

WHAT WORKS IN

CONTENT MARKETING

CASE STUDIES & TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

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What Works in Content Marketing: Case Studies & Tools for Success

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

On average, B2B marketers devote [26% of their total marketing budget to content marketing](#). While that percentage may be far less than brands spent on traditional marketing, it does illustrate that brands of all sizes are recognizing the value of content marketing. And, as content marketing continues to eclipse traditional methods, marketers will be required to create engaging content that connects with their target audience and achieves tangible results.

While there's no denying that content marketing can be an effective part of a marketing strategy, it does present a number of challenges. For starters, with so many competitors, how do you make sure your content stands out? Or, what do you do if you don't have access to tons of resources? Other challenges include figuring out how to produce quality content consistently, adapting to the needs of your audience, and having the patience to let the campaign work.

This whitepaper will not only provide marketers with a clear explanation of content marketing, it will also explore the history of content marketing, outline the goals of content marketing, and illustrate how this strategy works using real-world examples from brands in a variety of industries.

CHAPTER 2

What Exactly is Content Marketing?

The definition of content marketing provided by the [Content Marketing Institute](#) is:

“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.”

While that is a straightforward description, the definition for content marketing can shift depending on the needs of your business. For example, [Pushing Social](#) simply describes content marketing as “Storytelling for Sales”.

Content marketing expert and blogger [Heidi Cohen](#), however, provides a more detailed explanation, stating:

“Content marketing provides prospects, customers and the public with useful information, while shopping or after purchase, without shouting its promotional messages.”

Content marketing's major attributes are:

1. Embodies an organization's core brand elements
2. Uses a variety of media formats such as text, video, photographs, audio, presentations, ebooks, and infographics to tell your brand or company's story
3. Can be read on a variety of devices including computers, tablets, smartphones, and others
4. Is distributed via owned, third-party, and social media platforms
5. Provides measurable results through the use of appropriate calls-to-action and promotional codes

No matter which definition you prefer, in its simplest form, content marketing is a way to attract and retain customers by providing them with something of value.

What Content Marketing is Not

Despite the dizzying number of definitions, there remains a number of misconceptions involving content marketing.

Let's take a moment and address what content marketing is not.

It's not just about content - Content marketing should be about [demonstrating value](#) and building upon the customer's story and not just about creating content for content's sake.

It's not just about sales pitches and offers - [Chris Brogan](#) states that content marketing is “not about being pushy,” but advancing your business through relationships.

It's not native advertising - When the Wall Street Journal defined content marketing as quasi-native advertising, [Joe Pulizzi](#) stated that while native advertising and content should work together, they are quite different. You own the media when it comes to content marketing. With native advertising, you're paying someone else to distribute your content.

Content marketing is not replacing other forms of marketing - [Neil Patel](#) reminds us that content marketing and SEO, for example, are separate. Content marketing is “broader and more holistic,” while “SEO is narrower, and more technical.” While content marketing and SEO overlap, content marketing will not replace SEO, or any other form of marketing.

CHAPTER 3

Why Content Marketing Matters

According to the [Content Marketing Institute](#), “9 out of 10 marketers are using content marketing.” In 2013, [Curata](#) found, “71% of marketers will increase their content marketing investment in the next year.”

The question to be asked, then, is why are marketers continuing to grow their content marketing strategies?

Here are ten facts to illustrate just how important content marketing can be when used effectively.

- 1. Content marketing has been able to convert 30% more organic traffic into high-quality sales leads. ([Source](#))**
- 2. Website conversion rates can double from 6% to 12% when an inbound strategy is put into place. ([Source](#))**
- 3. Inbound tactics can save a business an average of 13% in overall cost per lead. ([Source](#))**

4. **60% of decision-makers reported that content marketing helped them make better purchasing decisions.** ([Source](#))
5. **Approximately 60% of marketers believe their “ROI from content marketing is increasing” or remaining the same.** ([Source](#))
6. **73% of surveyed marketers stated that “content marketing creates improved brand awareness”.** ([Source](#))
7. **B2B companies that maintain a blog generated 67% more leads than companies who don’t blog.** ([Source](#))
8. **78% of CMOs believe custom content will be the future of marketing.** ([Source](#))
9. **80% of people appreciate learning about brand via custom content.** ([Source](#))
10. **Around 40% of the world population is connected to the internet.** ([Source](#))

Content marketing is effective and it’s only continuing to grow. If you want to reach customers and stay competitive, you need to implement a content marketing plan for your business.

CHAPTER 4

The History of Content Marketing

Now that we have established the definition and importance of content marketing, it's time to take a look at where content marketing originated.

Believe it or not, [content marketing isn't a new tactic](#). In fact, there is evidence of custom cave paintings tracing to 4200 B.C. which explained “six ways a spear can save you from a wild boar”. As for marketing, it's actually been used as an industry technique since the 19th Century.

Here's a timeline of content marketing throughout the decades.

1891: [Dr. August Oetker](#) attaches recipes onto the back of his Backin baking soda packages.

1895: John Deere launches its own magazine, The Furrow, to help farmers become more profitable. Today, the magazine has a circulation of 1.5 million in 40 countries.

