

CONTENT MARKETING HANDBOOK

SIMPLE WAYS TO INNOVATE
YOUR MARKETING APPROACH

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Content Marketing Handbook – Simple Ways to Innovate Your Marketing Approach

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ACRONYMS

B2B	Business To Business
B2C	Business To Consumer
CM	Content Marketing
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CMEx	Content Marketing Expert
CMS	Content Management System
CPM	Cost Per Thousand Ad Impressions
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ROI	Return on Investment
RSS	Really Simple Syndication
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
URL	Uniform Resource Locator

CHAPTER

1

FOREWORD

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been produced within the “**Content Marketing Expert Project – CMEx**”, a project co-funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme, sub-program of Leonardo da Vinci, Transfer of Innovation action, to encourage the spread of the content culture and to provide a practical tool for the creation of content and the implementation of the most appropriate and effective content marketing strategy.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

CMEX The aim of the CMEx Project is to provide practical knowledge of modern marketing through the implementation and testing of the innovative method of Content Marketing in Poland, Malta, Austria and Italy (the countries of the project partners).

The activities planned intend to increase the competitiveness of SMEs and their employees, entrepreneurs and marketing specialists by introducing the use of innovative marketing tools, practices and strategies.

Traditional methods of promoting products are getting less effective. There are always more and more companies and products on the market, making it increasingly difficult to stand out from the competition. Content marketing allows SMEs to share knowledge and to show themselves, because everyone, regardless of size or origin, has something interesting to say, and knowledge sharing brings profit to any business activity.

The free movement of goods and services not only extends a company’s range, but also its competitiveness. In the existing global market modern marketing techniques become key factors for competition, development and often even for the survival of companies. The effectiveness of content marketing is confirmed by several research studies and surveys but the most important thing is to put it into practice, to make it happen.

Content marketing is still a relatively new approach in marketing in many countries. It is a very powerful tool but surprisingly very little used. Content marketing offers an effective way to reach potential customers. Most people can understand and use it without extensive training. Unfortunately, companies often see a danger in this kind of strategy: they are afraid of giving away valuable knowledge without being certain of receiving something in return. That is why many companies rely solely on traditional marketing methods.



Many employees are not ready for modern marketing yet; this handbook aims to present innovative methods and content marketing solutions (based on proven, transferred models) that can be applied by SMEs to help them increase their innovation level and performance.

At the present there is a lack of proven sets of principles of what works for content marketing, based on research findings or industry best practices; there is no systematic market for content marketing services yet. Marketing companies and portals in the field generally aim at proven standard marketing strategies; they don’t provide either know-how or experience or viable business models for content marketing.

Recent developments in streaming video and interactive educational materials make it possible to use the content marketing approach in very dynamic and complex forms. Therefore, marketing specialists, entrepreneurs and SMEs and their employees should carefully consider their content marketing strategy before starting any business activity.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The **Content Marketing Handbook** starts from a shared definition of what Content Marketing means, how it evolved and how it relates to other marketing practices, what strategies, tools, objectives and benefits it involves today. In a second step the authors conducted research of current practices worldwide. Finally, they analysed the state of the art, who practices it and how, and they identified good practices and strategies and documented these through case studies.

Specific tactics and tools have been studied in depth, identifying strengths relative to different goals, target groups and distribution, how content marketing is implemented, how its results are measured, lessons learnt/mistakes to avoid, and some good practices.

The **content marketing awareness**, needs, expertise and the use of SMEs in each project country (Poland, Austria, Malta, Italy), have been collected through electronic, in-person and telephone questionnaires, completed by entrepreneurs or the marketing staff working with them. The information gathered – about how widespread the awareness and application of content marketing practices are, how they are applied, the results attained by SMEs using them, and the differences and similarities discovered among the CMEx partner countries – are presented in this handbook.



The intention is to illustrate not only what high-profile international companies with well-funded marketing specialists are able to accomplish, but more importantly, to highlight achievements that are possible by small companies without large budgets. While the former can illustrate and set a high target, it is even more important to show what SMEs are able to do, inspiring other SMEs to envision themselves performing content marketing and becoming more competitive. The case studies reported also provide a benchmark of current practices between the SMEs in participating countries.

In addition to performing the field research of current practices, and the questionnaire survey of SMEs, the CMEx project partners have also consulted marketing experts including web marketing agencies, and have incorporated their advice and suggestions.

Experts will also be consulted for the next phases of the project work – field testing the manual, revising it based on the analysis of the test results, and creating teaching materials that work with this handbook, and adapting it to the workflow and goals of SMEs and their employees.

Following the preparation of the initial version of the **Content Marketing Handbook**, the materials will be translated into the project partners' national languages and made available to a pool of potential users (SMEs and their employees, NGOs, entrepreneurs and marketing experts) in each country.

After a period of testing, further revisions will be incorporated based on the results obtained and on the feedback from those that have used it in the trial period.

The final version of the handbook will be shared throughout the EU, its citizens and companies.

The CMEx project also expects to conduct meetings with national and European public bodies in order to present the handbook and its strategies.

CHAPTER

2

INTRODUCTION TO
CONTENT MARKETING

2.1 DEFINITION OF CONTENT MARKETING

CM

“Content marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action“¹

This is the definition developed by the Content Marketing Institute and recognized by the international community of experts in marketing.

Some other original ways in which experts have framed the practice of content marketing are:

- » **Content marketing** is the opposite of advertising. It’s about engaging consumers with the stuff they really want, in a way that serves your brand’s purposes and ideals, rather than just trying to jam your logo into their periphery. It’s reaching the exact consumers you want, instead of a vaguely defined demo. It’s helpfully providing an experience they want, instead of trying to distract them from the one they came for. In short, it is the very evolution of advertising itself into something more effective, more efficient, and much less odious (*Keith Blanchard – Story Worldwide*).
- » **Content Marketing** isn’t also a tactic that you can just turn on and off and hope that it will be successful. It has to be a mind-set that is embraced and encouraged (*C.C. Chapman, co-author with Ann Handley of Content Rules*).
- » **Content Marketing** embodies an organization’s core brand elements. It uses a variety of media formats such as text, video, photographs, audio, presentations, e-books and infographics to tell your brand or company’s story. It can be read on a variety of devices including computers, tablets, smartphones and others. It’s distributed via owned, third party and social media platforms and it provides measurable results through the use of appropriate calls-to-action and promotional codes (*Heidi Cohen – Riverside Marketing Strategies*).
- » A winning strategy succeeds when technology and people work together. Automation and semantics can help to filter, facilitate and uncover hidden treasures, but it is the human touch – thoughtful selection and consideration of content – that will create a truly new and engaging brand experience for audiences to discover, enjoy and share. In this sense **Content Marketing** is a winning strategy (*Kelly Hungerford – Paper.li*).
- » **Content Marketing** isn’t push marketing, in which messages are sprayed out at groups of consumers. Rather, it’s a pull strategy – it’s the marketing of attraction. It’s being there when consumers need you and seek you out with relevant, educational, helpful, compelling, engaging, and sometimes entertaining information (*Rebecca Lieb, author of Content Marketing “Think Like a Publisher – How to Use Content to Market Online and in Social Media“*).

¹ <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/>

The definition of content marketing further depends on the author's viewpoint and background, but the rules of good content marketing and essential strategies and principles are very much alike in most cases.

One of the key similarities in all the different ways of looking at content marketing is that the customer experience and the needs, preferences and questions of people and the so-called target audiences are at the centre.

A consistent use of relevant content runs like a thread through all marketing activities. Good content is essential everywhere so using it in a smart way is key too.

Content marketing is a narrative form of marketing that provides customers with useful information, at moments when they are interested in receiving it, in an engaging, not "sales-ey" way. This enables it to break through the advertising clutter that consumers ignore or view sceptically, while it gently persuades prospects and helps buyers and the public.

Even if Content Marketing may appear to be a recent innovation in marketing practice, really it's simply a new technique to convey the same information that consumers have always wanted about products and services. Its power has been exponentially improved with today's social media platforms and other devices.

2.2 HISTORY & EVOLUTION OF CONTENT MARKETING

Sometimes, when we speak of Content Marketing, one is led to think that it is something new and innovative designed especially for the internet, but history says that is not so.

Content Marketing is a success coming from the past, it is something of a practiced craft with a longer history than we might expect.

The story of content marketing spans the past 120 years, beginning with a baking powder manufacturer that published a revolutionary practical cookbook. By the way, we often read or hear about "Content Marketing", i.e. the creation and sharing of media and editorial content by companies in order to acquire customers, it is natural to think that we are faced with something relatively "new" and designed specifically to be conveyed through social media, but let's look at this infographic created by the Content Marketing Institute², which illustrates, in short, the history of the Content Marketing.

As we can see, Content Marketing is anything but new: Content Marketing has a long history behind it, it is a tried and a true marketing strategy that has been utilized by several brands to successfully build or consolidate their reputation.

Though the types of content created by brands today are very different from the type of content distributed a hundred years ago, the core concept it still the same³.

