TSL

MARKETING

How Great
Content Dresses
Your Company
for Success

INTRODUCTION

Everyone's familiar with the nightmare of showing up naked at work or school. If your business lacks great marketing content, it's like beginning an important presentation only to find you're stark naked. Some content may be like the Emperor's new clothes: you may be convinced that your business is arrayed in finery when, in reality, you are missing the collateral needed to capture, nurture, and convert leads.
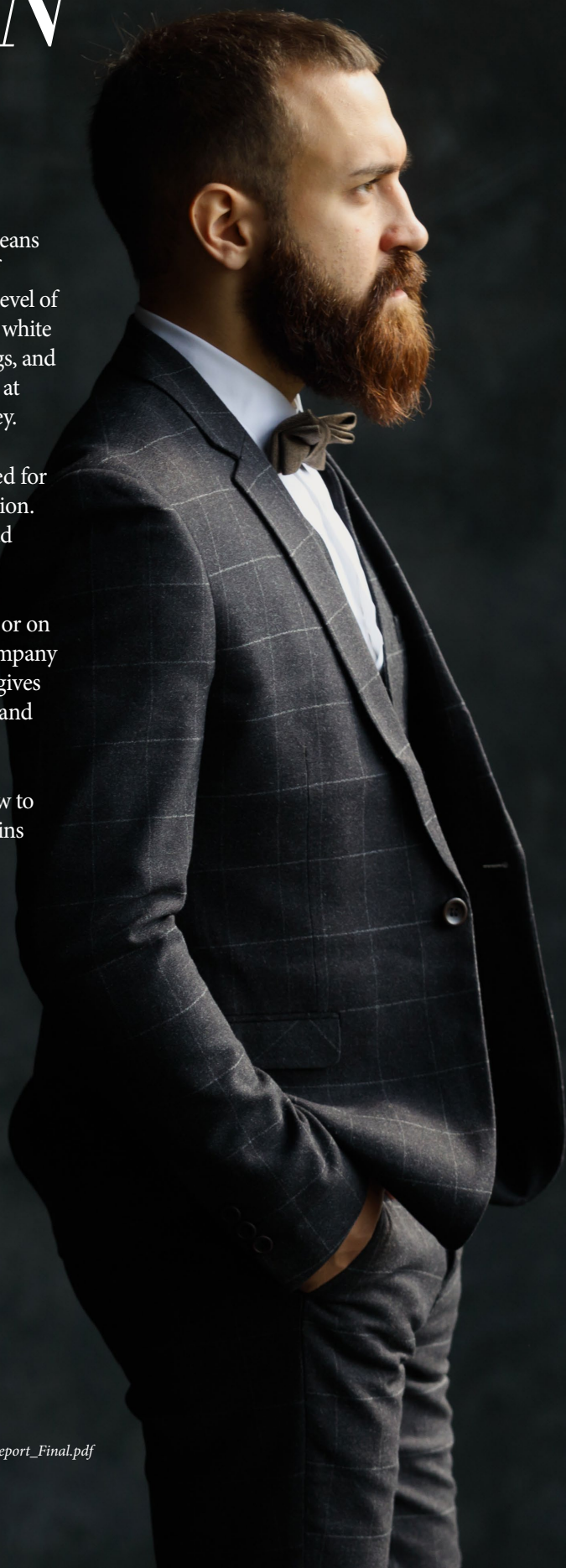
Many companies are underdressed when it comes to content marketing strategy. The 2016 B2B Content Marketing study found that only 30% of companies considered their content marketing to be effective.[1] Only 32% of organizations reported being at a sophisticated or mature level of content marketing.

You Wouldn't Go to a Meeting Naked

Successful content marketing means accumulating a full wardrobe of tactics. Companies with a high level of content marketing maturity use white papers, case studies, videos, blogs, and eBooks to meet customer needs at every point in the buyer's journey.