1900: The Michelin Guides become an annual guidebook produced in multiple countries with lodging and restaurant information and ratings. The ubiquitous “Michelin Stars” come from this guide.

1904: Jell-O produces and distributes a free recipe book door-to-door. By 1906, Jell-O sales exceed \$1 million.

1913: Burns & McDonnell, an engineering firm located in Kansas City, first publishes Benchmark magazine, which covers trends and topics in the engineering disciplines. The magazine is still published today.



The Furrow Magazine: March 2014

- 1922:** With content supplied by Sears' Roebuck Agricultural Foundation, the World's Largest Store radio program assists farmers during the deflation crisis.
- 1923:** Claude Hopkins releases his book [Scientific Advertising](#). The book is credited for originating the use of coupons, loyalty programs, and split testing.
- 1930s:** Procter & Gamble sponsors radio programs like Painted Lives and Guiding Light and introduces the audience to their 'new Duz' laundry soap. With that, [the soap opera was born](#).
- 1960s:** After observing a jogging club in New Zealand, Bill Bowerman, the founder of Nike, publishes a three page booklet on jogging. In 1966, Bowerman published the 90-page book **Jogging** that went on to sell a million copies. With that, jogging is introduced to America and an iconic brand is born.
- 1982:** Hasbro and Marvel team up to create "The Real American Hero," which converted the GI Joe action figure into a product promoted across different channels including television and comic books.

- 1999:** In his book, [Make Your Website Work for You: How to Convert Online Content Into Profits](#), Jeff Cannon writes “in content marketing, content is created to provide consumers with the information they seek.”
- 2000:** Seth Godin introduces the eBook, [Unleashing the Leadvirus](#), which has been downloaded more than one million times.
- 2001:** [Joe Pulizzi](#) begins to offer content marketing services as part of Penton Media’s custom media division.
- 2004:** Microsoft launches the first corporate blog, Channel 9, which keeps visitors up-to-date on what Microsoft engineers are working on.
- 2005:** LiveVault releases “The John Cleese Institute for Backup Trauma Viral Video” which becomes one of the [earliest viral videos](#). YouTube launches shortly after.
- 2008:** AMEX unveils OPENForum, which is a platform for small business owners to locate advice regarding financial, marketing, or operational inquiries.

Today, marketers are using many [different tactics for content marketing](#), including:

- Social Media Content
- eNewsletters
- Website Articles
- Blogs
- In-Person Events
- Case Studies
- Videos
- Illustrations/Photos
- White Papers
- Online Presentations
- Infographics
- Webinars
- Research Reports
- Microsites
- Apps (like Groupon, etc)

Having been involved in content marketing for almost a decade, I have seen it grow from a simple linkbuilding tactic to a marketing necessity for every business today. Quite simply, if you are not marketing your content, why bother creating it?

- Brent Csutoras, Chief Social Media Strategist of Search Engine Journal

CHAPTER 5

How Content Marketing Has Evolved

Content marketing has come a long way from recipes on the back of Jell-O packets, to include recipe ideas in the form of tweets. Besides going digital, here are some other ways that content marketing has evolved over the years.

Diversification

Today, marketers have to diversify their content. For example, you can no longer just share a recipe on the back of a Jell-O package. You have to share that recipe on Pinterest and create an instructional video on YouTube as well.

In other words, you need to create and distribute different forms of content across various channels. As [Heidi Cohen](#) states, marketers should “offer multiple types content to extend your reach and increase its chance of yielding results.”

Going Mobile

Another way that content marketing has evolved is being prepared for new technology, especially mobile. [The Pew Research Center](#) discovered that as of April 2015, 64% of American adults now own a smartphone. In 2011, only 35% of Americans owned some form of smartphone.

The study also discovered that the 18-29 age group are using their smartphones to access the internet (97%), email (91%), video (75%), social networking services (91%), and music (64%). If you want to be competitive, make sure your business has a mobile-friendly website and uses tactics like sending coupons via SMS.

No One-Size-Fits-All Approach

[Sunil Rajaraman](#) also discovered that the content marketing landscape has changed for marketers. For example, companies are beginning to consolidate so that they create, curate, distribute content, as well as manage workflow and analyze the results under one umbrella.

Sunil also found that brands have different needs. This means there isn't a "one-size fits all" approach for content marketing - social media works for Taco Bell, but maybe not so much for a law firm.

Finally, even smaller companies are spending a lot of money on content, so it's no longer just larger corporations on a content marketing spending spree.

Goals of Content Marketing

In the first part of this white paper, we described what content marketing is, why it's important, and discussed the history of content marketing. In this section, we'll outline the main goals of content marketing and help you determine how to choose the right goals for your brand.

How to Define Goals

Before you can begin creating, curating, and distributing content, you have to develop a documented content marketing strategy. According to [Joe Pulizzi](#), only around 20% of marketers actually do this.

If you happen to belong in the 80% of marketers who have not created a documented content strategy, here are the steps you'll need to take.

- 1. What business goals are you trying to achieve?** Typically, your business goals should result in either more revenue, lower expenses, or an enhanced customer experience.
- 2. Who is your audience and what do you want them to do?** Where do they spend their time online? What are their wants and needs? What kind of information are they looking for?