2 <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2012/02/history-content-marketing-infographic/>

3 Arnie Kuenn (Jun 25, 2013) , "Is John Deere, The Original Content Marketer?"

➤ August Oetker

In 1891 **August Oetker**⁴ sold small packages of his Backin baking powder to households with recipes printed on the back. In 1911 he started publishing a cookbook that has gone through several updates over the past 100 years and now it is one of the most “best-selling” cookbooks with more than 19 million printed copies. All recipes originated from the test kitchen of the Oetker company and the book was carefully written as a textbook to teach cooking from scratch.

Oetker was very aware of the need for good marketing and practical communication, and used to lend authority to his marketing. The goal was to communicate the quality and reliability (“succeeds every time”) of this brand-name product, which more than a century later remains a best seller.

➤ John Deere

In 1895 agricultural machinery manufacturer **John Deere**⁵, in hopes of becoming a resource for its customers, launched *The Furrow* magazine.

The Furrow is not filled with promotional messages and self-serving content, it is not selling John Deere equipment directly (like a catalogue would do) but it provides information to farmers on how to solve daily problems and increase their activity’s profitability.

It was developed by thoughtful journalists, storytellers, and designers, and covered topics that farmers cared about deeply.

The Furrow, considered as the first custom publication, the earliest example of content marketing, is still in circulation, reaching 1.5 million readers in 40 countries in 12 different languages.

John Deere is often given credit for being the first to leverage content marketing as part of a long-term business process⁶.



4 <http://www.oetker.us/us-en/about-dr-oetker/about.html>

5 <http://www.deere.com/furrow/>

6 <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2013/09/content-marketing-history-and-future/>

> Michelin

In 1900 **Michelin**⁷, a French tyre company, published its first guidebook – the 400-page *Michelin Guide* – to help drivers maintain their cars and find accommodation and refreshment points while touring France. The guide also included addresses of fuelling stations, mechanics and tyre dealers: the logic being presumably the connection between tyres and travel.

An amount of 35,000 copies of the first edition were distributed for free.

As the success of the initiative kept growing through the years, Michelin started selling these books in 1920. “This Guide was born with the century, and it will last every bit as long”, said the Michelin brothers, André and Edouard, in the preface to the first ever Michelin Guide.

More than 100 years later, the *Michelin Guide* still remains the reference for the restaurant and hotel world, and is today available in 14 editions covering 23 countries and is sold in nearly 90 countries. It also set a precedent for both informative guides and content marketing distribution.

> Woodward’s Genesee Pure Food Company

In 1904 **Woodward’s Genesee Pure Food Company**⁸ started the distribution of the cookbook *Jell-O*, the gelatine dessert produced by the company. *Jell-O* was the main ingredient in the recipes featured: this forward-looking marketing tactic led to a strong increase of sales. *Jell-O* made its books easily available to anyone who wished to experiment with creative *Jell-O* dessert recipes by delivering them door-to-door for free.

“There’s Always Room for *Jell-O*”: this is the campaign slogan of a simple gelatine dessert that today is known as “America’s Most Famous Dessert”⁹. The success story is the result of advertising and merchandising methods, new and different, never before employed. Today, the brand is so popular that *Jell-O* has become a generic term to refer to gelatine dessert across the United States and Canada.

> Burns and McDonnell

In 1913, the U.S. Engineering and Consulting company **Burns and McDonnell**¹⁰ introduced its *BenchMark* magazine, a quarterly engineering periodical that covers a broad range of trends, topics and engineering disciplines, as well as general-interest engineering pieces. The periodical helped the company to illustrate its expertise in the engineering industry by providing high quality educational content to potential customers.

This high-level expertise is something the firm is very proud of and serves as a differentiator when compared to competitors.

The magazine is still published today both in printed and digital version, viewable online and on mobile devices. It is not only being the engineering industry’s top free magazine, but also the oldest.

7 <http://www.viamichelin.co.uk/tpl/mag6/art200903/htm/tour-saga-michelin.htm>

8 <http://www.jellogallery.org/history.html>

9 Wyman, Carolyn (2001). *Jell-O: A Biography – The History and Mystery of America’s Most Famous Dessert*. Mariner Books. pp. 4–5. ISBN 978-0156011235.

10 <http://www.burnsmcd.com/BenchMark>

> Sears

In 1924 **Sears**¹¹ launched its *World's Largest Store Radio Program*, keeping farmers informed during the deflation crisis with contents supplied by the Roebuck Agricultural Foundation.

Sears understood that radio was a great tool to reach the audience, since in the previous years the company had regularly paid radio stations to broadcast advertisements, increasing its popularity among farmers.

> Procter and Gamble

In 1930s soap manufacturers **Procter and Gamble**¹² was the first company to advertise nationally directly to consumers and it literally created the concept of “soap opera” by sponsoring radio and television dramas targeting women.

On the 4th of December 1933, at 3:00 pm, on NBC's Red Network broadcast the first episode of *Oxydol's Own Ma Perkins* sponsored by P&G. This was more than the debut of a program. It was the first daytime serial on network radio sponsored by a Procter & Gamble product—and more importantly, a Procter & Gamble SOAP product.

Using dramatic, engaging storylines, these soap operas became an integral part of a regular talking point where people's daily lives and the company increased soaps' sales.

> Nike

In 1966, the founder of the **Nike**¹³ company, Bill Bowerman, after observing a jogging club in New Zealand, began to understand the value of jogging as a traditional fitness routine and so he published a booklet on jogging that basically brought the sport to America.

This 19-page booklet, titled *Jogging*, was written by Bowerman and an experienced cardiologist to help the average American get fit through running, not sell shoes. Along with Bowerman's other involvement with professional athletes, his work helped inspire the 1970s running boom that Nike clearly benefitted from.

The booklet never once mentioned Nike shoes. It didn't need to. Great content brings big movement all on its own. Content creates movement because it focuses on distributing ideas and adjusting consumer behaviour.

Nike's strategy was based on a perceived need. As first, that need wasn't for better running shoes, but rather for jogging itself. Once the trend was ingrained, the need shifted and the “jogging shoes” themselves became the felt need. Bowerman's original goal was to promote a sport and an idea that he believed in. Nike probably wouldn't be what it is today without Content Marketing.

11 <http://www.searsarchives.com/history/chronologies/detailed/1920s.htm>

12 <http://www.old-time.com/commercials/1930%27s/OOMP.htm>

13 <http://coschedule.com/blog/nike-marketing-strategy/>

> Hasbro

In 1982 **Hasbro**¹⁴ signed a partnership agreement with Marvel Comics, starting a revolution in the toy industry. The two companies simultaneously created G.I. Joe Comic Book series, based on a complex back-story of the heroes fighting against the Cobra Command and associated range of toys.

An animated television mini-series and video games were then developed, contributing to the huge success of the toys; for the first time G.I. Joe proved that creative cross-channel promotion was a viable option even when content marketers were more limited in their choice of media.

The idea was simple – the comics would generate interest in the toys, driving sales, kids would play with the toys and then want to read more of the comics to learn more about their favourite characters.

> LEGO

In the 1980s, **LEGO**¹⁵ faced a tremendous threat from competing construction toys. To cope with this situation, in 1987 LEGO began building a brand content empire by producing wildly successful LEGO videogames, with all their cross merchandising and brand extensions with Star Wars, Harry Potter and others, and launching the *Brick Kicks* magazine now “*LEGO Club*” delivered to millions of LEGO Club members around the world.

Today LEGO is such a giant when it comes to brand content, that at times it more closely resembles a media company than a toy company, literally dominating the competition through multimedia storytelling. As a toy company, no one else comes close to what LEGO has been able to accomplish with branded content.

Each LEGO story line has a dedicated microsite that features plot and character explanations, online games, movies, polls and quizzes and, of course, retail links. Two great examples are LEGO Star Wars and LEGO Ninjago.

For each storyline release, LEGO produces a serial-style movie that runs both on cable and, eventually, through the LEGO website. Most recently, LEGO released its LEGO CHIMA series with a new cartoon through a partnership with Cartoon Network.

LEGO has created *Click*, a community platform that encourages fans to share their LEGO creations. The company has also created *My LEGO Network*, a social network designed especially for children (with a high level of parental control and safety measures), where members can create their own personal pages, win rewards, meet other LEGO fans (and battle them in game modules), and watch LEGO TV.

Although LEGO generates direct revenues from its content (licensing fees for LEGO cartoons, books, and games), most content is created to support its business model (which is to sell more LEGO product).

14 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G.I._Joe:_A_Real_American_Hero_%28Marvel_Comics%29

15 <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2013/06/build-brand-content-empire-learn-from-lego/>

> John F. Oppedahl

In 1996, **John F. Oppedahl**¹⁶, during a roundtable for journalists held at the American Society for Newspaper Editors Conference, coined the expression “Content Marketing”. On this occasion, he offered some different ways to think about readers and how the paper was marketed. He thought that rather than readership, satisfaction needs to be measured – with the goal of moving those who are dissatisfied to satisfied and those who are satisfied to very satisfied.

He argued that a factor affecting satisfaction was the day of the week. What people wanted on their Monday paper was different from what they wanted on their Friday paper. There were certain core topics for different days, and readers had been willing to pay a week’s price for only four days of papers – if they could pick the four days. So, he suggested undertaking an editorial reorganization of certain days. On his opinion, consumers react and follow, but they don’t lead.

