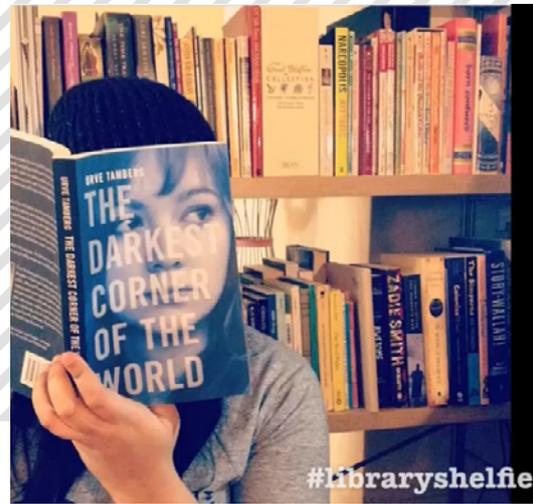
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EMOTICONS AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Do you speak emoticon? While emojis have taken over our mobile phones, redditors and other Web denizens around the world are keeping it old school with increasingly complex emoticons (most of which have Japanese origins). Can you match the emoticon to its meaning? [For a full index of Japanese emoticons, check out japaneseemoticons.net]

1.	(@_@)	A. BEAR
2.	(≧∩≦)	B. DANCING
3.	(= ` 彡 '=)	C. HUGGING
4.	(ノ・I・)	D. CONFUSED
5.	((≡´ω`≡))	E. TELLING A SECRET
6.	Q(●_● `Q)	F. HIGH FIVE!
7.	m(∩_∩)m	G. ANGRY
8.	(づ´▽`づ)	H. HAPPY
9.	(´▽(・_・)	I. APOLOGIZING
10.	(●>ω)/ \ (▽<●)	J. CAT

ANSWER KEY: 1=D, 2=G, 3=J, 4=B, 5=A, 6=H, 7=I, 8=C, 9=E, 10=F



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UNHATE THIS CONTENT

No stranger to provocative advertising, **Benetton** is taking on unemployment with the *Unemployee* campaign. *Unemployee* follows Benetton's award-winning *Unhate* campaign, which featured world leaders locking lips. But Benetton is doing more than courting controversy: through its Unhate Foundation, Benetton is running an Unemployee of the Year campaign and contest that will help unemployed people ages 18-30 create projects that improve lives in their communities. Visitors who register for the campaign's online community will vote on their favorite proposals, and the Unhate Foundation will award 5,000 euros each to 100 projects.



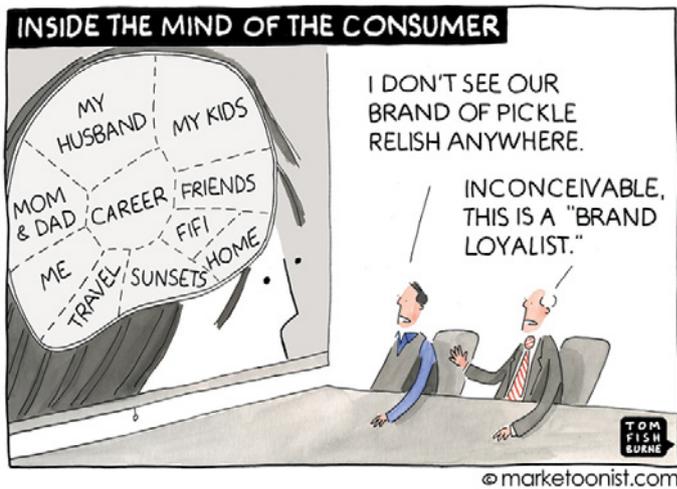
DEPARTMENT EDITOR

Natalya Minkovsky is a writer and content strategist. Find her @ [hejhejnatalya](https://twitter.com/hejhejnatalya).



It's Not About The Brand

By Tom Fishburne



It is common for marketers to exaggerate the importance of their brands in consumers' lives. Brand positioning statements are often written as if consumers constantly think and obsess about the brand. Branded content frequently reads as if every consumer is a cult follower.

In reality, even "brand loyalists" have complex lives completely separate from our brands. Brands can play important roles, but we should be careful not to overstate how much consumers give thought to our brands.

One of the most emotional brands I ever worked on was Cheerios. In focus groups, parents would recount, sometimes with tears in their eyes, the first time their children had the manual dexterity to pick up and eat a Cheerio with their own

fingers. That "first finger-food moment" became (rightfully) a cornerstone of the Cheerios brand, and the underlying "nurturing" insight led to every powerful marketing communication from literacy promotions to heart-health packaging.

But Cheerios wasn't the star of that scene. It was a supporting character. The Cheerios brand didn't create that moment for these parents. It had the privilege of sharing in that moment with parents. Brand loyalists are loyal to a brand only as long as that brand complements their own life and priorities.

This is particularly true with content marketing. Too often, "branded content" emphasizes "brand" over "content." We focus too much on where the content fits in our marketing lead generation funnel, and not

enough on how the content can support what is truly important to our customers' lives.

