A Best Practices Report

A Culture of Content

December 3, 2014

By Rebecca Lieb and Jessica Groopman

With Susan Etlinger

Includes input from 15 ecosystem contributors

ALTIMETER®

Executive Summary

Companies that evangelize, reinforce, and institutionalize the importance of content throughout and beyond the marketing organization are more successful not only across their marketing initiatives but also with other internal and external success benchmarks, such as sales, employee advocacy, customer service, audience engagement, thought leadership, and hiring.[1]

When content becomes an ingrained element of an enterprise's culture, the culture functions like a well-oiled engine, producing, circulating, and begetting content, creating numerous efficiencies in the process.

Table of Contents

ALTIMETER®

A Culture of Content

DEFINITION

A culture of content exists when the importance of content is evangelized enterprise-wide, content is shared and made accessible, creation and creativity are encouraged, and content flows up and downstream, as well as across various divisions. A formalized yet not immutable content strategy is the framework upon which to base culture.

A culture of content was first defined as the fourth of five levels of content marketing maturity in the Altimeter Group report *Content: The New Marketing Equation*.[2] It is the most realistically achievable level of maturity for the vast majority of organizations. As content strategy and content marketing continue to gain traction in the enterprise, research must examine and illustrate how organizations create and foster a culture for it.

WHY A CULTURE OF CONTENT IS EMERGENT NOW

Content Demand

It's not just because brands are publishers that the culture of content is emerging, it's that employees are publishers, too. The demand for content has never been higher. Some will dismiss this as noise rather than signal, but channel, platform, and device proliferation, as well as always-on social media, initiatives such as social selling, thought leadership, real-time marketing and customer service, and recruitment demand that content be continually created, refined, repurposed, and reformatted.

Content Is Everywhere

Subject matter experts don't solely reside in the marketing department; they come from product, research, senior management, and beyond. A customer service rep knows better than the social media team what

A culture of content exists when the importance of content is evangelized enterprise-wide, content is shared and made accessible, creation and creativity are encouraged, and content flows up and downstream, as well as across various divisions.

ALTIMETER®

problems or complaints customers have. Sales staffs, whether working on the floor at a retailer or peddling a high-tech, long-consideration-cycle product, know what their customers need to learn at various stages of the buying cycle.

Proliferation of Media and Channels

Not only are demand and need for content growing, so too are the forms content can take. Content is no longer limited to whitepapers, blog entries and reports, but is increasingly also video, infographics, billboards, social media posts, GIFs, testimonials, receipts, and connected products, among the ever-growing list of new media form factors. The rapid digitalization of culture through channels such as smartphones, social media, and connectivity is creating an imperative for real-time, dynamic, and highly targeted and contextualized content deployment across channels and audiences.

Media Convergence

The convergence of paid, owned, and earned media also creates a need to efficiently transport and transform content across screens, media, and platforms. Content should be part of a well-oiled, well-built, smoothly efficient machine.

THE ANATOMY OF A CULTURE OF CONTENT

A culture of content resembles an engine in that it stream-lines content production and workflows, but also a circulatory system in that it is inherently about sharing, ideation, and distributing the value of content across everyone involved.

A strategic, systematized culture of content (CoC) results in more than just better marketing, but it requires strong leaders with a clear vision to enact and support it. Altimeter Group has identified four primary components of the CoC, which will be examined in this report: inspiration, people, process, and content.

Inspiration: The Intangibles That Fuel a CoC

Culture in any context is driven by certain intangible but powerful forces. These forces inform, inspire, and reinforce the behaviors that define and embody the culture itself, and a culture of content is no exception. Our research identifies three primary forces that fuel a content-centric organizational culture: vision, creativity, and risk.

Vision

The idea of a single, shared purpose, mission, or goal is paramount to empowering a CoC because it serves as the baseline of understanding. Establishing a common vision is a critical first step to developing a content strategy and is typically most effective when generated, embodied, and exemplified by leadership. Disseminating vision from the top down helps employees understand how their day-to-day tasks serve a higher purpose and align with organizational and even social or humanitarian objectives.

charity: water, a nonprofit that works to provide clean drinking water to developing countries, uses content to drive its vision and its vision to drive content. The vision is to leverage the web's reach to reinvent charity. Because the company is focused on driving individuals to action, that is, to fundraise instead of simply donate, its content objective is to inspire, educate, and build relationships. Paull Young, director of digital at charity: water, emphasizes the importance of investing in talent to execute high-quality creative, as well as investing in ways to inspire that talent. charity: water gauges content success on the basis of inspiration, known internally as an inspiration quotient, that is, did the content inspire its audience?

