



# PREDICTIONS

# ON CONTENT MARKETING

# IN 2016



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While I myself am ever the optimist, my personal content marketing predictions for 2016 are a bit of a mixed bag:

1. While we will see shining examples of content marketing magic in action, the sheer majority of brands will continue to crash and burn with their content creation and distribution efforts. Simply put, most brands resist telling a truly differentiated story, and even those that do tell one aren't consistent or patient enough to build loyal audiences over time.
2. While some media companies (like *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*) will find their footing with sponsored content/native advertising, a few other enterprise media brands will be decimated by their lack of control over native — which will kill their credibility (a deficit from which they will never fully recover).
3. 2016 will finally be the year in which large brands will consider purchasing media platforms, and brands will begin to set up the infrastructure to make these purchases possible. This will start in the B2B arena, where large manufacturers (like GE) will purchase niche content sites that already have loyal audiences (buy vs. build). This momentum will continue into 2017, when Apple will buy Disney, bringing together Steve Jobs' two greatest creations (Apple and Pixar), at last.



**JOE PULIZZI**

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Founder

Content Marketing Institute



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2016 will be the year when the worlds of product-as-content and content-as-product collide. The hottest, most positive trend will be enterprises reorganizing their brand, product, marketing, sales, and customer service teams around innovation and customer experience. The negative will be the new and developing enterprise-wide battle over which department should “own” the content-driven customer experience.



**ROBERT ROSE**

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Chief Strategy Officer

Content Marketing Institute



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In 2016, the content part of “content marketing” will take front and center. Isn’t it bizarre how, for so long, our industry has been mum about how to produce great content? We love to say, “The secret of great marketing is great content,” but rather than help each other create better, we spend all our time agonizing over distribution, tech, and measurement — all important focal points, but they are all well covered.

Over the next year, content marketers will focus, not only on how to reach people, but also on how to resonate with them. And in mature niches, teams with top producers on staff or at their disposal will win out. Tech and tactics are commodities, but creative talent is a rare and precious resource.

As media like podcasting and interactive experiences come to the fore, the creative table stakes will get pushed even higher. These, and other emerging forms of content, can’t be gamed, as the audience’s already-high BS detectors shoot through the roof when they detect poor quality in audio, video, apps, and more. The major trend we’ll watch unfold as a result will be tech players enabling creators.

Yes, today is a great day to be a marketer; but tomorrow will be the very best of times to be a creator.



**JAY ACUNZO**

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VP, Platform & Content  
NextView Ventures



I predict the emergence of “TweetRank.” As sign-up growth slows, Twitter will boost its stock price by making ads more prominent. That means making some tweets less prominent. To decide which tweets get which treatment, there will be an algorithm.

Expect to start paying for visibility on Twitter. For many brands, it will be worth it.



**ANDY CRESTODINA**

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I predict that vision will be more important than ever for content. To make an impact through content, brand marketers will need to go big. By big, I don't mean high volume. I mean ambitious. I mean unique. I mean impactful. And that's impossible to achieve without a distinct and meaningful vision.



**COLLEEN JONES**

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CEO

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Brand marketers will continue to struggle to produce and deliver consistent content to their target audiences. While 2016 will see increased interest in advanced information-management strategies (like adopting intelligent content), most brand marketers will continue to use outdated approaches (like hand-crafting deliverables) — until the weight of their efforts exceeds their capacity.



**SCOTT ABEL**

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CEO & Chief Wrangler

The Content Wrangler, Inc.



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All signs point to video. Whether it's Facebook Live, video on Twitter, Periscope, Blab, Instagram, Vine, or the old standby YouTube, 2016 will be the year when video becomes a primary content marketing consideration for all brands — even B2B. This is partially because the customer appetite for video (even low-res, real-time video) is insatiable, and partially because video is the most efficient way to atomize content marketing: If you have video, you have audio. If you have video, you have text (via transcription). If you have video, you have photos. But it doesn't work the other way around. In 2016, video will take its rightful place as the petri dish of great content marketing.



