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## SURVEY TERM DEFINITIONS

**Content Marketing:** A strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.

**Success:** Success is defined as achieving your organization's desired/targeted results.

**Note:** Agency respondents were asked to answer the survey questions based on how their agency uses content marketing to market its own services, not on behalf of their content marketing clients.
Hello Agency Content Marketers,

Welcome to the first *Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends* report. Here we present insights from the 320 agency marketers who replied to our ninth annual content marketing survey of 1,947 global content marketers. These 320 marketers all use content marketing to promote their agencies, with 83% reporting they used the approach successfully to create brand awareness in the last 12 months.

How does your agency’s content marketing approach compare with others? Or are you just starting to use content marketing? In either case, use this report not only for benchmarks, but also to ignite ideas for growing your own approach.

For additional resources, see the back cover of this report. We’re happy to help!
Many agencies report content marketing maturity and success
49% of those surveyed report their organization is in the sophisticated/mature phase of content marketing maturity. 64% of all respondents say they are more successful with content marketing compared with one year ago, indicating continued growth and development.

Agency marketers prize creativity
94% of respondents agree their agency values creativity and craft in content creation and production (69% agreed strongly, and 25% agreed somewhat). This isn’t surprising considering creativity is an essential component of successful agencies.

Storytelling is a common approach
Considering that agencies are in the business of using words and images to communicate powerfully, it makes sense that 69% of respondents always/frequently use storytelling in their own content marketing.

They are committed to content marketing
When compared with content marketers across other industry verticals, agency marketers report higher levels of commitment to content marketing (74% say they are extremely/very committed). This suggests agency marketers see the value of using content marketing.

Content marketing has been key to creating brand awareness
Agency marketers say they have used content marketing successfully in the last 12 months to create brand awareness (83%), build credibility/trust (75%), and educate audiences (72%). For a list of other goals agency marketers have achieved with content marketing, see page 33.
SUCCESS, MATURITY, & COMMITMENT
One out of three (32%) agency respondents report high levels of content marketing success.

**How Agency Marketers Rate Their Organization’s Overall Level of Content Marketing Success**

- Extremely Successful: 2%
- Very Successful: 5%
- Moderately Successful: 20%
- Minimally Successful: 27%
- Not At All Successful: 46%

**How Agency Marketers Rate Their Organization’s Content Marketing Success Compared With One Year Ago**

- Much More Successful: 3%
- Somewhat More Successful: 18%
- About the Same: 32%
- Somewhat Less Successful: 18%
- Much Less Successful: 46%

Note: The survey defined success as achieving your organization’s desired/targeted results.

Base: Agency content marketers; aided list.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
49% of agency marketers report their organization is in the sophisticated/mature phase of content marketing maturity.

**How Agency Marketers Rate Their Organization’s Content Marketing Maturity Level**

- **Sophisticated**: Providing accurate measurement to the business, scaling across the organization
- **Mature**: Finding success, yet challenged with integration across the organization
- **Adolescent**: Have developed a business case, seeing early success, becoming more sophisticated with measurement and scaling
- **Young**: Growing pains, challenged with creating a cohesive strategy and a measurement plan
- **First Steps**: Doing some aspects of content, but have not yet begun to make content marketing a process

*Base: Agency content marketers; aided list.*

*Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
74% of agency content marketers say their organization is extremely/very committed to content marketing.

CMI/MarketingProfs’ annual research consistently shows that a strong commitment to content marketing often yields a higher level of overall success.

How Agency Marketers Rate Their Organization’s Commitment to Content Marketing

Base: Agency content marketers; aided list.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
42% of agency marketers reported their organization has a documented content marketing strategy.

CMI/MarketingProfs’ annual research consistently shows that content marketers who have a documented strategy often report higher levels of overall content marketing success in their organization.

Proportion of Agency Marketers With a Content Marketing Strategy

- 42% Yes, and it is documented
- 40% Yes, but it is not documented
- 14% No, but plan to within 12 months
- 4% No, with no plans within 12 months

Base: Agency content marketers; aided list.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
Agency content marketers say the top benefits of a documented strategy are that it aligns the team around a common mission/goals and makes it easier to determine which types of content to develop.

Benefits of a Documented Agency Content Marketing Strategy

- Aligns team around a common mission/goals: 83%
- Makes it easier to determine which types of content to develop: 77%
- Keeps team focused on documented priorities: 73%
- Creates accountability: 69%
- Provides clarity on targeted audience(s): 69%
- Helps team allocate resources to optimize desired results: 68%
- Makes it easier to identify which metrics to focus on: 57%
- Yields more accurate budgetary information: 24%
- Other benefits: 4%

Base: Agency content marketers who have a documented content marketing strategy. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
94% of agency content marketers agree their organization values creativity and craft in content creation and production.

