



White Paper:

The Rising Importance of Content Marketing

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Introduction

Another year has flown by, but the content marketing landscape remains busy. From new tools to shifts in goals and objectives, it's extremely evident that content marketing is an ever changing industry. Keeping up with the latest trends and techniques has become imperative, which is why more and more companies are now brainstorming to make their strategy as effective as possible in the years to come.

The entire purpose of content marketing is to give your audience and viewers something that is relevant and timely, while simultaneously providing them engaging information that they will enjoy. As marketing prototypes transform, technologies advance, and customer preferences shift, "what do they enjoy?" becomes that more of a difficult question to answer. With this question in mind, we've put together key takeaways based on current content marketing statistics to consider if you want to make the most out of your content marketing efforts this year.

What is Content Marketing?



Content Marketing, as defined by Content Marketing Institute, is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience – and, ultimately, drive profitable consumer action. The keyword here is “valuable”. You are delivering useful content to potential prospects and customers to help them solve each of their respective matters, instead of merely pitching your products and services. It's the type of content people venture to seek out, rather than avoid.

Why is Content Marketing Important?

Perhaps equally as important as understanding what content marketing is, is understanding the why. Why, exactly, is content marketing even important in the first place? Well, to answer this question thoroughly, we first must understand the buying process for each consumer.

The four steps of the buying cycle are:

- Awareness
- Research
- Consideration
- Buy



Why is Content Marketing Important?

Awareness is the point at which the consumer recognizes that he needs something – a product or a service. For example, billboards and pamphlets portraying restaurants are often used to trigger hunger acknowledgement.

Research and familiarity is the step in which the potential customer has decided they want or need a product or service like yours. They are likely to start reading reviews, learning the features, and making comparisons.

Consideration is arguably the most impacting stage in terms of your company's status with the consumer. During this stage, the buyer formulates a consideration set and evaluates each option on factors most important to him or her. Your company's ability to convey benefits that coincide with the target customers' needs are crucial during this step.

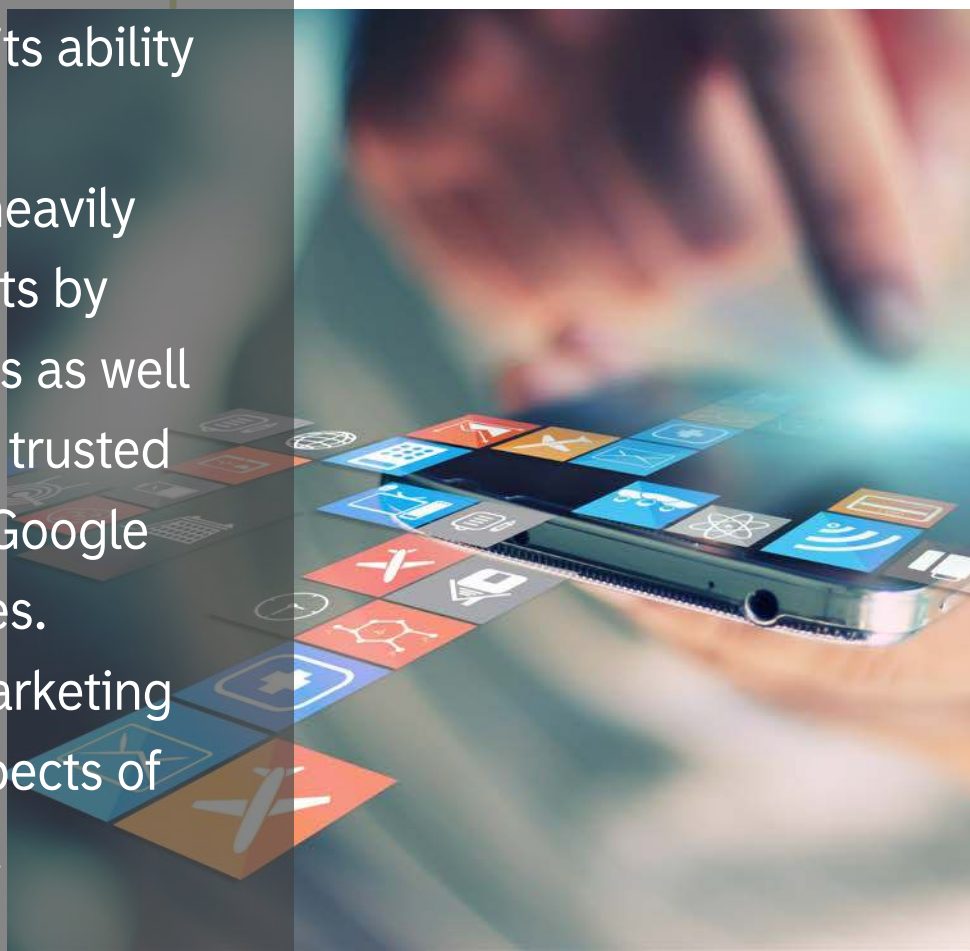
Why is Content Marketing Important?