While not a formalized metric, charity: water's cites Seattle-based EastLake Community Church as an example. Inspired by charity: water's content and mission, the church created a content and event series that raised more than $709,000, enough to provide 54,541 Cambodians with access to clean water, well exceeding its fundraising goal. The church now includes clean water as a ministry budget line item and donates $5 to charity: water in honor of every first-time church visitor.[3]
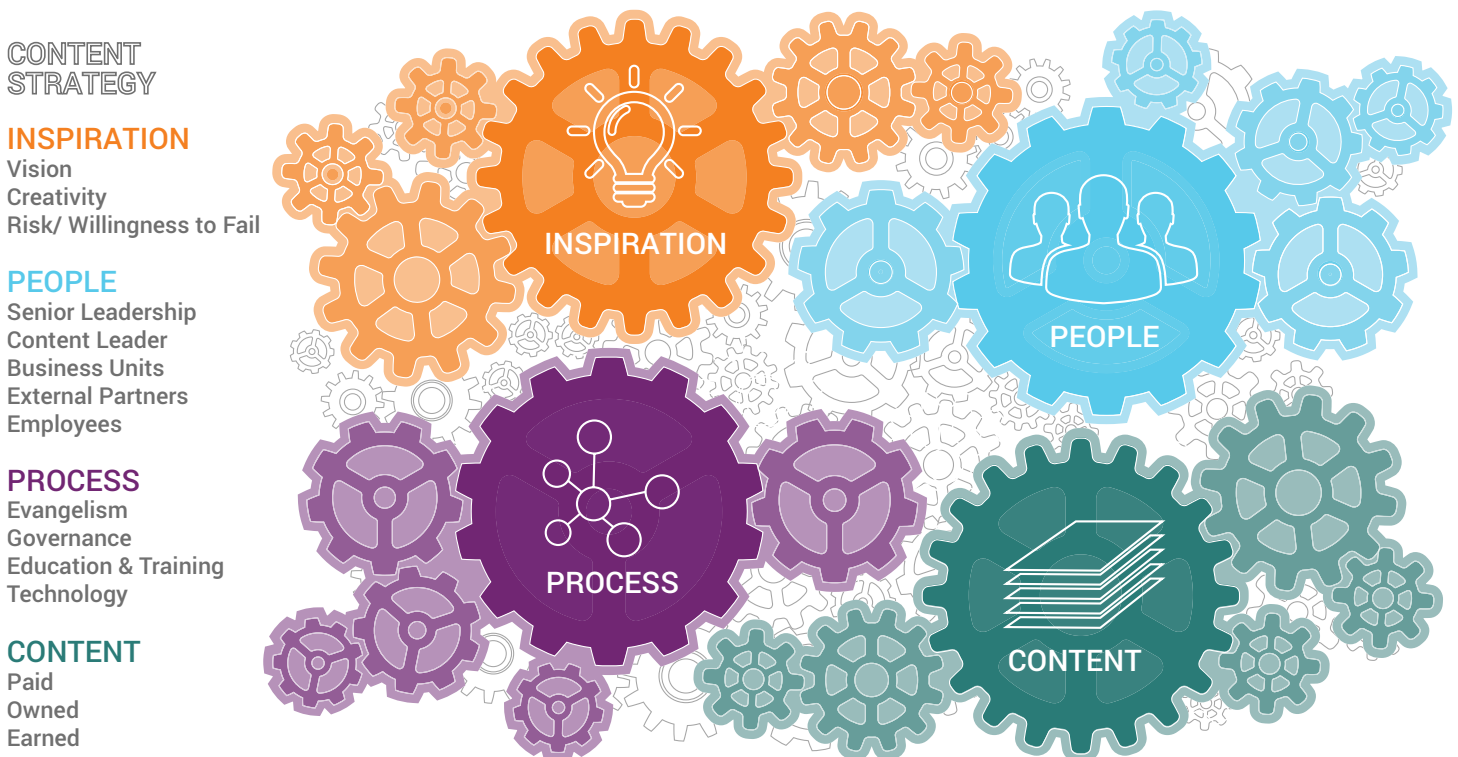
Creativity

The willingness and drive to think beyond content and marketing that have worked in the past is another way organizations inspire a CoC. Training organizations to creatively think about and produce content serves two ends. First, it helps differentiate the organization through its content, an increasingly important tactic in a crowded and noisy media environment. Second, it grants the very individuals who create content (e.g., designers, copywriters, bloggers, videographers) the freedom to flex their creative muscles to reach current and new audiences.

