A CMO ROADMAP
FOR MANAGING, SYSTEMATIZING AND OPTIMIZING THE MARKETING CONTENT SUPPLY CHAIN
Despite a growing economy and lengthening CMO tenure, according to Spencer Stuart, marketing remains a challenging discipline. Why?

Ever-evolving digital channels, social media and mobile devices have fractured the impression-based, media model of marketing. In turn, customers are more informed about your company or its products and services than ever, creating a more complex buyer journey. What’s a marketer to do?

Content that travels across digital and mobile channels, is easily discoverable and informs, delights, educates, entertains and provides a point of differentiation is the order of the day. Content truly is king today.

And while content marketing is still a nascent practice, marketers already allocate some 25% of their budgets to content creation and will spend over $10 billion on native advertising in 2015. Overall spending on digital marketing will grow to $43 billion in the next two years, according to Forrester Research.

Transitioning from an advertising to a publishing model is already under way. Simultaneously, so is the process of better connecting marketing content to sales as the distinctions between sales and marketing continue to narrow.

Driving top-line growth is the number one CEO mandate to the CMO, according to Forbes Insights research. Yet most marketing executives struggle to achieve that objective. According to D&B’s CMO Rishi Dave, only 30% of all companies achieved growth of any kind over the past year.

**PUBLISH OR PERISH:**
WHY THE CMO MUST BECOME A PUBLISHER TO DRIVE GROWTH

Bruce H. Rogers
Chief Insights Officer and
Head of the CMO Practice, Forbes Media
Companies are spending billions transforming their marketing and sales performance by executing value selling, sales enablement and targeting analytics strategies. Spending on skills, content and technologies that help salespeople consistently sell value over price, navigate an increasingly complex buying process and communicate customer value messages is on the rise. For example, last year business investment in sales training and CRM each exceeded $20 billion.

Content marketing and sales enablement now collide in a bewildering array of technologies and opportunities, creating huge opportunities for some and uncertainty for most.

The paradigm shift to publishing is not yet well understood. Our ongoing research in this arena suggests that CMOs are not yet very good at managing, distributing and “optimizing” the content they create—a process now critical to growing the top line.

The challenge of managing, distributing and tracking the performance of marketing content has emerged as a hidden pain point for most CMOs because it is not yet a mature discipline with a clear enterprise strategy, business case, or ownership and governance.

To help sales and marketing leaders get the most impact from their investment in marketing and sales content, the Forbes CMO Practice has undertaken this best practices research and is actively educating marketers about practical ways they can fix the content problem.

We trust you will find this report a valuable guide to managing your journey to becoming a brand publisher.

— Bruce H. Rogers
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. How Small Businesses Can Use Content Marketing—
and Why They Need To ................................................................. 4

Publish or Perish: How Businesses Can Inform, Delight,
Attract and Keep Customers .............................................................. 5

Expert Perspectives on Content Marketing ........................................ 6

Every Business Needs to Become a Publisher .................................... 12

II. About this Study: Research Objectives
and Methodology ........................................................................ 13

III. About Microsoft ........................................................................ 15
HOW SMALL BUSINESSES CAN USE CONTENT MARKETING—AND WHY THEY NEED TO
PUBLISH OR PERISH: HOW BUSINESSES CAN INFORM, DELIGHT, ATTRACT AND KEEP CUSTOMERS

Despite a growing economy and a wide array of technologies and platforms, marketing remains a challenging discipline. Digital channels, social media and mobile devices have fractured traditional approaches to reaching current and potential customers, who are more informed about companies than ever before. The challenge for businesses today is not only to gain and hold peoples’ attention but also to tantalize and energize them, and, in the process, raise their enthusiasm toward the products and services they offer.

That’s why content marketing is so important to succeeding in today’s economy. Businesses need to increase their investments in marketing content and in deploying systems for distributing content through social, mobile, digital marketing and sales channels. It needs to be easily discoverable, and to inform, delight, educate, entertain and provide a point of differentiation.

Content marketing is still a nascent practice, but businesses already allocate some 25% of their marketing budgets to content creation. The implications of this opportunity are more profound than marketing programs, however. To succeed in the 21st-century economy, every business needs to become a publisher. Publishing—defined as the production, management, distribution and optimization of marketing and sales content at scale—has now become essential to the future growth of every business.

More than 90% of 380 executives participating in a recent Forbes Insights survey agree that their organizations must develop a publishing function to further their growth prospects. Transitioning to a content publishing model is already underway within many companies. In fact, leading organizations are reengineering outdated marketing processes, adding new publishing skills, editorial management structures and technology platforms.

