

How To Launch A **KILLER CONTENT MARKETING** Campaign In A Few Months

Learn How Eloqua Uses Social Content (and an Edgy Style)
to Build a Following and Generate Revenue



► OPPORTUNITY

Eloqua, a leader in the marketing automation space, had a lot of things going for them: they had a good client base from ten years in business and a lot of credibility. But, as the marketing automation space exploded, they were feeling a lot of pressure to break through the fast-moving and noisy “Web 2.0” market that had up to this point largely eluded them.

As Joe Chernov, Director of Content, explains, “We weren’t going to be able to yell louder than [our competitors], and we didn’t want to create a cacophony. Instead, we wanted to zig when they zagged. While they were busy yelling, we wanted to show.”

While Eloqua was marketing to people who already expressed interest in a marketing automation solution, they also needed to connect with people who were largely unaware of the marketing automation category.

Specifically, they had two goals:

- Create a new category called [Revenue Performance Management \(RPM\)](#)
- Build momentum for a massive product launch, Eloqua10

► SOLUTION

There were two ways in which Eloqua wanted to gain awareness for both RPM and their product launch: provide relevant and helpful content and form real relationships.

Enter Joe Chernov. Originally hired as Eloqua’s director of communications and social media, Joe became Eloqua’s Director of Content in 2010 and got started developing a plan to generate awareness for RPM and Eloqua10. Working with the design firm JESS3, Joe brainstormed what would become Eloqua’s systematic and highly experimental content marketing plan. In addition, he ramped up Eloqua’s social media efforts so that he could really connect with marketers and have conversations.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

What They Do: Marketing Automation

Who They Help: Marketers

Industry: Marketing

Number of Employees: 270

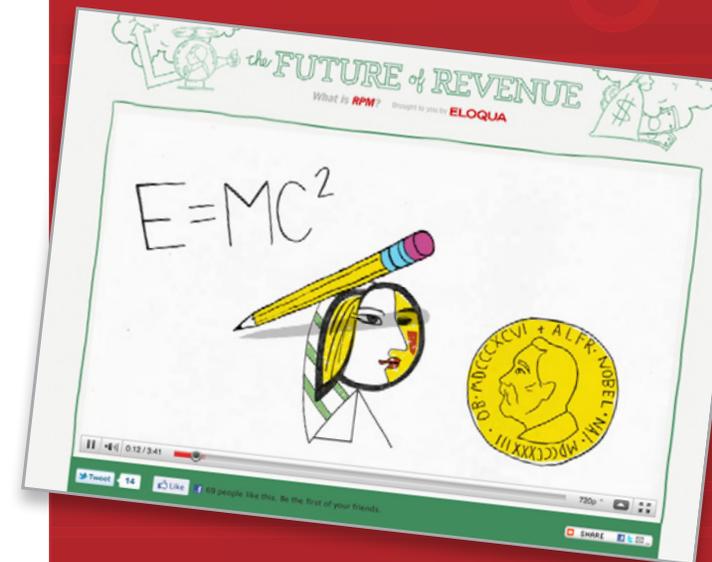
Size of Marketing Department: 20

Insource or Outsource Marketing?

Both: One person internally dedicated to this project, with outsourced help in PR, SEO and content creation

In Business Since: 2000

Headquarters: Vienna, VA



► INTEGRATION WITH OTHER MARKETING

Eloqua's content strategy is additive to everything they were already doing. To understand what steps Joe took, it's useful to understand how his plans fit in with Eloqua's overall marketing strategy.

As Joe explains, "The marketing department was running programs for the 10% of the market that was aware of marketing automation, and I was creating content for the 90% of the market that was unaware of it."

In short, Joe's job was to generate awareness and get someone to enter their sales funnel. Once there, the marketing/demand generation team would take over.

► STEPS TO SUCCESS

Eloqua's timeline was really aggressive. They started serious discussions about the need for this type of program in April 2010, started planning in early May, and launched in mid-June. Even more amazing? They did this with a small team that included one dedicated person from Eloqua (Joe) and a design agency. Joe reminded me, however, that others from Eloqua supported the initiative with enthusiasm.

Train and empower employees

One of Joe's initial goals was to empower Eloqua's employees to become more active with social media under Eloqua's brand. There was a paradox, as Joe explains: "I believe that social media marketers think that if they institute rules, people won't participate. But, the absence of rules scares people because they think they may get in trouble. So, institute rules but call them something different."

To that end, Eloqua instituted guidelines that Joe likens to guardrails: as long as employees don't go to the extreme, they should be within bounds.



