

Content Marketing Trends

2019

DISCOVER WHAT SOME OF AUSTRALIA'S
LEADING MARKETERS THINK ABOUT THE
STATE OF CONTENT MARKETING NOW
AND INTO THE FUTURE.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Head of Content at Private Media and Director of Bureau..... 1

CHAPTER 1 WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING? 2

Avoiding over-the-top self-promotion 3

Value-adding, not bragging..... 4

CHAPTER 2 HOW HAS CONTENT MARKETING CHANGED OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS? 5

Quality counts 6

The role of technology 6

CHAPTER 3 CUTTING THROUGH ALL OF THE NOISE 7

Be clear about what you're doing..... 8

Be original, relevant and timely..... 8

Meeting B2B and B2C audience expectations 9

CHAPTER 4 TOP TIPS FOR BUILDING A CONTENT STRATEGY ON A BUDGET 10

Less is more 11

Slice and dice..... 11

Know your audience 11

Use social media 11

Leverage mass-volume platforms..... 12

Optimise for keyword searches 12

CHAPTER 5 FUNNEL OF LOVE - FROM AWARENESS TO LEAD GENERATION AND SALES 13

CHAPTER 6 WHO'S NAILING IT AND WHO ISN'T? 15

Room for improvement 16

CHAPTER 7 THE FUTURE OF CONTENT - VOICE AND VIDEO 17

More voice searches 18

CONCLUSION..... 19



INTRODUCTION

Content marketing came to prominence a decade ago as social platforms and websites offered a coveted place for brands to disseminate their messaging. Meanwhile newspapers were in decline, free-to-air TV was challenged by subscription TV and consumers were increasingly able to enjoy the democracy of the internet and avoid traditional advertising.

There are now more than 2.3 billion people on Facebook, one billion on Instagram, 1.9 billion on YouTube, 610 million on LinkedIn and 330 million on Twitter. While social is still a huge part of a marketer's toolkit, it's not the silver bullet it was 10 years ago.

Algorithms change, the amount of noise and social content is at historic highs, privacy and data concerns such as GDPR have taken a front seat and if brands want consumers to see their posts, they need to pay to play in an era where organic posts are typically achieving 2%.

It's not all doom and gloom. It just means brands need to be more strategic than ever. Having a content strategy that considers the three Cs—company objectives, customers and competitors means you'll not only differentiate yourself but you'll be more mindful to create content optimised for the platform you're using.

In this ebook, we interview some of Australia's leading marketers on the trends and changes in content marketing. There's no doubt audiences are consuming content differently than they did five years ago. People are more time poor than ever and social channels are increasingly crowded.

Marketers need to capture people's attention and communicate the value of investing their time, fast. People sit on public transport scrolling through their newsfeeds at unprecedented rates. Listening to podcasts at 2 x speed, saving videos to watch later, avoiding content because the article read time is too onerous.

Brands shouldn't put all their eggs in one basket. In fact, email marketing is the only channel where people are in control and not algorithms. We recently saw influencers become de-influenced with Instagram likes and Facebook business page updates in January 2018 superceded to family and friend's updates.

If brands want to stand out on the internet they need to 'tell and not sell' which means they firstly need to help, entertain or inform potential customers. This inbound approach is now more successful than the traditional disruptive model of advertising.

As Digital and Communications Marketing Manager at Chobani, Olivia Dickinson, says content marketing is like a first date. If all you do is talk about yourself, there won't be a second date.



CATH VALLANCE **HEAD OF CONTENT** **AT PRIVATE MEDIA** **AND DIRECTOR** **OF BUREAU**

Cath was previously Managing Editor at King Content, and has more than 18 years' experience in journalism and PR in Australia and the UK and more recently in content marketing, helping B2B and B2C brands achieve business objectives for key target audiences.



CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

It could be a video, blog, podcast or infographic, but if it showcases your brand's expertise while providing useful takeaways for the audience, it falls into the category of content marketing.

Content Lead at ME Bank Bec Thexton says: "Whatever format, whatever channel, if the intention is to impart value, that's content marketing."

If you want to be seen and heard by today's discerning audiences, and sow the seeds for long-term loyalty, you've got to offer something that solves a real, specific customer need.



“Putting the focus on being helpful lets us build a relationship and show value before we ask our customer to purchase from us. It builds trust and credibility which is essential to our broader marketing strategy and at the core of our brand.”

