

# How to build an inspired B2B marketing campaign with point of view at its heart

## Five steps to mining marketing gold in your business

**Kelly Pepworth**
Managing Director
Speed Communications

speed communications™

# Contents


## Introduction

How can B2B marketers better harness their assets? 3

## Step-by-step guide to mining marketing gold in your business

Step 1: Who knows what? 4

Step 2: Make the most of your data 5

Step 3: What do you want to be famous for? 6

Step 4: A content strategy that mirrors your business plan 7

Step 5: What channels should you use? 8

Summary 9

## Find out more

Resources 10

Get in touch 11

# How can B2B marketers better harness their assets?

In today's fast-paced multichannel world, it is harder than ever to stand out and be heard. We have learnt to tune out the noise, because as human beings we are limited in what we can process let alone respond to. In fact, brands and businesses are now often just a sub-theme to the conversations they may once have dominated.

So, how do you get noticed for the right reasons without jeopardising the integrity of your brand and business? How do you decide on what to say to the outside world, and more importantly your customers and prospects? How do you make them sit up and pay attention?

This is where the modern day B2B marketer comes into his or her own. Forget channel tactics, budget efficiency, and sales integration – all important but easily sorted by any savvy marketer – it's our ability to guide businesses on the space they should own in the wider world that is the real challenge.

Through customer knowledge, insight, intelligence and external referencing, a point of view can be reached, that only you can own, on what really counts for your customers.

On the face of it this is something so simple, but is possibly the hardest thing to deliver as it requires clarity and bravery in equal measures.

So, what do you need to do to build an efficient and effective B2B marketing campaign, with both a definable and ownable point of view at its heart?



# STEP 1

## Who knows what?

Every company has a mine of knowledge and expertise within.

You can test this out by listing the 10 people in your company who know the business and market best. They may not necessarily be heads of sectors or departments; they may not be the longest serving employees but if you can find the challengers, innovators and thinkers, their experience and understanding is priceless.

Surprisingly few companies, regardless of whether they are big or small, encourage open dialogue between colleagues. Silos in businesses still seem to reign. Yet without this encouraged sharing of thinking and insight no marketing strategy with a point of view at its centre can be complete.

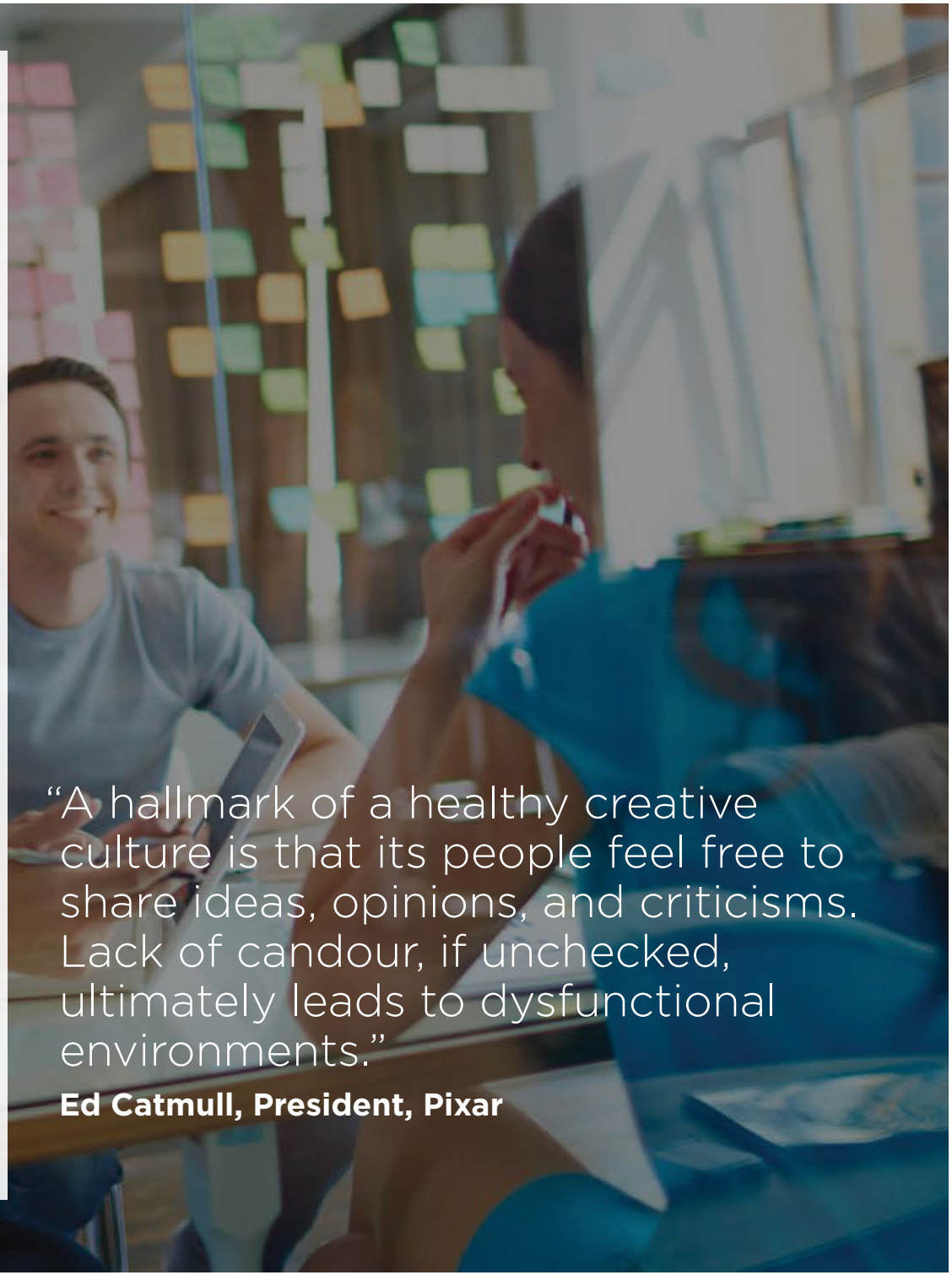
Amongst the companies that do practice open communication is Richard Branson's Virgin group. Here employees are told: "No company should ignore their staff's feedback and suggestions. And no member of staff should silence their ideas or innovations."