Joe Chernov

Director of Content

Eloqua

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Find a designer or design firm you can trust

From the beginning, design played a critical role in Joe's plan. "We wanted a consistent identity that wasn't derivative of anyone else. There were some lessons we took, but we wanted our own mojo." As a writer, Joe knew his number one ally would be a great design firm. "If you don't have a designer, it's difficult to execute this well. It's a visual world. 140 characters really means short attention spans. The best nourishment is something to see, not read. It's why visuals matter so much now."

Joe hired JESS3, and he absolutely gushes about the impact they have had on the program. "I'm glad I hired JESS3. I'm glad I hired someone I trust because everyone is figuring this out together in real-time."

Set the content free

Because the goal of the content Joe was creating was to generate awareness, he wanted to remove registration requirements. David Meerman Scott had recently joined their advisory board. Joe believes he was key in justifying the approach to execs and getting them to think about the benefits of distributing content this way.

While Joe has a "set it free" mentality, he also realizes the value of collecting the right information at the right time. A series within their content library, The Grande Guides, requires registration (and, looking at the results – see below – this was a good approach.)

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The screenshot shows the Slideshare profile for 'Eloquentia'. The profile includes a bio, location (Vienna, VA), industry (Advertising / Marketing / PR), and website (blog.eloqua.com). It also lists statistics: 20 presentations, 6 documents, 13 followers, and 91 followers. The content library is divided into 'Presentations (20)' and 'Documents (6)'. The presentations section shows four items, including 'Eloqua Steve Woods content mark...', 'A Case for Content by Eloqua an...', and 'How to Conquer the World with M...'. The documents section shows four items, including 'Eloqua Social Media Guidelines', 'Eloqua Grande Guide to Sales En...', 'Eloqua Grande Guide to Lead Sco...', and 'Eloqua conversation age social...'. The page is decorated with hand-drawn doodles, including a smartphone, a laptop, a cloud, and a person.

Create a cross-platform narrative

Joe uses multiple platforms to publish his content. “Content marketing is the art of storytelling. I look at the pieces of content we publish as characters of that story. But, a collection of characters isn’t a story.”

Enter the social platforms, which Joe considers to be the “connective tissue – the place we tell the story based on the characters we create.” Eloqua has the following social platforms, which they have branded, to help promote RPM:

- Slideshare: [The Revenue Hub](#)
- Twitter: [The Revenue Stream](#)
- Blog: [It’s All About Revenue](#)

Decide on a distribution schedule for content

While most marketers stagger the release of key pieces of content, Joe tried a different approach. To kick off this program, Joe planned a back-to-back distribution of two pieces of content in which they had invested heavily. On day one they released the Content Grid, an infographic that is their framework for content marketing, and then three days later they released their Social Media Playbook.

“If I took a conservative approach where we trickled stuff out over time, we may have missed the opportunity to shake people into paying attention.”

Extend the shelf life of content

In addition to planning when to launch each piece of content, they also planned for how they would distribute the content on multiple platforms. Instead of announcing content on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. on the first day, Joe deliberately staggered this. “I control the distribution. Why do I want everything to happen on the same day? I want to keep the conversation humming along.”

PROCESS OVERVIEW

Who Was Involved?

- * Director of Content: Joe Chernov
- * CMO: Brian Kardon
- * PR Manager: Sheila Bohan
- * Design firm: JESS3

What Was The Time Commitment?

- * The idea was formed in April 2010, they planned throughout May and launched in June.
- * There is an ongoing commitment to develop content.

What Tools Did They Use?

- * Initially all “freeware” (TweetDeck, Twitterrific, Topsy); now they use FOCUS and Sysomos as well.

“Why do I want everything to happen on the same day? I want to keep the conversation humming along.”

Engage with your audience

As mentioned, Joe wanted to use his content marketing effort to build real relationships. When responding to what he needed in place to make this program successful, Joe said one thing: people. “You put out great content, but if you aren’t there to engage in a dialogue about it, people are going to stop talking about it really quickly.”

He engages in a dialogue wherever comments are made. To help him listen to the right conversations, they use Vocus, and their PR firm (SHIFT Communications) uses Sysomos.

Ask for feedback

In a simple yet brilliant move, Joe had his intern create a spreadsheet of all of the people who tweeted about Eloqua including what they said. When they update some of their content, Joe has plans to reach out to people who have commented via Twitter in the past to ask for feedback and give these people a first look at what they are planning.

Be human

Joe thinks that one of the smartest things they did was to realize that “people trust people more than they trust businesses.” To that end, much of the content has a byline from a person, not solely Eloqua.



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4 THINGS THEY’RE GLAD THEY DID

Found the right agency:

Joe attributes much of the success of the program to partnering with an agency that he could really trust and collaborate with. Trust they know their stuff, and then get out of the way so they can do their job.

Created guidelines:

Joe considers the realization that their staff needed more social media rules, not fewer, a light bulb moment.

Humanized their content:

As Joe explains, people trust—and buy—from people, not companies. Everything that they did was delivered/attributed to a person, not solely to Eloqua.