**JAY BAER**

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President, Convince & Convert

Author of *Hug Your Haters*



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In 2016, we will see less importance placed on individual thought leaders, and much more importance placed on brand leaders—teams of marketers who align their message across campaigns, audiences, buyer journeys, functions, and business units. Their coordinated content will become known for its consistent voice and tone, targeted to audiences that are clearly defined and for whom it will be most relevant. Like a great sports franchise, the individual team members will always emphasize the team first when asked about their success. A few of these brand leaders will emerge in each industry and will so utterly dominate their respective areas that 2017 will be about their competitors trying to catch up.



**GREG MARLIN**

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Founder & CEO  
Marketing.AI



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Show me a 30-minute conversation between B2B marketing leaders, and I'll show you a dozen mentions of "account-based marketing (ABM)." I'll resist the temptation to say, "Account-based marketing is the new content marketing," but truth is, it's the topic on everyone's tongue.

My belief is that ABM and content aren't mutually exclusive. In fact, like many other marketing disciplines, ABM requires content. It just requires a different mindset and different metrics attached to that content. Mass appeal gives way to hyper-personalized; broadcasting gives way to narrow distribution. In other words, in 2016, you'll see more account-level content — provided, of course, you are on the target account distribution list.



**JOE CHERNOV**

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VP of Marketing  
InsightSquared



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Too much content marketing is created on a hunch and doesn't perform that well.

2016 will be the year marketers start to use data and a connection with leads and revenue to develop their strategy, to create better content, and to more smartly distribute it.

Wild prediction: Yahoo will get bought by a media company.



**PAWAN DESHPANDE**

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CEO

Curata



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Too many marketers are creating content on an island, failing to optimize its impact due to a lack of collaboration across the organization.

2016 will mark the beginning of the collapse of barriers between marketing functions such as content marketing, social media teams, product marketing, marketing operations, and digital marketing teams.



**MICHAEL GERARD**

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CMO

Curata



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In 2016, B2B marketers will apply more focus to flow. Instead of one-off campaigns, they'll start to think about the experience they can create across the entirety of the buying process — what I call the continuum. They'll also start to explore the dynamics of buying committees to understand the flow amongst those involved. But flow applies internally, as well. Rather than silos that create fragmented engagement across channels for buyers, marketers need to start connecting teams within the company to create a fluency of experience that helps buying committees eliminate the conflict that so commonly derails the decision to buy.



## ARDATH ALBEE

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Author of *Digital Relevance*



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In 2016, the continued consolidation/integration of content marketing tools will allow marketers to create, manage, and distribute content all in one system. However, as things become more template-based, it will drastically reduce creativity, which will lead to a creative revolt (most likely led by Doug Kessler).



**MIKE MYERS**

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For 2016, I predict that the place where content marketing sits within a company will change. Today, many companies are duplicating their content efforts amongst various teams. There are “content marketers” in product marketing, field marketing, sales, demand generation, and public relations. I placed “content marketers” in quotations because even though many don’t have that title, they are doing that job. This leads to low ROI and, even worse, customer confusion. In order for content marketing to be successful, companies will need to end their content marketing silos and create a cohesive content marketing machine.

In other words: In 2016, the silos of content marketing will end, and a new, more unified team model will begin.



**AMY HIGGINS**

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Director of Content

Deem



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I think brand marketers will be shifting into high gear with their employee advocacy programs. Even those brands that arrived late to the content marketing party are awake to the fact that employees represent the biggest potential to reach their target audience.

More brands are investing aggressively in awareness, training, and governance to empower their employees to become ambassadors for their brands through content production, content sharing, and social media engagement.

While this is not a new approach to content marketing, it is (in my opinion) the fastest-growing aspect of content marketing.



**BERNIE BORGES**

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CEO, Find and Convert

Producer, Social Business Engine



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1. Businesses will hire more (and more senior-level) executives to oversee content, and will give those people purview over owned and earned media. Content is not a channel, and it can't be siloed in the way social media, communications, media, search, or email can exist in relative isolation.

