

DISCOVER THE POWER OF *Content Marketing*

Content marketers harness powerful opportunities to connect with key audiences in a sophisticated and effective format, engaging their current and prospective customers in a unique conversation that can only be had within the context of peer-generated content.

SMART MARKETERS UNDERSTAND the value of well-crafted content delivered to a highly targeted audience. In fact, new research from the Custom Publishing Council (CPC) shows that only the Internet beats content marketing as the fastest-growing marketing tool.

More of today's marketers are moving away from one-size-fits-all solutions and developing targeted approaches using custom content. Compared to radio, television, and other intrusive types of advertising, content marketing provides an elegant, non-interruptive forum for conveying your unique insights and perspective and positioning your business as an authority on the subject covered. Research reflects the value of content marketing, as another CPC study showed media consumers prefer to receive marketing messages within an interesting editorial package rather than traditional advertising alone.

If your organization hasn't embraced a content marketing strategy, you could be left behind. Here's how to leverage the power of content marketing for your business.

PLAY THE POWERFUL ROLE OF PUBLISHER TO MEET YOUR BUYER'S CRITICAL INFORMATION NEEDS

The best business-to-business and business-to-consumer publications delivered must read content for the buyers marketers wanted to reach. These buyers, in turn, became loyal followers of the publications and responded actively to both editorial and advertising messages.

As Paul Gillin suggests in *The New Influencers*, content marketing is all about engaging in a conversation with your customers and prospects:

"The next generation of customers will want to interact with businesses in very different ways. The new influencers are here to stay. Your challenge, and your opportunity, is in learning how to influence them and becoming an influencer yourself."

The old influencers, especially traditional media, are declining in influence. This has created an unprecedented opportunity for companies to fill the information void. Although media companies are increasingly disappointing your buyers, those same buyers are still hungry for content that offers solutions to their problems — and helps him lead more successful, productive, and enjoyable lives.

Therefore, you have the opportunity to transform the way in which you market by providing relevant content that positions you as a trusted source. You begin as a source of information and continue as a source of products and services.

It's neither necessary nor desirable to attempt to sell prospects who don't want to be sold. Instead, your thought leadership positions your company as the obvious source for solutions. As you become increasingly customer centric, you can develop an intensely loyal and lucrative base of repeat customers.

TARGET AND REACH BUYERS AFFORDABLY AND EFFECTIVELY

Big companies have long had the technological resources and the investment capital required to build sophisticated content marketing solutions — and to manage huge amounts of demographic data relating to their prospects and customer base. Many such as Best Buy, Microsoft, and Amazon.com probably know more about us than some of our relatives. They also do a terrific job of delivering relevant and compelling content to different segments of their prospect bases. This applies to print and electronic solutions.

Smaller companies typically had to rely on media companies to deliver their message to their targeted buyers. This has certainly been true with print publications and until fairly recently online as well. Affordable technology has changed all of the rules. In fact, a 10-person company may be able to out market a 10,000-person company in a carefully chosen niche. Today, because the software technology required to manage a customer database is now affordable for any size organization, even small companies have less need of the services of trade and consumer publishers. You can target your ideal set of customers both precisely and inexpensively. Of course, in the burgeoning world of social media, tools such as Twitter and Facebook offer even more possibilities of aggregating prospects who are eager to listen to what you have to say.

All of this is vital because effective and efficient distribution powers the very best content marketing strategies. After all, there is not much point in creating great content unless you can deliver it exactly where you want it. Now you can do both.

GENERATE HIGH-QUALITY EDITORIAL EVEN WITH LIMITED TIME AND DOLLARS

The key to successful media programs for corporations is great content. Your buyers know the difference between great content and a blatant sales pitch. You may have to work hard to provide consistently relevant and compelling content, but it need not be cost prohibitive. You can benefit directly from the miseries of traditional media organizations thanks to a growing reservoir of available writers and editors.

Much of the best editorial talent has been forced out of media organizations to save money. The outflow of terrific journalists is headline material everywhere as newspaper and magazine editorial pages shrink in lock step with the drastic drop in ad pages. Companies of all sizes can afford to create high-quality content as they attract high-quality journalists for contract work. In particular, savvy, small organizations are also working with talented freelancers to generate consistently solid content.

Great content underlies great content marketing. Your buyers want and need great content. They used to receive it from media companies. Today, they can and should be receiving it from your organization. Even if you do not have internal editorial talent, plenty of brilliant editors and reporters will be happy to put their talents to work on behalf of your company.

