



HOW TO MANAGE CONTENT MARKETING EFFECTIVELY

The world of marketing has undergone a dramatic shift in buyer behavior over the last decade. The rapid acceptance of the smartphone, and now wearable devices, has changed core buyer behavior, leaving many people wondering where their customers have gone or why marketing efforts have diminishing returns. Fortunately, the shift that buyers have made is to digital, providing us with near-realtime actionable data. For example, we know that 95% of all **B2B** buying research is made before contacting a vendor (as opposed to other means of letting vendors provide research). And 85% of that research is done on a mobile device.

That's why it is important, in fact imperative, to establish yourself as a **thought leader** in your industry. This allows you to insert your company and products early in that decision-making cycle, creating sales leads. This is the core of content marketing. Our process empowers CMOs to leverage content efficiently and measure success reliably.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR BUYER PERSONAS

The key to a successful content marketing program is to identify some detail about your customer types, is called **buyer personas**, in order to maximize **ROI** (Return On Investment). Our methods help you develop clear and concise buyer personas. For example, a CEO and a purchasing manager may have unique personas, but both could be part of your content and SEO strategy.

STEP 2: EVALUATE YOUR CONTENT

Our client managers can assist you in performing a very thorough **content audit**. All existing content is reviewed, allowing our clients to receive a clearer picture of what content will be useful moving forward. You might find that you have access to an insufficient amount of cornerstone content (content you deem ideal for your buyer personas). It is helpful to identify your company's experts to help you create content, understanding that some of this may need to be developed through an interview-style format.

The value of this content is determined by how people access it. Online options may include:

- Organic Search
- Paid Search
- Social Media
- Email
- Content Marketing
- Influencers (individuals who have the ability to affect other people's thinking in social media communities)

STEP 3: CREATE A CONTENT STRATEGY

With personas defined and a content audit completed, we can assist you in developing a **content strategy**. This includes development of **SEO** (Search Engine Optimization) built to attract your personas and a content calendar to be sure that all content is filled consistently.

Always try to remember that thought leadership content is not meant to be purely promotional.

This content is best described as free deliverables that organizations or individuals produce on a topic that they know a lot about, and feel their perspective can benefit others. Thought leadership, in this specific context, does not include content primarily focused on describing an organization's products or services. This content can include:

- Research reports
- Thought pieces
- Essays
- Videos
- Webinars
- Presentations (live or published online)

"I am more willing to pay a premium to work with an organization that has publicly articulated a clear vision for the future."

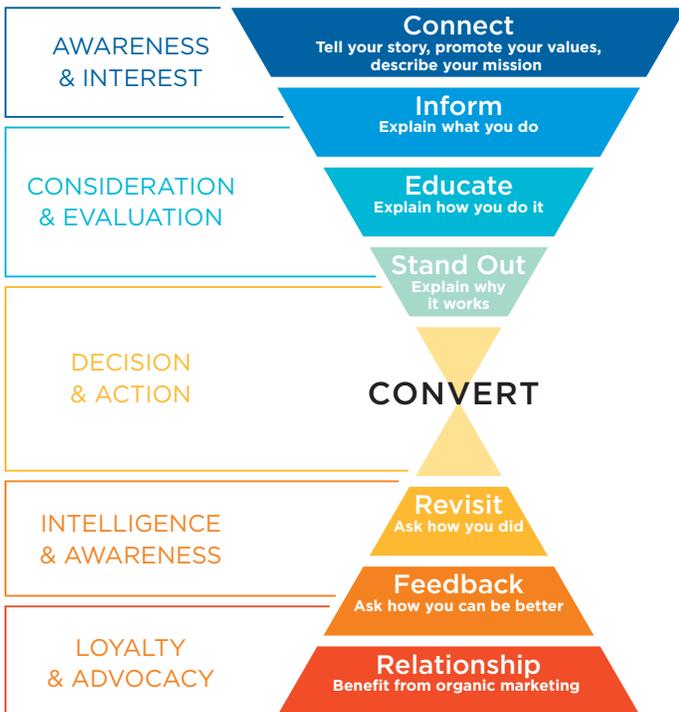
Source: 2017 Edelman/LinkedIn Study of Decision Makers
"How Thought Leadership Impacts B2B Demand Generation."



STEP 4: BUILD CONTENT PARTNERSHIPS

The most useful content in the world also needs to drive ROI. In social media, that means to move from likes and views to shares and comments (**reach**). In the world of search, that means a healthy balance of paid and organic key phrases, with constant split testing and measurement.

The other thing that the digital/mobile revolution created for marketers is the evolution of the **path-to-purchase** funnel into an hourglass. The modern buyer wants and expects the point of purchase to be the beginning of the relationship, not the end. Our model is simple and demonstrates the relationship between effective content marketing and modern buyers.



“Reading thought leadership is one of the best ways to get a sense of the type and caliber of thinking an organization is likely to deliver.”

Source: 2017 Edelman/LinkedIn Study of Decision Makers
 “How Thought Leadership Impacts B2B Demand Generation.”

STEP 5: GET STARTED

Inertia can be the biggest setback in effective content marketing. The task of creating good content can seem overwhelming. But according to the latest research of C-Suite executives (**CXOs**) by LinkedIn, thought leadership delivered through effective content marketing is very important. For example, 41% of CXOs said they have awarded an **RFP** to a company that provided good content to them, while only 17% of content creators thought it would lead to an RFP.

In addition, 81% said good thought leadership increased their trust in vendor organizations.

But there is a double-edged sword: Over half of CXOs said they lost respect and admiration of an organization due to poor thought leadership.

However, it doesn't mean that content needs to be original or long, detailed thought pieces. In fact, this chart shows the breakdown of preferred content:

Short-form 3-4 page documents	67%
Snackable media that can be digested in 1-2 minutes	50%
Short-form 3-4 minute videos	49%

In the end, it takes effort, planning and execution, but the rewards are also large. Some key takeaways:

- Align thought leadership strategy with demand generation efforts
- Know your customer
- Focus on delivering value, not selling

*What tools are you providing to improve your customer relationships?
 Let RGI help.*