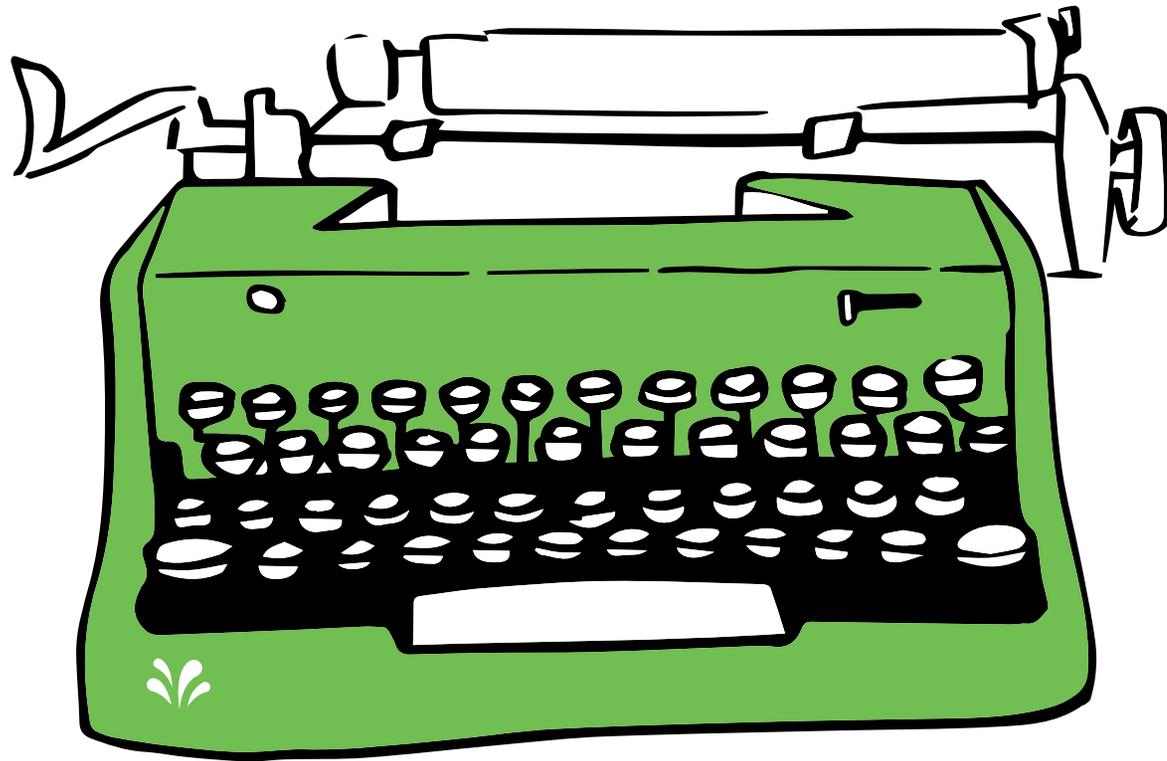


# THE CONTENT MARKETER'S GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA



WHITEPAPER OCTOBER 2014

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# INTRODUCTION

Bill Gates totally called it.

Almost two decades ago, Gates wrote three famous words that have since then ruled the world of marketing: "[Content Is King.](#)" Whether you agree with him – maybe content is queen instead – content has reigned supreme ever since. And for a good reason.

Content is the cornerstone of the consumer-brand relationship, especially in the digital age. If you're a consumer, it's often the first impression you have of companies. Think of all the times you've seen a tweet about a particular brand, the daily emails you receive from your favorite stores, or the promoted posts you scroll through on your Facebook feed. If you're a brand, it's vital to creating positive experiences for your customers.

No debate here: content is a big deal. But there's a big problem happening with content these days – the problem of saturation.

**Every single minute, there are...**

[1.3M](#) pieces of content shared on Facebook

[350K](#) new tweets

[100 hrs](#) of videos uploaded to YouTube

41K photos posted to [Instagram](#)

[14 gigabytes](#) of data generated on Pinterest

The saturation of the social media space can be an inconvenience for consumers, making it difficult to know what posts to focus on and from whom. But for brands, it signals trouble ahead. It means that your content will most likely get lost in the noise – rendering all the time effort and money you spent creating that content irrelevant.

So what can content marketers do to overcome social media saturation? They need to find ways to stand out from the crowd. They need to produce the right content and get it to the right consumers, in order to drive them to the right actions. Easier said than done, right? Well that's why this whitepaper exists.

This is the guide to winning at content marketing. Here's what it'll show you:

- The biggest hurdle facing content marketers today
- How to use insights from social conversations to create content that's valuable
- How to deliver compelling content to your readers
- Best practices from experts at Content Marketing Institute, Groupon, R/GA, LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, The Clorox Company, and more.

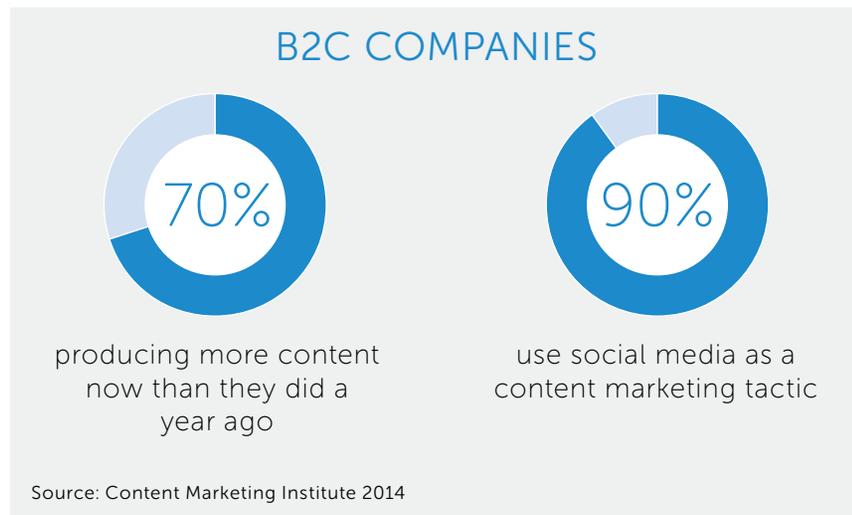
## PROBLEMS WITH YOUR CONTENT

There's a lot of content out there and more is being created every day. [Nearly 70%](#) of B2C companies are producing more content now than they did a year ago. In addition to blogs, emails, newsletters, and traditional content marketing methods, companies are also pumping out a lot on social.

In fact, social media is the by far the most widely used content marketing tactic and is used by over 90% of B2C companies.

Content production evidently has nowhere to go but up, as 60% of marketers plan on increasing their budget over the next 12 months.

