

Content Marketing

constant
engagement

Content marketing is hot!

That's what we've been hearing.

But the fact is content marketing has been around for decades, we just didn't have a specific name for it. So, there is a big gap between hype and reality.

This white paper will help you make sense of it all. How to kick off content marketing successfully, strategically and most importantly, how to benefit from it?

First of all, we have to make a clear distinction between a content marketing strategy and a content strategy.

A marketing strategy determines how we will profile ourselves within a market. A content marketing strategy is the inherent part of it that defines how we will use content to improve interaction with our target groups, and how this can help us achieve our goals.

A content strategy, on the other hand, is a lot more practical in nature. It's the actual way of creating, managing and publishing your content. This being said, it's obvious that we need a good content marketing strategy to start with. Research from the Content Marketing Institute shows companies with a well-documented content marketing strategy:

- Know better how to be effective in content marketing
- Feel more confident in all aspects of content marketing
- Can efficiently target groups through content and social media channels
- Have a better view on the budget they spend on content marketing
- Can easily provide resources for content marketing

A good content marketing strategy integrates all content related tactics that we can use to achieve our marketing goals. This includes our owned media such as websites, social media, blogs, landing pages, CTAs, SlideShares and video content. But also earned media such as the viral effect of our content and of course PR.

The role of PR in the content marketing strategy

PR involves any activity, online or offline, designed to improve communication and build relationships with audiences that are important to your business.

Typically the following are included:

- Press contacts
- Blogger and community relations
- Media relations
- Crisis communications
- Internal communications
- Media training

Traditional PR uses clipping services in order to monitor publications and measure their ad equivalence. There is nothing wrong with this approach, but we believe that PR can do a lot more! For instance, it has an undeniable impact on range, website traffic, lead generation and customer loyalty. In other words, PR is one of the channels we will use to distribute and reinforce our content. The better we adjust all channels to one another and integrate them into our general strategy, the more chance we have of success.

An integrated approach

Of course, each project is different and therefore it is difficult to create ready-to-use templates. However, this eight-step model can serve as a guide when taking your first steps creating a content marketing strategy.

1. Define your goals
2. Develop personas
3. Define the customer journey
4. Create a content hub and assemble a content team
5. Define a content strategy
6. Create a content calendar
7. Distribute your content
8. Measure, analyse and improve

1. Define your goals

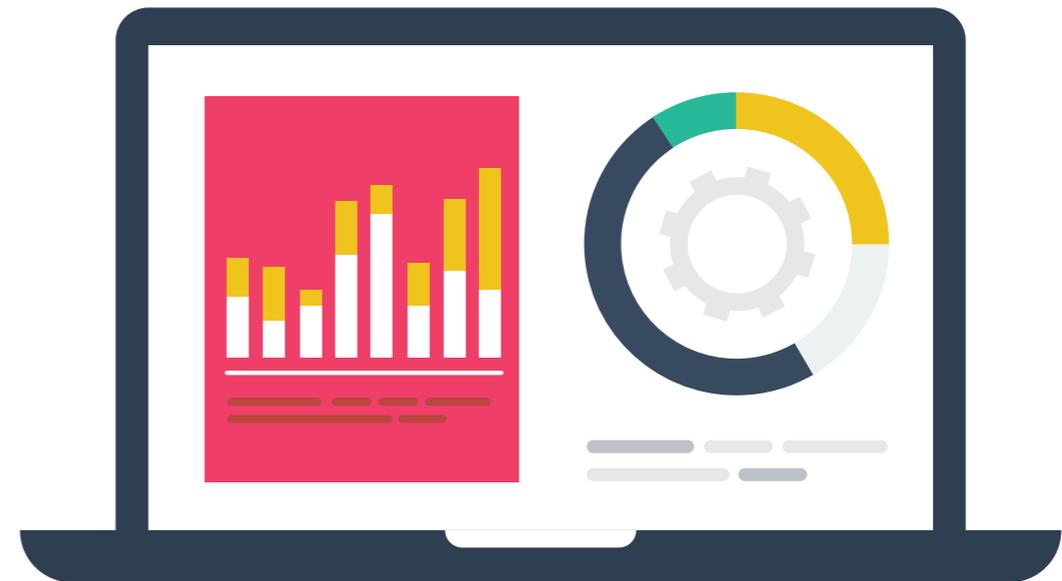
What do we want to achieve by using content marketing?

