

# Content Marketing as an Effective Contemporary Marketing Tool

Dr. Rajan Sharma<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract** - The way marketing is being done in the contemporary scenario has undergone a sea change with the influx of internet, technology and IT becoming affordable and accessible to masses from all walks of life. The marketing principles largely remain same, but the tools have changed drastically in the contemporary marketing context. Digital ways and means are the new solution providers on the digital marketing war platform. Big data marketing and predictive analytics, content marketing, social marketing, marketing automation, mobile media marketing, social media marketing are some of the new trends to be watched and followed in the coming times.

Big players like amazon, flipkart, myntra, jabong are changing the way the businesses being handled previously or traditionally. Among this the Content Marketing resonates the most frequent, as it is unique and quite different from the rest of the tools in the marketer's toolkit and requires specialized skill set.

The proposed paper is a humble attempt to highlight some of the key characteristics related to Content Marketing, contemporary examples and the roadmap for the future. The paper also highlights some of the paradigm shifts to be taken by the marketer in view of the changes in the business environment, consumer behaviour and preferences in the light of impact through information technology.

**Key words:** CRO (conversion rate optimisation), IoT (internet of things) marketing application, SEO (search engine optimization), affiliate marketing, co-marketing

## Content Marketing as an Effective Contemporary Marketing Tool

Contemporary marketing practices have undergone a dramatic shift from the traditional marketing tool kit. Though the basic principles and concepts remain same but the tools have undergone a sea change. In this context traditional marketing is becoming less and less effective day by day. In the emerging trends content marketing echoes the most. Other trends are social media marketing, affiliate marketing, big data based on business analytics, marketing automation, Conversion rate Optimisation, Internet of things (IoT), search engine optimisation (SEO).

As given in the below mentioned slide the content marketing tops the list of contemporary digital marketing techniques in 2017.

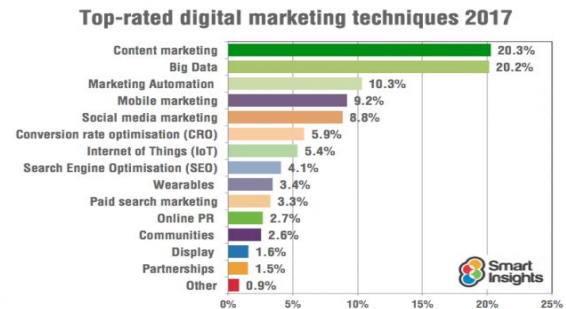


Fig. 1: Top Rated digital marketing techniques 2017

Source: [www.smartinsights.com](http://www.smartinsights.com)

## CONTENT MARKETING

Content Marketing 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, to drive profitable customer action.

Thus Content Marketing is defined as a type of marketing that involves the creation and sharing of online material (such as videos, blogs, and social media posts) that does not explicitly promote a brand but is intended to stimulate interest in its products or services.

As defined by the Content Marketing Institute's Website. "Content Marketing is all about connecting with the consumers who have a specific need with their solution via content." Social media is an integral part of content marketing.

So basically content marketing in context of digital marketing is all about creation, publishing and promotion of content material placed on carefully designed and tested landing pages. And it is all done on a constant and regular basis consistently. Content designed must be provocative, unique, interesting, novel, distinctive, intriguing, engaging & stimulating.

The benefits your organisation will draw out of the content marketing are manifold. It would build Your website in to a trusted authority in your industry. It will keep your visitors or potential visitors coming quite often and staying longer. Your organisation will rank higher in the search engines for key competitive words. It will help you build a permanent source of targeted links and traffic. It will benefit the organisation by generating lot of qualified leads and sales. Finally, it will increase your conversion rates.

Five important factors in the context of Content Marketing:

1. It is all about consistent strategic marketing in action.
2. It is all about consumer and not about you (your organisation)
3. Focussed on the customers having specific needs
4. Provide incredible value through various content. Basically content should offer best solutions to the specific problems of the customer targeted. It might not be your product.
5. It is the content which matters as listed below.

Type of content marketing tools: Articles, Images, Webinars, Tutorials, question and answer series, animated videos, Podcasts, Email newsletters, infographics, Worksheets, Blog post, e-books, White papers.

Significance of content marketing:

Through application of various marketing tools the content marketing tries to achieve various objectives. Some of them are given as under:

1. Increase sales
2. Long term marketing strategy to build trust and a relationship with the customers
3. To improve customer retention and loyalty
4. It serves as a mode for customer engagement providing opportunity to customers to interact and discuss with the business organisation.
5. To create brand awareness. It enhances brand recall & recognition through sustained exposure.
6. To gain competitive advantage.
7. Valuable content makes rooms for engaging consumer for future.

