13TH ANNUAL

B2C CONTENT MARKETING

BENCHMARKS, BUDGETS, AND TRENDS

INSIGHTS FOR 2023
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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:* Achieving your organization’s desired/targeted results.

Last year’s theme, The Sleeping Giant Awakes, explored how the pandemic changed the way organizations perceive content marketing. We found that content marketing took a more prominent role as organizations lost the ability to meet face to face with prospects and customers.

Has that momentum continued?

Well, 70% of B2C marketers told us that content marketing has become more important to their organization over the last year.

But with the increase in importance and growth comes a need for more resources. When we asked, “If you could change one thing about content marketing in your organization, what would that be?” many of those same marketers told us they are still fighting for more staff, more budget, and better access to subject matter experts.

Furthermore, the year-over-year needle on strategy is stuck. Only 37% of B2C marketers say they have a documented content marketing strategy. Without a strategy, too many content marketers are creating content for the sake of creating content – in many cases this could mean responding to ad hoc requests.
For content marketing to be truly effective, it needs a strategy with resources behind it. Too many content marketers are operating either alone or with a small staff trying to do too much. In fact, 42% of all B2C marketers surveyed told us that one person (or group) in their organization is responsible for all types of content produced.

It’s unsurprising, then, that the year-over-year needle has also been stuck on overall success – with only 29% of those surveyed saying their organizations are extremely or very successful with content marketing.
All of this is not to say that B2C marketers are unhappy. In fact, 86% told us they feel that content marketing provides a rewarding and purposeful career path.

Our annual research suggests that content marketers would be happier in their current roles if their organizations prioritized content marketing, backed it with strategies and resources, and invested in technologies to help them do their jobs faster and more efficiently.

If one theme emerged from this year’s annual research it was this: It’s time for organizations to finally give content marketing the investment it deserves, staff it accordingly, and reap the rewards. The sleeping giant is awake. Now it’s time to feed it.

It’s just not always with the company in which they’re currently working. CMI’s recent Content Marketing Career & Salary 2023 Outlook found that the lack of a clear career path in the organizations content marketers work for is a real problem. And many content marketers are willing to switch companies for better opportunities.
KEY TAKEAWAYS

Nearly half of B2C marketers surveyed think their organization will hire or contract for content producers in 2023.

Forty-five percent of respondents told us they expect their organization to hire or contract for content producers in 2023 (e.g., writers, designers, videographers). This should come as a relief to content marketers who are stretched too thin. See page 9.

B2C marketers who differentiate their content cite two key things.

Those who are excelling with content differentiation say they produce better quality content and cover topics/stories their competitors don’t. See page 12.

In-person events are back.

In-person events came back up the list of content types used in the last 12 months, with 43% reporting they used in-person events to get in front of their audiences versus only 25% (understandably) the previous year. They also said in-person events produced the best results for their content marketing. Furthermore, 50% expect their organization’s investment in in-person events will increase in 2023 compared with their 2022 budget. See pages 13, 14, and 34.

Investment in video will continue to increase.

Seventy-one percent of B2C marketers reported that they used videos in the last 12 months. In addition, 77% said their organization will invest/continue to invest in video in 2023, making it the top area of content marketing investment. Video was also the top area of investment the previous year. See pages 13 and 38.

More B2C marketers plan to invest in social media/community building.

Sixty-one percent of respondents said their organization would invest in social media/community building in 2023, up from 48% the previous year. See page 38.
The use of paid content distribution channels has decreased.
The percentage of B2C marketers using one or more paid distribution channels decreased to 63%, compared with 78% the previous year. Of those who are using paid channels, 88% use paid social media. See page 19.

Content technologies are an issue.
In this new section of the survey, we asked content marketers whether their organization has the right technology in place to manage content across the organization. Among those who said no, 32% of all respondents said they have the technology but aren’t using it to potential and 33% said they have not acquired the right technology. See page 23.

B2C marketers struggle with creating content that appeals to different audiences, developing consistency with measurement, and differentiating their products/services from the competition.
B2C marketers cited these as their top three current content marketing challenges. Other issues included communicating internally, technology integration, and achieving consistency with messaging. See page 36.
STAFFING & OPINIONS
Many B2C marketers wear too many hats.

Forty-two percent of those surveyed said one person (or group) in their organization is responsible for all types of content – but help with content creation may be on the way in 2023.

