

# content marketing



Your comprehensive and concise guide to interactive marketing channels, best practices, measurement, and trends.

## content marketing

### The Basics

The rules have changed for brands trying to market their products and services. If a brand wants to hold the attention of its customer base, it must now deliver value to the consumer within its marketing materials.

Online, the best value is often in the form of quality content. Brands that deliver relevant information to their target market will be able to take a more important role in the lives of these consumers and help turn them into a loyal customer base.

Content marketing is the channel that a brand utilizes to provide high quality, relevant, and valuable information to its target audience with the ultimate goal that this information will attract prospective customers.

Content marketing is not interruptive marketing where advertising cuts into the consumers' time to spread the brand's message. The intent of this specific content is not to tout the brand's products and services; the aim is instead to inform and provide these target consumers with information about key industry issues. By educating consumers in this fashion, the intent is that they will recognize and trust the brand as an indus-

try thought leader and expert, thus boosting the brand's image and bettering the chances these consumers will choose the brand for their next purchase.

Content marketing also can help a brand's SEO efforts via links back to the brand's site as well as by the creation of relevant content to offer online users.



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### Executions

There are two primary ways to engage in content marketing: on-site and off-site.



#### On-Site

On-site content marketing can comprise a variety of forms, including blogs, podcasts, webinars, white-papers, presentations, and virtually any other type of downloadable file or viewable content. The key to on-site content marketing is providing information that is useful to your customers and prospects.

When you deliver content that site visitors find valuable they are likely to return to your site. If you provide frequently updated content that provides

value then visitors will not only return more frequently, but will also have a better rate of conversion. Useful content also increases word of mouth referrals to

your site.

#### Off-Site

Off-site activities consist of content that is distributed to the

internet in a variety of forms. This may include white papers, articles, videos, photos, or other materials that are relevant to your target audience.

Certain types of content can be distributed through media networks. Examples include:

- Distribution of white papers through white paper directories. Several directories also offer lead generation based on white paper downloads with a CPL (cost per lead) model.
- Article advertising on a CPC (cost per click) model. This provides the benefit of generating highly targeted site visitors who have shown interest twice (once by clicking to the article, and again by clicking through to the brand's site).

In addition to the obvious benefits for conversion, content marketing also provides substantial benefits for Search Engine Optimization efforts through relevant links back to the brand's Website.

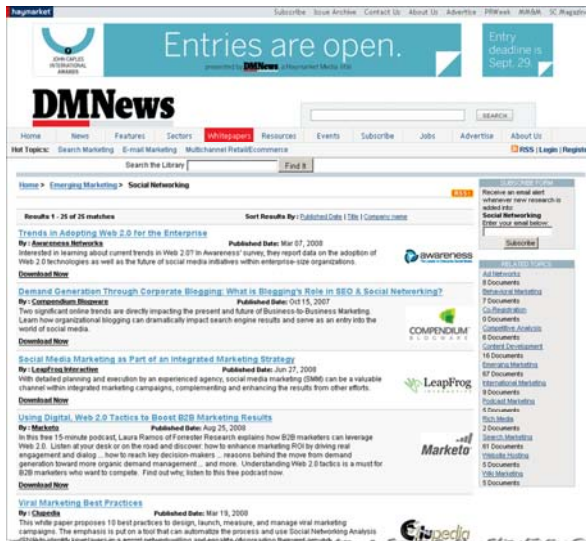
Regardless of the format, a brand that provides quality content will be able to turn average consumers into potential customers and brand advocates.



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### Best Practices

Several key steps are a part of creating the content that can appeal to a brand's desired consumer base. The brand will need to:



- Define the group of consumers its wishes to reach.

- Determine the type of information they really need and the means with which they want to receive it.

- Deliver this information via means (e.g., e-mail, site content, etc.) that this targeted group of consumers prefers.

- Be sure that the content created combines topical relevance and compelling information.
- Measure continually how well the content created is performing (i.e., are consumers reading and responding to it as the brand desires) and making whatever adjustments need to be made.

In addition, content marketing has several best practices that

brands need to keep in mind as they generate and disseminate their content.

- The content should engage a brand's consumers and be developed to fit the specific needs of this target audience.
- Content should utilize relevant keywords within text, or within tags for images, audio, and video.
- Brands need to determine what its target audience considers valued content to be.
- Compelling content remains relevant for the long haul.
- Brands must avoid self-serving content that will be interpreted by users as promotional material.
- As it moves its content from marketing channel to marketing channel and presents it via different forms of media, a brand must make sure the message of its content is clearly defined and consistent throughout.

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### Measurement

Content marketing can be tracked via the analytics tools utilized for other forms of interactive marketing, such as ClickTracks.

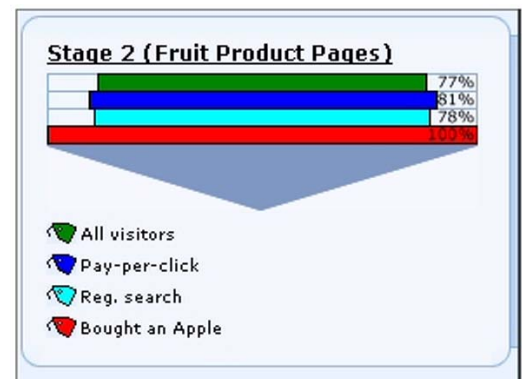
It is particularly useful for off-site content to track referrals from specific channels to see site visits that are stemming from those channels. Utilizing analytics software, you can track the activity of users on-site based on the referral source, providing a details understanding of the impact that content has on user activity.

Most distribution channels will also offer some form of tracking capability for content that you post. This is useful for gauging the impact these channels have on awareness, it will also provide opportunities to identify content that is not engaging consumers to act.

Understanding how its content is being received will help guide a brand as it creates and publishes new content going forward.

Additional tools such as Nielson BuzzMetrics will provide indications if materials have sparked a significant amount of conversation.

As you look at the results of content marketing, also take a look at conversion rates that may not be the cause of direct referrals. Content marketing can often provide changes in consumer perception that is visible through indirect increases in conversion and response of other marketing activities.



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### Trends

The types of online content are always increasing as publishers determine new ways of providing value to consumers. As the information available continued to expand, internet users are getting more demanding about the content they choose to pay attention to.

In addition, search engines, widgets, and tools are making internet users more sophisticated at finding information that is useful to them. Another key source of information for internet users is word of mouth.

Part of this changing trend has been a decrease in the amount of time a brand has to capture a user's attention, coupled with an increase in the time user's spend with brand's that have earned their trust.

While the changes in internet behavior can be challenging, these changes also provide great opportunity for those brands ready to invest in developing quality content for their target audience.

Media channels are also changing to address this change in user behavior. A growing number of media outlets have become available to provide a means to distribute content to

an audience. It is expected that over the next several years additional media channels will become available to distribute and retrieve content online. While many of these channels will follow the established CPC (cost per click) and CPL (cost per lead) models, additional models will also likely be developed to support these new channels.