Creativity flourishes most with multiple perspectives, and as such, customers can serve as an inspirational source for creative content. Content marketers (among other business functions) can leverage both earned media and listening analytics across all media to extract insights on how to evolve existing artifacts and justify new approaches. Nico Henderijckx, Sony's European forum and community manager, points to an example. A recent how-to troubleshooting post, written by a volunteer super-user (i.e., at no cost) on Sony's community site, was viewed by 42,000 visitors within two weeks. Leveraging data around who was interacting with this specific piece of content not only helped Sony identify the need for similar creative content but also helped affix value to it. A call to the call center costs the brand €7. The potential value of this one post, then, in just a fortnight was €294,000 (€7 x 42,000).

FIGURE 1 A CULTURE OF CONTENT IS AN ENGINE OF CONTENT

CONTENT
STRATEGY

INSPIRATION
Vision
Creativity
Risk/ Willingness to Fail

PEOPLE
Senior Leadership
Content Leader
Business Units
External Partners
Employees

PROCESS
Evangelism
Governance
Education & Training
Technology

CONTENT
Paid
Owned
Earned

Source: Altimeter Group

ΛLTIMETER®

Risk and a Willingness to Fail

Risk and a willingness to fail emerged repeatedly in our research as a critical force for empowering a culture of content. Providing permission to fail and assurance mitigates such fear as fear of failure, embarrassment and job termination, fundamental obstacles to the creative process. Strong content is valuable; it informs, educates, entertains, or solves a problem. To differentiate through any one of these uses, content marketers must be comfortable with, and empowered to take risks, to fail entirely, and to move forward, applying learnings from failure.

Even massive, global corporations with multiple lines of business like Nestlé view risk taking as critical to differentiation, employee empowerment, market share growth, and scale. Gurdeep Dhillon, global vice president of marketing at SAP, points to the willingness to fail as a driver of culture. He encourages his team to recognize, learn from, and move on from failures quickly and with a spirit of innovation. Paul Marcum, formerly with General Electric, incorporated this spirit of risk into the hiring process, selecting only content creators who can demonstrate a willingness to take risks and a willingness to fail.[4]

Coca-Cola bases its content strategy on a 70/20/10 rule, which focuses its investment strategy on driving a culture of content and innovation. In model, 70% of content produced falls under a "now" heading: safe, standard content that appeals to a huge audience created for established and successful programs. Twenty percent of content produced goes under "new or emerging": moderately risky content that deals with trends beginning to gain traction and that should appeal to new audiences. Finally, 10% of Coke's content produced under a "next" heading: content that focuses on untested ideas that are complicated and push boundaries.

People: The Human Foundation of a Culture of Content

No tool or technology is as essential to CoC as people are. A culture is, after all, common beliefs, practices, attitudes, and behaviors that are shared by a group. And just like

> ## Content marketers must be comfortable with, and empowered to take risks, to fail entirely, and to move forward, applying learnings from failure.

in other types of cultures, in an organization's culture, some people have more influence than others. In an organization, hierarchies, divisions, and external partners (e.g., agencies and vendors) each play a role in the culture of content.

Senior Leadership

C-level executives don't tend to implement a CoC, but their buy-in and evangelism can be critical to driving success and adoption throughout the enterprise. GE and Johnson & Johnson cite CMOs with an expressed passion for content as integral to the entire spectrum of their marketing programs.

When that passion is lacking or must be developed, many marketing executives make a formal business case to management to encourage them to adopt and finance content initiatives. Content leaders cite metrics as a frequent point of entry. SAP began its content initiatives by launching small, inexpensive, and carefully monitored and measured programs so the C-suite could be approached with tangible, actionable results. This isn't a one-time pitch but a constant, ongoing process. Kraft's Julie Fleischer underscores the need to constantly reinforce the value of content initiatives with data to illustrate benefits, such as increased sales and brand lift.

