



of B2B Marketing



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Introduction

Organizations invest time and money in content marketing in hopes of engaging and winning over customers. Research by CEB Global found that 90% of B2B companies use content marketing to reach customers in the early stages of their buyer's journey.¹

Content marketing can be a great way to capture customer interest with entertaining and informative material that addresses their pain points. Popular channels such as social media platforms are ideal forums for publishing content. Social media posts may go viral and generate comments that teach you more about your prospects.

Content Marketing Isn't Foolproof

Despite its popularity as a tactic, content marketing isn't always successful. Companies make mistakes when developing and distributing content. They may create content blindly without looking at the big picture. Organizations need to think of content marketing as part of a larger strategy that takes into account the needs of their audience and the best ways to reach prospective customers.

To be effective, content marketing needs to create a sustainable relationship between prospective customers and your brand. Marketing errors prevent your company from attracting, nurturing, and converting customers.

This eBook explores common B2B marketing mistakes and proposes some best practices that can help your company avoid missteps and improve performance.

90%

90% of B2B companies use content marketing to reach customers in the early stages of their buyer's journey.



1. CEB Global | <https://www.cebglobal.com/blogs/b2b-marketing-3-common-content-marketing-mistakes/>



Don't Commit Random Acts of Marketing

Many companies engage in random acts of marketing. For instance, they create top of the funnel content without developing an overall strategy that considers all parts of the funnel.

Organizations may develop content to promote certain products and services rather than to fulfill their audience's need for information on how to fix pain points. These random acts of marketing create a disconnect between your brand and your audience. According to *The Future of Content* report, 55% of consumers find marketing content uninteresting or irrelevant to them.²

Just because your business sees competitors using certain tactics doesn't mean they are right for you and your customers. Don't blog just to blog. Don't create infographics just because you don't have any. Certain tactics work better at specific points in the buyer's journey.

Your customers may prefer to use certain channels to interact with your brand. If you aren't familiar with their preferences, you won't connect with them.

Many companies are turning to marketing automation to streamline their process. However, organizations that fail to use metrics to measure their marketing performance and adjust their strategy are doomed to repeat costly mistakes.

55%

55% of consumers find marketing content uninteresting or irrelevant to them.



2. Rapt Media | <http://info.raptmedia.com/blog/future-of-content-report-part-1>



Do Align Your Marketing Plan With Business Goals

Successful content marketing requires careful planning and the willingness to reevaluate your strategy. Before developing and publishing content, your business should conduct a content inventory to see where you have gaps in your strategy. If your strategy is top-heavy, your marketing team should focus on creating content that serves the middle and bottom of the funnel.

Before committing to a form of content, consider where it best fits in the buyer's journey. For instance, blogs can be a great way to nurture current clients. Customers can subscribe to a blog to stay up to date on trends and developments. Infographics help make complex statistics understandable in the awareness and consideration stages.

Get Your Strategy in Writing

The content marketing process should begin with the development of a documented marketing strategy. The Content Marketing Institute (CMI) discovered that 48% of companies have a marketing strategy but have failed to document it.³

The study also found that organizations that had their strategy in writing were twice as likely to rate their content marketing as effective compared to those that had a verbal strategy. Putting the strategy in writing keeps your marketing team accountable and ensures that everyone knows his or her role.

An effective marketing strategy should set measurable and realistic goals. Set a time frame for raising the percentage of visitors your website attracts or the number of clicks a landing page receives.

48%

48% of companies have a marketing strategy but have failed to document it.



3. Content Marketing Institute | http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2015_B2B_Research.pdf



Don't Promote Features of Your Solution

Most readers of your content won't be ready to purchase. There's a reason the purchasing process is called a buyer's journey: Prospective customers go through a series of stages before they are ready to choose a solution.

A survey by retargeting experts Criteo showed that 53% of customers don't make a purchasing decision during their first visit to a website. Almost a third of consumers visit multiple sites before making a purchase.⁴

Aiming at the Wrong Part of the Funnel

Chances are, customers are in the awareness or consideration stage when reading your content. When companies focus their marketing on the bottom of the funnel, they miss opportunities to engage these potential customers.

These customers won't be ready to hear about the advantages of your products and services. They don't know what they need yet. Early in the buyer's journey, customers are trying to understand symptoms of their problems. For this reason, you should aim to educate your customers instead of selling to them.

If your company tries to target customers in early stages of the buyer's journey with free trials or sell sheets, it will chase them away. A direct offer seems too aggressive when a consumer is just looking for information.

53%

53% of customers don't make a purchasing decision during their first visit to a website.