JODY HART
DIRECTOR MARKETING AND DIGITAL
AT TAFE QUEENSLAND

AVOIDING OVER-THE-TOP SELF-PROMOTION

Content marketing is about connecting with people, not talking at customers. To build credibility among your audience, you must stay focused on the needs of the group you're trying to reach – if they can trust you to reliably put their best interests first, it will strengthen your bond over the long term.

“That may mean they ultimately make a decision to go with another provider because they are a better fit,” says Director Marketing and Digital at TAFE Queensland Jody Hart, “but even that has the two-fold benefit of improving customer retention and enabling us to establish a relationship of trust for a future opportunity that is a good fit.”

bureau

HOW'S YOUR CONTENT PROVIDER PERFORMING?
NEED A SECOND OPINION?

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VALUE-ADDING, NOT BRAGGING

“Content marketing is like a first date. If all you do is talk about yourself, there won’t be a second date.” It’s a quote that really resonated with Olivia Dickinson, and as Digital and Communications Marketing Manager at Chobani she has instilled this approach into her team’s way of thinking.

Building relationships through shared value is the essence of content marketing, she says, and “If you only talk to product attributes you won’t drive the loyalty that will ensure conversion when your consumer is at the shelf.”

That doesn’t mean you have to shy away from self-promotion altogether, but tread lightly and make sure the quality of your content justifies the reference to your brand.

“If you’ve added value in some way such as additional information or entertainment, then you have earned the right to subtly mention a product or service,” Thexton says. “This can be tempting to ignore, however product stuffing your content will do all your efforts a disservice.”



“I look at content marketing as a channel to educate, inspire and empower to drive inbound traffic. It shouldn’t be a direct sell of products and services. That’s what differentiates content marketing to traditional marketing.

Content marketing focuses on highlighting the pain points, understanding the need, creating and building trust and loyalty among a brand’s visitors and consumers, which eventually creates sticky customers. It’s a win for prospects, customers and the brand.

SHREYA DUTT

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE CONTENT MARKETING LEAD AT ANZ

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CHAPTER 2

HOW HAS CONTENT MARKETING CHANGED OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS?

Content marketing has certainly gained traction in the past half-decade, with the majority (55%) of marketers saying blog content creation was their top inbound marketing priority in 2018.

Now, more brands are pumping out video, blogs, infographics and podcasts in an effort to grab attention. Meanwhile, people are becoming more selective about the content they consume.

QUALITY COUNTS

Audience expectations have skyrocketed since being bombarded with content on every platform, forcing brands to pay more attention to strategy and standards if they want to get noticed.

“Five years ago it was a mad dash to create as much content as possible. If you weren’t posting daily, ‘your brand was doomed to die,’” Dickinson says. “Today, however, it’s about quality through fierce prioritisation. “Fluff” content, or content without original ideas, will become obsolete, rendering lower and lower returns compared to low-frequency, high-value content.”

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

New channels and technology have also impacted the way brands engage with their customers. Think changing social media algorithms and the rise of influencer culture, the increasing popularity of voice and video (more on that later), advancements in mobile tech and apps, and people experiencing product benefits via interactive content, such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR).

Cathy Tanimura, Senior Director of Analytics and Data Science at US-based exercise app Strava, has noticed another, numbers-driven shift. “With the rise of big data and data science, savvy organisations can put together unique and fascinating insights into their industries,” she says.



“The platforms used to distribute content have become so cluttered that the quality is now more important than ever, with an expectation on authenticity and transparency from brands.

Sophisticated and mature brands understand how to create content that resonates with their audiences as audiences have become more conscious of what they are consuming as well.

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BEK THEXTON, CONTENT LEAD AT ME BANK



CHAPTER 3

CUTTING THROUGH ALL OF THE NOISE

Targeting your consumer needs with a solid strategy will give you the best chances of cutting through and getting noticed – and again, it all comes down to the quality of your content.

BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING

Whether it's giving them a new perspective, new information, or a new solution to a problem, make sure you know how each piece of content you're producing is adding value to your audience.

"Content should always be the answer to a customer question," says Hart. "If someone engages with your content and doesn't recognise it as being authentic to you, hasn't learnt something new, or knows what to do next, you are not ready to share it."

BE ORIGINAL, RELEVANT AND TIMELY

Use current events to inspire insights that connect back to your brand and resonate with your audience, and look for other innovative ways to tell your story.