Content Leader

Whether content and a CoC require a dedicated leader is a still-evolving conversation (see Altimeter Group's report, *Organizing for Content*), as is the authority that leader wields, such as global, departmental, and regional. As a result, the much-vaunted chief content officer is a role that exists in precious few organizations.

ALTIMETER®

There is a marked preference for a content leader, but whether that person's authority is limited to a department, location, or region or has a global purview is highly inconsistent. A content leader's foremost responsibilities include evangelizing and constantly demonstrating content's value, creating a content strategy, putting processes and infrastructure into place, and driving interdepartmental coordination and awareness. More than any other role, including senior management, the content leader gets everyone on the same page.

The content leader also creates a sense of content ownership within specific business units or divisions. The leader articulates the importance of content, detects cross-functional areas where content is needed, spots and nurtures creative talent, and identifies individuals in the organization who share a content-centric mindset.

Business Units

A defining characteristic of a CoC is that content travels a circulatory system that goes beyond marketing to permeate other divisions. Clearly communications, PR, social media, field marketing teams, and other divisions participate in content initiatives because they rely on content to communicate at scale. What other divisions to include and how to prioritize their inclusion naturally differs from business to business, but not surprisingly, our research found customer-facing groups are cited as mandatory participates. Groups include customer support and sales in B2C organizations, as well as thought leadership and subject matter experts from among senior executives, researchers, and often product groups. Legal is frequently part of the approval and governance process, and IT must advise on software and tools integration and deployment.

To motivate these groups, avoid asking them to work for marketing. Instead, tie content to individual or departmental objectives and develop metrics that enable them to track their progress toward these goals.

External Partners

Smaller organizations, such as charity: water, argue that content is more passionate, authentic, and human when it's homegrown. For larger brands facing issues of scale,

however, external partners are a necessity; for some, it can be akin to the necessity of scaling content outside the marketing organization. Equally urgent to the need for external partners to help create the content is the need for cultural unity among all parties.

Kraft works with several agencies, including MXM, Starcom, TBWA, 360i, and McGarryBowen. In addition, it partners with shopper marketing and insights organizations to help retailers better sell their products. Central to these many initiatives and partnerships is a social media monitoring center that examines activity around individual brands with a variety of lenses for insights by segment, geo-location, and influencers. Combining content with data, says Fleisher, extends impact.

Another brand extending its partnerships is Nestlé, which is using outside relationships to foster more creativity and experimentation. Mondelēz also seeks partners to create enough content to steadily feed to media and social channels, a capacity B. Bonin Bough says doesn't exist in-house, as well as to distribute it. Bough's mantra? "Find the thing that works, and operationalize it."

Employees

There's no consistent framework for bringing individual employees into a content culture, but there are best practices. Evangelism can help pinpoint hand-raisers and enthusiastic contributors. Not all contributors will be content creators, but employees can be encouraged and empowered to identify content needs or stories worth spreading. If customer support, for example, continually sees people struggle with a setting on a device or if sales sees a knowledge gap that interrupts the funnel, the ability for them to flag a content need for an appropriate leader or team can prove valuable, as well as empowering and profitable, such as in the above Sony example.

Training, educating, demonstrating value, and welcoming feedback and input are essential to this flow of input and information. Many organizations are operationalizing this via internal social networks, highlighting best practices, case studies, feedback solicitation, and asset sharing. Digital acceleration teams are another way to inspire

ALTIMETER®

The idea of a single, shared purpose, mission, or goal is paramount to empowering a culture of content because it serves as the baseline of understanding. Establishing a common vision is a critical first step to developing a content strategy and is typically most effective when generated, embodied, and exemplified by leadership.

and encourage participation in content initiatives, as are centers of excellence.

Altimeter Group predicts that companies that foster a strong CoC will increasingly make content part of the hiring process. This will not be based so much on aptitude (e.g., a talent for writing) as attitude—an enthusiasm for participation, storytelling, sharing, or otherwise contributing to the content process.

Process: Components That Streamline and Scale a CoC

Establishing clear processes, roles, and resources helps a culture of content thrive and evolve over time. It's the oil in the well-oiled engine a CoC embodies. The content's governing body creates that oil, helping the engine run more efficiently. When the governing body develops strategic alignment, workflow and process clarity, consistent tools, guidelines, and triage protocols, as well as identify stakeholders, it empowers employees to ideate, create, approve, disseminate, measure, optimize, and scale content more efficiently. The fuel for all of this, though, is a relentless crusade to demonstrate the unique value of content to every aspect of the organization.

