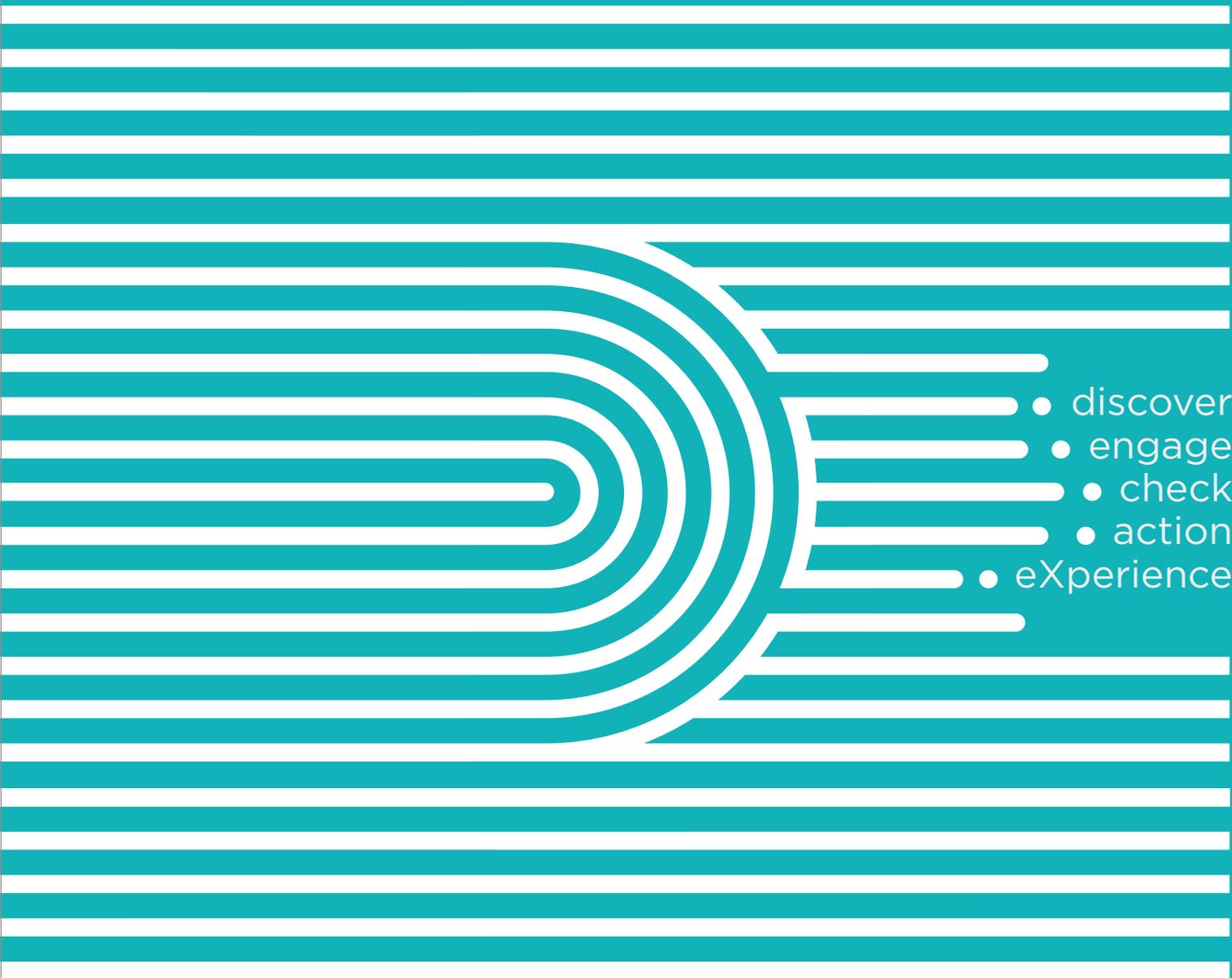


dentsu

WSJ. CUSTOM
STUDIOS

THE BUSINESS OF CONTENT MARKETING

IN ASIA PACIFIC 2017

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 - engage
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01 A GROWING FORCE IN ASIA PACIFIC

Marketers in Asia Pacific believe in the power of content marketing. Nearly 62 percent of businesses intend to create more content compared to 2015, according to the 'Asia Pacific Content Marketing Report 2016', released towards the end of last year by Hub Spot and Survey Monkey.

