



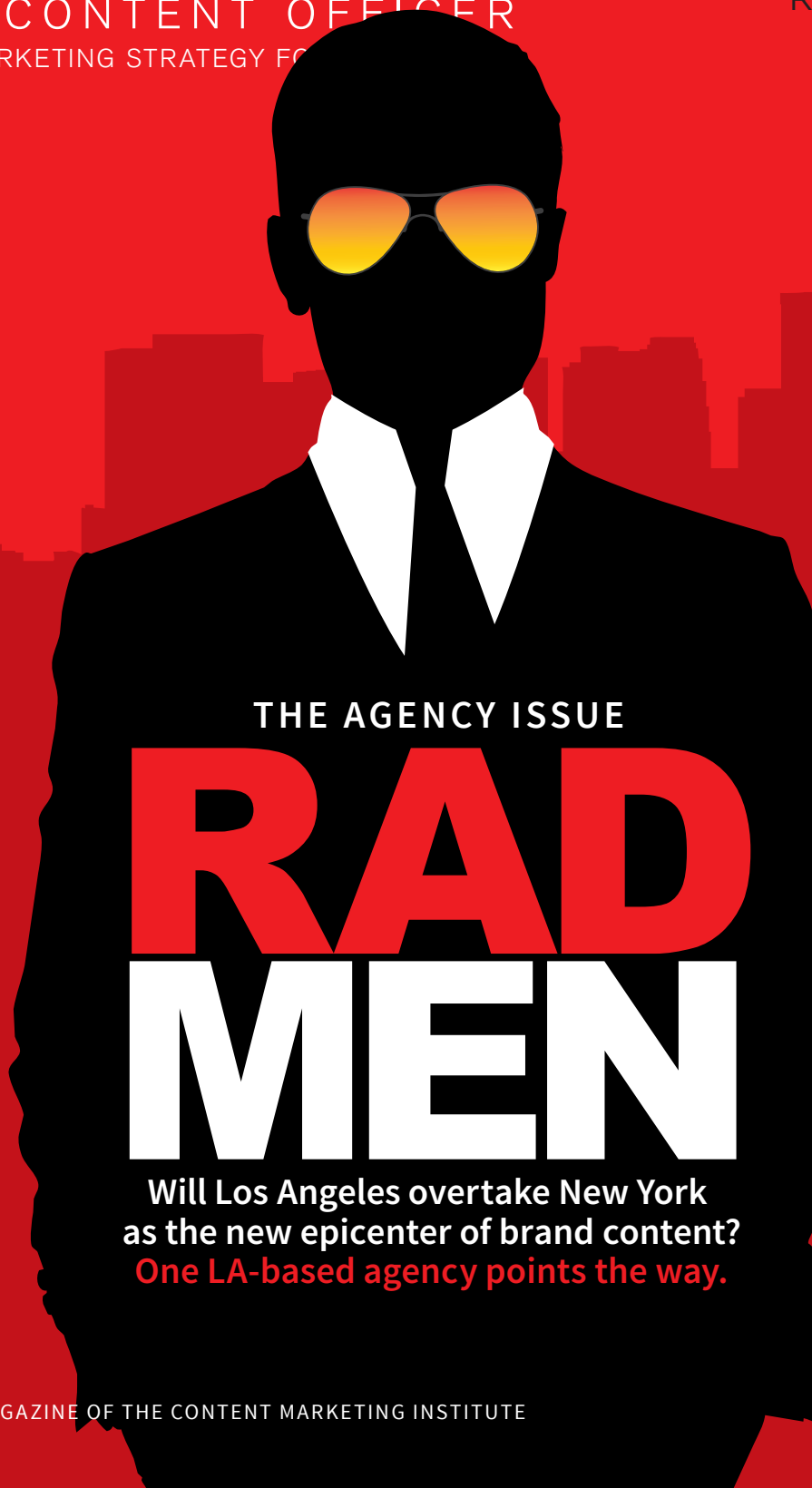
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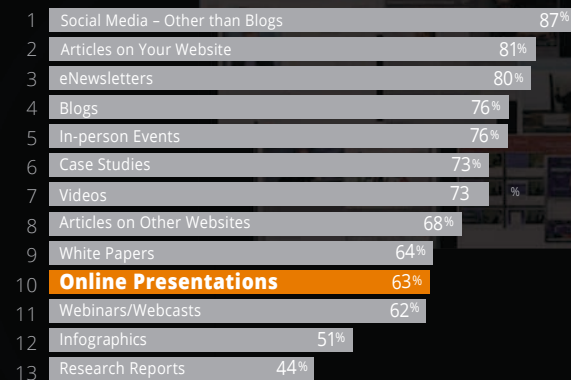
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Content Without Strategy Is Just Stuff

If you wander around marketing blogs long enough, you'll see this comment in multiple places from acclaimed Twitter storyteller Arjun Basu: Content without strategy is just stuff.

The statement reminds me of George Carlin's famous comedy bit about stuff. If you haven't seen it, it's worth a look. The basic gist is this: Humans accumulate more and more stuff to put in more and more places. In Carlin's words, "A house is where we put our stuff while we go out and get more stuff."

Companies behave the same way.

When the web came along, we took all our product and service stuff and filled all the little pockets of our website. The thought was, the more stuff we can put on the web, the more chance we have to sell the stuff we have.

Before long there were even more places to put our corporate stuff. Blogs let us write about our awesome stuff. YouTube helped us create movies about our stuff. Facebook allowed us to chit-chat about our stuff, and gave us hope others would comment on our stuff, and even share our stuff with other people who wanted to buy our stuff.

Slowly but surely we realized customers largely didn't want our self-promotional, self-centered stuff, and didn't feel like sharing our stuff with others.

Eventually we found a better way: Content stuff.

We started to create stuff that was interesting to our customers. We stopped talking our stuff and started

to talk about our customers' stuff, or at least stuff that interested our customers.

This worked great. Customers began paying attention to our

need to ensure our content elevates our customers' stuff (i.e. their need for information or entertainment) and corporate stuff (i.e. our need to grow revenues). We must pull

The clear majority of companies has no documented strategy for why they are creating all that content.

content stuff. Some even started to share our content stuff. Page views shot up and social shares increased. It worked so well we were able to increase our marketing budgets and hire more people to create even more stuff.

But the honeymoon soon ended. People loved our content, but it wasn't helping us sell corporate stuff. Our senior marketers questioned why we're creating all this content stuff to no good end.

Enter Strategy

Content without strategy is just stuff. It's clutter in need of a purpose. There are two reasons why most brands are wasting their time: 1) creating corporate stuff that doesn't resonate with customers means little-to-no activity, and 2) creating content stuff without a real strategy creates frenetic activity with no purpose.

Here's what we know: nine in 10 companies budget for and create content stuff. At the same time, the clear majority of those companies has no documented strategy for why they are creating all that content stuff.

For content marketing to work, we

away from creating, publishing and sharing for the sake of the stuff, and focus on how our content supports our strategy and performs.

(And just possibly, you may need to create a little less stuff.)



Joe Pulizzi

Founder

Content Marketing Institute

@JoePulizzi



Download our
*Buyer's Guide to
Content Discovery and
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<http://bit.ly/NativeAdv>





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@JoePulizzi

Aaaaw Yissss: Kevin Spacey is headlining Content Marketing World this September. Who's pumped? Me. #CMWorld



THE
CONTENT
AGENCY
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COVER STORY/SPECIAL SECTION

26 Meet Los Angeles-based CAA: The brains behind the Chipotle Scarecrow.

32 Sponsored What? Why the FTC's recent murmuring about native ads is plain wrong.

36 A list of top content agencies across the globe.

12

DO IT WITH FEELING

Inspirational videos from the non-profit world.

8

SPOTTING SOCIAL MEDIA TALENT

What to look for (and run from).

42

BUILD YOUR DEMAND GEN STRATEGY

A killer simple step-by-step guide.



16

MOBILE HIP

A roundup of cool ideas from brand-sponsored apps.

CCO /// IN EVERY ISSUE

Tech Tools	10	Idea Garage.....	44
Tactician.....	20	Marketoologist.....	46
Expert Insight	39		

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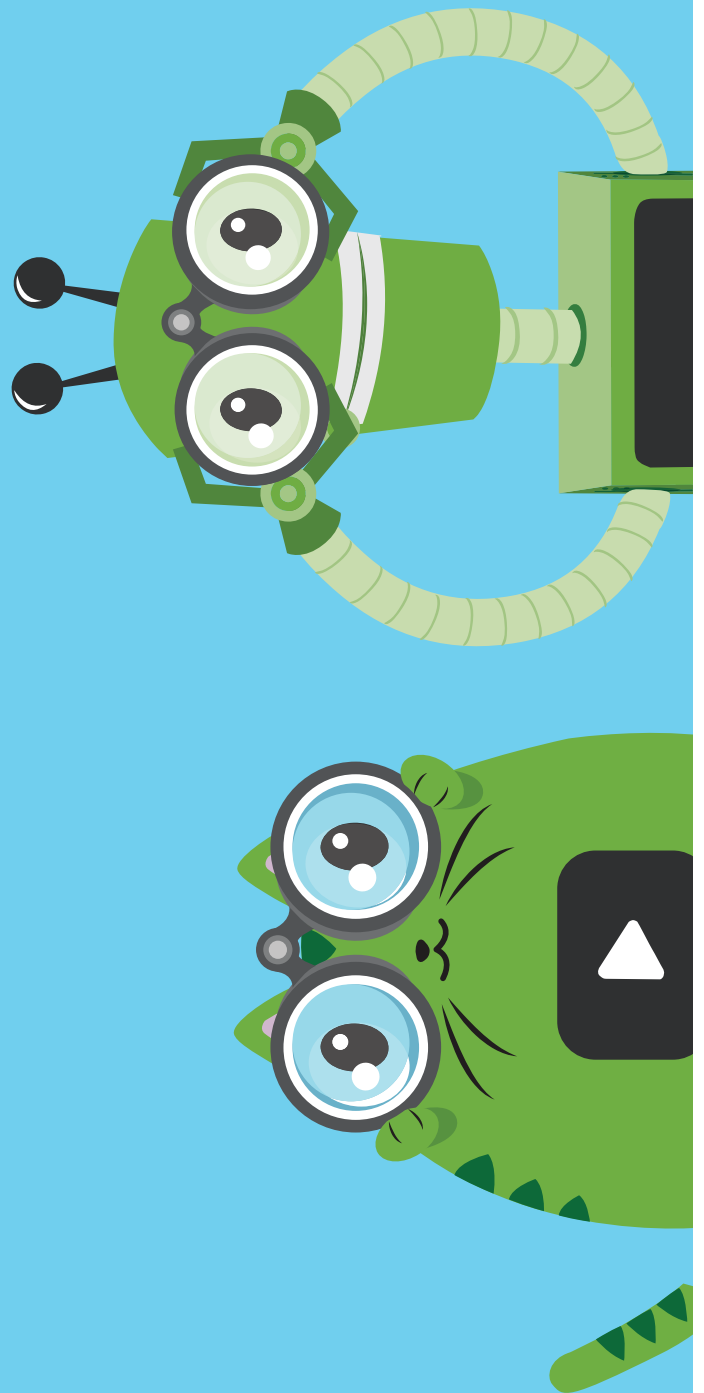
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A Social Media Talent Spotters Guide

What to look for (and run from) in your next hire.