- 3. Define your mission.** After discovering why you're creating content and who it is for, you need to create a mission statement that should include: target audience, what you will deliver, and the desired outcome.

Not only will this information assist you in creating a marketing strategy, it will continue to be used during content creation.

Long Term Versus Short Term Goals

While creating your content marketing strategy, you also want to be aware of the differences between long term and short term goals.

Long term goals are usually going to take several months, even years, to complete. Examples of long term goals would acquiring quality links or building a community. These are goals that take time to achieve.

Short term goals can usually be completed in a few days or weeks. For example, sharing great content on social media platforms to boost engagement is a short term goal. Your short term goals are steps you use to reach your long term goals. For example, social media engagement can lead to building a strong community.

Be SMART

To further help you create you a documented content strategy, [TrackMaven](#) suggests that you use the following framework based on Peter Drucker's SMART criteria.

- **Specific:** Answer the who, what, when, where, and why. For example, writing a blog post and sharing on LinkedIn once a week to increase activity on the platform.
- **Measurable:** Quantitative or qualitative tracking. For example, generating a specific number of leads.
- **Attainable:** Only set goals that will be possible to achieve. For example, writing an eBook this year.
- **Realistic:** What results can be achieved with your current resources? For example, converting a set percentage of leads.
- **Time-related:** Set deadlines for the completion of goals. For example, "eBook to be released on August 1".

5 Common Content Marketing Goals

Now that you are aware of how to define your goals and create a documented content marketing strategy, it's time to take a closer look at the most common goals you'll want to achieve.

Spread Brand Awareness

What makes you stand out from the competition? A logo or tagline may be a start, but making sure that consumers recognize and remember your brand also means creating incredible and valuable content in the form of blog posts, videos, podcasts, infographics, etc. This is so important for marketers that [84% have responded that brand awareness is their main goal.](#)

That may sound easier said than done, but when composing content designed to help spread brand awareness keep the following tips in mind:

- **Carefully word your messages so they are memorable.**
- **Keep customers up-to-date with a weekly newsletter.**
- **Know your demographics and be aware of where they seek advice online.**

- **Assign a specific team member for this task.**
- **What channels will you use? Will it be on social media, billboards, radio, etc.**

Although controversial at times, an interesting example of using content marketing to spread brand awareness have been the ads created by Manhattan Mini Storage (MMS). The company, which was founded in 1978, wanted to launch a strong brand strategy that was similar to the edgy one-liners used by Kenneth Cole.

Lead by Archie Gottesman, MMS originally focused solely on their product. Gottesman kept pushing the boundaries and experimented with witty ads. The 2003 “I Store” campaign included ads of Santa storing his exercise bike, a ditsy woman storing half her brain, and a man who stored his boyfriend’s artwork.



Image Image: [Manhattan Mini Storage](#)

Gottesman informed [Fast Company](#) about the ad, “We got so many calls from people saying they appreciated how this ad was not about the man’s sexuality; he was just a medical student or a doctor talking about the many things in his life.”

Since then, MMS has continued to create billboard ads that “address hot button issues on New Yorkers’ minds including gay culture, right wing politics, abortion rights, and perhaps most shockingly, why the Mets even bother calling themselves a professional team.”

Manhattan Mini Storage has been able to successfully spread brand awareness through edgy billboards that reflect the mentality and personality of its market; New Yorkers. Instead of targeting people who are in need of storage space during a transition, MMS has created a long-term approach so that when New Yorkers need storage, they will immediately think of MMS.

While the company will not give out exact sales figures, Fast Company reported that “the business appears to be thriving and currently serves over 250,000 customers”.

Improve Lead Generation



Screen Shot [Sports Car Challenge Google Play](#) 6/8/15

83% of marketers view lead generation as their second most important goal, according to the [Content Marketing Institute](#). A good place to start is by optimizing your landing page with short registration forms and clear CTAs.

But, what about the content you create on and off of the landing page? Here are some suggestions.

- **Product video:** Place a video on the landing page that shows exactly what your product or service does.

- **Email marketing:** Create personalized email messages to previous customers.
- **Speak at industry conferences, events:** If you choose the right events, you will have the undivided attention of your target audience. Create an unforgettable presentation to keep their attention.
- **Blog:** Create content that shares relevant tips, ideas, or advice to showcase your expertise.
- **Use social media:** Ask a question or create a poll to share with your audience on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or wherever your audience spends their time.

An example of an effective lead generation campaign would be Volkswagen China's Sports Car Challenge 2. Launched in 2013, the mobile game was available for download for iOS and Android users as way to inform customers about the brand's premium models, such as Audi, Bentley, Bugatti, Lamborghini, Porsche, and Volkswagen. Markus Nels, head of sports cars, motorsport, and car culture at Volkswagen Group China, informed [Mobile Marketer](#) "Our objective with branded mobile games was to connect consumers directly to the VW brands through exciting virtual driving experiences."

Users, via a CRM in-game link, were able to directly contact Volkswagen regarding the vehicle they were virtually driving by providing their email address, as well as basic information. The Volkswagen CRM team were notified about the leads through the app's analytics and then contacted the prospect.