"There is a big uptick in the prevalence of content marketing in the APAC region, after a slightly slow start a few years ago," says Carlos Bruinsma, editor of Marketing Magazine. "Based on Marketing's Content 360 conference as an example, we're seeing sophisticated campaigns, more creative content, bigger budgets and much more emphasis on the importance of being a content creator, as opposed to being a 'content interrupter'".

APAC businesses on content marketing



70% feeling their content marketing efforts are limited, basic, or inconsistent.



50% admitting they are doing content marketing, but don't have a focused strategy yet.

That said, the 'how' and 'why' of content marketing remain elusive for some brands, with 70 percent of APAC businesses feeling their content marketing efforts are limited, basic, or inconsistent, and another 50 percent admitting they are doing content marketing, but don't have a focused strategy yet.

Mobile and video all the way

It's hard to find many solid facts about the use of content marketing in Asia Pacific. But one thing we can be sure of is that mobile is leading the way. According to the 'Trends 17' report from GlobalWebIndex, a whopping 93 percent of internet users in Asia Pacific owned smartphones in Q3 2016. This is important for content marketers, as they are using their mobile devices more frequently to access the internet when compared to regions where legacy desktop and laptop internet use is still high. In countries like Thailand and Malaysia, as many as one in three internet users are now mobile only.

"ONE THING WE CAN BE SURE OF IS THAT MOBILE IS LEADING THE WAY."

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries had a mobile-first design strategy for its 'Spectra' content marketing platform launched last May. Branding Director Jack Shaw says, "We knew most of our customers access content from their smart

phones and tablets, so it made sense to focus on this technology when we first built the site. It's proven to be a good decision as recent research shows that 90 percent of our visitors are accessing the site via mobile devices."

"INSTEAD OF INTERRUPTING CONTENT THAT THE READERS WANT TO SEE, WHY NOT BECOME THE CONTENT?"

We can match the number 93 from 'Trends 17' with another one from the report - the percentage of people in Asia Pacific who watched a video clip or visited a video-sharing site in the last month. Research provider, eMarketer, said that digital videos were watched by more than 1.98 billion consumers around the world in 2016, a year-on-year increase of 10.1 percent. Of that figure, more than 998 million people came from Asia Pacific, with half from China.

"Some of the most watched videos on YouTube have been created by brands, and investment in the area increases exponentially every year," says Bruinsma.

Campaigns which reach multi-device users are just some of the reasons to be excited about content marketing. Bruinsma says, "Trends such as ad-blocking have made content marketing the de facto weapon of choice in the uphill battle for attention on the internet. Instead of interrupting content that the readers want to see, why not become the content?"

SPECTRA #1

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) has more than 300 companies globally, and it can be hard for our key stakeholders to make the connection between the organizations, particularly as they do not all carry the Mitsubishi name.

The Spectra site was created to build a link between MHI's business activities using journalistic storytelling on industrial technology 'trends, topics and tangents'. The site is attracting a broad range of stakeholders, including customers, investors, employees and traditional media.

CREATION AND DISTRIBUTION

As the phrase goes, “it does what it says on the tin.” Content marketing is made up of two key elements - creating high-quality content and marketing to generate brand awareness and customer engagement.

Content marketing is not new, of course. Ask any marketing communications professional and they will point out they have been using it for years - creating content from surveys and white papers, and expert opinion and events - to reach their audiences. However, the advent of digital technology brought a sea-change to the whole marketing industry, and businesses, NGOs, government and politicians alike are harnessing its power to capture the attention of customers and the public. It has become a particularly useful way of looking at marketing because it puts news, messages and social comment that real people want to share with each other at the center of the communications equation.

Dane Lim, Director, Marketing & Communications,

Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) says, “Content marketing in a digital age requires brands to be responsive towards trends and deliver value to their audiences. This applies beyond business-to-consumer marketing. Since 2010, EDB has engaged with C-suite audiences through our owned content marketing platform ‘Future Ready Singapore’ (FRS). We pay attention to the needs of our audience and how they consume content. They are savvy, well-informed and in search of critical insights for their businesses. FRS responds to these needs by delivering information in the areas of strategy, innovation, market insights and leadership & talent with unique perspectives and proven cases from Asia.”

Most marketers agree that content marketing is one of the many tools in the marketing toolkit and content has become an inherent part of all marketing strategies. The essence of content marketing is that it needs to be either informative, educational or entertaining - preferably all three - with high value for customers. It takes many forms, ranging from articles; images; video; webcasts and podcasts to competitions; research; case studies; mobile messaging and events (now commonly called in-person marketing ...).