By Jonathan Crossfield

How many social media experts does it take to change a light bulb?

Never mind. We'll come back to that. But what do we mean by the term "social media expert"?

"You're a master of Farmville, know the best filters for sunset photos on Instagram and Stephen Fry once replied to you on Twitter ... So why not become a social media expert? All you need is a simple WordPress blog, an account in each of the major networks and HootSuite installed on your laptop, and you too could be charging high hourly fees for generic advice gleaned from that morning's Social Media Examiner newsletter."

Chris Brogan probably has a few more digital tools in his kit. But hey, he's got a book deal, so he can afford to get all 'enterprise-grade' with his digital sizzle. Anyway, chances are your entry-level clients don't even know who Brogan is, so dazzle them with the scheduling feature in TweetDeck instead."

Maybe not.

These days, it appears almost anyone can declare him or herself a social media expert. Seems like every third Twitter profile claims to be some kind of consultant, entrepreneur or (shudder) social media guru. But falling for the self-promoting hype can be costly to your campaign and your business.

There is a massive difference between the ability to do something and a real talent for doing something well; yet often the two are confused. How do you spot true social media talent?

Distinguishing Features

Good social media marketers are multi-taskers, able to dip in and out of their networks throughout even the busiest of days. They don't need to be reminded to check the various channels because it's instinct. You'd have a harder time trying to stop these people from updating, replying and interacting in real time.

Social media is a relaxed medium, so the best practitioners often have a sense of humor and a

casual style that's more "backyard barbecue" than "bank manager's letter." It can take great skill to balance professionalism with personality.

For that reason, style and tone of voice are extremely important. Do they have wit? Are they aware of topical events, both relevant and trivial, so they can join in the banter without ever sounding uninformed or disconnected from the real world? Can they convey complex issues in surprisingly simple ways to a broad audience? Are they respectful, but with a twinkle in the eye and the occasional bit of irreverence?

Great style also needs to be partnered with a mature head for business. That doesn't mean your social media team also has to be adept in accounts and spreadsheets, but team members do need to understand the relationship between what happens online and the interests of the business.

This balancing act can require exceptional skills of diplomacy, such as assuaging customer issues and moderating hot-headed forum disputes—all the while keeping the various internal stakeholders satisfied. This is why some of the best social media marketers are almost bilingual. They can communicate with the brand's audience on the audience's terms, and can equally liaise with internal departments and upper management in the business language they expect, framed by corporate priorities.

And finally, the basics have to be there. Style and diplomacy don't mean much if poor spelling and grammar detract from the message. Your social media team represents the brand. Standards are still important. They have to be able to write, and write well.

Good social media talent is hard to define in any finite way, but you know it when you see it because people respond. Because you respond.

But does a talent for social media make someone an expert?

The myth of the social media expert

Personally, I hate the term “social media expert” because it implies an authority over something that refuses to stand still. And that’s just silly.

Social media marketing is like eating soup with a fork. With practice, and the right chunky soup, you might get more in your mouth than on your shirt. But you’ll never gain total supremacy (or should that be soup-remacy?) over your meal. It just moves too fast.

This is why the best social media marketers focus far more on content, messaging and strategy than they do on technical details and gimmicks. Otherwise, every time Facebook updated its algorithm or LinkedIn changed its functionality, it would be like having your experience ripped up to start again.

The best practitioners understand their limitations and are continually learning, exploring and experimenting as the social media and technology landscape constantly evolves around them.

So, back to the question I asked at the very beginning. How many social media experts does it take to change a light bulb?

Your social media team represents the brand. Standards are still important. They have to be able to write, and write well.

.....

Answer: Three. One to provide an overly detailed running commentary of the incident (#LightbulbOutage), one to crowdsource an electrician to actually change the bulb, and one to itemize and justify their high fee for doing very little to solve the problem.



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



Are you a social media algorithm chaser?
<http://bit.ly/AlgorithmChasers>

CHATTER

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU LOOK FOR IN SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS? WHAT ARE RED FLAGS?



ERIKA MADDEN
@OlyviaMedia

Best qualities: transparency, writing/grammar skills, compassion and prudence. Biggest red flag: arrogance. It comes across in all their online interactions.



DAVID KING
@DavidKing

Red Flag: Someone who is too tech and statistics-oriented, or anyone who doesn’t strive to connect with the human behind the profile (marketing insight and empathy). Super Red Flag: Someone who moonlights as a troll. ;-)



ALYSSA MORRISEY
@AlyssaMorrisey

A lot of social media managers are hired because they use social media heavily in their personal lives. A good employee should demonstrate knowledge of how to apply social media strategy to business.



JACKIE BEBENROTH
@MuseContentGrp

The most compelling social media accounts are penned by those who not only know what to say, but also know how to say it in a way that expresses the personality of the brand.

TECH TOOLS

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

What is your favorite video platform or tool?



Vimeo

My favorite video platform, hands-down, is Vimeo. At Shutterstock we use Vimeo to host a majority of the things we create (like this fun reel of super slow-motion clips, shot on Phantom: <https://vimeo.com/78774141>). I love the simplicity of the interface and the wide range of embedding options.

Submitted by **Derick Rhodes** @madethesethings



Adobe Creative Suite Production Premium

I use the Adobe suite because it has all of the tools I need to get a project complete: graphics editing (Photoshop), video editing (Premiere), motion and special effects (After Effects) and audio production and finishing (Audition). You can round trip flawlessly. I can send a video from

Premiere into After Effects to do special fix and when it's done the changes are right on my editing timeline. Or I send an audio file to Audition for editing right from my editing timeline. It's perfect for creating quality videos necessary for the B2B audience.

Submitted by **Robyn Johnson** @RobynJohnson87



Wistia

We make compelling, interesting and fun videos that help explain products and tell stories. Wistia is a video host for

businesses. There are no ads or "related videos," which is important for businesses. One favorite feature is the analytics. With their "heatmaps," you can see who is watching your video, how long they are engaged, what parts they skip over, and what parts they rewind and watch again.

Submitted by **Danny DiGiovani** @lessfilms



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.

Canon 7D Splice

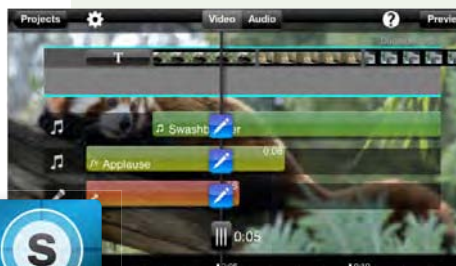
In terms of camera hardware, we use and prefer the Canon 7D to shoot video because it's small, portable and the quality is professional. For editing software, we use Final Cut Pro and Adobe Premiere, as well as Avid. We prefer Premiere



because of its ease of use. We're able to splice together audio and video to publish in a manner of minutes. If I had to choose an iPhone app for video marketing, I'd recommend Splice because you can produce and edit video

that looks as if it was put together using desktop software but it's still simple to use.

Submitted by **Dee Wong** @iamnerdee



YouTube

YouTube is an essential tool if you are creating video for public consumption because it's the go-to site where people look for content and it's the second most popular search engine behind Google, which also owns YouTube. It's also mobile friendly, easily shareable and provides decent analytics. It's also becoming an alternative "channel" to television so it's a fairly efficient way to position yourself for a presence in the living room.

Submitted by **David Erickson** @derickson



Brightcove

The user experience at Cars.com has improved significantly since we implemented Brightcove's Video Cloud online video platform. Our average engagement time for users watching editorial video content went from roughly 30 seconds to more than six minutes, which is much more attractive to our prospective partners.

Submitted by **Patrick Olsen** @PatrickOlsen



Final Cut Pro , MPEG Streamclip , Episode, Handbrake

As a full-service production company, Guggenheim Productions has a unique perspective on video equipment and tools. We edit with Final Cut Pro because of its versatility and use software like MPEG Streamclip, Episode and Handbrake for compressing files to meet our clients' varied needs.

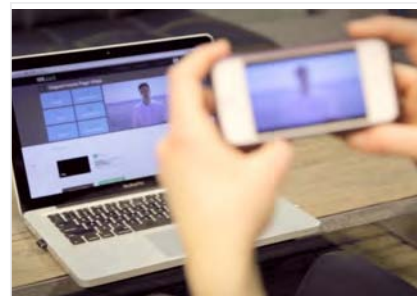
Submitted by **John Matson** @guggenheimvideo



KnowledgeVision

Our sales executive was trying to get into an account for six months or more. Finally he put a presentation together to introduce himself and a relevant case study ... all through video. He sent it at 6 in the evening and got a response by 8 the next morning. KnowledgeVision is a platform where you can engage people by showing your face. When somebody clicks on the link, they actually get a person.

Submitted by **Stephanie Grant** / Abel Womack



Vidyard

We absolutely love that Vidyard engagement data is connected to a viewer's activity log in Marketo. Because of this,

we're able to score viewers based on which videos they watch and how long they watch them for.

Submitted by **Bhaji Illuminati** @itsbhaji



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

Telling High-Emotion Stories

If nonprofits want their short films to change the world, they need to be seen. Let's look at three successful cause-driven videos, and the distribution strategies behind them.

By Natasha Deganello Giraudie



In theory, videos should be one of a nonprofit marketer's most powerful tools. No content on the web today has the same viral potential of video, and few forms of content can match it for immediacy. In the span of a few minutes, videos can transport audiences to the front lines of an organization to experience compelling stories by sight and sound—the sort of up-close and personal impact that's usually reserved for in-person meetings. As an added bonus, the potential audience for videos is virtually limitless, from conference attendees to readers of virtual annual reports to casual viewers on YouTube,

the third most trafficked site on the Internet today behind Facebook and Google.

But in practice, many nonprofits are still lacking results. A 2014 report from the Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs reveals 92 percent of nonprofits in the United States are engaged in content marketing, yet only

READ Global saw a 54-percent increase in the total number of donors to its end-of-year campaign as a result.

26 percent deem their current content marketing campaigns effective.

When it comes to video, part of the problem has been what I call the “post-and-pray” strategy. After producing a film, organizations often have no strategy at all other than posting the film to social media, putting it up on their website, maybe sending it by email to their audience, then praying the viral gods of YouTube blow a friendly gust of good fortune in the video's direction.

No matter how gripping the story or how adventurous the setting, videos still need a sound distribution plan to find an audience to help move the mission forward. Without it, videos will

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end up languishing on home pages or Facebook with a handful of “likes.”