But more isn't always better, especially if you're a brand.



### MO' CONTENT, MO' PROBLEMS

You've probably noticed that it's becoming increasingly difficult to make your brand's content stand out from the crowd. Consumers only have so much time (and brain capacity) to consume content – and when there's so much stuff out there, most of it will get lost in the noise.

The race for consumer attention is highly competitive and there are a lot of losers.

Why such fierce competition? Because brands are not only competing against other brands, they're also competing with users. Every time someone opens up their Facebook, there are [1,500](#) to 15,000 stories waiting for them. Facebook altered its algorithms earlier this year to show users only about 300 of these potential suitors – promising to only surface content relevant to the individual users. The move left many brands in the dark, literally, as their [organic reach](#) took a nose dive simultaneously.

But Facebook isn't the only platform changing. Similar issues for brands are popping up on Twitter. The social network's real-time, show-everything approach is proving to be rather unsustainable as users share more and more stories. There are 6,000 new tweets every single second – thousands of tweets published in less time than it takes you to blink. Taking a page from Facebook, Twitter is considering implementing its own [filters](#) to prioritize relevance. Emerging networks like Instagram and Pinterest are expected to reach the boiling point, as well.

It's no surprise then that marketers have so little confidence in their content marketing tactics. While social media is used by nearly 93% of marketers, only [58%](#) think social media content is effective...

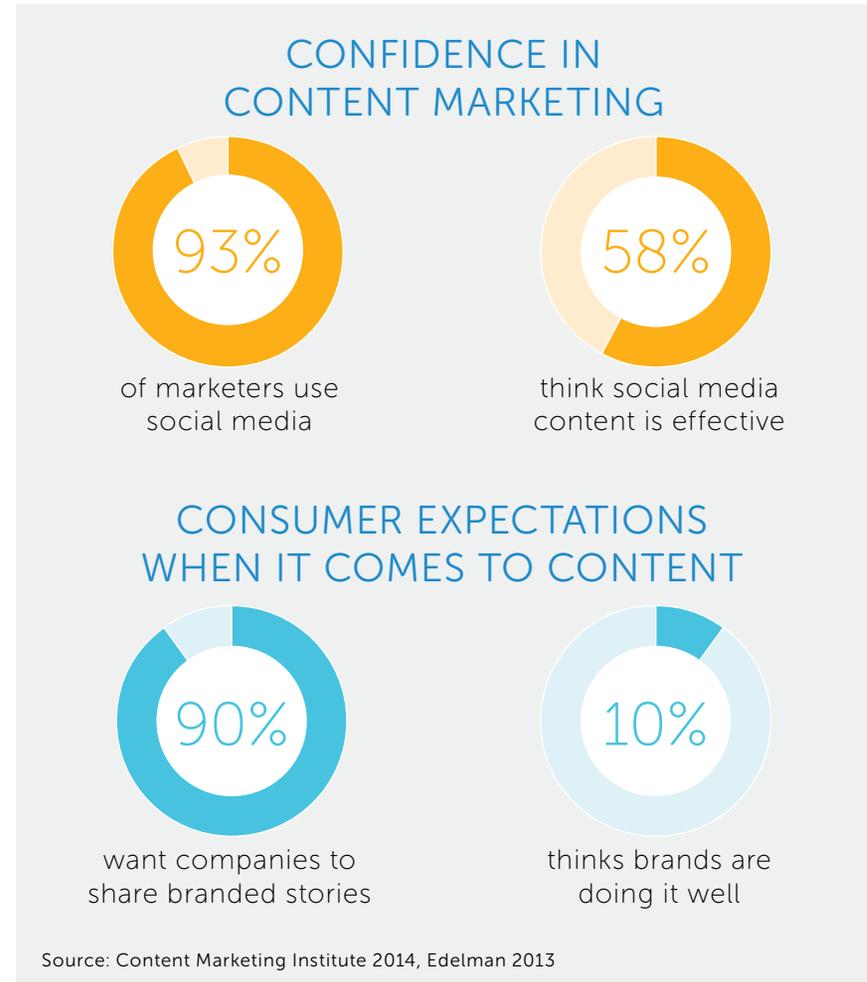
## SO MUCH CONTENT... BUT MOST OF IT IS IRRELEVANT

You can blame it on the numbers – too much out there for your content to shine – and you'd be right. You can blame it on the different networks – they're actively tweaking their secret sauce to undermine you – and you could be right. Or you can accept that the problem also lies within you.

A recent [study](#) of 10,000 consumers across eight countries by Edelman revealed that the latter is much more of a problem than many brands may realize. While more than 90% of those surveyed want companies to share branded stories, only 10% of those surveyed think brands are doing this well.

There's a big discrepancy in what consumers want to hear from brands and what they're actually getting.

**It's time to revise your content strategy.**



Outstanding content is relevant to your brand and audience's interests. It's practical, fresh, and visually appealing.

**ERICK DICKENS, KING'S HAWAIIAN**  
[see page 15](#)

## 5 STEPS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT STAND OUT

Many brands are struggling with content. We know this. So, how to address the issue? It's simple: you create the stories that people want to read, then put it in front of them.

Here are five steps you should follow when producing and promoting branded content.

### 01. IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

The first thing you need to do is identify your audience. Think of your favorite magazines. Each publication has a specific audience, no matter how niche, and their articles target these people specifically. Your content should do the same.

So how do you know who your audience members are? Start by thinking of the people that normally interact with your brand – your core customers. Then think of the people who consume your brand's content online. They might be one and the same. But sometimes, they're not. Your content should cater to both segments, so that you're not leaving anyone out.

A lot of information about your online audience can be extracted from publicly available social data.

This is where "profiling" – a social media software platform capability that allows you to categorize individuals – comes in handy. It gives you insights into your online communities that would be difficult to attain otherwise. For example, if you set up profile tags based on a person's relationship to the brand (customer, future customer, influencer, etc.), you can then pull reports based on these categories. Who's talking about your brand on a regular basis? It might not always be your existing customers.

The more time you take to create your custom categories, the more acutely you can listen to the voice of your customers. Which age group interacts with your brand most on social? In which geographic areas do most of your customers reside? It might not be necessary to know all the granular details about your audience members. But profiling helps you paint a picture of your different audience groups – which will be invaluable as you create content.



Stop with the content campaigns and tell consistent stories that evolve over time.

**JOE PULIZZI, CONTENT MARKETING INSTITUTE**  
[see page 19](#)

## 02. DETERMINE THE NEEDS OF YOUR AUDIENCE

Once you figure out who your audience members are on social, you should then figure out what their needs and interests are.

