

Make me care

How to create content that people pay attention to

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Content, content everywhere

Within two hours of waking we see and hear roughly 350 pieces of content. TV, radio, internet, email, text message, billboard – the list goes on – content is everywhere.

In fact:

- 27m pieces of content are shared every day.
- 300 hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute.
- Google's index exceeds 40 billion pages.
- 3 million new blog posts every day.

And the volume is only set to increase, with web content predicted to double every 9 to 24 months.

But is anyone paying attention?

We have learnt to tune out the noise, because as human beings we are limited in what we can process.

Take a news story online. Eight out of 10 people may read the headline, but only two will read the rest. We are selective in what we pay attention to, and brutal in what we forget.

Due to the rise in content marketing and a new army of self-publishers blogging and reviewing, we encounter a barrage of content daily. And brands are now a sub-theme of the conversations they may once have dominated.



Cutting through the clutter

A marketer's key challenge today is not channel tactics, budget efficiency or sales integration, but producing enough quality content for the channels that count.

And with only 1% of content marketing posts receiving 30% of all shares, how do you ensure your content gets noticed, remembered and passed on?

Be one of the four

Of the 2,904 media messages we receive daily, we only actually pay attention to 52, and positively remember only four.

So, what can you do to make sure your content is one of the four pieces positively remembered, and that the time you invest delivers audience engagement?

Keep reading for our five steps to better content...

"Today's consumer demands a high level of engagement from brands, and getting your content marketing plan right can mean the difference between the generation of brand loyalty and brand loathing."

Thomas Brown,
Director of Strategy and
Marketing at CIM



STEP 1

Know your customer

Due to the rise in self research, today's buyers might be anywhere from two-thirds to 90% of the way through their journey before they reach out to your business or brand.

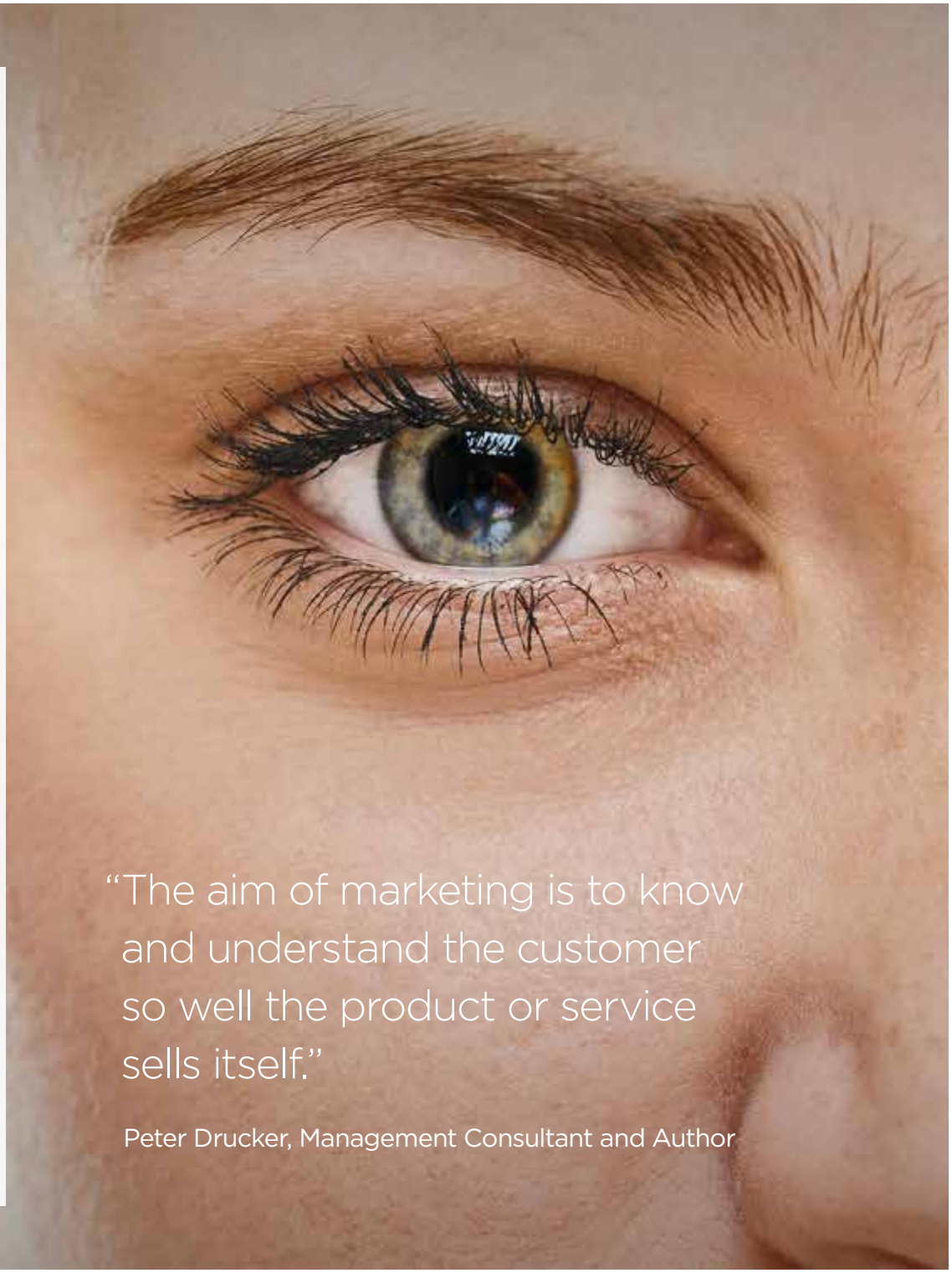
This, combined with the fact that a high percentage of content produced is wasted due to the wrong topic being focussed on, makes knowing your customers' needs, concerns, priorities an absolute necessity if you are going to deliver an effective content strategy.