When this mining of information from within is done in an inclusive way it builds trust, engagement and inevitably leads to a flow of information in all directions. A company that talks, thinks, challenges and encourages debate, imagine that!

### But how do you capture employees' knowledge and insight?

You can ask colleagues for their views and ideas in a variety of ways, for example, by getting them to email suggestions, fill in questionnaires or take part in Q&A sessions or round table debates. Some companies use reward schemes or bonuses to encourage open communication channels.

But if you truly want valuable opinions then talk with employees individually. It need not be formal, a conversation over a coffee or a chat as you walk through the office can be just as beneficial. But make sure it's focused on what's important for the business and its customers.



"A hallmark of a healthy creative culture is that its people feel free to share ideas, opinions, and criticisms. Lack of candour, if unchecked, ultimately leads to dysfunctional environments."

**Ed Catmull, President, Pixar**

# STEP 2

## Make the most of your data

Companies have access to and receive daily far more data on their marketplace and customers than ever before. But, deriving meaningful insights from it and then converting that knowledge into interesting opinion is easier said than done.

Simply having a lot of data is no guarantee that it will be useful.

Data needs to have a good lineage. Sourcing is everything. Take time to make sure someone in your business has an eye on the external world – broader news, trade media, think tanks, government policy, and analyst thinking – as this content is invaluable in ensuring your data relevant and your opinion is not only pertinent but informed.

