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Content Marketing

Content is king. We already know that content marketing is the defacto method for spreading our message to, and engaging with, our prospects & customers. Content marketing is an effective method for educating and communicating. And so marketers are rapidly increasing their content marketing efforts in a race towards… what exactly?

Marketers are frenetically churning out blog posts, infographics, videos, webinars, slidedecks, white papers and strategy briefs. And then MORE blog posts, infographics, videos, webinars, slidedecks, white papers and strategy briefs.

“In a recent study by the Content Marketing Institute, marketers rated their biggest challenge as ‘producing the kind of content that engages’.”

~Content Marketing Institute
We have a veritable mountain of content. But what is the goal of this content machine? It’s not an endless stream of more and more content, is it?

According to the Content Marketing Institute (CMI), content marketing is defined as “a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a target audience - with the objective of driving profitable customer action.”

ATTRACT, ACQUIRE and ENGAGE. These three words are both the biggest opportunity and challenge of content marketing. **It’s one thing to create the content and distribute it; it’s another to distribute it in a way that is understood, enjoyed, consumed, shared and acted upon.**
There are only two ways for companies to break through in an environment that is unprecedented in its cacophony. They can be ‘amazing’ or they can be useful. Instead of betting all your money on ‘amazing,’ what if… you just focused on being useful?

~ Jay Baer
Your prospects and customers don’t want content. They want answers to their questions or new information. They want something useful. They want to learn. They want something interesting. They want something that’s engaging.

Great content, presented in a meaningful way, can be an incredible way to educate, influence, and persuade your audience while building a strong affinity for your brand. But it’s not enough to create great content. The content itself is only the conduit by which we drive engagement, affinity, leads and sales.

Your opportunity no longer lies in generating more and more content. Your opportunity lies in putting that content to work, making it useful for those who interact with it, providing it in a way they find enjoyable, and allowing them to be entertained while gaining knowledge.

Say hello to interactive content. Transforming static content into engaging and useful experiences.
“A relationship exists between placing a high priority on digital experience marketing and revenue growth. 76% of participants reporting revenue growth in the most recent fiscal year also put a high priority on digital experience creation. For organizations that report declining revenue growth, only 6% report digital experience creation as a high priority.”

~ Demand Metric, Digital Marketing Landscape, The Power of Digital Experiences in 2014
Why Interactivity Matters

Online visitors expect useful, meaningful digital experiences every time they interact with your brand. Your digital touchpoints are a critical opportunity to meet (or exceed) visitor expectations through easy, enjoyable, interactive experiences. Several trends are quickly converging to radically raise the expectation of the average web visitor.

- **Mobility**: Users are increasingly conditioned to interact with mobile apps, which provide an instant feedback loop. Book an appointment. Play a game and see your stats. Transfer funds between accounts. Put in data, get a result. There is an inherent interactivity in a mobile app that users have come to expect with their browser-based experiences as well.

- **Youtility**: It’s no longer enough to pitch your wares and win the sale. Consumers expect useful experiences from the brands they do business with. A helpful experience will always win over a self-serving experience that simply overloads the visitor with information.

- **Content Overload**: With the explosion of content available at every turn, web users are increasingly feeling overwhelmed. Visitors now either stockpile content to read ‘at a later date’, or they surf & skim, ‘snacking’ on content rather than dining.
“People can get content anywhere — and they’re sick of it. Content fatigue creates a new roadblock, as massive amount of poorly developed, uninteresting content makes it more difficult to reach the good stuff.”

~ Gordon Locke, dcustom
Interactivity transforms static content into engaging, useful digital experiences. Forrester Research identifies three types of customer perceptions that a digital experience must align with:

**Enjoyable** — How enjoyable were they to do business with?

**Easy** — How easy were they to do business with?

**Useful** — How effective were they at meeting your needs?

“The degree of sophistication of the digital experience that is created is a clear predictor of brand perception.”

~ Demand Metric, Digital Marketing Landscape, The Power of Digital Experiences in 2014
In our digital age, content overload has morphed from claustrophobia-inducing stacks of papers to perpetually-refreshing news feeds and ever-populating inboxes. Yes, content overload has gone digital, but that doesn’t make it any less daunting. And that feeling isn’t reserved just for the consumers of content, but for the marketers who are creating and curating it as well.

