

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

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AJ KOHN ROBERT ROSE DAVE SNYDER MARTIN VAN DER ROEST TODD HARTLEY
JON WUEBBEN HEIDI COHEN JOE CHERNOV ARDATH ALBEE BARRY FELDMAN
BERNIE BORGES MATT SILTALA PAT STRADER TOM MARTIN WIL REYNOLDS
MIKE CORAK MARK TRAPHAGEN SCOTT ABEL

Now is the time for brands to get behind content marketing. Strategic content marketing has the power to turn potential customers into loyal consumers of your business. Effective content marketing consists of knowing your customer and providing them with the information they need at the right time. But what makes for successful content marketing, and how will this benefit your brand? To explain these ideas, we asked several industry experts to answer one simple question: **What is content marketing?**

DEFINING CONTENT MARKETING



DAVE SNYDER:

True content marketing is really just taking a trip into the past and doing what has been done since well before the growth of the Internet.

Think about how things like Soap Operas began in the 30s over radio where the advertising were integrated into the show content. Even before that Shakespeare would slip in mentions of [products into plays](#).

Advertising and content have always shared a tie, and not until the concept of “paid media” has that really taken a divergence. So now the key is finding ways to advertise via the fastest growing medium in history in ways that will comply with governmental and ethical regulations.

- Product placements on popular Youtube channels
- Sponsored illustrations, apps, and other media
- Brand content portals

SEOs are thinking too small right now in my opinion with what they regard as content marketing. Think bigger and the rewards will be just as big.

[Dave Snyder](#), CEO of CopyPress has spoken around the world on topics of search marketing and social media and has a strong passion for the creation, construction and management of startups.



ROBERT ROSE:

Marketers no longer have to rent access to customer attention. We have the power and responsibility to aggregate our own audiences - and engage consumers across every touch-point of the brand

experience. Content Marketing is a process, an approach to marketing that attracts and retains customers by consistently creating, curating and distributing content in order to change or enhance a consumer behavior. Put simply: Traditional marketing is telling the world you're a rock star. Content Marketing is showing the world you are one.

As The Chief Troublemaker at [Big Blue Moose](#), and Lead Strategist at the Content Marketing Institute, Robert's mission is to transform marketers into storytellers.

*Think bigger
and the rewards
will be just
as big.*

-Dave Snyder





JAY BAER:

Content Marketing is the practice of creating or curating words, pictures, video and other communication assets that educate, inform, delight, persuade and drive consumer behaviors that build businesses.

President of content accelerator [Convince & Convert](#), and author of *Youtility: Why Smart Marketing is About Help not Hype*.



AJ KOHN:

Sometimes it's easier to break a term into component parts.

First there's content. You create memorable content that satisfies the needs of users at every stage of their relationship with your site or

brand. The type of content will differ during that journey, based on the intent and environment. Content can be anything from text, to images, to presentations, to video.

Each piece of content is part of a greater narrative in telling a story – your story.

Second is marketing. Content that doesn't get seen can't be valuable, great or memorable. This is not Field of Dreams. Publish it and they might not come.

Content has to be marketed. If you've done your job right you'll have fans or evangelizers who will make your job easier. They'll do a substantial amount of the marketing for you.

But you'll still need to socialize the content, ensure that it's promoted in the right places and seen by those who would benefit from that content. Once seen the content should be easy to transmit to others by presenting appropriate sharing options and be optimized for social platforms.

Create memorable content and engage your community.

A recognized thought leader and widely referenced expert, [AJ Kohn](#) is a Marketing Land columnist and SEOmoz Search Engine Ranking Factors panelist, speaks regularly at industry conferences and runs *Blind Five Year Old*, a digital marketing firm specializing in search.



MARTIN VAN DER ROEST:

Content marketing is like being a media publisher, but on the web and without the concerns to drive ad revenue. As a publisher you plan, produce and publish digital content coupled with activities to engage your

target audience for the purpose of enhancing your brand visibility and/or driving inbound opportunities/leads. Think like a marketer, but act like a publisher.

[Martin van der Roest](#), Co-founder, President and CEO of Cadence9, has over 25 years of experience launching and managing software technology firms and is a recognized expert in enterprise content management (ECM), application integrations and content marketing platforms.