Evangelism

A culture of content doesn't just produce content, it truly values it. Thus evangelism, education, and training are foundational to building a CoC because if stakeholders don't understand a content strategy's purpose or process, they have little incentive to embrace it. Defining the value content generates across business functions and aligning that value to business objectives are central to gaining buy-in at every level in the organization. Content marketing leaders must identify and build relationships with other functional leaders, and not just once, but continuously, fostering deeper understanding, value, and trust over time. Many organizations begin evangelizing the content's value at the consumer-facing level, citing marketing, corporate communications, and customer service as primary candidates for buy-in. salesforce.com deems the end user of any specific piece of content as the owner of that content. Thus, most frequent content needs are in customer service, social media, and sales but

also extend outward to product development, research and development, HR, IT, and beyond. Content evangelists listen for and leverage department-specific pain points and day-to-day needs as a way to create cross-functional justification and buy-in for content investment.

Both B2B and B2C organizations, including SAP, 3M, Salesforce, and Kraft, involve marketing and other consumer-facing roles initially, later pushing into less consumer-facing roles based on frequency of content needs, as outlined above. Companies must also involve external partners, including agencies, vendors, and research organizations. The key to evangelism is understanding the unique needs and pain points of each constituency and tailoring content initiatives to serve their needs and yield relevant results to drive greater buy-in.

Governance

Establishing clear guidelines for who does what and when creates structure and clarity in the content marketing program. Specifically, the governing body (e.g., center of excellence, editorial board, steering committee) defines how content is developed, curated, created, and reviewed; what brand guidelines are; what the standards for content artifacts are; who is empowered to make editorial decisions; and how to manage crises. Governance empowers employees to act autonomously while also making decisions in line with the organization, whether acting on behalf of headquarters or across international borders. Governance also helps organizations manage workflows, accountability, safeguards, and the like for distributing content publication responsibilities across multiple departments and levels. To enable a CoC, the governing body must ensure that content is accessible across business functions and represents cross-functional needs.

Education and Training

When new programs are rolled out, initial educational programs are key to access and adoption, but training must be ongoing to share best practices and updates on programs, tools, and workflows. Training can range from formal face-to-face sessions to less formalized programs through the content center of excellence and evangelism by program leaders.

ALTIMETER®

FIGURE 2 A CULTURE OF CONTENT FLOWS OUTWARD ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION

Source: Altimeter Group

While there may be one overarching leader, many brands also designate regional or departmental leaders to support training at scale. Many enterprises also focus on enabling less formal, more routine knowledge sharing through enterprise collaboration tools or internal social networks. Collaboration tools help connect and empower each role in the content marketing chain, from copywriters to legal to agencies, to benefit from and repurpose each other's efforts. Hiring or promoting with an eye for editorial or creative background, or even just enthusiasm and a willingness to participate in content initiatives, can help accelerate the learning curve.

Kraft's content center of excellence is developing a formal training curriculum to educate marketers on how to create strategy, what great content looks like, what tools are in place, and how they streamline processes, as well as what other resources are available and what measurement methodologies to use. It also conducts annual roadshows, where a core education team travels around, educating marketers on best practices.

Technology

The role of technology in a CoC is to centralize, streamline, and optimize. It is to provide a central toolset for execution,

knowledge sharing, branded assets, approvals, analysis, and reporting. Successfully leveraging content marketing (and any other) technology is a function of defining the organization's priority use cases and aligning the tools against those use cases, not the other way around.

Stakeholder alignment is important to success. Shared access to common tools that serve multiple teams helps streamline creation, curation, measurement, analytics, and deployment. An editorial calendar, for example, is a simple but vital component for keeping stakeholders clear on publishing frequency, media types, and publishing channels, as well as on the alignment of content cadence with the organization's larger content strategy. Analytics is also critical, as an integrated understanding of how paid, owned, and earned content is performing across channels and platforms helps inform opportunities for optimization, more efficient spend, process effectiveness, and, most importantly, identification of what resonates with specific audiences and in what context.

But tools are only as valuable as their level of integration, particularly when it comes to driving behavioral adoption, change, and empowerment. Organizations must recognize the imperative to integrate systems (e.g., content management, digital asset management, social media management, advertising platforms, mobile management, and agency systems) to drive as holistic a view of content performance and customer experience as possible — and not just create another silo.