According to [Proelios](#), a mobile brand agency, Sports Car Challenge 2 resulted in more than 1,000,000 downloads during its first ten weeks, and over 25,000 Volkswagen Group dealership enquiries and test-drives within the first ten weeks. Additionally, the game was able to generate more than 339 qualified sales leads in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan from September to November 2014.

By creating an interactive and engaging piece of content, Volkswagen China was able to effectively generate sales leads while increasing brand awareness at the same time.

As Adam Heitzman states on [Inc.com](#), as long as you have a great product, target the right audience, and give them a reason to act, you shouldn't have any problems improving lead generation.

Help and Educate Customers

What do you believe is the main reason you can't convert a sales lead? It's fear. Which is why you need to develop trust - so your leads can get past their fear. You can begin to build a rapport with your audience by producing a lot of valuable content. If you sell lumber, for example, then why not create an instructional video that shows viewers how to build a deck?

As mentioned in Search Engine Journal's [The 2015 Beginner's Guide to Content Marketing](#), "Every successful business owner will tell you that a key element to their long-term success is being able to connect with their audience. Understanding how this is done on an emotional level is the highest prize in marketing. This not achieved by bombarding an audience with TV or print advertisements, but rather strategically educating or entertaining them, consistently, until your brand equates to a positive feeling for them over time."

For example, your brand could produce a product video that demonstrates how your product works and how it benefits your target audience.



Screenshot of *Dumb Ways to Die* 5/28/15

That’s what the Australian company Metro Trains gave their customers in 2012 through a safety campaign that included a catchy song and an animated video that was described as “adorably morbid.”

Developed by advertising agency McCann Melbourn as a public service announcement, the “[Dumb Ways to Die](#)” video featured “21 cartoon characters dying through stupid mistakes, such as swimming with piranhas. Three of the characters die after being hit by trains.” While that may not sound helpful or educational, the video was intended to promote rail safety in an interesting way instead of creating another dull PSA.

The Result

The video was viewed 2.5 million times within 48 hours and has since eclipsed 100 million views. More importantly, the campaign contributed to a more than 30% reduction in “near-miss” accidents between November 2012 and January 2013. The campaign also received seven Webby Awards in 2013, which included the Best Animation Film & Video and Best Public Service & Activism (Social Content & Marketing).

The Dumb Ways to Die website continues where the video leaves off by sharing train safety facts that can be downloaded as posters, animated GIFs of the characters, as well as a game for Android and iOS devices.

Position Yourself as an Industry Leader



Screenshot of [Copyblogger Blog](#) 5/28/15

If you want to continue to build trust among your audience, there is no better way than becoming an industry leader. You can achieve this by answering questions on sites like LinkedIn or Quora, or writing a guest post on an industry-leading site. As for content that can improve your credibility, you could host a webinar, interview a thought leader on a podcast, or conduct research that you use to create an infographic.

One of the best examples of creating and distributing content to raise your status in the industry is all the content [Copyblogger](#) has generated since 2006.

Created by Brian Clark, who had been building businesses with content marketing since 1998, Copyblogger began as a one-man blog to teach others how to create amazing online content.

Copyblogger has since grown into a multi-million dollar media company that features:

- **An online marketing blog**
- **16 eBooks covering dozens of topics including content marketing, email marketing, and keyword research**
- **A 20-part online course**
- **Seminars**

- **Webinars**
- **The Digital Marketing Podcast Network**

Copyblogger uses this content to help give customers a reason to purchase its products, such as the Rainmaker Platform and Synthesis, because it has proven to be one of the leading authority figures when it comes to content marketing.

When you prove you are an industry leader, it not only continues to build trust, it also shows your audience you have the knowledge and skills to address their wants and needs.

Boost Customer Engagement



Image Source: [Old Spice Twitter](#)

Engagement is another content marketing goal marketers have made a priority. Most marketers can begin to increase customer engagement by simply responding to customers. For example, if someone has a question or suggestion to a blog post you have recently published, then taking the time to address that individual will open up the opportunity for you to build a relationship with them.

Old Spice is a company known for boosting customer engagement. Not only do they create viral videos and campaigns, such as [“The Man You Could Smell Like”](#), which has more than 50 million views, they also connect with customers on social media.

The [Old Spice Twitter](#) account, for example, uses the platform for humorous and witty tweets its customers find entertaining - such as “No matter how much evidence you hear to the contrary, it is still hard to believe that cauliflower is not poisonous.”

Old Spice also created interactive content designed around Twitch ([Digiday](#) states this is Amazon’s live streaming platform, where viewers could “control the actions of a real human in a mysterious, boob-trapped forest for three consecutive days.”) by using the hashtag [#twitchplaysoldspice](#). Old Spice’s marketing strategy has resulted in the brand acquiring approximately 224,000 Twitter followers.

Remember, consumers don’t want a sales pitch, and they don’t want to purchase from a faceless corporation. They want information that

can better their lives. By putting yourself out there and connecting with them, you are adding a human touch to the content they have been searching for.

Additional Content Marketing Goals

There are obviously more than five goals for content marketers, which is why we'll take a brief look at eleven other popular content marketing goals.