Becoming the go-to destination

“A good content strategy can, over time, help create a unique personality and character for your brand,” says Suresh Balaji, Head of Marketing, Asia Pacific, Retail Banking and Wealth Management, HSBC. A Hong Kong landmark, the pair of lions guarding the HSBC building, were given a rainbow-colored make-over at the end of 2016, as part of the bank’s “Celebrate Pride, Celebrate Unity” campaign for LGBT rights. It was a sight that might not be considered unusual in many cities - but in Hong Kong it sparked controversy with several campaign groups signing petitions against the lions, while other people were vocal on social media with their support. The story was picked up by the international media and launched countless selfies.

It was an important piece of content marketing for HSBC. “We’re well known for being experts on financial matters and wealth management and for supporting

our clients with education and advice, but our social media page enabled us to become a destination for people to debate this issue.”

Another success for HSBC was its myth-busting Facebook post in February 2017, about the ‘secret’ tunnel from the bank’s Hong Kong headquarters to Victoria Harbour.

It turns out to be true; there is a tunnel. But it’s not a romantic escape route, instead it’s used to channel seawater to cool the building. In two days, the post attracted more than 8.5 k likes, 660 shares and over 270 comments; helping the bank go beyond its core brand and reach new audiences.

Ayal Steiner, Managing Director APAC at Outbrain, content



“THE ESSENCE OF CONTENT MARKETING IS THAT IT NEEDS TO BE EITHER INFORMATIVE, EDUCATIONAL OR ENTERTAINING.”

SHARE THE SHAVE #2

Through the real-life, ten-year romance of Hong Kong celebrities Alex Fong and Stephy Tan, Braun and its communication partner, Ketchum, created a romantic video where Stephy gives Alex a surprise gift- a Braun shaver — then proceeded to shave him on camera as part of a romantic and often humorous look at their relationship. Share the Shave was a hit on social media and amplified through readers of Elle magazine who received coaching on how to shave their partners.

Of course, those knowledgeable of Hong Kong's pop culture will recall that Alex and Stephy have since split. However, the program cut through the clutter to reap success for Braun.

discovery and marketing platform, agrees that brands have an opportunity to make themselves a destination. "Would you prefer to watch a sky-diving video from a regular TV channel or Red Bull?" he asks. "Red Bull now has a phenomenal reputation for extreme sports and if you go to www.redbull.com you'll see crazy stuff. Over time, brands that are dedicated to building their brands and becoming experts through content receive the most attention."

"PARTNERING WITH PUBLISHERS HAS PROVEN A SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY."

Remaining relevant

It's also about being relevant. "Authenticity and relevancy are critical", says Dr. Simeon Mellalieu, Partner, Client Development Asia Pacific, Ketchum, and External Relations Chair, Council of Public Relations Firms of Hong Kong "Content marketers need to focus on the emotional benefit rather

than the functional benefit. If you are functional-benefit driven, then people think it's just 'a load of messages', and those messages are either ignored - or maybe even ridiculed - for the way you've approaching the content."

"If you're developing your content from an emotional benefit point of view, you're tapping into an issue or a question your audiences are thinking about and what is motivating them. You're inserting yourself into a conversation which is relevant to the audiences you're trying to reach."

Think like a publisher

A key mindset for brands is to think like publishers, to understand their audience well enough to create the kind of content that they really want and find credible. Brands can learn from publishers by looking at four main concepts - talking about a trending and relevant topic; reporting on research and insights; being authoritative and answering readers' questions before they ask; and having strong opinions in the editorial section.

And partnering with publishers has been a successful strategy. Content programs that tell a story organic to a publishing platform are better recalled and appreciated by readers. "Storytelling that digs deep into an engaging topic mirrors an editorial approach and proven best practices," says Mark Rogers, Vice President of Sales, Asia Pacific, for The Wall Street Journal. "The opportunity to leverage a publisher's convening power and access to its trusted news archives and audiences provides an opportunity for brands."

Search, social and discovery

Organic social distribution remains an effective way to drive traffic to content - generating shares, comments and links via social

channels. However, with social networks constantly adding or changing their functionality, it can be hard to keep up. This is why the vast majority of brands use paid distribution as well, using channels such as Outbrain and Taboola.

Steiner says, "Every company needs a content distribution strategy. Getting organic social shares or audience searching for your content organically, will most likely not work at scale. Paid search and social allow you to target people based on search keywords or social preferences such as pages they 'like'. But there is also an opportunity to leverage Discovery moment and target audience by their interests. A solid distribution strategy needs to plug into what people do online, and that is Search, Social and Discovery."