Content: Converged Media Results in Content Begetting More Content

A primary impetus for a pervasive, unified CoC is the growing knowledge and acceptance of the fact that content is the atomic particle of all marketing across paid, owned, and earned channels, as addressed in Altimeter's report *The Converged Media Imperative: How Brands Will Combine Paid, Owned, and Earned*. Content isn't just a company blog or newsletter. Instead, it's myriad forms of media that fuel social, PR, and advertising. This new mindset is changing the makeup and structure of marketing organizations and going far to foster a culture of content in more mature organizations.

Nestlé explicitly designs content to function in advertising and social media. Media efficiency, according to Pete Blackshaw, global head of digital and social media at Nestlé, is creating the amount of value from earned media that equals the spend on paid. To that end, content must be buzzworthy and function in paid, owned, and earned channels.

Both B2B (e.g., Intel) and B2C (e.g., Kraft) organizations are working to eliminate internal barriers between content, media, and data to create an exchange of ideas and a content circulatory system both within the enterprise and with external partners.

Organizations must create and systematize the integration of paid, owned, and earned media with regularly scheduled meetings leading up to content activation. For example, three or four weeks before an initiative is deployed, all channel owners convene in a room to plan together. The following week, teams align and review individual plans on the best way to move forward, share assets, measure, and redeploy in different channels and media. Such meetings are rarely about content per se but rather about seamless experiences that cross channels, media, and devices.

Other content leaders design content to later slice into component parts. Salesforce.com leverages its own Chatter tool to expedite content repurposing. Kyle Lacy, director of Salesforce Marketing Cloud's global content and research team, points to simple tactics for repurposing, such as slicing up long PowerPoint decks and long videos into shorter, more sharable units, or sharing one-pagers. Packaging these assets with a list of top-line points makes it easier for other teams to digest and apply content for use in other channels, such as social selling.

ALTIMETER®

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Our research found common trends across companies that embody a CoC. Content leaders must embrace the following criteria to help drive shared understanding, access, and value of content across the enterprise.

1. Customer obsession guides content. An obsession with understanding customer wants, preferences, behaviors, trends, passions, and so on helps drive a CoC because the data informs how brands use content to serve customers. In fact, a CoC starts with an obsession of customer, says Michael Brenner, head of strategy at NewsCred. Whether listening to customer feedback directly or monitoring customer interactions across various touch points, companies with a well-defined CoC are equipped to optimize rapidly based on customer insights. This is embodied in the convergence of media, where paid, owned, and earned must work together because the consumer sees only one brand, not specific departments. As such, content helps define the human side of a brand — creative, helpful, passionate, contextually sensitive, even vulnerable.

Instead of letting editorial calendars dictate content cadence, Kraft errs on the side of asking what is worthy of distribution in the first place based on how people spend their time. Kraft's standard of worthiness is a human way of determining what to publish based on whether the content is worth customers spending their valuable time and attention. Kraft makes this decision by:

- ☑ Listen for consumer insights across channels.
- ☑ Design content to unify the customer−brand experience.
- ☑ Assess all content for worthiness.

2. Align content with brand. Every company should have its own understanding of purpose, differentiation, philosophy, and vision. While these will vary from company to company, brands must articulate how content serves those elements underlying the very identity of the brand. How content embodies brand values must be clear to every level, from the C-suite to functional leads to practitioners. This alignment should be a guiding force and benchmark for what constitutes worthy and authentic branded content. To align the content with the brand:

- ☑ Crystallize how the content supports the brand vision.
- ☑ Incorporate that vision into training and evangelism.
- ☑ Only publish content that supports the brand vision.

3. Drive content leadership from the top down and the bottom up. The content leader must facilitate a top-down and a bottom-up approach to drive a culture of content. Top-down, C-level buy-in is critical not only for investment and program expansion but also for leadership by example. Top-down content leadership helps drive investment and an understanding, a mentality, and enactment of the value of content across the company. Simultaneously, a strong leader or advocate is nearly always required for education, evangelism, training, and testing, which drives buy-in from the bottom up. Bottom-up content leadership can manifest through greater departmental buy-in, alignment, demand for content, and internal participation down to the practitioner level. As the value of content is translated across other business functions through evangelism and small, inexpensive programs supporting those functions, hard numerical results aligning with business objectives help justify deeper executive support. To drive content leadership:

- ☑ Evangelize and test department-specific initiatives to drive bottom-up support.
- ☑ Leverage cross-functional results and support to drive top-down support.
- ☑ Both C-level and content leaders must reinforce an ongoing culture of content.