Unfortunately, this logical question is too often neglected. Yet it is crucial for the further development of your strategy and for the measurability of the execution. Some typical objectives are:

- Increase in brand awareness
- Lead generation
- Lead nurturing
- Customer retention / loyalty
- Thought leadership
- Sales (up-selling & cross-selling)
- Stimulation of engagement

It goes without saying that every goal requires a different approach with adapted channels and timings.

Although this does not mean that there can't be some overlap when working simultaneously towards multiple targets.



2. Develop personas

Really understanding who we are talking to

What are his or her needs?
Why should he or she care about us?
What do we have to offer?

By creating personas we can optimise and personalise our content, and significantly increase our chances of success.

Personas:

- A semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer
- Based on real data and personal experiences
- Where demographic characteristics, behavioural patterns, motivations and objectives are all combined



3. Define the customer journey

What do we communicate? And where and when do we say it?

It mainly depends on the stage of the buying process or the buyer's journey the persona is in. In everyday life, we communicate differently with a stranger than we would with a neighbour, an acquaintance or a friend. The way we address one another, what we do or do not say, and what we are likely to accept from each other. It all depends on how familiar we are. Why should that be different in a business environment?

Awareness stage

- Analyst reports
- Research reports
- e-Books
- Articles
- White papers
- Educational content

The prospect is experiencing or pointing out a problem or opportunity.

Consideration stage

- Case studies
- Best practises
- Webcasts
- Podcasts
- Video content
- Comparative studies

The prospect has clearly identified the problem or opportunity.

Decision stage

- Sales comparisons
- Product comparisons
- Trial download
- Product information
- Conferences

The prospect chooses a strategy, method or approach to solve the problem.

4. Create a content hub and assemble a team

The content needs to be well crafted and relevant for personas

Though most companies have created and gathered a lot of content over the years, they often find it hard to make this content attractive, relevant and interesting for everyone. That is, of course, because it wasn't created for everyone in the first place. Consciously or not, most content is created with a particular persona in mind, even if we hadn't defined that persona yet.

By adjusting your content to a particular persona, you make it much more personal and relevant. Sending the same message at the same time to everyone is terribly outdated in this context and looks a lot like old-fashioned advertising.

Tailor-made content, however, does not always mean we have to start from scratch. It is often a matter of rewriting and remodelling existing content into clear and digestible pieces for each persona. Therefore, it is crucial that we put together a dedicated team of specialists with the required knowledge, skills and authority to create customised content.



5. Define a content strategy

Mapping communication flows

Once we have defined our goals, created personas with customer journeys and put together our content team, we can really get started.

What content should be (re)created for whom, and when and where are we going to distribute it?

