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DECEMBER 2014

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Two Little Things Make All the Difference

In my early days in publishing, I had the trappings of success: a solid, full-time job and work on innovative projects with a leading publisher. Yet I didn't feel successful. Not even close, actually. I honestly had no idea what "success" even meant for me.

Then I read this passage in *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill: "Opportunity has spread its wares before you. Step up to the front, select what you want, create your plan, put the plan into action, and follow through with persistence."

Of course! I needed to define success, and then put a plan in place. Simple, right? So, I wrote down my goals. Done and done. Now what?

I read another book: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey. The second habit is, "Begin with the end in mind." Here is the part I underlined: "Beginning with the end in mind means to begin each day, task, or project with a clear vision of your desired direction and destination, and then continue by flexing your proactive muscles to make things happen."

Goals were just the start.

Reviewing those goals every day was critical. And that's when I started to see real change. These two little things—writing down my goals and reviewing them constantly—are what helped me reach those goals consistently and within the timeframes I'd set.

Why am I telling you this?

This fall, in collaboration with MarketingProfs, we released the 2015 *B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America* research report. The findings are

amazing. Amazing in that they clearly point to two little things that separate the great content marketers from the not-so-great ones.

1. Great content marketers document their content strategies (i.e. they write them down.)

2. Great content marketers say their strategy guides their efforts "very closely."

.....

These two little things—writing down my goals and reviewing them constantly—are what helped me reach those goals consistently and within the timeframes I'd set.

.....

One more finding really stands out: While 86 percent of North American B2B companies use content marketing, far fewer than half (38%) believe their efforts are effective. And the two habits I mentioned (documentation and consistent review) seem to make all the difference. Effective content marketers are five times more likely than their least effective peers to document their content marketing strategies and four times more likely to follow those strategies very closely.

The takeaway: Stop creating more content. Create a strategy that makes sense. Review that strategy often. Then greatness awaits.

Two little things. Seems so easy, doesn't it?



Joe Pulizzi

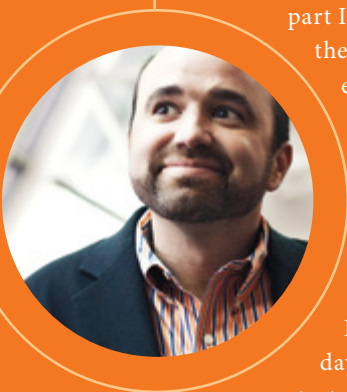
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To stay on top of content marketing trends, subscribe to Joe and Robert Rose's weekly podcast, *PNR: This Old Marketing*: <http://bit.ly/PNRThisOldMktg>





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My New Year's resolution: Do less, but make each project count more.



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Photo by Miller Mobley/ Redux

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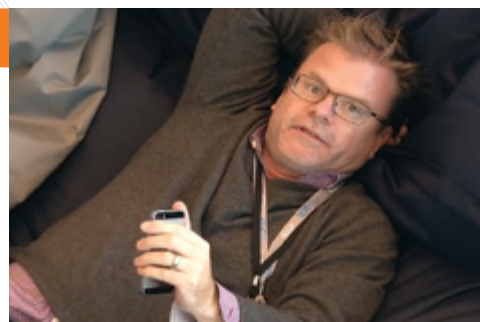
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Bryan Rhoads from Intel proves why he won the Big Award (again).



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WHAT'S NEXT FOR CONTENT MARKETING? **YOU.**

By Robert Rose

Consumers have changed. Great digital experiences are no longer new ... they are expected.

In response, marketing departments have flexed and stretched with each new disruption, channel and technology ... but only within the existing bounds of their confined, comfortable and well-worn structures. To succeed, marketers must step out of the shampoo-rinse-repeat cycle of chasing campaign-oriented capabilities around every emerging channel. They must not only describe the value of their brand, they must create differentiated value separate and distinct from that brand.

Content marketers—with their influence on all of the above—may be ideally poised to become the change agents of this decade.

“So, what’s next?”

It’s a question I get asked with some regularity at conferences, or when I’m asked to do a workshop or client advisory. And to be clear, the interrogators are not asking about next week, next month or even next year. No. They’re asking what’s next after content marketing. You know—what’s the next Big Idea. When I answer “you,” they look at me a little like my dog does when I try to whistle.

Let me explain what I mean.

There’s a wonderful quote by the Nobel Prize-winning physicist Niels Bohr: “Prediction is very difficult, especially if it is about the future.” The question “What’s next?” really isn’t about predicting the future. If we peel back the layers, what we’re really asking is, “What is our place in the future?” How do we prepare ourselves now so that we’re ready for whatever comes next?

In a July 2014 *Harvard Business Review* article entitled “The Ultimate Marketing Machine,” three authors (who were all part of a larger study called Marketing2020) concluded that in order to meet the challenges of the future, marketing organizations must evolve to deliver what the authors call the “total experience.” They wrote: “Companies are increasingly enhancing the value of their products by creating customer experiences. Some deepen the customer relationship by leveraging what they know about [customers] to personalize offerings. Others focus on the breadth of the relationship by adding touchpoints. Our research shows that high-performing brands do both—providing what we call ‘total experience.’ In fact, we believe that the most important marketing metric will soon change from ‘share of wallet’ or ‘share of voice’ to ‘share of experience.’”

It seems clear now that the evolution of marketing will move beyond the goal of simply creating a customer—in fact, creating a customer will simply be table stakes for most marketing organizations. The new objective for marketing will be to

What are Content-Driven Experiences?

Marketers today are charged with creating optimal experiences that are both physical and digital—experiences that entertain, educate and align our brand promise to our consumer's purpose. They may range from the entirely transactional, such as a sharable social post or video, to the moderately engaging such as a white paper or blog post, to the highly intimate such as a physical event or even customized application. At the heart of every single one of these experiences—whether in the physical or virtual world—is a desire to make the most profound impact possible through clear, consistent and engaging communication. Or, put another way: content-driven experiences.

evolve customers, from unaware all the way to a brand-subscribing advocate. And content-driven experiences will be the natural-selection process that moves the customer along.

To put it bluntly: to succeed, marketing departments must themselves evolve. They must not only serve to describe the value that has been theoretically created in the product or service for sale, but also to create differentiated experiential value that is separate and distinct from that product or service.

That is what's next from a marketing perspective.

But, more importantly (and to get to the heart of the question), what's our place in it? How will the content marketer specifically, and the practice of marketing more broadly, fundamentally change in order to be ready for it?

Changing the marketing structure

Our experience with the Content Marketing Institute's advisory clients and partners, and with participants at our latest Executive Forum, tell a similar story. We are seeing brands have much more success when there is a process for creating consistent and integrated experiences. And the key is that these experiences are solely designed with the purpose to create delight at every single stage of the customer journey.

OK, so that's way too pat of a projection for sure. "Design for delight" is an easy, tweetable sound bite ... but come on, surely the reality is more complicated. How does this relate to the structure and process in the marketing department?

One of the largest challenges we see is that brands have spent the last seven years fully stratifying the customer experience—and then adding discrete teams (each with its own silo goals) to address each stratum.

We now have brand teams, demand-generation teams, sales-enablement teams, field-marketing teams, social-marketing teams, social-CRM teams, PR teams and even (my favorite) a separation in some organizations between digital marketing and regular plain ol' marketing.

The interesting thing is that brands have been so focused on this structure that it has encouraged agencies to do the same. For all the strata mentioned, there's an agency to cover each slice. Even big agencies now have the direct group and the digital group ... the analytics group and the experiential group.

So, before we look at hubs, spokes, agile or other structures ... if marketing is to become customer-centric and a strategic discipline for delivering value to the business by 2020 ... we must simply agree that change is what's important. "Into what?" is a question that, in this moment, is candidly less critical.

Content marketers: The agent for change

We often talk about how using content-driven experiences for marketing purposes isn't a new practice—and we still believe that. For hundreds of years, businesses have been using content in pockets within the business—discretely focused to handle a very specific need at a very specific time. But the reality is this: Whether it was John Deere's *The Furrow* from the 1800s, Michelin's guide to car maintenance in the early 1900s or even Hasbro's GI-Joe partnership with Marvel in the 1980s, content was not—and is not—a scalable, repeatable practice within the function of marketing. In short, content marketing was historically (and still is almost exclusively) treated as a project, not a process.

That's the part that has changed. Whether it's due to the digital disruption and ease by which we now publish and distribute content and experiences to aggregate our own audiences, or just the natural evolution of marketing itself doesn't matter as much as the ultimate outcome.

We've absolutely seen evidence of this in all the research, advisory clients and our own Executive Forum. Companies that have successfully created a process to deliver valuable content-driven experiences worry less about the specific structure of the group and where it sits in the company

hierarchy; they focus on content itself as a recognized, valuable and discrete function in the business.

Built to change

Ultimately there is no way to accurately predict what the marketing organization will need to look like in five years' time. It's only been eight years since any business could even think about how to address such disruptions as Facebook or iPhone or Android. And it's been less than five since any marketer even thought about what opportunities an iPad could bring.

So—what will the next five years really bring? What's really next? Who knows. What is clear is that we know consumers' buying habits have changed. And we know content and customer-centric experiences are the drivers to creating more meaningful engagement with those consumers. Instead of looking at each new disruptive technology (hardware or software) as a need for a new team or node to a structure, marketers (and content marketers specifically) should instead just look at structures where collaboration, content and data flow more fluidly to handle ANY new disruption—from wherever it may come.