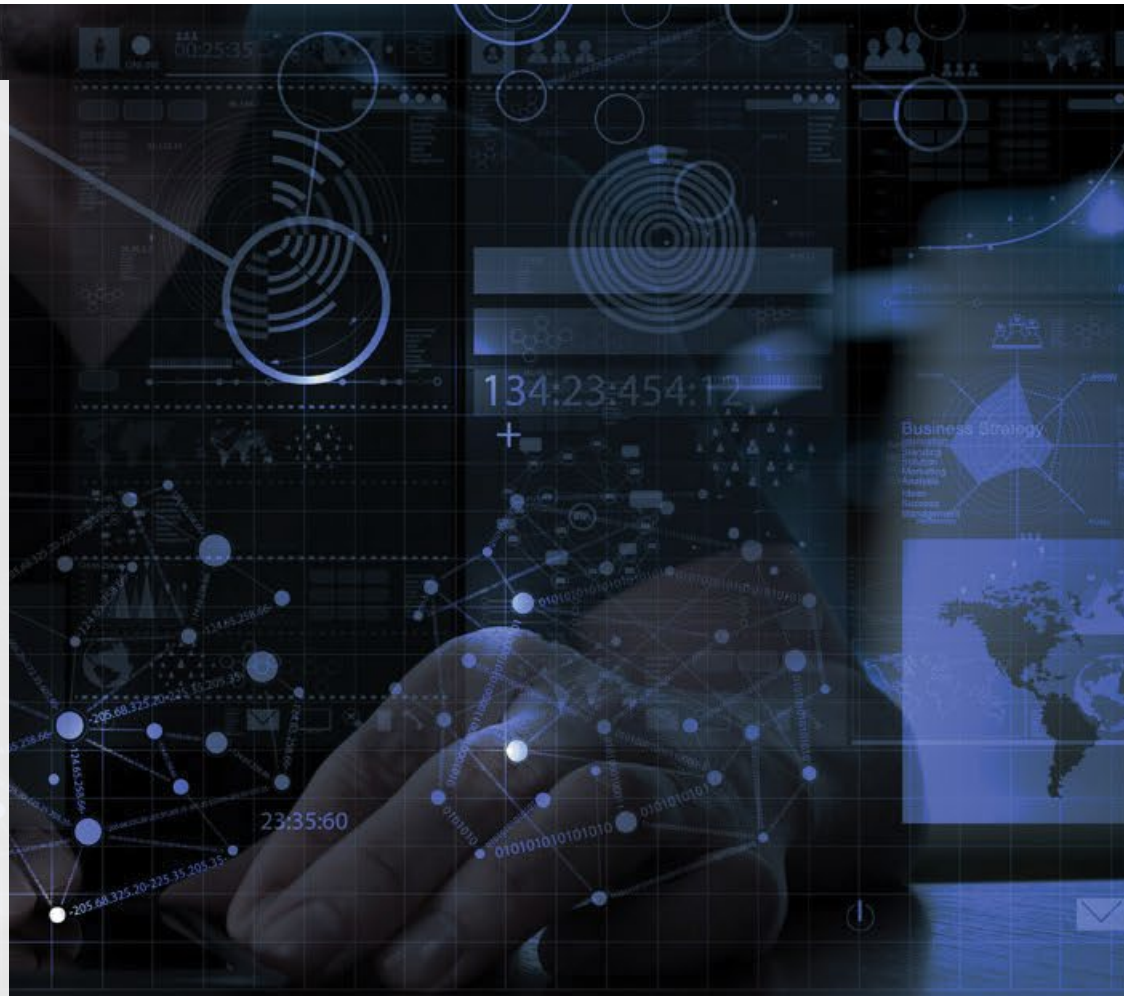
Once you have access to the data, you need to understand what it is saying and what it means for your customers.

You can mine data and drill down into trends and figures, but unless you marry what you discover with perspective from the big thinkers in your business you will be analysing it out of context.

Put simply you need to create a complete picture, a picture you can own.

This is where a marketer's skill comes into practice: being able to filter the information you glean through the lens provided by a thorough understanding of customers, stakeholders, competitors, business trends and wider economic influences.

As before, just as you would keep checking fresh data, so you should keep having new conversations with those thinkers you've identified.




"Data! Data! Data!
I can't make bricks without clay!"

**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, writer and physician**

# STEP 3

## What do you want to be famous for?

This is probably one of the most difficult questions a business has to answer. And in a B2B world you are often expected to filter through several people's versions as well as your own to reach a consensus that the majority buy in to.

Put simply, you all need to be able to finish this sentence in the same way: "We want to be known for..."

Most businesses start out with a very clear idea of who they are and how they want to be seen. Sometimes this can get lost over time as a business grows, leadership teams change and markets shift.

But a confident and successful business will have a definite point of view at its heart and a personality that can be easily identified by staff and customers.

To achieve this think about the messages your company is sending out be it through your sales team, direct mail, digital and social channels or the media. You should be clear and consistent regardless of where you are seen or the audience you are talking to.

This is where your carefully gathered insight and intelligence prove their worth. When used consistently, clear messaging matched with solid facts and well-informed opinions will be your saving grace in helping you stand out from the competition when the disparity between your price and product is negligible.