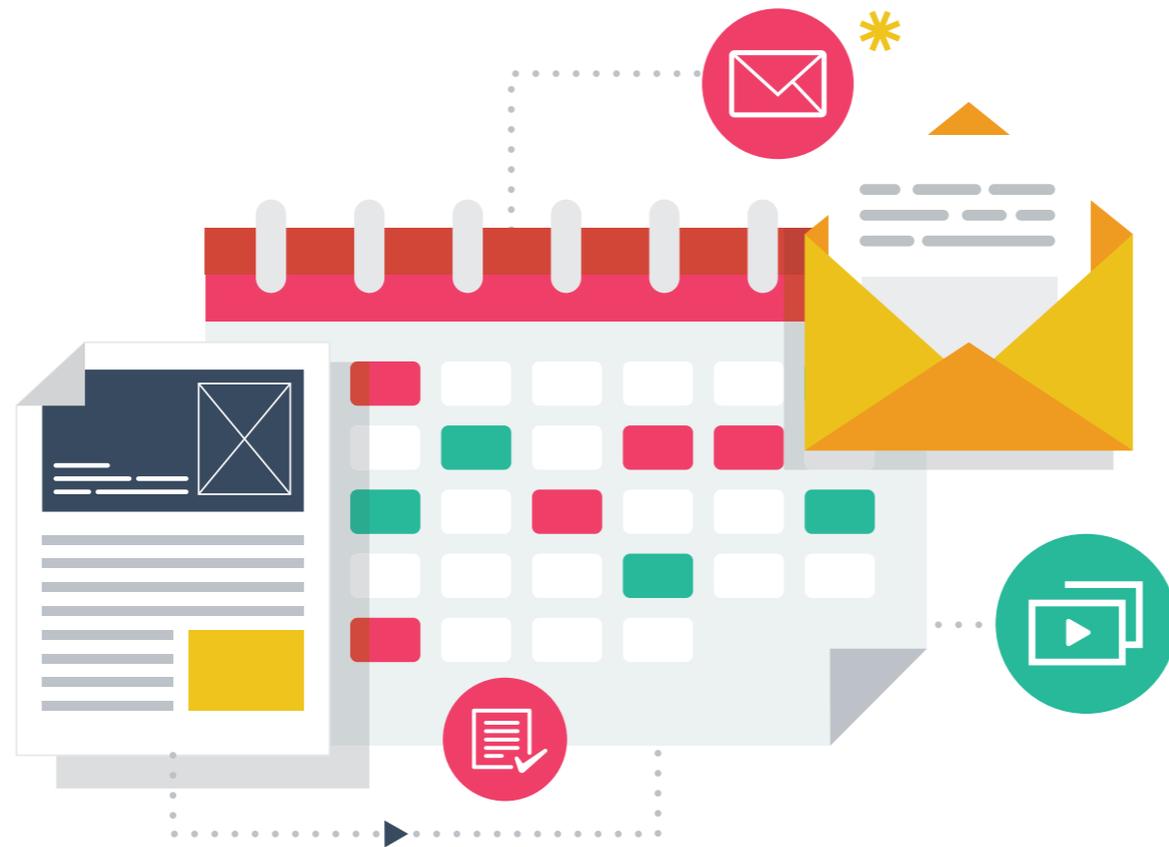
By visualising the various communication flows, we can literally map out our strategy.