⁴. Adweek | <http://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/infographic-how-omnishoppers-browse-and-buy/>



Do Address Client Needs

As part of an effective marketing strategy, your team should create content that addresses prospects at every stage in the buyer's journey. Early in the journey, content needs to help customers assess their current situation to determine what problems need to be solved. White papers and eBooks should address trends and issues that affect the customer instead of promote products and services.

Building Personas

Instead of focusing on your company's products and services, most of your content marketing should focus on potential customers' pain points. Before building your content, you should develop a range of personas as a way of understanding and targeting your audience.

Personas are pictures of your ideal customers that include demographics, needs and interests, favored sources of information, and typical objections. These personas can be compiled from research, data on current customers, or interviews. Once these personas are in place, your marketing team can start creating content that directly appeals to them.

Finding the Right Balance in Personalization

Developing personas is a great way to target your audience, but you don't want to overdo your personalization. CEB Global cautions against over-personalization because it found an average of 5.4 stakeholders are involved in a B2B purchasing decision.⁵

B2B marketing works differently than B2C marketing because your company is targeting an organization instead of an individual. According to CMI, companies target an average of four different audiences in their marketing strategy.⁶ For this reason, you should develop a range of appropriate personas to market to.

5.4

Stakeholders

An average of 5.4 stakeholders are involved in a B2B purchasing decision.



5. CEB Global | <https://www.cebglobal.com/blogs/b2b-marketing-3-common-content-marketing-mistakes/>

6. Content Marketing Institute | http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2015_B2B_Research.pdf



Don't Present an Inconsistent Brand Image

A Demand Metric study revealed that 40% of companies struggle with brand consistency.⁷ A company can't be all things to all people.

Imagine if you went into your local McDonald's restaurant and were seated by a maitre d' at a table with a white tablecloth and silverware. You would probably be shocked and bewildered and wouldn't want to come back.

Brand inconsistency confuses potential customers by presenting them with conflicting impressions of who you are as a company. If you are posting blogs regularly and one blog shows an irreverent sense of humor and the next takes a business professional tone, your customers won't know what to expect next.

The Downside of Inconsistency

Inconsistent branding can negatively affect your bottom line. Demand Metric found that inconsistent content reduces revenue by 11%.⁸ Customers that can't recognize or understand your brand may turn to your competitors when it's time to choose a solution.

Inconsistent branding makes your company seem untrustworthy and unreliable. Customers may wonder if your company is hiding something by pretending to be something it is not. If your company can't present a consistent image, how can you present consistent products and services?

40%

40% of companies struggle with brand consistency.



⁷. MarcomCentral | <https://marcom.com/we-calculated-impact-of-inconsistent-marketing-content>

⁸. MarcomCentral | <https://marcom.com/we-calculated-impact-of-inconsistent-marketing-content/>



Do Be Consistent Across Channels

CMI found that 84% of companies list brand awareness as their top goal.⁹ Brand consistency helps promote awareness of your brand. Potential customers come to recognize the appearance and tone of your content.

Maintaining brand consistency can be challenging when customers interact with your brand on different channels. Consumers may do product research on your website, through emailed communications, or on social media platforms.

No matter where customers interact with your brand, they want to find consistent information about your products and services. A unified voice and vision helps to humanize your brand and encourages brand loyalty.

How to Achieve Brand Consistency

The path to brand consistency starts with the development and implementation of branding guidelines. Your company should establish primary and secondary colors that project your brand. Chosen fonts and graphics should consistently appear in all your content. These guidelines can be used by your marketing team or presented to a third-party analyst to ensure that all your marketing materials have a uniform look and feel.

Use a consistent voice and tone in your content no matter what channel it is published on. Whether your company chooses a casual or business professional tone, all content should reflect it. Your content should give the impression that it is coming from a consistent point of view.



9. Content Marketing Institute | http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2015_B2B_Research.pdf

Developing a Stronger B2B Marketing Strategy

The growth of content marketing shows no sign of slowing. CMI discovered that 70% of organizations are increasing their content production.¹⁰ However, throwing content at prospects and hoping it will lead to a conversion isn't the best approach. Focusing on quality, not just quantity, is the key to B2B marketing success.

When aspects of your strategy don't work, your company needs to be ready to adapt and change. An expert marketing team can assess your marketing efforts and show you how to optimize them. TSL Marketing has almost 20 years' experience helping top technology companies plan and execute winning content marketing strategies.

70%

70% of organizations are increasing their content production.



**Partner with the
experts at TSL
to avoid making
damaging B2B
marketing mistakes.**



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