Meet Chuna

Consider *Meet Chuna*, a micro-documentary about a Nepalese woman who was brought up to believe she was worthless because she was a girl. At 47, she flipped the narrative of her life by teaching herself how to read, educating her daughters and starting a women’s association to ensure other women have a safe space to learn and dream. It’s a nice story, especially when you can see and

Be true, be humble and get to the point

In addition to lack of strategy, video content marketing campaigns in the



Follow the Frog by the Rainforest Alliance.

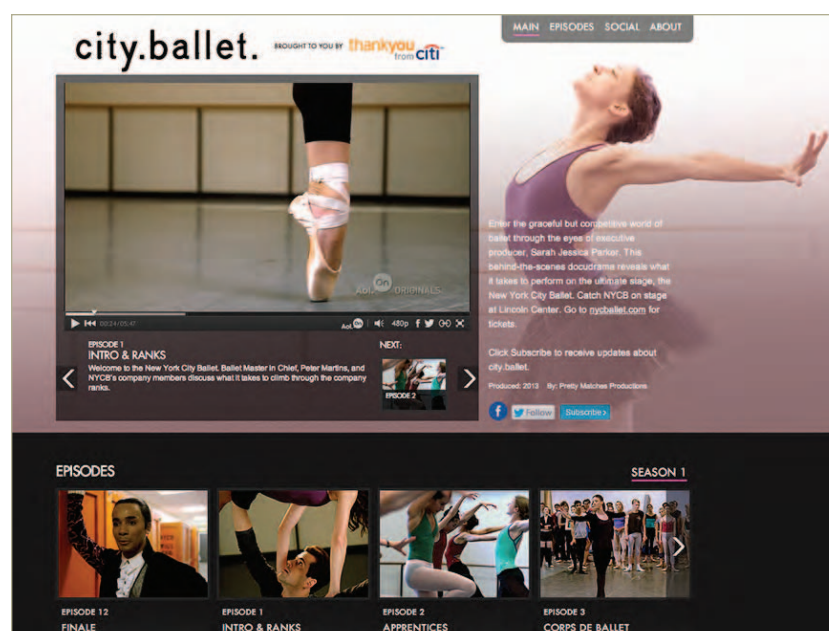
hear it directly from Chuna. But there are plenty of other films out there that tell equally touching tales. What gave this film 40,000 views in a span of three weeks was the distribution plan behind it.

In unison with launching the film, nonprofit READ Global reached out to hundreds of bloggers who covered topics related to Chuna’s story in some thematic respect (e.g. women and empowerment, reading and libraries, education, mommy blogs, authentic travel or South Asian philanthropy). The film ended up landing on an array of sites, including the gold standard of viral video platforms: **Upworthy**. READ Global saw a 54-percent increase in the total number of donors to its end-of-year campaign as a result.

non-profit space often prove ineffective due to the videos themselves, which tend to run too long and focus on the organization rather than on content the organization’s audiences would like to consume.

Regarding the former, films should be bite-sized, which I define as two to three minutes in length, five to six max for more in-depth content. Anything longer comes off feeling like an infringement on your audience’s time. Note that “bite-sized” doesn’t mean lacking substance or story; it just means editorially focused. Consider the Rainforest Alliance’s *Follow the Frog*. It’s short. It’s fast-moving. As this issue goes to press, it’s racked up close to 1.5 million views.

Likewise, films must feel authentic. The moment an organization injects a whiff of promotion into a film, audiences will lose interest. It’s better to leave the brand out of it altogether and deliver real stories and material that will educate, entertain or inspire. Then, at the end of the film, allow the audience to discover the brand in an “aha” moment. This creates a feeling of gratitude for the content (i.e. aha, this all ties into a Rainforest Alliance



city.ballet by the New York City Ballet.

Common Mistakes

PRODUCED A VIDEO. NOW WHAT?

Too many nonprofits pour their passion into video production, but then simply *post and pray* ... hoping the viral gods of YouTube blow a friendly gust of good fortune their way.

THIS IS GOING TO TAKE A WHILE.

Any video longer than five minutes is infringing on your audience's time. Keep it short (ideally a bite-sized three minutes). To do so, tell a story with a tight editorial focus.

FOCUS ON THE ORGANIZATION INSTEAD OF THE MISSION.

Great videos tell the stories from the field ... vignettes that reveal your work slowly and authentically. The best don't even mention the sponsoring organization outside of the credits.



campaign from the New York City Ballet, which was released as a mini-series through AOL On in fall 2013. On the one hand, the campaign breaks the rule I just stated in that it's all about the organization, illuminating the dancers and their preparation for the stage. The 12-part series was successful, however, because it was executed with a raw aesthetic and provided an imperfect portrayal of the ballet, rather than a polished promotion. The dancers feel real, vulnerable and intimate—and compelling as a result.



The producers also did a good job of keeping each micro-documentary short and weaving a variety of formats into the series: overview, testimonial, expert profile and mashups. Drama builds from one video to the next, and we find ourselves increasingly drawn into the behind-the-scenes working of an organization whose product we may or may not have cared about when we started the series. The “aha” is less powerful here. We know the organization is there all along, but it's not trying to sell us anything, and the more the stories engage us, the more the bell goes off that this might be a group of artists we'd like to support.



campaign) rather than the sensation of being introduced to yet another organization you should care about but don't have the time or energy to do so.

city.ballet

An interesting case study here is the *city.ballet* video content marketing

board. If you're a non-profit marketer out there, don't be fooled into thinking that you need a celebrity to narrate your short films. You don't. Nor do you need the budget to launch a 12-part miniseries on AOL or to produce a commercialized film with storyboards and actors like *Follow the Frog*. I point to these two examples, in addition to *Meet Chuna*, because they succeed where many others fail.

Keep it short, keep it real, tell a story that's bound to inspire and remember: Don't post and pray. It's never the way.



Natasha Deganello Giraudio is the CEO of Micro-Documentaries, which produces one-to two-minute documentary-style films to help purposeful businesses and nonprofits move their missions forward.

Disclosure: Meet Chuna was produced by Micro-Documentaries



More examples of non-profit content marketing done right: <http://bit.ly/CMforNPOs>

Takeaways

The *city.ballet* series was thought up, produced and narrated by Sarah Jessica Parker, who sits on the organization's

UK-based Brand Perfect—an online community for brands, designers and developers—offers up their favorite apps from B2C brands.

By Neil Ayres and Julia Errens

Mobile content marketing efforts can be a bit like dancing a cha-cha on the lip of a volcano. The problem is mobile's greatest asset is also its vulnerability. Most mobile devices are personal so they offer marketers a breathtakingly rich source of data from geotracking and social media accounts. Manage it gracefully, and you can tap your customers' most ardent interests ... even before they are consciously aware of them. Overstep, and expect instant payback.

Our favorite mobile plays in the B2C space these last years manage to toe the line carefully, offering value in exchange for access, and carefully keeping clear of overly promotional or self-serving content.



Whole Foods makes its digital marketing approach work without consistent online retail, as not every physical Whole Foods location offers an online shop. Whole Foods enhances its in-store experience with the help of mobile commerce provider **Digby**. Through the Whole Foods app, shoppers can scan barcodes and access rich information about the product (such as provenance and reviews), activate QR codes and virtually check in to stores. Whole Foods uses the information to build a behavior profile then serves up relevant deals in real time while shoppers are in the store.



Guatemalan shoe store chain **Meat Pack** uses a similar approach, but takes it to a brilliant extreme. **Saatchi & Saatchi** Guatemala developed an enhancement to the Meat Pack app called Hijack. Using GPS data, Hijack sends a push notification when it detects that a customer is browsing a Meat Pack competitor's store. The message offers a 99-percent discount for the same shoes in the local Meat Pack branch, and the moment the customer looks at the message the discount starts counting down 1 percent at a time. The faster the customer can make it to the store the greater the discount.

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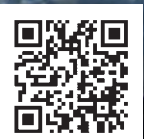


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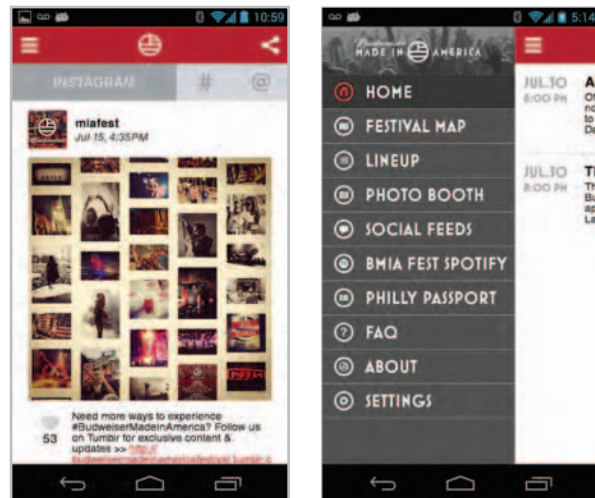


Delta Air Lines found a way to exploit its customers' craving for information about an area that's usually off-limits: the baggage journey. The company's Fly Delta app offers a baggage tracker. To promote the baggage tracker feature, **Wieden+Kennedy** created a simple film that peeked behind the plastic flaps on the conveyor belt by rigging a suitcase with six cameras and sending it from Atlanta to New York. The journey was hosted on YouTube and viewed more than 1.5 million times. More importantly, it spurred a 60-percent increase in downloads the month after launch and a 50-percent increase the following month (the app is now used an average of 8,000 times daily).



Some of the best mobile plays provide something to do or know where customers previously felt passive. In 2011, **Heineken** launched a fantastic, soccer-themed app to that end. Research showed most fans watched Union of European Football Associations games at home alone, often watching games that did not feature their favorite team. Heineken's Star Player app lets users quickly set up a gaming account, and as soon as the whistle blows, the action on the viewer's second screen syncs to the game. Throughout the game, the player is given eight tries to accurately predict whether either team will score within the next 30 seconds. A correct guess wins big points, with the first to take the plunge scoring more highly than those who call it closer to the goal time. Free kicks or corners result in a quick decision-making prompt, with each outcome—goal, miss, save, clear—offering a score in proportion to the likelihood of that outcome.

Sometimes the best mobile experiences play off existing apps on the market. **Budweiser** managed such a feat by collaborating with **Bonfyre**, a photo-sharing and group-texting app. For its *Made in America* festival, Budweiser shared branded but relevant images into the Bonfyre group set up for the event. According to Budweiser, the strategy resulted in re-shares to almost 100,000 friends and followers outside the actual event.



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COMMUNITY CONTENT:

Are you ready to hand over content creation to your customers?

By Matt Myers



2012 CMI Content Marketer of the Year Award winner Joe Chernov and family pose for a selfie pic for Facebook during their Warby Parker home try-on.

As more and more content is required to populate a growing number of channels, marketers must find new ways to source high-quality content efficiently. A growing number of brands are turning their social media platforms over to fans, letting them drive content creation in ways unheard of a few years ago.

Take **Warby Parker's** Home Try-On campaign. Customers try on new eyeglass frames at home and upload photos to Warby Facebook and Instagram pages for feedback. To date, Home Try-On users have posted some 25,000 images to the company's Facebook timeline and more than 40,000 to Instagram.

But what about brands that need more than customer snapshots?