Which of These Roles Do You Think Your B2C Organization Will Hire or Contract for in 2023?

- Content producers (writers, designers, photographers, videographers): 45%
- Content marketers (who create and manage content marketing programs to attract an audience): 27%
- Community managers/social media specialists: 26%
- User experience (UX) designers/specialists: 21%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

42% said one group (or person) is responsible for handling all types of content in their organization (including advertising, thought leadership, brochures, SEO content, etc.)

Base: B2C content marketers.
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
B2C organizations have to work harder to measure content performance accurately – and to provide customers with consistent experiences.

Twenty-six percent indicated that they don’t measure content performance accurately. In addition, 16% said they don’t provide customers with a consistent experience across their engagement journey.

**B2C Marketers’ Opinions About Content Marketing in Their Organizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our organization values creativity and craft in content creation and production.</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organization provides customers with a consistent experience across their engagement journey.</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and inclusion play an integral role in our organization’s content decision-making and creative processes.</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organization measures content performance accurately.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

*Base: B2C content marketers who answered each statement.*

*13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022*
CONTENT CREATION & DISTRIBUTION
B2C marketers who want to differentiate their content should focus on quality and unique stories. Eighty-four percent of those who always/frequently differentiate their content said they do so by producing better quality content than their competitors.
In-person events are back, while articles and videos remain popular for interacting with audiences.

Forty-three percent reported using in-person events, compared with 25% the previous year. The use of videos increased to 71% from 61% the previous year. The use of short articles remained steady.

Content Assets B2C Marketers Created/Used in Last 12 Months

- Short articles/posts (fewer than 1,500 words): 86%
- Videos (of any length/format): 71%
- Infographics/charts/data viz/3D models: 57%
- Long articles/posts (more than 1,500 words): 57%
- Virtual events/webinars/online courses: 55%
- Case studies: 51%
- E-books/white papers: 43%
- In-person events: 43%
- Podcasts and other audio content: 31%
- Research reports: 25%
- Print magazines or books: 20%
- Livestreaming content: 17%
- Other: 10%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
In-person events are producing results
B2C marketers said in-person events produced the best results for their content marketing in the last 12 months.

Content Assets That Produced the Best Results for B2C Marketers in Last 12 Months (Top 4)

- In-person events: 48%
- Short articles/posts (fewer than 1,500 words): 47%
- Videos (of any length/format): 45%
- Virtual events/webinars/online courses: 41%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Note: Respondents were shown a display list of the content types they used in the last 12 months and asked, "Which content assets produced the best results for your content marketing in the last 12 months? (Select all that apply.)"

Base: B2C content marketers who use each content asset listed. Multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
B2C marketers mostly used their own websites and blogs to distribute content.

Email and email newsletters also topped the list.

**Owned-Media Platforms B2C Marketers Used to Distribute Content in Last 12 Months**

- Their organization’s website: 87%
- Blog: 76%
- Email newsletter: 68%
- Email (other than newsletter): 61%
- In-person or digital events: 48%
- Their organization’s branded online community: 30%
- Microsite (e.g., resource center): 25%
- Digital magazine: 15%
- Mobile app: 15%
- Separate content brand: 13%

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
Nearly all B2C marketers surveyed used organic social media to distribute content in the last 12 months.

Speaking/presenting at events, media/public relations, and guest posting also topped the list.

**Organic (Nonpaid) Platforms B2C Marketers Used to Distribute Content in Last 12 Months**

- Social media platforms: 95%
- Speaking/presenting at events: 56%
- Media/public relations: 53%
- Guest posts/articles in third-party publications: 47%
- Guest spots on podcasts, live video, etc.: 33%
- Influencer partnerships: 29%
- SMS/text messages: 15%
- Listening platforms: 11%

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
LinkedIn and Facebook topped the list of organic social media platforms B2C marketers used.

The use of organic social media platforms remained steady with the exceptions of LinkedIn, which increased to 93% from 78% the previous year, and YouTube, which increased to 67% from 55%.

Organic (Nonpaid) Social Media Platforms B2C Content Marketers Used in Last 12 Months

LinkedIn 93%
Facebook 88%
Instagram 73%
YouTube 67%
Twitter 61%
Pinterest 23%
TikTok 18%
Other 12%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
Base: B2C content marketers who used organic social media platforms in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
B2C users of LinkedIn and YouTube gave those two platforms the highest effectiveness ratings.