> PlaceWare

In 1996 **PlaceWare**¹⁷, a spin-off from Xerox’s PARC Laboratory, started offering web conferencing services. Later that year, WebEx was founded. Web conferencing started to make its way into the marketing mix, branded as *Webinars* or *Webcasts*.

> Microsoft

In 2004 **Microsoft** launched *Channel 9*¹⁸, the first corporate blog to target the developer community. Channel 9 is a Microsoft community site for Microsoft customers. It has video channels, discussions, podcasts, screencasts and interviews with Microsoft. Inspired from the unintentional efforts of Microsoft engineers, it became an immediate success.

Today, the video blog still goes “in the trenches” to cover what Microsoft engineers and creators are working on that are of interest to the company’s followers.

> LiveVault

On 21 February 2005 **LiveVault**¹⁹, a provider of data backup services, needed to promote their new disk-based backup system for corporate data. They knew that traditional media would not cut through the clutter and allow them to reach their audience of IT professionals so the independent marketing consultant, Jeff Weiner asked Captains, along with their sister company, Thunder Sky Pictures, to create a viral web video starring John Cleese that would grab the attention of IT managers.

The result was a new six minutes video featuring John Cleese and the “*Institute of Backup Trauma*”. The incredibly funny video, sent by mail to 150,000 people (mostly IT managers), *went viral* with a 20% click through rate on the 150,000 emails they sent out, generating over 250,000 downloads within the first couple of months. Ten months later the video was being downloaded between 2,000 and 10,000 times a week.

16 <http://files.asne.org/kiosk/editor/june/doyle.htm>

17 <http://rebar.ecn.purdue.edu/ect/links/technologies/internet/placeware.aspx>

18 <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/news/features/2011/sep11/09-08channel9.aspx>

19 <http://soundcry.com/video/GZ2lShDM4-0/John-Cleese-%E2%80%93-Institute-of-Backup-Trauma-%E2%80%93-LiveVault>

> Red Bull

In 2007 the Austrian company **Red Bull**²⁰, the media company that just happens to sell energy drinks, launched its official magazine *The Red Bulletin*, which now has over 5 million subscribers. This is also inserted in newspapers as a free publication. The Red Bull publishing is extensive both in media, channels and formats. It includes mobile apps, print, web TV, web radio, newsfeeds, social networks, video, and even a full length film. It owns 900 different domain names spread across 36 languages.

Red Bull understands the importance of mobile; in fact it has developed apps, games and platforms that work for all devices.

The company sponsors a music school and a month-long event called *Red Bull Music Academy*. It also sponsors different sporting events, such as diving, Formula One Motorsport, plane racing, snowboarding and cycling, just to name a few.

Red Bull has learned to entertain first, it understands that if you do this, the sales will come. They create conversations “around” their brand: they understood that no one wants to talk about a drink, but they will talk about music, share amazing photos and embed videos that are epic.

They created a focused and powerful content strategy by setting up a separate media company. No distractions are allowed from the goal of publishing awesome content.

> BlendTec

In 2007 **BlendTec**²¹ – a \$40-million Orem, Utah-based company specialised in food-processing appliances – uploaded its first “*Will It Blend*” video on YouTube, well acknowledged as one of the pioneering campaigns in the nascent field of *viral marketing*. The video showed a BlendTec blender that made a smoothie out of 13 spiced buffalo wings, a bowl of tortilla chips, and a can of soda. It became an instant hit and spawned a series of “*Will It Blend*” videos showing the industrial- strength blender utterly destroying and pulverising iPhones, firearms, golf clubs, and other items.

The viral sensation led to a 700 percent revenue growth for the blender manufacturer.

The campaign has brought BlendTec’s all-powerful blender more than 100 million views and BlendTec’s YouTube channel now has over 600,000 subscribers.

> AMEX

In 2008 **AMEX**²² launched *OPENForum*, the American Express content platform focused on financial, marketing, and operational solutions for small businesses.

Designed to help business owners grow their business, not out of altruism, but rather of enlightened self-interest. Many small businesses are Amex customers and their growth is good for Amex.

20 <http://www.jeffbullas.com/2013/11/08/is-this-the-top-content-marketing-company-in-the-world/#JoXGw5MoOu5m9KmV.99>

21 <http://www.blendtec.com/>

22 <http://anderspink.com/portfolio-items/7-content-marketing-lessons-from-american-express-open-forum/>

OPENForum gives business owners practical information and educational content, insights from industry experts and business owners (there are over 200 contributors), and tools to connect and collaborate.

The site has user generated content but also content from publishers such as Inc.com.

AMEX now gets as many new credit card inquiries from this platform as it does from any of its other ventures.

American Express intentionally does not publish self-promotional material but focuses on giving customers content that they want and need. The topics that interest small businesses include personal productivity, business management and finance. These are areas that American Express can legitimately comment on without selling but rather than promoting American Express cards, their content marketing approach means they have become a trusted authority on supporting small businesses and developed longer term relationships with customers and potential customers. The benefits to American Express from this content and community marketing include building brand equity, acquiring new customers and developing the loyalty of existing customers. They don't need to overtly sell their services.

➤ Content Marketing Institute

In 2010 the **Content Marketing Institute**²³ was founded by Joe Pulizzi, the leading evangelist for content marketing, an entrepreneur, speaker, and author on content marketing, who believes passionately that there is a better way for brands to market than how they've done it in the past.

The CMI has been created with the mission of advancing the art and science of the practice of Content Marketing, and which now has over 60,000 subscribers, hailing from nearly every country on the planet.

The CMI provides all information about Content Marketing: articles, magazines, sources, researches, experts focuses, trainings, consulting, events organization, webinars, etc.

➤ Coca-Cola

In 2011 the **Coca-Cola**²⁴ company posted on YouTube two videos in which, thanks to a sequence of amusing and curious images (in fact the dominant brand in the colours white, red and black), shows the creativity that lies behind its renowned marketing strategy named *Content 2020*. Jonathan Mildenhall architects Coca-Cola's content marketing strategy and makes it available for the world to view.

The company's ads have always been creative and entertaining. Coca Cola is one of the most recognisable brands in the world. It doesn't matter where you go, Coca Cola is there!

Coca Cola is also the largest business brand on Facebook with nearly 40 million fans.

Content for Coca Cola is the "Matter" and "Substance" of "Brand Engagement". The purpose of content excellence is to create ideas so contagious that they cannot be controlled. On a social web, people can easily share ideas, videos and photos on social networks such as Facebook, so the company wants to create content that could be shared, whether that be an image, a video or an article.

23 <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/>

24 <http://blog.firebrandtalent.com/2012/02/5-lessons-from-coca-colas-new-content-marketing-strategy/>

Coca Cola has realised that the consumer creates more stories and ideas than they do, so their goal is to provoke conversations and then act and react to those conversations 365 days of the year.

The new distribution technologies of Twitter, YouTube and Facebook provide greater connectivity and consumer empowerment than ever before. So Coca Cola believes that just publishing isn't enough, but is necessary interact with its audience and "tribe".

Coca Cola has come to the realisation that in order to grow their business on the social web they need to move on from "One Way Story Telling" to "Dynamic Story Telling". This means they need to allow the story to evolve as they interact and converse with their customers in many media formats and social networks. Storytelling has moved on from static and synchronous, to multifaceted, engaged and spreadable.

➤ Content Marketing World

On September 2011 in Cleveland, Ohio, **Content Marketing World**²⁵ debuted, the largest annual content marketing event on the planet, with the participation of over 600 marketing professionals from 18 different countries coming together to rally around the practice of content marketing.

The event includes opening day workshops, hands-on industry-specific sessions, full conference days, vertical industry sessions and more.

During the event people can learn and network with the best and the brightest in the content marketing industry. They also can collect all the materials they need to take a content marketing strategy back to their team – and – to implement a content marketing plan that will grow their business and inspire their audience.

➤ Ralph Lauren

On August 2008 **Ralph Lauren**²⁶ went mobile and included a QR code on a US open advertising campaign.

If scanned by a smart phone, the QR code would link the user directly to the new mobile site of the company.

By leveraging QR code technology, Ralph Lauren offered consumers a way to shop via their smart phones by scanning the QR code appearing in print advertisements, store windows and mailers. The QR code, a two-dimensional symbol that holds much information including URLs, will automatically connect the mobile user to a specified Internet portal, simply by using the smart phone to read a given symbol or photographing it.

In addition to the shopping functionality, the new site²⁷ will also feature a Ralph Lauren Style Guide and exclusive video content. Not only can consumers shop the U.S. Open collection, but they can also watch tennis videos, read tournament articles and fully experience the brand – all in the palm of their hand. In October of the same year, the company launched a new campaign that included print ads with a QR Code, the first major corporation to start using them in the US.

25 <http://contentmarketingworld.com/>

26 <http://www.mobilemarketer.com/cms/news/commerce/1545.html>

27 <http://m.ralphlauren.com>

Although not a piece of content per se, QR Codes can help engage users and drive them to other online content.