Content-heavy brands—particularly those that lean heavily on blogging—can learn a lot from digital publishers. Faced with a growing challenge to develop more editorial despite

shrinking staffs, publications such as **Forbes** have created dedicated digital channels for reader contributions—and in doing so expanded their reach at a fraction of the cost of hiring in-house writers. Forbes relies on hundreds of guest columnists for their online magazine site, spread across a variety of verticals and disciplines. Once selected and vetted, these columnists have broad leeway to publish on a wide range of topics (though they submit to editorial oversight to ensure quality and consistency across the platform).

These types of brand/contributor collaborations offer both parties tremendous benefits. Brands benefit from low-cost or free content from contributors who, in many cases, already have large followings and influence; and contributors gain the reach and amplification only a big brand can provide.

Beware Community Danger Zones

Keep in mind, honest reader-generated content can be a double-edged sword, so a solid review and approval plan is important. Decide on an editorial theme and workflow at kickoff, and get all stakeholders on-board to keep surprises at bay.

Also, be sure your contributors are receiving value in return for their efforts. Brands like Forbes or Lucky have cachet that writers think they can leverage—both through exposure and credentials. Think about what value you'll provide your reader/writers in exchange for their work because one-sided benefits do not make a sustainable model.

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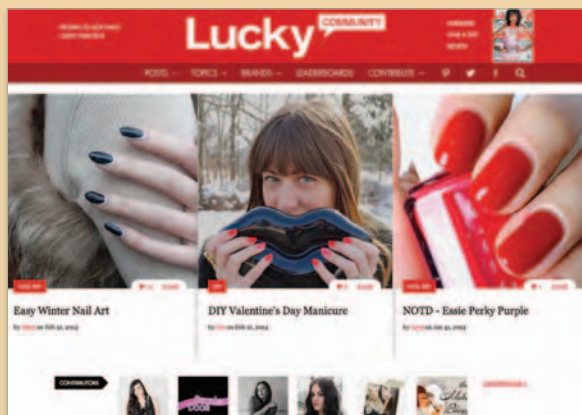
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The value of contributed content

But does it work? Fan-generated material can yield big increases in the metrics marketers are most obsessed about: time on site, followers or page views, SEO and bounce rates.

As an example, *Lucky Magazine* launched a community-driven content section called, “Lucky Community,” (contributors.luckymag.com) in mid-2012. The Lucky Community features advice and style tips from bloggers and influencers around the world, and is intended to encourage print readers to go online and read more. It aims to give readers their own voice via photo and blog contributions. Since launch, Lucky has seen readers spend twice as long on the site, increasing their stays from an average of 2 minutes to approximately 4.5 minutes.

In case you think the strategy works best for publishers, think again. **Pepsi** relaunched its official Tumblr with a similar approach. Instead of recycling marketing content on its Tumblr, the brand aggregates photos and blog posts from summer music festival attendees. So far more than 100 music influencers have participated in the site, contributing hundreds of posts. Grassroots content by those with a vested interest to share it has multiplied Pepsi’s Tumblr followers by more than 20 times, shares by 90 times and views by 100 times.

Still not ready to launch a community-driven site?

Brands can lean on publisher know-how to get started by using a brand/media collaborative approach to user-generated content. Last year **Mountain Dew** partnered with **Complex Media**, a digital media site that targets young men, to jointly launch Green-Label.com. Rather than seek

guest contributors one by one, Mountain Dew borrows guest writers and editors from Complex Media. The duo creates a schedule of content to support upcoming sponsored events and related marketing initiatives.

For example, the Green-Label.com site may introduce an upcoming X Games competition with an article about the world’s best motocross riders and what music they love to jam before an event. The Complex Media editorial team already has expertise on extreme sports and how to pull in particular audience with content, and Mountain Dew gets great content supporting an event it sponsors. As ad-unit revenues for digital media sites come under pressure, we expect these types of content collaborations to become more common.



When to Seek Community-Driven Content

While marketers can almost always benefit by adding contributed content into the mix, certain events lend themselves better to contributed content than others.

Brands - Offline events are great ways to get content submissions flowing for brands. Festivals, sporting events, product launches—all of these have a very specific, set theme that contributors can understand easily. In each instance, contributors should be given a specific call to action for the type of content needed (e.g. send us a photo of the best sunglasses you saw, submit your best dance Vine, tell us your favorite play of the Super Bowl and why.).

Publishers - Publishers benefit from having a set editorial schedule in place so content can be molded to supplement planned editorial. If your magazine plans to cover the best whiskey bars in town, ask readers to submit their favorite whiskey-based recipes.

Retailers - Seasonal cues work best here as more and more readers will go online seeking insight on the season's latest trends, or tips and tricks for back-to-school or holiday shopping. Readers benefit from other real world expertise on what to look for while shopping and, most importantly, where to find the newest looks, gadgets or amenities.

More than metrics

For marketers ready to relinquish some control, fan-driven content can be more genuine and engaging. Contributed content lets brands get closer to fans and opens up a new population of influencers as brand advocates. Contributors are excited to see their content featured on other sites, and tell their fans and followers about it. With a little work and guidance, it creates sustainable, virtuous cycle.



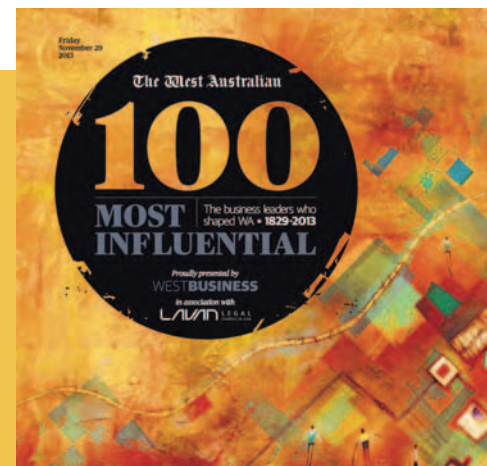
Matt Myers is the CEO and co-founder of Tidal Labs. Find him @MattMyers.

NAILING LONG-FORM SPONSORED CONTENT

It's no secret newspapers are fighting for life, but a recent sponsored content play from The *West Australian* newspaper shows the medium is far from dead. The paper's recent supplement, "100 Most Influential Business Leaders, 1829-2013," provides a fascinating look at the people who shaped Western Australia, from 19th century ruffians to current captains of industry. Incredibly well researched and loaded with photographs, it's an unexpected page-turner.

Creating a 56-page print magazine is an expensive undertaking, but law firm Lavan Legal saw tremendous benefits from the partnership including brand exposure, participation in the editorial process, well-placed advertisements and networking at an invitation-only black-tie affair.

Content marketers can learn a lot from this example. It's essential to find a sponsor with the same target audience who would benefit from exposure to your marketing database. While every Chief Content Officer scrambles to get more funding for content, a sponsor can supplement the budget for a specific project. Lastly, applying great storytelling and journalistic objectivity creates widespread appeal. Don't be surprised if a sponsored content project turns into a recurring product for your business. —Sarah Mitchell



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CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER

THE AGENCY ISSUE

SPECIAL SECTION



26

THIS CHIPOTLE AD IS NOT AN AD

Meet Los Angeles-based CAA,
the brains behind the Chipotle
Scarecrow

32

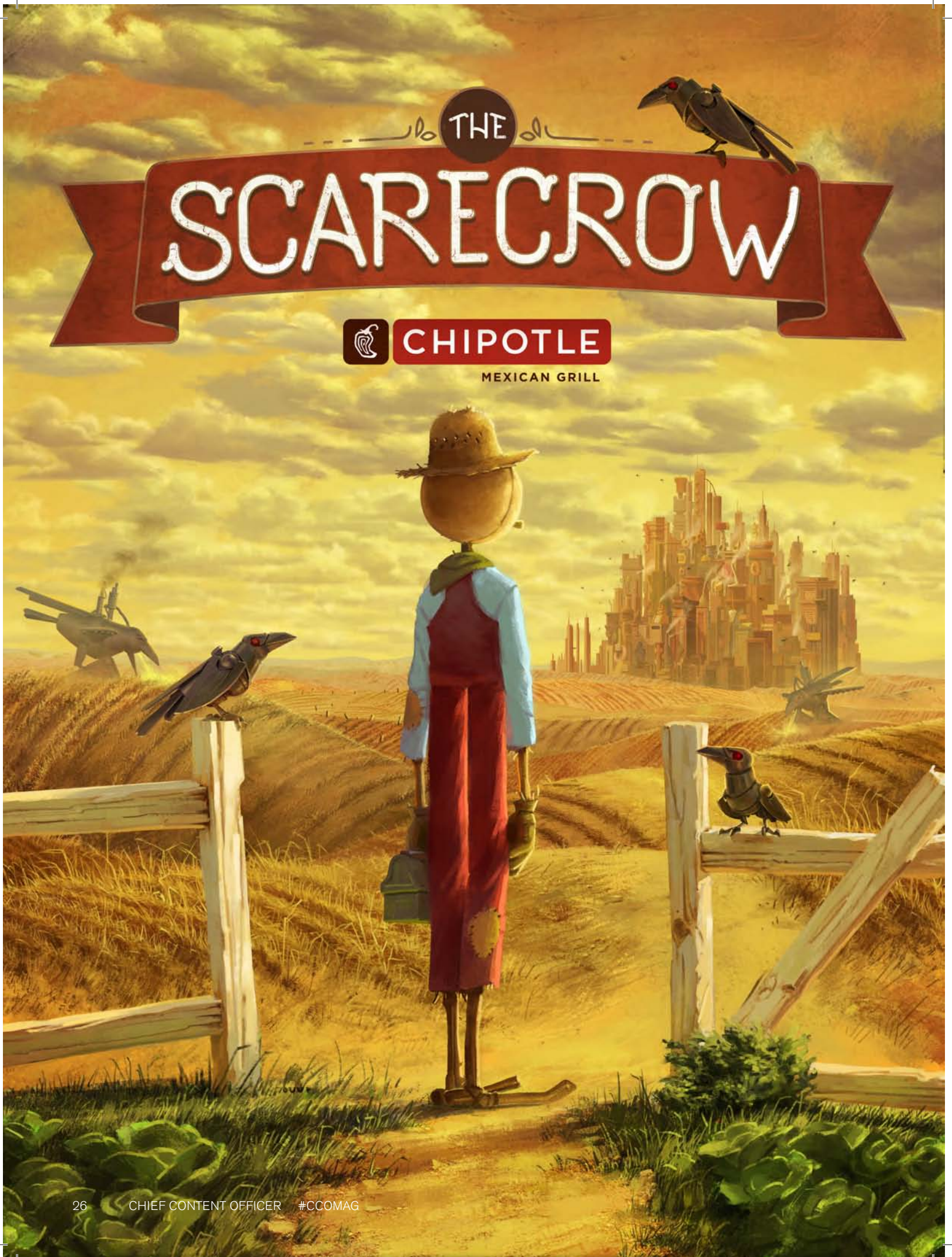
DECEPTION

Why the FTC's recent murmuring
about native ads is so wrongheaded

36

THE A LIST

A list of top content agencies
across the globe



THIS CHIPOTLE AD IS NOT AN AD

A LOOK AT BRAND STORYTELLING IN THE HANDS OF HOLLYWOOD MAGIC-MAKERS.