Publishing has emerged as a management competency critical to the success of the digital marketing, social media and sales enablement programs that promise to drive growth. Executives overwhelmingly agree that without effective marketing content—including videos, white papers, collateral, articles, case studies, blogs and training—their advanced sales and marketing systems would not produce the results they need.

The challenge is that most business leaders don’t know how to apply the principles of publishing to their marketing operations—and they want help. Executives are looking for more effective ways to deliver highly personalized and engaging content across all channels. They want to understand how a new array of technologies can help them produce and manage content at the scale needed to support growth in this new era.

Content marketing is still a nascent practice, but businesses already allocate some 25% of their marketing budgets to content creation.
EXPERT PERSPECTIVES ON CONTENT MARKETING

To paint a picture of the value and opportunities content marketing provides to small and medium-size businesses, we spoke with leading luminaries in the field, including Chase Jarvis, CEO and founder of CreativeLive; Chris Stoikos, CEO and cofounder of the Dollar Beard Club; Alex Brown, cofounder of the Dollar Beard Club; and Scott Duffy, founder and CEO of The Content Market.

Here is what these thought leaders had to share with us:
“It’s an evolution. Content marketing has been around forever, but ironically, the term was first coined three to five years ago.”

Chase Jarvis, 
CEO and Founder of CreativeLive

“Through fully authentic content marketing, we have created a loyal tribe of customers who feel a part of something much bigger than each individual person.”

Chris Stoikos, 
CEO and Cofounder of the Dollar Beard Club

“Content marketing is an ongoing process, and not simply a short-term mechanism with the hopes of going viral.”

Alex Brown, 
Cofounder of the Dollar Beard Club

“Today over 50% of purchase decisions are made before a person ever gets to a store. They go to websites, blogs and social networks, and speak to their friends.”

Scott Duffy, 
Founder and CEO of The Content Market
Q | HOW HAS CONTENT MARKETING BEEN EVOLVING OVER THE PAST THREE TO FIVE YEARS, AND HOW HAS IT SHAPED YOUR STRATEGY?

**Chris Stoikos:** Social media changed the very nature of marketing itself in countless ways, and one of the most prominent is the need for companies to have their own personality with new levels of transparency between business and customer. Through social media, there is an incredibly strong push toward video as the most important medium of communication. The main focus of our marketing strategy has been on creating videos and social content that are completely transparent in regards to what our team feels and believes about our products and what it means to be a member of our club. Through fully authentic content marketing, we have created a loyal tribe of customers who feel a part of something much bigger than each individual person.

**Chase Jarvis:** It’s an evolution. Content marketing has been around forever, but ironically, the term was first coined three to five years ago. It’s relatively new as a discipline, although it is forever old. It used to be just storytelling—someone would stand in the back of a train and tell you about the latest snake oil. It was a whole production, with a person selling you a thing. More recently, it was just someone putting content out to the world in the form of a speech or presentation.

But now, if you look in your YouTube feed or any of the social channels, content is embedded deeply into our lives, and the quality of what we’re seeing is high. There are now broadcast television commercial budgets being allocated toward the quality of content. To be crystal clear, budget isn’t an indicator of quality, but it’s an indicator of how much people are willing to invest. If you think people are willing to invest a lot of time and energy, there’s definitely going to be some quality that will reciprocate from that. That’s what we’re experiencing right now.

I am founder and CEO of CreativeLive, the world’s largest live-streaming education company. We have 10 million students and billions of minutes of video consumed on our platform, which is where some of the best creators and entrepreneurs—such as Richard Branson, Mark Cuban and Tim Ferriss—teach. Education is ultimately the most amazing piece of content marketing. As a brand, you can entertain somebody and market to them by broadcasting content. Of course, education is on a spectrum—you can teach people how to do brain surgery, or you can teach them how to use a new camera. Education is authentic, it’s useful, and there’s a utility there. It’s a massive trend, and we’re going to see this powerful type of content marketing out there.

**Scott Duffy:** Today over 50% of purchase decisions are made before a person ever gets to a store. They go to websites, blogs and social networks, and speak to their friends. They do their homework, they do their research and get informed before they decide. Big companies know this, and they have big teams, big budgets and a vast array of tools available to them to help their content marketing efforts.