What we do know—what we can say when someone asks, “What's next?”—is that marketing organizations absolutely will need to be built to change ... constantly. And content marketers

can be that agent of change. That is what's next. And that's why I answer the question with “you.” It is our time to evolve the practice of marketing more broadly. How do we do that? Well, that's an even bigger question—but it starts by making what we do real in the business. The delivery of a scalable, manageable marketing process that consistently produces valuable content-driven experiences will never be achieved by begging, borrowing and stealing resources that can “do content” whenever it is convenient. We must first change the notion that content is everyone and no one's job. Content—and the experiences it creates—should be a strategic asset that is well-resourced, has adequate investment dollars and is held to account for the value it does or does not create. So, the job now is to be the revolutionary, not the politician.

We can change, and marketing will change with us. But right now, instead of trying to figure out exactly what we should change into, we first should just start at the word “change.”



Robert Rose is chief strategy officer at the Content Marketing Institute. Find him @Robert_Rose.



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JUST GO DO IT

Marketers spend too much time explaining and defending. Sometimes jumping right in is the best way to show C-level execs why and how content marketing works.

By Roanne Neuwirth

Though content marketing has firmly established itself as critical for connecting with customers across industries and companies of all sizes and types, many marketers still struggle internally to get resources and attention from the executive team to get a program off the ground. Some company leaders fear letting go of traditional views about how marketing should operate; reallocating dollars to content marketing seems risky. Others view creating an idea culture in a product-focused environment with skepticism. And spending your time and effort to build the case for content marketing takes up scarce resources that should be spent elsewhere.

If you want to build a content marketing program but face reluctance, don't waste time creating big plans and trying to sell the concept. Instead, jump in, start small and show some early results. The support will follow. Here are a few ideas to catch the eye of your C-suite and build momentum, without requiring large-scale resources or buy-in up front.

Co-create some great stories with your clients

Your own clients—particularly those clients who are your company's big advocates—are a powerful source of good content, and what they say matters to your senior leaders. The issues they face represent an important voice of your marketplace, as well as the value your company brings in solving those issues. If you approach a few of these clients to extract insights and work with them to create a point of view, you can develop a powerful set of stories relatively easily that will intrigue your own executives. And of course, these stories offer a valuable tool for conversation with other clients and prospects.

Here are a couple of examples we have seen work well as a starting point:

► Leverage an existing client event or program

Begin with one of your upcoming events where a client or two is speaking. Your clients have already bought into the idea of sharing on the topic ... and so accessing their thinking is simple to do in the context of the ongoing program-planning effort. Build off a case study that a client is presenting, creating a more robust story with outcomes and lessons learned, highlighting your client's success. Turn a panel discussion into an article, showcasing the participants' perspectives on the topic and their implications for driving value. These pieces demonstrate the role and connection of content to the broader communication and engagement efforts within the company, and can be used for follow-up and continued conversation with clients who attended to increase the impact of the event.



► **Interview a few of your biggest client advocates on a hot-button issue**

Take advantage of an event in the marketplace that is relevant to your business and your clients' key priorities—such as a regulatory change or a high-profile merger impacting their industry—and interview a couple of your key clients on their view on the implications. Create a commentary that highlights the shared challenge and outlines potential approaches for others to consider in responding. The timeliness of the issue provides a good excuse for quick outreach to the clients, and a good opportunity to reinforce your company's credibility to address emerging and evolving challenges of concern to your client base.

Create a content champion on the inside

Creating change in an organization requires a well-placed champion to help carry the message and promote the cause. Making the case for content marketing is no different. Your C-suite will listen to what one of their respected peers has to say, and be more inclined to pay attention if he or she is involved in the content creation and speaks to its value. Befriend one or two of the organization's leading senior experts—particularly someone who prizes opportunities to speak and share their knowledge. Make it easy for the expert to extend and expand on work already being done by helping to develop an article, a blog post, a case study based on ideas the expert already has started to progress. No need to

reinvent the wheel; focus on developing the thinking and extracting the relevance to your clients' key issues. And if you can link it back to the client perspectives that you have helped to create (as discussed above), even better. The key is making it simple—if you are doing the heavy lifting, your experts can provide interesting points of view and thought-provoking insights without taking them off their track of running the business.

Publicize and market the results

Finally, as you begin to get traction, share and showcase the content you have co-created with clients and your internal colleagues. Highlight the stories on internal websites, newsletters and other forums, and include pieces in the packages you give out to help the sales and client teams have conversations. Even if you set modest goals for the volume of content you can create, a steady drum beat of these stories will start to infiltrate the consciousness of senior executives and client-facing leaders, creating the pull to ramp up the program.



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



Learn from Neuwirth's Executive Content series for CCO. <http://bit.ly/RoanneNeuwirth>



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BUILD IT OR

By James Dillon

BUY IT?

Why spend years building an audience for your brand if you can buy a turnkey, niche media property?

When we need a new kitchen table, few of us head down to the local hardware store to pick up timber. We know the experts do it better. A “how-to” Google search only goes so far.

So why are brands building their own content marketing foundations without seriously considering the ready-made option? The pros of buying an existing publisher for their audience are significant:

Successful publishers already know how to create engaging content and get it in front of the right people.

The talent you need to build your content site is sitting in a niche media company’s editorial office.

A publisher’s revenue stream comes with the purchase, opening an opportunity to earn advertising dollars.

The opportunity costs alone should be enough for brands to consider a purchase. The time and resources required to build your content site can be redirected elsewhere—at significantly lower risk.

And there is one standout advantage of buying an existing audience that goes largely unnoticed: Data. Publishers sit on a veritable gold mine of user-behavior data.

Want proof? Consider the global powerhouse, Kraft Foods Group. Through print and online, Kraft’s publishing efforts generate the equivalent of 1.1 billion ad impressions a year. But even more interesting: Kraft tracks 22,000 attributes of the more than 100 million annual visitors to its websites, according to *AdAge*. With all that data, Kraft can run sophisticated sentiment analysis on its audience’s online behavior; the deep dive helps Kraft understand not only what recipes will work well in which channels, but what a particular

individual is likely to want to cook on a particular day.

While most brands don’t have enough data to mimic what Kraft does, many publishers’ content engagement analytics can provide juicy information for product development, channel strategy, promotions (e.g. coupons) and even content development.

In 2001, Johnson & Johnson acquired online parenting resource BabyCenter for a cool \$10 million from near-bankrupt publisher, eToys. The BabyCenter website provides educational resources for a community of engaged women on the topics of birth, pregnancy and parenting.

Christina Hoff, manager of global strategic insights for J&J, cites BabyCenter’s data as among J&J’s most powerful data-mining resources. The company uses sentiment analysis on the site’s 35-plus million readers, developing relevant messaging for target consumers. “We can tell what a mom is going to do before she does [it] based on what she is searching for,” Hoff explained recently to an audience in Spain.

Bring on the skeptics

With all advantages of the buy and the difficulties of the build, what’s stopping brands from purchasing a publisher for their established audience?

Skeptics contend the profit-seeking behavior of a corporate Big Brother may compromise the ability of a media company to tell stories without an agenda undermining the quality of the very asset the brand hopes to leverage.

If a cosmetics company purchased *Vogue*, would readers leave in outrage? If the airliner Emirates bought National Geographic, would everyone stop watching, reading and subscribing? Such deals may scream shameless selling to the

uninitiated, but if the content is valuable and has integrity, provenance simply doesn't matter.

Conversant Media co-founder and managing director Zac Zavos agrees. With three online publications reaching a combined 2.8 million visitors per month, Zavos has a good handle on the publishing industry. As he says, "If the content is good enough, and the audience is happy, why not?"

And as it turns out, brands aren't the only companies sniffing around for deals. Media companies are also ready for change; many are looking outside of advertising and subscription, and some publishers are even actively seeking corporate support.

Men's digital powerhouse, *Thrillist*, reverse engineered the buy decision. After passing 1 million email subscribers, the publisher noticed one advertising partner exponentially increasing its spend. Members-only e-commerce site, JackThreads, was selling more and more men's fashion apparel through *Thrillist*'s subscription list of twentysomething urban guys.

Ultimately it was the publisher, not the brand, that saw the buy opportunity. JackThreads acquired Thrillist for \$10 million. "This is a win-win for *Thrillist* and JackThreads ... we see e-commerce as an exciting ancillary revenue stream with lots of potential," CEO Ben Lerer said at the time of acquisition.

Four years on, JackThreads has over 5 million members

BRAND/MEDIA MAVENS

A number of interesting brand acquisitions or investments in publishers shows the model works.

Australian wallet e-retailer Bellroy invested in Carryology, a leather goods lifestyle blog. The goal: to further their shared belief in "quality ways to carry." At last count, Bellroy has connected with over 160,000 carry-savvy potential customers as the blog continues to grow.

L'Oréal's 2011 acquisition of the now 10-year-old property Makeup.com is an often-mentioned success story. "L'Oréal used what they would have normally spent in media dollars to actually create value," explains Robert Rose, chief strategy officer at The Content Marketing Institute.