6. Create a content calendar

Timing is crucial for a successful content strategy

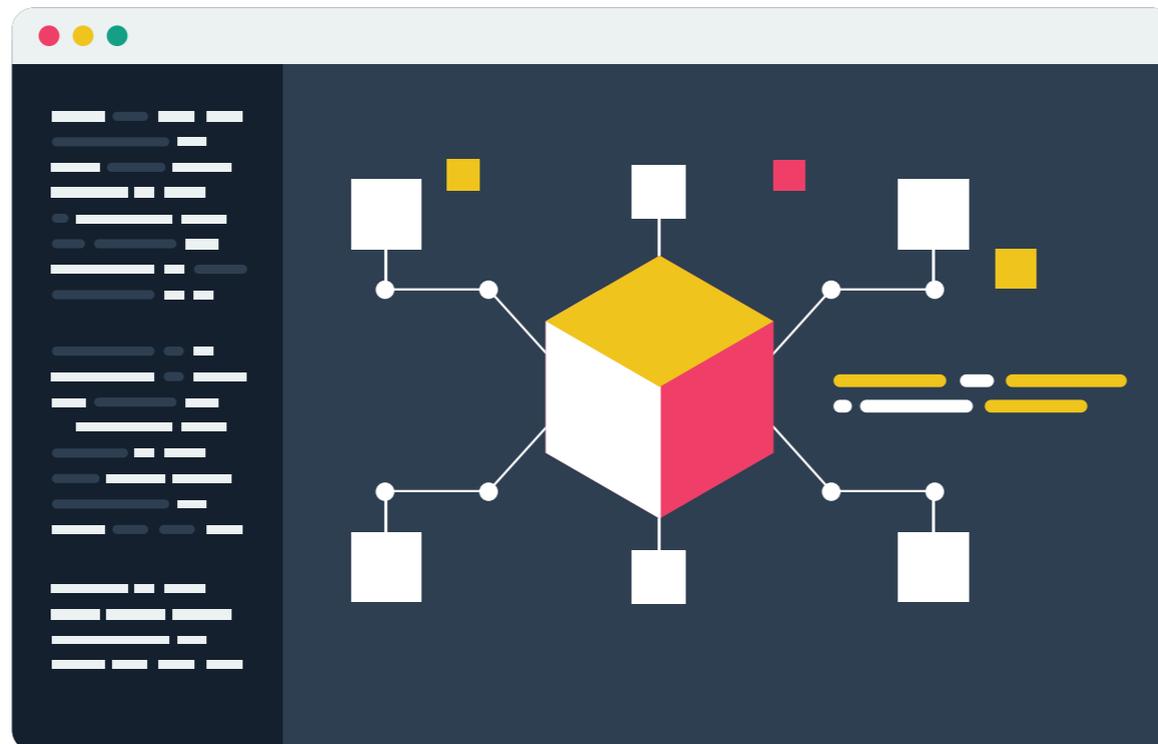
A detailed schedule ensures that all actions are planned and well-coordinated. It is recommended to share this calendar with everyone from sales and marketing, so outbound campaigns or other communication flows can be taken into account. As mentioned earlier, content marketing should be part of your marketing strategy.



7. Distribute your content

Get your mix of channels right

As the range of available channels is increasing every year, you have to make choices. Don't struggle to be everywhere, but consider your personas and buyer's journey. Try to find a good mix of visual and textual channels and make sure that your content can be easily shared. The "virtual potential" of your content will strongly influence its distribution and will have a beneficial effect on your SEO.



8. Measure, analyse and improve

If you don't measure, you can't improve

The main advantage of (digital) content is, of course, its measurability. Instead of vague assumptions or dubious estimations about the audience, you receive clear, precise data with KPIs you can determine yourself.

In that way, you can measure and know at all times which content, times and channels are the most effective. So you don't need to wait until your campaign is over (and your money runs out) to make adjustments. Obviously, good measurement instruments and clear reporting are a must. Also keep in mind that it requires the necessary software and man-hours.



Why stop here?

Let's go back to step 1: defining your goals. Lead generation and nurturing can be an explicit goal, but it can also be an implicit part of your strategy. After all, content marketing is the basis of every inbound strategy and therefore perfect for collecting data and generating leads.

The next logical step is to convert these leads into customers, which can be facilitated by modern techniques, such as marketing automation. It would be a shame if the effort you put in creating good content was not rewarded with leads and satisfied colleagues from the sales department.

Customer experience: Down with the silos!

Most companies have different departments: sales, marketing, customer service, IT and finance. All of these departments. All these departments often operate like silos, independently, using other software platforms and communicating separately to the market. From their point of view it seems perfectly normal, but the customer knows only one brand or product. For them, it doesn't matter if they're approached by sales, marketing or customer services. Non-matching, overlapping or even conflicting information from the same company will be experienced as odd, disturbing or confusing.

Therefore, we are increasingly using a CX (customer experience) approach, transcending the marketing level. When mapping content from a CX approach, we will automatically tune and harmonise the content that is typical for marketing, sales and customer service. Furthermore, we will also reduce the silo-thinking pattern and work towards shared goals using shared platforms. It goes without saying that this increases efficiency and results in a better ROI.