2. The content software stack will continue to evolve. Brands will be able to invest in more end-to-end content solutions, rather than multiple point solutions, which will streamline workflow and simplify investment decisions.



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Live-casting will rival podcasting.

The advent of new live-casting technology in 2015 (Periscope, Blab, and Meerkat) will lead to a huge upsurge in live broadcasting in 2016, which will surpass the growth of podcasting. The ease of adoption and consumption with live-casting will usher in a new era of personalities and programming that was previously impossible.



**MICHAEL STELZNER**

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CEO & Founder

Social Media Examiner



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Everyone is inundated with content, so 2016 will be the year of standing out. There will be more creative campaigns. Companies will get smarter about creation. They will work with influencers and media outlets to distribute their content. And they will finally be able to show a real return on investment as it relates to content marketing.



**GINI DIETRICH**

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CEO

Arment Dietrich



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As professional sports broadcast ratings continue to increase, viewers will take this broadcast consumption behavior to viewing brand marketing content. As a result, brand marketers will leverage this behavior and activate audiences via live-streaming technologies. Live, branded broadcast will be the best conversion tool in 2016.



**JUNTAE DeLANE**

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Principal

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Marketers will focus on the broader experience they are offering their audience, instead of looking at one-off pieces of content or even disconnected collections of content. This will require brands to prioritize things such as digital user experience, metadata, and taxonomies (so related content is more easily surfaced), and tone and brand guidelines (so the experience is consistent).



**MICHELE LINN**

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VP of Content

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Sometime in 2016, it's likely that Google will publicly make available its native advertising solution (currently in private beta). It will directly compete with content recommendation engines like Taboola, Outbrain, etc. Additionally, it will connect brands directly with blogs and publications for turnkey sponsored content publishing at scale, like NewsLauncher.



**CHAD POLLITT**

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VP of Audience & Co-Founder

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The focus will be shifting from simply creating “more” content to serving the “right” content — especially personalized content. We have the ability to be — and users now expect — personalized and hyper-relevant content delivered instantly to them wherever they are engaging — social, email, or any channel, for that matter. There is increased pressure to constantly deliver that seamless, engaging experience, and more brands will be stepping up to deliver exactly that.



**AMANDA TODOROVICH**

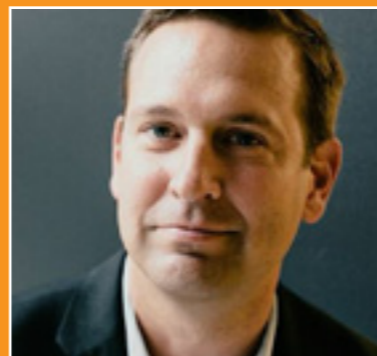
@amandatodo

Content Marketing Director  
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I predict a massive correction in advertising budgets that will drive an increase in content marketing. This will require us to get pretty darn good at showing content marketing ROI. We'll also see more personalization, visual content, and brand-produced entertaining content. Could 2016 be the year of brands finding a personality and sense of humor?



**MICHAEL BRENNER**

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CEO, Marketing Insider Group

Head of Strategy, NewsCred



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2016 is going to be the year of the brand newsroom. While we've seen a few big brands adopt this model already, small and medium businesses will begin to see the benefit of creating their own newsrooms. It's also likely these brand newsrooms will be staffed by traditional journalists. As marketers realize publishing can be a punishing discipline, they'll see the wisdom of hiring people who know how to deliver great stories in a timely fashion. The beauty of this is everyone wins: Brands of all sizes produce consistent, high-quality content at an affordable price, while journalists find job security and attractive compensation packages.



**SARAH MITCHELL**

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Director of Content Strategy

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Content Marketing will finally hit the mainstream. I base this on seeing the type and knowledge level of the people attending our content marketing workshops in the U.S. The students are much further along, compared to just a couple years ago, when everyone in our classes were wide-eyed neophytes.