In 2009, the owner of photography periodical *JPG Magazine* was on the verge of collapse. In one of the first deals of its kind, camera retailer Adorama stepped in to invest. Explains social media expert Chris Brogan on his blog: "This is another move into the land of content marketing. It's easy: Adorama wants to sell cameras, and *JPG* is a magazine dedicated to pointing out awesome camera work. It's a perfect little marriage. Instead of buying ads in good content projects, buy the content project."

and the Thrillist Media Group has annual product sales over \$100 million. *Thrillist* knew how to tell stories and build a trusting audience. JackThreads knew how to monetize this same audience. A happy marriage was born.



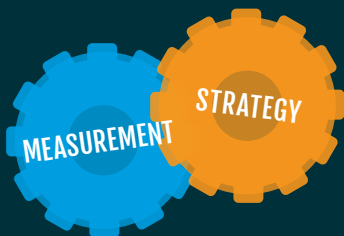
James Dillon is the content manager at Gorilla SEO. Find him @JD_JamesDillon.

BY THE NUMBERS

MEASUREMENT ANGST

Even as content marketers grow more sophisticated year over year, they still struggle mightily to measure effectiveness.

Given the gap, those who master it will have a critical competitive advantage over their peers.

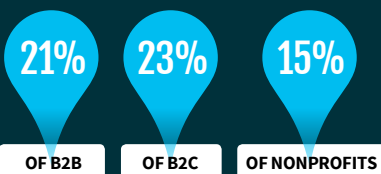


TOP PERFORMERS PAIR MEASUREMENT WITH STRATEGY.

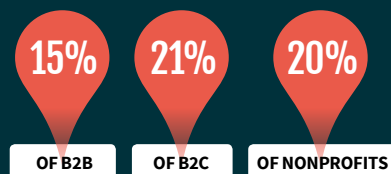
Those with a documented content marketing strategy are less challenged and having more success with measuring effectiveness and tracking ROI.

CONTENT MARKETERS IN NORTH AMERICA STRUGGLE TO TRACK ROI.

Percentage who consider themselves effective at tracking ROI:



Percentage who don't track ROI at all:



WILL 2015 BE THE YEAR TO BRIDGE THE GAP?



Measuring content marketing is the top initiative both B2B and nonprofit marketers are working on in the next 12 months.



Dig into all of CMI's original content marketing research: <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/research/>

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

CCO magazine contributors share the ambitious, the inspirational and the wacky resolutions they've made for 2015.

Jonathan Crossfield @kimota



This is the year I finally take Friday back for myself! For years, I've blocked out time in my diary each week for me—blog posts I'm itching to write, ideas I'm desperate to explore and even the first draft of that book that continues to taunt me. But by Wednesday each week a client has usually talked me into giving them the hours or I've crumbled under a deadline that snuck up on me when I wasn't looking. No more. Line in the sand. Friday is mine for reading and writing and developing me, myself and I. So hands off!

Sarah Mitchell @globalcopywrite



I've been an insomniac for most of my adult life. That's a handy affliction if your content marketing is focused on quantity and always-on social networking. We can all agree it's an unsustainable and ineffective model, right? So, if I want to tell good stories and inject a big dose of creativity into my content—and I do—I need a sharpness of mind that only comes with a well-rested brain. In 2015, I resolve to get at least seven hours sleep a night, every night—at least until "True Detective" starts again.

Scott Brinker
@chiefmartec



I'm resolved to toppling the dull hegemony of passive content—all the reports, eBooks and white papers that make your eyeballs bleed. My goal is to make 2015 the year of interactive content.

Roanne Neuwirth
@RoanneNeuwirth



In 2015, I want to take a kernel from the wisdom Kevin Spacey shared in Cleveland and "just go do it." Whatever it is. Have more fun, agonize less and tell more good stories. Spend more time reading others' good stories and trying to think about things in new ways. Be more patient when I explain yet again what I do for a living. And make sure to eat lots more heirloom tomatoes as soon as they are in season.

EDITOR'S RESOLUTION

Clare McDermott @soloportfolio



I resolve to thank people more often, and with a personal touch. Our print magazine relies on dozens of outside contributors, to say nothing of the folks I call for gut checks about stories or ideas. I usually dash off a thank-you email ... but those rapid-fire notes don't really communicate how grateful I am. In 2015 I resolve to thank people more often, using handwritten snail mail.

Retail Therapy

How you present content can significantly increase engagement ... by as much as double-digits! Who best to teach you how to do it than merchandisers?

By Steve Smith

In 2008 Walmart announced an ambitious store remodeling program called Project Impact. It sought to increase sales by (among other things) significantly changing how products were organized and displayed in the stores. The project was a spectacular flop—with losses in the billions—and Walmart eventually reversed its methods.

Techniques of visual merchandising (i.e. displaying products to make them more appealing) can make or break brick-and-mortar retailers. Visual merchandising incorporates elements such as traffic flow, lighting, color, signage, product packaging, organization and assortment.

Good visual merchandising can have outsized impact on sales—which is why retailers regularly change their store layouts and displays, or completely remodel their stores.

Content marketers can use visual-merchandising concepts to showcase their content more effectively—with as much as double-digit impacts on page views, time on site, repeat visits, conversion and social engagement. It also creates a better user experience and makes content offerings stand out in comparison to the competition.

Let's look at some of the best visual merchandising techniques used by content marketers and online publishers.



1. THE CONTENT PACKAGING

Retailers know product packaging has a huge impact on sales. Good packaging grabs attention and communicates the value proposition of a product. When it comes to digital content experiences, every individual item of content should be similarly designed to entice the user:

- Always use high-impact images
- Provide a crisp and compelling title and a teaser description
- Use badges (visual tags and symbols to call out specific categories)
- Ensure a clear call to action for every content item

EXAMPLE WE LOVE:

► **Coke** (<http://www.coca-colacompany.com/>)

Coca-Cola is a gold standard in content marketing destinations. We love how compelling titles are worked directly into high-impact images. Every piece has accompanying descriptive teaser text and makes use of badging based on category. Every content-related element is clickable, with clear calls to action. For example, the use of play, read-now and see-more buttons make it clear to the users what kind of content they can expect and what will happen next.

2. THE CONTENT ASSORTMENT

Endcap-aisle displays in a store are an effective technique to present items together in a visually appealing way, organized around a unifying theme, with highest margin items placed at eye-level. Items located in endcaps typically outsell regular items by two (or more) to one. Similarly for digital content experiences, how content is organized and presented can have major impact on user engagement. Marketers should:

- Group content into useful or interesting buckets
- Use visually appealing designs that are varied and make effective use of white space
- Take advantage of how users' eyes scan through a page
- Consider incorporating carousels or sliders—old standbys that remain effective for promoting content

EXAMPLE WE LOVE:

► **USA Today** (<http://www.usatoday.com/>)



USA Today recently went through a massive redesign, and set the bar for rich, fluid, immersive news experiences on the web. We love the use of rich images, the variety of image sizes, text that appears when hovering over

content, badging by category, eye-pleasing variation in sizing and assortment of articles, and logical groupings by category with curated and algorithmic groupings seamlessly integrated. *USA Today* has also created an experience that is fluid, with users able to navigate through content continuously—feeling almost like a native tablet application.

3. THE FLOW

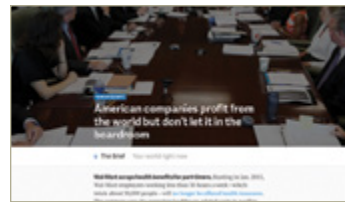
Retailers pay a lot of attention to traffic flow through a store. Are they drawing shoppers deeper into the store? Do displays and paths help move people through the store? User flow through digital content is equally important. Content marketers should:

- Always optimize for mobile
- Choose fast, fluid experiences (e.g. scrolling) over clicks wherever feasible
- Provide simple, compelling navigation and flat content taxonomies
- Strive to bring more content directly to the users instead of expecting them to find it

EXAMPLE WE LOVE:

► **Quartz** (<http://www.Qz.com>)

A rethinking of the content experience for users, Quartz is extremely mobile friendly, and features infinite scrolling, simple navigation, and is easy to keep reading and reading.



Quartz is one of a new breed of content destinations that avoids clicks and layering of content, in favor of a flat hierarchy that brings the user directly into its stories.

4. THE CROSS-SELL

Supermarkets put candy, soda and magazines in the checkout line because cross-selling is an effective technique. Content marketers also have big opportunities to suggest content most likely to keep a user engaged:

- Use relevance, relatedness, recency and popularity as key levers to merchandise content
- Make it extremely easy and timely for the users to select the next piece of content they will want
- Personalize as much as your platform permits based on what you know about the user's context, interests and behavior (for example, don't suggest content that the user has seen)

Like the corner grocer who knows the name of every customer, the more you understand about your readers at an individual level, the more effective you will be at promoting the best content to a user.

EXAMPLE WE LOVE:

► **The New York Times**

(<http://www.nytimes.com/recommendations>)



The *New York Times* has been an early pioneer in personalized reader recommendations. We've found the recommendations to be quite good, and it must be working with their readers

as they have been incorporating this excellent technology more and more deeply into the user experience.

American advertising icon Morris Hite (1910-1983) summed up the opportunity for visual-merchandising perfectly: "Advertising moves people toward goods; merchandising moves goods toward people." By delivering a visually engaging experience that makes interesting content easy to find (and hard to ignore) you can increase the likelihood of your visitors consuming more of it. Retailers have long mastered this art, but we are still in the early innings when it comes to applying visual-merchandising techniques to content.