ΛLTIMETER®

4. Culture requires constant evangelism. While culture is pervasive and powerful, it is not built overnight. It slowly gains acceptance and takes steady reinforcement. Terms such as constant, relentless, frequent, and reinforcement are commonly used to describe a CoC. Why? Because content leaders must constantly demonstrate business and consumer value across the organization. Recruiting and securing participation from divisions, groups, and territories are based heavily on WIIFM (what's in it for me) and demonstrated by metrics that relate to their goals. This evangelism must continue over time, through results, case study and best (and worst) practice sharing, centrally shared tools and resources, recycled content, and so on. To create a CoC:

- ✅ Content leaders must lead the content evangelism.
- ✅ Articulate and demonstrate WIIFM, both bottom-up and top-down.
- ✅ Commit to ongoing cross-functional evangelism, support, communication, and optimization.

5. Test and learn. Brands must be willing to take risks in the content they produce. This requires a spirit of piloting small, tightly scoped content initiatives with predetermined key performance indicators that align with business objectives. These initiatives, especially early on, don't necessarily have to be resource intensive. Testing and learning are less about new channel, device, or content plays and more about creating ostensible business value that can be reported back to leadership in order to drive program and resource expansion. These tasks are inherent to a CoC because they require taking risks, which may result in failure or in tangible justification to use when evangelizing content across functions and to leadership. To test content:

- ✅ Start with small, tightly scoped, inexpensive pilots.
- ✅ Listen, analyze, A/B test, optimize, and repeat.
- ✅ Take risks, fail forward, and apply lessons.

6. Global must enable local. Whether you're a large multinational corporation with presences across dozens of countries or a company with numerous locations in one country, a CoC must be enabled locally. Divisional authority and autonomy with strategic oversight is as important for national companies as it is for multi- or international companies because both must empower local practitioners with local content that reflects local tastes, context, and language. This could be a case study suited for a German-speaking audience or simply tweaking content by region based on weather or news, such as promoting snow tires in New England and beach umbrellas in Florida. As brands are forced to become publishers, enabling local authority is critical to standing out. To enable local:

- ✅ Global must provide strategic oversight, support, resources, and direction.
- ✅ Enable local teams with appropriate cultural, linguistic, and contextual resources.
- ✅ Appoint regional and/or local content leaders to scale training and ongoing evangelism.
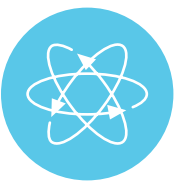
7. Integrate across all cultural components. In a true culture of content, integration and shared insights should exist across every component of the culture: people, processes, mindsets, and the content itself. A CoC doesn't work in silos. Integrated workflows across teams, business units, and internal and external parties help streamline and scale content deployment. Integrated technology systems with shared access, reporting, data, and automation enable agility and meaningful measurement. Even media itself, through the convergence of paid, owned, and earned must be connected through workflow and divisional coordination, designed for optimizing resources, as outlined in Altimeter's report, "*The Converged Media Imperative: How Brands Will Combine Paid, Owned, & Earned.*" Integrate insights:

- ✅ Integrate across people: workflows, tool access, collaboration, best-practice sharing.
- ✅ Integrate across technology: data sets, systems, third-party tools, analytics.
- ✅ Integrate across media: paid, owned, earned, local, and so on.

ΛLTIMETER®

CONCLUSION

As brands continue to embrace content as a valuable, inspired business asset that establishes essential points of differentiation, content strategy and content culture will deeply infuse organizational cultures. Content will become like other enterprise assets (e.g., financial, plants, data inventory) where organizational acceptance of key best practices will be well defined, engendering wider accountability and ownership of the problem.

Because creating enough content is a nagging problem for businesses whose core mission is to create products or services, turf wars will escalate in the agency sector. Already, advertising, creative, public relations, social media, and storytelling agencies are duking it out for ownership of this sector. In addition, content marketing agencies are beginning to populate the landscape. Altimeter does not believe a clear winner will emerge, as converged media requirements are too complex to favor one type of agency over another.

