The New Marketing Reality

An Introduction to Content Marketing…and 5 Reasons it Works

By Dan Trumblee

Copywriter, Content Strategist
www.MarketingContentWriter.com
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Interruption Marketing: A Loathe Affair…

While waiting to get a haircut the other day, I began rummaging through the magazines on the table next to me. Eventually, I settled on GQ because it had a cover story that interested me. I don’t remember what the story was though because I never got to read it.

If you’ve never picked up a GQ, it’s about the thickness of a short novel and it seems 80% of the pages are devoted to advertising. In fact, this particular copy was so replete with ads that I couldn’t find the article that had piqued my interest. In fact, I couldn’t even find the table of contents because the first 30 pages of the magazine were ads. Flip...ad. Flip...ad. Flip...ad. I spent the entire 10 minutes before my haircut flipping through ads. They were a barrier between me and what I wanted, an interruption, so I ignored them.

Can your company afford to be ignored like this?

This is a perfect example of how the old model of interrupting marketing is failing more than ever before. In the New Marketing Reality, you don’t have to pay to interrupt the content your audience is trying to enjoy; you can simply create the content yourself. This eBook will show you how to get started.
Welcome to the New Marketing Reality…

Studies have shown that the average person encounters between 3,000 and 5,000 marketing messages per day (GQ subscribers must be closer to the 5,000 end of the spectrum). But how many of those messages do we actually pay attention to?

How many people now, with the advent of DVR, just record their shows and fast-forward through the commercials? Junk mail? Toss it. Telemarketers? Caller ID. E-mails? Vaporized by SPAM filters and the trusty “Delete” button.

Fortunately, for you and your customers, a new model has emerged. Rather than waiting passively for information to come at them, people are now actively seeking out information on the Internet. They’re watching videos, reading blogs, downloading white papers, participating in forum discussions, subscribing to newsletters.

This is the New Marketing Reality—a new school of marketing that allows organizations large and small to establish their authority and win the trust of new prospects by emphasizing educational, non-sales-oriented messaging.
“It’s about Mindset, Not Skillset”

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What most companies don’t understand is that the New Marketing Reality is not about having a certain skillset; it’s about having the right mindset.

It’s really as simple as realizing that successful marketing is no longer about you. It’s about your customers. So, rather than talking about yourself or your products in your marketing, you focus on helping your customers solve their problems.
The New Marketing Reality: An Introduction to Content Marketing and 5 Reasons it Works

From Concept to Reality

So how do concepts like the “New Marketing Reality” and “generosity” translate to real-world marketing actions?

Rather than building a web site or a Facebook page focused on you and your business, you might instead offer articles, videos, case studies, white papers and tools that address your customers’ pain points, help them do their jobs better and shows your expertise. Marketing no longer needs to say anything about your products or services.

What I’m describing is called Content Marketing, which is defined as the creation and distribution of relevant and valuable content meant to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action.

In other words, you produce interesting and valuable content aimed at getting your target audience to listen to you, remember you, trust you, buy from you and recommend you (likely in that order).

Content is the key to success in the new marketing reality.
What can content do that traditional marketing can’t?

1. Content adds value.
   Unlike traditional marketing, which aims to uncover needs and propose a solution, content marketing at its best can be a solution in itself. That may sound counter-intuitive—you want to sell things not solve people’s problems for free. But it’s really as simple as long-term vs. short-term thinking. You might be able to sell a widget today, but then you’re just another salesman. Content positions you as an expert who is more interested in adding value and finding solutions than in selling widgets—making you more trustworthy and referable over the long-term.

   With content marketing, you’re no longer in the business of selling widgets, you’re in the business of solving your customers’ problems. Again, it’s all about mind-set.

2. Content can spread.
   People don’t share ads; they share content, and the social web gives us the ability to share interesting content more efficiently than ever. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Delicious and YouTube are just a few of the most popular platforms where your content can spread or “go viral.” Hundreds more exist.

   So what’s the point? Why do we want all these people reading our content? Companies spend billions on advertising every year in an effort to get in front of potential clients. When people share your content, they’re doing it for you—for free.
What can content do that traditional marketing can’t? – Cont.