"Show up in surprising, unexpected places and ways," says Ringham. "Collaborate with an established entity who reaches your audience with a podcast, video series or blog series. Partner with other businesses that complement your business. The key is to experiment and keep trying. And keep telling the story of how your product or service helps people."

“ When my team is concepting, I always encourage them to think of their concept and then to think about how we can display this in an abstract or novel manner. The most interesting ideas come from flipping expectations on their heads, breaking moulds and taking risks. ”

OLIVIA DICKINSON
DIGITAL AND COMMUNICATIONS
MARKETING MANAGER AT CHOBANI



MEETING B2B AND B2C AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS

Increasingly B2B brands need to step up the quality of their content to appeal to a target market that has also become more sophisticated and demanding.

“I still see “listicles” and click-bait headlines, but these are often less than satisfying reads,” Tanimura says. “There’s a desire to cut through the hype and the jargon and tell me what I really need to know.”

B2B audiences need to be on top of industry knowledge and trends, so content catered to them should provide valuable and interesting information and build domain thought leadership. It won’t take them long to differentiate reliable, relevant and quality insights from product-pushing fluff – and if your content falls into the latter group you won’t be doing your brand any favours.

“We see the customer identifying the quality of the content they receive in the early stages of brand engagement directly impacts their view of the brand and the services they are considering,” says Hart. “There is a huge opportunity for thought leaders to build personal brand clout based on their ability to deliver content that speaks to this audience.”



“

B2B audiences expect to be treated like a B2C audience. This sets the bar very high for B2B marketers. Content needs to show up in surprising ways to grab the attention of your audience and it all comes down to good storytelling.

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URSULA RINGHAM

HEAD OF GLOBAL INFLUENCER
MARKETING AT US-BASED INTERNATIONAL
SOFTWARE COMPANY SAP



CHAPTER 4

TOP TIPS FOR BUILDING A CONTENT STRATEGY ON A BUDGET

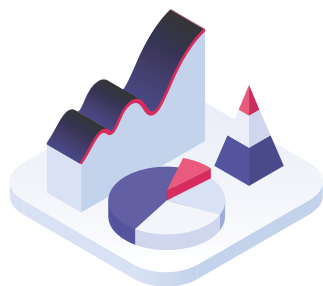
Limited funds and quality, compelling content aren't mutually exclusive. Here are a few tactical tips for making an impact on a budget.



LESS IS MORE

When money is tight, focus on doing a few things well – and always stick to quality over quantity.

“Find a customer problem that you can help with, and provide an authentic engaging experience on a channel you know your customers use,” says Hart. “Fifteen second videos that communicate actionable advice are great. Show people unique content that no one else could give them.”



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Research your target audience, find out about their pain points and passions, and how you can reach them, and then be strategic in your distribution. Let your demographic guide you.

“You need to fish where the fish are,” says ANZ Strategic Initiative Content Marketing Lead Shreya Dutt.



SLICE AND DICE

Break up individual content pieces into small, snackable servings and repackage them to get more bang for your buck. Thexton suggests taking headlines or tips from long-form articles and posting them as insights on social media, or repurposing them into questions for Instagram story polls to create some interactive content.



USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Make the most of platforms such as LinkedIn, Medium and Twitter for distributing content, and develop your networks through social media. Build a community by connecting directly with followers and encourage consumers to share their positive experiences with user generated content (UGC).

Try using games, competitions and polls to drive engagement for your product or service, or partner with micro-influencers who resonate with your target audience.



LEVERAGE MASS-VOLUME PLATFORMS

Mass volume platforms such as Creatively Squared, Shutterstock Custom and 90seconds are a cost-effective way to produce high-quality content, Dickinson says.

“The tip here is to always control the content. Ideate and create the concepts internally but leverage expertise of external stylist and photographers through these platforms.”



OPTIMISE FOR KEYWORD SEARCHES

A lot of customers, existing and new, search for products and services online, so search engine marketing is an important investment, says Dutt.

“For SMEs who are in a sector where there are hotly contested keywords, it’s useful to look at related keywords so your business can appear in the related searches. The Google Keywords platform can help you to identify keywords, phrases and long-tail keywords your target audience is searching with. Think like your customer here.”



“Don’t feel the need to be on all platforms at all times. Research as much as you can about your audience before you launch your content marketing strategy. What you might find is that running content on one channel that has great engagement is better than multiple channels, especially on a limited budget.”

ZARA CURTIS

DIRECTOR OF CONTENT & CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AT IAG



CHAPTER 5

FUNNEL OF LOVE – FROM AWARENESS TO LEAD GENERATION AND SALES

Content marketing is often at the top of the marketing funnel with engagement, but what about driving people to the next stage?