~ Kara Burney
What is ‘interactive content’?

An interactive content experience is a browser-based marketing experience designed for user engagement. It’s not a mobile app that runs on a mobile operating system as an installed application. Rather, it’s an interactive, engaging experience that’s lives within the browser, regardless of device. It’s desktop, mobile, tablet—it’s any device, any time. Interactive content can take the form of:

- Quizzes
- Assessments
- Surveys
- Contests
- Conversion Paths
- Calculators
- eBooks
- Wizards
- Configurators
- eCatalogs
- Interactive White Papers
- Lookbooks

Interactive content typically includes some sort of feedback loop where the outcome is directly impacted by the interaction of the visitor. In this way, even a sophisticated, logic-based landing page or microsite can be categorized as interactive content marketing.
Interactivity is a mechanism to transform your static content into engaging, enjoyable digital experiences. To start, evaluate your existing content and consider how to mix it up in creative ways. Take a look through this chapter for some ideas:

“We’re now trained to sample…our filters are strong, and our “easy meter” is on highest alert; if you’re going to make me really work for something, it had better be incredibly worth it... because I have no patience.”

~ Glenn Engler
Content Wizard

Content wizards let visitors drill down to their favorite content while enabling you to learn who’s on your site and what interests your visitors have. In this way, consider a content wizard to be a tour guide, navigating your visitor to your existing content that is most relevant to them.

Rather than showing long list pages of white papers and webinars to wade through, content wizards provide a more enjoyable and personal user experience. Ask your visitors about their interests or how they like to consume content, and serve up the most relevant stuff you’ve got.
Conversion Path

Do you have specific messaging for verticals, roles, or business need and struggle with getting the right content into the right hands? A conversion path will help visitors step themselves through a series of simple choices to quickly get to the most relevant and targeted information.
Quiz / Assessment

Turn a set of your best practices into an online self-assessment or quiz that your visitors can take themselves. Based on visitor responses to questions, you can deliver personalized recommendations for improvements. You can use the data that you gain from the answers to drive targeted marketing automation programs and to surface warmer leads to sales with pre-fab insight into pains. For assessments to work well, they must offer valuable information.
Calculator

Turn your internal pricing spreadsheet into an online calculator. Even complex pricing can be converted into a pricing range estimator. Most organizations have something that can be calculated using an engaging interactive experience. This provides the immediate gratification that B2B buyers crave while allowing sales to continue to build value prior to delivering a specific price quote.

Prominent, simple form

Dynamic price range based off answer

RFP incentive for more detailed pricing
Game

Games are entertaining ways to engage, educate and convert prospects. For example, rather than answering survey questions for themselves, visitors can guess which answers were most popular amongst their peers. In answering, they are exposed to shared pains, problems, and solutions that drive demand. Simple guessing games provide another way to communicate strategically compelling information. Not only does it provide knowledge, but gives your brand that stand-out attention to draw in a more qualified audience.
Interactive White Paper / eBook

Do you have an in-depth white paper? Turn it into an interactive, ‘choose your own adventure’ eBook. Chunking up the white paper content into interactive, navigable sections can bring your content to life in a highly engaging way. Instead of a visitor downloading a 12-page white paper to quickly skim through then throw away, entertain them with something useful that they want to share.

Playful and engaging layout

Quickly navigate through content

Organize your Information
Start Improving Your Content Marketing!

It’s time to turn your content from “ho hum” to exciting, useful, relevant, engaging content. After taking a look at some ideas, it’s your turn to be creative. Grab an existing content marketing asset and transform it into an engaging interactive experience.

Commonly, interactive content is custom built by software engineers or developers. While this provides the marketing department with a high degree of customization for the final end-result, there are some inherent inefficiencies with hard-coded solutions. In addition to long lead times & high costs for development, a hard-coded interactive experience is largely inflexible and can’t be modified or updated without additional costs & time. A modern marketing department needs an agile, flexible, marketer-managed system for the creation and launch of interactive content. An interactive content platform drastically reduces the time & cost associated with launching — while providing several significant benefits to marketing:
• Agile, flexible interactive content creation & launch—drag-and-drop interface with simple rules-based logic gives you tremendous power without developers.