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ARDATH ALBEE BARRY FELDMAN BERNIE BORGES
PAT STRADER TOM MARTIN WIL REYNOLDS





TODD HARTLEY:

Why Content Marketing? Search engines have been shifting their algorithms from easily manipulated results towards user-verified content, ensuring that searchers receive the most relevant web pages. This has

created a huge advantage for strategic content marketing.

What Is Content Marketing? People are inundated with so many ads that they simply tune them out. But content marketing breaks through the chatter by providing value to potential consumers without being “salesy.” Leveraging your wisdom freely through content without directly asking for anything in return builds high-value relationships and credibility with your target customers. And because people do business with people they have relationships with, your content consumers are more likely to work with you when they need something you offer.

Todd Hartley is the CEO of WireBuzz, a strategic video content marketing agency, who enjoys downhill skiing and standup paddle boarding in his free time.



JON WUEBBEN:

You've probably heard lots of definitions for it. As the hottest tool in your marketing tool kit, content marketing is all the rage. And it has been for a while now. “Content” is pretty obvious...it's the pages on our site, the posts on our

blog, the e-books, the white papers, the videos, the podcasts and more.

But Content Marketing? Here's how I see it...

Its taking that great content...which of course, is the greatest content ever...as original and interesting as you can make it and using it to connect with a group of people through a set of benefits that's important to them and continuing to use new content to connect with them over and over again.

The critical pieces of the content marketing machine is the frequency of it (high), the distribution of it (automated and diverse) and the management of it (every day). It's an ongoing, never ending “to do” item. But more than that, it should make up the very heart of your marketing program.

It's a commitment, but it's one that will absolutely pay off if done correctly and consistently. As long as human beings want to connect with each other, it will be viable. And that is pretty much a lock forever. Good luck!

Jon Wuebben is the CEO of Content Launch, a web content development and strategy firm and the author of “Content is Currency: Developing Powerful Content for Web & Mobile”.

82% like reading content from brands when it's relevant.

Source: Content Marketing Association





HEIDI COHEN:

Content marketing is quality non-promotional information targeted at answering prospects' questions regarding an organization's products or services. At its core, content marketing tells

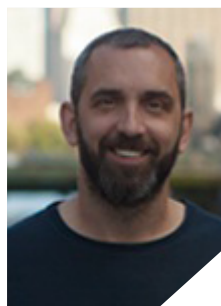
stories to enable its facts and information to break through and be memorable.

Content marketing works best when it shows how to use the firm's products, offers patterns and recipes, demonstrates how to style the product, and entertains its target audience. This information can be presented a variety of formats including text, images, video, audio and/or presentations. Incorporate the 360° brand into the content. BTW - don't underestimate the need to format your content for easy consumption.

To ensure your content marketing is effective, create specific, measurable goals that are aligned with your business objectives. Then develop appropriate tactics achieve these goals and metrics to track your results.

As president of Riverside Marketing Strategies, Heidi Cohen is an actionable marketing expert who blogs at HeidiCohen.com and works with companies to increase their profitability with innovative marketing programs based on solid analytics.

CONTENT MARKETING IS... FOR THE CUSTOMER



JOE CHERNOV:

Content marketing is what a company produces when it stops thinking about its own agenda and begins to consider its audience's needs.

Joe Chernov is the VP of marketing for mobile [backend as a service](#) provider, Kinvey.



ARDATH ALBEE:

Content designed for the execution of a content marketing strategy speaks to prospects and customers at the exact point that their needs intersect with what the company provides. It's designed

to educate them about solving a problem, provide expertise that helps them understand the value they will receive, as well as evidence that your company can deliver what you promise.

Content marketing is not about products, features, feeds and speeds or sales pitches. It's focused on what your products, services or solutions help your customers to achieve. This content is oriented to the buyer's perceptions, needs and priorities and provides a connected pathway that helps them advance their journey toward a purchase decision by catching and sustaining their attention across the channels they frequent.

Ardath Albee, CEO of Marketing Interactions, Inc., is a B2B Marketing Strategist that helps companies with complex sales create eMarketing strategies that use contagious content platforms to turn prospects into buyers.

