

**HAR
VARD:**

**BALANCING ART AND SCIENCE:
HOW TO MAXIMISE
TECHNOLOGY
CONTENT MARKETING**

2023 Content
Trends Playbook



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01

INTRODUCTION: CONTENT AT A CROSSROADS

Since its inception in the late 2000s, content marketing has been troubled by a fundamental tension. On the one hand, there's the constant pressure to experiment – to tap into emerging formats and try out different approaches in the hope of cutting through in an over-saturated media environment.

It's likely something you already sense deep down. As either a tech PR pro or marketer, you'll be aware of audiences suffering from content overload and the fight for attention being harder than ever before. Considering some 90 percent of the global internet population use a mobile device to go online, this continued growth in device usage means the 'window of opportunity' for reaching audiences should be wide open.



WOW MOMENTS TO 'STOP THE SCROLL' EXIST, BUT MARKETERS ARE OFTEN HELD BACK BY THE NEED FOR CONSISTENCY

We can see content consumption habits constantly shifting as people take up podcast-listening and tire of long-form white papers. Previous preferences are being tipped on their heads – backed up by a recent study around thought leadership content and the C-Suite.

Some 40% ranked video in their top three preferences, along with 38% for interactive content. Both were ahead of infographics (36%) and text (29%). But it also showed there was no clear runaway winner, forcing a widespread result across different mediums and formats.

As communicators look to solidify their plans for 2023, experimentation is seen as essential for keeping up, especially with a tech-focused audience. The need to be able to show and deliver something new, novel, or different is pressing. Supporting this is a slow burning evolution of how content is delivered to audiences. Despite being more than ten years old, HTML5 is now opening new possibilities via low and no code tools, creating new and immersive content experiences, for instance.

01



The ability to create wow moments to ‘stop the scroll’ exist, but it is often held back by the need for consistency.

To create enduring ROI, content marketers need to get beyond the commoditised content trap, positioning their brands as something more than a “content provider”. It means consistently offering something valuable and giving your content breathing space to make an impression - it takes time to nurture an audience and position yourself as a partner.

But it’s this need for consistency which comes into direct conflict with the drive for experimentation. And it’s this tension between the two which may already feel familiar in your role as tech marketer or PR pro.

Both strands ladder up to how brands approach content strategy – something which is often lost or overlooked. This is symptomatic of an ever-expanding universe of content, yet marketers are less sure of its effectiveness.

With continued pressure on budgets, there may be a tendency to reorientate towards the short-term, driving sales activations to weather the economic storm rather than investing in long-term brand-building activities.

In this turbulent context, marketers and PR pros need to rethink their approach to content and find balance between innovation and consistency.

It means grounding a content strategy in both art and science. Typically, brands may be focussing on one or the other.


**TO CREATE ENDURING
ROI, CONTENT MARKETERS
NEED TO GET BEYOND
THE COMMODITISED
CONTENT TRAP**

01

Science asks these kinds of questions: What are people searching for? What has worked well previously? What do we want people to do before and after this content? Will it contribute to or generate leads and revenue?

On the other hand **art** asks: Is this distinctive creatively? Does it tell a compelling story? Does it stand out visually? Is it innovative compared to competitors?

When just focussing on science, brands struggle for engagement and lose in the battle of attention. When focussing on

just art, people will struggle to find the content, underlining the importance of search and SEO.

Both art and science interlock with Google's 'helpful content' update, with the search algorithm now prioritising content which is original, genuinely helpful, and written by real people, for people.

A greater onus for publishing brilliant content is written into the rules which determine if your story is discoverable - solidifying the need to balance both the art and science.

To achieve success in 2023 and beyond, **tech brands need to do both.**

We'll now explore the different content types at your disposal, looking at the opportunities for **experimentation** and the imperatives for **consistency**.



A GREATER ONUS ON PUBLISHING BRILLIANT CONTENT IS NOW WRITTEN INTO THE RULES WHICH DETERMINE IF YOUR STORY IS DISCOVERABLE



CONTENT MEDIUM DEEP DIVE:

A. THE WRITTEN WORD

B. AUDIO AND SOUND

C. VISION: IMAGERY AND VIDEO

D. INTERACTIVE CONTENT

02





COPY: THE KING FOR CONSISTENCY

STATE OF PLAY

When a brand hits that content sweet spot between accessible and creative, there's no wonder they tend to stick with it.

And when it comes to technology brands and longer-form content – eBooks, white papers, by-lines or thought leadership blogs – the industry has kept to well-trodden ground for years.

In fact, at Harvard we've seen an increase in clients wanting to create long-form content to drive site visits, sign-ups, and sales. The weight behind a well-researched story, conveyed in a written format, still proves sufficient to reach internal targets and drive audiences towards owned content.

Blogs are one of the top marketing channels for companies – second only to social media – with blog posts used by 48% of marketers, according to [HubSpot](#). It's a format positioned perfectly for consistency, giving the ability to create content at a regular cadence. But with many vying for attention in a saturated market, there's an opportunity for companies to raise the bar when it comes to the written word.