Content also needs to be tailored for every type of customer interaction. Wherever customers like to read or view content—whether on social sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or YouTube, or on informative websites—your company should have great content that gives them the opportunity to know and like your business.

This eBook shares details on how to create marketing content that wins over customers and keeps them coming back.

1. Content Marketing Institute | http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2016_B2B_Report_Final.pdf

UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

Today's customers demand personalized experiences. If you aren't writing content directed at a specific person, your content will fall flat. When you strive to know all you can about your audience, you build trust and encourage customer loyalty. The Content Marketing Institute found that 41% of companies in North America make understanding their customers a top priority.[2]

Two Ways to Get to Know Your Customer

1. Analytics

   Analytics mine data for insights that can be used to segment consumers. Once you understand groups of consumers, you can customize content for them. Data gathered from past interactions can be analyzed to predict future customer behavior. You learn how customers prefer to interact with your brand so you can design appropriate content for these channels.

2. Personas

   A persona is a fictionalized representation of an ideal customer. When you are developing content, your marketing team should imagine they are trying to speak to this persona.

   Developing personas helps your company target content toward prospects with specific demographics, psychographics, research habits, pain points, and challenges.

Automation makes it easier to run complex marketing campaigns, but it doesn't excuse you from generating content that speaks from the heart. Know and address the persona that represents each segment of your audience. This way you can deliver exceptional customer experiences that are completely individualized.

41% of companies in North America make understanding their customers a top priority.

2. Content Marketing Institute | http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2016/05/content-strategy-practices-2016/

GET THEM HOOKED ON A FEELING

Imagine arriving at a backyard barbecue in a tuxedo. Instead of coming across as approachable and fun, you come across as closed off and stuffy. The same thing happens if your content is too technical. You want your company to be seen as a thought leader, but too much jargon and too many facts and figures will turn your audience off. Using an emotional appeal humanizes your company.

While many companies believe they are good at creating emotionally engaging content, Forrester Research found that almost 40% fail to use customer data to create emotional content. 53% of customers stated that companies don't use emotionally engaging language in their content.[3]

White papers and sell sheets provide valuable information, but blogs, eBooks, and social media posts can be used to harness powerful emotions that readers will connect to and engage with. Choose topics that are near and dear to the audience's interests and needs. Deliver these messages with a voice full of positive and powerful emotions.

Let's Give Them Something to Talk About

Social media is a great way to convey emotion and receive information about customer sentiment. Emotions such as surprise, fear, joy, sadness, anger, or disgust create a connection with the reader. When used appropriately, these emotions can open the door to a new level of lead optimization and conversion.

Strong emotion can make a piece of content go viral on social media. For instance, readers who are inspired to respond to a tweet may retweet as a kind of referral to other potential customers. As the conversation spreads, so does your brand message.

40% of companies fail to use customer data to create emotional content.

3. Persado | http://lp.persado.com/rs/880-EHZ-626/images/Persado_ForresterTLP.pdf

A PICTURE SPEAKS A GIGABYTE OF WORDS

The way we dress influences the first impression we create. Using visual content makes your marketing message more striking and memorable for audiences. People respond more quickly and positively to images than they do to text. Dr. John J. Medina, a molecular biologist specializing in the human brain, found that readers will retain 65% of information when text is supplemented by an image.[4]

Choose images with power and vibrancy that stop viewers in their tracks. After all, you need to capture the audience's attention before it can read your content. Your visual content should be closely related to your written content so it doesn't distract readers from your message.

Photos, graphics, charts, and graphs are great ways to help readers visualize abstract concepts, figures, and statistics. Video is becoming one of the most popular and effective forms of visual content. A Webdam study predicted that by 2018 79% of internet content will include video.[5]

Using Visual Content to Improve SEO

In Content Marketing Institute's Link Building Survey,[6] SEO experts reported that the following types of content generate the most backlinking:

66%
of videos

61%
of infographics

60%
of white papers

4. Brain Rules | http://www.brainrules.net/vision
5. Webdam | https://webdam.com/blog/brand-marketing-infographic
6. Content Marketing Institute | http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2017/11/types-content-links/

USE KILLER HEADLINES

The headline is the king of first impressions. It's the first thing that catches readers' eyes when they are checking their inbox, scanning a blog, or exploring a website. Headlines need to spark the reader's interest. The headline is just as important as the copy itself, so the time invested in writing both should be equivalent.