As Harvard Professor Theodore Levitt famously wrote in "Marketing Myopia," a *Harvard Business Review* article, "People don't want to buy a quarter-inch drill. They want a quarter-inch hole."

Too often, "branded content" emphasizes "brand" over "content." We focus too much on where the content fits in our marketing lead generation funnel, and not enough on how the content can support what is truly important to our customers' lives.

In content marketing, our customers don't want to read articles, watch YouTube videos or see infographics about quarter-inch drills. They want advice on how to make their homes nicer.

I first learned this lesson as a cartoonist. The cartoons that resonate the best are the ones where readers can see themselves in the drawing. The most successful cartoons reflect the world of the audience, not the cartoonist.

Content marketing is not about the brand. It's about the consumer. As marketers, it's important to remember to keep our brands in perspective. ■

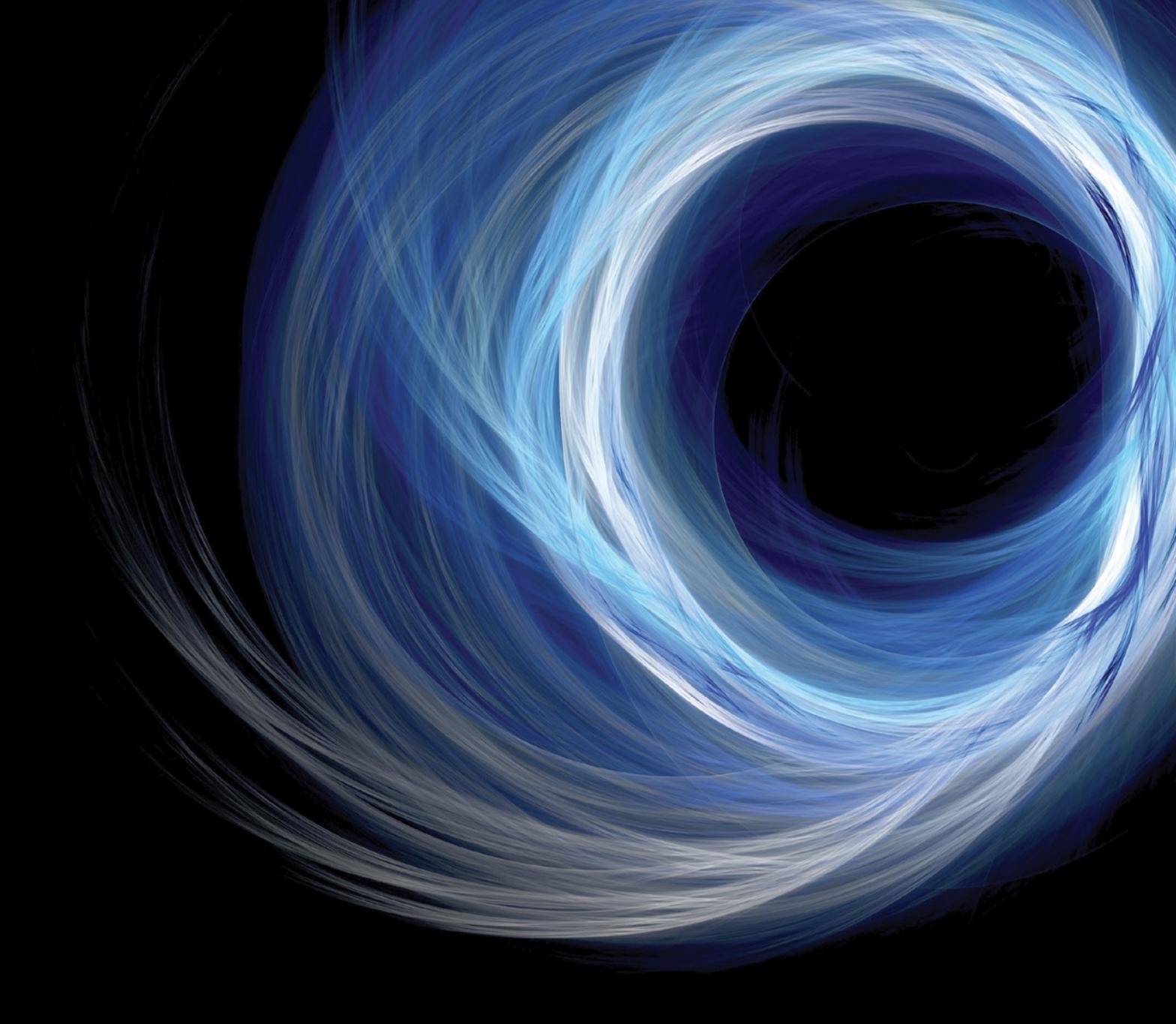


Tom Fishburne is Marketoonist and founder of Marketoon Studios. Find him @tomfishburne.



Still unsure? Read more about why your branded content should not be about your brand.

<http://bit.ly/YourBrandedContent>



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