The slide given below gives us the idea on how different goals are achieved through Content Marketing.

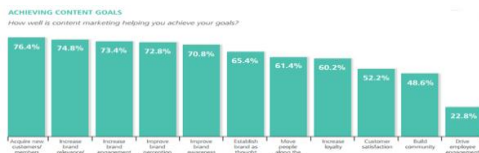


Fig 2.: Content Marketing

Source :<http://www.adweek.com/digital/the-3-biggest-challenges-in-content-marketing/>

Researches have shown that Customer engagement enhanced consumer loyalty, satisfaction, empowerment, connection, emotional bonding, trust and commitment. The slide given ahead highlights the impact of time and content sophistication level. Going up in the sophistication level is all about breaking through the noise and clutter of traditional marketing through innovative and unique content for the customer’s specific needs.

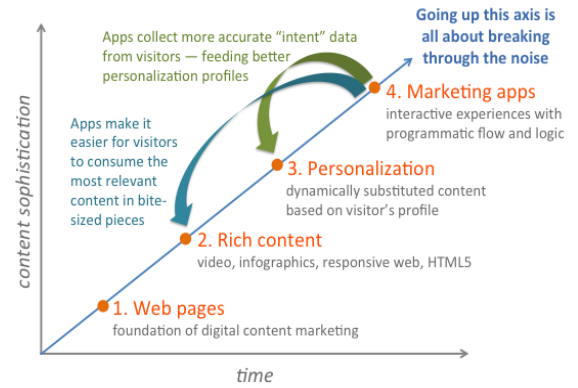


Fig 3: The impact of time and content sophistication level

Source :<http://www.smartinsights.com>

Content marketing applied by leading brands worldwide  
 Vast majority of marketers are using content marketing. In fact, it is used by many prominent organizations in the world, including P&G, Microsoft, Cisco Systems, and John Deere. It’s also developed and executed by small businesses and one-person shops around the globe. Reasons are that it works wonderfully for the marketer. Content as a base is must for marketing

In content marketing we try to spread the information which is relevant and valuable to the customer specific needs. The companies who are adapting the content marketing are different from the other organisation sending you the informational garbage to sell you various products and most of the times it is not the very relevant or valuable. And it is this ability of content marketing to provide relevant and valuable solutions, which makes it the most popular and different from all the other marketing effort.

Marketing without good content is impossible in the present times:

Regardless of what type of marketing tactics you use, content marketing should be part of your process, not something separate. Quality content is part of all forms of marketing:

- Social media marketing: Content marketing strategy comes before your social media strategy.
- SEO: Search engines reward businesses that publish quality, consistent content.
- PR: Successful PR strategies address issues readers care about, not their business.
- PPC: For PPC to work, you need great content behind it.
- Inbound marketing: Content is key to driving inbound traffic and leads.

- Content strategy: Content strategy is part of most content marketing strategies.

Emerging trends in content market in the future

1. Buying influencers by marketer

Influencer marketing was a buzzword in last few years. Now the shift in the pattern is that instead of partnering with content creators and distributors, organisations are straight way buying them. As in a recent example, CNN bought a social media app. CNN is shutting down the app and asking Casey and his team to start a new media platform. Basically, CNN is looking to target a new audience, one that it believes Neistat holds the keys to. Instead of organically growing a platform or finding a leader within its ranks, CNN just went out and purchased Neistat and his team for \$25 million.

2. Content marketing as defensive mechanism

In the markets nationally and internationally the traditional media is being attacked by the content campaigns and effect of the same has been favourable and fantastic. This type of action from media companies against brands will only multiply in future. The way left for the companies to defend themselves is to create their own large, loyal audiences. The must work on content marketing/PR business case to be front-and-centre in any large enterprise.

Recently Kellogg pulled its advertising from Breitbart.com because of Mr. Steve Bannon, Brietbart’s former chairman was named as a top advisor in a political context and Kellogg’s had some disagreements over the usage of website as a different platform. The Brietbart combated it through statements and campaign in the social media namely twitter and was picked up by all the major new outlets. It resulted in faster traffic increase. As the Barbiet had huge audience or followers and Kellogg’s was less effective in combating the same.