- **Enhance Customer Experience:** Make your customers happy and better their lives with useful content.
- **Acquire Talent:** You want team members who are enthusiastic about your product. After discovering your content, a talented person should want to join your organization because they support your goals.
- **Showcase Products or Services:** What does your product actually do? Content can demonstrate exactly what your product does and how it can help customers.
- **Strengthen Customer Loyalty:** Your loyal customers will become your biggest champions and will refer others to your business.

- **Entertain Customers:** Creating an article or visual aid that makes others laugh, for example, is an effective way to attract customers and increase shares.
- **Overcoming Objections:** Create content addressing questions or concerns customers may have about your product or service.
- **Help Search Engines Find You:** Blogging frequently gives web sites [434% more indexed pages](#) and 97% more indexed links.
- **Attract Strategic Partners:** Finding the right partners can help introduce your brand to a new audience.
- **Build a Community:** Another way to build trust since potential consumers will consult a community before making a purchase.
- **Link Acquisition:** Use quality content to earn links from influential websites in your industry.
- **Develop New Ideas:** Maybe you have never hosted podcasts, but after giving it a try, you discover a positive reaction - and now you have a leading podcast in your industry.

No matter your exact content marketing goal, if you clearly define your objectives and share it with the right audience, you'll be able to make meaningful connections - which means more revenue.

CHAPTER 7

Case Studies: How Content Marketing Benefits Companies

When you plan and execute a well-constructed content marketing strategy you are able to drive traffic to your site, increase leads, create brand advocates, establish trust, and become an authority in your industry.

In short, there are more than enough benefits of content marketing to convince you to begin creating a documented content marketing strategy.

To further illustrate the benefits of content marketing, let's look at three case studies from three different types of companies: brick and mortar (McDonald's), eCommerce (ShipServ), and publisher (Search Engine Journal).

McDonald's: "Our Food. Your Questions."

Founded in 1940 after brothers Richard and Maurice McDonald opened their first barbecue restaurant in California, McDonald's is now the

world's largest restaurant chain. In 2014, there were [14,350 McDonald's restaurants in the United States](#) with an additional 21,908 in international locations. Worldwide revenue in 2014 was \$27.44 billion.

Despite the success McDonald's has enjoyed, the company has turned to content marketing over the years to increase brand loyalty, customer engagement, and combat slipping sales.

A few examples of [McDonald's clever marketing campaigns](#) include:

- In the UK, McDonald's initiated a mobile location-based campaign to promote late night operating hours. By targeting shift workers and travelers through ads at ATMs and gas points, along with banner ads on sites night owls visited, the company was able to attract over 500,000 visits with an ROI of 100%.
- In 1987, McDonald's launched its Monopoly marketing campaign. After the company noticed customers were blogging about Monopoly around 2007, McDonald's initiated a digital Monopoly campaign that gave customers a second chance to win, as well as a Facebook page where winners visitors could share their prize winnings.

- In China, McDonald's teamed up with Rovio for a chance to allow customers to play a real-life version of 'Angry Birds' inside a McDonald's. Customers downloaded an app and voted for their favorite McDonald's branch.

One of the most talked about campaigns, however, was 2012's "Our Food. Your Questions." from McDonald's Canada. The campaign was launched to help answer concerns on whether or not McDonald's was using "pink slime" in food products. The campaign was so successful that marketing expert and author [Jay Baer](#) proclaimed "the 'Golden Arches' embrace of information could be the start of a cultural change that impacts every business."

The campaign was also awarded [Marketer of the Year 2012](#) by Marketing Magazine, and saw the following results:

- **The dedicated section for "Our Food. Your Questions." on McDonald's website was able to garner more than one million hits.**
- **Visitors spent an average time of four and a half minutes on the site reading 12 questions.**

- The “Behind the scenes at a McDonald’s photo shoot” for McDonald’s Canada currently has: **10.3 million views; 27,000 YouTube likes; 91,000 Facebook shares; and 21,000 tweets.**

Because of the success in Canada, it was no surprise to see McDonald’s launch an “Our Food. Your Questions.” campaign in the United States. The United States version of the campaign features former Mythbuster Grant Imahara who goes behind the scenes to see what McDonald’s food products are really made of.

For example, in December of 2014, Imahara visited a Tyson food-processing plant to investigate if Chicken McNuggets were made with the notorious pink slime or real chicken.

Results

As of May 2015, the [“What are McDonald’s Chicken McNuggets Made Of?”](#) has been viewed by more than 7.6 million people. It also has:

- **30,000 likes on YouTube**
- **16,000 shares on Facebook**
- **Over 3,000 Twitter shares**

The United States version of the campaign has a total of 13 videos, and has become a successful marketing campaign for McDonald's.

According to [Reelseo](#), the campaign has totaled more than 30 million views and “is over 1.9 times more popular than the company's Super Bowl commercial and almost 7.7 times more popular than its animated ‘Archenemies’ ad.”

ShipServ: Limited Budget Campaign

ShipServ was [founded in 1999 by Paul Østergaard](#) “with the vision to drive out inefficiencies and increasing competitiveness in the global maritime shipping industry by using the Internet to create an e-marketplace where global maritime suppliers meets to do business.”