**ARNIE KUENN**

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Consumers will reach digital overload, and will look to digest their content offline — in the form of magazines, books, or other means of “disconnecting” while still becoming more educated and informed. Because of this, brands will cut their social presence by focusing on creating only the best content that will be distributed on only their most important channels, so that they can efficiently and effectively reach their audiences in the dwindling time they spend online. (And then brands will be publishing more books and magazines!)



**CATHY MCPHILLIPS**

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Marketing Director

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I think the biggest trend will be the exploration of newer platforms. I was recently working with a Fortune 100 brand that was finding it more and more difficult to cut through the information density of Facebook. I asked if they had considered Instagram. No. Slideshare? No. This diversification strategy seems so intuitive, but it's still a big opportunity for brands.



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Brand marketers will look to keep costs under control, repurpose more content, and create efficiencies in critical processes. Based on the company's people, process, and technology maturity level, they will look to become more relevant and customer-centric.

The problem is, the best results in the world are a function of time. To benefit from the effects of compounding, duration is important, along with a deep understanding of how success in a field actually works. This means systems over goals, keeping an eye on the emergence of patterns meaningful to the business, and managing energy.



**VALERIA MALTONI**

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Brands will get fatter. See, today they're spreading themselves too thin. You can't be everywhere and everything to everybody. This truth will sink in, and brands interested in reach and engagement will uncover the channels where they can actually accomplish these things and focus on them.



**BARRY FELDMAN**

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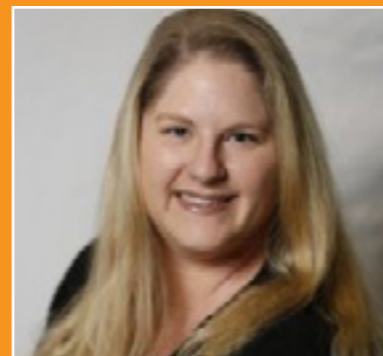
Founder

Feldman Creative



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In 2016, we will start to see content marketing skills — both creation of new ideas and curation of existing ideas — as a requirement for frontline sales roles in large enterprises, as frontline sales teams move from selling products and services to helping prospects and customers solve their business problems. Content marketing will contribute to salespeople being seen as trusted advisers.



## ALANA FISHER-CHEJOSKI

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After growing interest for five years, 2016 will be the year newsjacking goes mainstream. For those who don't yet use the strategy, newsjacking is the art and science of injecting your ideas into a breaking news story to generate tons of media coverage, get sales leads, and grow business.



## DAVID MEERMAN SCOTT

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Sales & Marketing Strategist

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The best marketers will ensure their content stands out and encourages their audience members to interact, contribute their voices, and share those contributions with their own networks. Brand marketers in 2016 will leverage their customers, prospects, partners, and fans more effectively than ever to accelerate the amplification, impact, and ROI of their content.



**MATT HEINZ**

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President

Heinz Marketing Inc.



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I believe brand marketers will create content that is more informed by their buyers' needs. There will be a turning of the tide from vendor-focused content to content that is informed by customer insights. This will extend to the distribution channels, as organizations will distribute content based on the preferences of their customers.



**CARLOS HIDALGO**

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This is not a prediction; rather, it's more a direction for marketers to ponder in 2016: Content marketers need to take on a more integrated approach to address content requirements and promotion in paid, owned, and earned media. It's important to understand your company's (or clients') customized content marketing campaigns for paid media channels. Having a holistic view is essential to guide content planning, content atomization, and customization for different channels.



## PAM DIDNER

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Author of *Global Content Marketing  
Relentless Pursuit*



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Much of the “shiny object” effect of content marketing will wear off in 2016, making way for the real work to begin for companies that invest strategically.

Here are a few trends worth watching:

- The market will become even more saturated with content marketing platforms and technologies. Let's call it #martechshock.
- More brands will evolve — from working with influencers to helping their community become more influential — through content.
- Companies will continue to create content hubs and wonder how they will ever keep up with the demands of being brand publishers.
- Content marketers who go big on visual and interactive will really break away from the pack.
- Optimized, socialized, and engaging content for mobile and apps will become even MORE important.
- Predictive analytics technologies to research, suggest, and optimize topics will flourish.
- Marketers will make content more collaborative and scalable by increasing co-creation amongst employees, customers, industry influencers, and their social communities.