One example is an over reliance on PDFs for reports and white papers, which makes campaigns difficult to measure and optimise. Now, we're seeing more brands experiment with ['web-native' reports](#) and long-form, combining interactivity to create an amazing experience for readers.



THE WEIGHT BEHIND A WELL-RESEARCHED STORY, CONVEYED IN A WRITTEN FORMAT, STILL PROVES SUFFICIENT TO DRIVE AUDIENCES

A.

Great copy has the power to seed amazing creative ideas for both B2B and B2C. And when it comes to the tech sector, where technical details tend to override readability or message penetration, the opportunity to tell stories and connect through the written word is vast.

The introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) copy tools introduces an extra dynamic to the innovation versus consistency conversation surrounding content creation.

From supporting time-poor social media managers to organisations lacking skills and resources internally, AI has helped companies produce copy but only so long as it follows a set formulae.

Typically, AI today assists content creation where data available can be easily accessed, processed, and regurgitated. For instance, reporting

from a press release, data sheet, or analysing trending topics to suggest copy based on readily available information.

But, just as the Terminator doesn't exist (yet), AI copy tools are still in their infancy. There are plenty examples where AI copy hasn't hit the mark.

Too often, AI is used to churn out fast-turnaround content such as posts on social media. But repeating content or following a prescriptive set of rules is an example of using copy in the wrong way. Churn commonly results in repetition, which has diminishing levels of value and can switch audiences off.

Furthermore, [Google's latest 'helpful content' algorithm update](#) will prioritise original content written with the audience at heart.



JUST AS THE TERMINATOR DOESN'T EXIST (YET), AI COPY TOOLS ARE STILL IN THEIR INFANCY



It drills home the power of human-driven creative thought as centre stage for successful written content in the long term. Marketers and PR pros who ignore or underinvest in copy do so at their peril.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Google is responsible for 83% of search engine share worldwide. If your content isn't ranking on Google, it's not getting seen.

Today, successful copy needs to clearly drive ROI with measurable impact through SEO and accessible, user-first content that's been tried and tested. It's an approach which combines both art and science in beautiful unison.

When marketing targets are set, copy underpins the success of a campaign – it can make or break deliverables. But it's not just about the numbers. Striking the balance between consistent, results-driven content creation with innovative, compelling, and distinctive ideas is the sweet spot for today's marketers. And particularly for the technology sector – getting this right has the power to deliver content that's a cut above competitors.

Great copy can spark real change. If that's changing minds or influencing behaviour, disrupting a market, or creating a new category, winning fans, or capturing attention... the combination of art and science through copy not only supports brilliant ideas and KPIs, but affects meaningful audience impact.

TIPS FOR GETTING THERE

- Ask yourself why? Why a blog post? Why a written report? It might be the right format for your topic, but be certain by considering other formats for getting your message across
- SEO is fundamental to long-term success, understand what audience is searching for but keep in mind what Google now likes: original, authentic, audience-centric content
- Consider opportunities for supporting content – perhaps the report can be supported by an interactive tool, or the blog post will be shared via a LinkedIn Pulse post or a series of paid social media

A.



CARLA LEIGHTON
HEAD OF SERVICENOW
GLOBAL MARKETING



ONE BRAND DOING IT WELL: FUJITSU SERVICENOW

Personally, I love the written word. I'm an avid reader and it's a great form of escapism.

We're all familiar with the 'noise' of everyday life but reading gives you an opportunity to totally focus on what's in front.

Words also allow you bring in a personal perspective to a story. For instance, we've seen higher engagement rates through LinkedIn Pulse rather than a corporate blog as people connect on a more human level.

Accessibility is a big part of its appeal too. Our audience is global, so content isn't always produced in a reader's native language, but it's never been easier to implement dynamic translation.

Right now, I do see a tension between innovation and consistency. But it doesn't have to mean friction. As marketers, we are fundamentally storytellers regardless of the format we're using. A key part of success in marketing is experimentation, and we should embrace opportunities to adapt to the constantly changing ways people consume content.

Consistency can come from telling the same story from new perspectives or repurposing longer form content into shorter, more digestible pieces. Additionally, speed can be more important than perfection – and don't be afraid of having an opinion. There's nothing worse than bland content.

It all comes back to putting your audience first. Their hopes, desires, and challenges are the reason you're writing in the first place. To make that connection, brands must put people at the heart of their stories.

B.

CAN YOU HEAR IT? THE RALLYING CALL OF AUDIO

STATE OF PLAY:

With more than 4 million podcasts on Spotify to date, there are oceans of audio content to get lost in. And that's just one of many audio-streaming sites around. From the rapid rise (and fall) of Clubhouse, to Twitter's experimentation with Twitter Spaces, the medium continues to make waves.

We've been enamoured with audio since the first public radio broadcasts more than a century ago. In the internet era, anyone can launch their own 'talk radio' style show with just a few mouse clicks.