There are a number of ways to identify these problems – customer polls, random surveys, cold calling households. These are pretty high involvement though. Not to mention, no one likes a cold call during dinnertime.

An easier solution is to leverage the numerous social conversations around you. You can look for terms relevant to your brand through a key term search on the native networks, or by using listening technology.

By using social listening, for example, to search for web conversations about “wedding dresses” that contain negative terms, you’ll have insights into what issues brides encounter when looking for the perfect frock. And if that listening software is connected to your engagement platform, you can then route this specific search into a monitoring queue and keep track of conversation trends – maybe even reach out to influential conversation drivers and invite them to provide additional feedback.

This is just one example of using social data to drive customer insights. However you choose to identify and cultivate social conversations doesn’t matter. The main point is that as a content marketer, you need to tap into social conversations in order to create content that resonates with your online reader.



Brands need to take a step back and document their content marketing objectives... too often brands fail simply because they don't document [their] goals.

**MICHAEL BRENNER, NEWSURED**  
[see page 23](#)

## 03. USE THE RIGHT PACKAGING TO DELIVER CONTENT

Each social platform has it's own vernacular, style, and core users. The way to speak to your audience members on Twitter will differ very much from the way you speak to them on LinkedIn. Knowing how to package your content for different social networks will mostly involve testing (and re-testing!) – tactics that develop over time.

Some of it, however, will follow general guidelines... a few of which we've put together for your convenience.

## TWITTER



### SECRET SAUCE

TWITTER OWNS  
LIVE EVENTS  
& REAL-TIME  
MARKETING

2014 WORLD CUP

672  
million  
tweets



## CONTENT

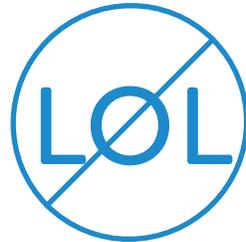
60/20/20 RULE:

60 / 20 / 20  
engagement / audience / yourself

60 is engagement, 20 about what your audience cares about, 20 about yourself.

140 characters

but stick to 120 to give people room for RT w/out modifying the 'meat' of your message



abbreviations and shorthand is okay, due to character limit, but no text talk.

HASHTAG  
VS. NONE

when in doubt, avoid.

use them only if they're part of the natural conversation (use sites like [hashtags.org](http://hashtags.org), [topsy.com](http://topsy.com) or [tagdef.com](http://tagdef.com) to help)

## VISUALS

Duh.

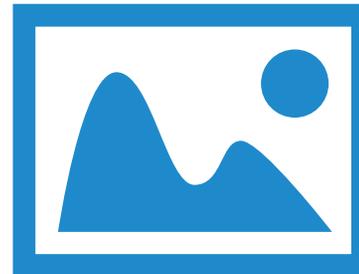
VISUALS ARE PROCESSED

60,000x

FASTER THAN TEXT

(SOME DEBATE, BUT IT'S A GOOD INDICATION OF EFFECTIVENESS)

USE IMAGES TO SUPPORT TWEETS



SOMETHING  
INTERESTING &  
INFORMATIONAL

## FACEBOOK



### SECRET SAUCE

GREAT SPACE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
BRANDS

81% of daily  
active users

are outside  
the US and Canada

### CONTENT

CTAS ARE GOOD, BUT BE CAREFUL



Facebook will punish you for saying things like:

"like us"  
"share this post"  
"comment here"

CTA CAN JUST BE A QUESTION:

10-20%

MORE ENGAGEMENT



100-199 characters

unlimited space on facebook: yes.  
unlimited attention span: no.

HASHTAG  
VS. NONE

use sparingly

more interaction  
with hashtags,  
but use sparingly.

(1-2 GETS MORE ENGAGEMENT THAN 3-4)

KEEP MOBILE IN MIND

1.07  
mobile MAUs



### VISUALS



Duh.

photos receive

2x more engagement  
than text

### VIDEOS



EVEN MORE

DUH.

shared

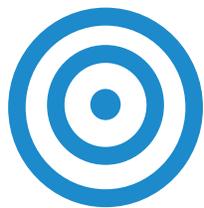
12x more often  
than texts and links

## LINKEDIN



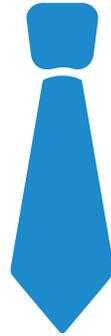
### SECRET SAUCE

LOTS OF TARGETING  
OPTIONS FOR  
ADVERTISERS



industry,  
location,  
functions,  
seniority,  
titles, etc.

### CONTENT

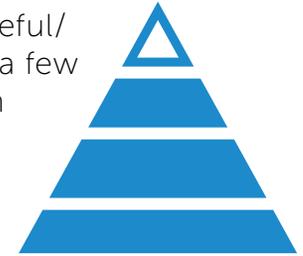


AUDIENCES ARE  
PROFESSIONALS

they want content that  
helps them be more  
successful & productive

LIKE THE FOOD PYRAMID!

keep it mostly useful/  
educational, but a few  
treats in between



90-140 characters

CTAs have

2x the engagement  
when you include links

### VISUALS



photos receive

2x more engagement  
than text

### VIDEOS

GO WITH VIMEO OR YOUTUBE



they play directly in the feed and have

75% higher  
share rate

## 04. IDENTIFY YOUR TOP PERFORMING CONTENT

If you've been diligently tagging all messages in your social media management platform – which you should absolutely be doing \*side eye\* – pulling reports to see what content performs best will be a breeze. Seriously, it can be as simple as going to your reporting dashboards and clicking on “top campaigns by engagement” or “CTR by content type.”

The performance of your published content is a good indication of what your audience craves most. Is an expensive video really worth it for your brand? Maybe yes... or maybe the spike in engagement doesn't outweigh the costs.

Reporting allows you to know not only what content topics perform best, but also what social messaging pairs well with a particular campaign, which social networks you should concentrate your efforts and when you should be posting. This way, you know exactly what, when and how your audience members like their content.



Brands struggle with social media because they are using it to amplify and distribute all of their content and tell every story on every channel. This approach dilutes their message.

**MICHAEL BRITO, WCG**  
[see page 25](#)

## 05. AMPLIFY YOUR TOP PERFORMERS

Once you identify your best performing content, it's time to put some paid behind it.

Paid is expensive. We know. But so is content creation. Videos take weeks to turn around and even a simple blog post takes days to finesse, so it's already costing you. It doesn't make sense not to get more miles of your content, especially if you know the audience desires it.

So how do you know which of your content pieces to amplify? Reporting will show you where to put your dollars by showing you which campaigns perform better in terms of reach, clicks or engagement. You can even boost a specific message if it has an abnormally high engagement rate.