Start by mapping your customers and their journeys. If you understand the touchpoints that will make a difference and the right channels to reach them, you can start planning a successful content strategy. Next, map that strategy against your sales plan, to ensure the content you produce supports your sales teams.

The closer you are to understanding your customer, and their point in the decision-making journey, the more you can tailor your content to help move them along. And another thing, timing is everything – from the hour to the day, month and season.

Remember

Set clear goals. What are you trying to achieve? If you only need to target 10 people, plan to do just that, with content built to spec.



"The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service sells itself."

Peter Drucker, Management Consultant and Author

STEP 2

Use your people to your advantage

Developing ongoing, rich, engaging content that resonates with customers can be challenging from a time and resource perspective; 64% of marketers say their biggest challenge is producing quality content.

Now you know your customers, it's important to use the insight, talent and networks of your employees, stakeholders and wider industry contacts to your advantage wherever possible.

Start by building up your bank of ideas. List out the great minds and experts in your business, and sit down with them one-to-one to capture their thinking on the challenges and opportunities that impact on your market and customers.

With this priceless content resource in place, continue to encourage your thinkers by creating an environment for debate at all levels. Look at the world around you, and think about your business' take on it.

Next, join the wider conversation, but be clear about the space you want to own. Interact with your customers and stakeholders. Join in wherever you can, whether that's via social media, live events or industry publications. Encourage employees to do the same; nothing sells a business more than passionate, engaged people.

Remember

Be brave. Have an opinion. And allow your people to have their own voice.

"When we dare to see, and we create conflict, we enable ourselves and the people around us to do our very best thinking."

Margaret Heffernan, entrepreneur and author



STEP 3

Create an emotional connection

We are in the midst of a revolution that is psychological, not technological. Never underestimate the power of emotion in decision making, regardless of whether we are talking to a B2B or B2C audience.

B2B decision makers, for example, need on average seven pieces of engaging content before they are ready to talk. So, what we're looking for is a series of content pieces that deliver micro-yeses, to ultimately achieve a macro-YES!!!

Tune into what engages and motivates people and they will share with their networks, boosting the effectiveness of your marketing budget. You're not just passing on a message, you are trying to make people care, to encourage them to engage and take a step towards you.