**Blogs give websites
434% more indexed
pages and 97% more
inbound links.** *Source: Hubspot*





BARRY FELDMAN:

Proactively answering your customers' questions.

Barry Feldman of [Feldman Creative](#) is copywriter and content marketing strategist and creator (with a healthy 'tude).

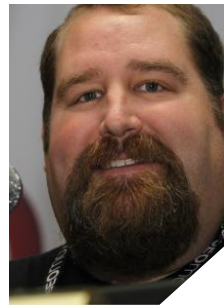


BERNIE BORGES:

Content marketing is modern marketing. It's the act of marketing as a service. When your audience consumes your content and appreciates your content because it is relevant, that is a service to your audience. Often

the most effective content marketing tactics answer basic questions for the consumer. Regardless of the question answered, relevant content adds value to your consumer. Good content marketing solves problems, makes people's lives simpler, more efficient or more fun. Effective content marketing can also be entertaining. The end result of a successful content marketing strategy creates awareness of a brand's position, loyalty to the brand, and word of mouth referrals. Relevant content marketing creates demand. And, that's what every brand wants.

*Bernie Borges is founder and CEO of digital marketing agency [Find and Convert](#), a blogger, author and host of the digital TV show *The Social Business Engine*.*



MATT SILTALA:

Content marketing to me is about storytelling, the kind of storytelling that leads people to do something. We create all different kinds of content for many different reasons; sales, leads, traffic, links, brand recognition and so on.

In some cases, an infographic or visual story might work best in telling a story that the usual boring data or written form can't. And in other cases a video might work best. Either way, you are telling a story. You want that story to be shared, to be viewed by the masses, and the only way it's going to happen is if that story is compelling enough to be shared.

Think about the needs of your customers and create the kind of content that is going to help them with those specific needs. There are many places out there where you can research the kind of questions being asked about your industry (LinkedIn, Quora, Facebook just to name a few). Take these questions from real people (primarily customers) and answer them. This is the kind of content that is going to be shared.

Help them learn, make them laugh; leave them wanting MORE from your content. Give them a reason to keep coming back and you will win every time.

President of Avalaunch Media & Search Industry speaker - My company specializes in Content Marketing, [Infographics](#), Social Promotion, SEO & PPC.

Give them a reason to keep coming back and you will win every time.

-Matt Siltala





TOM MARTIN:

Today's buyers are cloaking themselves in the anonymity of the Internet search to self-educate prior to contacting a company about buying products or services. This is creating a unique paradigm I call the invisible sale. In

an invisible sale, the buyer is using Google Searches to ask questions normally posed to a company's salespeople. In doing so, the buyer gets the freedom to define a short list of options or in some cases, make their purchase decision, without enduring pressure from a commission motivated salesperson.

This invisible sale is a problem for digitally challenged companies because they risk missing out on these self-educating buyers. Thus smart companies are realizing they can still have a salesperson – albeit a digital one -- be the one to provide those answers to a buyer via content (audio, video, photographic, text and webinars) that is provided on the company's website. By anticipating buyer questions, answering those questions online, and helping that invisible buyer self-educate, these companies can convert an invisible sale into a visible customer.

And that is how I define Content Marketing - helpful content that converts invisible buyers into visible sales.

Tom Martin is no nonsense, straight-talking 20-year veteran of the advertising and marketing business who favors stiff drinks, good debates and helping companies grow their businesses.



PAT STRADER:

Content Marketing is the carefully orchestrated art and science of using words, images, graphics and video to educate, build trust and instill confidence in your customers and prospective customers.

Content marketing provides the opportunity for people to find you, learn about your company and your product via content that is relevant to their stage in the buying cycle. Are they researching for purchase? Looking for installation directions? Or needing to find warranty information? Each phase presents different opportunities.

When you solve your customers and prospects problems by answering their questions before they are asked, you have educated, instilled trust and provided the consumer confidence needed to spend money with your company.

I'm having fun... are you? Digital Relativity team member, (family, mountain bikes and craft beer) + (search, social, development) = I love what I do.

B2B companies with blogs generate 67% more leads per month on average than non-blogging firms.