Content can be amplified manually – using reporting to see how content performs, then using the social networks' native ad tools in order to amplify. You can also automate the process. If your social media management platform offers both reporting and paid, you can set up rules to automatically boost posts if they hit a certain level of engagement.

However you choose to execute paid, it will be especially necessary as major social networks transform into ad platforms.

## CONCLUSION

There's a positive correlation in sharing brand stories and consumer intent. If you show customers that you're listening, that you care about their problems, that you want to provide positive brand experiences for them at every touchpoint... they'll be much more likely to trust you. They'll be likely to do business with you. This trust can be established through content – as long as it's the right content delivered in the right way.



If there's one thing I've learned in the world of content marketing, it's that audiences love a brand with a sense of humor.

**JASON MILLER, LINKEDIN MARKETING SOLUTIONS**  
[see page 17](#)

**DISCLAIMER:** These are only our recommendations. You do not have take our word for it. Actually, you should probably consult a few content marketing experts to see what's really best. Coincidentally... a few of these experts did volunteer their best practices, insights and predictions for this publication.

Turn to the next page to see advice from 10 leading content marketers.



**DAVID KELLIS**  
[@flacks76](#)

David Kellis is Director of PR & Social Media for **The Clorox Company**. He has more than 20 years of public relations experience and created the Social Media department at Clorox. His focus is on building out Clorox's Social Media capability including developing methodologies for creating Social campaigns that can be measured by business results. Sometimes that actually happens.

## CREATING COMPELLING CONTENT SHOULD ALWAYS COME FIRST

The industry is abuzz about the implications of the social media industry moving to being more of a paid platform. And it's true that most of the major channels have made that move already to become advertising-focused. As new channels emerge and gain traction, there will be opportunities for organic content, but eventually they too will follow the path of more mature businesses to become advertising-based platforms.

But similar to traditional and digital media, there will always be a role for organic/earned content that is compelling, relevant and provides utility. Great content comes first. If we, as marketers, do this well and understand the intricacies of how to use each channel - what type of content works best and where - our content will be valuable.

### HOW CONTENT IS CREATED AT CLOROX

At Clorox, the PR/Social/Content department produces content for paid social, as well as earned. We may not have the scale we once had organically, but we're making up for it by using paid to amplify our reach. We achieve this by working with our media team to help plan and buy social media with the same principles by which all other media is purchased. Though because social media is a real-time environment, we have set aside money for real-time opportunistic paid social media as topics arise that could be relevant to our products or campaigns. We've had a fair amount of success with this.

And in addition to increasing our reach through paid social media, we tap into influencers and consumers who are our loyalists (Facebook fans, Twitter followers, Instagram followers and CRM database) to share information via their social networks. Essentially turning loyalists into advocates and leveraging their organic reach. Finally, we use social media for listening. It's been said that social media is the world's largest focus group (I think it was Mark Twain?) – social conversations are basically pockets of consumer insights waiting to be used. And so, we need to sift through the unstructured data in social to glean insights that will help us be smarter marketers – creating more relevant, useful, and targeted content. Then we rinse and repeat.



The channels may change,  
but you should continue  
to create compelling  
content that resonates with  
consumers.

### My Advice to All Marketers?

1. The channels may change, but you should continue to create compelling content that resonates with consumers. Approach the creative from the standpoint of the role of your product in their life.
2. Determine the social media channels that are a priority for your brand and the unique role of each channel, so you can develop discreet content for those channels. Creative that works on Twitter, typically doesn't work on Facebook or Pinterest.
3. As you create organic social content, ensure it passes the test, "would I put paid media behind this post, tweet or pin?" If the answer is no, maybe you shouldn't be doing it. After years of "quantity over quality" because of the way the Facebook algorithm worked and how Twitter was used, the approach now should be "quality first." There is no benefit (only downside) to over-posting "push messages" that aren't meaningful or engaging.

QUALITY

— over —

quantity quantity quantity quantity  
quantity quantity quantity quantity  
quantity quantity quantity quantity  
quantity quantity quantity quantity



**ERICK DICKENS**  
[@ErickDickens](#)

Erick Dickens, the Vice President of Marketing at **King's Hawaiian**, is a consumer marketing and general management professional with over 17 years of experience leading teams and driving growth.

# HOW TO DEVELOP & DELIVER OUTSTANDING BRAND CONTENT

At King's Hawaiian, content is a vital part of our larger marketing strategy. We have developed a number of guidelines and habits that have worked for us... a few of which I'll share with you.

## WHEN DEVELOPING CONTENT

Outstanding content is relevant to your brand and your audience's interests. It's practical, fresh and visually appealing. To make sure that we create outstanding content, we follow these guidelines:

### 1. Find the right balance

We strike a balance between branded and non-branded content to keep our audience engaged. But when creating non-branded content, we still find ways to connect back to the brand and the audience – ex. we use branded templates on content that pushes beyond our core messaging.

### 2. Keep it short and sweet

We use brief, digestible posts that are easy for people to consume quickly and interact with. The shorter the copy, the better – as long as you are getting your point across. It's important to be clear and to the point in your call to action. Don't be afraid to ask your fans to do what you want them to do.

### 3. Listen closely

We use social media as a platform to gain consumer insights and engage our loyal fans. This means using the language our consumers use to be more relevant. We also leverage brand insight reports to drive content topics and to find even more relevant ways to connect with our consumers.

### 4. Never stop learning

We're always testing, learning and adapting – using data to determine what works. We use meta tags to track content and assess what performs best. We also conduct A/B testing to see what content performs best and then shift ad dollars behind better performing content.

• • •  
We're always testing,  
learning and adapting –  
using data to determine  
what works.

## WHEN DELIVERING CONTENT

Creating content is only half the battle, which is why we put just as much thought into how we deliver content.

We want to stay top of mind with consumers, posting often but not so often that we exhaust our audience. When (time/date) you post is just as important as what you post – you want your content to be seen by the maximum number of people possible. This includes taking their time zones into account. As a rule, we have found that our fans are most active and engaging around 5pm PST.

When opportunities outside of your regular content schedule present themselves, be prepared with a response plan that allows you to be flexible and adaptable, and be able to take advantage of these real-time opportunities quickly. But only engage when the real-time event is relevant and natural for the brand.

## WHEN ASSESSING VALUE

When establishing social objectives, it is important that they ladder up to your overall brand objectives so that everything is working together to achieve your brand goals. Keeping your social and brand goals linked will help ensure that you are delivering consistent messaging across all platforms. This strategic approach will influence the type of content you develop and result in a more positive consumer experience.

At King's Hawaiian, we report content performance monthly against our overall brand objectives, then we adjust our content plans accordingly. We set specific social objectives for each individual campaign that we run in addition to regularly scheduled monthly content. We measure against a multitude of different variables including, engagement rate, CPM and CPC.