By Michael Weiss

IN LATE 2013 CHIPOTLE RELEASED A VIDEO one writer called “the most beautiful, haunting infomercial you’ll ever see.” Gawker seconded, “all other ads should just give up.”

In it, a sad-sack scarecrow living in a processed-food dystopia dreams of turning his tiny garden into a bountiful farm (and eventually opens up a little burrito stand.) While it may sound a little too cute, the video is actually quite striking ... and clearly Chipotle was reaching for something ambitious.

After the campaign launched, it was interesting to hear media experts comment on the advertisement’s power because it is decidedly not an ad. The content ran through social channels, but never morphed into a television commercial or banner. Chipotle never paid for placement.

And yet ... “The Scarecrow” got more than 11.6 million views on YouTube, more than 12,000 Facebook posts and more than 31,000 tweets from more than 26,000 unique users—for a whopping total of 126 million impressions.

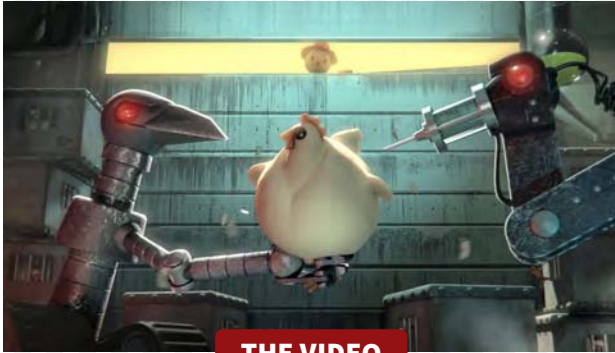
At press time, Chipotle has the most fans on four of the top six social media sites, including Google+, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. Not bad for an “ad” that never ran on network or cable TV.

What accounts for the project’s unbelievable success?

For all the talk about The Scarecrow campaign, little has been said of the agency that worked collaboratively with Chipotle to create it: Los Angeles-based CAA Marketing, a division of Creative Artists Agency (CAA).

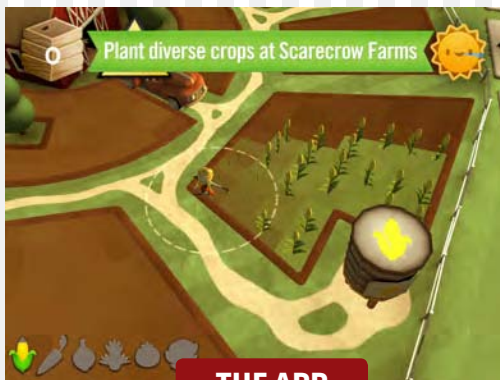


THE CAMPAIGN



THE VIDEO

The Scarecrow has earned more than 11.6 million views on YouTube, more than 12,000 Facebook posts and more than 31,000 tweets from more than 26,000 unique users—for a whopping total of 126 million impressions.



THE APP

At launch, The Scarecrow app was the No. 1 adventure game on iTunes and a top 10 iPad app and to date, the game has more than 563,000 downloads.



THE FOOD FESTIVAL

Chipotle also launched Cultivate, a festival that combined the highbrow ethics of farmers markets and organic foods with the popular appeal of a music festival. More than 100,000 people attended last year.

CAA represents many of the most successful professionals working in entertainment, including Steven Spielberg, Robert Downey Jr., George Clooney, Jennifer Aniston, One Direction, Eminem and Katy Perry, in addition to more than 1,000 of the world's best athletes both on and off the field. In other words, CAA is an über-influencer in the land of culture influencers.

Throughout the past decade, CAA has built a thriving entertainment marketing business, with dozens of strategic and creative marketing executives who work with colleagues across the agency to harness the power of entertainment to build brands and drive business results. The company represents clients interested in developing content so powerful it no longer needs to interrupt. To put it simply, CAA has made a strategic—and successful—push into content marketing.

Kirk Cheyfitz, founder of Story Worldwide, recently wrote in these pages: “In a digital world where anyone can ignore anything, advertising must be as valuable as a good book, movie or news story.” This notion—that brands must become as good as what professional storytellers produce—is like a dinner bell to an agency like CAA ... because it already works with the most masterful storytellers on the planet. To produce The Scarecrow video, CAA pulled in talent from its vast network: Academy Award-winning Moonbot Studios—animators for The Numberlys and Morris Lessmore—produced the video. Grammy-winning Fiona Apple sang the haunting soundtrack (a cover of “Pure Imagination” from the 1971 movie, “Willy Wonka”). Can you point to any other brand-created content with a similar lineup of artists and storytellers?

ON THE MAKING OF THE SCARECROW

Let's zero in on how a brand creates content so good it becomes the program or broadcast.

The Chipotle campaign began with a problem. The company felt that after 17 years of producing what it called “food with integrity,” customers knew little about the company's devotion to ethically raised livestock and family farms. What's more, Chipotle divested from McDonalds in 2007 but many consumers still associated the brand with the fast-food behemoth.

Given the brand's bold steps to rid its supply chain of genetically modified foods and its commitment to food ethics, Chipotle wanted to kick off a conversation about these issues. But Chipotle marketers were also highly aware they needed to do so in a way that was meaningful (read: not awkwardly promotional) for their core Millennial audience. (As an aside, Chipotle has an interesting history of running ads that comment wryly on the ad industry. Not surprisingly, those ads were created in-house.)

A large crowd of white cow silhouettes is shown in profile, facing right. They are arranged in a dense, overlapping group. In the lower right portion of the crowd, one cow is colored solid orange, making it stand out from the others.

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PAID-EARNED-OWNED

THE CHIPOTLE SCARECROW CAMPAIGN POINTS TO A PROFOUND CHANGE in how agencies will serve brands.

Todd Hunter, creative executive of CAA Marketing, says “We talk a lot about how we can shift marketing dollars, which are traditionally interruptive dollars. Right now brands are creating content that disrupts people from the content they want to watch. We talk about taking those dollars and turning them into value creation dollars that tell a story people want to engage in, or create experiences they want to be a part of and naturally consume.”

To do it successfully, however, agencies need to figure out how to attach metrics to these types of campaigns that are as incisive as those we get from paid units.

Says Chris King, CAA Marketing executive, “In the early days, there weren’t a lot of metrics to measure what we were offering. The industry is now catching up; we can look at video views, social mentions, etc. ... and quantify those metrics to put in front of clients.”

Jesse Coulter, co-chief creative officer of CAA Marketing, explains, “We started with an idea ... or the story we wanted to tell. Only much further down the line did we talk about execution.” This single idea—to put the story before the tactic—is profoundly important and still we see few brands investing in this approach. Too often, mega brands are jumping head-first into where they want to broadcast their content before figuring out who they want to target and what they want to say (i.e. the story.)

Chipotle and the team at CAA Marketing decided that rather than talk about Chipotle food, the campaign would document the journey that ethically produced food takes to get from farm to plate. With the broad strokes of the story in place, Chipotle’s end-to-end strategy began to take shape. The team explored how to articulate and disseminate the message. How would they pull a single storyline through diverse channels and customer experiences? And how would they deal with the full gamut of commentary, from positive to deeply cynical?

The Scarecrow video became but one storyline in the campaign called Cultivate a Better World. CAA Marketing and Chipotle produced a virtual world app as well as a massive food and music festival called Cultivate. [See sidebar on page 28.] Through these tactics—each targeted different customer segments—Chipotle introduced a difficult and complex subject (food with integrity) to a mass audience.

Since its release, the campaign received some backlash from observers who felt they didn’t want a food-sourcing lesson from a company like Chipotle. But those detractors miss the point. Chipotle never endeavored to hector about food integrity. In fact, the company admits that to source ingredients at the scale necessary to supply all its burrito outlets, it at times must buy meats and produce that do not adhere to the company’s own guidelines. Rather, Chipotle hoped (and succeeded) in getting a wider audience to become curious about where their food comes from and how it’s raised. It sparked a conversation that’s still reverberating

ABOUT CAA

WHAT MAKES THE TEAM AT CAA MARKETING SO UNUSUAL? Their pedigrees. Employees are as likely to come from Disney or Pixar as they are to arrive from BBDO. The agency-within-an-agency is steeped in Hollywood storytelling, animation, special effects and on-screen talent.

In fact, in our discussions with CAA, they spoke of recent work the agency completed for Coca-Cola. Says Jesse Coulter, “We created a short film produced by Ridley Scott and directed by the same person who directed *Kung Fu Panda*. And the script was written by the writer from *Finding Nemo*.”

That’s kind of like asking Albert Einstein to help your kid with a science project or Mark Twain to write you a book report. You can’t ask for better talent.

through social channels today.

For marketers and agencies, Chipotle points to something fairly profound. Far from the converging paid, earned and owned, some brands are so singularly focused on storytelling that they’re weaning themselves from paid altogether. That should blow your hair back. As Coulter says while discussing the Chipotle account, “We don’t think about commercials.” And that, my friends, is a wrap.



Michael Weiss is vice president of marketing at Musician’s Friend. Find him @mikepweiss.

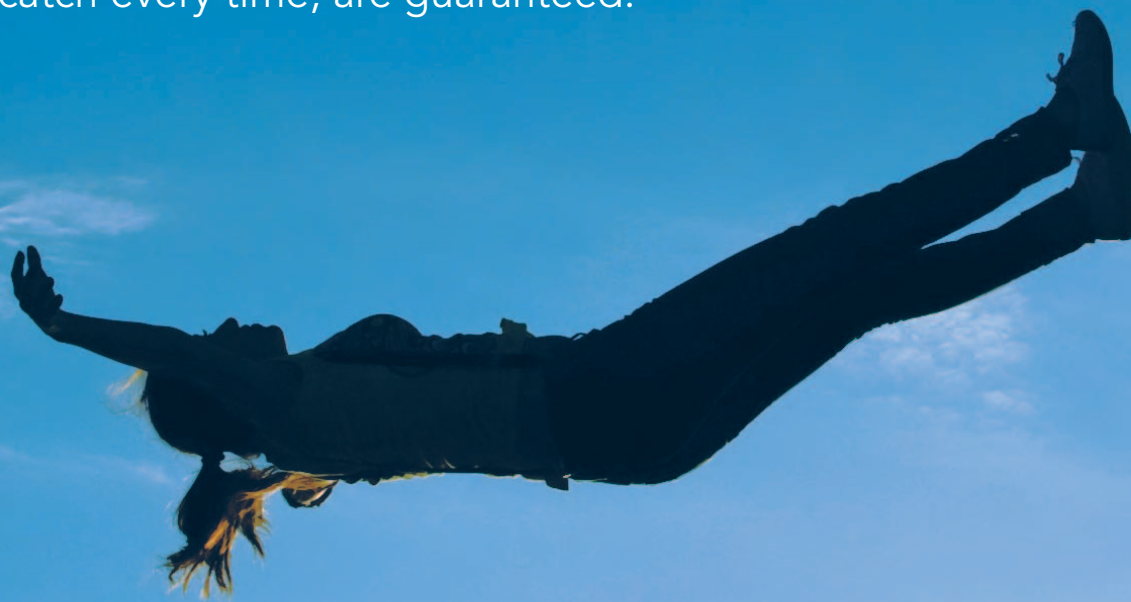


Chipotle’s latest foray into storytelling may be its boldest yet: A scripted comedy on Hulu about industrial farming. Hear the discussion via the PNR podcast. <http://bit.ly/PNRChipotle>

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DECEPTION

The Federal Trade Commission has signaled it intends to watch—and possibly regulate—how brands and the media handle native ads.