Agency Marketers’ Opinions About Content Marketing in Their Organization

- **Our organization values creativity and craft in content creation and production.**
  - Strongly Agree: 94%
  - Neither Agree Nor Disagree: 3%
  - Disagree: 3%

- **Our organization is concerned with creating content that builds loyalty with existing clients/customers.**
  - Strongly Agree: 88%
  - Neither Agree Nor Disagree: 7%
  - Disagree: 5%

- **There is content marketing buy-in from the highest levels in our organization.**
  - Strongly Agree: 88%
  - Neither Agree Nor Disagree: 8%
  - Disagree: 4%

- **Our audience views our organization as a credible and trusted resource.**
  - Strongly Agree: 87%
  - Neither Agree Nor Disagree: 10%
  - Disagree: 3%

- **Our organization places importance on building relationships with influencers (e.g., brand advocates, journalists).**
  - Strongly Agree: 61%
  - Neither Agree Nor Disagree: 20%
  - Disagree: 19%

Base: Agency content marketers; aided list.

*Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
TECHNOLOGY USE & PROFICIENCY
42% of agency content marketers describe their organization’s proficiency with the use of content marketing technology as expert/advanced.

Agency Marketers’ Proficiency With Use of Content Marketing Technology

- **EXPERT**
  - Content marketing technology is integrated across the organization, experiencing the benefits

- **ADVANCED**
  - Finding success, yet challenged with integrating content marketing technology across the organization

- **INTERMEDIATE**
  - Becoming more consistent with the use of content marketing technology, seeing early success

- **NOVICE**
  - Growing in use of content marketing technology, but not using it consistently

- **BEGINNER**
  - Just started using one or more content marketing technologies

Base: Agency content marketers whose organizations use one or more of the listed technologies presented on the survey. Aided list.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
The top two technologies agency content marketers use to assist with managing their content marketing efforts are analytics tools and social media publishing/analytics.

**Types of Technologies Agency Marketers Use to Assist With the Management of Content Marketing Efforts**

- Analytics Tools: 83%
- Social Media Publishing/Analytics: 82%
- Email Marketing Software: 73%
- Content Creation/Optimization: 65%
- Content Management System (CMS): 62%
- Workflow/Project Management/Editorial Calendaring: 57%
- Marketing Automation System: 39%
- Content Syndication/Promotional Tools: 28%
- Integrated Content Marketing Platform (CMP): 15%
- Chatbots: 12%
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): 1%

Base: Agency content marketers whose organizations use one or more of the listed technologies. Multiple responses permitted.

*Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
Agency marketers say the top benefit of using content marketing technology is that it provides better insight into how content is performing.

Benefits Agency Marketers Derive from Using Content Marketing Technologies

- Better insight into how content is performing: 77%
- Better insight into audience behavior/preferences: 61%
- Improved workflow: 45%
- Easier content repurposing: 42%
- More conversions: 38%
- Time savings: 36%
- Enhanced customer experiences due to improved interactions: 35%
- Other benefits: 2%

Base: Agency content marketers whose organizations use one or more of the listed technologies presented on the survey. Multiple responses permitted.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
AUDIENCE RESEARCH & NURTURING
Keyword research and website analytics are the top two techniques agency content marketers use to research their audience(s).

Techniques Agency Content Marketers Use to Research Their Audience

- **Keyword Research** 78%
- **Website Analytics** 76%
- **Secondary Research (e.g., internet searches)** 65%
- **Social Media Listening** 65%
- **Primary Research (e.g., quantitative, qualitative)** 58%
- **Sales Team Feedback** 58%
- **Database Analysis** 40%
- **Customer Conversations/panels** 33%
- **AI-powered Audience Analysis** 6%
- **Other techniques** 3%

*Base: Agency content marketers who research target audiences. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.*

*Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
62% of agency content marketers reported their organization uses personas; another 18% said it had plans to prior to year-end 2018.

**Agency Content Marketers’ Use of Personas in 2018**

- Yes: 62%
- No, but had plans to in 2018: 18%
- No, and had no plans to in 2018: 20%

*Base: Agency content marketers, aided list.*

*Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
Email/Email Campaigns and educational content are the top two ways agency content marketers nurture their audience.