> Salesforce.com

In 2013 **Salesforce.com**²⁸ buys the interactive marketing hub *ExactTarget*. The former CRM (customer relationship management) platform joined forces with the email marketing software firm – which also owns Pardot, the marketing automation company. Salesforce immediately became a key player in the content marketing realm.

As the world's most powerful 1:1 digital marketing platform, connecting companies with their customers in a whole “new way”, the ExactTarget Marketing Cloud helps companies make the most of every customer interaction-creating personalised, cross-channel customer journeys that deliver exceptional brand experiences.

> Oracle

In 2013 **Oracle**²⁹ bought Compendium, a pure content marketing platform that helps companies plan, produce and deliver engaging content across multiple channels throughout their customers' project lifecycle.

Compendium's data-driven content marketing platform aligns relevant content with customer data and profiles to help companies more effectively attract prospects, engage buyers, accelerate conversion of prospects to opportunities, increase adoption, and drive revenue growth.

The combination of Oracle Eloqua Marketing Cloud with Compendium is expected to enable modern marketers to automate content delivery across channels by aligning persona-based content with customers' digital body language to increase top-of-funnel (i.e., initial) customer engagement, improve the quality of sales leads, realize the highest return on their marketing investment, and increase customer loyalty.

Oracle has now positioned itself in the middle of the content marketing revolution by purchasing a pure content-marketing platform.

For a long time, the most widely used distribution method for Content Marketing has been mail (the *Furrow* and the *Jell-O* guide were widely distributed by mail but in the early 90's, with the rise of the Internet, most things changed: a plethora of websites came to life and a new era of content was born.

Whitepapers started to be published online by technology companies and became a standard means for corporate content dissemination.

In the 2000's, eBooks, blogs, podcasts and ultimately Social Media like YouTube, Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook, etc. gained popularity as new ways to produce and distribute content.

Today, many leading international companies practice some sort of Content Marketing and make wide use of the newest digital technologies to reach a huge range of customers worldwide (i.e. Coca Cola – Coca Cola Journey; Red Bull – Red Bulletin Magazine; American Express – OPEN Forum, etc.)

28 <http://www.exacttarget.com/>

29 <http://www.oracle.com/us/corporate/acquisitions/compendium/index.html>

If we think about Content Marketing for a moment, it's evident that the mechanism which relies on it is so intuitive and effective, that helping clients to do something better, faster, and more safely, this reflects positively on the brand and increases the likelihood of product/service sales.

According to a recent infographic, 60% of consumers are inclined to buy a product after reading something that concerned it.

That Content Marketing is effective there is no doubt, in fact it is used by 91% of B2B companies and 86% of B2C (Content Marketing Institute data 2014)³⁰.

Time and time again, Content Marketing has earned its reputation of bringing results³¹.

As we have seen, the history of Content Marketing is rich, and brimming with stories of success. It includes well-known companies like Nike, Sears, LEGO, Coca Cola, McDonalds, American Express, etc.

Brands have been telling stories to attract and retain customers for over one hundred years. The difference today is that the barriers to entry into the publishing arena (content acceptance, talent and technology) no longer exist.

Out of necessity, marketing ideas and concepts have evolved and been refined over time. Today's audience is more conscious of advertising, so modern marketers need to employ greater finesse and subtlety.

The opportunities for Content Marketing are easier to access now than ever before. With blogs or social media feeds, companies can hit "publish" at a moment's notice. The content they create is limited only by their ideas, or their understanding of what their customers really want to know.

Customers will never grow tired of helpful information that helps them be better at what they do. The more companies contribute to their education, the more they will contribute to the companies' bottom line.

From John Deere to Coca-Cola, the power of story has never been stronger, or more important for brands and their customers.

Content Marketing captures more of a customer's attention, and aims to help them more than the company itself. Potential customers are much more likely to consume it, and much more likely to learn. Learning then leads to a change in thinking, which then leads to movement, the kind of movement that will likely result in a sale without even asking for it.

Reflecting on past examples of notable Content Marketing campaigns makes it possible to appreciate the modern mechanics of Content Marketing, and to improve future campaigns by learning from the experience and mistakes made.

Content Marketing isn't just the future, it's the present!

30 <http://www.demandmetric.com/content/infographic-content-marketing>

31 <http://todaymade.com/blog/history-of-content-marketing/>

CHAPTER

3

OBJECTIVES, BENEFITS
AND STRATEGY OF CM

3.1 BUSINESS OBJECTIVES OF CONTENT MARKETING

3.1.1 WHY ARE COMPANIES USING CM?

There are numerous reasons why companies apply content marketing solutions. Basically, these reasons are the same as in the case of any other marketing practice. It does not come as a surprise that practically every company aims at winning customers (or maintaining the existing ones) and, as a result, at increasing the sales of its products and services. All actions within marketing are focused on this very objective. Content marketing is no exception.

However, if we assume that generating income is the objective, we will easily come to the conclusion that this objective is too obvious and too general. In particular in the context of the budget of the marketing actions, you must be perfectly aware of what the money is spent on and what effect you can expect. Precisely defined objectives will come in handy.

The major objectives of the marketers who decide to launch content marketing are as follows:

- » Increasing brand awareness
- » Lead generation
- » Converting leads into customers
- » Building the image as the industry leader
- » Customer engagement
- » Customer retention
- » Website traffic
- » Sales

Depending on the approach, the objectives can be defined more or less precisely. Some marketers agree that generating leads and converting them into customers are completely different actions. However there is a lot of truth in the opinions of those who simply reduce the objectives to three categories:

- » Higher sales
- » Customer loyalty
- » Brand recognition

This list (whether in the short or full version) seems familiar, doesn't it? After all, everybody wants to sell a lot and be recognized within the industry. Here the key question arises – if the objectives are the same as the ones of the traditional marketing, then why content marketing?

No need to look for the answer. Traditional methods do not always correspond to the real needs of the businesses. If you carried out a survey checking which of the above marketing objectives are not important for the company, you would learn that, regardless of the industry, company and market size or the turnover, everybody wants to sell and be recognized. This is what we know. We also know that if several companies try to win the customer, this is quite a challenge.

Bombarding customers with advertising content is becoming less and less effective. The human brain becomes resilient not only to the number of outdoor messages, but also the more or less classic forms of display. There are more and more advertisements, but the number of them noticed by us is dropping.

As customers, we also rebel against spamming (as we see it) in spaces, whether public (a lot of cities introduce restrictions on outdoor advertising, especially in the tourist-attractive district) or private (filters blocking the ads in the internet browsers is a standard) with such messages. Yet after all, the marketer wants the best for us. They just want to let us know about a new chance which we could otherwise miss. Like a hundred other marketers in a hundred other industries.

In consequence, the classic marketing often turns out to be ineffective, or at least insufficient. In principle, it focuses on the direct message put in front of the customer, which stands in their way. It aims at stopping them in their tracks even for a moment and forcing them to react to the offer. While reading e-mails from our colleagues, we need to filter the promotions, and while visiting our favourite websites, we must look for the content among the aggressive banners. Can it work properly?

Inbound marketing¹ is an alternative – it is based on the assumption that the customers will come to us themselves and get interested in what we offer, if we provide them with an interesting content. Instead of irritating them and often misleading by manipulation with the ad, we make them find us themselves. And it works best if we are able to offer them the access to what they are currently interested in and what they need.

It is difficult not to deem this approach ambitious, as effective implementation of content marketing is truly an art. However, the market enforces such actions and for some time they have already been a standard for many companies.

3.1.2 HOW ARE COMPANIES RUNNING CM?

Content marketing is a huge challenge, as it requires a long-term strategy and objectives set in a measurable way (broadly speaking – so that they are consistent with the SMART concept *definire*). The effects are never visible straight away. The contributed work, especially the one connected with the subject matter, involves costs and dedicating a lot of hours (after all, we talk about a situation when the customers find us themselves). Additionally, you must be well familiar with Internet technology, as even the best content is of no use if we do not secure the issues connected with SEO/SEM. Then how are the companies implementing the content marketing strategies?

One of the solutions is acquiring the suitable skills within the marketing team (possibly – adding new persons to the team). A plus of this solution is full control over the whole strategy, whereas the fact that the team must possess very broad skills is a minus. Content marketing requires constant content generation and it is much more than just preparing the e-mailing. Even such a seemingly simple thing as running the company blog requires not only the subject matter contribution (which is knowledge or the ability to collect the knowledge on the given subject) but also some regularity. It is a mistake to think that you can use content marketing on the side, while performing other main marketing actions.

1 **Inbound marketing** is promoting a company through blogs, podcasts, video, eBooks, newsletters, whitepapers, SEO, social media marketing, and other forms of content marketing which serve to bring customers in closer to the brand. Inbound marketing refers to marketing activities that bring visitors in, rather than marketers having to go out to get prospect's attention. Inbound marketing earns the attention of customers, makes the company easy to be found and draws customers to the website by producing interesting content. Inbound marketing methodologies are used to reach potential customers at various levels of brand awareness. These tactics require a commitment in order to steer marketing efforts into increased opportunities, as it provides the prospect to both learn about potential customers and have potential customers learn about the business (cfr. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inbound_marketing).