START BECOMING A PUBLISHER NOW:

DEVELOPING A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY BOTH EASIER AND MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

The new breed of buyer doesn't want to be sold. But, he is more desperate for solutions to complex business and life challenges than ever before. Whether it's a matter of selecting the right HD TV—or selecting the right enterprise software solution, your buyer has big problems that need solving. Delivering the content to solve those problems used to be the province of media company publications. No longer. It's your world now as the new breed of publisher.

You can deploy content marketing solutions that begin with genuine conversations, continue with careful targeting, and finish with solution-centered content. Your company will become the new media in the minds of your customers—because you both understand and solve their problems in a way that was once upon a time the sole province of publishing companies.

Don't wait. The time is now. Go for it.

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New Study Shows Content Marketing through Custom Media a Smart Investment

A **STRUGGLING ECONOMY** means your marketing strategy must be even more targeted for maximum relevance and user engagement to deliver results. When it's time to begin next year's budget planning process, consider custom media—a proven content marketing program that achieves these objectives.

The findings from a recent national study conducted by Roper Public Affairs reflect the efficacy of content marketing via custom publishing, both in print and digital formats.

- » **Custom publications show increased positive impact on purchasing behavior.** Nearly seven in 10 (68%) of respondents say that the companies that provide information about their products in custom publications help them make better purchase decisions. Sixty-six percent say they are likely to buy from the same company that provided them with a custom publication, and 63% say they have bought something they saw mentioned or advertised in a custom publication.
- » **Custom publications strengthen consumers' relationship with sponsoring companies.** Nearly eight in 10 (78%) say that custom publications indicate companies are interested in building good relationships with consumers and most feel better about the sponsoring company when they are reading a publication the company has provided.
- » **The majority of readers believe custom publications are valuable.** Seven in 10 (70%) like custom publications because the publications provide articles and information targeted to the reader's specific interests.
- » **Custom publications are preferred source of information about companies.** Seventy-four percent feel that getting information from a company through an interesting collection of articles, rather than an ad, is more appealing.
- » **Companies that provide custom publications are rated positively and recommended to others.** The study indicated that people who receive publications from their local hospitals are more satisfied with these hospitals and more likely to recommend them than are people who do not receive such publications.
- » **Awareness of custom publications is strong.** Before being presented with examples, 61% said they were aware of seeing or receiving custom publications. When presented with specific examples, 93% said they were familiar with at least one type of custom publication.
- » **Readership of custom publications is high.** Nearly six in 10 (59%) say that, at a minimum, they occasionally pick up and look through the custom publications they receive.
- » **Interesting information is an important selling point.** Nearly eight in 10 (78%) say that when it comes to custom publications, they don't mind the fact that sponsors are clearly selling their products and services, as long as the publications are filled with interesting information.
- » **Electronic custom publications are also seen as valuable.** Almost half (45%) of survey respondents feel that electronic custom publications provide a valuable service, and this number jumps among younger Americans. Nearly six in 10 (57%) of those ages 18 to 34 say electronic custom publications provide a valuable service.

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Americans' Relationship with Custom Publications and the Companies That Provide Them: 2009 Update" is based on surveys conducted by Roper Public Affairs and Media, a division of GfK—a leading international market research firm. Telephone interviews were conducted with 1,000 adult Americans aged 18 and older from February 18, 2009–March 3, 2009.



A Proven Content Marketing Strategy

MD NEWS IS ABLE to build very strong brands in the markets we serve by offering business and medical practices the opportunity to be a part of larger content marketing strategy through syndicated custom publishing programs. Our collective approach to building an underwriting structure for each local market is unique and powerful. This is the heart of syndicated custom publishing — to assemble like-minded business leaders to support a custom magazine in their market to their benefit as well as the benefit of the readership audience. This is a key opportunity for savvy business strategists to participate in a sophisticated and powerful marketing strategy that will enhance their reputation as leaders in their respective fields.

This is the opportunity *MD News* offers — to be a participant with other like-minded business professionals in a custom magazine. Our product is unique — it has a national brand image, yet is circulated at the local level. Therefore, it is imperative that we provide local perspective within our custom content. This is why we offer this unique and powerful opportunity to participate in a custom publishing program — to enhance the local relevance of *MD News* through partnerships with compatible marketers who understand the value of custom publishing and desire to employ custom content into their communication strategy.

Underwriting an editorial presence in *MD News* will put you and your business in front of your audience in a manner that no other marketing or communication resource can. You are building a dialogue with your audience that is grounded in a custom magazine that you help underwrite. You emerge as the leading expert in the topics we present in *MD News* and are ultimately perceived as the thought leader in your community and among your peers.

For more information on how your business can be featured in *MD News*, call Executive Vice President of Business Development Jason Provonsha at 800.624.7496, ext. 111 or jprovonsha@sunshinemediacom.com.

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