Steve Smith is vice president of product management at Acquia. He joined Acquia through its recent acquisition of TruCentric, a provider of web personalization software for publishers and content marketers. Find him @ssmithereens.



A look at the best retail apps. <http://bit.ly/StandoutApps>

Can I Join Your Gang?

Targeting social content with groups.

By Jonathan Crossfield

About once a week, my letterbox contains a real estate flyer. “We recently sold a house in your area for a record amount,” declares the smiling, yellow-jacketed headshot. “Have you considered selling your home?”

Not really. We’re renting, so I’m pretty sure our landlord would have something to say about it. We hope to buy in the area next year, but with this sort of messaging we’re not exactly optimistic we’ll get a fair price.

It’s the wrong message to the wrong audience. For every homeowner motivated to sell by those booming house prices, there’s probably a potential buyer scared into putting property plans on hold.

Unfortunately, marketers often treat social media in a similar way, broadcasting the same content to the widest possible audience, regardless of the different needs, wants and expectations of their followers.

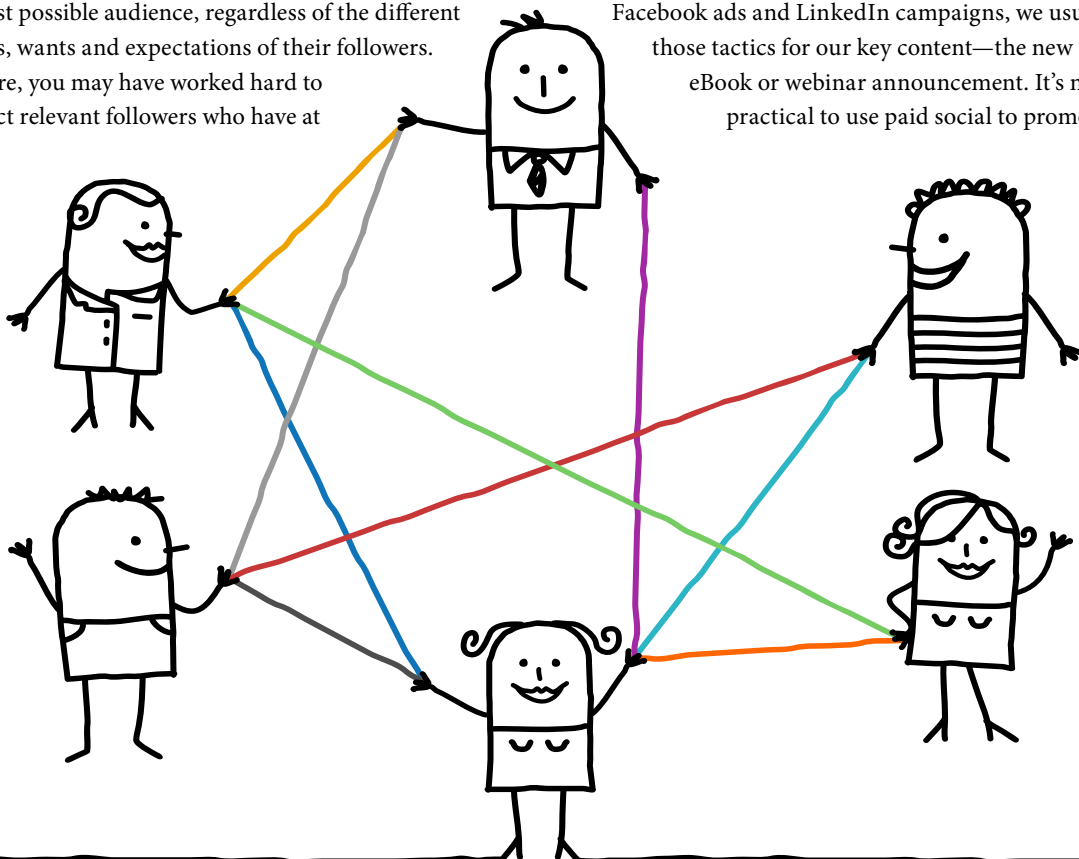
Sure, you may have worked hard to attract relevant followers who have at

least expressed a general interest in your brand. But if your product or service attracts more than one distinct customer profile, you may risk falling into the same trap as the real estate flyer.

Hitting the right target

Of course, we already know this. Email marketers can get quite fanatical about segmenting their lists into smaller and smaller, highly targeted groups. The entire SEO industry is about presenting the right content to the right person at the right time with the right keyword. And social media advertising is sold on the promise of being able to reach highly specific demographics.

But while we can be more targeted with promoted tweets, Facebook ads and LinkedIn campaigns, we usually save those tactics for our key content—the new quarterly eBook or webinar announcement. It’s not always practical to use paid social to promote today’s



blog post or the latest service update.

So, if we want to craft specific, day-to-day social media content for different profiles—and we should—we’re still left with the problem of getting it to the right people. Your social media followers aren’t necessarily organized into nicely segmented lists. Yes, Google Plus tried to make it easier with “circles”, but...well, I’m sure you can finish that sentence.

Thankfully, there is a better way. Instead of spraying your content across large numbers of generic followers in the hope of hitting the right target, you may find a ready-made community eagerly consuming the content you want to share.

I’m talking about social media groups, of course. Facebook, LinkedIn and Google Plus each has different types of group-, community- and/or fan-page functionalities. And these groups allow you to target some incredibly specific niches. (Networks such as Twitter and Instagram still rely on hashtags to group conversations together, which isn’t quite the same thing.)

The smaller scale of these groups means your content stays visible in the group feed for longer, instead of disappearing into obscurity after a few seconds. And group members are more likely to trawl back through previous conversations because, by definition, they are all relevant (or should be) to their interests and reasons for joining. Plus, by targeting an actively interested audience, your content may receive more retweets, comments and “likes”, sharing the content further within their own networks of like-minded people.

Segmenting your social content

Groups can allow you to get extremely granular with your content, developing a number of smaller, but more active and useful conversations.

Here’s a fictional “for instance,” starring the entirely made-up artist, Dustin Bueller. A pin-up heartthrob to many a young girl, Dustin is about as popular with everyone else as a cat in a blender.

Dustin’s record label attracts a wide variety of music lovers to its social media profiles—not just “Buelliebers.” If the label frequently uses its main Twitter account to announce Dustin news, excitable Bueller fans may see it, as intended. But it will also be seen by everyone else, not all of whom will be that excited. At best they’ll view it as irrelevant. But some may turn away from the label’s social media accounts entirely ... or retaliate by creating new memes, reusing that recent police photo of Dustin in increasingly imaginative ways.

Why should the record label risk losing control of the content and the story, when there are already Facebook groups and Google Plus communities devoted to analyzing the deeper meanings of Dustin’s lyrics, or sharing yet more

Groups can allow you to get extremely granular with your content, developing a number of smaller, but more active and useful conversations.

photos of the singer with his shirt off?

By joining and participating in these groups, the same content from the record label may receive much greater and more positive attention from the very people it was designed to reach, without aggravating everyone else. Repeat this idea across each musical niche and the record label could find the right audience for its content every time.

Who made you the boss?

Caution: Don’t assume that just because you’re a big brand you can demand attention and respect. It doesn’t matter that you have hundreds of thousands of followers elsewhere. In each new group, you’re starting from scratch.

In most (if not all) cases, you can’t join a group as the brand. You have to be a person with your own profile, so be careful to make it clear whom you represent. Each member of your team who joins a group will be judged depending on his or her actions and treated accordingly. (Side note: Groups functionality for Facebook brand pages is in evaluation.)

If you join a group only to push an agenda and spam your special offers, you may find yourself cast into the wilderness very quickly indeed. Instead, spend time joining conversations and building relationships before you start to share your content. (In short, your first post shouldn’t be your latest press release.)

Genuinely listening and participating in these groups could also be a massive opportunity to find out what your different customers care most about—valuable insights for your marketing strategy.

Never view groups simply as another distribution channel. You’re either one of the gang, or you’re not. But if the gang accepts you, your content may find a far more loyal and enthusiastic audience.



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



Read more from Jonathan Crossfield:
<http://bit.ly/JCrossfield>



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Tell your story.

*Source: Nielsen



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TECH TOOLS

SOCIAL INFLUENCERS SHARE THE TOOLS THAT HELP THEM KEEP THEIR EDGE

What are your favorite tools for content syndication?

CONTENT SYNDICATION can be a perplexing term, but simply put, it allows marketers to extend the life and reach of their content (blog, article, video, social media, etc.) by publishing it on third-party sites.



Taboola

Taboola helps us make sure we get our content in front of very relevant audiences. It's not just about more eyeballs. We leverage Taboola for content syndication and amplification. It helps Vocus get high-quality, relevant content in front of an audience we wouldn't reach with our own properties. It offers great conversion tracking that can tie into our CRM with leads—something that many do not provide. It really helps at the top end of the sales funnel.

We can monitor a piece of content's performance and further drive the well-performing pieces to get the most views. While you can filter the sites that publish your content, we're surprised because we're getting results from sites that we didn't expect. We also like its technical features. For example, we can do three different headlines to test performance with no effort on our part then further leverage the content with the better-performing headline.