"To stand out from the swell, we must quietly say only what is important. Briefly and with care."

**Brian Solis, analyst and author**

# STEP 4

## A content strategy that mirrors your business plan

No business would launch a product or new service without a business or go-to market plan. It is fundamental to a company's sustainable success.

Equally important should be your content strategy, which moulds and guides how the company presents itself to the world based on the internal, agreed direction. Research has shown that a well-executed content strategy will deliver results with content marketing leaders experiencing year-over-year growth in unique site traffic nearly eight times higher compared to those behind the curve.

Mining insight and external data and ensuring it is consistently delivered is therefore only part of the story. The other part is making sure that your content strategy, with a point of view at its heart, reflects your business plan and objectives, be that driving sales, building brand awareness or targeting a new market.

That means not only in its focus but in its tone and the voice it uses. Once again consistency is the key.

Content is wide ranging and includes everything from words to visual media, audio to infographics and print to digital.

American Scott Abel, who writes The Content Wrangler, says a content strategy helps a company "manage its content as a business asset". It is that important and it cannot be left to chance.

A well-documented content strategy can help to steer a business forward. But don't restrict it to only a handful of staff. Arguably everyone in the company should have access to it, to help them understand your business' point of view and ensure they support and drive the conversation for you where they can.

"Product content. It's critical to business success. When done well, it can inform, educate, and motivate."

**Scott Abel, author and content strategist**

# STEP 5

## What channels should you use?

This should be your final consideration. Don't look at it until your messages have been established, your point of view is clear on the issues that count, and both are aligned to your customers' challenges.

The ways a company chooses to convey information and news will vary dependent on their market, but ultimately it should be led by your audiences and where they are on their journey with you.

Channel options in this equation are endless when it comes to content dissemination.

With over 120 plus marketing channels to choose from (a number which is constantly growing due to the advent of digital), the channel selection process itself has become a minefield.

Again, think hard about your target audience and desired outcomes as well as the resource you have. It's not practical for most to manage all channels and certainly you need to prioritise resources on the channels which will give the best returns.

Start with a few and test the results and commitment needed to not just push out content but manage the communities you create and engage with them. B2B content marketers use an average of six social media platforms, enough to keep any well resourced team busy.

Also, don't forget about the principles of good old fashioned publishing, whatever the channel. Think ahead and plan what you want to say, when and why. Interrogate the brief, check the facts, carefully craft the story and then take pride in the finished product. Oh, and proofread every sentence. Twice.



"The easiest way to turn off your community is to broadcast the same message across multiple channels. Instead, determine the kind of content that interests the members of your community in a way that is useful to them."

**Joe Pulizzi, Founder of the Content Marketing Institute**

# Summary

The simplest joy of B2B marketing is in tapping into the most valuable seams: the challenges of a business community and the solutions a business can offer. This, however, is worthless unless it can be communicated.

Every company needs to converse effectively. This is why a content strategy aligned to your business plan is vital in terms of ensuring continued relevance to customers and the marketplace.