The Kaizen approach

Lim says, "One of the best things about content marketing in the digital space is that we receive constant feedback on our content and content tools. We can quickly get a sense of what our audiences are responding to and what they are consuming. We know what they like to see and can adjust our campaigns to ensure they see more of what they want."

"We take a 'Kaizen' approach of incremental improvement," says Jack Shaw. "Kaizen, 改善, is Japanese for "improvement". When used in the business sense, Kaizen refers to activities that continuously improve. So, we try things, and then take a step back and say, "what works?"; "what doesn't?"; and "what are we going to change?"

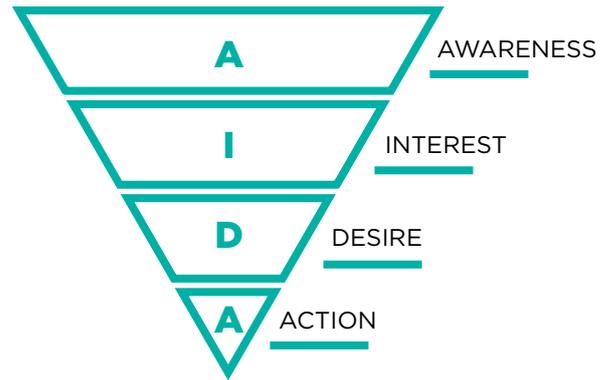
"And then we move forward again."

VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

It was not so long ago that marketing communications was all about trying to match a brand to a type of audience; maybe based on age, gender or geography or, if we were lucky, all three. Marketers have become smarter in recent years. They know the audience is less clearly defined and, instead of being targets, people have become discoverers.

In the early part of the 20th century, marketing was driven by what was referred to as the AIDA or AIDMA model: Attention, Interest, Desire, (Memory), and Action. Introduced when motorization made transport more efficient and affordable, goods went from being mainly locally produced and purchased, to being distributed nationally and internationally.

The AIDA model



Brands found new consumers by placing their products in supermarkets and shopping malls. However, with easier availability, came more choice. Brands had to learn how to differentiate themselves. Enter the AIDA or AIDMA model - a linear marketing strategy.

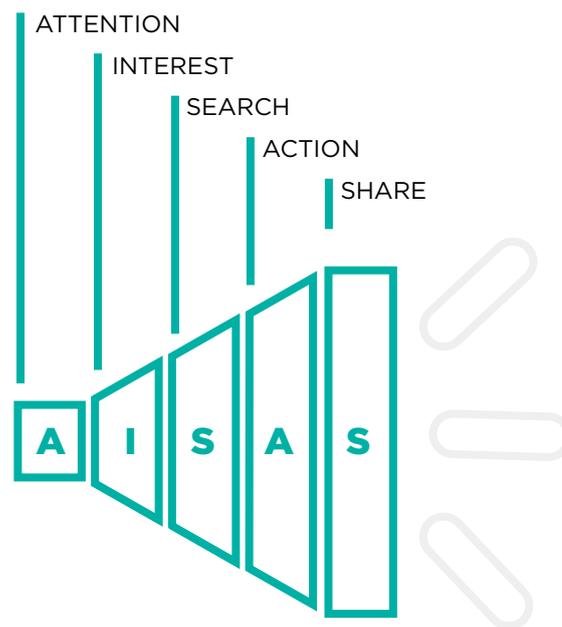
Creating differentiation

“To maximize their share of voice, brands had to continually reinvent themselves and outspend their competitors on television and radio, and in print,” says Alex Naito, Director of Digital, dentsu X APAC. These were the days when brand awareness was all about marketing and communication. TVCs and radio jingles were invented to keep a brand name top-of-mind to maximize a product’s chance of being remembered between the weekly shopping trip. Fundamentally, KPIs used today have not been revamped for nearly 80 years.”

Bridging to online

In 2004, Dentsu introduced a new model better suited to the digital economy. AISAS, an acronym for Attention, Interest, Search, Action and Share, resulted from recognizing digital media’s influence on consumer’s purchase behavior. Consumers had begun using the internet to search for products and reviews, and encouraged to post their own

The AISAS® model



reviews and blogs. E-commerce began to make itself felt and marketers became obsessed by search marketing.

However, the ‘A’ and ‘I’ of both models remained as important KPIs. Marketers added prompt messages at the end of TV and radio commercials in the hope that consumers would go online. “In my opinion, AISAS was a transition model, bridging the offline word of mass production, mass logistics and mass awareness to the online world of one-to-one activity,” says Naito.