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As narrowcasting becomes more sophisticated, the marriage between content and online advertising will start to make more sense to brand marketers. As such, brand marketers will spend more on creating content that can be leveraged for native ads and retargeting. Brands that do this well will be strategic and focused on content that fills a void for consumers, rather than content that simply fills the webiverse.



**CAS McCULLOUGH**

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Founder

Brilliant Content



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Brands are going to focus much more on distributing and creating content outside of their walled gardens in 2016 and beyond. More and more brands will publish real content in places like Facebook Notes, LinkedIn, Medium, and even as “contributors” (non-paid placement), and will use their own destinations (websites, blogs, etc.) as the portfolio for this content, instead of the hub. With this, brands will also spend additional dollars to promote, boost, and get traction for this content that lives off-site, as a way to push the content into further areas.



**MITCH JOEL**

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President  
Mirum



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2016 will be the year that content marketing yields actionable results that contribute in a measurable way to achieving company goals. As such, content marketing will become more integrated into marketing and business activity as a whole.

This will happen as a result of the following 3 key activities:

- Companies will craft and distribute a documented content strategy across the organization. As a result, content marketing will be associated with measurable results, and everyone will get on the same page.
- Marketing and sales teams will be integrated. This will ensure that marketing generates marketing qualified leads (MQLs) that sales can close. It will also eliminate redundant activity, freeing funds for other marketing objectives.
- Businesses will develop and improve their company blog to support content marketing goals. Through increased focus, blogs will become the killer content format, generating leads and sales.



**HEIDI COHEN**

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Chief Content Officer

Actionable Marketing Guide



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Enterprises will see accelerated collaboration among customer platform, content marketing, and organizational change management investments.

Formerly siloed initiatives will merge, as businesses increasingly realize that detailed requirements, full ROI, and customer life-cycle management coherency cannot be achieved if content engagement, platform, and organizational change management remain balkanized and are not strategically aligned upstream as one three-pronged iterative vision that is piloted and then scaled.

This situation will put upward pressure on the need for strategists that hybridize content, data, and platform architecture capabilities at strategic and tactical inception. Enterprises will increasingly internalize strategic and architectural roles. “Marketing cloud” type vendors will finally see greater interoperable sophistication across the components of their offerings. This prediction spans 2.5 years.



# CARLOS ABLER

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Global eTransformation

3M



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Paid content amplification will continue to increase as brands realize that it is the key to growing both paid AND organic reach. As a result, the gap between the “haves” (those who pay for content amplification on Facebook and other platforms) and the “have-nots” (those who don’t) will increase. Paid amplifiers will see increases in organic reach, and others will see decreases, which may result in those brands de-emphasizing or even abandoning a content strategy.



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Offline will become the new online. With 93% of retail sales taking place in stores, content marketers will awaken to the fact that mobile consumers are, in fact, on the move. This makes brick-and-mortar locations incredibly valuable points of consumer interaction. Those that can match the best content with consumer proximity via smartphones stand to build direct audiences, brand loyalty, and sales faster and better than the competition.



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CMO

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## About Content Marketing Institute

Content Marketing Institute is the leading global content marketing education and training organization, teaching enterprise brands how to attract and retain customers through compelling, multichannel storytelling. CMI's **Content Marketing World** event, the world's largest content marketing-focused event, is held every September in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, and the **Intelligent Content Conference** event is held every spring. CMI publishes the bimonthly *Chief Content Officer* magazine, and provides strategic consulting and content marketing research for some of the best-known brands in the world. CMI is a 2012-2015 Inc. 500/5000 company. Watch this [video](#) to learn more about CMI.

## About Marketing.AI

**Marketing.AI** is content marketing software that aligns strategy with execution while tracking results, all in one place. What makes us different is that our software adapts to how your team works and not the other way around.

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