Submitted by **Mark Thabit, Vocus, @markthabit**

DEPARTMENT EDITOR



Ann Gynn trains others to create successful content marketing or works directly to get the job done on behalf of her clients. Follow her @anngynn or www.content-marketing-coach.com.

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

Outbrain & Uberflip

A solid piece of content will gain some organic ground when published in a company's own channels. But publishing the piece to Outbrain truly amplifies the reach and can generate more traffic conversions. With Outbrain, links to your content appear as recommendations on the web's largest content publishers, including sites like CNN.com, Slate and ESPN. The more interesting your content and more traffic you drive, the more it will be recommended around the web.

I also like the approach that Uberflip has taken with converging multiple content channels into a single, branded content hub that provides a great experience on any device.

Submitted by **Brody Dorland, DivvyHQ, @brodydorland**



NewsCred

The content that resonates most with our clients covers success stories, must-have strategies and must-try tactics. With NewsCred, we access licensed content sources and original content creators to help us fill out the narratives and manage the end-to-end of content marketing so that we're poised to provide content of value to our audiences and amplify it across our marketing ecosystem. With NewsCred we're able to test content topics and themes and measure what resonates so that we're not just scaling content quantity, we're scaling content quality.

Submitted by **Jason Grunberg, Sailthru, @jasongrunberg**



Business 2 Community

Business 2 Community is a free service for bloggers. I gave it authorization to access my blog whenever a new post goes up. If it finds the content valuable, Business 2 Community will syndicate it. I get quite a few tweets referencing the service and my post so it is definitely getting the content out there. The service is easy to use and the process is completely seamless.

Submitted by **Jenifer Kramer, Jenerosity Marketing, @jenerositymktg**



Kevin Spacey opens up about nurturing creatives in the entertainment industry, collaborating with non-media brands, and crafting binge-worthy stories.

By Clare McDermott

Do you think non-media brands can pull off the kind of rich, nuanced storytelling we see coming out of the entertainment industry?

There's an incredible explosion happening in the last decade at the intersection of technology and creativity. We are seeing extremely creative content and creative advertising from the most surprising and unsuspected companies, venues and platforms.

Companies just have to stay true to what they are, and find a way to be innovative and authentic—authentic to their brand and authentic to their audience.

On the heels of the Netflix model (and now Hulu, Amazon and YouTube) we're going to start to see new channels, new platforms and all kinds of creativity we could not have imagined before.

■ It's been interesting to see Los Angeles-based agencies like CAA helping brands become better storytellers. As brands strive to behave more like media companies, will they need to lean on the entertainment industry?

It's incredibly smart of certain companies to go to where the creative source is ... if they perceive that to be in Hollywood, that's great.

Power [in the entertainment industry] used to be consigned to a very small group in years past. You couldn't get in if you were an artist unless you had some unbelievable luck, or you knew somebody who knew somebody, or you were in New York or Los Angeles knocking on doors. Now because of the Internet, there's no barrier to entry. Lucas Cruickshank is a perfect example of what happens when people self-produce and self-publish their own material. About eight years ago,

Cruickshank created a little webisode about a hyperactive teenager named Fred. He got some likes on YouTube and so he made another one, and another one ... by last April he had 1 billion views.

The job for those of us in the industry—and I would suggest for those in the studios and the network executives—is to pay attention because if we don't make these young, interesting, emerging talents realize the ground is very fertile in television or in the studio system, we're going to lose these kids because why would they partner with us if they can do it on their own?

■ What has changed in Hollywood in recent years when it comes to telling long-form stories?

Think about the way television used to be before 2000. You can throw in a caveat for *Hill Street Blues*. When it premiered, it was one of the first kinds of programs that dealt with complicated storylines, diverse characters, multiple plots going on, etc. I remember hearing about the network notes Steve Bochco [*Hill Street Blues*' co-creator and producer] got, and hearing that if he had been forced to follow those notes it would have destroyed everything about what that show was and why it became so popular. After that, audiences began to demand more complexity.

There was a time when the kind of general attitude was that “all characters on television have to be nice, and they have to be likeable, and they have to be good at their job, and be good family people.” But at a certain point people started to throw up their hands and ask, “Why not?” And when HBO shook their heads and asked, “Why not a series about a mob boss who kills people but also suffers from anxiety attacks? Why not?” They started a kind of revolution in television. *The Sopranos* was the groundbreaking show and, frankly, some incredibly courageous programming from some pretty ballsy executives. And you can follow that line right straight through *Sons of Anarchy*, *Breaking Bad*, *Mad Men*, *Rescue Me*, *Weeds*, *True Blood*, etc.

For us on *House of Cards*, the runway was paved very well before we decided to take off, and that kind of exciting, brave programming has illustrated that audiences are demanding more complex stories and, when you do that kind of programming, the most remarkable kinds of stories can be told. That kind of openness and creativity has been in evidence in the last 15 years in a way that I don't think it ever has been before.

Photo by Miller Mobley/ Redux

THE REAL STORY



Photo by Miller Mobley Redux



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■ **Let's talk about the AMC model, where brands are integrated into content creation (e.g. product placements in *Mad Men* or commercials during *The Walking Dead* that rely on creative from the show itself.) Are those types of collaborations of interest to you and will they become more common?**

If you're able to create a relationship between a show and a product, and it works for the story and doesn't feel imposed, it's fine. But it has to work creatively.

I run a theater in London and we do this thing called *The 24 Hour Plays*®. Quite often we try to get sponsorship because it's aimed at helping emerging artists like young writers, directors, producers and actors. We asked a potato-chip company to sponsor the event and they told us they would give us even more money if their potato chips ended up in one of the plays. Not only did it end up in one of the plays, it ended up being a featured part of one of the plays ... and it was hysterical. It was a brilliant example of how you can take a product, put it in front of a writer and say, "Can you make this work?" If the writer feels organically it can work, and it's not going to be exploitative or like you're being a whore, then I don't have a problem with it.

The shows you mentioned are expensive shows to produce; there's a certain level of quality that an audience has come to expect from these shows. Whatever you can do to bring those costs down—whether that's bringing product placements in, where they'll pay you a certain amount of money to put something in, or whether it's filming in a city where you have tax incentives—all of those are incredibly smart things to do in a world where we all have to be smart about the economics.

■ **Can you share what you believe makes a character particularly powerful, unique or relatable?**

Look, I'm not a writer and I don't create a character. What I do is interpret someone else's creation. My job as an actor is to serve the writing. Sometimes you read [a script] and you can hear the writer's voice coming out of everybody's mouth, and what you want to hear is a character's voice.

People are always saying to me, "How do you learn all those lines?" My retort is: they're not lines, they are ideas. If you can get your head around what the idea is that the writer is trying to get across, then the words come because that's the only way that this particular character could express it.

The question, "What makes an interesting character?," that's not the question to ask. The question is, "What story are you telling, and why are you telling it, and what representatives can you pull up of the human being that are the best ones to tell that particular story?" If the writer creates a genuine character, not a writer's mouthpiece, you are in a position as an actor to be able to bring that character to life, to interpret those ideas. That's what my job is.

■ ***House of Cards* is distributed only through Netflix. We see a lot of media companies racing to release omnimedia content. Have you given it any thought related to *House of Cards*?**

KEVIN SPACEY has won countless awards and accolades for his body of work as an actor, including Academy Awards for Best Supporting Actor in *The Usual Suspects* (1995) and Best Actor in *American Beauty* (1999). But when he spoke at **Content Marketing World** in September 2014, he described his most meaningful work to date, as artistic director of The Old Vic theater in London. In a speech to CMW attendees, he described his commitment to what his mentor, Jack Lemmon, taught him: "send the elevator back down" to cultivate and support new talent in the entertainment world.

Spacey also spoke in depth about his experience as lead actor in the groundbreaking series, *House of Cards*. The series—released only through Netflix—represents a mighty disruption to traditional broadcasting. Spacey believes *House of Cards* continues a path first created when *The Sopranos* debuted in 1999 and demonstrated audiences crave richer and more complex dramas. He thinks this hunger for better quality programming on diverse distribution platforms will spawn a new wave of creative talent in Hollywood and beyond. The role for brands in this non-commercial world? Read the interview to find out.

In terms of the creative experience, the platform doesn't matter. And it really doesn't matter to the audience. I don't think the audience cares anymore what platform something is on; they just want good content. And, as I say, I think they've demanded good content.

The way it's distributed has nothing to do with our creative process. The only thing we're not obligated to do since we are on Netflix is we don't have to create all sorts of arbitrary cliff-hangers to go to commercials (enticing people to come back.)

Netflix was the only network that didn't demand a pilot for *House of Cards*. So we were able to tell the story in the time that we wanted to tell it and have the space to allow characters to engage with each other without feeling those kind of confines or arbitrary things that we would have to have achieved in a pilot script. But the process for us is we're just trying to write the best story that we can, and tell an arc of a story over a long period of time. So, in many ways, this experience has not felt to me episodic at all, it feels like I'm making a very long movie.

■ **We had thousands of marketers in Cleveland, Ohio, to talk about content and storytelling. What would Frank Underwood say about such a gathering?**

[In character ...] It's probably the first time in history that anyone has been able to say that Cleveland is the hottest town in the United States.