3. Content shows your expertise.
For small-business owners, a significant part of the sales process is convincing prospects that you know what you’re doing. You don’t have a big name, a big budget, or a big reputation, so you have to show prospects early on that you actually know your stuff.

Unlike traditional advertising, where the best you can do is *tell* people you’re great at what you do—which they’ll likely see as hype—content allows you to put your expertise on display. Same goes for the media as well. Publishing your thoughts in articles, a blog, or a white paper helps members of the media recognize your expertise and makes them more likely to use you as a source.

4. Content creates fans.
Much of what determines buying decisions has very little to do with logic. Often it comes down to how the potential buyer feels about you, your product or service. Or, how they perceive others will feel about their decision to do business with you.

Apple is perhaps the most famous example of a company whose customers buy in large part because of the way they feel about the company and its products. Apple doesn’t just have customers, but legions of rabid fans who talk, blog, tweet and just plain won’t shut up about how they “love” the company and its products.

Put simply, fans are more loyal, easier to up-sell and, perhaps most important, more vocal than mere customers.
What can content do that traditional marketing can’t? – Cont.

5. Content can be searched.
People perform more than 1 billion Google searches every day. They’re not searching for ads. They’re searching for answers to their questions and solutions to their problems. They’re searching for content.

Due to the vastness of the Internet, the very nature of content and information has changed, becoming much more niche and specialized. Prior to the Internet it never would have made sense for a company with a very niche audience to produce a magazine or educational videos because of the expense. Now companies like yours can produce content in your specialized area of expertise and, thanks to the searchable Internet, your target audience will be able to find it.
Are You Ready?

Content Marketing isn’t for everyone. The Internet landscape is littered with evidence of that. There are many more abandoned blogs and Twitter accounts than active ones precisely because companies and the people behind them didn’t have the right mindset to thrive in this new reality.

To determine if you have the right mindset, answer the following questions:

- Are you willing to share your best ideas for free?
- Are you ready to start thinking of your company as a publisher?
- Are you ready to start thinking of your entire company as the marketing department?
- Are you ready to start thinking of your entire company as the customer service department?
- Are you ready to start answering questions, responding to comments and having discussions online?
- Are you ready to start thinking first about what your customers need, not what you have to sell?
- Are you ready to create “permanent” marketing, not just short-term campaigns?
- Are you ready to stop selling and start educating?
- Are you ready to start spending time instead of money?
- Are you interested in creating fans instead of just customers?

If you answered “no” to two or more of these questions, you may not be ready for the New Marketing Reality, yet. That’s fine. You will be someday. Not every company was ready to have a website in the beginning either. If you answered “yes” to the questions above, congratulations, you’re ready. But be forewarned. Success in this new marketing reality takes time, generosity, patience, organization-wide commitment and a lot of creativity—other than that, it’s pretty easy.
Getting Started

As a content marketing strategist, I help companies large and small adapt to the New Marketing Reality by teaching them how to generate world-class marketing content that turns strangers into prospects, prospects into clients and clients into fans. Of course, before you start cranking out content, you need a strategy. **Here’s the 10-step process I use.**

1. Review company/department goals and objectives  
2. Review your brand, values, differentiating factors  
3. Define your audience by creating buyer personas  
4. Select your topics based on findings in steps 1-3  
5. Assign content creators  
6. Choose formats (distribution channels)  
7. Create Editorial calendar  
8. Produce/Publish content  
9. Measure results  
10. Repurpose and re-use content

This process is not easy. Content strategy takes buy-in from all stakeholders and it’s an ongoing and constantly evolving endeavor. But the pay-off in trust, goodwill, prospects and referrals is well worth it.
About the Author:

Dan Trumblee is a copywriter and content marketing strategist based in Omaha, NE. A communications team leader for Senior Market Sales, Inc. by day, Dan enjoys consulting on the side, working mainly with small businesses and entrepreneurs to develop their content marketing strategy and execute content projects, such as white papers, ebooks, articles, and blogs. Dan is passionate about helping companies develop content they can be proud of—content that will establish them as experts in their industry, engage their customers with information they actually need, generate leads and increase their referrals. Dan can be reached at Dan@MarketingContentWriter.com.