Moving to proactive discovery

Recently, Naito and Dentsu have been talking about a new model. DECAX - Discover, Engage, Check, Action and eXperience - points to the move from waiting passively for a message to proactive discovery.

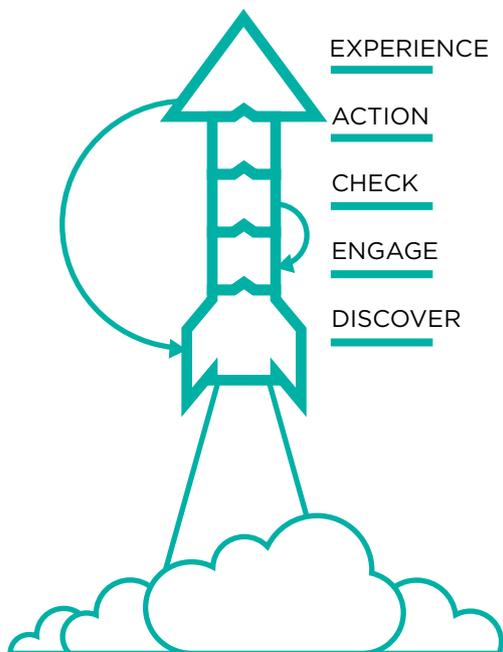
“WE HAVE TO PUT CONTENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CONSUMERS’ JOURNEYS SO THEY CAN FIND IT FOR THEMSELVES.”

“It has become harder for marketers to form a stereotypical brand awareness,” continues Naito. “With more and more people using digital devices to access video, programming and news, consumers are bypassing traditional and uniform media such as TV and moving to social media and curated sites. Consumers spontaneously click likes and engage with anything from the latest news to personal photos, and are not equally receptive to all messages.

“Such fundamental changes in consumer behavior means that pushing messages on traditional media only doesn’t work anymore.

To tackle this, it's become more important than ever for marketers to put content within the context of consumer behavior, so they find it interesting and opt-in to content by themselves. For such discovery to happen, we can use content discovery platforms like Outbrain and Taboola to help us."

The DECAX model



“AS CONSUMERS, WE DON’T APPEAR OUT OF NOWHERE, BUY SOMETHING, AND THEN GO AWAY.”

“When it comes to engaging with content, we need to ensure consumers are happy with their discoveries. For this, we need to learn new skills. We need to think like publishers, rather than copy writers. As creative directors, we must think beyond just raising awareness.

“Of course, we all know that consumers are becoming more cautious – particularly those who have encountered some ‘fishy’ or ‘cheesy’ content in the past. Smart consumers have become ‘fact checkers’; researching online sources continuously. As brand publishers, we need to take responsibility for content credibility.”

Then comes the eXperience part of the content journey. Content works best for users who have already made a purchase and used the brand. With inspiring content, users’ satisfaction can be elevated and they can be converted into loyal customers. This is why CRM has become so integral to marketing activity – to reinforce purchase decision and keep them coming back for more.

Continuous customer journey

Focusing on customer experience is critical says David Ketchum, CEO and Founder, Current Asia, and Chairman of the Digital + Direct Marketing Association Asia. “As consumers, we don’t appear out of nowhere, buy something, and then go away. There’s a continuous flow from the time that we become aware of a product or service, through to when we consider purchasing, until we become customers. So, content marketing becomes part of the customer experience.”

“DISCOVERY AND GOOD CONTENT MARKETING CAN WORK TOGETHER PERFECTLY.”

“Marketing has advanced from target audiences to engaging personas. A persona is of course not a real individual, but is synthesized from many data points including research and consumer behaviour. The concept of a target is old fashioned and brand centric; customers today are certainly not going to sit there and be targeted. Every person is different, so you may have infinite customer types, but practically they can be grouped into manageable number of personas.”

“Discovery and good content marketing can work together perfectly – finding customers at the right place in their journey and giving them the content they want at the right time,” says Naito.

TWO BELLMEN #3

Marriott Content Studio and JW Marriott’s Two Bellman short movie franchise has been a global hit. By producing its own content, the hotel chain says it’s “on a mission to stop interrupting consumers, and instead use storytelling to reach them where they are already.” The third movie, ‘Two Bellman Three’, takes place in Seoul, in and around the JW Marriott Dongdaemun Square Seoul.

“It’s a great example of what can happen when creativity meets big buy-in on a corporate scale,” says Carlos Bruinsma, editor of Marketing Magazine.