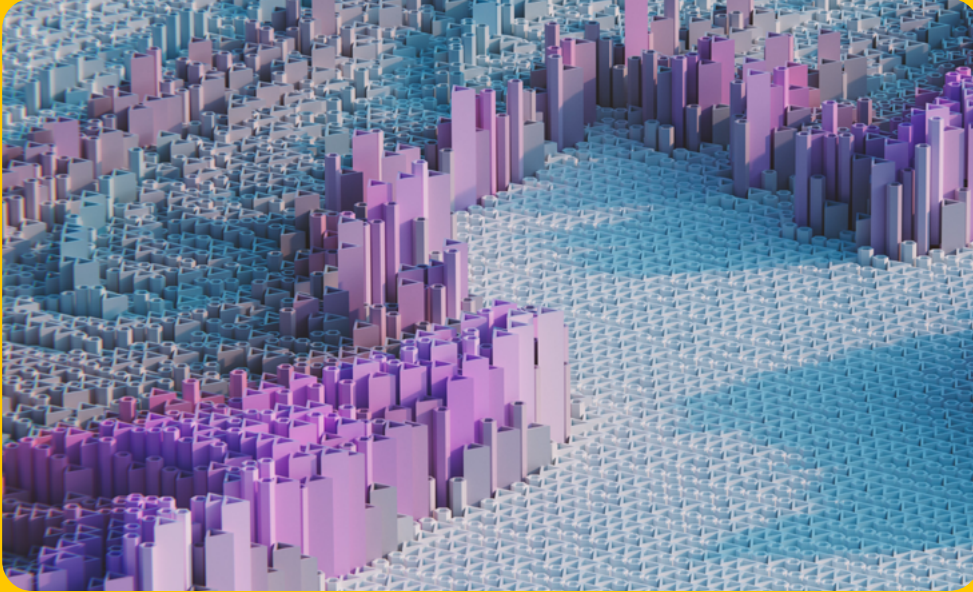
HAVE WE HIT PEAK PODCAST? AND WILL THERE A FUTURE FOR AUDIO CONTENT, WITH VIDEO VERY MUCH TAKING CENTRE STAGE?

But marketers and PR pros are asking: have we hit peak podcast? And will there a future for audio content, with video very much taking centre stage.

Audio offers a variety of opportunities for brands – from accessibility, such as reading blogs aloud, to capturing attention on social media.

The pervasiveness of audio mustn't be ignored, though it often is. And for some brands taking this avenue, they are let down by poor and inconsistent execution. Creating a podcast is one thing, but it takes commitment to truly reap the full benefits of audio.

B.



There is rich territory in creating personable, accessible, and personal connections with an audience through audio. Whether it's weaving content into everyday life through passive listening, or the development of audio to establish and consolidate brand identity – not many B2B and tech brands are cutting through.

Audio sponsorships, from radio stations to influencer reels on Instagram, are commonplace. But organic, brand-generated audio content is often lacking – with investment in content types favouring written or visual.

But personality and emotion can be communicated clearly through voice and music, which, in turn, carves space for more deeper connections with audiences if done well. And social networks are jumping on this opportunity too, recognising the power of audio.

Twitter Spaces gives users the chance to launch their own audio-based chatrooms, creating a new way for delivering thought leadership and live discussions.

LinkedIn too is following this up with their own version, trialling audio event concepts. It provides a clear chance for businesses and leaders to connect with audiences on a more personal level.

THE OPPORTUNITY

After assessing the opportunity for audio in your content mix and strategy, landing on an idea to bring it to life can sometimes feel daunting. The content must feel more than just two people chatting into a microphone, so hanging the content off a central idea is a good place to start.

Consider where the advantages of audio can be used to tell a story versus something in the written word. Anything which has a personal or human element can be transformed across this medium.

B.

Customers and clients are also your best advocates for marketing your brand. They've already bought into your offering, so let them speak for you. When it comes to creating audio content that resonates, authenticity is key. A real-world recommendation will always carry more weight than when a brand speaks highly of itself.

Perhaps you've dabbled in audio content before, but not really committed to a consistent cadence for your audience over the longer-term. All we can say is: stick with it.

Building an audience takes time, as does building a brand, Audio content can be impactful in creating a trusted identity – but only if production is persistent enough to actually establish credibility with audiences.

A one-off podcast episode or single blog in isolation with audio support is unlikely to have much impact. And, if anything, the lack of follow-through could be more detrimental to brand building as it doesn't inspire confidence when it comes to consistency.

Plus, with LinkedIn and Twitter, there is an opportunity to innovate at low cost with audio formats – creating a cost-effective route to connecting with audiences.

Keeping up with any new format demonstrates commitment, imbibing customers, clients or even partners with a level of trust towards your brand. But audio content alone has the power to get your voice into the ears and minds of your audience, like no other.