Content Marketing Methods Agency Marketers Use to Nurture Their Audience

- Email/Email Campaigns: 77%
- Educational Content: 74%
- Clear Calls-to-Action (CTAs) for Next Steps: 63%
- Storytelling/Relating to the Audience: 60%
- In-person Events: 45%
- Community Building/Audience Participation: 31%
- Offers/Incentives: 26%
- Predictive Technology: 5%
- Membership Perks (e.g., rewards card): 3%
- Other methods: 1%

Base: Agency content marketers whose organizations nurture their audience. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
CONTENT CREATION & DISTRIBUTION
87% of agency content marketers say they always/frequently prioritize the audience’s informational needs over their organization’s sales/promotional message.

Concepts Agency Marketers Take Into Account While Creating Content for Their Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Always/Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely/Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize the audience’s informational needs over our sales/promotional message.</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use storytelling in our content.</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize delivering the right content to the right audience(s) at optimal times.</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft content based on specific points/stages of the buyer's journey.</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate interactive features into our content.</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner with others on content marketing initiatives to tap into their audience(s) to expand our reach.</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Agency content marketers; aided list.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
The majority of agency content marketers say their organization increased its use of audio/visual content, written digital content, images, and in-person content compared with one year ago.

### How Agency Content Marketers Who Use Various Content Types/Formats Changed Frequency Compared With One Year Ago

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Type/Format</th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Remained the Same</th>
<th>Decreased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio/Visual Content (e.g., videos, livestreaming, webinars)</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Digital Content (e.g., articles, blogs, ebooks)</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images (e.g., infographics, photos, charts, GIFs)</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Person Content (e.g., events, presentations, workshops)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-only Digital Content (e.g., podcasts, audiobooks)</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Print Content (e.g., magazines, books, brochures)</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Agency content marketers who use each type/format listed.

*Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
77% of agency content marketers say their organization has used or developed long-form content in the last 12 months.

### Agency Content Marketers’ Use or Development of Select Types of Content in the Last 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Content</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long-form Content (e.g., in-depth articles, guides)</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Stories</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Snippets (micro-videos pointing to a site)</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film (e.g., documentaries, short films)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other types used or developed in last 12 months:
- Digital Out-of-Home (DOOH) Placement (10%)
- Experiential Content (e.g., VR/AR, immersive) (10%)
- Branded Apps (9%)
- Games/Gamification (e.g., contests, badges) (6%)
- Dedicated Livestreaming Channel(s) (5%)
- None of the nine types/formats listed (9%)

Base: Agency content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

*Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
56% of agency content marketers report their organization has increased its use of social media for content marketing purposes compared with one year ago; only 6% reported a decrease.

**How Agency Marketers’ Use of Social Media for Content Marketing Has Changed Compared with One Year Ago**

- Increased: 56%
- Remained the Same: 34%
- Decreased: 6%
- Unsure: 4%

*Base: Agency content marketers whose organizations have used social media for content marketing for at least one year.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
59% of agency content marketers say their organization uses paid methods to distribute content.

Proportion of Agency Content Marketers That Have Used Paid Methods to Distribute Content in the Last 12 Months

- Yes: 59%
- No: 33%
- Unsure: 8%

Base: Agency content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
Agency content marketers say the top reason their organization uses paid methods is to attract a new audience.

Reasons Why Agency Content Marketers Use Paid Methods to Distribute Content

- Attract a new audience: 84%
- Generate traffic when organic search isn’t producing desired results: 72%
- Reach a niche audience: 51%
- Promote foundational content: 46%
- Launch a new product or service: 39%
- Give new life to old content: 31%
- Other reasons: 6%

Base: Agency content marketers whose organizations have used paid methods to distribute content in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
Sponsored content on social media is the most often cited method agency marketers use to distribute content.

### Types of Paid Content Distribution

**Methods Agency Marketers Use**

- **Sponsored Content—on social media**: 79%
- **Search Engine Marketing (SEM)/Pay-per-Click**: 57%
- **Banner Ads Promoting Your Content (e.g., ebook, webinar)**: 35%
- **Native Advertising**: 30%
- **Partner Emails Promoting Your Content (e.g., ebook, webinar)**: 25%
- **Content Recommendation Engines**: 16%
- **Sponsored Content—on websites other than your own**: 16%
- **Other types**: 1%

*Base: Agency content marketers whose organizations used paid methods in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.*

*Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
Agency content marketers say their organization increased spending on content creation more so than other areas of content marketing in the last 12 months.