HOW DO YOU MEASURE THE ROI ON CONTENT MARKETING?

In a huge, multi-platform world, identifying audiences and reach is a huge challenge. And measuring the value of content marketing raises many of the same questions faced by several marketing disciplines, be it advertising, public relations or events.

The range of digital analytics available is, of course, immense. Organizations can look at users, page views, bounce rates, shares, links and a host of criteria to see who and how many people are looking at their content.

DIRECT ADVICE FOR DADS #4

Australian health insurer, HBF, developed a website to build a connection with soon-to-be-dads and those already grappling with the issues of fatherhood. In an online age crowded with “mummy blogs” and resources for mothers, health insurer HBF believes it has identified an unmet need.

With no-nonsense headline and copy, DAD offers practical tips, advice and articles. As it says on the site, it offers “Real-life advice, sense and nonsense from dads who’ve been there, done it, and are wearing the spewed-on t-shirt.”

Clicks and engagement

“Yes, we look at the number of impressions, time spent on pages and clicks, among other measures,” says Ayal Steiner, Managing Director APAC at Outbrain. However, there is a welcome trend towards engagement scores. Clients evaluate companies like Outbrain versus Facebook and Google not just based on what’s cheaper, but based on what’s driving better engagement.

“ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT CONTENT MARKETING IN THE DIGITAL SPACE IS THAT WE RECEIVE CONSTANT FEEDBACK ON OUR CONTENT AND CONTENT TOOLS.”

Global provider of digital, IT network and engineering solutions Tech Mahindra, has a proprietary tool called Socio, which measures online behavior and content consumption. “It’s one way of telling us where our content is being viewed and what kind of difference it is creating for our brand,” according to Indraneel Ganguli, SVP and Global Head – Brand, Marketing and Communication.

“Overall, we measure our content success based on three main indices. First, do content results grow over time? We look at real time results in terms of how many page views, how many people have commented, what the average time spent with their content and so on. Second, would anyone pay for your content? This, I think, is going to be the next big thing in measurement and where we need the best skills. Third, and critically, will people ask you when you’re going to publish your next content? This is the ultimate goal.”

The human factor

However, content marketers are aware of the danger of relying solely on metrics. While geotargeting and direct response has made it easier to find the right consumers, it’s hard to know who is really behind the click or share. The data collected may be 100% accurate, but it’s hard to factor in every human behavior.

David Ketchum, CEO and Founder of Current Asia and Chairman of the Digital + Direct Marketing Association Asia, cites his home laptop as an example. “It moves around the house and is shared by my wife and kids. It’s logged in with my Google account, and so now my profile shows that I like war games,

“WE ARE RECOGNIZING THE INTIMACY BETWEEN CONTENT AND SALES.”

Barbie dolls, dogs, capital markets, derivatives, customer experience, and macaroni and cheese. The analytics have got my identity mixed up with the many people who are signed in with my browser.”

It’s clear that content marketing needs to be measured in more than clicks and shares. Vice President of Sales, Asia Pacific, for The Wall Street Journal Mark Rogers says, “It’s not so much about metrics - although there is a need for that and we supply our clients with the data. What’s equally important is the ability for your content to be seen in the right place; on a platform that has trustworthy content. Brands need to go back to basics to protect their brand from serious damage. That’s where working with a reputable publisher like the ‘Journal’, in a safe and trusted environment, pays off. Readers and viewers are already engaged in quality content. In our latest research, we found that 82 percent of C-suite executives say they trust sponsored content in the Journal. In a recent study on a custom content program run with AT Kearney, 80 percent of



80% of C-suite executives say they trust sponsored content in the Journal.

readers said their perception of AT Kearney's brand had increased because of the campaign.

"It's also about being with customers on additional platforms. We run the 'Journal' based on a membership model. We don't just have readers, we have members. And we tailor our content towards what our members want - be it words, visuals or the ability to network with like-minded business people at our events."

Sales - the final frontier

However, maybe the true measure of content marketing is the number of sales made or opinions influenced.

Steiner continues. "What we and our clients are interested in is the "click before the last click"; what Google calls the 'zero moment of truth'. This is the moment when you can find someone interested and try and get them to the point where they acquire a product."

Dr. Simeon Mellalieu, Partner, Client Development Asia Pacific for global communications firm, Ketchum, and External Relations Chair, Council of Public Relations Firms of Hong Kong says, "We are recognizing the intimacy between content and sales, which is not always matched by the user experience.