Big companies have got a lot of solutions, but the solutions haven’t caught up to small business yet. For small businesses, the biggest shift is realizing that leveraging content to market themselves online is no longer a nice-to-have, it’s a must-have. The biggest growth we’re seeing is from small businesses that are committing more time and more dollars to the effort. The tools that small businesses need and can also afford are just starting to emerge.
**Q** SHOULD EVERY TYPE OF BUSINESS BE FOCUSED ON CONTENT MARKETING, OR IS IT OF MORE VALUE TO CERTAIN BUSINESSES?

**Alex Brown:** Certain businesses will undoubtedly benefit more from a focus on content marketing, particularly in the B2C world. Content marketing should also be an important tool that B2B-focused companies communicate through as well, in order to build relationships with prospective customers and show that they have both a solution to their problems and a personality to match, which is warm, inviting and helpful. We believe all companies should focus on content marketing; however, a company like ours will see greater returns than one that sells to the government, for example.

**Chase Jarvis:** There is education in every business. There are things that you can teach. Whether it’s from a ceiling fan company or plumbing supply manufacturer, if you watch their videos on how to cool a house or how to unclog a sink, when it comes time to pay for that product or service, a consumer is going to choose that company. [Companies] know that if they are putting out really high-quality pieces of information—in the shape of learning and teaching—they’re going to make lifelong customers.

There is an opportunity to have a content marketing relationship for every business because every business has aspects where you need to learn, and where value can be given or added to the consumer from the company. Whether or not it is the best and the most utilitarian or valuable thing you could be spending all your dollars or energy on, that’s to be determined. I don’t want to be prescriptive about the best way to reach your customers, that’s something you’ll have to assess for yourself.

**Scott Duffy:** My company, The Content Market, launched in 2016, and we’re finding that content marketing is for everyone. It’s the plumber, it’s the electrician, or it’s the real estate agent. It’s no longer just the big, well-funded company involved in content marketing. All businesses are leveraging content to attract, acquire and retain customers.

**Q** HAS THE RISE OF DIGITAL SERVICES AND DATA-DRIVEN ANALYSIS CHANGED THE NATURE OF CONTENT MARKETING?

**Chris Stoikos:** Absolutely. Data-driven analysis helps to measure the effectiveness of content marketing. With video as an example, marketers can get instant feedback on how engaging the content is, when viewers drop off, how it is organically performing, how it is performing with ad spend, and the overall impact on conversions and brand equity. Smart content marketers use data analysis to direct overall strategy with their content, and they continually test and optimize each piece to learn and adapt for future campaigns.

**Chase Jarvis:** Data helps us be more effective. When REI or Patagonia, for example, started using zip codes correlated with buying patterns, they knew that a customer in Utah or Colorado was probably more likely to buy a down jacket than if he or she lived in Hawaii. Data helps companies be much more effective in execution. Where do we distribute, what are we measuring in this specific thing? Whatever the thing is, data is really a useful piece to all of it.

 Remember, though, data is not a thing in and of itself—it’s a tool for measuring effectiveness and efficacy. It’s not data for data’s sake. You can collect data. But if you want to measure efficacy, the data can be valuable.
**Q** HOW CAN DATA BE USED TO MEASURE RESULTS, AND HAVE THESE RESULTS TIED BACK TO REVENUE OR SALES?

**Scott Duffy:** One way to check is to create calls to action. For example, at fairly regular intervals, when people visit your landing page, offer them something for free, and in return, ask for some information. Whether it’s a name, an email address or phone number. Then what the business is able to do is to take those leads, take that list and start to market to that list over time. It doesn’t happen overnight. You have to understand this is going to be a six- to nine-month process. As you start your content marketing effort and start building your database, you warm and you nurture that list, and over time, convert that person into a sale.

**Q** WHAT DO SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS TYPICALLY GET WRONG WITH CONTENT MARKETING, AND HOW CAN THIS BE CORRECTED?

**Alex Brown:** One of the biggest things small businesses get wrong is being afraid to get things wrong. Being willing to experiment, analyze, adapt and pivot are key. Content marketing is an ongoing process, and not simply a short-term mechanism with the hopes of going viral. It helps you build out the customer perception of your brand, and sometimes that includes making mistakes and being human.

**Chase Jarvis:** There is this wicked belief that people shouldn’t give away too much stuff. They want to hold back as much as they can, because they feel if they give away too much, they’re not going to have anything to sell. Some of the best, most successful companies in each genre, though, are willing to give stuff away and ask nothing in return, all in hopes that someday when someone does have that need, they’re going to remember who provided this knowledge.