Unfortunately, the agency is only highlighting how out of touch it is with today's media landscape.

By Kirk Cheyfitz

The long, noisy debate over so-called native advertising has completely missed that native is a dead end for advertisers and publishers—a passing fad in the slow demise of traditional advertising.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) weighed in back in December with a day-long workshop to figure out how to regulate native ads on digital publishers' sites. Everybody in adland got involved—publishers (traditional and digital), brands, ad agencies, lobbyists, lawyers, public advocates and so on.

Part of the FTC mission of course is to stop “deceptive acts or practices.” This clearly doesn’t include self-deception, however, because both the FTC and the publishers (from *The New York Times* to BuzzFeed) have talked themselves into believing that “native” is the long-sought replacement for dwindling ad revenue.

It isn't. For better or worse, it can't be.

Here's what content marketing has demonstrated so far: Brand storytelling with rich content is powerful because audiences—the people formerly known merely as “consumers”—pay attention to valuable content and reward brand-authors by sharing such content with friends and strangers on social platforms. This social sharing increases impact (by two to four times, studies show) and reach (up to nine times, mathematical models show), reducing media spend and boosting efficiency (by as much as 100 times).

A story good enough to accomplish all that is actually rendered less effective (from the advertisers' viewpoint) by appearing to be part of a publisher's site. Brand-told stories work harder for a brand when they appear on neutral platforms (YouTube, for example) or sites owned by the advertiser.

Why? A brand must be known as the provider of such content so audiences will see the brand as trusted ally, valued adviser and inventive entertainer. No sane brand would spend money to create great content only to let some publisher or broadcaster get the credit.

The FTC says it's upset by the prospect of online

publishers selling their “credibility” to brands by running “advertising that resembles editorial” or “content” and deceives the audience. FTC Chairwoman Edith Ramirez said her agency held its native ad workshop to define, pursue, prevent or punish the crime committed when brands deceptively “capitalize on the reputations of publishers.”

This might have been a fascinating way to frame the discussion if it weren't counter to the facts and an act of self-deception on at least three levels:

SELF-DECEPTION NO. 1:

Publishers can't mislead the public by selling their credibility because they have very little credibility to sell.

Gallup tells us that last year only 44 percent of Americans trusted mass media. At the same time, Nielsen says that 69 percent of the global online audience trust what they see on brand websites. In other words, Gallup and Nielsen find brands are roughly 1.6 times more trusted than publishers. So following the logic of the native ad argument, advertisers should be selling space on their brand websites for publishers to publish more credible news.

SELF-DECEPTION NO. 2:

The FTC is misunderstanding, perhaps intentionally, what advertising is.

The FTC has admitted that it cannot define native advertising. This is because the agency's working definition of advertising is wrong. The feds are sticking to the story that an ad is a paid message that interrupts or sits alongside news or entertainment content owned by a publisher or a broadcaster. In the FTC's version of reality, ads get seen solely because the publisher's editorial content or the broadcaster's show attracts an audience.

Working under this 19th century assumption, the

FTC, many advertisers and virtually all publishers fail to see that publishers and their audiences are not particularly valuable to advertisers in a digital world. The feds and the ad industry apparently cannot see that the best ads now stand successfully on their own, telling the brands' stories, attracting, holding and engaging the brand's audiences with no help at all, thank you very much, from newspapers, magazines, TV or online publishing.

The FTC is pretending that there is such a thing as non-biased news and that it can be cleanly, dependably distinguished from advertising.

The feds named the native ad workshop, “Blurred Lines: Advertising or Content?” The name assumes that advertising and content are different things. That assumption can’t survive much scrutiny.

I'm not saying that journalism from Disney is worse, better or even different than journalism from The New York Times Co. or News Corp. I am just skeptical about granting greater privileges (freedom from regulation of speech, for example) to so-called news corporations than to other corporations.

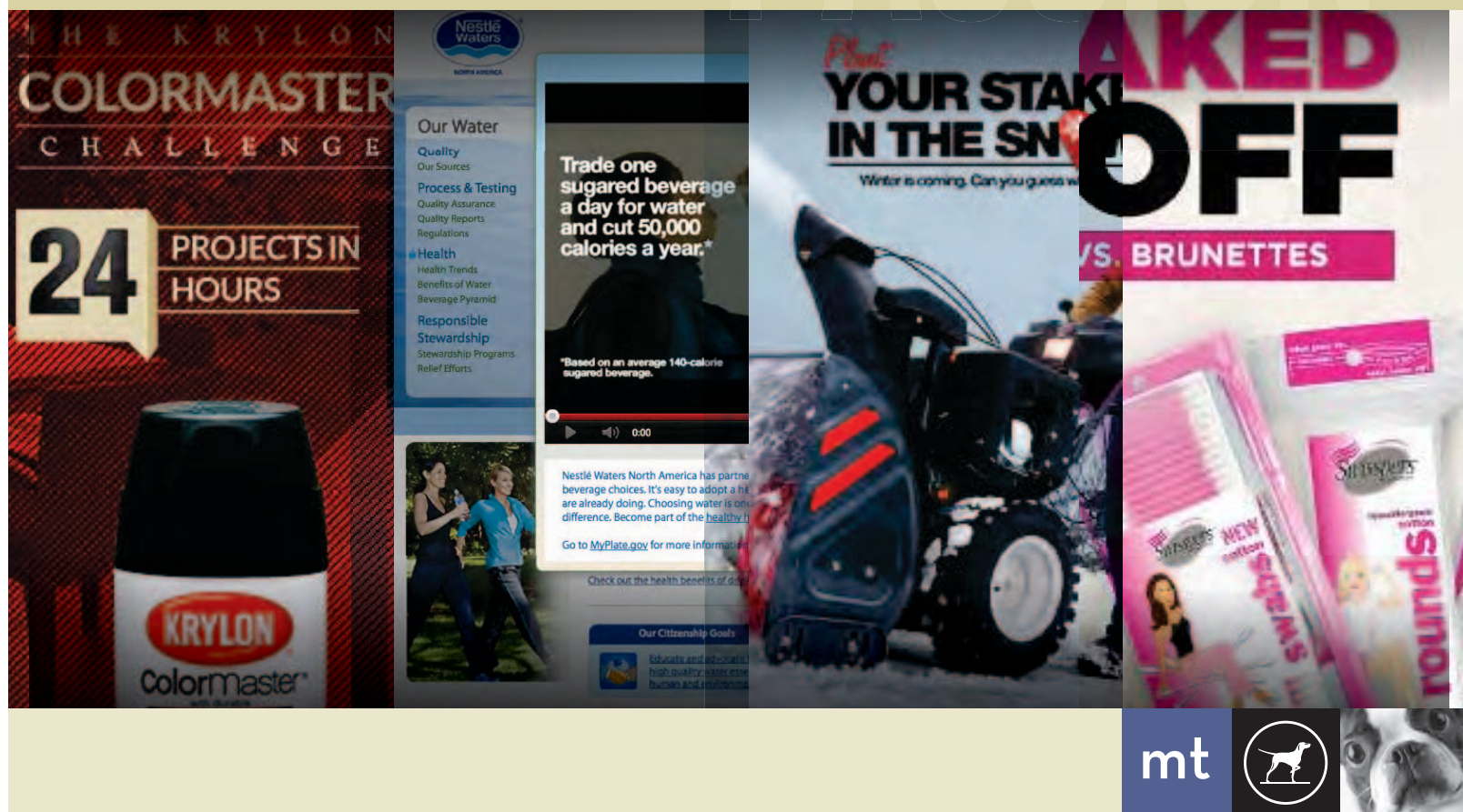
It is sadly easy to imagine the feds making rules about something they clearly don't understand. It is happily harder to imagine that native ads will survive too much longer no matter what the FTC does or doesn't do about them.



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Content agency
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BusinessOnline

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c-e.com
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Endurance Marketing

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enveritasgroup.com
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Full-service content engagement
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KircherBurkhardt GmbH

kircher-burkhardt.com
Berlin, Germany
Content agency
Key Clients: Allianz, T-Systems, Vacheron Constantin,

Madison Miles Media

madisonmilesmedia.com
Arlington, TX
Content marketing
Key Clients: ALOA SPAI, Earth911, Prestige Maintenance USA

Mahlab Media

mahlabmedia.com.au
Balmain, Australia
Full service agency
Key Clients: NIBA, The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA), MARS

Imagination

imaginepub.com
Chicago, IL
Content marketing
Key Clients: Wells Fargo, Lowe's, US Foods

Marcus Thomas LLC

marcusthomasllc.com
Cleveland, OH
Full service
Key Clients: MTD Products, Nestlé, Sherwin-Williams, Tarkett

McMurry/ TMG

mcmurry.com
New York, NY
Full service
Key Clients: CDW, WebMD, Marriott

Meredith

meredithxceleratedmarketing.com
New York, NY
Content-powered, customer engagement agency
Key Clients: Kraft, Lowe's, Chrysler

MSP Communications

msppcommunications.com
Minneapolis, MN
Content agency
Key Clients: Delta Airlines, General Mills, IBM

News Custom Content

newscustomcontent.com.au
Sydney, AUS
Custom and content agency
Key Clients: Woolworths Supermarket, National Rugby League, Formula 1

PACE

paceco.com
Greensboro, NC
Content agency
Key Clients: Verizon Wireless, Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, Walmart

Parthenon Publishing

parthenonpub.com
Nashville, TN
Print and digital custom publishing company
Key Clients: AMSURG, Civic Health, Fender Musical Instruments Corp.