Another solution is to outsource most or all of the actions to a suitable marketing agency which specializes in designing and creating content marketing actions. A plus of this solution is the outsourcing of the major resource-consuming elements and transferring them to specialists in generating content. The definite reduction in the control over each of the stages is a minus. An external expert company or freelancer, however, brings such wide experience in running this type of action that a meticulous control is not necessary and the cost settlement can be based on the effects. The quality factor is of a significant importance here, as an agency specializing in content marketing must be dedicated to the project in order for the cooperation to be possible and profitable. Hence, running content marketing on the side is out of question.

Yet another solution is to leave the project manager responsible for the strategy implementation within the company while outsourcing partial actions. Freelancers often turn out to be good contractors. The control over the whole project remains with the employee of the company, whereas the specific actions are allocated to the contractors who are not responsible for the whole project, but for the scope of the commissioned work. This approach requires a more precise management of the campaign, sticking strictly to the budget, preparing contingency plans and the like. At the same time the costs can be lower than in the other two cases. In the first case, we do not have to involve many people from the marketing department in our campaign, and in the second one, we avoid the costs of the service mark-up, which can be significant when we decide to cooperate with a content marketing agency.

What are the companies' decisions based on, then? Undoubtedly, the resources matter. There are companies with hundreds of employees, in which one person is responsible for marketing. Therefore, it would be naive to think that this person will be able to cope with another task consisting in designing, creating and launching a content marketing campaign. In some cases, taking on extra employees, even if on a temporary basis, can be unprofitable.

It is clear that companies make cost-based decisions. Outsourcing is often cheaper in practice than acting on our own in theory. A lot of managers underestimate how resource-consuming some creative processes can be. Running a company YouTube channel requires constant generation of unique content. Even though it seems easy at the beginning, the motivation drops after a few weeks, especially among those employees who are not directly connected with the campaign, but possess the necessary subject matter knowledge (in practice: they generate the content). Hence, paying experts to handle the details of the campaign, while concentrating on the main themes on our part, is often safer, faster and cheaper.

The decision about how to carry out the actions connected with content marketing should never be premature. Similarly, all pilot actions must be thoroughly analysed and planned. The next chapters of this work will surely help you make the right decisions by yourself.

3.2 EXTRA BENEFITS OF USING CM

3.2.1 MORE INBOUND APPROACH

Content marketing is one of the tools of inbound marketing. As we mentioned above, it is a situation where a company strives to draw the attention of potential customers by providing them with quality content. These actions are effective only after some time, as it is not easy to build one loyal group of recipients who we can expect to buy our product.

Nevertheless, the companies applying the inbound solutions are considered as places where the real experts of the industry work. What comes with it is that the customers are more willing to spend their money on organization which they perceive as professional. For the customer, the very moment of “getting to know” the company and its offer is much more pleasant, as it comes without the hard sell. Building the company image based on inbound marketing is surely an action worth dedicating some time.

3.2.2 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

A customer interested in the given subject is an engaged customer. Logically, any person reached by content marketing must be interested in the subject which the content relates to. Interest does not mean already a potential purchase, but one person who voluntarily subscribes to the company blog is a more valuable lead than a hundred recipients of e-mailing.

If our recipients regularly read the contents which we provide, then in their eyes we are the experts and innovators of the industry. This is often decisive when it comes to a purchasing decision. The reach achieved by whisper marketing is an extra gain. People who frequently take part in webinars that we organize, will sooner or later tell their friends about it. Meanwhile, it is hard to count on the recipient of our e-mailing or brochures to become our ambassador.

3.2.3 SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

Probably everybody heard the mysterious term “SEO”. It is also commonly known that it involves actions aimed at affecting the processes of content search on the Internet in such a way that Internet users encounter our content as often as possible. A situation when the customer googles the name of our industry or a term referring to it and our website is in the front position of the search results, it seems to be the utmost accomplishment. Obviously, in times of huge competition almost in every sector, it is really difficult to achieve.

There are numerous myths on how the suitable website software can help to achieve such a result, but the truth is just the opposite. Indeed, an unsuitable preparation of the website does a lot of harm, but a suitable one does not help. The proper SEO actions ensure a good starting position to achieve excellent results, but the latter depend on the content. Key words, metadata and efficiently and clearly written codes are friendly for the robots whose aim is to evaluate the usefulness of our website, but this is not enough to deal with the key issue. The robots give a high index to the websites which offer good content. How do they do this? They automatically analyse what is on the website. As they are not able to evaluate the content quality in terms of the subject matter, they check whether the visitors forward the content (e.g. by placing a link on a thematic forum or in the social media). Thanks to content marketing, which is based on nothing else but creating and publishing interesting content, a static company website can become livelier and increase its index significantly.

3.2.4 DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE CULTURE

Despite many critical voices referring to what can be found on the Internet, there is no doubt that if it had not been for the global network, we would have not become a learning society. The demand for constant development of our skills is enshrined in our times more than ever before. As it is often informal (school, university or trainings are not enough), the global network is an obvious medium. You can find knowledge in any field here.

While applying the content marketing strategies, we become a part of this culture of knowledge as its very important elements – the creators. It is difficult to measure how much this contribution is reflected in the business, but it is equally difficult to underestimate the chance that we get this way in the business of the 21st century.

3.2.5 BETTER USE OF COMPANY RESOURCES

In many organisations, knowledge about tools as well as resources are wasted. Companies often prepare data for industry reports, but do not always have an idea of how this data can be used beyond the in-company circulation. Meanwhile, if it is properly processed and described, it can constitute a perfect and – most importantly – required white paper. Others willingly apply the tools in video conferences and they do not realize that often a tool used for the purposes of in-company meetings can be useful also as an online seminar tool.

The conclusion is that we can make a better use of our knowledge and other resources which we already possess and which in big part have not been used so far. The argument for this kind of use will convince everyone – lower operating costs and a better marketing effect. It cannot be assumed straight away that content marketing allows creating “something” out of “nothing”, but the preparation and launch of a campaign in a way forces us to analyse the resources and think about what we can get out of them and what extra costs we will need to incur. This way quite a few managers who were convinced that they perfectly knew their company discovered completely new areas.

CHAPTER

4

CM TOOLS AND TACTICS

4.1 THE ESSENCE OF CM

As you already know, Content Marketing is a marketing technique using knowledge and experience of the company to promote its products or services. After lecture of chapter three you already know what the goals of content marketing are and what purpose it is for. In this chapter you will see what tools may be used to achieve these goals.

Generally, each content marketing tactic has different objectives to achieve but basically we can indicate the following factors:

- » To drive traffic on the social web and company's website;
- » To ensure quality and consistency;
- » To have a holistic view of the marketing strategy you should apply;
- » To answer the question how your content fulfils the expectations of your customer;
- » To control and manage online content;
- » To create, gather and distribute content.

Those tactics help to create a better content, and you must remember that the better content the more visible your product/service is. The importance of Content Marketing and its tools is confirmed by many researches. According to Content Marketing Institute¹ 91% of B2B marketers use content marketing.

Results of researches affirm also the significant role of tactics²:

- » B2B marketers use an average of 12 content marketing tactics;
- » 11% of B2B companies use over 20 different content marketing tactics;
- » Companies with 10,000 or more employees use an average of 18 tactics;
- » 28% of B2B companies use 5-9 different content marketing tactics.

The most popular tools, according to the same research are:

- » 87% of B2B content marketers use social media (other than blogs);
- » 83% of B2B content marketers use articles on their website;
- » 78% of B2B content marketers use eNewsletters;
- » 77% of B2B content marketers use blogs;
- » 71% of B2B content marketers use case studies;
- » 70% of B2B content marketers use videos;
- » 70% of B2B content marketers use articles on other websites;

Regarding the effectiveness of those tools:

- » 67% of B2B marketers rate in-person events as the most effective content marketing tactic;
- » 64% of B2B marketers rate case studies as an effective content marketing tactic;
- » 61% of B2B marketers rate webinars or webcasts as an effective content marketing tactic;
- » 59% of B2B marketers rate blogs as an effective content marketing tactic;
- » 58% of B2B marketers rate videos as an effective content marketing tactic;
- » 58% of B2B marketers rate newsletters as an effective content marketing tactic.

As we can see, Content Marketing tools are a real essence of this new marketing technique, and it's really important to know exactly what is the function of each tool and what you can gain, using particular ones. All this information can be found in this chapter.

1 Report for North American marketers: B2B Content Marketing: 2013 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends prepared by Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs

2 <http://www.toprankblog.com/2012/11/100-b2b-content-marketing-statistics-for-2013/>

BLOG

Definition

Blogs are websites with entries provided in chronological order. They can be used for a variety of purposes, ranging from shared, online reflective learning to dissemination and content marketing within organisation. The key feature of blogs is that they have a subjective character – they show the point of view of the author and focus on his/her opinions, remarks, recommendations. Blogs are often used by experts in companies to disseminate knowledge. One of the two most popular blog hosting services are Blogger* and Wordpress.** Other popular open source blogging platforms include Joomla and Droopal.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

infographics social media
webinars **blogs** video
online transmission

STRENGTHS

- » Low cost;
- » Builds brand awareness and it's much less expensive than standard online marketing campaigns;
- » Ease of use;
- » No time and place limitations;
- » It educates and informs about the company's activities in a very attractive form.