Areas Where Agency Content Marketers Increased Content Marketing Spending in the Last 12 Months

- Content Creation: 66%
- Content Marketing Staff: 38%
- Paid Content Distribution: 38%
- Content Marketing Technology: 29%
- Content Marketing Outsourcing: 15%
- Other Areas: 2%
- Unsure: 7%

The top three skills sought by those who increased spending on content marketing staff:
- Marketing: 65%
- Creative/Design: 36%
- Journalism: 36%

Note: 17% of respondents indicated their organization did not increase content marketing spending in the last 12 months.

Base: Agency content marketers whose organizations increased spending in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
58% of agency content marketers expect their content marketing budget to increase in 2019.

Agency Content Marketers’ Expected Change in 2019 Content Marketing Budget Compared With 2018

- 34% Expect to increase 1% to 9%
- 24% Expect to increase more than 9%
- 33% Expect to stay the same
- 7% Expect to decrease 1% to 9%
- 1% Expect to decrease more than 9%
- 1% are unsure

Base: Agency content marketers; aided list.

Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
83% of agency content marketers report their organization has used content marketing successfully over the last 12 months to create brand awareness.

**Goals Agency Marketers Have Achieved by Using Content Marketing Successfully in Last 12 Months**

- Create brand awareness: 83%
- Build credibility/trust: 75%
- Educate audience(s): 72%
- Generate demand/leads: 60%
- Build loyalty with existing clients/customers: 53%
- Nurture subscribers/audience/leads: 49%
- Build a subscribed audience: 43%
- Generate sales/revenue: 42%
- Drive attendance to one or more in-person events: 35%
- Support the launch of a new product: 25%

*Note: 6% said none of the above.*

*Base: Agency content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.*

*Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
54% of agency content marketers report their organization measures content marketing ROI.

Proportion of Agency Marketers That Measure Content Marketing ROI

- **Yes**: 54%
- **No**: 34%
- **Unsure**: 12%

*Base: Agency content marketers.*

_Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs_
38% of agency content marketers say their teams are extremely/very proficient with using the metrics they’ve selected to monitor content marketing performance.

There are many metrics and techniques available for measuring content marketing results. The key is to identify the metrics that will yield the most meaningful insights based on specific goals.

This chart shows how agency content marketers rate their teams’ proficiency with using the metrics they’ve selected. Those reporting low proficiency may have a need for additional resources (e.g., training or the addition of skilled staff) or they may need to reevaluate which metrics to use.
Agency content marketers say changes to SEO/search algorithms is a top content marketing issue of importance to their organization.

**Top 5 Content Marketing Issues That Were Important to Agencies in 2018**

- Changes to SEO/search algorithms: 71%
- Changes to social media algorithms: 62%
- Content marketing as a revenue center: 48%
- Data privacy/regulations: 35%
- Staffing/human resources: 35%

**Other issues cited:**
- Preparing Content for Voice Search (30%); AI Technologies (22%); Public’s Trust Issues with Media (22%); Content Security (e.g., HTTPS encryption, ID theft) (19%); Other Issues (2%); and Unsure (3%).

*Base: Agency content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.*

*Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
Agency Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends was produced by Content Marketing Institute.

The ninth annual content marketing survey, from which the results of this report were generated, was mailed electronically to a sample of marketers using lists from Content Marketing Institute, MarketingProfs, The Association for Data-driven Marketing & Advertising (ADMA), WTWH Media, and UBM Technology Group.

A total of 1,947 recipients from around the globe—representing a full range of industries, functional areas, and company sizes—replied to the survey during June and July 2018. This report presents the findings from the 320 respondents who indicated 1) their organization is a for-profit agency and 2) they are directly involved with or oversee content marketing within their agency. Most agency respondents are based in North America (76%), followed by Europe (10%), Asia (5%), and Other (9%). Agency respondents were asked to answer the survey questions based on how their agency uses content marketing to market its own services, not on behalf of their content marketing clients.

Additional reports based on the annual survey are available at www.contentmarketinginstitute.com/research. Special thanks to MarketingProfs for their assistance with the annual survey and the B2B and B2C reports.
Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs thank all the survey respondents and survey distribution partners who made this research possible.

About Content Marketing Institute
Content Marketing Institute is the leading global content marketing education and training organization, teaching enterprise brands how to attract and retain customers through compelling, multichannel storytelling. CMI's Content Marketing World event, the largest content marketing-focused event, is held every September in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, and ContentTECH Summit event is held every spring. CMI publishes the quarterly magazine Chief Content Officer, and provides strategic consulting and content marketing research for some of the best-known brands in the world. Watch this video to learn more about CMI. Content Marketing Institute is organized by UBM, which in June 2018 combined with Informa PLC to become a leading B2B information services group and the largest B2B events organizer in the world. To learn more and for the latest news and information, visit www.ubm.com and www.informa.com.

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