

MINI-WHITEPAPER:

What is Content Marketing & Why Do Technology Companies Need It?



**IN THIS MINI-WHITEPAPER,
WE'LL ANSWER:**

What is content marketing?

How does content marketing differ from other marketing methods?

What are the benefits of content marketing?

What does content marketing look like across the Buyer's Journey?

Why is content marketing beneficial for technology companies?

Executive Summary

Content marketing is more than a fleeting marketing trend. It's a proven methodology that eschews standard outreach tactics to bring qualified leads straight to you. Content marketing is an inbound marketing approach, similar to social media marketing and search engine optimization, that attracts leads through content and interactions that are relevant and helpful — not interruptive.

For B2B technology companies specifically, the sales-cycle is more competitive than ever, so persona-driven content marketing, also known as “content for all,” is a proven way to influence decision makers along their purchase paths.

What is content marketing?

More than a buzzword and much greater than a trend, content marketing uses web analytics and keyword-rich content to target, attract and nurture prospects throughout the purchase cycle. This dynamic method has moved to the forefront of effective marketing tactics in recent years – but why?

In large part, its success can be attributed to consumers themselves, who have become increasingly savvy about opting out of the advertisements they would rather not see online. In fact, approximately 200 million people worldwide have installed ad-blocking software as of August 2015.¹ To get around this issue, marketers sought a new way to reach their audiences.

Rapidly popularized, content marketing has taken on several definitions. Our favorite is attributed to HubSpot: “Content marketing is a program that centers on creating, publishing, and distributing content for your target audience, usually online, the goal of which is to attract new customers.”

Here are some common content marketing planning, execution and message amplification strategies:

Planning & Targeting Tools	Content Marketing Samples	Amplification Techniques
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Web Analytics Platforms• Search Engine Optimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blogs• Visual Content <p>Premium Assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• eBooks• Whitepapers• Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Media• Blogs• Landing Pages• Email Marketing• Marketing Automation

How does content marketing differ from other marketing tactics?

Traditional, outbound marketing includes tactics such as advertising, public relations, event marketing and direct marketing. Traditional tactics hold power and significant ROI when properly targeted and professionally executed.

Content marketing, on the other hand, enables you to attract prospects without time-consuming or intrusive efforts. This is accomplished by creating content specific to where an individual is within their Buyer Journey.

The diagram below demonstrates the three stages of the Buyer's Journey, outlines the ultimate goal for each stage and lists examples of the types of content you should provide at each.

TIP

Unlike traditional marketing methods, content marketing enables you to attract prospects without intrusive efforts.

Goals & Needs of the Buyer's Journey

STAGE	AWARENESS	CONSIDERATION	DECISION
Marketing Goal	Help persona recognize need(s)	Help persona compare, differentiate & reduce risks	Help reinforce persona's final decision
Content Needs	Neutral challenges & issues blogs Educational downloads on industry trends	Products & services comparison guides Detailed pricing & options sell sheets Testimonials & case studies	Free consultations & limited time offers Demonstrations & "what to expect" tip sheets Savings & guarantee(s) information

What are the benefits of content marketing?

The content marketing methodology directly contributes to the achievement of your marketing objectives. It's become a highly effective marketing method for increasing market awareness and lead generation. Quality content attracts interested prospects to your website where you can convert them into customers. As you continue to create relevant content that generates leads, you'll also be supplying current customers with catered content that keeps them interested in your business.

Other advantages of content marketing include:

TIP

Quality content not only helps generate leads, but also reminds current customers why your services and products are necessary.

INCREASED ORGANIC SEARCH ENGINE RANKINGS

Optimized content produced regularly will improve your search engine results page rankings, helping you get discovered quickly on the web.

MEASURABLE RESULTS & ROI

Content marketing is measurable – it lets you easily see who has downloaded certain pieces and based on popularity and conversions, you can focus on what works.

REAL COST SAVINGS

The cost of content marketing is estimated to be 62% less expensive than traditional marketing. Invest your time and energy in a tactic that saves you money along the way.

What does content marketing look like across the Buyer's Journey?

95% of B2B technology marketers use content marketing and 75% of those marketers developed more content in 2016 than in the previous year.²

The Goals & Needs of the Buyer's Journey chart indicated that the standard Buyer's Journey is comprised of three main stages: Awareness, Consideration and Decision. But because different industries face unique challenges, the purchasing path can differ slightly across sectors.

According to Forrester, a leader in market research and analysis, the purchasing path for the technology industry consists of six steps:

TIP

In steps three and six, purchasers seek information to educate themselves and solidify decisions.

Offering this information directly on your website will ensure you make their short list.

PRE-PURCHASE

- 1 Identify Needs (Awareness)
- 2 Specifications & Funding (Consideration)
- 3 Vendor Selection (Decision)

POST-PURCHASE

- 4 Implementation
- 5 Management
- 6 Renewal

Why is content marketing beneficial for technology companies?

Content marketing is particularly effective for B2B tech companies because more than any other industry, technology is constantly evolving as new advancements are made. This means purchasers of B2B technology services and products need content; they will search for detailed overviews of competing products and services and base decisions off of the content they find.

Here are the top three reasons why content marketing is particularly effective for B2B technology companies:

TIP

Due to the complex and dynamic nature of B2B tech products and services, consumers actually require digestible content to influence their purchase decisions.

TECHNOLOGY MOVES FAST

It's important to demonstrate the capabilities of products and services through digestible content such as infographics, software demos and tip sheets that show how your business fits into the marketplace.

CUTTING-EDGE MEANS MARKETING

Simply having a great product or service is not enough today. You need to prove to your buyers that your company sets marketplace trends and the only way to do that is through smart marketing that positions your business at the consumer's level.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IS NOT YOUR ONLY TARGET

It's natural to have more than one buyer persona for a product or service. For technology companies, decision makers will exist outside of the IT department and will need a comprehensive view of your technology: how it works and why it's worth the investment.

Conclusion

Some believe content marketing should replace all traditional marketing and public relations tactics. But to truly get the most out of content marketing and the premium assets you develop, it's important to use a combination of both traditional and modern marketing tactics.

To start achieving the ROI that comes with a streamlined, process-driven content marketing strategy, consider the goals of your leads at each stage of the sales cycle. Once your content is developed, carefully select key distribution channels and maintain a presence through continued promotion. Be sure to integrate this strategy with your existing marketing efforts to achieve maximum consistency, efficiency and ROI.

**For more information
or help getting started,
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References:

1 Content Marketing Institute, Why is Content Marketing Today's Marketing?
10 Stats That Prove It

2 Content Marketing Institute, 2016 B2B Technology Content Marketing Report