**JASON MILLER**  
**@JasonMillerCA**

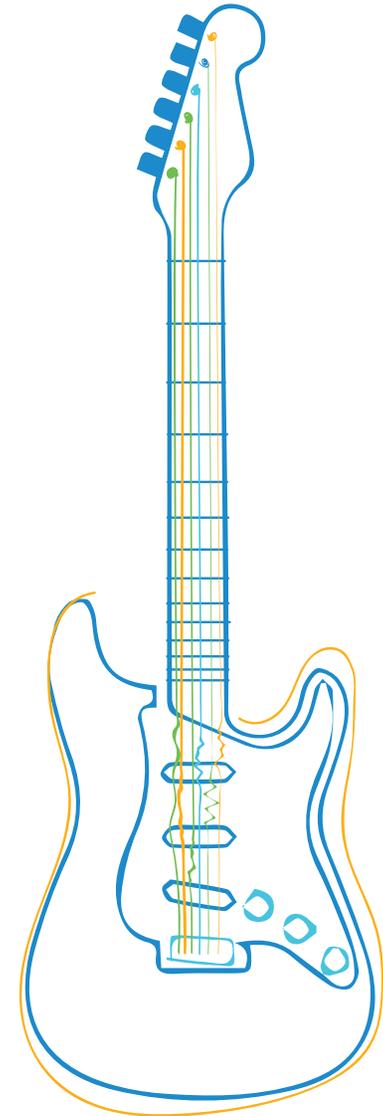
Jason leads global content and social initiatives for **LinkedIn Marketing Solutions** helping marketers understand how to use LinkedIn to achieve their marketing goals and deliver real ROI. When he is not building campaigns, creating remarkable content, and tracking the ROI of social, he is winning awards as a concert photographer, singing 80's metal karaoke, and winning at Seinfeld trivia.

## 4 NON-OBVIOUS WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT STAND OUT

### 01. HAVE SOMETHING YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT

My passion will always be Rock 'n' Roll and heavy metal. There is almost always some element of KISS, Judas Priest, or Guns N' Roses in my content and sometimes I even use my own Rock 'N' Roll photography and anecdotes to "enhance" my presentations.

If you can take your personality and inject it into what you do and the message you share, you'll be one step ahead in the content marketing game. Audiences can sense when a person is passionate about a certain topic and whether or not they are sincere in their message and delivery. In addition, passion adds credibility and trust which I find missing in much of the content on the web today. It may not translate to every individual, but then again... you can't please everyone, and you certainly shouldn't be trying to in the first place.



• • •

Even though most of us don't have a Red Bull-sized budget, that shouldn't keep us from trying new things and pushing the conversation outside of what your brand is comfortable with.

## 02. GO BEYOND YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Experiment with how far you can open up your content umbrella while still being relevant to your audience. Red Bull remains the undisputed king of content marketing because they continue to push the boundaries of their content while still keeping a firm grasp on relevance. Even though most of us don't have a Red Bull-sized budget, that shouldn't keep us from trying new things and pushing the conversation outside of what your brand is comfortable with.

## 03. GO VISUAL

There is a famous quote from the father of advertising, David Ogilvy, that says, "On the average, five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy. When you have written your headline, you have spent eighty cents out of your dollar."

I think this statement holds true today, but with the insertion of a visual element as the new headline. You have mere seconds to grab the attention of your audience in the overcrowded space that is social media and thinking of your visual as the new headline is the way to stand out. For example, I have seen many instances of text-based content repurposed into a visual format and achieving 10-15 times more views than the original.

That is a game changer in the world of content marketing.

## 04. HIRE A COMEDIAN (TO JOIN YOUR CONTENT TEAM)

If there's one thing I've learned in the world of content marketing, it's that audiences love a brand with a sense of humor. Brands that can poke a bit of fun at themselves, tell a good joke, and/or infuse a laugh or two into their content will ultimately win and stand out from all the noise. There are plenty of marketers out there with stand-up and improv experience; a perfect example is Cisco's Tim Washer.



**JOE PULIZZI**  
@JoePulizzi

Joe Pulizzi is founder of **Content Marketing Institute**, the leading education and training organization for content marketing, which includes the largest in-person content marketing event in the world, Content Marketing World. Joe is the winner of the 2014 John Caldwell Lifetime Achievement Award from the Content Council. Joe's third book, *Epic Content Marketing: How to Tell a Different Story, Break through the Clutter, and Win More Customers by Marketing Less* was named one of "Five Must Read Business Books of 2013" by Fortune Magazine.

If you ever see Joe in person, he'll be wearing orange.

# THE TRUE FUTURE OF CONTENT MARKETING

It hit me like a ton of bricks.

It was about a year ago. I was doing research for my book, *Epic Content Marketing*, on the valuations of particular media companies. Of course, I started with The New York Times.

At that time The New York Times had a little over a \$2 billion dollar market capitalization. It hasn't changed much (as of writing this, it's valued at \$2.14 billion).

Then I started to look at the available cash for a few well-known brands.

According to Bank of America US Trust division, Apple has \$160 billion in cash-on-hand. Microsoft has \$85 billion. For comparison's sake, the US government has \$49 billion in available cash.

## AVAILABLE CASH

The  
New York  
Times

\$2BN



\$160BN



\$85BN



COMPARED TO:



• • •

The content that consumers engage with on a regular basis will be coming from companies that aren't asking for advertising or paid content.

So, arguably, the most prestigious media brand in the world could be bought 80 times over by Apple. It's couch cushion change for Microsoft.

What does this mean? In our current economic model, there is no possible way media companies can raise the amount of capital needed to compete with non-media brands.

It means that when brands start to get serious about content marketing, it's game over. That doesn't mean that media companies will go away. Far from it. (I actually believe we are currently seeing a renaissance in niche publishing.)

But it does mean that the content that consumers engage with on a regular basis will be coming from companies that aren't asking for advertising or paid content.

Red Bull's solo channel on Apple TV gives us a hint to this. So does Chipotle's situation comedy, *Farmed and Dangerous*.

But this is nothing.

I expect the Coca-Colas of the world to stop sponsoring shows like *American Idol* and simply produce it themselves.

I expect the largest business trade shows in the world to be produced by brands. I expect the majority of "Must-See TV" appointments being produced by brands.

So what does this mean for you?

Put on your media production hat. Set your sites on becoming the leading content producer for your niche. Stop with the content campaigns and tell consistent stories that evolve over time. Focus on delivering amazing experiences to your customers as often as possible through content. Start hiring and working with smart people that understand your audiences and know how to construct and produce and distribute stories. Begin an internal communications program to senior executives showing the importance of content marketing for the organization.