Buy, the last step, is essentially crunch time in the cycle. If your product, price, and promotions effectively persuaded the customer enough during the consideration process, you should be in good shape at this pivotal step.

Traditional marketing and advertising help tremendously when it comes to the second two steps in the process, Consideration and Buy, whereas content marketing taps into the first steps, Awareness and Research. Raising awareness of solutions educates customers about a product or service they may have otherwise never considered before.

Why is Content Marketing Important?

Content marketing also provides added perks, including its ability to support other digital marketing channels. It heavily contributes to SEO efforts by generating inbound links as well as building up valuable, trusted content to be found by Google and other search engines. Additionally, content marketing provides content for aspects of social media marketing.



Where is Content Marketing Important?



As stated in our previous White Paper regarding 2017 Digital Marketing Trends, content has remained king this year. Whether or not you have your content marketing strategy in place for 2017, it's always beneficial to reevaluate and update your plan for the future. Below we've listed our top recommendations for creating content for your inbound and content marketing strategy.

Where is Content Marketing Important?

Email.

Personalization makes content marketing messages feel as though they're tailored to each individual. In fact, Experian states that emails with personalized subject lines are **26%** more likely to be opened than those without. Data you've leveraged from your audience members and customers can be put to work to increase open rates and drive more business.



Where is Content Marketing Important?

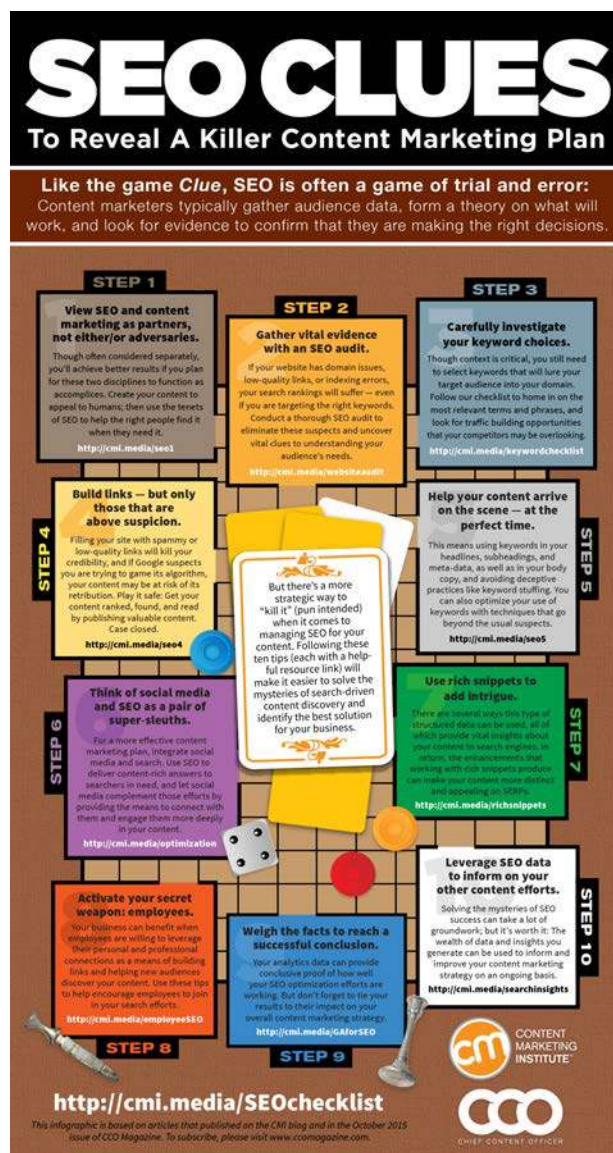
Social Media.