Twitter came in lowest, with 30% rating it as not very or not at all effective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Extremely Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Somewhat Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Not At All Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TikTok</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

Base: B2C content marketers who used the organic social media platforms listed in the last 12 months.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
Sixty-three percent of B2C marketers said their organization used one or more paid content distribution channels in the last 12 months, down from 78% the previous year.

Among those, 88% percent used paid social media advertising/promoted posts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paid Content Distribution Channels B2C Marketers Used in Last 12 Months</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media advertising/promoted posts</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engine marketing (SEM)/pay-per-click</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships (e.g., events, booths, workshops)</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native advertising/sponsored content (not including social media platforms)</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner emails promoting our content</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations used paid channels to distribute content in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

Does Your B2C Organization Use One or More Paid Content Distribution Channels for Content Marketing?

- Yes: 37%
- No: 63%
Eighty-four percent of B2C marketers who used social media advertising in the last year said they used Facebook advertising. But Facebook use declined, while LinkedIn made gains.

- Facebook decreased to 84% from 91%
- LinkedIn increased to 56% from 43%
- Instagram and YouTube remained steady compared with the previous year

### Paid Social Media Platforms B2C Content Marketers Used in Last 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs**

*Base: B2C content marketers whose organizations used paid channels to distribute content in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.*

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
B2C marketers who used paid social are getting the best results with LinkedIn advertising. Facebook and Instagram had the lowest effectiveness ratings.

### How Effective Are These Paid Social Media Platforms in Helping Your B2C Organization Reach Its Content Marketing Goals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Extremely Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Somewhat Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Not At All Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

Base: B2C content marketers who paid to promote content on the platforms listed in the last 12 months.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
CONTENT MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS
Eighty-one percent of B2C marketers said their organization uses analytics tools to manage content. Social media publishing/analytics tools came in second, at 72%.

**Technologies B2C Organizations Use to Manage Content**

- Analytics tools (e.g., web analytics, dashboards): 81%
- Social media publishing/analytics: 72%
- Email marketing software: 65%
- Content creation/calendaring/collaboration/workflow: 64%
- Content management system (CMS): 49%
- Customer relationship management (CRM) system: 46%
- Marketing automation system (MAS): 22%
- Digital asset management (DAM) system: 14%

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*


13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
Thirty-three percent of B2C marketers said their organization hasn’t acquired the right content management technology.

Another 32% said they have the technology but aren’t using it to potential.

Q: Do you feel that your organization has the right technology in place to manage content across your entire organization?

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
Thirty-three percent of B2C marketers said their organization translates content into different languages using a variety of methods.

Nearly three out of four who translated content also localized it, mostly using in-house teams.
METRICS & GOALS
Eighty-two percent of B2C marketers measure content performance.

Website traffic (83%) is the metric that B2C marketers look at most often.

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**Does Your B2C Organization Measure Content Performance?**

- **Yes**: 82%
- **No**: 18%

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**Metrics B2C Marketers Have Used to Track Content Performance in Last 12 Months**

- Website traffic: 83%
- Email engagement: 81%
- Website engagement: 81%
- Conversions: 78%
- Social media analytics: 78%
- Email subscriber numbers: 65%
- Search rankings: 58%
- Quantity of leads: 47%
- Quality of leads: 44%
- Cost to acquire a lead, subscriber, and/or customer: 37%

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*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

Base: B2C content marketers.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
B2C marketers rely most on conversions when evaluating content performance. Quality of leads, website engagement, email engagement, and website traffic rounded out the top five metrics.

**Metrics B2C Marketers Rely on Most When Evaluating Content Performance**

- Conversions: 70%
- Quality of leads: 57%
- Website engagement: 57%
- Email engagement: 55%
- Website traffic: 52%
- Social media analytics: 46%
- Search rankings: 41%
- Cost to acquire a lead, subscriber, and/or customer: 38%
- Quantity of leads: 29%

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

Base: B2C content marketers who measure the content performance metrics listed. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
Forty-nine percent of B2C marketers said it was difficult to integrate/correlate data across multiple platforms.

Other measurement challenges included lack of organizational goal setting/KPIs to measure against, tying performance data back to goals, and extracting insights from data.