In some cases, the headline is more important than the copy. The headline may be the only part of a piece of content a customer reads. According to Copyblogger, eight out of 10 people read a headline, but only two out of 10 will read the rest.[7] A headline must be arresting while conveying a lot of meaning using the fewest words possible.

Fashion designer Coco Chanel famously advised women, "Once you've dressed, and before you leave the house, look in the mirror and take at least one thing off."[8] The same less-is-more philosophy holds true for headline writing. To prevent a headline from being cut off in the search engine results list, limit the character count to around 50. Also, make sure to include keywords in the headline for SEO purposes.

Four Questions a Headline Should Answer

When writing a headline, make sure the final product answers these questions:

1. **Why is this valuable?**

2. **What can the reader learn from this?**

3. **Why is this compelling and different?**

4. **Why should the audience read this now?**

7. Copyblogger | https://www.copyblogger.com/magnetic-headlines/
8. Tasteful Words | http://quotations.tastefulwords.com/coco-chanel/

NURTURE TO WIN

Dressing for success isn't about having one great outfit; it's about having an entire wardrobe of outfits for every occasion. The same thing goes for writing great content. Your company needs to design content for every part of the sales funnel.

Content should be part of the lead nurturing process. Lead nurturing keeps your conversation with the prospect going and moves him or her down the sales funnel. Using content tailored for different media channels takes a relationship-building approach to marketing. Emails, white papers, webinars, blogs, sell sheets, and speaking engagements provide opportunities for customers to interact at every stage of the buyer's journey.

When content encourages an ongoing conversation, the chances that a prospect will turn into a sales-qualified lead increase. Marketo found that companies that are skilled at lead nurturing generate 50% more sales-qualified leads at 33% less cost.[9]

## Inventory Your Content Closet

Are there gaps in your content wardrobe? One way to find out is by conducting a content inventory. Map out your buyer's journey and take stock of what content you need to nurture leads during every stage.

If you are lacking awareness-stage content, consider developing an educational white paper or eBook. If your purchase stage is sparse, create content that leads to product demos or free consultations.

During your inventory process, take the opportunity to do some spring cleaning. Maybe some older content needs to be refreshed. Also, take some risks. Try using a tactic that is different from the type a customer is used to receiving.

50%

Companies that are skilled at lead nurturing generated 50% more sales-qualified leads,

33%

at 33% less cost.

9. Marketo | https://www.marketo.com/lead-nurturing/
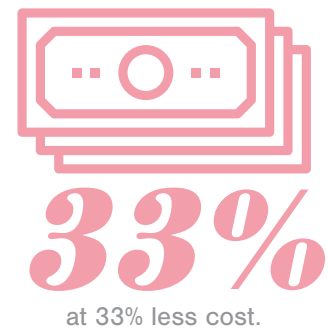
PROSPECTS GO CRAZY FOR A SHARP-DRESSED COMPANY

You can't win over clients while you're dressed in your birthday suit. Instead, your company should come dressed in Armani. Customers will be impressed with your professionalism and thought leadership when they interact with your business through engaging and informative content custom designed for their needs.

For almost 20 years, TSL Marketing has been working with top IT companies across the world to develop winning marketing strategies. Our strategists collaborate with our creative team to produce quality content that attracts customers to your brand. We offer a wide range of marketing tactics that address the needs of customers at every stage in their journey toward conversion.

Get ready to refresh your content marketing wardrobe. TSL Marketing can show you how.

TSL Marketing
plan • develop • manage