Today, [ShipServ](#) has become a leading e-marketplace for the marine industry through its main product TradeNet, “where over 200 shipowners, managers, yards, and drilling contractors supply more than 9,000 ships and rigs.” In 2014, the company recorded more than 6 million transactions for a total of \$3 billion. However, things were slightly different back in 2008.

ShipServ realized they were viewed as an impersonal software company. To make matters worse, 65% of their customers viewed the social web a “distracting waste of time”. With only a \$30,000 marketing budget, ShipServ decided to create a social media and content marketing strategy aimed at the following objectives:

- **Increase traffic to [shipserv.com](#) by 50% over three months**
- **Raise ShipServ’s brand awareness in the global shipping industry**

- **Attract sales leads through relevant content**
- **Change focus from “shouting” at customers to “listening, entertaining, participating, inspiring and nurturing” their audience**

To begin the campaign, ShipServ conducted research, constructed a quarterly content plan, and took the following measures:

- **Find Their Audience:** Keywords were found using Google AdWords and Netvibes was used for online conversations. With this info, ShipServ found maritime blogs and sought out to become an industry thought leader.
- **Revamp of ShipServ.com:** The website was redesigned from an impersonal enterprise site to a lighter, customer-friendly design which contained specific call-to-actions to suit customer needs.
- **Creation of a Blog:** The blog was used for customers to voice their opinions, share feedback, and encourage conversations.
- **Used Social Media to Push Content:** A variety of social media channels were used as “beacons” to drive traffic to ShipServ.com. Micro-content in the form of viral videos, LinkedIn group discussions, a revamped newsletter, frequent blog posts, podcasts, and white papers were created and shared.

- **Building an Online Community:** ShipServ created a LinkedIn group called “ShipServ Maritime Trading Network”. Suppliers and purchasing people in the shipping industry were encouraged to join the group. Content was created especially for what users searched for and what their needs were based on surveys. From 2010 to 2015, the group has grown from 800 to 4,000 members.
- **Marketo/Salesforce Integration:** ShipServ combined Marketo and Salesforce CRM data to review of the status of possible leads.

Results

ShipServ was awarded the 2009 CRM Market Award by CRM Magazine for [“its holistic use of Marketo, Salesforce.com, and social media.”](#) [Hakon Jensen](#) of Norway, who wrote a detailed case study about ShipServ, also found that during the first quarter of 2009, the campaign generated the following website statistics:

- **Increase in visitors by 59%**
- **Increase in pageviews by 70%**
- **Increase in average time on site by 25%**
- **Over 1,000 downloads of a white paper**

Jenson also found that 62% of the viral videos came from email distribution and the top 20 traffic sources came from Twitter and LinkedIn. Business statistics for the campaign:

- **Increased contact-to-lead (landing page contact) conversion by 150%**
- **Increased lead-to-opportunity conversion by 50%**
- **Decreased campaign management costs by 80%**
- **Increased the number of sales-ready leads by 400%**

In an interview with [Marketo](#), ShipServ's VP of Marketing John Watton stated, "I'm very proud of our limited budget campaign. The objective was to build awareness of ShipServ throughout the global industry without spending a fortune!" According to the data, ShipServ exceeded that objective.

Search Engine Journal: ThinkTank Webinar Series

Founded in 2003 by Loren Baker, Search Engine Journal (SEJ) is a digital marketing blog that publishes original content daily. While neither site continues ranking websites, SEJ was previously ranked #10 in AdAge's Power150 and #11 in Technorati's Business Blog listing.

To help expand our brand presence and continue to position ourselves as an industry leader, SEJ began hosting webinar series in the beginning of 2015. Not only did our team host a live webinar, we also shared recaps of the webinar which included a YouTube video of the webinar and SlideShare notes.

The first webinar, "[Managing the Online Editorial Process](#)," occurred on January 8, 2015. The recap of the webinar was shared 699 times, viewed 595 times on SlideShare, and viewed 794 times on YouTube.

The second webinar, "[Understanding Dynamic Google SEO](#)," took place on February 15, 2015 and exceeded expectations. Not only did more than 300 people attend the live webinar, the webinar recap has been read more than 3,000 times and the YouTube video was viewed more than 2,000 times. Most impressive, however, was that the SlideShare presentation received 15,379 views.

All stats current at the time of publication.

Has SEJ been able to keep up with that momentum? Here's a closer look at three other webinars that SEJ has hosted:

“Current Trends in Link Building & Content Marketing”

- Recap Post Shares: **877**
- Recap Post Reads: **1134**
- YouTube Views: **461**
- SlideShare Views: **8,507**

“Mastering Social Media For Big Brands”

- Recap Post Shares: **390**
- Recap Post Reads: **197**
- YouTube Views: **85**
- SlideShare Views: **3,449**

“Building Business Cases For SEO Initiatives with Keith Goode”

- Recap Post Shares: **567**
- Recap Post Reads: **440**
- YouTube Views: **214**
- SlideShare Views: **1,726**

The Results

The two most interesting results from SEJ’s ThinkTank series are the recap page views and the number of views on SlideShare. The numbers from the webinars listed above are a clear indication that people are utilizing the webinars by not only visiting the webinar recap page, but also viewing the presenter’s slides on Slideshare.