PropelGrowth

propelgrowth.com
Princeton, NJ
Full service
Key Clients: Object Trading, Software AG, Interactive Data Corporation

Rodale Grow

rodalegrow.com
New York, NY
Content agency
Key Clients: Whole Foods Market, Panera Bread, Sam's Club

Spafax

spafax.com
London, UK
Full service
Key Clients: Air Canada, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, Mercedes Benz

Sprout Content

sproutcontent.com
Pensacola, FL
Content marketing
Key Clients: Oren International, ESCO Technologies, Expo Logic

Star Content Studios

starcontentstudios.com
Toronto, ON
Content agency
Key Clients: The Royal Canadian Mint, Genworth Financial, Heart & Stroke

Story Worldwide

storyworldwide.com
New York, NY
Full service
Key Clients: Unilever, Lexus, USA Network, Wyndham

StudioOne

studioone.com
New York, NY
Content marketing and delivering high-quality, interactive content
Key Clients: Dupont, American Express, Bridgestone Firestone

Stunt & Gimmick's

stuntandgimmicks.com
Charleston, SC
Content agency
Key Clients: Mimoco, Timesulin, Jennifer Adams Home

Sùmer LLC

writtenbysumer.com
Charlotte, NC
Content marketing agency
Key Clients: Nissan, StrongProject, Vertex Innovations Inc

Switched on Media

switchedonmedia.com.au
Sydney, AUS
Full-service digital agency
Key Clients: Commonwealth Bank Australia, Nestle, The Athletes Foot

T3 Publishing

t3publishing.com
Seattle, WA
Full-service content marketing
Key Clients: TD Ameritrade, HSBC, Forbes

Think Stripes

thinkstripes.com
Dallas, TX
Content marketing
Key Clients: The Music Bed, Sam Moon, FireHost

TopRank Online Marketing

toprankmarketing.com
Minneapolis, MN
Integrated marketing
Key Clients: McKesson, LinkedIn, Dell

The Pohly Company

www.pohlyco.com
Boston, MA
Content agency
Key Clients: Hannaford Bros. Grocery Stores, Schlumberger Business Consulting, Association of National Advertisers

TREW Marketing

trewmarketing.com
Austin, TX
Full service
Key Clients: Marvin Test Solutions, Wineman Technology, Crank Software

Triangle Publishing

triangle-publishing.com
Newton, MA
Print and digital custom publishing
Key Clients: SAP, Oracle, Microsoft

Velocity Partners Ltd.

velocitypartners.co.uk
London, UK
Digital content agency
Key Clients: Kimberly-Clark Professional, Rackspace, Salesforce.com

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Find out how to get involved by contacting Karen Schopp at karen@contentmarketinginstitute.com



What should you do with this list? Find out which content marketing agency is right for you: <http://bit.ly/CMAgency>

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Sparking C-Suite Conversations

Does your content truly help your front-line sales executives sell? Learn techniques used by top thought leadership brands to dial up content relevance.

By Roanne Neuwirth

Armies of content developers are packaging research results, expert opinions and success stories into papers, podcasts, videos and events ... all of them rich with hard-earned insights. But does all this content fuel business development efforts? Does it help your sales executives educate customers struggling to make good decisions and get results?

In our work with marketing teams—particularly those trying to connect to an executive audience—we often find there is a disconnect between content creators and sales professionals on the front lines who want tools that help strike up meaningful conversations with clients and prospects. It is not for lack of quality or ideas, but a problem of actionable relevance. As one seller at a large technology company put it, “In reviewing a recent study we published, I found it difficult to find the key messages to share with a CIO, which is my target client. The study reported the data rather than spelling out our point of view on actions, outcomes and next steps for someone like my client to take.”

Actionable relevance matters now more than ever. Executive buyers come to the table more educated and

CASE STUDY: IBM GLOBAL BUSINESS SERVICES

Heather Higgins, BAO marketing leader, IBM Global Business Services, recently saw the power of client co-creation first hand. The GBS team was in the process of finalizing the output of a global research effort, and decided to share the content with a group of key clients as part of an advisory meeting. The feedback changed the direction of the final piece. Higgins explains, “We went in thinking the content was close to final, and received a set of specific comments and thoughtful reactions that helped us understand what resonated with our clients and what did not. We got clear direction about how to make the output more useful to our clients, and therefore more impactful for us.” Higgins stressed the importance of the shift to earlier collaboration when it comes to content. “We used to share results after publication. With this piece, we started to involve a few clients in research design, and then tested the output with a group of client leaders. Going forward we will continue to look for opportunities to bring clients earlier into our thinking.”



DESIGNING UTILITY

Want your content to be useful to your frontline sales team? Consider the following:

CONVERSATION KITS:

Particularly for major reports, key events and lengthy videos, consider creating a conversation kit. Provide a set of tools, summaries, highlights and explicit paths for action, and make them targeted, flexible and easy to use—all of which help your colleagues maximize the value of the content when speaking with clients and prospects. For example, (1) create an interview guide for sales to discuss findings with a client, (2) a spider chart that plots a client's position relative to its peer universe for a few key indicators, or (3) a reference guide of key experts for sales to share with clients so they can follow up on key questions that arise from the research.

OFF-RAMPS:

Map out defined activities or actions to take with the client based on the findings or observations at key junctures in the piece. For example, say your team prepares a report about getting business value from the cloud. In the section where you talk about best practices, you may include a customized section that benchmarks the client relative to high performers (and allows your sales team to have deeper, more meaningful conversations.) These extra tools designed specifically for internal sellers help connect content to concrete steps, and scale the impact of the content and extend the life of your ideas and investment.

informed, with a desire to get value even more quickly. The same seller commented, "C-levels are becoming much more savvy and we need to be better prepared for a much deeper level of conversation." It behooves content marketers to present information in a way that hastens deeper conversation and ensures that all of the value embedded in the content is available for the taking.

Stand in the shoes of your users

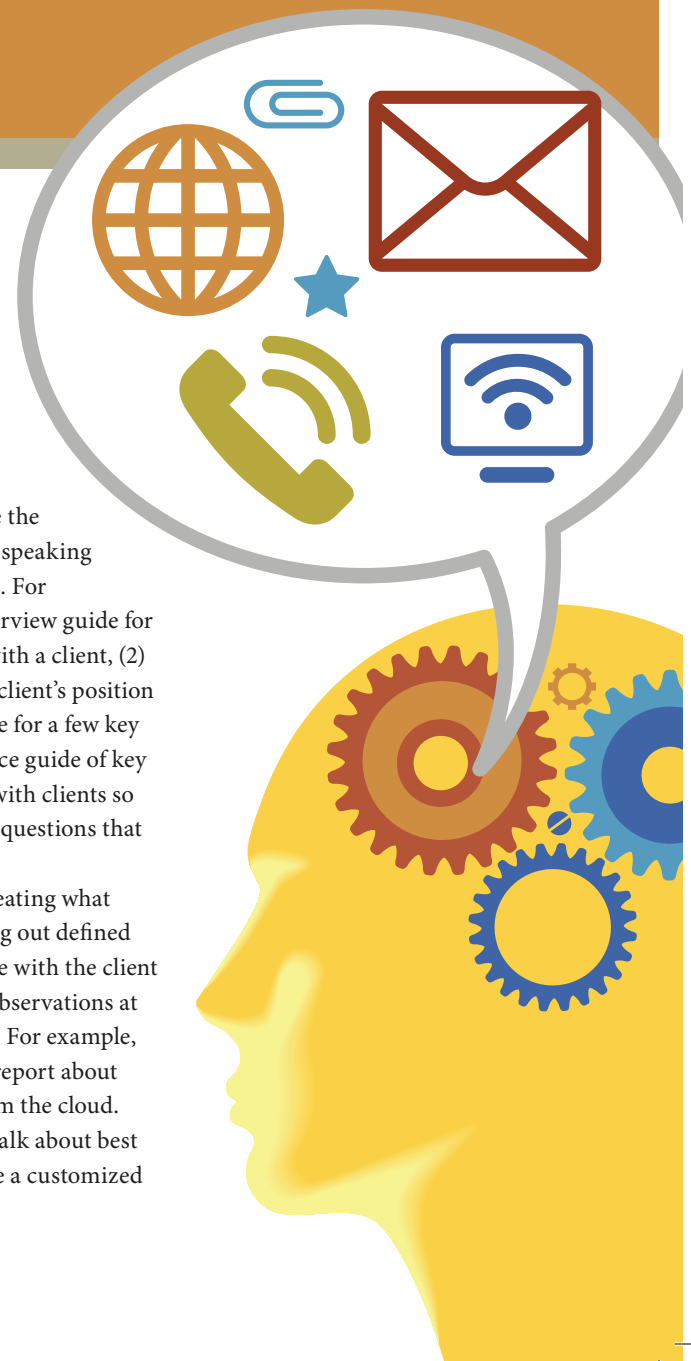
As you design and develop your content pieces, think about the focus from the perspective of a seller, a client rep or even one of your own executives. Could that person tell a succinct story from what you have laid out? Would the story summarize the output—without lengthy review or deep analysis—into an elevator pitch that spells out what someone should do differently based on the content? If not, take the time to extract the relevant storyline for each audience and package it clearly.

Think off-ramps and guideposts

Particularly for major reports, key events

and lengthy videos, consider creating a conversation kit. Provide a set of tools, summaries, highlights and explicit paths for action—all of which help your colleagues maximize the value of the content when speaking with clients and prospects. For example, (1) create an interview guide for sales to discuss findings with a client, (2) a spider chart that plots a client's position relative to its peer universe for a few key indicators, or (3) a reference guide of key experts for sales to share with clients so they can follow up on key questions that arise from the research.

We also recommend creating what we call off-ramps: mapping out defined activities or actions to take with the client based on the findings or observations at key junctures in the piece. For example, say your team prepares a report about getting business value from the cloud. In the section where you talk about best practices, you may include a customized



section that benchmarks the client relative to high performers (and allows your sales team to have deeper, more meaningful conversations). These extra tools designed specifically for internal sellers help to scale the impact of the content and extend the life of your ideas and investment.

As an example, Karla Bousquet, director of client executive marketing at IBM Corp., shares IBM's approach to leveraging high-level event content: "A critical component for our C-suite events is helping client reps engage more effectively with the content during and after the event. Our teams package summaries, help to identify related next steps, link case studies and map the event content themes to potential paths forward to help our executives take action with clients."

Co-create for relevance

Take time to engage and involve clients in your thought leadership development. As you work to extract meaning and relevance from your ideas and output, test them with clients. Set up a thought leadership review panel; conduct interviews to source ideas and share findings; and test assumptions and talk through their perspective on what actions to take based on what you created. If you take the time to define the conclusions and actions together with a subset of your trusted clients, you improve the value

and usefulness of the content ... and your clients will usually evangelize the output to others.

Extract, extract, extract

Just like the executives with whom they are trying to connect, sellers have busy schedules and short attention spans. Keep a rigorous focus on boiling down the most relevant findings and recommendations, and be sure to make these accessible. If you make it easy to see what to do based on your ideas and insights, you will find your content in constant use.

Remember that great content is only half the battle. For content marketing to engage customers and prospects and bring about new business opportunities, it needs to provide a platform for conversation and action. Building an explicit bridge to relevance ensures that your content investment will have more impact and value.



Roanne Neuwirth is a senior vice president at Farland Group. Find her @RoanneNeuwirth.



Read other articles by Roanne Neuwirth about reaching C-level executives: <http://bit.ly/RoanneNeuwirth>

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DEMAND GENERATION USERS GUIDE

Step-by-step instructions to build your demand generation strategy.

