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MARKETING CLOUD

Justifying Your Investment in Content Marketing

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Facing Today's Content Marketing Expectations

To drive leads and build business, the content you provide through multiple channels must attract and help convert targeted prospects and customers at the point of engagement. This is challenging in a hypercommunicative environment where more competitive noise vies for their attention. That's why most organizations now have a content marketing strategy, including 91 percent of B2B and 86 percent of B2C marketers in North America.[1] With 54 percent of these marketers planning to spend more on content marketing[2], they are clearly committed to funding related activities that provide a competitive advantage.

Done well, content marketing aligns with the practices of today's buyers, who actively perform their own research to uncover solution information from vendors, peers, and industry experts. In fact, a recent study shows that customers progress nearly 60 percent of the way through the decision-making process before engaging a sales representative—often turning to digital and social media channels to diagnose problems and form opinions about solutions.[3]

Responding to these more sophisticated and demanding buyers requires a content marketing solution that enables your organization to

- Effectively address the ongoing need for a higher volume of published content
- Produce meaningful content for targeted audiences at each stage of engagement
- Manage and deliver content across the channels where your prospects and customers are found
- Assess the effectiveness of your content and optimize it to improve response rates
- Meet all your desired marketing goals, including generating inbound marketing leads, acquiring and retaining customers, and increasing brand awareness

As you reflect on the effectiveness of your preferred content marketing approach, make sure to implement a platform that makes it easier to produce high-impact content and achieve solid results.

1 Content Marketing Institute and Marketing Profs, "B2B Content Marketing: 2013 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends."
2 Ibid.
3 The Corporate Executive Board Company, "The Digital Evolution in B2B Marketing," 2012.

Impediments to Content Marketing Success

If it's difficult to reach all your content marketing objectives, then it's time to re-evaluate what's happening. More often than not, you'll find a combination of issues in both the related processes and the technology you use to support content marketing. Consider the following:

- Your established workflows have bottlenecks. Instead of a streamlined process, you may be employing disruptive manual steps during content creation, review, and approval cycles.
- You can't produce enough useful content to fill your content pipeline. Your content marketing system restricts the number of author and editor user accounts permitted—putting the responsibility of content production on a chosen few. Your current process also lacks pointers or helpers that promote persona-driven content around recognized topics of interest.
- You can't easily unlock additional value from the content you've already produced. If the resources you're employing to develop content are limited, you have little time to focus on how to repurpose it and few (if any) tools to help you to quickly accomplish this.
- The tools you're using to gauge content effectiveness are insufficient. Your content marketing strategy is complex due to both the variety of content you produce and the channels you employ to publish it. Your current content marketing system lacks the capabilities to fully measure the success of individual tactics or is unable to integrate with related marketing automation and other customer-facing systems where related data is stored.

Any of these concerns can derail the effectiveness of your content marketing efforts. Once you understand the related impact on your business, you'll see why it's critical to deploy the right content marketing solution.

What It Means to Your Business

The issues identified earlier can affect your content marketing activities in the following specific ways:

- **Cumbersome workflows.** Slowdowns in the content-creation-to-publication process waste time and effort. If you can't track documents at every point, you won't know where they're being held up or who to contact to keep things moving. Planned campaigns may be delayed or executed poorly as a result. In addition, it will be harder to be first in market to respond to situations that present immediate selling opportunities. When just 52 percent of companies describe their level of content marketing execution as effective or very effective, many continue to struggle to align capabilities and processes with goals.
- **Low-volume content pipeline.** Given the speed of publishing today, the faster you can produce customized content for a specific audience, the greater the chance to engage with members when they are most receptive. However, you can miss these opportunities if you can't enable more contributors to share their expertise and authoring capabilities as content demands grow. You may also need to limit certain tactics such as blogs, which require a constant influx of relevant content to attract and retain reader interests.
- **Underutilized content.** You can fill your content pipeline more effectively when you produce a steady stream of new content and reuse existing, proven content in multiple ways. You'll find this harder to achieve without a view into which content obtained the best results based on the specific audience and channel, let alone without mechanisms to rapidly repurpose it.
- **Lack of content data insights.** When you evaluate published content using a basic set of metrics—or without required data from other customer-facing systems—you can misjudge its effectiveness. This partial analysis can skew the results of campaigns, with sales teams receiving lower-quality leads than expected. It can also impair your understanding of how to further optimize content and publication tactics to achieve better results.

Ultimately, any limitations in content marketing can have a ripple effect, diluting the effectiveness of each step that follows a shortfall in the process, as well as postcampaign analysis and future planning.

Options to Address Content Marketing Challenges

Organizations take different approaches to resolve their content marketing issues. They achieve lesser or greater success based on their understanding of

- The true costs of each alternative, including how much it costs for plug-ins, maintenance, and customizations to existing systems
- The risks associated with the current approach, including potential security vulnerabilities
- The ability of current systems to support effectiveness goals, and opportunity costs associated with the use of these systems

Let's look at how content marketing is being handled in many organizations today.