As online and offline brand experiences, and media itself, continue to converge, content will increasingly serve as the united face of the brand across those experiences and across every single interaction customers have with the brand. In tandem, technology will embrace content in the emergence of the marketing cloud; a full-suite digital marketing solution reflects the convergence of social, display, search, content, marketing automation, email, and other channels. A CoC ensures the viability of a unified brand experience; better, more contextually relevant and more timely interaction with customers and prospects; improved customer experiences; and the leveraging of the investments companies are making in technology. The rewards of a CoC for brands are far reaching: stronger branding and identity, a greater share of voice, better and faster communications and resolutions, and boosts to all stages of the purchase funnel.

As communications shift from interruptive and obtrusive forms of push messaging (advertising) to softer pull strategies that are more marketing-oriented (owned and earned media), brands will require appropriate, relevant, authoritative, and timely content. Such a need can no longer be the purview of marketing alone; it requires participation across the enterprise and an evolution toward a culture of content.

ΛLTIMETER®

ENDNOTES

[1] Joe Chernov, *State of Inbound 2014* (Hubspot, 2014), HubSpot-State-of-Inbound-2014_(1).pdf.

[2] Rebecca Lieb, Zak Kirchner, and Jaimy Szymanksi, *Content: The New Marketing Equation* (Altimeter, February 16, 2012) http://www.slideshare.net/Altimeter/content-the-new-marketing-equation.

[3] Stacie Zellmer, "Campaign update: Drinks4Drinks" *The Water Log*, August 13 2012, http://www.charitywater.org/blog/drinks4drinks/.

[4] Lydia Laurenson, "A Leap of Faith and the Willingness to Fail: Early Adoption Stories from SAP and Dell," *Distilled*, October 2, 2013, https://www.distilled.net/blog/marketing/a-leap-of-faith-and-the-willingness-to-fail-early-adoption-stories-from-sap-and-dell/.

ECOSYSTEM INPUT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ΛLTIMETER®

About Us

Rebecca Lieb, Industry Analyst

Rebecca Lieb (@lieblink) covers digital advertising and media, encompassing brands, publishers, agencies and technology vendors. In addition to her background as a marketing executive, she was VP and editor-in-chief of the ClickZ Network for over seven years. She's written two books on digital marketing: *The Truth About Search Engine Optimization* (2009) and *Content Marketing* (2011). Rebecca blogs at www.rebeccalieb.com/blog.

Jessica Groopman, Senior Researcher

Jessica (@jessgroopman) is a Senior Researcher specializing in content and digital strategy, customer experience, and the Internet of Things. She focuses on how organizations can optimize internally and build better experiences externally by unifying media, data, and strategy. Jessica blogs here, and is a regular contributor to multiple industry blogs covering wearables and the Internet of Things. She has experience conducting business, technological, and anthropological research.

Susan Etlinger, Industry Analyst

Susan Etlinger (@setlinger) works with global organizations to develop big data and analytics strategies that support their business objectives. Susan has a diverse background in marketing and strategic planning within both corporations and agencies. Find her on Twitter at at her blog, Thought Experiments, at susanetlinger.com.

Altimeter is a research and consulting firm that helps companies understand and act on technology disruption. We give business leaders the insight and confidence to help their companies thrive in the face of disruption. In addition to publishing research, Altimeter Group analysts speak and provide strategy consulting on trends in leadership, digital transformation, social business, data disruption and content marketing strategy.

Altimeter Group
1875 S Grant St #680
San Mateo, CA 94402

info@altimetergroup.com
www.altimetergroup.com
@altimetergroup

650.212.2272

How to Work with Us

Content strategy establishes strategic, business-oriented goals for content and also enables repeatable processes for the planning, creation, delivery, and governance of digital content that are both useful to and useable by an organization's constituencies. In conjunction with content marketing software research, there are several ways Altimeter can help with your content strategy:

- **Content strategy roadmap:** Development of benchmarks for your organization's content marketing maturity and a roadmap for moving forward.
- **Content audit:** A qualitative and quantitative assessment of your organization's content marketing effectiveness, capabilities, and governance
- **Content vendor selection:** Based on existing capabilities, content strategy, and stated needs and requirements, Altimeter Group will suggest a short list of vendors/solutions.

To learn more about Altimeter's content offerings, contact us at sales@altimetergroup.com or 650-212-2272.

ALTIMETER®