By Jay Hidalgo

I've been in the marketing and sales world for nearly 25 years, and have worked with hundreds of marketers. No matter their backgrounds (e.g. enterprise vs. startup, B2B vs. B2C, etc.), marketers most often ask me, "Why isn't my demand generation more effective?" In my experience, the simple answer is "focus on your buyer." In fact, most marketers will eventually admit,

- They don't know their buyer well enough;
- They don't understand the buying process well enough;
- They don't have a content framework for communicating with the buyer.

But here's the thing: Most of the companies I interact with know they need to improve in these areas. What they don't know is *how* to do it.

Whether you're a novice marketer who doesn't know where to start, or a seasoned marketer looking for an edge to boost effectiveness, these practical tips should be of help. The entire process is organized into three distinct sub-processes: (a) develop a buyer persona, (b) define the buying process and (c) develop a content framework.

DEVELOP A BUYER PERSONA *(i.e. know your buyer)*

GATHER MARKETING AND SALES TOGETHER.

This will be a working session or workshop where equal representation from both marketing and sales is present. If marketing seeks to develop the personas alone, the result will be skewed. Having both groups with their unique view of the customer gives a more holistic view.

DETERMINE BUYING GROUPS.

Through dialogue, brainstorming and whiteboarding, determine the buying groups for your products and services. These are target groups that decide or influence the buying decision. Try to stay away from titles (e.g. VP or manager) and focus more on functions such as technical buyer, user, designer, etc.

DEFINE INFORMATION CATEGORIES.

Once you determine the buying groups, define which categories of information are important to know with regard to the group's buying behavior. Sample information categories might be personal background, daily activities, role in the company, challenges, preferred sources for industry news, etc. At this stage, you're only defining those categories but not filling in the answers.

CREATE A MATRIX.

Put together a matrix of the buying groups and information categories, with buying groups across the x-axis and the information categories down the y-axis.

FILL IN THE MATRIX.

Use a bullet-point list to determine the three to five descriptors for each buying group's information category. For example, if the buying group is *facility management*, and the information category is *daily activity*, you might list:

- Monitor operational efficiency
- Manage staff
- Manage vendor relationships
- Create and maintain budget

VALIDATE.

After completing the matrix, validate it with customers and other staff. This can be done via phone call or small group presentation. If it's available, use secondary research to validate results.

DEFINE THE BUYING PROCESS

GATHER MARKETING AND SALES. WHITEBOARD AN INITIAL BUYING PROCESS DRAFT.

This second working session is separate from the one to develop the buyer persona. Through conversation, create an initial buying process map—a simple flow chart that identifies the specific decisions or steps the buyer goes through.

Start by asking, “What triggers a buyer to start looking for our solution?” Once you determine that, then ask, “What does the buyer do/think next?” Keep asking follow-on questions until you’ve plotted out the steps the buyer take through post-purchase.

For some groups, working backwards is more effective. For example, start with the statement, “They bought ‘x’ from our company.” Then ask, “What did they do just before buying?” (e.g. Before making a purchase, they justified their decision. So, justification becomes the step before purchase.) Keep working backwards in this fashion until you define the trigger step that starts the process.

SUPPORT/REVISE YOUR MAP WITH RESEARCH.

It’s important to verify the buying process with objective research. Methods such as in-depth interviews and focus groups work well to determine the buyer mindset through the buying cycle. These should be conducted among prospects and customers. If you have the resources to use an outside research firm, make sure it understands the concepts of buyer insight for demand generation.

CONFIRM.

After revising the draft based on research, confirm the results by asking internal stakeholders (e.g. sales, business development, product marketing) and customers to review and validate it. This can be done via phone call or small group presentation.

Depending on the size of your organization, completing the entire process will take approximately one to three months—a considerable investment of time. Is it worth it? A resounding “Yes!” Too often marketers implement demand generation tactics without strategic support. They spend time and money executing programs they “hope” or “think” will work. I always counsel to “plan the work then work the plan.”



Jay Hidalgo is president of The Barzel Group and creator of Demand Gen Coach. Find him @jayhidalgo



Can your marketing plan focus on both lead and demand generation? Find out: <http://bit.ly/LeadDemand>

DEVELOP A CONTENT FRAMEWORK

GATHER MARKETING AND SALES. CREATE A MATRIX.

This will be yet another working session. Build a matrix using the buyer personas and buying process map. List buying process stages across the x-axis and buyer personas down the y-axis.

FILL IN THE MATRIX.

As you did with the buyer personas, use bullet points to list the answers to questions for each persona in each stage:

- What questions is the buyer asking at this stage?
- What answers should we provide to those questions?
- What is the best medium for delivering the answers?
- What behavior do we want our answers to elicit?

VALIDATE.

After completing the matrix, validate it with customers and other staff. This can be done via phone call or small group presentation. If possible, use available secondary research to validate as well.

IDEA GARAGE

A CONTENT SMÖRGÅSBORD.



NETFLIX MAILERS GET A MAKEOVER

Netflix subscribers who receive DVDs in the mail may have noticed something different about those signature red envelopes around the holidays. For Halloween and Christmas, **Netflix** sent envelopes adorned with whimsical drawings crowdsourced from an artist whose “Doodle Flix” Tumblr site showcases mailers decorated by Netflix subscribers. Netflix previously sent themed envelopes, but this collaboration marks the first time the company has leveraged social media content to get creative with its mailers.

Envelopes created Doodlers Anonymous: Tim Hodge(2), Alesha Potter, Bruno Pieroni, Kevin Hancock, Robert Hendricks, Mason Jouclas and Ella Lapointe.

#FORTYEIGHT WHAT?

Why is a bruised Edward Norton trying to escape from a car trunk? And what does **#fortyeight** have to do with it? If you saw the mysterious TV ad and got excited for the actor’s new movie, you would have been disappointed. The ad turned out to be part of a promotion by **Verizon** for its new **Droid** phone, which has 48 hours of battery life. The @fortyeight Twitter feed released information in bites, building anticipation for an online video that revealed exactly what happened to Norton in those 48 hours.



DEPARTMENT EDITOR

Natalya Minkovsky is a writer and content strategist. Find her @hejhejnatalya.



BUILD YOUR OWN VIRTUAL SUBWAY® STORE

SUBWAY ENTERS THE CLASSROOM

A company that helps brands connect with the next-generation global workforce, **YSN** (Your Success Now) has partnered with **Subway** to create a series of tools teachers can use in their classrooms to

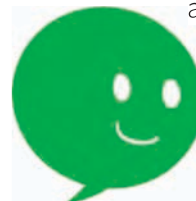
teach entrepreneurship and critical business skills. The teaching tools include the Subway Global Challenge, a five-week business simulation game that gives students a chance to see what it takes to be the

boss. There is also the “Subway Case Study,” a corporate documentary featuring 60 interviews with Subway employees, from C-level executives to “sandwich artists.” The materials come with a teachers’ guide that instructors can use to develop their Subway-themed lesson plans.



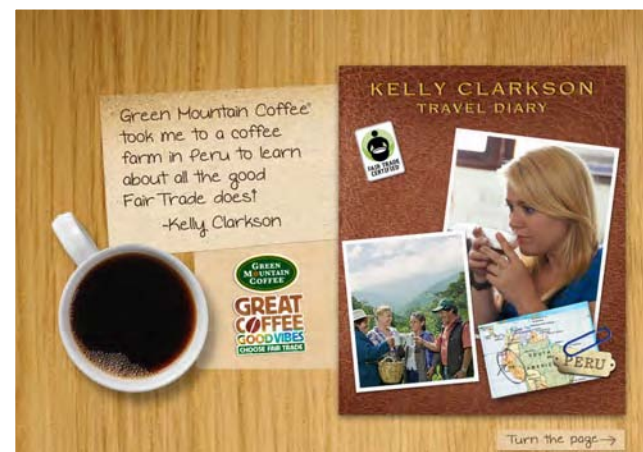
WRITE A LETTER, RAISE A GIANT

A social campaign from General Mills brand **Green Giant**, “Raise a Giant,” uses storytelling to help parents teach their kids about bullying. The campaign, launched in partnership with PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center and We Day Minnesota, asks parents to write a letter to their kids and help them stand up to bullying. Parents can post their letter to the campaign website or share “Raise a Giant” content, such as infographics about bullying, through social channels.



IS THIS CONTENT FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED?

Green Mountain Coffee took advantage of Kelly Clarkson’s star power—and a variety of branded content like videos and infographics—to educate consumers about fair trade-certified coffee. In a Google+ Hangout, Clarkson talked about her visit to a coffee farming community in Peru, and the singer’s interactive travelogue is posted on the campaign website, ChooseFairTrade.com. The “Great Coffee, Good Vibes, Choose Fair Trade” campaign also included online videos featuring coffee farmers and an invite-only concert streamed live on the Green Mountain Coffee Facebook page.



Snapchat: Social Network of the Week

By Tom Fishburne



Marketers are watching the explosive growth of the latest social network, Snapchat. The social app now shares more than 350 million photos every day. But because the one-to-one messaging and pictures self-destruct after just a few seconds, it hasn't been obvious how brands can use Snapchat.

It's only a matter of time before marketers rush in. Early Snapchat experiments have included Lynx in the United Kingdom and Taco Bell; Snapchat introduced "Snapchat Stories" in October 2013 as another step in that direction.

The marketing chatter on Snapchat resembles the marketing chatter in each of the social networks that has come along. Ridicule is eventually followed by a marketing stampede.

How to respond to a new social network like Snapchat?

The first temptation for marketers is to leap into every

social network that shows scale. Instead, marketers must first decide if the audience they're trying to reach uses that network. It is better to invest heavily in the few social networks that a brand's audience really cares about than to spread content marketing thinly across all of them.

A second temptation is to treat every social network the same and push the same content in every channel. Each social network operates by a unique set of rules. People use Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat and other social networks for different reasons and in different ways. Trying to engage audiences the same way in each network is a missed opportunity. One size fits none.

When Twitter launched Vine, some marketers responded by trying to cram the same old messaging into a smaller container. Home improvement

retailer Lowe's took a different tack. It launched a series of six-second home improvement videos called "Lowe's Fix in Six." The stop-motion Vines showed how to use a rubber band to get out a stripped screw or how to use a hair dryer to peel a sticker. Helping the audience came first. The content then embraced the medium.

The marketing chatter on Snapchat resembles the marketing chatter in each of the social networks that has come along. Ridicule is eventually followed by a marketing stampede.

When we first started developing content marketing campaigns with cartoons, we used the same cartoon images everywhere. But over time, we discovered that content followed different rules in different social networks. Some of this was appearance (e.g. Facebook has limitations on the amount and placement of text inside an image). In many cases, the type of content is different (e.g. We found that what thrives in Instagram are photos of original art or 15-second animations). The goal is to create content that feels native to the network.

Snapchat and Twitter Vine and whatever comes next won't be a good fit for every brand. But brands ultimately want to be where their consumers are spending time. When they join the conversation, they need to remember to bring value to that conversation, wherever that conversation lives. ■



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



Struggling to know which social networks are for you? Learn when and where to focus your efforts: <http://bit.ly/SMContentChannels>

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