Another mistake: many marketers only put content out on a channel they’re comfortable with, as opposed to where their customers actually are. If you’re a company that sells wallpaper, a platform such as Twitter may not be suitable for content marketing efforts. Twitter is not a heavily visual distribution channel. You should think about something like Pinterest or Instagram. Understand where your customers are, and where you can go to meet them.

**Scott Duffy:** It used to be that small business owners were good at what they did, but now they’re also supposed to be great at creating content. It represents a real challenge. Small business owners and managers typically start their content marketing efforts by writing or blogging. But it takes them an average of five hours to write 500 words. Plus, after they’ve written their second article, they’re completely out of ideas, and they don’t know what to do next. They end up feeling guilty for spending the time writing that article, when they could be on the phone or in front of customers. But they also need to understand that if they’re not putting content out on a consistent basis, it’s going to hurt them just as much, if not more. Content marketing presents opportunities for entrepreneurs today to build solutions that meet the unique needs of their customers to help them be better.
Q | DO YOU HAVE ANY CONTENT MARKETING SUCCESS STORIES TO SHARE?

Chris Stoikos: Bigger production values do not always equate to bigger success. Our first video brought in over $3 million in sales and cost $1,800, whereas one of our other major productions cost $100,000-plus and only brought in $500,000. We learned a ton from this experience. Nothing is a failure in content marketing if you learn from your mistakes, and this video still provided immeasurable benefits to our overall brand equity and positioning.

Chase Jarvis: At CreativeLive, we’re an education company that’s focused on creativity and entrepreneurship. Helping people lift their dreams in those umbrellas. We’ve got more than 10,000 hours of content. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, you can go on CreativeLive and watch the world’s top experts in any one of those fields give away the world’s secrets. We’re only playing 24 hours of content a day on any one of those channels. It’s so easy to make an argument that we’re giving it all away and that’s going to undermine our sales. In fact, we’re the only education company that has this freemium mentality: you can watch our best stuff for free, but if you want to own it or watch it on your schedule, then you need to buy it. If you consume all this stuff through our iPhone, iPad and Apple TV apps, you can watch one lesson every day across any of our catalog, something we normally charge $100 a class for.

Q | WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE OTHER SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS WHEN IT COMES TO CONTENT MARKETING?

Alex Brown: Do not be afraid to try new things, to be different and to be creative. People love different. Always be authentic and true to the core values of your brand, and the energy that viewers will receive from this is from a place of honesty and integrity, and it will resonate with them on many levels. Lastly, we advise that companies plan to pump out content consistently and continually. Always be communicating, and always be experimenting. For those interested in learning from our successes, and also our mistakes, we have put some tips together on Chris’ formula for creating highly engaging videos at unconsciouscontent.com.

Scott Duffy: Pick one area where you want to be a thought leader. If you have a plumbing company, and you’re exceptional in providing plumbing services to homes in the winter months, focus on that, and focus on one keyword. Make sure that in all of your content marketing, you’re filling each and every article with that keyword multiple times so you get picked up through search engine optimization (SEO). Make that decision to choose one thing, and really drill down your content marketing into that area.

Also, be consistent. The worst thing you can do is start and stop, start and stop. Come up with a plan, something you can do on a regular basis—engage in social media once or twice a week, or write an article or blog post once or twice a month. To get started, you don’t need to do everything, just do one thing, and do it well, and then build from there.
EVERY BUSINESS NEEDS TO BECOME A PUBLISHER

In today’s hypercompetitive economy, businesses are competing for the attention and loyalty of ever-more-discerning consumers, who recognize that abundant choices are just a click away. Content, in all its forms—videos, white papers, collateral, articles, case studies, blogs and training—will help not only reach but also energize consumers.

Successful delivery of content means every business needs to become a publisher. Sharing quality content will build your brand and ensure customer loyalty for years to come.

Learn more about how to create impactful content for your small business by reading “How to Create Content—3 Rules for Small Businesses,” “Engage Your Customers With Content—6 Tips for Small Businesses” and “6 Ways to Deliver Content That Stirs Customers’ Imaginations” at https://blogs.business.microsoft.com/en-us/.
ABOUT THIS STUDY: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The Publish or Perish research report was created to teach marketing executives publishing best practices and a proprietary methodology for organizing, optimizing and systematizing enterprise-wide publishing processes to get the greatest top-line impact from their investment in marketing content.