Prominently branded their content creation agency:

By shining the spotlight on JESS3 in all of their content, they had a natural partner to help with promotion.

► RESULTS ACHIEVED

There are a number of ways that Eloqua has found this program to be successful.

Increased employee engagement

20 new staffers became active on Twitter, and three staffers closed their personal blog and began writing for the Eloqua blog.

Increased traffic

- 12,000 new visitors to the blog
- 43% increase in traffic referred to Eloqua.com from blog
- 35,000 downloads/views of the Content Grid/Social Media Playbook
- 2,000 tweets
- 11 posts/tweets by AdAge 150

Increased customer engagement

- 21% increase in views of the demo (which is their primary indicator for purchase)
- 12% increase in pageviews on Eloqua.com
- 14% decreased bounce rate
- The day that Future of Revenue video was released was the single highest traffic day on Eloqua.com
- Grande Guides:
 - ▶ More than 2,000 registrations
 - ▶ More than 500 qualified leads – best campaign all quarter
- More than 25 people in active buying stage

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To that end, much of the content has a byline
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3 LESSONS LEARNED

Don't underestimate the importance of internal allies:

While Joe was constantly talking with Eloqua employees, he realizes it's vitally important to get the support of the right people inside the organization.

Mix fun with relevant:

Joe recalls that it was easy to get wrapped up in the “fun” part of the content, but he always needs to have an eye out for how it will support sales and help demand generation efforts.

Think about execution details:

Joe shared a story of how they thanked everyone who tweeted something from Eloqua by including their Twitter handles in a blog post. While it was a good idea to express gratitude, they didn't think about the implications of how over 1,000 twitter handles in a blog would alert spammers.

► WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM THE EXPERT

JESS3 is the design firm that helped Eloqua develop their content. Here is insight from Leslie Bradshaw, President, COO and co-founder on what you can learn from their experience with Eloqua.

Our collaboration with Eloqua has been so successful for five reasons:

A really smart client: Joe not only brings the hot fire in terms of concepts and ability to execute, but also raises our game and teaches us new things. That's an amazing one-two punch (you know, Joe is a boxer) that makes us that much more excited and involved in the projects we execute together.

Agile planning: Moving quickly and identifying trends has been a huge driver of our success together. Instead of over-planning months out, we set aside resources and focus when the opportunities present themselves. It is no accident that what we create strikes the right chord and finds its way into the blood stream of the Twitterverse and Blogosphere. It's timely. It's relevant. It's beautiful.

Genuine compassion and interest: Joe has been able to strike the right balance of compassion, interest, insight, restraint and appreciation we look for in a client partner in every circumstance and in every project. This has allowed our team to not just be extra comfortable with Joe as a client and point of contact, but also extra willing to do what it takes for Eloqua.

Letting us do our jobs: For us to be successful, we need the freedom to create on our terms. While we work very collaboratively with all of our clients -- and within branding constraints and with our client's ultimate goals top-of-mind -- we are our most successful when we are allowed to perform as surgeons and not as wind-up toys.

Being positioned alongside Eloqua: The old model of white labeling your agency or not having them as a part of the story has been blown out of the water with the Eloqua x JESS3 dual recognition model. We feel appreciated and we have the incentive for it to do well. The result: a very happy and invested JESS3 team. The reach of the coverage says the rest.



Leslie Bradshaw

President, COO

JESS3

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► A LOOK AT KEY CONTENT

- Content Grid
- Social Media Playbook
- Grande Guides
- Future of Revenue
- Social media guidelines
- Benchmark report



3 THINGS THAT FOSTERED SUCCESS

A mirror:

This couldn't have been done without the company being self-aware enough to realize that it had ground to make up in the area of social content.

Trust:

Joe explains, "I have a great boss (Brian Kardon, CMO) for a number of reasons, but foremost is that he trusts me. We had meetings in which I looked at him and said, 'I don't know, what do you think?' He would reply, 'Beats me, what's your gut tell you?' We realized that everyone is figuring this discipline out together, and to his credit, when paths diverged, Brian would say, 'Let's try your way.'"

Lateral support:

Once this content started to spread, once a new type of influencer began to notice Eloqua, Joe received a tremendous amount of support throughout the organization. Today there are more content creators than ever before at Eloqua. Self-expression is invigorating.

▶ HOW TO GET SUPPORT IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

While Joe and his team at Eloqua were fortunate to have had David Meerman Scott grease the skids for launching this initiative, not every marketer has that luxury. But what do marketers have? Joe's take: "Well, to begin they have this case study. Content marketing can make a real difference to real businesses. It's not, as my CEO Joe Payne likes to say, 'measurement by anecdote.' Marketers can now take this case study to their management and apply it to their business. This is the era of democratized success."



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