WEAKNESSES

- » Some people can use it to publish rude comments or spam – good anti-spam plugin is needed;
- » Requires long term investment;
- » Necessity for frequent updates;
- » Risk that the event will not affect the company's profits.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Frequent updates;
- + Adding multimedia: video, audio, pictures, etc.;
- + Interactions writer-readers-writer;
- + Responding to reader's queries.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Posting too rarely;
- ✗ Not responding to peoples' questions;
- ✗ Complicated structure;
- ✗ Too less content and too much advertisement.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Page shares;
- » Number of visitors;
- » Number of comments;
- » Page rank.

BEST PRACTICES

TechCrunch – <http://techcrunch.com>

COST CONSUMPTION

Updates: at least once a week.

Cost: graphics, multimedia, writer's time (4 hours a week) = 300 euro at start
+ 160 euro/month.

BRANCH GUIDE / FOLDER

Definition

Branch guides or folders are specially prepared instructions placed on the companies' websites. This is a very efficient solution for e-commerce activities or when clients may have problems with proper use of the bought product (e.g. DIY stores, online pharmacies). Unlike blogs, the person posting and her/his impartiality is not so important. The frequency of posting is also not crucial. What does matter, is the size and quality of information and the volume of the base. People want to be sure that the information they are searching for is accessible. They are not interested in the author's opinions or remarks.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

video social media
branch guide
online transmission webinars
infographics

STRENGTHS

- » Great channel for professional knowledge distribution;
- » Multiple authors;
- » Low cost;
- » Only internal resources needed.

WEAKNESSES

- » Size of the base – very often it can be hard to find required information.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Complementary information about the product or service;
- + Good search engine – information are linked to each other and well tagged;
- + Adding multimedia: video, audio, pictures, etc.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Posting too rarely;
- ✗ Complicated search engine – information is valuable but hard to find;
- ✗ Not complementary information.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Inbound links;
- » Number of views;
- » Time spent on the website;
- » Click-throughs.

BEST PRACTICES

Amazon

<http://services.amazon.com/fulfillment-by-amazon/how-it-works.htm>

COST CONSUMPTION

Updates: updates are not as important as completeness of information – this can be done one time and further updates may occur as reply to questions or updates of products or services.

Cost: graphics, multimedia, writer's time (3-5 days – depending on the size of the product/service) = 300 euro at start + 150/250 euro which gives max 550 euro for first complete version of the guide. This may be widened with additional costs of further updates.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Definition

A series of activities aimed at promoting content through social media channels. Social media are not a tool itself, but rather a part of the strategy. What is crucial about social media is that it aims to build social interaction and involves people into more informal communication. Social media are also very sensitive to seasonal fashion – they occur and may disappear very rapidly. Nonetheless, there are few well known social media applications which are very popular and didn't have serious competition on the market. These are: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS

webinars video
social media
online transmission
infographics

+

STRENGTHS

- » Ease of use;
- » Direct contact with recipients;
- » Low cost;
- » More informal way of communication which can build personalised connection.

-

WEAKNESSES

- » Amount of social media profiles – it's hard and time consuming to promote and build a large community over social media;
- » It can generate rude comments and critics over the company.

✓

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Frequent updates;
- + Adding multimedia: video, audio, pictures, etc.;
- + Connecting different social media – one post will appear on all social media channels;
- + Building a community of practice.

✗

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Posting too rarely;
- ✗ Not responding to peoples' questions;
- ✗ Too much text, too less multimedia, photos;
- ✗ Writing in too formal way;
- ✗ Too much advertisements.

↗

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Number of followers;
- » Number of shares;
- » Number of posts;
- » Number of comments;
- » Page views.

★ ★ ★

BEST PRACTICES

FritoLay Fanpage – <https://www.facebook.com/FritoLay>

COST CONSUMPTION

Updates: at least 2-3 times a week.
Cost: it requires only the time of the person posting and eventual stock photos, graphics.

CASE STUDY

Definition

Case studies were firstly implemented and used on business faculties in the US and Western Europe. This approach was meant to help MBA students to understand processes and see them on real, successful examples.

In this context, case study is a format in which examples of effective business implementations of products or services are being described. What makes it really valuable, is that it is always prepared after agreement of the company being described as a case study example. Thanks to that, all case studies may build your company brand and authenticate it on the market.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

white papers
infographics
case studies video
webinars online transmission

STRENGTHS

- » Credible testimony from business practice;
- » It builds the company's reputation and proves that it's solutions are effective;
- » Low cost.

WEAKNESSES

- » Time consuming;
- » Requires approval from the client's side.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Asking clients for permission for case study preparation after each successfully implemented product or service;
- + Showing different contexts of implementation.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Publishing case studies without client's permission;
- ✗ Giving too much detail and information not relevant for potential clients;
- ✗ Not paying attention to most important information.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Sales increase;
- » Subscription increase;
- » ROI;
- » Click-throughs.

BEST PRACTICES

Pokelondon
<http://www.pokelondon.com/portfolio/mulberrycom/>

COST CONSUMPTION

Updates: after each successfully implemented project.
Cost: time of the person writing.

WEBINAR

Definition

Interactive form of live broadcast over the internet. It does not require installation – webinar software can be accessed directly through the browser. Webinar engages audiences into more direct interaction with an expert – you can usually ask him questions, speak or share your video, largely popular due to the effect of novelty. It is short due to the nature of broadcasting live, but allows for close contact with customers.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

presentations sponsored articles
webinar infographics
video
mobile applications

STRENGTHS

- » Cost efficiency;
- » Convenience of use;
- » Direct contact with the trainer;
- » Opportunity for asking questions;
- » No time and place limitations.

WEAKNESSES

- » It can motivate people for rude comments;
- » Limitations of non-verbal communication;
- » Limited time;
- » Many distractors that may disturb interaction.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Organised systematically;
- + Good preparation before each webinar;
- + Being punctual and closing the event on time;
- + Using interaction tools.

BAD PRACTICES

- x Disorganised;
- x Being unprepared and too much talking;
- x Not using interaction tools;
- x Not responding to peoples' questions.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Number of participants;
- » Participants' opinion;
- » Sales increase;
- » Time spent on webinar.

BEST PRACTICES

10 Keys to a Killer Facebook Timeline – http://help.verticalresponse.com/how-to/tutorial/webinar_10_keys_to_a_killer_facebook_timeline/

COST CONSUMPTION

Updates: frequency of webinars depends on the company but it's good to have it organised in a frequency model – e.g. once a week, once a month.

Cost: webinar software, time of presenters/experts/moderator = min. 30 euro/month for the software plus the time of people engaged.

ONLINE TRANSMISSION

Definition

Broadcast of audio-visual signal of a particular event via the web. This event may be directly or indirectly related to the company and its offer. Many features indicate similarity to the webinar, but keep in mind that the transmission takes it somewhat beside the main event and the online viewer is not a major participant. Interaction is usually at a much lower level, and the whole event is designed for the participants gathered in the conference room.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

video
mobile applications
online transmission
social media infographics

STRENGTHS

- » Professionally organised;
- » Possibility to involve online audience present during f2f events or organise f2f events and make a transmission of the key note speaker presentations.

WEAKNESSES

- » Stable and fast Internet connection is necessary;
- » Limitations of non-verbal communication;
- » Online audience has limited opportunities to interact – they are more watch it like TV.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Using at least few cameras and view of the presentation;
- + Involving audience into discussions;
- + Separate communication with online audience;
- + Competitions or game involving online audience.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Not informing about the transmission – the price and effort is accurate when it has large online audience;
- ✗ Not managing the online audience;
- ✗ Communicating to f2f and online audience at the same time – online audience usually have some transmission delay.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Number of participants;
- » Time spent during transmission;
- » Number of comments;
- » Social media shares.

BEST PRACTICES

Google I/O – <https://www.google.com/events/io>

COST CONSUMPTION

Updates: this can be organised as a separate event – transmission from the conference, meeting, etc.
Cost: starting from 300 euro/event depending on the size of it.

VIDEO PUBLICATION

Definition

Most often the form of a separate channel in social media (e.g. YouTube), or on the corporate website. It allows you to build a community interested in the content who prefer to watch multimedia materials (perhaps more likely, than the written reading content). Due to the large amount of material accessible on the Internet, this solution needs a constant supply of content and a clear visibility of the brand. The contents do not necessarily have to be created independently, in many cases, customers can create them, which further demonstrates the reasonableness of the product (e.g. videos with GoPro camera on the official profile YT manufacturer).

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

webinars
newsletter whitepapers
video publication
infographics sponsored article

STRENGTHS

- » Repeatability;
- » No time and place limitations;
- » May be used off-line;
- » It can be embedded to the website, social media or other media and multimedia tools.

WEAKNESSES

- » It can be expensive when prepared and edited by professional multimedia studio.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Prepare good scenario for the video;
- + Have one place where videos are stored but distribute them through many different channels;
- + Always tag your videos and describe them in detail.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Not describing your videos properly – as a result they are hard to find;
- ✗ Not responding to peoples' questions.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Number of followers;
- » Number of shares;
- » Inbound links;
- » Number of comments;
- » Page views;
- » Time spent on the website.