The path is right in front of you... and the time is now.



MARC COWLIN  
@mcowlin

As Sr. Director of Content Marketing for **Thismoment**, Marc is a content marketer with a proven track record of driving sales and buzz through public relations, social media and integrated marketing. With nearly 15 years of in-house experience with companies such as Birkenstock USA, CafePress.com, and Meltwater, Marc offers a unique perspective on content marketing and its convergence with PR, social media and digital marketing.

## 4 TIPS FOR USING UGC TO EASE CONTENT MARKETING CONCERNS

As most marketers know, [90% of consumers](#) say they want more content from brands. As consumers are demanding more and more content, marketers are coming to terms with the fact that they should be focusing on content marketing. Not surprisingly, this has created a few concerns.

Today's [marketers report](#) that they are most concerned with time, engagement, budget and quantity when it comes to content marketing.

User generated content (UGC) can help ease all of these concerns.

### TIP 1: USE UGC TO HELP WITH TIME CHALLENGES

Marketers often get hung up on the amount of time it will take to create great content. For instance, a quality video can take weeks to pull together and a blog article can take a few days to get right. Marketers assume that they need to create 100% unique, brand new content. This simply isn't true. With hundreds of millions of pieces of content being uploaded to the Internet everyday, there are likely a few hundred YouTube videos, tweets, blog posts and articles that will help you with your content project.

Look to existing content on the web and learn how to repurpose or curate it for your own use.

### TIP 2: USE UGC TO HELP WITH ENGAGEMENT

According to [Nielsen](#), earned media and user reviews are the two most trusted forms of "advertising" on the Internet. Why? Simply put, the most engaging content on the Internet is authentic, entertaining and often comes from the minds of users. If you engage with your audience to create content on your behalf, you'll receive amazing, authentic and highly engaging content. You already have customers and fans, so put them to work in your marketing campaigns.



The most engaging content on the internet is authentic, entertaining, and often comes from the mind of users.

### TIP 3: USE UGC TO HELP WITH BUDGET CHALLENGES

One of the main concerns with content creation is that it is extremely expensive to create content, especially at the scale that is needed for a substantial program. By employing UGC, you can tap into endless existing pieces of content across the Internet – at little to no cost.

### TIP 4: USE UGC TO HELP WITH CONTENT QUANTITY CONCERNS

UGC, like the universe, is ever expanding and infinite. There are zero limitations on quantity. To get an idea of the scope of content, take a look at LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter, or YouTube – where over 100 hours of video are uploaded every minute of every day.

Entice the creator of a relevant piece of user content to grant you use permission by offering major exposure to their content. Once granted, you have an amazing piece of relevant and credible content for your campaign.



**MICHAEL BRENNER**  
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Michael is the Head of Strategy for **NewsCred**. Recognized as a Forbes Top 40 Social Media Marketer, a Top Content Marketing Influencer and Most Mentioned Marketer on Twitter, Michael is an accomplished marketing speaker, author of the B2B Marketing Insider blog, and a frequent contributor on leading publications like Forbes, The Economist, and The Guardian. Michael recently served as Vice President of Global Marketing and Content Strategy for SAP where he developed an award-winning thought leadership blog for SAP called Business Innovation.

## THE THREE V'S OF CONTENT MARKETING

Today's consumer is bombarded with thousands of marketing messages every single day.

In order to stand apart from the noise, many brands are shifting their marketing budgets out of paid advertising, which is ignored at staggering rates, and into owned media content programs.

### WHAT ARE THE BEST PRACTICES FOR STANDING OUT IN TODAY'S ATTENTION-STARVED WORLD?

First, brands need to take a step back and document their content marketing objectives. For some brands, that may include common marketing objectives like brand awareness and lead generation. For others, it might mean higher-level goals like we see with GE and their approach to publishing stories on today's leading innovations that improve lives, or like what we see with RedBull and extreme adventures and sports.

But whatever the goals are, too often brands fail simply because they don't document these goals. Despite the fact that every business is producing content, too few brands have a documented strategy. And most feel that they are not getting the results they should from content marketing.

It all starts with the goals. Breaking through the noise then becomes simply a part of the measure of success.

Once a business has documented their content marketing goals, success comes down to things like the volume of posts, the variety of the content, and the value it provides your audience. Volume. Variety. Value.

### LET'S START WITH VALUE

One of the biggest mistakes content marketers make is that they make the topic of the content too much about their brand, the products they sell or why they are better. And



Success comes down to things like the volume of posts, the variety of content, and the value it provides your audience. Volume. Variety. Value.

while content like this has a place, most businesses have too much of it. Your audience tunes this out. In order to break through the noise, a brand has to create content that is 100% for the audience. Take the brand out of the story. Make the customer the hero of the stories, and your audience will pay attention. Value is not negotiable in today's hyper-competitive information landscape.

## NEXT CHALLENGE TO CONSIDER IS VOLUME

In today's digital, social, mobile world, we are always-on and always connected. We don't wait for news or interesting stories. We filter out what is not relevant to us and we tune in to the sources that provide a consistent experience in the channels we use, with the formats we like, with content that we want to read and share.

My advice to brands is to start with a goal, like publishing one piece of content every day for each major topic. And then figure out how to achieve that goal in a quality way and with the budget you have. And look for technology that can help with workflow approvals and editorial guidelines.

## THE OTHER PIECE OF THE PUZZLE IS VARIETY

Once you have determined how to produce valuable content on a consistent basis, it's time to start mixing it up. Text-based articles are the foundation of almost every content marketing program. Your audience is looking for information. And your brand can be the source of it.

But we are seeing an explosion of visual content. Videos on YouTube. Presentations on slideshare. Infographics. And images, images everywhere on Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr and more. In order to break through the noise, the successful content marketing program will have a plan for creating visual and longer form content. And some adventurous brands are even moving beyond informational content into entertainment and comedy to add variety and drive loyalty with their audience.

Once a business has considered the volume, variety and value of the content it publishes, paid media can be deployed on the best content that people want to read and share, instead of the ads that no one wants.

With strong content, your brand can begin the process of breaking through the noise on a consistent basis.



**MICHAEL BRITO**  
@Britopian

Michael Brito is a head of social strategy at **WCG**, a W2O Company. Prior to WCG, Michael worked as a Senior Vice President of Edelman Digital and also for brands in Silicon Valley like Hewlett-Packard, Yahoo, and Intel. A digital marketer by trade, Michael has been building external communities for over 10 years and believes that brands should focus on turning friends, fans, and followers into brand advocates and storytellers.