3. Negative points of social platforms

Off late content marketers have found various negative points in the way the social platform make their rules and policies, which are detrimental and obstructive in the goals to be achieved by content marketers. The marketers have faced problems with the Youtube and Facebook and shifted gradually to other social marketing platforms. And it is opined by experts that there would be more advertising on social media platforms and less organic publishing. Even a brand can opt for its owned platform for better control and manageability and paid promotion through social platforms to generate leads and influence prospects. There would be content spread through social media sharing and brand need not to be present on the platform for sharing to happen. i.e. the same can be induced through content activities.

4. Email is still the key tool

Apart from emails, social media platform do not provide the clear-cut information and control over communication with followers or targeted audiences. And in this aspect email has been found to be very effective and efficient tool. In the recent study by CMI/MarketingProfs B2B it was

found that email was rated as the No. 1 success metric for measuring content marketing. It is to be understood that more organisation will focus on the targeted and relevant e-newsletters to increase the number of prospects and for better conversion. Organisations also have to reorient their outlook toward e-newsletters as truly fantastic tools for increasing customer engagement rather than mere attachments.

5. Print re-emerging and finding value

Marketers especially dealing in niche segments, finding it effective to reach the audience through print magazine or other print medium. Reasons for this are that it will do away with the clutter of social media or content. Apart from this the print can be used as a complementing material to serve a niche segment profitability by making a positive impression.

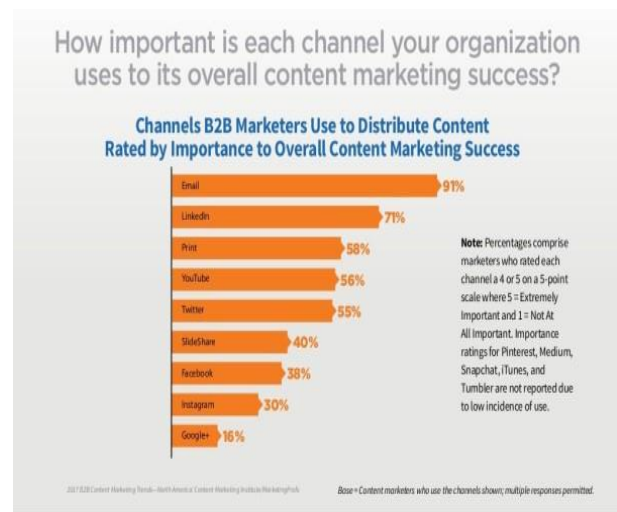


Fig 4: Content Marketing Success

Source: <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com>

Challenges in the field of Content Marketing:

1. Understanding & Finding the specific needs of the customer and finding best solutions through content.
2. Building a research based framework for all content marketing effort.
3. Creative Content Development that make customer engagement in true sense.
4. Measuring the performance of content marketing.
5. Deciding about the measurement criterions for content marketing.
6. Increasing clutter on the internet or on social media

7. Cross-cultural influences and differences in context to response to content marketing.
8. Expertise on the application and usage of different tools of content marketing.

There have been few research work done in the field of marketing to analyse the performance of content marketing. Various measurement criterion like web traffic, sales, lead quality & quantity, customer feedback, SEO (Search Engine Optimization) ranking, and customer loyalty have been considered for the measurement. But which one is the best or serves best the purpose of marketer still need to be explored. Challenges are also in the field of finding and serving the best solutions through various content. As in the case of content marketing, it is not only one single tool which is to be used, but it is combination of many, and each media for content marketing requires special set of expertise and exposure set.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing>
- [2] <http://www.smartinsights.com/managing-digital-marketing/marketing-innovation/digital-marketing-trends-2016-2017>
- [3] <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2016/12/content-marketing-trends-watch/>
- [4] Kaba Rahim &Bechter, "Organizational Goals and Performance Measurement Criteria for Content Marketing", Journal of Communication and Computer 9 (2012) 896-904
- [5] R.J. Brodie, A. Ilic, B. Juric, L. Hollebeek, Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis, Journal of Business Research, article in press, 2011.
- [6] P. Kotler, K.L. Keller, M. Brady, M. Goodman, T. Hansen, Marketing Management, Pearson Prentice Hall, Harlow, England, 2009.
- [7] D. Edelman, Branding in the digital age, Harvard Business, Review (2010) 64.
- [8] J. Pulizzi, N. Barrett, Get Content, Get Customers: Turn Prospects into Buyers with Content Marketing, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2009.
- [9] <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/content-marketing-challenges>
- [10] <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2016/02/conquer-marketing-challenges>
- [11] <http://www.adweek.com/digital/the-3-biggest-challenges-in-content-marketing>