ROI attribution is much easier now that you can monitor views, clicks, engagement time and scroll depth. These days more sophisticated targeting of functions and behavioural signals has seen a trend towards producing content for lead generation and conversion.

“I think it depends on the purpose, and it’s important to have clear goals and measure accordingly,” Tanimura says. “When entering a new market or targeting a new audience, driving awareness and measuring that may be appropriate, with other types of marketing later turning that awareness into sales. For deeper in the funnel content when the audience is already aware and you’re trying to get them interested in a specific product or service, lead generation and attribution may be more important.”

In other words, aim for a combination of content focused at different stages of the funnel and run the campaigns simultaneously – awareness still plays a part, but you need to have a plan for what to do with your audience next.



“Six years ago content marketing was about driving awareness. But now it’s more about identifying the stage the user is in the decision making journey and then delivering the next action in the user journey. Effectiveness of content marketing is now being measured against lead quality, conversion rate, time on site through inbound traffic, direct attributions and, even in some instances, direct sales.”

SHREYA DUTT STRATEGIC INITIATIVE CONTENT MARKETING LEAD AT ANZ

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CHAPTER 6

WHO'S NAILING IT AND WHO ISN'T?

Audiences have high expectations when it comes to content and some brands are consistently stepping up and delivering the goods. Here are a few top performers.

LUSH

Lush is a surprising and exciting brand to watch in the content space, according to Thexton, as they “champion marketing for a cause with attitude”.

“Lush transition seamlessly between meaningful purpose-led social cause campaigns to cheeky and out-there experimental content, like working with ASMR influencers,” she says.

VINOMOFO

The online wine retailer got the nod from Dickinson. “Sign up to their EDM to get a taste of their quality content, but subscribe at your own risk – they are unignorable.”

BIG BANG AR

The Big Bang AR app, narrated by Tilda Swinton, “really points to the future of content and the role it can play in entertaining, educating and interacting with audiences,” Curtis says.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Experimenting and taking risks is a great way to innovate, but be prepared to ditch anything that isn’t working quick smart. Remember content marketing should always be about and for the audience – something that even experienced brands can get forget sometimes.

“The North Face along with their ad agency, Leo Burnett, manipulated Wikipedia for a marketing campaign to climb to the top of Google search results,” Ringham says. “They replaced known public photos on Wikipedia with their own that contained their brand logo [and] took advantage of the public’s trust in Wikipedia for their own gain. Clever publicity stunt or massive fail?”



“

Brands that are serious about providing value and developing long term relationships are generally doing better. I still see a fair number of listicles and content that lacks real substance or has too much of a sales pitch. And of course, anyone using data in their content needs to strictly respect privacy, and share only aggregated, de-identified information.

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CATHY TANIMURA, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ANALYTICS AND DATA SCIENCE AT US-BASED EXERCISE APP STRAVA



CHAPTER 7

THE FUTURE OF CONTENT - VOICE AND VIDEO

With the rise of voice and video technology, the future of content looks a lot less text-based. Already video is everywhere, being used by every industry, and the expectations for its impact are, in a word, huge.

“Right now, it’s about short, snackable video that grabs the attention of your audience and leads them to longer format content such as blogs, longer videos and podcasts,” Ringham says. “Look for VR, 360, and vlogging from influencers to come into play.”

MORE VOICE SEARCHES

Voice searches are also unquestionably on the rise, and since spoken English can be very different to written English, brands will need to consider applying a human tone to optimise search terms for natural speak. Plus, voice assistants use different search engines, so how can you maintain a presence across each one?

In short, investing in voice and video is going to be essential for staying relevant and top of mind going forward. The good news is these are powerful forms of communication, paving the way for brands to start producing more entertaining, engaging and easy to digest content that cuts through the abundance of text.

“Now the majority of the internet has shifted to beautifully optimised mobile friendly websites, we need to design what a voice friendly website looks like. How do you search a navigation structure using voice commands?”

BEC THEXTON

CONTENT LEAD AT ME BANK



CONCLUSION

It all comes down to good storytelling. And focusing on the needs of your consumers.

It's knowing who you're marketing to, what stage of the customer journey they're at, and where to find them.

Voice and video might be set to shake things up, but these things won't change: it will still be about using shared value to build deeper connections with people. That's content marketing, and that's why it's so effective.



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