# HOW "CONTENT AS A SERVICE" WILL HELP YOUR BRAND BECOME A CONTENT PUBLISHER

The Content as a Service (CaaS) model is meant to address both the external challenges of reaching your target audience; and also the barriers you face internally. The goal of CaaS is to ensure that content is considered a strategic imperative for business today, and making it core to business and marketing operations.

The model is broken down by four separate (yet related) work streams and supported by an operational framework that's meant to facilitate integration at key touch points.



Craft an operational framework that facilitates the evolution into a content organization.

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Rather than measuring content at the social network level, there is more value measuring content at the content level.

## SOCIAL NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Both a quantitative and qualitative analysis are needed to craft a story that can break through the clutter and reach new audiences.

Quantitative data includes a deep analysis of your customers' interest and affinities, social graphics, an in-depth market conversation analysis, search behavior and customer segmentation data.

Qualitative data is studying the various perceptions and general conversations about your brand from various stakeholders (media, analysts, influencers, the community, etc.) purely from a contextual perspective.

The output of this exercise is to establish an editorial architecture from which all future content is created. While there are several ways to do this, the best way to think about storytelling is through three different lenses, whereby the brand:

- is the story (events, campaigns, product/brand focused)
- is a character in a story (customer stories, 3rd party articles, sponsorships)
- comments on a story (lifestyle, real-time/agile content)

From there, you can begin to map out content for your brand's editorial calendar and align content to specific social and digital channels with some strategic thinking.

## SOCIAL CHANNEL STRATEGY

Brands struggle with social media because they are using it to amplify and distribute all of their content and tell every story on every channel. This approach dilutes their message and contributes to the content surplus that many people ignore.

A social channel strategy consists of two very important steps. The first requires an in-depth analysis of existing communities/ social channels, a competitive content analysis and an examination of internal resources that manage the content process. This determines what's working and not working from a content perspective, and the analysis will deliver insight as to what needs to change and which channels need consolidating (i.e. multiple Twitter accounts, etc.). It may even uncover the option of creating new channels.

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 Branded storytelling is more than just branded content... It also involves mobilizing employees to participate and feed the content engine.

The second step involves strategically aligning content to specific social/digital channels based on the audience segmentation, platform behavior, and documented brand goals.

Social Channel Strategy also involves building converged media models that will integrate brand storytelling across PESO (paid, earned, shared and owned media), and deploying a real-time content engine using analytics, creative, and publishing capabilities.

## PARTICIPATORY STORYTELLING

Data from the Boston Consulting Group tell us that when it comes to trust and credibility, "people they know", "consumer opinions online" and "colleagues and friends" rank the highest when people are seeking information about a brand and its products.

Brand storytelling is more than just branded content, native advertising or creative campaigns on Facebook. It also involves mobilizing employees to participate and feed the content engine. And it's not just employees tweeting or sharing company news in social media. It's about finding good stories about the brand, its products or employees and using long-form content to tell everyone about it.

This step involves mobilizing and operationalizing a brand's stakeholders (employees, caregivers, customers, the media, etc.) to "participate" and help tell the brand story through their individual lens.

## CONTENT PERFORMANCE & ANALYSIS

Rather than measuring content (status update, press release, blog post, tweet) at the "social network" level, there is more value measuring content at the content level. We score each piece of content that gets published on a 1 – 100 scale. High performing content ranks higher on the scale.

The algorithm uses two variables to determine the score:

1) where that content was published and 2) the engagement level in each platform on which it was published.

We then use that scoring system to optimize future content, where it's shared and to decide whether or not to push paid dollars behind it in order to improve reach/engagement.

## CONTENT OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

This is an operational step that spans across each of the four work streams above. It's a consultative approach that helps our clients structure their teams, assign roles & responsibilities with internal stakeholders and others agency partners, invest in the right technology, and build a scalable content supply chain (the editorial process that facilitates the movement of content from ideation to distribution). Essentially, it's helping brands build a newsroom organization.



**MIKE NIEMCZYK**  
@mikeczyk

Mike Niemczyk, Sr. Social Media Content Strategist at **Groupon**, is a digital native with a focus on emerging technology, trends, and the psychology behind what makes people share. Prior to working at Groupon, Mike created social media strategy for Cheez-It, Delta, Coors Light, Lunchables, Cars.com and ALPO.

## THE SECRET TO GREAT CONTENT IS COLLABORATION



48 countries



When developing a solid content strategy, there are many factors to keep in mind, depending on the client. Thinking beyond what has been established – analytics, scrappy content, available 24/7 – the most important factor for bulletproof content strategy is collaboration. There is no better way for a team to stay on strategy while breaking new creative ground than with representation from multiple teams. In addition to great ideas, collaboration promotes camaraderie.

Groupon generates approximately 1,500 – 2,000 messages a day across all of our social channels. Approximately 35-40% of those are from North America. Given this volume of content, compared to the size of our team, collaboration is the only way we can achieve our goals. So we began hosting multi-team bi-weekly analytics and brainstorming meetings.

The basis for these meetings is a modification of Brian Eno's concept of "scenius," which refers to "the collective intelligence and intuition of a whole cultural scene." When you apply this line of thinking to running a brand, you'll see the value. It has helped solve both creative and workload issues for Groupon, and it can do the same for you.

• • •

There is no better way for a team to stay on strategy while breaking new creative ground than representation from multiple teams.

In order to have a healthy collaborative environment, there are a few simple conditions that must be met.

## FIND THE INTERESTED

Social media is still a shiny, new object at agencies and brands, with many active employees on social in their personal lives. These are the best people to take from internal teams, because they have experience with the platforms.

At Groupon, we expanded our brainstorming group from just the immediate content creators to include management and sales. The people that really want to participate, and do a good job, will go out of their way to join. Do what you can to find these people in your organization; they're helpful to keeping your perspective current in a rapidly changing social landscape.

## MUTUAL APPRECIATION

The best collaborative teams trust and respect each other, as well as each other's job boundaries. This includes keeping the playing field level no matter the job title. Great ideas can come from anyone.

We've had senior management brainstorming alongside our social customer service people and have come up with some great ideas. All parts of the marketing funnel have something to teach and learn from each other. Working together like this also gives people from various levels something to talk about, which strengthens the team's bond.

## EASY IDEA EXCHANGE

Everyone needs to be comfortable sharing his or her ideas. Some of the best ideas are ones people sometimes feel unsure about sharing, because they're either weird or untested. This is another instance where having mutual appreciation helps.

If you can't set up time for multi-team brainstorms, setting up email groups will suffice. This will keep your team on the same page and able to share relevant news. This is something that is very common at Groupon and allows for a more passive form of brainstorming.