TOP TIPS FOR GETTING THERE

- Be consistent and persistent – whether it's the branded look and feel of your podcast or optimising every blog post with audio support, keep at it to build trust with your audience
- You don't need high-tech equipment to record a podcast, just make sure you're recording in a quiet place – with windows shut and headphones on
- Use statistics on listening platforms – such as Apple Music, Spotify, or Anchor – to understand what's working and what can be improved (plus back-up why you need to keep at it with others internally)



AUDIO CAN BE IMPACTFUL IN CREATING A TRUSTED IDENTITY – BUT ONLY IF PRODUCTION IS PERSISTENT TO ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY

B.



LAURA BARNES
SENIOR PR MANAGER AT
MIMECAST AND PHISHY BUSINESS
PODCAST PROJECT LEAD



**ONE BRAND
DOING IT WELL:
MIMECAST**

It's funny to look back. When we launched the [Phishy Business podcast](#), we hadn't fully anticipated the heights it would reach. You do dream of it...sure! But now we're working with an award-winning series on its fourth season.

The world of podcasting is a saturated place. Following extensive market, audience, and brand research, we spotted a gap for a features-driven cybersecurity podcast.

We wanted to avoid the trap many B2B podcasts fall into, where the format restricts the conversation to an interview between the host and guest. Instead, we opted for two hosts – with one focussing on the technology angle and the other homing in on the human aspect. The combination creates an interesting interaction while adding to the personality of the podcast. Added to the mix is a new guest each week, to keep the content fresh.

Balancing new guests and topics for every episode with consistent production is a lot of work, but it's 100% worth it. We've had sales generated from podcast listeners, additional marketing opportunities with guests, and over 12,500 podcast plays to date.

It's not just a podcast. It's a relatable, personal way to tell our cyber security story that's informative and actually interesting.

My advice to any brand looking to incorporate audio into their marketing is to **stick with it**. Put the work in before you launch to make sure you've got a resilient, engaging theme for listeners. And bake-in a wider amplification strategy, ensuring your podcast works as hard for you, as you do to make it happen.

C.

CRUSH FOR CONSISTENCY AS ONLINE VISUAL LANGUAGE EVOLVES

THE STATE OF PLAY

Apple showed how tech marketers can use gorgeous visuals within their content, to great effect.

Since then, tech marketers have adopted a distinct but sometimes samey visual vocabulary.

In the world of consumer, think smooth and streamlined lines with light colours. In B2B, blues and whites, alongside simple figurative imagery.



And it's here where we see the fight between innovation and consistency come into play. The battleground plays out across social media – the hungry beast which both PR pros and marketers need to feed.

While the age-old questions of social media's effectiveness still hang over its head, switching off the feeds also isn't an option.

So, while there's a need to stand out with attention grabbing, 'thumb-stopping' visual content, the time and effort required to do it well holds communicators back.

Meanwhile, the online dichotomy is dominated by memes and 'shitposting', with audiences embracing a more casual visual language of their own.

C.

These relaxed rules around what makes an engaging piece of content flips norms on their head. Posts are rough and ready Photoshops, badly drawn comics, and use deliberately poor layouts – all riffing on topical points of discussion, while remixing old jokes and references. Ultimately, this rubs against the grain of ‘consistency’ for companies wanting control in what they put out, and the ever-ruling need to ‘stay on brand’.

Furthermore, for branded accounts, getting involved in these conversations authentically is a challenge – accompanied with a high risk of audience blowback. Yet, those which do it well will connect with audiences in a more meaningful way.

Looking elsewhere, TikTok has emerged as the new leader in dictating the visual formats users embrace. Instagram has attempted to replicate its (previously successful) chameleon act by copying TikTok with its Reels feature and an extremely algorithmic main feed, only for users to react negatively.



It also makes the fight for consistency much harder. Platform changes are forcing channel owners into creating more video content for their feeds. Where all they used to have to do is procure some imagery and write captions, channel owners now need to think about storyboarding, shooting, and editing video for the Reels format.

For B2B brands grappling with these changes on Instagram, many are still assessing the opportunity on TikTok with its boom in popularity. More people have the opportunity to become ‘creators’ than ever before, with the tools to create content at speed, all shot and edited from a smartphone.



LIVE STREAMING STILL APPEARS TO BE A RELATIVELY UNTAPPED RESOURCE FOR B2B BRANDS LOOKING TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT



Live streaming still appears to be a relatively untapped resource for B2B brands looking to do something different, a format untapped in the familiar B2B playground of LinkedIn.

After grappling with the technical requirements, it's a format which looks rich for exploitation – as long as streams are approached with authenticity.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The need to stand out will never dissipate, but there's no better way to get lost in an ocean of noise than by relying on indistinctive stock imagery. The emergence of AI image creation tools such as [Dall-E 2](#) could transform this in years to come – but the technology is not currently ready for public consumption.

In the meantime, tools such as Canva have given social teams a boost by helping non-designers create content at pace. However, this shouldn't be a substitute for investing in great design – don't neglect the art.