• Optimize both form & function—rather than being restricted to just one version of an interactive content experience, use built-in testing capabilities to learn which experiences & content are most effective at increasing engagement & conversion rates.

• Not one interactive content experience, but an ‘interactive first’ culture throughout all your marketing—launch dozens or hundreds of different experiences with no additional hard costs.

• Share data across multiple interactive content experiences—every user interaction can build behavioral and profile data that can be leveraged for personalization & targeting across your entire portfolio.
of interactive experiences.

- Reusable components—reuse content and functionality across a wide array of interactive content experiences.

- Centralized and decentralized control—centralize brand control and consistent measurement; decentralize interactive content creation and deployment to brands, teams, regions, etc.

- Simplified integration—single integration point connects all your interactive content into your marketing technology ecosystem; seamlessly share data with CRM, analytics, marketing automation, and customer data platforms.

Next Steps

Implement interactive experiences and see how they can improve your results. It is time to turn your digital experiences into engaging, useful, enjoyable ones.

It’s what your web visitors expect, and the technology exists to enable you to rapidly deploy and test interactive content while minimizing development time and costs. Interactive content can change your campaign results from “so-so” to “wow” by decreasing bounce rate, increasing visitor consumption of your content, and ultimately delivering far more leads and sales to your organization.
Digital touch points can drive revenue, lower costs, build brands, and engender customer loyalty. But to achieve these potential benefits, companies must deliver digital interactions that meet their customers’ needs in easy and enjoyable ways.

~ Forrester Research, Top 10 Ways To Improve Digital Experiences
More **leads.** More **engagement.** More **revenue.**

**Interactive content from ion interactive**

The ion platform helps marketers generate leads and revenue with highly engaging, interactive content experiences that can be created and tested without developers. It’s used to differentiate brands, increase engagement and improve conversions in content marketing, social marketing, email marketing and advertising campaigns.

- Create engaging interactive content in minutes
- Pass segmentation and sales enablement data in and out
- Test and auto-optimize alternatives
- Save time, money and resources

According to third-party research: 73% of our customers double their conversions; 90% get positive ROI; and 95% would recommend us. Join them.

**Get Started:** meet.ioninteractive.com/getstarted

or Call 1.888.ion.idea (466.4332) or +1.561.235.7474 outside the US
Curious about how to make your digital experience more interactive and engaging? Start with an interactive white paper. Take your most popular asset and turn it into something your visitors can truly experience. Add smaller app-like content within the interactive white paper; maybe a quiz, a short video, a survey. Transform that static content into an engaging piece of interactive art for the visitor to experience.

Not sure where to start?

Check out ion’s Interactive Content for Landing Pages interactive white paper here:

http://apps.ioninteractive.com/site/IWP/marketing-apps-for-landing-pages
Most companies have something that can be calculated using an engaging app-like experience. For example, you may have an internal pricing calculator that the sales team uses. Great! Make it interactive and let the visitor calculate the pricing for themselves. Take a look at ion interactive’s A/B test duration calculator. The visitor can answer multiple times to calculate alternatives and desired improvement for testing. They can then receive an estimate of how long their test should run and compare alternative scenarios. Of course, the latter is a lead-gen activity.

**Want to see it in action?**

Check out ion interactive’s Test Duration Calculator here:

http://apps.ioninteractive.com/site/calculator/test-duration
Quizzes are always a great way to engage and educate participants. Who doesn’t love to test their knowledge and see what they can learn? Not only can you give the visitor valuable insight and advice with a quiz, but the brand can gain high-value visitor profiling and segmentation data. In ion interactive’s Guess Which Won quiz, the visitor navigates through five questions to guess which version won. After seeing how you stack up against others that have completed the quiz, your answers, along with the correct ones, are given with the results for each. Talk about interactive learning! Oh, and you can get the actual test hypotheses emailed to you and make your learning complete.

Curious on taking the quiz for yourself?

Check out ion interactive’s Guess Which Won quiz here:

http://apps.ioninteractive.com/site/contest/guess-which-won