Approach #1: Primarily Manual Effort

In this scenario, an organization has not purchased a formal enterprise content marketing or management system. Instead, it may be employing such in-house tools as Microsoft Excel, Outlook, or Project Manager spreadsheets to assign responsibilities, create timelines, and handle reporting. Microsoft Word may serve as the content development tool, with a SharePoint site set up for reviewers or serving as a hub for produced content. Internal resources or outside designers may assist with the design of HTML campaign mailers, online newsletters, and other web-based publications. In some cases, IT may be involved in setting up and managing the SharePoint site, as well as publishing content to the company website.

Meanwhile, demand-generation and lead-tracking systems operate in silos, with no ability to easily share information with other content-marketing-related processes or systems. Gathering and evaluating results against content marketing activities is time-consuming. To streamline the process, IT may be called in to perform expensive workarounds to enable integration (if it is even possible). However, other, higher-level IT projects or a lack of resources may keep this project on the back burner.

Approach #2: Do-It-Yourself Effort

This approach often employs WordPress or another all-purpose content management system to provide an easier-to-use tool to help automate the content creation and publication process. These tools may be free or available for a small fee, but costs can quickly add up. For example, adding to basic WordPress functionality requires the installation of plug-ins and integrations with other platforms, which may be costly to install and maintain, and could add security risks. The expertise involved in managing updates may mean that IT will be responsible for the content marketing system. And, in environments where IT resources are spread thin, system availability and security may be in jeopardy.

Approach #3: Automated Workflow Supporting Comprehensive, Multichannel Content Management

Under this approach, an organization employs a single, automated solution to perform all content management functions, from planning, collaborating, and assigning tasks, to publishing content to multiple online channels, to measuring and reporting on results.

Because all functions related to content marketing are integrated within this single solution, there is no need for plug-ins, custom platform integrations, or replacing marketing automation platforms. As a result, the content marketing organization can prevent added IT expense, while retaining both full ownership and management of the solution. It can also respond faster to address new requirements because its requests are no longer tied up in an IT queue.

Recommended Solution

Oracle Marketing Cloud offers a complete platform for developing, managing, publishing, measuring, and maximizing the effectiveness of your marketing content. By streamlining and automating key processes, and providing features that enhance productivity, improve targeting, and minimize costs, you get long-term value for your business by supporting results-driven content marketing efforts throughout the customer engagement cycle.

Highlights include

- **Automated workflow.** You can streamline document review, approval, and publication cycles through automated workflow, while making use of alerting features to keep projects on track.
- **Topic modeling.** You can produce a constant supply of content ideas by first developing a core set of content categories, then subcategories, and further developing content ideas off of your original categories using a topic tree format.
- **Story capture.** Your customers can easily share details of their experience with your company using this online, form-based feature. Your editor can modify it as needed and add links with coupons or promotions to help cement the customer relationship.
- **Content buckets.** You can rapidly repurpose and reformat existing content into online newsletters, HTML mailers, and landing pages by placing desired content into a content bucket.
- **Editorial calendar.** You can schedule everything, make assignments, and view progress from a single, intuitive, calendar-based tool.
- **Multichannel distribution/promotion.** You can automatically publish your content to your corporate website, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and other digital channels in a single step.
- **Flexible user account structure.** Everyone in your organization can contribute content and help you build and maintain a full content pipeline with no per-user pricing.
- **Personas.** You can develop sophisticated persona profiles for better targeting, providing authors with related trigger questions to guide them as they create content. You can later track and measure content effectiveness by persona as well.
- **Automatic or custom search engine optimization (SEO) tagging.** You can improve your content's keyword score with this feature. For example, you can incorporate customized SEO tagging based on personas, topics, or other criteria.
- **Dynamic, content-based calls to action (CTAs).** With one click, you can automatically replace the CTA in all content pieces associated with a campaign with a more current offer or promotion.
- **Fully customizable user experience (UX) and design.** Through UX and design flexibility, you can set up a workspace that reflects your unique processes while providing an easy-to-use interface.
- **Easy integrations.** Using simple, secure APIs, you can link content marketing to other systems.

The following table reflects how content marketing maps to key business needs.