Watch some important moments of Kevin Spacey's presentation at CMWorld 2014. <http://bit.ly/CMWisdom>

THE WIZARD OF MOZ



Rand Fishkin, founder of Moz, a leading inbound marketing software company, and host of the popular video series, “Whiteboard Fridays,” talks about what he wishes marketers understood about search, and tips for upping your game in 2015.

Interview by Clare McDermott

CCO: Marketers seem ambivalent about search these days. As Google focuses more and more on quality content, there’s a growing sense among marketers that search isn’t as important as it once was. What do you wish marketers understood about SEO, and what are their blind spots?

FISHKIN: One of the key misunderstandings is the power search engines have to drive traffic. There’s a perception in the marketing world that Google is last year’s news. Social is hot and content is hot and native advertising is hot ... and SEO isn’t all that exciting. It may be true that SEO has been around a long time, but it is still the most powerful earned, nonpaid source of traffic on the web. Google is sending out 10 times more

traffic everyday than Facebook does. There are 6 billion searches per day, each of those resulting in 1.5 to 2.5 visits on average. Those searchers are seeking something very different from social media audiences or email audiences in that they are looking for exactly the thing they’ve told the search engine. And if the searcher arrives on your website, the power to solve that person’s problem, convert and expose the searcher to your work is exceptional. That’s the big one.

Due to a lack of knowledge, there’s underinvestment in SEO by content marketers to the detriment of their efforts.


What I also see from those who invest in content marketing is an addiction to the daily drive to add more and more content—mostly for the reason that if they don’t have something new, they can’t drive more traffic. SEO is a potentially huge solution to that problem. While social media and other sources of promotion fade after a few hours or days, search traffic continues on for months or years. Content marketers feel they have to constantly feed that fire in order to get traffic, and it’s a huge source of frustration for them.

Due to a lack of knowledge, there’s underinvestment in SEO by content marketers to the detriment of their efforts.

Some marketers also misunderstand how keyword research and targeting works in concert with content. It's a historical bias left over from the '90s that says: In order to do good SEO, you have to do keyword stuffing and use a very keyword-focused strategy with their content, as opposed to writing for users and simply using a few terms and phrases intelligently in the title, headline and content to attract search engines.

Finally (and this is tangentially related to SEO), I see a lot of content marketers seeking viral content—one big content success—rather than investing in figuring out what serves their audience and influencers, and then serving those two groups with the right content. And by the way, marketers seeking to serve the right content can be hugely helped by investing in keyword research.

Google is moving quickly to meet the needs of mobile devices. Can you help demystify some of the changes—particularly those that will affect content marketers?


 Google is doing something interesting that a lot of marketers take as a negative, but it may be overall in the long term a net positive. Google is providing a lot of instant answers to queries—and many marketers are crying foul because they see it as stealing website traffic. If you do a search for NFL scores, ESPN comes up and NFL.com comes up. But ahead of those two is a Google Universal One box that tallies up scores for the day. Google does that for all sorts of queries: weather, travel, hotel, flights. They even do it if you search, for example, for art museums in Boston. They'll give you a list of museums tied to Google maps—and that will come in ahead of the

individual museum websites.

A lot of brands are frustrated thinking Google is taking away their traffic opportunities.

My only counterpoint to that is: In these cases, Google is usually taking away traffic when a decision is already made or when there's not a lot of opportunity to capture conversion-focused value from those visitors. And by offering the information up front, Google is promoting more and greater use of Google. You can see that in the mobile-search statistics, which just

Can you give us some practical tips for marketers to kick off 2015?

 Many marketers are failing right now to properly connect and measure ROI from various channels. For example, social media is a channel that very rarely figures in the last click before conversion (or often even in the full conversion path if you're tracking 90 days of activity in Google Analytics or whatever you might be using.) That being said, you can look at the contribution of social channels to your

Due to the measurement challenge, a lot of C-suite executives—including CMOs—are biased toward channels that are the most measurable rather than the ones that are most serendipitous and hard to measure.

keep going up and to the right. Search is one of the most popular things we do on mobile devices, and certainly one of the most popular things we do on the mobile web. Google is doing a good job creating addictive behavior in searches such that the volume of queries keeps going up and up. As we all search more, Google is actually creating more potential and more value in the chunky middle and long tail of keyword demand—where Google is never going to serve instant answers and there are going to be more queries.

So yes, in the short term Google is taking away some of that traffic trying to get answers to mobile searchers as fast as possible and getting the searchers addicted to mobile search. But in the long term it creates a bigger pie for everyone, including marketers.

overall traffic, returning traffic and loyal traffic, then look at your funnel and see how social media and content marketing are often broadening the very top of the funnel. They affect how people discover you, get branded by you and first come to know you. For the next three, six or nine months, those people will often turn into conversions or amplifiers ... but unfortunately, we don't have great ways of measuring that directly.

Due to the measurement challenge, a lot of C-suite executives—including CMOs—are biased toward channels that are the most measurable rather than the ones that are most serendipitous and hard to measure. The thing that sucks about that is those easy-to-measure channels get quickly clogged up with competition. Everyone's going to put dollars toward the ones that are easy to measure and

obvious ... and they will become very expensive, high cost-of-acquisition channels. The ones that are hard to measure and serendipitous (sitting mostly at top of the funnel) will have low competition and much less noise. A lot of people won't put dollars toward them—which means there's tremendous opportunity in those channels. Unfortunately, people focus on what they can measure. I would urge intelligent marketers to bias the other way and be a little serendipitous.

Second, I am seeing a huge amount of investment in content marketing and that's exciting, but I think the pendulum has swung too far to quantity over quality. Very few companies approve projects that are expensive and interactive—projects that require designers, developers and content creators to work together. Marketers are more bias toward, "Hey, let's get up a blog post every day."

We are all so overwhelmed with how much content is being produced and broadcast. Only the very special stuff

stands out. I'd like to encourage and urge folks not to chase that one viral hit but to invest is quality over quantity. And to consider that publishing every day or every week may not be a very good goal. Attracting the right kind of customer, potential customer and evangelist should be your focus ... and finding the content and time frame that accomplishes that.



Wake the sleeping giant of search: Your employees.
<http://bit.ly/WakeTheGiant>

FACEBOOK'S CLICK-BAIT CUTDOWN: ARE YOUR HEADLINES SAFE?

Facebook is cracking down on click-bait headlines and posts, but the move is causing confusion about what's out and what's still OK.

Tracy C. Gold

Amid Facebook's recent algorithm changes, many marketers misunderstand what the social giant is actually doing. It's not cutting down on BuzzFeed-type headlines, which generally use a formula such as "10 Things Harry Potter Fanatics Want for the Holidays." That's actually a great headline by Facebook's rules because it clearly defines what readers can expect ... even if it is silly.

Facebook's research found that "80 percent of the time, people preferred headlines that helped them decide if they wanted to read the full article before they had to click through," so it's cutting down on headlines and statuses that are misleading. Titles like, "You'll Never Believe What This Mom Did

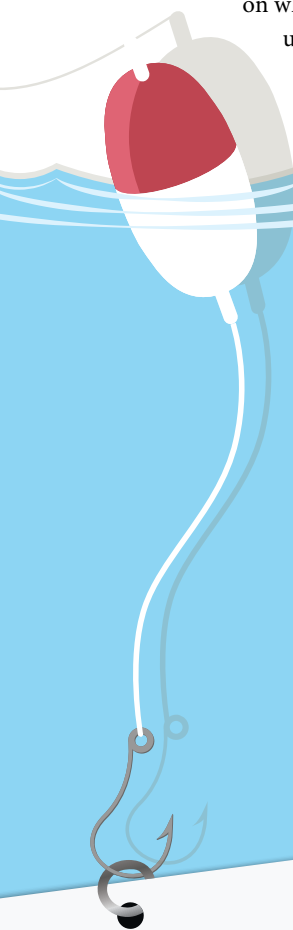
for Halloween" are now penalized. Facebook knows which titles are click-bait because it measures the time a user spends away from the Newsfeed after

clicking the link. If it's a long time, users are more likely engaging with the content—and Facebook will reward the link with better placement on the Newsfeed.

What about numbered headlines? (e.g. "10 things...") In CMI's own study, we found content that included a number outperformed the average by 45 percent. We think in part it's because the number makes a very clear and specific promise to the reader about what to expect in the post. A title like "Why Content Marketing is Awesome" could preface a paragraph, a book, a rambling and disorganized blog post, anything. You just don't know from the title. But "6 Reasons Why Content Marketing is Awesome" promises the reader the content will likely be reasonably short and well-organized. Yes, the numbered list title type is overused and sometimes overly simplistic (hence the eye rolling), but it does ultimately make a promise to the reader that the content keeps.



Tracy Gold is a marketer, writer, and editor based in Baltimore, Maryland. Follow her @tracycgold.



YOUTUBE IS A SEARCH ENGINE

Marketers tend to overlook social networks as search engines ... and the most overlooked of all is YouTube. When you consider SEO strategy, don't forget about video content.

Seth Dotterer

Ask marketers what is the second-biggest search engine in the world, and I'll bet the answer you hear is Baidu or Bing. In fact, it's YouTube, with 1 billion mobile views per day. And video is expected to account for 79 percent of all consumer Internet traffic by 2018.

Simply put: Brands that ignore YouTube (and video content) will find themselves without the audiences they need to survive.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS SEARCH



You probably don't think of YouTube, Facebook or Pinterest as search engines. Think again. Facebook serves more than 1 billion searches per day, and Pinterest—consistently ranked in comScore's top 50 digital media properties—launched guided search this summer. (Pinterest says it wants to be the place where people search for inspiration.)