This comprehensive research initiative is based on a quantitative and qualitative survey of marketing executives from around the world, as well as interviews with over 50 subject matter experts, and an in-depth analysis of over a thousand marketing technology solutions with the ability to enable aspects of the brand publishing process.

This report outlines best practices for managing, systematizing and optimizing content operations, uncovered in hundreds of ongoing hours of research into the latest brand publishing best practices, skills, technologies and competencies.

This initiative was headed and authored by Stephen Diorio, an established authority in go-to-market innovation and the director of the Brand Publishing Institute. For the last 25 years, Diorio has worked with over 100 marketing leaders to execute leading-edge go-to-market strategies. He authored the book Beyond e: 12 Ways Technology Is Transforming Sales and Marketing Strategy (McGraw-Hill).

To define and execute this best practices analysis, Diorio engaged a distinguished advisory panel with decades of experience in publishing processes, content strategy, CMO leadership and digital publishing. The advisory panel lent its expertise, experience and insights about how leading marketers are successfully navigating the transition to a publishing model and how the role of the CMO will need to evolve to support content operations at scale. The panel includes the following experts:

- Kathy Baughman is an expert in content strategy, a principal at ComBlu, a leading content strategy consultancy, and the author of ComBlu’s e-books Content Supply Chain and The Alchemy of Content.

- Brad McLane is a leading authority on CMO leadership and heads the CMO practice at RSR Partners, an executive search and leadership consulting firm.

- Bruce Rogers is the chief insights officer for Forbes Media and head of the Forbes CMO Practice. He is a sought-after speaker and presenter on the topics of branding, content optimization, thought leadership content, online marketing and the affluent marketplace.

- Michael Dugan is the chief technology officer of Forbes Media and is an expert in publishing technology and a developer of the Forbes Falcon publishing platform.
This report delivers a comprehensive set of original primary research on brand publishing best practices, as well as an assessment of the leading companies’ publishing platform and solutions landscape. To develop a complete picture of the most recent brand publishing trends, performance levels, management practices and technology solutions, Forbes Insights undertook four parallel sets of original primary research in the third quarter of 2015. These included:

1. A Forbes Insights survey of 368 senior-level marketing executives who have responsibility for content operations to identify trends, benchmarks and best practices for publishing, managing and distributing content at scale.

2. Qualitative interviews with 25 marketing executives from leading global corporations to identify trends, benchmarks and best practices for publishing, managing and distributing content at scale in corporate marketing.

3. Interviews with over 50 subject matter experts on brand publishing, content strategy and the best practices necessary to streamline and automate content operations and execute a publishing model in a corporate marketing environment.

4. An analysis of over 500 marketing technology solutions to identify the top 100 best-of-breed brand publishing solutions and the handful of technology partners with the breadth of solutions, experience and execution capabilities to help the CMO define a roadmap for enabling brand publishing with technology.

Secondary research supports these findings, validating the marketing best practices, success stories, benchmarks and recommendations in this report as well as the technology solution analysis. The appendix documents all research sources.

About the Forbes CMO Practice

With competencies in publishing, editorial management, digital media, native advertising and advanced CMSs, Forbes Media is uniquely qualified to help marketing executives lead the transformation of their organizations from an advertising to a brand publishing model. Our CMO Practice offers marketing executives networking and advisory services, as well as skill development programs grounded in the time-tested success and insights from 98 years of publishing evolution and success at Forbes. We offer a collaborative approach from insight to implementation, including CMO events, forums, best practices research, and executive educational workshops and certification programs.

Forbes Media is a 98-year-old publishing enterprise that has built the structures, systems and competencies to succeed in the new era of brand publishing at scale. The publishing systems we have created now support 30 editorial channels, over 150 staff writers, nearly 2,000 creators and 30 million engaged readers who transact with us to comment on, append or create new content—all with one voice.

Forbes has drawn upon its experience in executing and evolving the publishing model to create a blueprint that will help CMOs build publishing competencies, processes and systems into their sales, marketing and service operations. Our team has worked with internal and external experts, leading marketers and technology providers to outline how the CMO can learn from and adapt our publishing systems to build a similar management system for creating, managing and distributing content at scale within a corporate marketing organization. The result is a strategic roadmap for enabling your organization with the skills, processes and systems to generate highly effective marketing content at scale and better support modern marketing.
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ABOUT THE FORBES CMO PRACTICE

The Forbes CMO Practice offers marketing executives networking and advisory services and skill development programs grounded in the time-tested success and insights from 98 years of publishing evolution and success at Forbes.

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