Talent is the key ingredient

As mentioned before, this white paper is intended primarily as a guide. Nevertheless, every theoretical approach, no matter how accurate and detailed, is and remains subordinate to the quality of the execution. Every minute, more than 33 million messages, photos and videos are posted on social media. So it's important that your content really stands out. Make sure to adopt copywriters, bloggers, designers and creative talent in your team who can lift your content to a higher level.



What is BBN?

The world's most talented and experienced B2B marketing professionals, united by a single proposition.

The bold new generation of B2B agency.

BBN is a collaborative agency-owned organisation, with every agency-partner an equity shareholder – all sharing the same genuine passion for B2B. Our collective knowledge and understanding of communications in the sector is almost impossible to match.

Working together, our combined advantage means we significantly influence what can be achieved when a business talks to another business. We're proud to stand for full service capability; spanning strategy, creativity, technology and implementation. It's not just brilliant, but also surprising.

The BBN attraction

BBN is a vibrant organisation, bursting with energy and enthusiasm for what we do. We're driven by a passion for developing and sharing industry-leading processes, systems and intellectual property for the greater good. Our dynamic entrepreneurial spirit is infectious and inherent.

Our core strength lies in our highly structured approach, underpinned by focused management. We are a model for all organisations in the alignment of large numbers of people working across five continents.

We collaborate daily in real time across multiple territories to support our clients in every discipline. Our global service matrix model ensures that our clients have access to the exact skills, services, industry expertise and geographic footprint that they need, where and when they need it.

But it's not just collaboration and focus that makes us stand out. We constantly innovate, and have created the world's only truly integrated B2B marketing toolkit, called BBN Navigator. Navigator defines best practice B2B marketing methodologies, processes and tools and, enabled by our international learning and development program, it has been adopted in all agency locations.

"When we had to launch our brand communication campaign across four different countries, having access to a communication agency network was a must. BBN partners provide very professional support in terms of coordination and consistency."

**- Etienne Bouquet,
General Manager, Dow Seeds Europe**

The benefits of BBN

The BBN benefit is that clients get the best of both worlds. This means revelling in the creativity and personal attention of dealing with a locally based agency, while being backed by the might of a large, international organisation. This intriguing combination delivers campaigns through the extensive reach of an international framework, coupled with the creative and entrepreneurial flair of independent agencies, enabling worldwide marketing strategies to be rolled out efficiently and effectively.

- BBN has 20 agency partners
- BBN spans 29 countries, worldwide
- 1,130 people strong, and growing
- #1 in the global B2B agency league table 2016-2017, revenues \$130million
- In the last 2 years, BBN partners have won 160 industry awards

BBNs future's bright

The hard work developing our IP and sharing best practice are laid down in BBN's best practice guidelines which maintains a firm level of high quality standards.

Never content to stand still, we are actively building on our strong foundation and boldly moving forward. Having just completed the most successful year in our 30 year history, we're embarking upon further expansion in 2017, while maintaining our robust position.

To ensure we continue to successfully implement new international client projects across multiple territories, our ambitious future plans include expansion into other key global locations, giving us more scope, with the integration of more agencies, to help more clients. So, our vision to be 'the world's B2B agency' by creating the next generation of B2B is a challenging one, but we have the strategy and the plan, but most of all we have the people to realise it.

The power of engagement and collaboration

BBN is a collaborative agency-owned organisation, with every agency an equity partner – all sharing the same genuine passion for B2B. Our combined knowledge and understanding of communications in the sector is almost impossible to match.

[cylindr](#) is the Denmark-based office of BBN. We are content marketing specialists, strategists and copywriters. We love getting geeky, writing and creating content about all the technical details, yet we recognise that making meaningful, trusted connections with people comes first.



Need some geeks to help with your content marketing needs? Have a chat with Jonathan Winch today!

[Connect with Mr. Content \(Jonathan\)](#)



cylindr

part of



THE WORLD'S B2B AGENCY

For more information contact:

Jonathan Winch

Corporate storyteller and marketing strategist

E-mail: jonathan@cylindr.com

Tel: 0045 26 23 51 23

<https://cylindr.com>