In other words, visitors are not just listening to the live webinar and moving on. They’re watching the webinar again and viewing the SlideShare presentation so they can put that information to good use.

Not only is the ThinkTank Webinar Series placing SEJ into a more authoritative position, it’s also a great example of how to repurpose your content.

Take for example the “Current Trends in Link Building & Content Marketing” webinar. This content began as a webinar and has since been repurposed into a YouTube video, SlideShare presentation, and then converted into a long-form blog post. That’s four different methods for the same piece of content to reach various audience members.

CHAPTER 8

Five Benefits of Content Marketing

In 2011, Michael Dubin and Mark Levine founded a company that sold no-name razors. Just one year later the company, Dollar Shave Club, became a serious threat to companies like Gillette and Schick.

With only five employees and \$1 million in seed funding, [Dollar Shave Club](#) spent a mere \$4,500 on an engaging YouTube video that resulted in the following:

- **9.5 million views**
- **23,000 Twitter followers, 76,000 Facebook fans**
- **12,000 new customers in 2 days**
- **An additional \$10.8 million in financing**

Through one piece of content Dollar Shave Club proved that content marketing has major benefits, such as increasing sales and site visitors, becoming a trusted source, and building a relationship all on a limited budget.

Here is a closer look at the benefits of content marketing with additional examples.

1. Increases Sales

As [Neil Patel](#) perfectly states, “There is a big misconception that content marketing doesn’t drive sales. But if it didn’t work well, none of my companies would exist.”

One of the main benefits of content marketing is that it can increase sales for your business— [Business 2 Community](#) actually found that 30% of respondents from a survey reported their ROI increased because of content marketing. If it didn’t, then what would be the point in investing and running a content marketing campaign?

An example of how content marketing can increase sales was provided by Neil Patel, who claims that 99% of KISSMetrics marketing budget is spent on content marketing and email marketing. Neil notes that he spends \$2,000/month on Pardot to send out email blasts and spends between \$5,000 - \$6,000 on the blog. This money is used to hire writers and create content like infographics.

After crunching the numbers, Neil and his team discovered that the KISSmetrics blog can drive around 60% of new leads to potentially purchase a \$200 product.

And, if they can get one person to read at least 3 blog posts, they can convert that person into a lead approximately 45% of the time. KISSMetrics is able to generate 6 figures each month. So, the company is more than willingly to spend the \$5,000 - \$6,000 on content creation.

2. It's Cheaper Than Other Forms of Marketing

Another benefit of content marketing is that it's more cost effective than other forms of marketing. In fact, content marketing [costs 62% less than traditional marketing](#). Because the internet is full of free tools and resources, this shouldn't be that shocking. Why purchase TV space when you can share a video on YouTube?

However, that doesn't mean that content marketing is easily achieved or completely free.

An example of the cost-effectiveness of content marketing is how [Beardbrand](#) went from a passion to a [\\$40,000+ per month business](#). After attending the 2012 West Coast Beard & Mustache Championships, Eric Bandholz and Jon Reisinger launched an online community in 2012 that included a blog, Tumblr, and YouTube Channel that provided advice

on beard maintenance. Slowly but surely, the Beardbrand community continued to grow.

Bandholz was contacted by a New York Times reporter for an article regarding beard products and began to produce small batches of products to service their community and fellow beard enthusiasts. The company even sought out an investment on Shark Tank. While Beardbrand didn't receive funding, the company gained additional exposure for free.

Beardbrand didn't have to spend a fortune on promoting its brand. By simply sharing their expertise, creating low-budget instructional videos, and piggybacking on other forms of content, the company has gained massive exposure.

3. Generates More Inbound Traffic to Your Site

Content marketing is one of the most effective ways to increase inbound traffic to your site. Business2Community reported that 64% of respondents stated that their website traffic increased because of content marketing.

The [Sales Lion](#) shares a simple, yet effective, example on how content marketing increases website traffic by examining an IT and software development company called Segue Technologies.

After having the entire team buy into content marketing, the company committed to creating four blog posts per month and distributing the content on its official blog and social media channels. Segue Technologies also created content like eBooks during this period.

In just 12 months, Segue Technologies “went from less than 1000 organic web visitors a month when they started, to roughly 25,000 visitors” because the company created valuable content for its audience.

4. Establishes Your Organization as a Resource

Have you noticed a pattern in the above examples? While each company used content marketing to increase sales and website traffic fairly inexpensively, they also proved they were experts in their respective industries.

This is another huge perk of content marketing.

Creating content that establishes your organization as resource puts you into a position where people will listen and trust what you have to say, which in turn will increase leads and sales.

Whole Foods has done a solid job of perfecting this tactic.

The grocery chain is known for selling healthy and organic foods, which is why the company has created content that backs up this vision. Over the years [Whole Foods](#) has produced educational content that covers everything from sustainability to animal welfare to healthy recipes. Whole Foods also discusses GMOs and what the company's values are through enticing visual content.



Screen Shot [Whole Foods Market](#) 6/8/15

Through this content, Whole Foods proved it is indeed an organization that takes the health of its customers seriously. Therefore, customers can trust Whole Foods products are healthy and good for them.