For example, you might read about something on Facebook and want to buy it. However, you have to leave the site and go to, say, Amazon to make the purchase."

China might be leading the way when it comes to integrating social media and e-commerce. "They have some of the most integrated social media and ecommerce platforms. China has taken the best of what is available around the world and added their own secret sauce," says Mellalieu. "You can discover great content and take an action - be it a purchase or just a simple share, without leaving the social platform. This is a model which many marketers are trying to export around the world."

"THE TRUE POINT OF CONTENT IS THE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE."

Ganguli adds, "Whether hard data, engagement or sales, the level of emotional response is key. The true point of content is the emotional response. The most important thing is to measure whether a person has responded to you or not."

IN THE FUTURE #5

Tech Mahindra and WSJ Custom Studios have a three-year partnership focused on multimedia custom content about the connected future aimed at global business leaders.

Called In The Future, the partnership includes Tech Mahindra's participation in WSJ's CEO Council annual meeting in Washington, an exclusive, invitation-only membership that brings together the world's most influential leaders of industry, finance, government and policy.

IS FAKE NEWS DEVALUING CONTENT MARKETING?

At the Interactive Advertising Bureau's Annual Leadership Meeting in January, President and Chief Executive Randall Rothenberg called upon marketers to act against fake news. Referring to it as "the child of clickbait and the grandchild of the direct-mail scams", he said the digital media industry needs to "repair the trust."

It's hard to find a media outlet that is not reporting on fake news lately. In response to a groundswell of opinions, Mark Zuckerberg first took to his blog at the end of 2016 to outline some of the work Facebook is doing to kick fake news off the platform, including its flagging system, which it will tag fake news as "disputed". If many readers report a false story, it will go to a third-party fact checking organization for flagging. Zuckerberg believes that people who read a flagged article are significantly less likely to share it than people who just read the headline. The social site is also trying to crack down

on advertising and spammers who masquerade as well-known news organizations. While Facebook experimented with these efforts in the past few months, it has most recently upped the ante by offering users advice for spotting hoaxes that appear in its newsfeed.

Over at Google, in tackling digital advertising fraud, Scott Spencer, Director of Product Management, Sustainable Ads, said that it took down 1.7 billion ads in 2016 that violated its advertising policies, more than double the number of bad adverts it took down in 2015. He said Google acted on 47,000 sites for promoting content and products related to weight-loss scams; 15,000 sites for unwanted software; disabled 900,000 ads for containing malware; and suspended around 6,000 sites and 6,000 accounts for attempting to advertise counterfeit goods. In early 2017, Google has also deployed an army of "content cops" or content-monitor contractors on fake news enforcing its updated guidelines that tackle "upsetting-offensive" content. It has also recently introduced a Fact Check tag in search results so that people can easily access information about the claim, the person who made the claim and the verdict after fact-check by news publishers and fact-checking organizations.

Overdue accountability

For publishers and content marketers, it's a case of "about time too".

"We need to hold people and businesses accountable. It's about the fight for journalism," says Mark Rogers, Vice President of Sales, Asia Pacific, The Wall Street Journal. The parent company of Dow Jones & The Wall Street Journal - News Corp has consistently battled against fake news, piracy and digital duopoly of Google and Facebook.

Alex Naito, Director of Digital, dentsu X APAC, agrees. "Brands need to be careful where their content appears. The last thing an advertiser wants is for their product to appear next to a fake news posting. It hurts the product and, ultimately, impacts the value of their brand."

There has been a spate of advertisers pulling campaigns from social sites in 2017. And industry pundits know this is just the tip of

the iceberg. Many are still reeling from the 'Methgate' revelation by computer security firm, White Ops, that a Russian cyber-forgery ring has created more than half a million fake internet users and 250,000 fake websites to trick programmatic advertising. Digital ad fraud like this was projected to cost marketers more than US\$7 billion in 2016, according to a study by the US Association of National Advertisers and White Ops.

The opportunity for contenting marketing

The good news - if there is any - about fake news is that people are paying more attention to reputable publishers and trustworthy content. It's an opportunity for premium publishers and brands to generate more readers and viewers through their content.

In a time of low trust in institutions and some digital media, it boils down to a much-maligned noun, 'authenticity'. Content marketers are garnering

"BRANDS NEED TO BE CAREFUL WHERE THEIR CONTENT APPEARS."

trust by using data and case studies from verified sources and demonstrating quality journalism.

Future Ready Singapore

#6

Future Ready Singapore from Singapore's Economic Development Board is a digital publication dedicated to delivering valuable market insights and information about Singapore and Asia to business leaders.