If agility and responsiveness is holding you back, internal processes should be reassessed. Investing in original content and leaning into formats created on platforms is the most direct way of achieving success with visual content, especially when created with your target audience in mind.

While B2C brands were much quicker to enter the fray on TikTok, there are still countless opportunities for B2B brands to play – if they know where to look. Unearthing niches and creating content to serve those audiences creates opportunity for B2B. And being open to innovation and authenticity are key to success.

TIPS FOR GETTING THERE

- Don't ignore the impact of the meme, but if you want to get involved ensure it feels authentic and not forced. Tone of voice is critical in making this work
- Invest in design and be clear around where you want to focus your energy and attention – be that channels where your audience hangs out, or formats you know deliver results
- Video formats perform stronger across the board with social media algorithms. As well as levelling up the skills to create, don't forget about authenticity – be that creating content for TikTok, Reels on Instagram, or live streaming for LinkedIn.

C.



VICKI DEBLASI
FOUNDER OF INNOVATE COMMS



ONE BRAND DOING IT WELL: INNOVATION COMMS

For techs brand wanting to educate an audience, it often hangs on our ability to break complex topics down in an easily digestible way.

Let's be honest, it's something the tech industry isn't exactly renown for.

In the consortium innovation projects we deliver; the subject matter is often dry and riddled with technical jargon.

Yet there's a clear need to communicate clearly. We've found great success using animation, created using a consistent visual language.

Ultimately shared as a series of video posts, it's a format geared for the social algorithms across all platforms. Working across channels, it delivers our message in a clear and easily consumable way.

It also creates a 'brand' adding weight to the content as well as enhancing the overall experience. Plus, users can still scroll on afterwards if they choose – the message still lands, at least at a subconscious level.

We balance consistency with innovation in our content by ensuring we still push the boundaries but in the right moments.

Currently, a lot of our work is with stakeholders in local and central government. It means we haven't felt the urge to go on TikTok (yet).

But if our target audience for a project is there, then of course we'll explore ways to communicate with them via that channel. It means being measured in our approach, and not just jumping on a new trend for the sake of it.

D.

INTERACTIVE CONTENT IS AN OPEN GOAL FOR INNOVATION

THE STATE OF PLAY

In case you aren't familiar, interactive content is content which requires active engagement from its consumers. More than being a passive viewer or reader, the individual becomes an integral part of a dynamic, two-way experience. Web-native, it is build using HTML5, and strives to make more engaging, memorable, and useful for audiences.

Until recently, interactive content has generally been seen as more of a personalisation play in tech, especially B2B, than an engagement or entertainment one.



WEB NATIVE CONTENT CHALLENGES THE TRADITIONS OF LINEAR STORYTELLING, WHILE SUPERCHARGING CONVERSION AND ENGAGEMENT

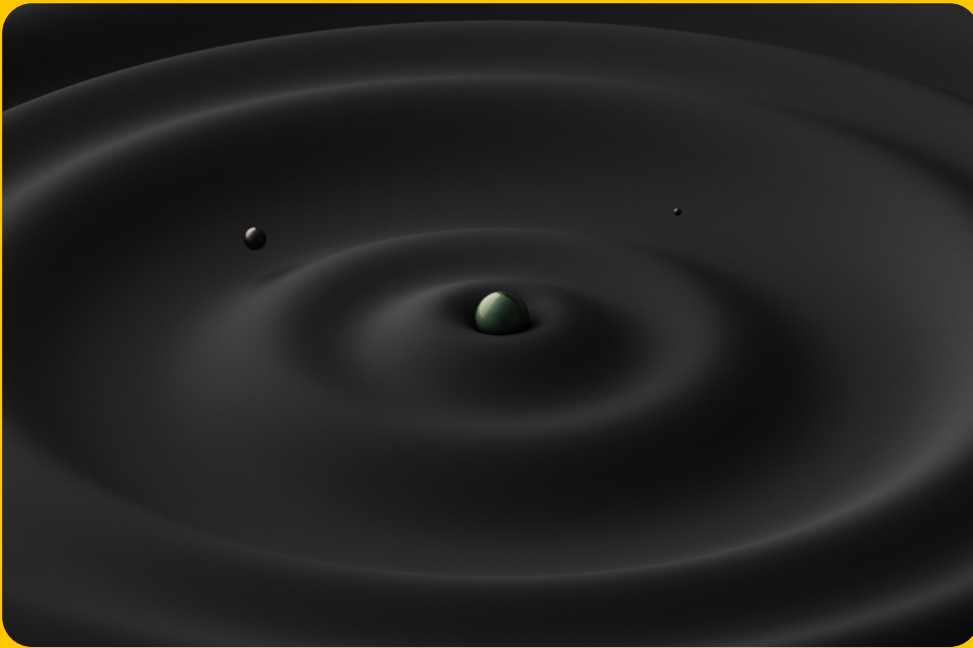
And while the adoption curve is steepening, a large chunk of B2B tech brands are missing out on what is a huge opportunity.