TABLE 1. BUSINESS NEEDS MET BY CONTENT MARKETING

Business Need	How Content Marketing Can Help
Greater efficiency	» **Automated workflow.** Streamline document review, approval, and publication cycles through automated workflow. Keep projects on track using alerts. » **Editorial calendar.** Schedule everything, make assignments, and view progress from a single, intuitive, calendar-based tool. » **Multichannel distribution/promotion.** Automatically publish content to a corporate website, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and other channels in a single step. » **Content buckets.** Rapidly repurpose and reformat existing content into online newsletters, HTML mailers, and landing pages.
Continuous content pipeline	» **Topic modeling.** Produce nonstop content ideas by using a topic tree format. » **Story capture.** Enable access to an online, form-based feature so customers can easily share details of their experiences. Modify stories as needed and add links with promotions to help cement customer relationships. » **Flexible user account structure.** Allow everyone to be a contributor and author with no per-user pricing.
Improved content targeting and customization	» **Personas.** Develop sophisticated persona profiles for better targeting, providing authors with related trigger questions to guide them as they create content. Track and measure content effectiveness by persona as well. » **Automatic or custom SEO tagging.** Improve content keyword scores and incorporate customized SEO tagging based on personas, topics, or other criteria. » **Dynamic, content-based CTAs.** With one click, automatically replace the CTA in related campaign content items with a more current offer or promotion.
Better user experience	» **Fully customizable UX and design.** Set up a workspace that reflects an organization's unique processes while providing an easy-to-use interface. » **Easy integrations.** Link content marketing to other systems via simple, secure APIs.

Why Oracle Marketing Cloud

Oracle Marketing Cloud offers a comprehensive, integrated content marketing platform for managing all steps of the content marketing process. The platform can help you achieve all your content marketing objectives, from optimizing your brand story across multiple channels with messaging that drives increased site traffic, to fueling social channels and, ultimately, generating sales leads.

Oracle Marketing Cloud serves a growing range of customers across industry and public sector organizations and is committed to continuously bringing new and innovative capabilities to users to improve the results of their content marketing efforts.

Oracle takes technical support just as seriously. Through a hands-on approach, Oracle works closely with customers to deliver and implement a content marketing solution that is optimized to their unique requirements. As needed, Oracle can provide an additional service to categorize and tag existing content, then automatically migrate it from a customer's existing content management system to Oracle Marketing Cloud.

Oracle Marketing Cloud Customer References

Oracle Marketing Cloud customers have achieved impressive results, including

- Clickthrough average of 15.03 percent for Bass Pro Shops
- 325 percent increase in sales-ready leads for Cvent
- Social media sharing up to 1,100 times per article at Indiana University

Now you can do the same.

Bass Pro Shops

An outdoor retail leader in hunting, camping, nature gifts, and more, Bass Pro Shops (basspro.com) operates destination outdoor retail stores across the United States and Canada, serving more than 75 million sportspeople a year. Bass Pro's objective was to create deeper and more-meaningful interactions within each store's markets. Oracle Marketing Cloud provided easy-to-use capabilities, enabling

- Unique accounts and pages for each store, produced by employees who understood local customer needs
- Organic, rather than advertising-driven, search results
- Content marketing extending to the digital space

The results for Bass Pro Shops included

- 2,249 total articles
- 920,000 visitors (3 times the previous total)
- Clickthrough average of 15 percent

"With Oracle Marketing Cloud's help, we connect with our local market and reinforce our brand by capturing and sharing our most engaging content."

***—Todd Jones,** Senior Marketing Manager, Bass Pro Shops*

Cvent

Cvent (cvent.com) is a world leader in online event management. Their objective was to deploy a platform to coordinate and repurpose content for varying audiences. Oracle Marketing Cloud provided easy-to-use capabilities, enabling

- Content creation, moderation, and broadcasting via four distinct content hubs—each targeted to a specific audience with specific goals
- Custom approval workflows for each hub to ease the editing process
- Content scoring to gauge the relevancy of a story to its designated audience

The results for Cvent included

- 12 targeted e-newsletters
- Total monthly readership of approximately 125,000
- 325 percent increase in sales-ready leads
- 1.5 average work hours per editor per day

"Thanks to the sophistication of Oracle Marketing Cloud, it's easy for visitors to get to the content that most interests them, and we can target various calls to action to viewers based on the topic. We've seen a 60 percent lift in asset downloads from the blog through this method."

***—Sherrie Mersdorf,** Marketing Operations Team Lead, Cvent*

Indiana University

Indiana University (weareiu.com) is a leading research and teaching institution, employing more than 17,800 people, including faculty and professional and support staff. Their objective was to meet prospective students on their social media channels to boost recruitment. Oracle Marketing Cloud provided easy-to-use capabilities, enabling

- A single marketing hub to collect student-generated articles, videos, photos, and audio files aligned with 80 specific categories
- An intuitive, web-based interface for contributors to submit articles
- Simplified editing and publication

The results for Indiana University included

- About 200 site visits per day, two-thirds from new visitors
- An average of 2.5 page views and three minutes per visit
- Moderation: one hour per day for 50 to 100 contributors
- Social media sharing up to 1,100 times per article

"It's hard to correlate site visits to enrollments, so we look for qualitative data—testimonies, conversations, interaction, engagement, connections being made. The contributors send me screen shots from their own social media pages, and those connections and interactions are what prospective students want."

***—Jay Steele,** Assistant Director, Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing, Indiana University*

Oracle Corporation, World Headquarters
500 Oracle Parkway
Redwood Shores, CA 94065, USA

Worldwide Inquiries
Phone: +1.650.506.7000
Fax: +1.650.506.7200

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Hardware and Software, Engineered to Work Together

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