Future Ready Singapore editors provide a streamlined, carefully curated selection of new items, articles and viewpoints in four vital categories - Strategy, Innovation, Market Insights and Leadership & Talent.

06 2017 AND BEYOND

We asked our contributors to tell us what they think 2017 will bring for content marketing. Here's what they had to say:

Suresh Balaji, Head of Marketing, Asia Pacific, Retail Banking and Wealth Management, HSBC

"A lot of people come and ask me what is your digital marketing strategy, Suresh? I respond with a line I read recently - there shouldn't be anything called a digital marketing strategy, it's just marketing strategy for a world that's gone digital."

"So, I seldom have content marketing conversations. Whatever strategy we use will eventually serve the whole business."

Carlos Bruinsma, Editor, Marketing Magazine

"One thing we have seen as certain technology has become more accessible, is the more mainstream adoption of technology such as virtual and augmented reality as marketing tools."

"Going forward, I imagine we'll see more of this but, perhaps more importantly, machine learning is a hot topic. Technology that is already here, such as chatbots, has the potential to seriously impact the industry."

Indraneel Ganguli, SVP and Global Head - Brand, Marketing and Communication, Tech Mahindra

"The future of content marketing is going to be less of content but more of intent."

"The average lifespan of content is diminishing and marketers have to focus on this fact. As content marketing evolves, we'll be producing far less content, but which is far more interesting."

David Ketchum, CEO and Founder, Current Asia, and Chairman of the Digital + Direct Marketing Association Asia

"The part that hasn't changed is you still need people who understand what other people's needs are, and make sure that you're talking about topics that are truly interesting. To help do that, there are many analytics, tools, platforms and syndication channels. Some believe automation will be a key driver, but we should remember that you can't automate the EQ part of the equation. You can imitate the IQ, but you can't automate the EQ."

Dane Lim, Director of Marketing and Communications, Singapore Economic Development Board

"The pace and speed of how people are being absorbed into the digital age is amazing, yet we still have a divide between the digital native and digital immigrant. Many of our audience are still in the digital immigrant section. This is a great opportunity for us to develop content which speaks to them directly, and helps them navigate through the business challenges."

Simeon Mellalieu, Partner, Client Development Asia Pacific, Ketchum, and External Relations Chair, Council of Public Relations Firms of Hong Kong

"I don't think we have a single client that actually uses an exclusive content marketing approach to their communications. It's an element of the toolkit rather than the primary directive. Fundamentally, if you look at what we're actually talking about, it's an ability to craft a story in a way that is meaningful and relevant to specific audience segments, and there's never a one size fits all approach to storytelling."

"However, there's one thing which content marketing has done - it refreshingly reminds us to be audience centric. Every individual in your target audience has an audience, and that audience has an audience."

Alex Naito, Director of Digital, dentsu X APAC

"Discovery is a tremendous opportunity for content marketing. People don't wait passively to receive content any more; instead they are happy to go out and find it for themselves. That's why it's more important than ever to put trusted brand content in front of consumers and make it easy for them to discover."

Mark Rogers, Vice President of Sales, Asia Pacific, The Wall Street Journal

"CMOs are moving more towards content marketing because they realize that the influence that it has

is far greater, and they're focused much more on quality rather than quantity. This is where we come in - through our membership model, we provide a credible platform, and we can make content marketing work because we already have the attention of the world's most important people."

Jack Shaw, Branding Director, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries

"At the World Economic Forum in Davos we talked about how we live in this new age of fake news. I believe we have an added responsibility as content marketers to make sure that what we're doing isn't delegitimizing journalism. While I strongly believe corporate journalism can and should still be great reportage, I do feel that there's a lack of best practices sharing and conversation around transparency and responsibility in the content marketing field. Part of the issue may lie in that content marketing can be seen from two different views - and these two sides don't talk to each other nearly enough."

"We are going to look at our own practices over the next year and develop guidelines to ensure we are transparent in a way that's a positive experience for the reader. I would love to join a working group in Asia to push this forward."

Ayal Steiner, Managing Director APAC, Outbrain

"I think the term content marketing will eventually disappear. Content marketing is a term we use today to describe a different approach to the creative process, which is a lot more client centric."

"Consumers have far more choice and that means that those brands have to go back to the drawing board - rethink their messaging, their creative strategy, and their media strategy. It has always been clear in marketing that great stories and great creative the key to winning attention. And this will just become the normal way that marketers run their creative strategy."