Source: Social Media B2B

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PAT STRADER TOM MARTIN WIL REYNOLDS





WIL REYNOLDS:

Content marketing to me is simple; it's about understanding the journey of your customer before they become a customer and after. That is where content marketing begins, helping your customer on their journey.

In the prospecting phase your focus is deeply understanding what they are seeking to make the right decision for THEM. Content marketing is not about persuading someone to buy your stuff, it's about helping them make the best decision for them. The content you develop should hinge on helping people understand what you offer, your value proposition, etc. I have always believed that great content writing comes from listening. Listening to the struggles of your customer, prospects, etc. and working to make that understanding easier, more clear, more helpful.

I want to be developing content for each step on that journey of making a decision. Content marketing is about building the assets that will help people first, then with those assets you can start to "market" those assets to them as they traverse the journey of selecting a product or service. I also believe content marketing has a role after a product has been bought or a service selected. It's the content you send out to maintain engagement with your product to keep people subscribed, it's the owner's manual / FAQ that ranks well so I can get the manuals and FAQs when I need them.

Will Reynolds is an associate at [SEER interactive](#), a search focused online marketing agency.



MARCUS SHERIDAN:

The essence of content marketing for businesses comes down to three principles: Great listening, communication, and teaching.

Great listening means a business hears every question a prospect or client asks-- in the way they think it, say it, and feel it. From this listening comes a fountain of ever-flowing content possibilities.

Great communication is a company's ability to answer all those questions and thoughts of a prospect or client in a way it can be understood, applied, and appreciated.

Great teaching, much like communication, is a company's ability to help prospects and clients so much to understand the answers to their questions/problems/needs/etc. that they now have the ability to teach and tell others what they learned.

If a company can master these 3 skills, they've mastered content marketing, and their overall business and sales will benefit because of it.

Marcus Sheridan helps companies do amazing things in the online space, and you can find him at [The Sales Lion](#).

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-Marcus Sheridan





MIKE CORAK:

Content Marketing: the most authentic way for brands to connect with their target audiences by simply being a resource at the time of need.

Typically a true integrated effort, employing relevant

content amplified by search and social efforts, content marketing allows organizations to answer target audience topical needs related to their expertise.

Done right, the effort is informed by audience content demand garnered from sources like search and social listening, and website analytics (content attribution), providing useful information for those needing it related to an organization's taxonomy. Done right, the effort is guided by a strong omnichannel content strategy, ensuring that content created, curated, and repackaged is ready to create impact in the channel the target audience most desires to engage with it. Done right, content marketing is not an integrated tactical execution, but rather a communication behavior rooted in an organization's culture.

Brand exposure, consideration, and direct conversions are all possible for organizations willing to create a deeper connection with target audiences on their terms, providing information the community covets, while reaping the rewards for a much longer timeframe than any pure one-time media play.

Mike Corak is the EVP of Strategy at [ethology](#), a leading integrated digital marketing agency where the consumer is the big idea.

CONTENT MARKETING IS... MEANT TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS



RAND FISHKIN:

Content marketing is the production, publication, and promotion of content (in all the many forms it can take) for the purpose of attracting an audience. The goal is often a combination of the following: to build/grow

a brand, to create perceptions/associations with a brand, to attract visitors that will take some specific action, to increase traffic for the purposes of serving advertising, and/or to spread a message.

CEO & founder of [SEOMoz](#).



ARNIE KUENN:

Content marketing is the art of providing relevant, valuable content to your customers without selling or interrupting them. Instead of pitching your products or services, you are delivering information that makes

your prospects more informed before they buy. If you deliver consistent, ongoing valuable information to your prospects, they ultimately reward you with their business and loyalty.

Arnie Kuenn is the president of Vertical Measures, a [search, social & content marketing agency](#). Arnie is a frequent speaker and author of the award winning [content marketing book Accelerate! Moving Your Business Forward Through the Convergence of Search, Social & Content Marketing](#) available on [Amazon](#).





JOE PULIZZI:

Content marketing is the marketing and business process for creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action.