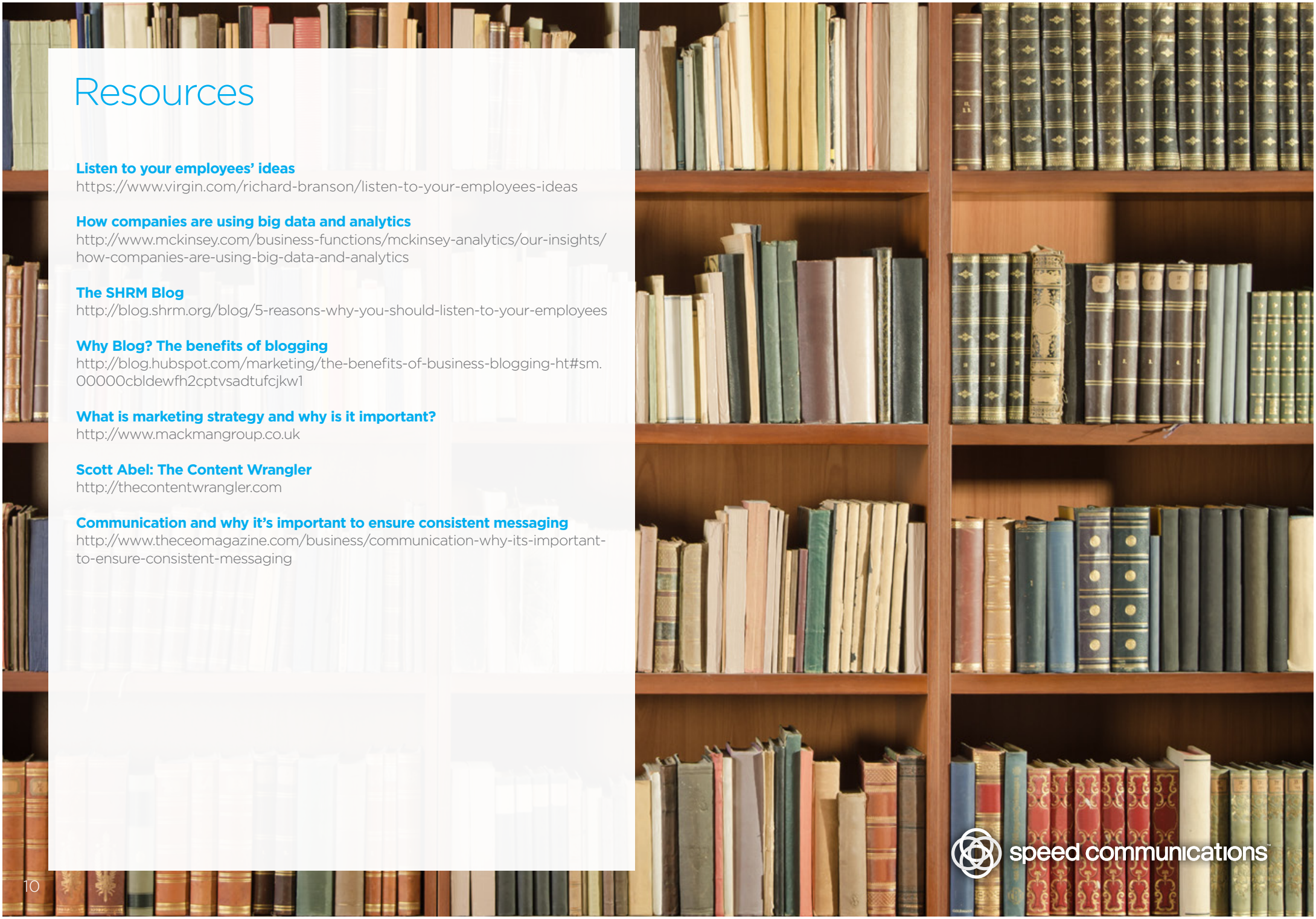
The reputation of a business can depend on a well planned and executed content strategy. And importantly it can be elevated by using your experience and expertise to address the confusing or challenging issues faced by your customers.

However, a lack of consistency and resonance can undermine everything a company is trying to say.  After all, it is human nature to mistrust mixed messages.

This can be easily avoided. Every company large or small has access to increasing amounts of intelligence outside of its business and expertise from within. This can be used to create and nurture an expert and informed bank of people who are on message and willing to challenge thinking and offer insight.

Teaming intelligence with insight makes good business sense. And together they create marketing gold.





# Resources

**Listen to your employees' ideas**
https://www.virgin.com/richard-branson/listen-to-your-employees-ideas

**How companies are using big data and analytics**
http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/mckinsey-analytics/our-insights/how-companies-are-using-big-data-and-analytics

**The SHRM Blog**
http://blog.shrm.org/blog/5-reasons-why-you-should-listen-to-your-employees

**Why Blog? The benefits of blogging**
http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/the-benefits-of-business-blogging-ht#sm.00000cbldewfh2cptvsadtufcjkw1

**What is marketing strategy and why is it important?**
http://www.mackmangroup.co.uk

**Scott Abel: The Content Wrangler**
http://thecontentwrangler.com

**Communication and why it's important to ensure consistent messaging**
http://www.theceomagazine.com/business/communication-why-its-important-to-ensure-consistent-messaging



speed communications™

# Get in touch

**Kelly Pepworth**

Managing Director, Speed Communications

Email: kelly.pepworth@speedcomms.com

Twitter: @KellyPepworth

Phone: +44 (0)7725 423187