BEST PRACTICES

Blendtec

<https://www.youtube.com/user/Blendtec/videos>

COST CONSUMPTION

Updates: at least once in 3-4 weeks.

Cost: depending on who is responsible for preparation and edition of the video content.

SPONSORED ARTICLE

Definition

Sponsored article is a form of advertisement referring to some product or service, sponsored by the publisher. Its main goal is to attract readers to that product/service in an indirect way. It means that a text is only related to something that an owner of the product/service wants to promote but it's not an intrusive advertising. It may contain video/audio materials, infographics etc. This content is labelled and one has to pay for its publishing. The sponsored article is also closely integrated with editorial content on publisher sites or in newspapers to be more appealing to readers. It helps to gain new customers, engage them and inform about news.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

whitepaper
webinar
blogs
sponsored articles
branch guide/folder

STRENGTHS

- » Possibility of promotion of the product/service in the branch media;
- » It's a better way of marketing than banner ads and other advertisements which are often ignored by people;
- » It can contain links directing to the product/service's webpage;
- » It's more appealing for readers than other forms of advertising;
- » Chance for reaching new customers.

WEAKNESSES

- » Costs – it's not for free;
- » Time and place limitations;
- » People may not want to read it when they get to know that it's sponsored;
- » Return on investment from sponsored content is not well-known;
- » It's difficult to measure the effects of sponsored articles.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Linking to the article placed in social media;
- + Adding multimedia: video, audio, pictures, etc.;
- + Links to product/service inside the article;
- + Interesting content which is not only about the product/service you would like to promote.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Content sounds like an advertisement;
- ✗ Content only related to product/service;
- ✗ No linking to the article in social media;
- ✗ Lack of useful and entertaining information;
- ✗ Duplication of content.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Number of page's views;
- » Time spent on website;
- » Number of comments;
- » Click-through;
- » Number of social media shares;
- » Inbound links;
- » Conversion funnel.

BEST PRACTICES

Agirlastyle.com

<http://agirlastyle.com/2012/11/how-to-my-favourite-apps-and-gadgets/>

COST CONSUMPTION

Cost differs a lot and it depends on the time the article is presented, portals (the more popular the more expensive), CPM and theme of article. The cost increases if the article is not written by the owner of the product/service the article is referring to.

Writing an article: 120 euro (4 hours, 30 euro per hour).

Average cost of publishing: 1200 euro per week.

NEWSLETTER

Definition

Newsletter is a form of advertising, sent periodically to a specific group of people. It is a regularly distributed publication which is mostly about the one main topic that may be interesting to a target group. Newsletter is delivered via email to its subscribers. There are a lot of different forms of newsletters. Sometimes it takes the form of a large set of information, referring to articles posted on the web, or simply containing the whole text. A very popular form is the one devoted to the newest events or promotions, where readers can learn about the latest developments. The subscription of a newsletter may be payable, however most frequently a subscription is for free. Newsletters are usually used by owners of the websites to communicate and advertise themselves to their readers. In the past it was a form of rapid scientific journal amplified on the photocopier and sent to interested subscribers.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

infographics
branch guide/folder social media
newsletter
sponsored articles

STRENGTHS

- » Allows to communicate and keep clients informed about a specific topic;
- » Creates and builds relationships with customers;
- » Low cost;
- » Easily delivered to your subscribers;
- » Channel for advertising company's new products and services;
- » Helps to reach your target groups –customers who already expressed an interest in your products.

WEAKNESSES

- » To receive a newsletter, the client must provide his email address and some people don't want to share their personal data;
- » Filters could block your newsletters on the subscriber's email account;
- » It can get lost in dozens of users' e-mails;
- » Readers can be annoyed if they will receive it too often and it's easy to lose the subscribers' interest;
- » It's hard to find the right balance of frequency and content.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Frequent updates – but not more than twice a week;
- + Interesting and relevant content;
- + Regular sending;
- + Adding multimedia: video, audio, pictures, etc.;
- + Sharing your expertise and insight.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Posting too rarely;
- ✗ Too much information;
- ✗ Too brief information and lack of substance;
- ✗ Out of date information;
- ✗ Sending the newsletter not in the right time for recipients.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Number of sent newsletters;
- » Number of openings;
- » Click-throughs;
- » Subscription increase.

BEST PRACTICES

Moo.com

<http://us.moo.com/newsletter/archive/2013/04/25/uk/01/index.html>

COST CONSUMPTION

Updates: at least once a week.

Cost: graphics, multimedia, writer's time (2 hours a week) = 250 euro
+ 240 euro/month.

ONLINE PRESENTATION

Definition

Online presentation is a type of content that can be delivered in different forms and then transferred to the online environment. It's not just slides but also images, links, social media feeds, video and audio materials, documents and interactive presentation viewers. The most popular programme for creating presentations is Power Point, but there are also online presentation creators which enable to create multimedia presentations.*

Generally there are 3 types of online presentations in common use: Online slide decks (PowerPoint presentations uploaded to a website and placed in a viewer), Narrated audio presentations (presentation slides with synchronized audio narration) and Interactive video presentations (interactive presentations that can be equipped with additional functionalities like storyteller's gestures and facial expressions).

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

video webinars
online online transmission
presentations
infographics

STRENGTHS

- » Ease of use;
- » Availability for anyone who has an Internet connection;
- » Low cost;
- » Content can be edited, revised and updated;
- » Interactive video presentations allow to communicate with users;
- » It can be used on-demand.

WEAKNESSES

- » Users have to have an Internet connection;
- » Time consuming;
- » Form of slides forces the presenter to reduce complex subjects to a set of bullet items;
- » Some formats of audio and video files may not be supported by the computer's operating system;
- » Sometimes, animations and background templates can distract users.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Simple, easy to understand and concise slides;
- + Adding multimedia: video, graphics audio, etc.;
- + Engaging users;
- + Interesting, dynamic content – information from public and private resources.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Complicated slides;
- ✗ Changing the structure of slides;
- ✗ No entertainment;
- ✗ Too less or too much slides;
- ✗ Too much information on slides.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Inbound links;
- » Number of views;
- » Click-throughs;
- » Number of social media shares;
- » Number of comments.

BEST PRACTICES

American Health Care

<http://www.slideshare.net/danroam/healthcare-napkins-all>

COST CONSUMPTION

Cost consumption: Cost depends on types of presentation and materials added.
 Average cost: 20 euro per slides.
 Editing slides (own preparation) – 4 euro per slides.
 Own resources: graphics, multimedia, writer's time (4 hours) = 250 euro + 120 euro.

MOBILE APPLICATION

Definition

Mobile application is a software programme (Internet application) designed for smartphones or other mobile applications. The main aim of creating an application is to acquire as many users as possible and to deliver quality engagement within the target groups. It helps to customize a phone or other mobile device to the specific user's needs. Applications are in general easy to find and to install (for free or for a fee). A mobile application is also known as an app and it was popularized by Apple. Apps are usually available through distribution platforms, such as App Store, Google Play, Windows Phone Store and BlackBerry App World.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

blogs **mobile** newsletter
applications
social media

STRENGTHS

- » Useful for small screens, e.g. in smartphones;
- » It can use the phone's native interactions, GPS, camera, taps, tools;
- » Some advertisements can be added into the application;
- » It's faster to access the application than to look for some information using a computer;
- » Form of marketing that is more effective than traditional marketing, for example billboards.

WEAKNESSES

- » Requires long term investment;
- » Necessity of frequent updating;
- » Users have to first download the application;
- » Applications have to be placed in some storage, like app store;
- » Overflow of data storage;
- » Cost of developing and marketing;
- » Necessity for designing it for multiple platforms.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Designing it for different platforms;
- + Headlines and bullet points;
- + Interactions writer-readers-writer;
- + Flexible display adjusted to different screen sizes;
- + Avoiding Flash, using video or HTML5.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Using not relevant content;
- ✗ No navigation menus visible on every screen;
- ✗ Scrolling;
- ✗ Low contrast;
- ✗ No links to additional information.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Comments;
- » Number of downloads;
- » Updates rate;
- » Time spent.

BEST PRACTICES

Snapchat; YouTube.

COST CONSUMPTION

Updates: once a month.

Cost: from 1 000 euro (simple app) to 10 000 euro.

INFOGRAPHIC

Definition

Infographic is a visual presentation of knowledge or data designed to present all information in a clear and attractive way. Graphics help the reader to understand some complicated processes or simply show some piece of information in an interesting form, aimed at attracting the user's attention. We can find many different types of infographics (statistical, graph, histogram, data map, sequence map and so on), but the main aim is to be shared among large number of people. Infographics consist of 3 parts: the visual, the content and some insights into data they present. Infographics can be a tool for learning and informing, as well as a way to build brand awareness. Our brain is mostly dedicated to visual functions and pictures are transferred faster than text so infographics seem to be very effective.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

social media
blogs whitepapers
infographics
e-book sponsored articles

STRENGTHS

- » It's more likely that one will read infographics than text articles;
- » t educates and informs about something in a very attractive way;
- » Builds brand awareness and it's much less expensive than standard online marketing campaigns;
- » Helps to increase SEO;
- » Shows a lot of information in small spaces.