A content marketing strategy can leverage all story channels (print, online, in-person, mobile, social, etc.), be employed at any and all stages of the buying process, from attention-oriented strategies to retention and loyalty strategies, and include multiple buying groups.

The difference between content and content marketing? Not a day goes by that this question is not asked by some marketer somewhere around the world. Since that may be the case with you, here's the answer.

Some experts say that content is any word, image or pixel that can be engaged with by another human being. In the context of this question, content is:

Compelling content that informs, engages or amuses.

What makes content marketing different than simple content is that content marketing must do something for the business.

“...with the objective of driving profitable customer action.”

Your content may engage or inform, but if it's not accomplishing your business goals (i.e., customer retention, lead generation, etc.), it's not content marketing. The content you create must directly work to attract and/or retain customers in some way.

Joe Pulizzi is the founder of The Content Marketing Institute and author of Get Content, Get Customers and Managing Content Marketing.



MARK TRAPHAGEN:

Content marketing is one facet of a strategic marketing plan and must be fully informed by and driven by that plan. The content created, if done well, should be able to contribute toward multiple goals, including

authority-building, influence-expansion, brand establishment, traffic generation, and search ranking improvement. Good marketing content doesn't exist just to attract links, but it speaks to the needs and aspirations of potential customers, assuring them that your business can be trusted and is competent. It is a business's best opportunity to establish a personality and make an emotional connection with prospects. Finally, great content for content marketing always leads the reader toward some action.

Mark Traphagen, Director of Digital Outreach for Virante Inc. in Morrisville, NC, is a sought-after conference speaker and prolific content creator who can sometimes be found creating something slightly less beautiful as a member of a Dixieland street band.

Per dollar, content marketing produces three times more leads.

Source: thecma.com





STEVE LAZUKA:

Content Marketing involves the creation, publishing, and distribution of unique, custom content designed to increase an organization's brand awareness, and generate qualified leads and sales.

Unlike other forms of marketing that involve "interrupting" people with emails, phone calls, or ads, content marketing is based on providing helpful, interesting information that people actually want to read and engage with!

By creating search engine optimized content, on a regular basis, companies can produce a steady stream of free search engine traffic that can last for months or years, dramatically reducing their marketing costs. Great content also has the potential to be shared using social media, further increasing a company's reach and exposure.

Finally, content marketing also involves placing content on carefully designed and tested landing pages that convert information seekers into action takers using compelling call-to-action forms.

Steve Lazuka is founder of Interact Media, creators of the Zerys Content Marketing Platform for marketers and agencies.



SCOTT ABEL:

Content marketing is not a synonym for content strategy, despite what far too many content marketers seem to believe. Content strategy is a repeatable system that governs the management of content

throughout its entire lifecycle. It's about envisioning the future of content -- its development, management, delivery -- and creating a plan that helps us leverage content to achieve our vision. Vision is what you want your content to help you accomplish in the future. It should be a clear, concise, and easy-to-understand description of the future you desire. Whereas content marketing is a tactic. It involves everything needed to ensure your content acts as a magnet that attracts prospects to content that helps you reach (even exceed) your vision.

Scott Abel, aka The Content Wrangler, is an internationally-recognized content marketing strategist and social networking choreographer whose strengths lie in helping global organizations improve the way they author, maintain, and deliver information.

60% of consumers feel more positive about a company after reading custom content on its site. Source: Contentplus.co.uk



CONCLUSION

As content marketing becomes more prevalent in your company's overall marketing efforts, be sure to keep in mind these effective strategies and the benefits that the content you are producing will yield. By acknowledging your target audience, their interests and the various methods of online interaction they engage in, you will ensure that your content is helpful, memorable and easy to find. Creating relevant, informative content that reinforces your organization's specialty and expertise accomplishes the goal of attracting loyal customers that result in conversions. With this foundation, you can now jumpstart your content marketing and propel your business.

ABOUT VERTICAL MEASURES

Vertical Measures is an internet marketing company specializing in content marketing. We produce strategies, content pieces, and targeted campaigns for a wide range of industries nationwide. We also produce educational content marketing workshops and can bring customized onsite training directly to your team. If you are interested in partnering with Vertical Measures to attract more traffic, more leads and more business with content marketing, [contact us](#) today.

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