One of the reasons the opportunity hasn't been seized, is the consistent tension between innovation and consistency. Interactive is an open goal for innovation: web native content challenges the traditions of linear storytelling, while supercharging conversion and engagement.

For example, it can mean completely reimagining how thought leadership content is delivered to an audience.

Some 81% of marketers agree interactive content grabs attention more effectively than static content, according to the Content Marketing Institute, though full disclaimer: the study dates to 2016.

D.



And if stats from interactive content platform Paperflite are to be believed, those who deploy interactive content experiences see a 42% increase in leads, a 73% increase in time spent, and a 28% increase in click through rates.

Interactive offers a perfect intersection between the art and science: stunning copy and visuals, working within a web native format that is easier to measure, and thus prove ROI.

So what has been holding interactive adoption back? The need for consistency means interactive content is not necessarily considered part of the ‘day-to-day’ arsenal yet – but this is changing.

Budgetary pressures also don’t help. There is of course an element of ‘risk’ associated with something new or different, particularly when tried and tested methods currently remain more cost-effective from an initial capital outlay. To counter this, interactive content enables marketers to demonstrate how it delivers results for the bottom line by providing data insights to prove true ROI.



**THE NEED FOR CONSISTENCY
MEANS INTERACTIVE
CONTENT IS NOT
NECESSARILY CONSIDERED
PART OF THE ‘DAY-TO-DAY’
ARSENAL JUST YET**

D.

This is where traditional methods such as the PDF run into tricky waters. When using PDFs all you can see are the raw downloads, and any contacts gathered from gating. Interactive allows marketers to measure individual points on any experience they create, allowing them to optimise for their objectives.

Some are now claiming time is up for the PDF, with interactive taking its place – but we feel this is off the mark for now. Instead, we see traditional formats (such as reports) realigning with the way users navigate and consume content on the web, throwing away linear structures and narratives.

THE OPPORTUNITY

New tools powered by low-code/no-code are lowering the barrier to entry, creating lots of space for creativity, and experimentation. There are heaps out there to explore, so marketers need to remain focussed on how different content types can best serve their objectives and KPIs.

There are a multitude of platforms to choose from, so be prudent when selecting a technology partner to work with. And finally, something which serves both PR pros and marketers, interactive gives the chance to create content which works ‘through the funnel’ in one go, while also vastly improving measurement capabilities.



WHAT'S CRITICAL IS UNDERSTANDING HOW PEOPLE CHOOSE TO INTERACT AND CONSUME CONTENT IN THE METAVERSE

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- If completely new to interactive, be open to testing and innovating
- Low/no code tools at lower price points give the chance to build a white-labelled’ experience at low cost to test with your audience and prove the value to stakeholders before investing further
- Don’t forget integrated thinking. Interactive works well as ‘hero content’ – such as this example from UNDP – consider how all channels open to you (including search) can attract visitors

D.



RUTH CONNOR
VP OF GLOBAL MARKETING
AT KALIBRATE



**ONE BRAND
DOING IT WELL:
KALIBRATE**

Our mantra is to be the most helpful brand in our space. It's led us to start exploring interactive content – we're currently building a tool which will ask users a few simple questions before they're served a personalised report based on their answers.

It felt like a neat way of bringing together audience insights, serving relevant gated content, and supporting sales conversations. There's an acceptance we're in the experimentation phase and we know there's an element of testing and finding out what works for our audience.

The dream output will be to have more people engaged and spending longer on the Electric Vehicle section of our website.

While this activity represents innovation, I feel it also supports consistency. We have a strong recycle/reuse/repurpose mandate on content – when you're investing time and budget, you must think of ways to make content work harder across different platforms and formats.

Our tool could be used by sales teams in their live conversations with customers for instance. It's also being built in a way which lets us easily replicate the tool for other products or business areas, without masses of effort.

Ultimately this serves a commercial goal, while keeping our content helpful.

CREATING CONTENT HARMONY: 5 WAYS TO EMBRACE CONTENT MARKETING IN PR

The boundaries around “who owns what” between marketing and PR pros continue to blur.

For many PR practitioners it could mean they are now responsible for corporate blog sites, social media channels and even disciplines which would traditionally be seen as a core-marketing function.

Squeezed budgets internally and a shortage of skills have compounded the issue. It leaves many traditional PR folk having to upskill to stay on top of business demands, be that around SEO and even paid media – both previously seen as ‘dark arts’.

Content has become a unifying point between the two different disciplines of marketing and PR - it serves the objectives of both, communicates to an audience or readership, and creates a record or point of reference which can be returned to.




CONTENT HAS BECOME A UNIFYING POINT BETWEEN THE TWO DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES OF MARKETING AND PR

Levelling up how to approach content in PR can greatly help in reaching audiences and engaging with them. And on top of that, it tackles the innovation versus consistency tension which we've explored in the playbook so far.