## DIVERSIFY YOUR TEAM

Including a few individuals from other teams affected by social adds an interesting dynamic to the process. Now, instead of only focusing on engagement with a homogenous team, we're making collective decisions with multiple departments.

For Groupon, this diversification has involved team, age and gender. There is compelling evidence that a group's collective intelligence is not based on an aggregated IQ, but on conditions like having a balanced gender mix, and having people take turns speaking. So, in addition to how the team behaves, we pay attention to this.

This collaborative approach to content strategy has been very successful for Groupon. Since its implementation in Q2, 2014, we've generated numerous campaign and content ideas, launched new social channels, and increased CTR, impressions, and engagement tenfold.



**PAM DIDNER**  
@PamDidner

Pam Didner, selected as one of B2B's Top Digital Marketers in 2011 and 2012, is an author, speaker and global content marketing strategist. Her new book, ***Global Content Marketing***, is the first content marketing book to offer a complete process to scale content across regions. Didner is an expert in creating successful global marketing plans that meet local marketing needs.

## TANSTAAFL (THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH)

The best way to engage your customers on social media channels is to provide content that is entertaining, educational and helpful.

In general, there are two types of content: original content and curated content. Original content is what you create, while curated content is created by a third-party that your customers may find useful and beneficial. Original content pieces such as white papers, blog posts, videos and other formats take time, resources and money to create. Even though you curate third party content, it's still not free. It takes time and manpower to source relevant and high quality content for your customers.

To engage your customers on social media channels, you need to plan a mix of original and curated content. Understanding your customers' aspirations and challenges is a good starting point to determine your editorial topics and content selection. In general, original content tends to perform better than curated content. This doesn't mean that you should focus too heavily on original content, since high quality and compelling original content takes time, resources and budget to accomplish. Your creative concept and story-telling approach for original content is vital. The percentage mix of original and curated content is based on your budget, resource, editorial planning, internal stakeholder/agency support and other factors.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are "free" to use for distribution. But if you really want to reach a broader audience, you have to pay to generate awareness. Otherwise, very limited numbers of people will see your content, unless you get very lucky. In some ways, social media channels are becoming more and more like paid media channels and less like "earned" media from the perspective of their advertising business models.

In my book, *Global Content Marketing*, I share the content creation and promotion processes from the perspective of scaling content across regions. Creating compelling and relevant content is only half the battle; the other half (actually more than half) is to get your awesome content out where your target audience can stumble upon it. When it gets down to brass tacks, you need to pay your dues. There is no free content and there is no such thing as free promotion, either.



## TRACI KOLLER MAZUREK @heytrace

Traci Koller Mazurek is a social media strategist at **R/GA** in Austin, TX and has previously worked in public relations. She's fond of perfectly-timed GIFs, shark-related SyFy films, her rocket scientist husband, and her tiny future supervillain, Molly.

# THE REAL-LIFE CONSEQUENCES OF REAL-TIME MARKETING

We've all heard about Oreo's infamous Super Bowl tweet, "You can still dunk in the dark." One could argue that this particular "Tweet Heard 'Round the World" jump-started the real-time marketing craze most commonly observed during major cultural events, such as the World Cup, Discovery Channel's Shark Week, and SyFy's "Sharknado 2."

## REAL-TIME MARKETING CAN GO VERY RIGHT



**McDonald's Uruguay**  
@McDonalds\_Uy

Follow

Hola @luis16suarez, si te quedaste con hambre vení a darle un mordisco a una BigMac ;)

Reply Retweet Favorite More

### Translation:

"Hi, Luis Suarez. If you are still hungry, come take a bite out of a Big Mac."

During the World Cup, Uruguay's Luis Suarez chomped down the shoulder of Italy's Giorgio Chiellini. The Twitterverse exploded, and consumers and brands alike joked about the incident (McDonald's was certainly not alone).



**Charmin**  
@Charmin

Follow

While they're out guarding the galaxy, we'll take care of Uranus. #astronomy  
#tweetfromtheseat  
[pic.twitter.com/xzG81GdH7B](http://pic.twitter.com/xzG81GdH7B)

Reply Retweet Favorite More

As a tie-in to the summer blockbuster "Guardians of the Galaxy," Charmin made a Uranus quip; their #tweetsfromtheseat campaign is known for light-hearted excrement-related jokes.

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 In attempting to jump on the real-time marketing bandwagon, brands need to be wary of alienating key entities.



DiGiorno Pizza ✓  
 @DiGiornoPizza

Follow

It's not delivery, it's DIGIORNADO  
 hahahaha so timely  
 #Sharknado2TheSecondOne

Reply Retweet Favorite More

The frozen pizza company has been garnering attention this year for their irreverent tweets, frequently relating to current events. The company tweeted up a storm (a Sharknado?) during "Sharknado 2."

## REAL-TIME MARKETING CAN ALSO GO VERY WRONG

In attempting to jump on the real-time marketing bandwagon, brands need to be wary of alienating key entities – namely current and future sponsors, as well as their own legal departments.

Disclosure: I haven't worked with these brands and do not have knowledge of either their internal approval structures or full list of partnerships, so I'm going off of what I think might be needed by my current and previous clients.

## CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS

What if Luis Suarez had taken offense with McDonald's tweet and decided to sue the company? Although McDonald's was a World Cup sponsor, what if FIFA saw this in a negative light and opted to reconsider their partnership?

Charmin essentially just promoted "Guardians of the Galaxy" for free, and DiGiorno provided the same to SyFy and Asylum Entertainment. Could this be a turn-off for potential relationships with competing film studios and networks?

Although these are "What If" scenarios, if brands are too quick to forget which events they're unable to mention due to lack of sponsorship (or due to competitor exclusivity), there can be real-life consequences to real-time marketing.

A social media manager's best bet would be to speak with the relevant parties (clients, corporate counsel, sponsorships) ahead of known events to ensure that tweeting during an event is at all feasible, given current partnerships, and be made aware of any potential roadblocks ahead of time.

One example of a real-time marketing-situation-turned-awkward involves Gatorade and LeBron James.

During Game 1 of this year's NBA Finals, the air conditioning went out, and LeBron James suffered cramps that were potentially caused by the sweltering heat. Gatorade took the opportunity to pounce and note that if he had been drinking their product, he would have avoided cramps, as James is endorsed by Powerade.

Unfortunately, images of James drinking out of a Gatorade bottle on the sidelines were captured, and Gatorade had to put out an apology.

**The lesson here:** Social media managers, be relevant and timely, but take precautions ahead of time to avoid uncomfortable situations for your brand.

Sprinklr believes people never forget how you made them feel. That's why we help brands manage their customers' social media experiences by providing technology that connects every social media experience to every enterprise system.

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