But the big daddy of all social search engines is YouTube. And still, many marketers view video content as "nice to have." Consider this: video content is expected to account for 79 percent of all consumer Internet traffic by 2018 ... which means it's time video content becomes "need to have."

HOW TO BEGIN WITH VIDEO

Expanding into video means upping your content game ... but you don't have to be James Cameron or even Red Bull to compete. In fact, with a little in-house talent, a decent camera and some editing software, any brand can produce video its audiences want to watch. Here are some ideas:

How-to: This one is a no-brainer for a brand that sells a product or service because consumers are so accustomed to searching the Web for how-to advice. Simply take your most relevant "how-to" search queries and answer them in video form.

List: If you're producing written content, you're probably publishing lists. The next step is to cherry pick the lists that most naturally lend themselves to visual storytelling (hint: they're the blog posts with the most pictures) and turn those into videos.

Unboxing: Do you enjoy unwrapping gifts? A lot of people do. Heck, there's even a large niche for people who like watching unboxing videos (where someone else, you guessed it, films themselves unwrapping a product and posts it online.) You can make these in-house, but they're also a ready-made format for encouraging user-generated content.

MEASURE AND ADJUST

Obviously, not all of these video formats will work for every brand, and factors like production value and style will go a long way to determining success.

But the key factor for driving success is relevance. Are you producing videos audiences want to watch? To answer that question, you must measure results so you know what's working, what content isn't worth pursuing and where to put your resources to maximize ROI.

YouTube provides a reporting dashboard that gives you a rough idea of how your content is performing. This is a good start, but you'll need to go further. At a minimum, you should know which keywords are driving traffic to your video. But it's also important to know where and how those keywords overlap with the keywords for your strategies in other channels so you can find the gaps in your reach. At the same time, you must measure and track other key performance indicators like the total number of videos, subscribers, views and minutes watched.

Naturally, this is a starting point. Once you begin to see sites like YouTube as search engines, you'll approach each new channel with the same level of sophistication that you use to deploy your content strategy in more traditional channels. But the key thing to remember is that your audience moves across a vast Web, so it's important that your ultimate content marketing strategy includes a roadmap to expanding your presence into every relevant channel.



Seth Dotterer is vice president of marketing of Conductor. Find him @dotterer.

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Content Personalization Tips

Most content marketers segment content based on their audience ... but what about technology-fueled, target-seeking content personalization? Turns out many of us still have a long way to go. We sought answers from the experts about getting started with personalization and honing your skills.

By Ann Gynn

Content personalization is tough. Before beginning, marketers must weigh buyer personas, channel strategy, the buyer journey and even account for different devices. Then add that, “Content marketing tends to be both longer-form and much less automated than other types of personalized digital marketing, such as email and banner ads,” says Rebecca Lieb of Altimeter Group.

Given the complexity of the issue and its best practices, it’s no surprise many marketers still struggle with how to apply content personalization effectively. We asked a handful of CMI contributors and CMW speakers to share their personalization tips.

Secure information on individuals; be systematic

“Content marketers must have access to information about individuals, not persona groups. It requires content and technology. And it cannot be done effectively without the adoption of a repeatable, systematic approach. A component content management system—one that can be connected to other data sources—is required to automate personalization efforts and to manage the effort efficiently.”

Scott P. Abel, content marketing strategist, The Content Wrangler Inc., @scottabel

Monitor what’s popular

When distributing content to your audience, send snippets of content with links to further details. Use your marketing automation tool to monitor what your audience is interested in and personalize further communication based on this.

“You also can track if your subscribers visit your website

and what pages they visit. Then you can automatically trigger personalized emails based on pages they have visited.”

Ian Cleary, social media tools guy, RazorSocial, @iancleary

Go small, then grow your efforts

Large-scale personalization takes technology. Companies are now able to target super-specific audiences with Facebook ads. Shop Local does this and it’s pretty amazing how specific the targets are.

Small-scale personalization takes work. But it’s also effective, especially for B2B companies that need a lower volume of higher value leads. Come up with any reason to do personalized outreach to a few hundred contacts, and give it a try. It could be a survey, an event or any other reason to reach out.

“You’ll get blisters on your fingers from writing hundreds of personal messages, but those reconnections are golden. This kind of ‘brute-force’ marketing is so difficult, only a tiny percentage of marketers will do it.”

Andy Crestodina, principal, strategic director, Orbit Media, @crestodina

Take it step by step

“Starting with intelligent segmentation—by discipline, vertical or geography—is a good way in. Moving to behavior-triggered content is a logical next step. Going for full-blown, dynamic personalization is a lot to take on from a standing start.”

Doug Kessler, co-founder and creative director, Velocity Partners, @dougkessler

Understand your audience

“What it boils down to with content personalization is knowing your audience. It’s critical for content marketers to understand with whom they’re communicating with and what type of content their audience wants to consume. Once that understanding is there, personalization can be applied through different content mediums.”

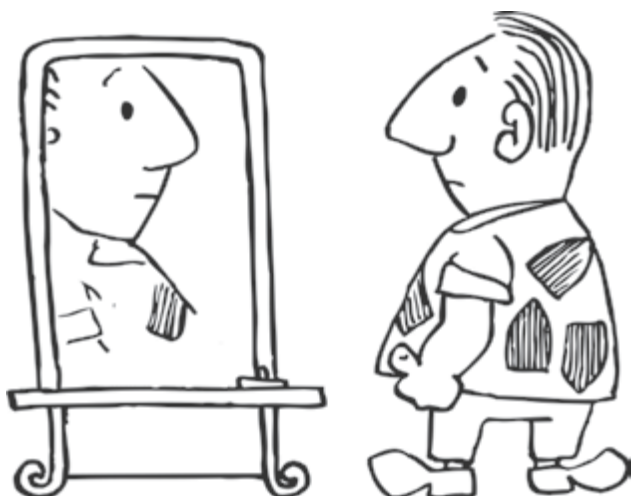
Sunil Rajaraman, co-founder and CEO, Scripted, @subes01



Ann Gynn is the editor of the CMI blog and owner of Content Marketing Coach, where she helps brands create successful content marketing strategies and tactics. Follow her @anngynn.



Find more personalization tips online.
<http://bit.ly/CMPersonalization>



REUSING & RECYCLE

[Tips for tired content producers.]



.....

Feeling worn out by producing so much original content? Consider reusing and repurposing others' work. Here's a quick guide to the models of content reusing, and how to be sure you do it legally and ethically.

SYNDICATION

Content syndication is an agreement between a content producer (e.g. blogger or brand publisher) and a publisher or syndicator to reusing content, often in a consistent, ongoing agreement. You can syndicate full-length content (e.g. a blog post), just a headline and first paragraph or even just a thumbnail with a link—the tactic you choose depends on your overall content marketing strategy. Syndication options include:

- ▶ **PAID SYNDICATION:** Syndication platforms get your content on major and niche publishers' sites in a recommended-links window.
- ▶ **NON-PAID SYNDICATION:** You can arrange one-off agreements with publishers to automatically pull your content from your RSS feed on a pre-arranged schedule. Seeking Alpha and Instapundit, for example, have one-to-one relationships with bloggers to republish their content.
- ▶ **OTHER OPTIONS:** Consider manually cross-posting content on platforms like Medium, Reddit or Storify—sites that aggregate contributed content.

LICENSING

Often confused with syndication, licensing allows companies to republish an article that casts them in a good light or republish online content that is particularly germane to their business. By licensing the content, companies pay for the right to reusing it in some pre-agreed fashion. Examples include:

- ▶ **CONTENT REPRINTS:** A technology company republishes or reprints a *LAPTOP* magazine article that features its product.
- ▶ **RE-USING LOGOS AND BADGES:** A hospital pays to use the *US News & World Report* Best Hospitals logo on its website or a tech business pays *Fast Company* to use a Most Innovative Company badge in its email signatures.

- ▶ **OTHER OPTIONS:** Interesting new models include IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) licenses, in which media companies license their content to IPTV broadcasters to create highly specialized cable channels. In a novel collaboration between broadcasting, media and brands, IPTV channels run video content on a niche topic (e.g. automotive repair) paired with in-stream “clickable” product offerings (e.g. supplies from PepBoys.)

CURATION

Using curation, brands collect other publishers' content to re-publish on their own site; however, rather than republishing it in full, they present a summary or short excerpt with a link to the publisher's original content. Because they don't publish content in full, companies don't pay for the content. Companies may choose to curate manually or leverage scale by using one of the large content-curation platforms.

PERMISSIONS

What if you want to publish an excerpt from a book, report or blog post, but worry whether you have permission to do so? The “fair use” rule of copyright law isn't always clear, but common sense should guide you. Pulling a short quote, with proper citation, from a longer document is typically OK. But if you're pulling a long excerpt or if your quote represents a significant portion of the entire work (for example, a pull quote of 100 words from a blog post that's only 400 words), you should seek permission from the source. Keep in mind, attitudes about digital content are generally more lax than print. But when in doubt, ask.



Want more advice about permissions? Ann Handley's new book, *Everybody Writes*, includes a chapter about the basics of copyright, fair use and attribution.