### Challenges B2C Marketers Face With Measuring Content Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty integrating/correlating data across multiple platforms</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of organizational goal setting/KPIs to measure against</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty tying performance data back to our goals</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty extracting insights from data</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of training</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We do not face challenges measuring content performance</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*


13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
Eighty-one percent of B2C marketers said they were using content marketing successfully to create brand awareness.

B2C marketers said the top three goals content marketing has helped them achieve are creating brand awareness, building credibility/trust, and educating audience(s).

**Goals B2C Marketers Have Achieved by Using Content Marketing Successfully in Last 12 Months**

- Create brand awareness: 81%
- Build/grow credibility/trust: 77%
- Educate audience(s): 71%
- Build/grow loyalty with existing clients/customers: 63%
- Generate demand/leads: 63%
- Nurture subscribers/audiences/leads: 51%
- Build/grow a subscribed audience: 46%
- Drive attendance to one or more in-person or virtual events: 42%
- Generate sales/revenue: 42%
- Support the launch of a new product: 38%
- None of the above: 2%

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*


13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
Thirty-one percent of B2C marketers reported that their organization spends 50% or more of its total marketing budget on content marketing. Another 29% reported that they spend less than 10%.

Do You Have Knowledge of Your B2C Organization’s Budget/Budgeting Process for Content Marketing?

- Yes: 43%
- No: 57%

Percentage of Total Marketing Budget Spent on B2C Content Marketing

- 100%: 3%
- 75%-99%: 11%
- 50%-74%: 17%
- 25%-49%: 17%
- 10%-24%: 24%
- 5%-9%: 16%
- 1%-4%: 9%
- 0%: 4%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
Base: B2C content marketers who know their organizations’ budget/budgeting process for content marketing. Aided list.
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
Forty-seven percent of B2C respondents thought their content marketing budget would increase in 2023.

Forty percent thought their budget would stay the same.

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**How B2C Content Marketing Budget Will Change in 2023 Compared With 2022**

- 40% Stay the same
- 33% Increase more than 9%
- 14% Increase 1%-9%
- 10% Decrease
- 3% Unsure

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

*Base: B2C content marketers who know their organizations’ budget/budgeting process for content marketing. Aided list.*

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
Half of B2C marketers expect their organization’s investment in in-person events to increase in 2023. Around one-third expect their investments in digital/virtual, in-person, and hybrid events to stay the same in 2023.

How B2C Organizations’ Investment Will Change in 2023 Compared With 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Stay the same</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
<th>Will be a new area of investment</th>
<th>Do not/will not use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital/virtual events</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person events</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid events</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
Base: B2C content marketers who know their organizations’ budget/budgeting process for content marketing. Aided list.
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2021
CHALLENGES
Fifty-seven percent of B2C marketers said they were challenged with creating content that appeals to different target audiences.

Developing consistency with measurement was another top challenge.

**B2C Organizations’ Current Content Marketing Challenges**

- Creating content that appeals to different target audiences: 57%
- Developing consistency with measurement: 44%
- Differentiating our products/services from the competition's: 40%
- Communicating internally among teams/silos: 38%
- Technology integration: 37%
- Achieving consistency with messaging: 34%
- Accessing subject matter experts to create content: 27%
- Continuing to make a business case for content marketing: 25%
- Other: 5%
- None: 3%

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*

*Base: B2C content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.*

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
LOOKING FORWARD
Investment in video will continue to grow.
Owned-media assets and social media/community building are also expected to be top areas of investment.

Areas of B2C Content Marketing Investment in 2023

- Video: 77%
- Owned-media assets: 64%
- Social media/community building: 61%
- Paid media: 53%
- Events (digital, in-person, hybrid): 51%
- Earned media: 40%
- Getting to know audiences better: 32%
- User experience (UX) design: 31%

*Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs*
Base: B2C content marketers. Aided list; up to seven responses permitted.
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022
What I find fascinating in this year’s research is that, yes, it’s time to feed the giant – but we should be careful not to get distracted by the food, but instead focus on our ability to cook.

Too often, content marketers get wrapped up in content creation, rather than their ability to lead the efforts to create.