Social media marketing continues to help content marketing teams extend the reach and shareability of their content and campaigns. Studies show **94%** of B2B marketers use LinkedIn as part of their content marketing strategy, with Twitter (**87%**), Facebook (**84%**), YouTube (**74%**), and Google+ (**62%**) close behind. Additionally, Social Media Examiner found that **81%** of marketers saw increased traffic to their website with as little as 6 hours per week invested in social media marketing.

Where is Content Marketing Important?

SEO.

The Content Marketing Institute portrays optimizing your content marketing for search as that of a game of Clue, revealing that content marketers typically gather audience data, form a theory on what will work, and look for evidence to confirm that they are making the right decisions, as the Infographic below demonstrates:



Where is Content Marketing Important?

Infographics.

Speaking of Infographics, these generally long, vertical graphs that include statistics, charts, displays, and other forms of relevant diagrams, are just as effective in content marketing as any form mentioned above. A well designed Infographic has the potential to be passed around social media and posted on websites for years.



Content Marketing Statistics



Blog content is getting longer and more visual. The average blog post is up about 19%, coming in at about 1,050 words in length. (Orbit Media Studios)

Long-form content is now becoming the norm instead of the exception. Rather than whipping up short-form snippets of content, delivering longer, more in-depth pieces of content to your audience will prove to be far more valuable in the long run. According to Curata, long-form blog posts generate 9x more leads than short-form blog posts.

Content Marketing Statistics

The demand for infographics has increased 800% in the past year. (Unbounce)

As stated above, content is becoming more and more visual than in previous years. Infographics make it easy for readers to obtain a large amount of information fairly quickly, due to visuals and graphics making statistics easy to grasp. Additionally, when these become interactive, they create a more engaging experience that tends to stick with the reader far more than a static piece of content.

75% of marketers using interactive content plan to increase their use of the medium in the coming year. (Content Marketing Institute)

Content Marketing Statistics



In 2016, there was a sizable projected uptick in the use of interactive content for content teams, a trend we can expect to continue on into the current year. Interactive, engaging content is helping teams gather more audience insight and transform leads into customers.

About 49% of marketers are learning to drive content to align with the buyer's journey. (LookBookHQ)

Content Marketing Statistics

As content becomes more aligned with the buyer's journey, marketing teams are becoming better at creating content for sales establishment. This, in turn, boosts ROI of content and can be quite a powerful tactic when sales and marketing teams work together.

Brands spend 25%-43% of their marketing budget on content, yet only 23% of CMOs feel they are producing the right information for the right audience, and delivering it at the right time and correct format.
(Business2Community)

Content Marketing Statistics

Strategy, benchmarks, and clear objectives are necessities for teams who want to see their content efforts pay off. Having proper metrics in place to ensure your content marketing is doing everything it should and can do is a crucial step in the process.

- **70%** of B2B marketers plan to create more content in 2017 compared to 2016.
- Emails with personalized subject lines are **26%** more likely to be opened.

Content Marketing Statistics

- **29%** of leading marketers systematically reuse and repurpose content.
- **69%** of companies report their video marketing budget is increasing.
- **46%** of marketers say photography is critical to their current marketing and storytelling strategies.
- **94%** of B2B marketers use LinkedIn as part of their content strategy. Other popular platforms include Twitter (**87%**), Facebook (**84%**), YouTube (**74%**) and Google+ (**62%**).

Conclusion



Keep this information and statistics in mind as you and your team consider the best plan of action for your 2017 content marketing strategy. When content marketing is executed effectively and efficiently, your organization reaps the benefits. So, don't wait to brainstorm what will work best for your company in the year ahead, start now!