Now you're ready to start putting pen to paper, or images to camera, think about your tone of voice.

Speak to your audience in a genuine way. Be authentic. People want to deal with companies they know, like and trust, so be clear on the purpose of your brand or business and the values you hold.

REMEMBER

Deliver value with every piece of content. Sell yourself, sell your expertise, sell your experience, sell your point of view, but don't sell your products or offering.

"Every company is a media company because every company publishes to its customers, its staff, its neighbours, its communities."

Tom Foremski, Journalist and Blogger



STEP 4

Don’t compete on volume

You have a bank of ideas, and people to talk about them. It might be tempting to think that’s it. Job done. Content strategy nailed. But now is the time to stop, and think. How do you want your message to be received?

Quality is everything. You don’t need more content, you need GREAT content. Content that is rich and inherently shareable. Also avoid the abstract. Show, don’t tell. Use real stories, told by real people.

You’ve got your network in place, use it. Take a partnership approach – you don’t have to deliver content alone. Call on industry bodies, trade associations, wider industry influencers to help guide and create content with clout.

Then use social media to your advantage – ask your business’s community to help amplify your efforts, to engage and expand your audience.

And finally, think about visual impact. As humans, we’re hard wired to respond to visual triggers, so make sure you invest in great imagery, moving or otherwise. After all, we spend a third of our time online watching video.

REMEMBER

Have a pen of iron. Don’t create anaemic, unoriginal content. Secure great writers – whether that’s on your team or from an outside resource – and give them the freedom to be creative.

“The more you leave out, the more you highlight what you leave in.”

Henry Green, Novelist



STEP 5

Inspect what you expect

Congratulations, you're content strategy is up and running. You're producing hot content – video, text, the lot. You're not just joining in conversations, you're starting them. You're an industry expert, whose opinion your customers actively seek out.

But remember it's not just what you say, it's how people respond. It's a two-way street, so get into conversation.

Take time to listen and watch their reaction, then learn from them. Adopt a 360 degree review of your content to create an accurate picture of how it's being received, and then do more of what is working well.

Flex. Don't be scared to change tack if something isn't working.

You don't want your content to grow stale, so use the tools you've developed to keep your content fresh and engaging.

Remember

Don't focus on the number of people viewing your content, but their influence and reach. It's better to be remembered positively by the right 10 than negatively by the wrong 10,000.

"From confidence in your beliefs comes bravery in action, innate clarity on where you need to be."

Kelly Pepworth, Managing Partner,
Speed Communications



5 STEPS TO GREAT CONTENT

STEP 1	Know your customer
STEP 2	Use your people to your advantage
STEP 3	Create an emotional connection
STEP 4	Don’t compete on volume
STEP 5	Inspect what you expect

Resources

ONLINE

Fortune Favours the Brave a blog by Kelly Pepworth
speedcommunications.com/2015/03/fortune-favours-brave-leading-pr-firms-stay-game

Dare to Disagree a Ted Talk with Margaret Heffernan
ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_dare_to_disagree

The Art of Fiction an interview with Henry Green
theparisreview.org/interviews/4800/the-art-of-fiction-no-22-henry-green

Every Company is a Media Company a blog by journalist Tom Foremski
everycompanyisamediacompany.com/every-company-is-a-media

Digital Influence Report Technorati
http://technorati.com/report/2013-dir/

Why content fails a blog by digital content expert Steve Rayson
http://buzzsumo.com/blog/50-of-content-gets-8-shares-or-less-why-content-fails-and-how-to-fix-it/

Content marketing: Are you prepared? a blog by marketer Kieran Flanagan
http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/content-marketing-2014-tl

Content Shock: Why content marketing is not a sustainable strategy
a blog by keynote speaker Mark W. Schaefer
http://www.businessesgrow.com/2014/01/06/content-shock/#sthash.Fl4OH1xf.dpuf

IN PRINT

Brand Journalism by Andy Bull

The Essential Drucker by Peter Drucker

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Get in touch

If you have a business challenge or communications obstacle to overcome, or just fancy a chat, then give us a call:

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