So, let's look at our five tips to bring in content marketing into a traditional PR role:

1. INVEST YOUR TIME IN THE RIGHT CHANNEL FOR YOUR AUDIENCE:

Defining the audience you want to reach and the channels they use, will inform your approach on the type of content you need to develop. Your audience may prefer to consume content on social media, others may be more interested in your website and the blog. Focussing your time on where your audience hangs out and consumes media (be that traditional press, or online) will better serve your objectives.



FOR EXAMPLE, A PERFECTLY PENNED BLOG POST ON A TOPICAL SUBJECT MAY LEAD ITSELF FOR COMMENTARY FOR A NEWS STORY

2. SLICE AND DICE STORIES FOR DIFFERENT CHANNELS:

Great stories take time to develop. Make them work harder by considering how the same story can be treated across different channels and content formats. For example, a perfectly penned blog post on a topical subject may lead itself for commentary for a news story. Once live, consider your brand's social media channels, executives, and employees - all of which can increase reach by sharing your content.

3. DEFINE SUCCESS TOGETHER:

Through content, there is a chance to clearly demonstrate how activity has performed. Hard metrics around dwell time, pages visited, and downloads are all much clearer than relying on reported readership and reach figures. Use this to your advantage when reporting back to the business, such as sharing the Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs) which came off the back of your latest thought leadership campaign.

4. INCORPORATE CONTENT MARKETING INTO YOUR CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLANS:

Proactively consider the role content can play to share your messaging and narrative directly with your audience. Depending on the circumstances, content can be an effective way of keeping your audience up-to-date and communicating how your business may be remedying an issue.

5. LEVEL UP YOUR SEO UNDERSTANDING:

Through coverage, PR can drive a lot of value for an SEO strategy owing to the trusted nature of media sites to Google’s algorithm. Understanding the power of this in reaching audiences, and communicating it back to the business, will help to cement the power of PR.



PROACTIVELY CONSIDER THE ROLE CONTENT CAN PLAY TO SHARE YOUR MESSAGING AND NARRATIVE DIRECTLY WITH YOUR AUDIENCE



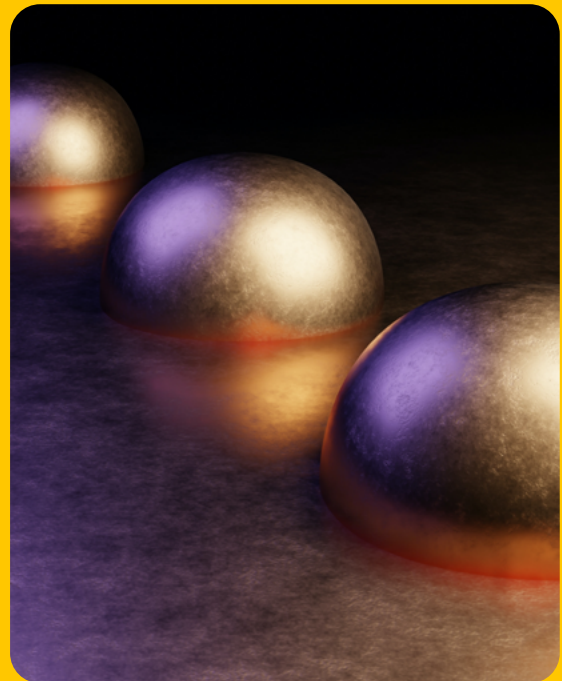
GETTING STARTED, AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE...

We couldn't write an overview of the state of play in content marketing without mentioning the metaverse.

It has the potential to rewrite formats and overturn consumption habits, providing vast opportunities for the savvy content marketer.

Metaverse is just the next phase in an evolution of how and where people consume content.

Finding the balance between experimentation and consistency will be vital for tapping into these opportunities – it's still far from clear what the metaverse will eventually look like, how people will access it, and what they might use it for. And while the 'true' metaverse of interoperability is years away, right now there is clear opportunity for exploration and experimentation.



What will be critical in understanding is how people choose to interact and consume content in this new medium.

In the meantime, how do you get started today?

By being cognisant of both the art and science in their content strategy, marketers can ensure they're cutting through and connecting while building the brand with a consistent message and story – ultimately delivering long-term ROI on their content marketing efforts.



WHAT WILL BE CRITICAL IN UNDERSTANDING IS HOW PEOPLE CHOOSE TO INTERACT AND CONSUME CONTENT IN THIS NEW MEDIUM

04

Here are three ideas to get you thinking.

1. BUILD A STRATEGIC CONTENT FRAMEWORK

If you were distilling your entire strategy and approach to content onto a page, what would it look like? It enables you to clearly define what objective and comms tasks you need to complete across every stage of the funnel, to meet your overall communications goal. Below are some thought starters on how to start answering some of those questions.

2. LISTEN TO GOOGLE: LET 'HELPFUL CONTENT' FRAME YOUR APPROACH

The helpful content search algorithm changes will have a huge impact on how content discovered. Ultimately this is tipped in favour of users, helping them find stories which are relevant, engaging, and useful.