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CONTENT MARKETING AWARDS

CONTENT MARKETER OF THE YEAR: BRYAN RHOADS

FROM INTEL



Bryan Rhoads' acceptance video for Content Marketer of the Year proves why he won the award; it's a content asset in its own right. See Rhoads' acceptance speech: <http://bit.ly/BryanRhoads>

In September, the Content Marketing Institute awarded Bryan Rhoads our top honor for an individual marketer: Content Marketer of the Year. Rhoads couldn't make it to Content Marketing World to accept his award because Intel's Developer Forum ran on the same dates ... but he promised to send an acceptance video. I warned him, “Don't be a talking head.”

Boy did he deliver. What Rhoads sent only confirmed why we chose him as our winner. (Who knew an acceptance video could be side splittingly funny?) I can't possibly describe it for you ... you'll have to watch it on your own.

Rhoads runs Intel's Media Lab and leads Intel's global content marketing strategies. His work on projects like iQ and the Creator's Project explores the roles of media, brand, art and technology. But Rhoads' recent deep thinking about storytelling archetypes (see the October issue of CCO for his article about story archetypes) signals he's just getting started.

- **Clare McDermott**, editor, CCO magazine; judge, Content Marketer of the Year award



Read Rhoads' article about classic story archetypes.
<http://bit.ly/7Archetypes>

Branded Content

By Tom Fishburne



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

cm CONTENT
TECH

Wednesday
February 25, 2015
10am-5pm

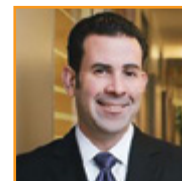
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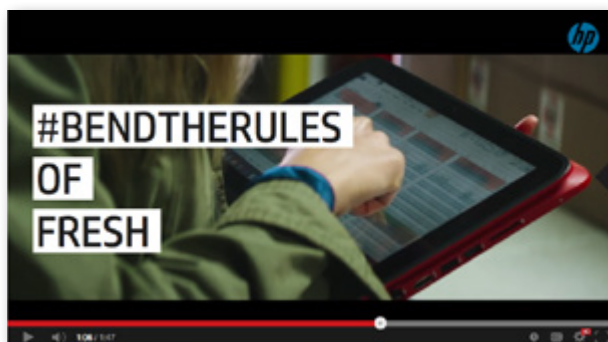
WINGING IT WITH BENEFIT COSMETICS

She's your Gymfluencer, your Belle of the Brunch, your Style Soulmate. She's your best friend, and **Benefit Cosmetics** wants to help you celebrate your friendship. For its month-long "Wing Women & Win" campaign, the cosmetics company created a series of "adorbs wing women badges in social that you can tag your friends in—think Girl Scout badges, but with more booze and beauty." Benefit shared the badges on Instagram and Pinterest, where fans could tag the #wingwomen who best embodied the persona of each badge for a chance to win prizes for themselves and that friend.



MASHABLE & HP BEND THE RULES TOGETHER

The Mashable Photo Challenge is a weekly feature inviting readers to submit photos based on a particular prompt ... and brands have joined in. **Hewlett-Packard** uses prompts like "bend your fashion rules" and "extreme photo editing" connected to HP's "Bend the Rules" social campaign. The HP partnership also extended to the Mashable Vine Challenge, where a "360-degree" prompt cleverly tied into promotion of the x360 Pavilion convertible PC.



DEPARTMENT EDITOR

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



#SUPERHERO KID TO THE RESCUE!

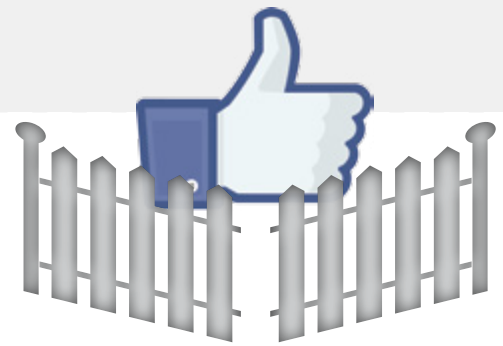
If your child had a superhero power, what would it be? According to **Pirate's Booty** fans on social media, our littlest superheroes have the powers to make huge messes, sneak things into shopping carts and get their parents to say "yes" to anything. The tongue-in-cheek responses came from parents hoping to win a contest launched by the snack company to promote its limited-edition Avengers-themed lunch packs. The Pirate's Booty partnership with Marvel Comics also included a custom-designed digital comic starring the Avengers and, of course, the Pirate's Booty Pirate.



THIS IS HOW YOU WEBINAR

“I’m all about lead generation, listen close if you need an explanation. I’m international, you know, like every nation. That’s why my platform has seamless integration.”

How does a webinar-based marketing solutions company stand out from the crowd? **ON24** did it by hiring songwriter DJ Dave, the man behind the “Whole Foods Parking Lot” viral video, to create a three-minute rap video, “This Is How You Webinar.” Businessman Dave is having a boring day at the office, but when it’s time for his webinar he becomes a rapping lead-generation star (gold bling included.) The webinar rap theme continues through the “Way to Webinar” campaign website. There you can download a print-your-own door hanger—“Do Not Disturb, I’m Webinarizing”—together with a benchmarks report that has section headings like “Driving Bomb Style Registration” and “On-Demand Viewing to Keep Your Game Tight.” You can even remix DJ Dave’s song while you’re there. Be careful, though, “This Is How You Webinar” just might get stuck in your head.



FACEBOOK CLOSES THE ‘LIKE’ GATES

Getting **Facebook** fans just got harder for companies that relied on freebies to get new likes. Facebook recently phased out “like” gates, meaning that companies can no longer require users to like their page in exchange for a coupon, free sample or contest entry. In a developers blog post announcing changes to the platform policies, Facebook wrote, “To ensure quality connections and help businesses reach the people who matter to them, we want people to like Pages because they want to connect and hear from the business, not because of artificial incentives. We believe this update will benefit people and advertisers alike.” And wouldn’t you rather have a fan who is interested in your content than a fan who is just there for the occasional giveaway?

CONTENT THAT’S ALWAYS AVAILABLE

Most people associate e-paper screens with the Amazon’s Kindle, but a small Slovenian company aims to change that. **Visionect V-tablets** use e-paper technology to give brands new ways to reach customers in the physical world. Using the Visionect platform, companies can prototype an e-paper product for an unlimited number of applications—from digital signage to event guides or handheld libraries in waiting rooms. The tablet has a touch screen (no buttons whatsoever) and is waterproof. Want to change the information on the tablet? Just push out new content remotely through wifi. Pretty nifty.



– Nenad Senic @NenadSenic

Connect Me With a Real Person.



In his column, **Andrew Davis** dishes out content marketing advice to unsuspecting targets. In this issue, Davis asks director of data for **Kraft Foods Group**, Julie Fleischer, to consider a more human approach to email newsletters.

Julie Fleischer

Director, Data + Content + Media
Kraft Foods Group

Dear Ms. Fleischer,

Who is Kraft.Kitchens@e.kraftfoods.com? Is there a person back there or just an algorithm that spits out a recipe and sends it to me?

Don't get me wrong ... I really like the recipes you send me. (The one for "creamy lasagna roll-ups" is really inventive!) I just don't feel a personal connection to your brand and I think you're missing a tremendous opportunity to deliver a humanized experience from a powerhouse brand. You're passing up the chance to connect me with the people behind your brand.

Over a year ago I answered your call to "Make Tonight Delicious" and I signed up to receive a recipe in my inbox every Thursday. I chose Thursday because it's the one night a week I don't feel like cooking at home, even though I know I should. I made an appointment with your brand and I'm excited about the inspiration you send each week.

Your e-mails are wonderfully produced. They are. The imagery is enticing. The food looks appealing. Even the recipe names are well-suited to my dinner desires.

Here's the rub: It feels like commodity content. You see ... email is an interpersonal communication medium. It lets people connect with others, instantly. I spend my entire day emailing back and forth with people. Not brands. People.

Who are the people who power your recipes? Why don't you invite them to add some flavor, context and personality to the recipes you send?

I'd love to build a relationship with your test kitchen staff. They spend their days dreaming up new ways to tease my tongue. They are good at it. Really good. Why not deliver these e-mails with some personality?

What if the e-mails came from your test kitchen chefs? I'm much more likely to open,

Email is a personal space. So make your emails personal.

read and consume an e-mail from Deborah@KraftTestKitchen.com than I am from your generic newsletter address.

What if your staff invited me to respond to the email and tell them what I thought (after I've made your delicious recipe)? What if you asked me to send in variations of the recipe directly to *my* test kitchen chef?

Email is a personal space. So make your emails personal. The stuff you send will be magically transformed from brand-centric marketing material to a conversation between the people that power your brand and the consumers who love the recipes your talented chefs dream up.

So please, stop sending emails from generic, catch-all, email addresses. Send me an email from a real person on your team.

Here's the deal, Julie. If you agree to send your emails from real Kraft Kitchen staff, I promise to have you over for dinner. We can make those creamy lasagna roll-ups!

What do you say? Do we have a deal?

Whether you wanted it or not,

Andrew Davis

Andrew Davis is the author of *Brandscaping: Unleashing the Power of Partnerships*. Follow him @TPLDrew.



Read other unsolicited advice and more from Andrew Davis:
<http://bit.ly/AndrewDavis>



TODAY

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