5. Builds Personal Relationships

Another benefit of content marketing is it fosters a relationship between your brand and your targeted audience - whether the audience is a customer or influencer. Devesh Khanal illustrated this technique in a [Content Marketing Institute](#) article.

Eyefi, a technology company in the photography industry, wanted to establish relationships with influencers in this field. The strategy began with Eyefi targeting well-known photographers who actively engaged their audience. After compiling the list of influencers, the company created the 30 most socially influential photographers infographic as a piece of seed content.

Eyefi then sent personalized emails to the 30 influencers letting them know about the infographic. Some of the influencers shared the content with their social media followers, which exposed Eyefi to a new audience who would most likely be interested in their product.

Eyefi created a piece of content that helped start a relationship with these photographers because the content increased publicity for the

photographers. With this piece of content, Eyefi was able to attract 6 million people to their brand.

There are, of course, additional benefits of content marketing, [many of which are unintended](#). For example, it can attract potential employees by showing off how great your organization is to work for - think of sharing a behind-the-scenes look in the office or highlights from a party or event. Content marketing can also:

- **Boost Employee Morale:** Engaged employees are happier. Showcase their hard work in a blog post or have them contribute content to make them feel involved.
- **Test:** Before committing to a new marketing strategy, allow a portion of your audience to critique through surveys before moving forward.
- **Develop Original Ideas:** Content marketing frees you from depending on what your competition is doing before developing your own thoughts and ideas.
- **Remove Uninterested Buyers:** Why waste resources on people who never planned on becoming customers? Content marketing essentially weeds these individuals out immediately.

Content Marketing Tools

To assist you with creating, producing, promoting, and distributing your awesome content, here are 30 essential content marketing tools. While this is not a comprehensive list, all of these tools can be used when developing and implementing your content marketing strategy.

Content Discovery & Ideas

- [Feedly](#): Organize, read, and share content from relevant blogs and websites
- [BuzzSumo](#): Content analyzer tool used for discovering influencers and tracking competitors
- [Quora](#): Find trending discussions on the popular question and answer network
- [Klout](#): Suggests sharable content and tracks your impact on social media
- [Reddit](#): Discover what topics are trending worldwide
- [Swayy](#): Discover engaging content to share with your audience

Content Curation & Creation

- [Curata](#): Content discovery tool that also allows you to curate and share anywhere under one platform
- [WordPress](#): Most popular blogging and CMS tool
- [Visual.ly](#): Create infographics and data visualizations
- [UberFlip](#): Aggregate your content so that it will speak to different audience members
- [PowTown](#): Create animated presentations and videos
- [Google Keyword Tool](#): Can be used to discover keywords for article headlines and body

Distribution & Marketing

- [Buffer](#): Easy way to share and schedule content on your social media channels
- [Outbrain](#): A service that promotes your content on premium websites
- [PR Newswire](#): Send out a press release to a variety of sources
- [MailChimp](#): Email blast your newsletter subscribers
- [Promoted Posts on Facebook](#): Pay to have your content featured upfront on Facebook

- [SlideShare](#): Discover, upload, or share content, such as webinars, in presentation form

Social Media Listening, Managing, & Monitoring

- [Sprout Social](#): Management tool that allows you to schedule, publish, and engage your social media audience
- [Hootsuite](#): Manage social media accounts, schedule messages, analyze traffic, and track mentions
- [Salesforce Marketing Cloud](#): Discover what's being said about your brand, and your competitors as well
- [Tweetdeck](#): Track real-time brand mentions and schedule tweets
- [Social Mention](#): A real-time social media analyzer tool
- [Socialchorus](#): Turn employees and customers into brand advocates

Analytics & Testing

- [Google Analytics](#): Lets you measure website and social media impact and discover customers' profiles

- [KISSMetrics](#): Allows you to track, analyze, and optimize marketing campaigns with person-centric data
- [Raven Tools](#): Delivers metrics reports on SEO, PPC, and social media campaigns
- [TrackMaven](#): Provides a competitive intelligence that analyzes competitors social media activity
- [Moz Analytics](#): Audits your site, tracks ranking and links and makes actionable suggestions
- [Optimizely](#): Enhance customer experience through simple A/B and multivariate testing

Take Aways

Content marketing has been used by brands since the late 1800's, such as John Deere's The Furrow which has been in publication since 1895. Today, the strategy is used by most marketers and focuses on creating and distributing valuable content in order to attract and retain customers.

By creating content in the form of videos, podcasts, white papers, webinars, blog posts, or infographics, marketers are able to:

- **Spread brand awareness**
- **Improve lead generation**
- **Educate customers**
- **Position your brand as an industry leader**
- **Boost customer engagement**

Whether you're a brick and mortar store, eCommerce site, or publisher, content marketing is beneficial for your brand because it increases sales, is more cost-effective than traditional advertising, establishes your organization as a resource, and helps build personal relationships.

How can content marketing be used in your industry? How might content marketing benefit your specific organization? The resources and examples included in this white paper will guide your brand in creating and implementing a content marketing strategy for your targeted audience.