One of my go-to books of the last decade is Rita Gunther McGrath’s, *The End of Competitive Advantage*. In that book, she illustrates that all competitive advantage is transient – perhaps now more than ever. This fact, she contends, is understood. But then she asks, "Why hasn’t basic strategy practice changed?" As she says:

“Most executives, even when they realize that competitive advantages are going to be ephemeral, are still using strategy frameworks and tools designed for achieving a sustainable competitive advantage, not for quickly exploiting and moving in and out of advantages.”

That last part has the deepest implications for the evolving practice of strategic content marketing in a business. After working with hundreds of enterprise brands over the last 10 years, I’ve concluded:

**Most businesses think about how they can change content to fit marketing’s purpose instead of how they might change marketing to fit content’s purpose.**

Content will never be a sustainable competitive advantage or differentiator – all content is easily replicable and, at best, only transient in differentiated value.

Instead, consider looking at content operations as the catalyst that can change everything for the content marketing challenges you face. Recognize that you and the activities you perform are the competitive advantage. Your future success hinges on the ability as a team (of 1 or 100) to be dynamic and fluid – moving in and out of “arenas” (as McGrath calls them) of content and creating temporary advantages.

Here’s the real takeaway: Ask everyone in your business – including your CEO – if they believe compelling, engaging, useful, and dynamic content-driven experiences will move the business forward.

If the answer is yes, then the strategic value is in your ability to
evolve and coordinate all the activities to repeatedly create those valuable experiences. It is not the content itself or where you distribute it. The content team’s job is not to be good at content; their job is to enable the business to be good at content.

Realizing this strategic value presents a to-do list:

▶ Businesses must increasingly stop organizing and scaling new marketing teams based on platforms, technologies, or inside-looking-out views of the customer journey. The successful business becomes skilled and integrated at operating and managing all manners of content-driven experiences. The format and placement of those experiences on multiple channels will always be temporal.

▶ Businesses must stop looking at content from a container-first perspective – solely designed to support marketing tactics or initiatives. Instead, businesses must identify content operations as a function supporting the fluid use of content to fuel better customer experiences.

▶ Businesses will win with content marketing when they can constantly reconfigure their activities and manage portfolios of content-driven experiences. When one experience is no longer advantageous to the business, they do not say, “That’s the way we’ve always done it.” Instead, they healthily disengage and dismantle these experiences.

Content strategy = different activities that fit together

One of the first signs of trouble in any content marketing approach is if the first question is, “How do we get more efficient at content?”

Getting to efficiency assumes there is a working, standard operation that is providing value. The goal is to change that process to remove the friction. But when there’s no repeatable standard operation, focusing on efficiency means trying to produce the same or more content with the same resources.

That rarely works out to be better for the business.

The more difficult task is to determine the different activities the business will undertake to create or augment the existing processes, or which activities the business will undertake differently.

Your business’s content capabilities reflect its ability to communicate. And your ability to evolve the activities that impact communication is the only thing that creates any competitive advantage.

The content you create will provide you with no sustainable competitive advantage. But a strategic content operation just might.

ACTION STEPS

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The B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends: Insights for 2023 report was produced by Content Marketing Institute (CMI) and MarketingProfs.

The online survey, from which the results of this report were generated, was emailed to a sample of marketers using lists from CMI and MarketingProfs.

A total of 1,104 recipients from around the globe — representing a range of industries, functional areas, and company sizes — replied to the survey during July 2022.

This report presents the findings from the 434 respondents who indicated:

▶ Their organization is a for-profit B2C or B2B+B2C company (with the majority based in North America).
▶ They are a content marketer, involved with the content marketing function, and/or someone to whom content marketing reports.

Find all CMI research at contentmarketinginstitute.com/research.
Thanks to the survey participants, who made this research possible, and to everyone who helps disseminate these findings throughout the content marketing industry.

About Content Marketing Institute
Content Marketing Institute (CMI) exists to do one thing: advance the practice of content marketing through online education and in-person and digital events. We create and curate content experiences that teach marketers and creators from enterprise brands, small businesses, and agencies how to attract and retain customers through compelling, multichannel storytelling. Global brands turn to CMI for strategic consultation, training, and research. Organizations from around the world send teams to Content Marketing World, the largest content marketing-focused event, ContentTECH Summit, and CMI virtual events. Our community of 215,000+ content marketers shares camaraderie and conversation. CMI is organized by Informa Connect. To learn more, visit www.contentmarketinginstitute.com.

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