We believe there are three core principles of the update. Content must be:

- a. Original. Google will now deprioritise summaries or rehashes of what has been said elsewhere.
- b. Genuinely helpful. It means creating content with your target audience at heart, understanding how they will use and consume it.
- c. Written by real people, for people. Sorry AI, but now is not your time.

Remember: 'art' and 'science' – balancing the two with your content, without discounted one or the other, is the best route to success.

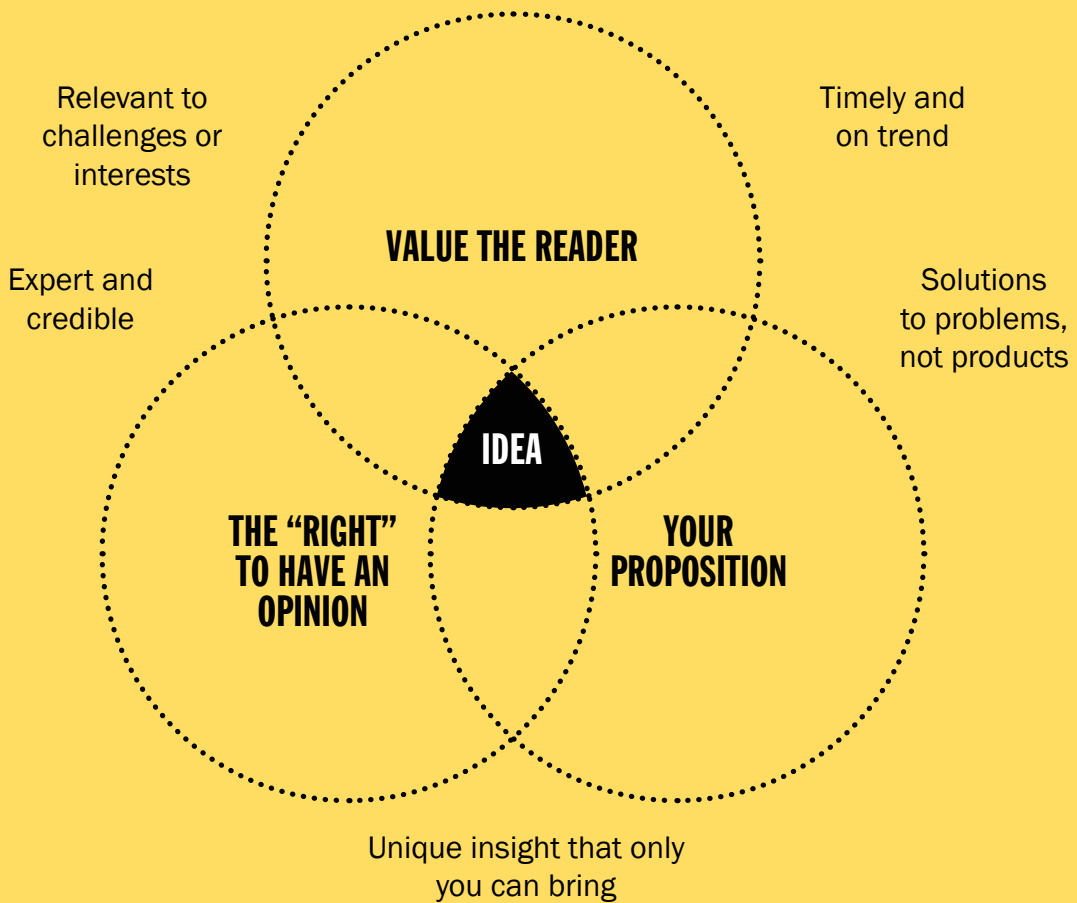
CONTENT VISION:

The overarching story that aligns content teams to a core purpose

AWARENESS	<p>“Help me don’t sell to me.” Buyer in discovery mode – actively or passively researching around issues, opportunities or specific needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut through the noise and get our brand on the radar • Show them a new perspective 	HERO CONTENT
CONSIDERATION	<p>“Show me why and how.” Buyer is actively evaluating potential solutions and vendors with a clear need identified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape their strategy and show them ‘why’ our brand • Give them a clear way forward 	FOLLOW-UP CONTENT
PURCHASE	<p>“Convince me.” Buyer is intent on buying a solution – deciding which partner to go with, and seeking validation they’re making the right choice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build consensus across decision-making unit • Show them the value and compel to choose our brand 	PRODUCT CONTENT

3. HERE'S A HANDY FRAMEWORK FOR ROBUST CONTENT IDEAS

Got your strategy in place but want to get some activations nailed? We use this framework for building out content ideas. The best content uses an idea that's creative, original, and memorable. And every activation should be underpinned by an idea or hook, to maximise audience engagement.



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WANT TO BALANCE THE ART AND SCIENCE IN YOUR CONTENT?

Thanks for reading!

Need any support to get this going?

From end-to-end content strategy down to your daily content needs, we've got you covered. If you want to explore any of the ideas from this playbook, get in touch at

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