WEAKNESSES

- » Can distract people;
- » Possibility that data numbers will be overwhelming;
- » Readers interpret data on their own;
- » For someone it may look too childish;
- » Can distort data.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Interesting topic;
- + Catchy title;
- + Includes many charts and statistics;
- + Promotion via social media.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Too much text;
- ✗ White background;
- ✗ Lack of promotion;
- ✗ Too detailed information.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Inbound links;
- » Page views;
- » Social shares;
- » Time spent on the website.

BEST PRACTICES

Thirteen reasons

<http://neomam.com/interactive/13reasons/>

COST CONSUMPTION

Cost

(own creation): graphics, multimedia, worker's time (2 days) = 350 euro + 480 euro.

Depends on the infographic type and the number of graphics and other elements – from 200 euro.

E - BOOK

Definition

A book in electronic format being displayed on a computer screen or handheld device. E-books can be composed in or converted to digital format. Basically, it contains text, but there can be also images, audio and video, animations. It may have different formats (PDF, PDA, epub). It can be download for free and for a fee. Prices for many e-books (especially bestsellers) are similar to paper books.

E-books are intended to be read on e-book readers but also computers or smartphones may be a good device. A lot of e-books are available for free on the Internet and can be backed-up to recover if any problems will appear.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

whitepapers case study
blog e-books sponsored articles

STRENGTHS

- » Flexibility;
- » It's mobile;
- » Space saving;
- » Multimedia effects (animations, sound effects);
- » No possibility of loss or damage;
- » Searchable and linkable text.

WEAKNESSES

- » Piracy;
- » Requires equipment (computer, e-book reader);
- » Lack of electricity or low battery make it hard to read;
- » For some readers nothing will replace a book;
- » E-readers have limits.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Interesting graphic design;
- + Adding multimedia: video, audio, pictures, etc.;
- + Big number of reviews;
- + Promotion through social media;
- + Interactivity.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ No reviews;
- ✗ Too crowded graphics;
- ✗ Lack of interactivity;
- ✗ Wrong paper size;
- ✗ No format for smaller screen.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Number of downloads;
- » Number of leads;
- » Social media shares;
- » Rates.

BEST PRACTICES

Statistical Analysis Techniques in Particle Physics – Fits, Density Estimation and Supervised Learning, Frank C. Porter, Ilya Narsky

COST CONSUMPTION

Cost: graphics, multimedia, writer's time (3 weeks, 100 pages, from 25 euro per page = 600 euro + from 2500 euro.

WHITEPAPER

Definition

A white paper is something between a report and a brochure. Its aim is to educate the reader and at the same time to increase selling and the promotion of the product/service/project. White paper's topic can differ a lot – there is no limitations in this field. Moreover, it may contain some graphic elements. This tool is considered as one of the most useful to generate leads, inform potential clients and show a leadership in a specific area. Correctly written whitepaper helps the readers to understand the issue, realize benefits of purchasing a specific product/service, solve problems and make a decision.

White papers support marketing efforts (anyone who wants to read a whitepaper has to register online) and impact potential customers. In the end, it's an effective driver of sales.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS
WITH OTHER FORMATS >

infographics
online presentation case study
whitepaper
branch guide/folder sponsored articles

STRENGTHS

- » Validates organization's credibility;
- » Increases the effectiveness of marketing;
- » Strengthens company's competitive position;
- » Supports sales;
- » Accelerates revenue growth by increasing lead flow;
- » Growth in number of users/customers.

WEAKNESSES

- » Mistakes made while writing white paper can discourage customers/users;
- » Time consuming;
- » Requires to convince and encourage people to read it;
- » It can be boring to customers/clients because of its length;
- » It's not so easy to find the right person for writing a white paper, it has to be an experienced person.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Attention grabbing headlines;
- + Adding graphic elements;
- + Content focused on the users/clients' goals and objectives;
- + Clear and understandable language;
- + Using sub-headings and bullet points;
- + Writing about benefits for clients.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Writing about ourselves/company/project instead of writing about what's important for users/clients;
- ✗ Writing white paper for the wrong audience;
- ✗ Using complicated terms;
- ✗ Too short or too long content (between 3 and 14 pages);
- ✗ Writing about the features of the product/service/project instead of information about benefits for customers.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Number of downloads;
- » Number of leads;
- » Social media shares.

BEST PRACTICES

How to write whitepaper

http://coe.winthrop.edu/educ651/readings/HowTo_WhitePaper.pdf

COST CONSUMPTION

Cost: graphics, multimedia, writer's time (1 week) = 350 euro + 1200 euro.

IN-PERSON EVENT

Definition

In-person events, such as conferences, trade shows and workshops can bring a lot of benefits for the organizer. Those events are indicated as one of the most effective content marketing tactics by marketers. First of all, it helps to increase sales and it's a great opportunity to inform potential clients about product/service so that participants can understand it better. The next benefit is higher brand awareness, becoming a leader in a specific context and a real contact with attendees. The disadvantages of in-person events are of course its cost which depends on the place of the event, the number of people, catering, speakers and other services related to its organization.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER FORMATS >

webinars online presentation
in-person events
social media online transmission

STRENGTHS

- » Promotion for the event's organizer;
- » Communication with potential clients;
- » Informing participants about product/service;
- » Integration of employees;
- » New contacts;
- » Chance for discussing and receiving feedback from participants;
- » Professional image of the company, which creates a leadership position.

WEAKNESSES

- » Costs of organization of the whole event;
- » Participants may not represent the company/organization's target group;
- » Risk of event's failure;
- » Risk that invited people will not attend;
- » If the event is for free, company has to invest its own money;
- » Risk that the event will not affect the company's profits.

GOOD PRACTICES

- + Key note speakers who are experts in specific topics;
- + Detailed programme available for participants;
- + Communication with participants before the event, during it and after;
- + Choosing participants who are potential clients;
- + Preparation of the event and it's promotion few months before;
- + Internet access for participants;
- + Recording the presentations.

BAD PRACTICES

- ✗ Speakers who are not well-known in the branch that the event is related to;
- ✗ Boring presentations and speeches;
- ✗ Lack of communication with participants before the event;
- ✗ Lack of programme;
- ✗ The event is not about presenting knowledge about some topic but it's an advertisement of some product/service.

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT

- » Number of participants;
- » Opinions of participants;
- » Social media shares;
- » Sales increase.

BEST PRACTICES

CEO Space – <http://ceospaceinternational.com/>

COST CONSUMPTION

Cost: room rental, catering, speakers – from 150 euro per person. Marketing actions (mailing, newsletters, sponsored articles, banners, advertisements in other media) – it depends on the mailing data bases, theme of the conference, range – conference per 500 people – 10 000 euro.

CHAPTER

5

DEFINING A CONTENT
MARKETING STRATEGY

5.1 DEFINING A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

You already know how you can use content marketing. You've been acquainted with several tools and tactics that you can use to design your strategy. But the strategy is much more than a list of activities referred to time. You need to rethink many aspects so that the strategy could really work. You need only 7 steps to plan and implement your Content Marketing campaign.

5.2 ANALYSE YOUR COMPANY'S BUSINESS

Content Marketing will only make sense if it will fulfil the goals of the company. If we are talking about business, the most logical goal for the company existence is profit. Probably there are other complementary goals like to have the best products on the market or be the most ecologically friendly in the sector, but incomes and profit are necessary to have in the company. If a company does not have profits, it will sooner or later be liquidated or bought by another stronger company.

The only option to bring profits to the company is to sell products or services. This selling will bring income necessary to pay the employees and other costs like marketing, equipment and taxes. Profit will be higher if the income is higher and/or costs are lower.

One of the main costs in the company is marketing and sales. At the same time this is a critical function of the company because it generates income. A typical problem of marketing is the high cost of informing our clients about our product and generating interest necessary for sales. The goal of marketing is also to convince potential clients to choose our service from many others. This effort and budget are often wasted, after transaction. To prevent this, companies are spending great marketing and sales budgets to sell to the existing clients.

CM promises an efficient and often low cost ways to find new clients interested in our products and give them value in knowledge. This knowledge and long term relation will eventually convince our clients to buy our products. It also gives the possibility to develop long lasting relations and engagement of clients supporting our business. So efficient CM could result in lowering costs of marketing and sales, building long lasting relations with clients and getting sincere feedback regarding our business efforts.

5.2.1 WHAT IS YOUR COMPANY'S PRODUCT/SERVICE?

The most fundamental aspect of defining a company are its products or services. To create products – R&D and production is organized. To sell products – sales and marketing is created. If a company produces physical products, logistics have to be developed. Other company functions like HR and accounting support those fundamental ones.

The preparation of a proper CM strategy starts with the vision of products in mind and decisions how this strategy will support different products or different product lines. If a company offers one product or service, the answer is simple. If there are more products but concentrated on one area, e.g. climbing equipment (shoes, ropes, helmets, trousers etc.) the CM strategy has to support clients interested in mountaineering by teaching them safety procedures, or ways to prepare for such expeditions, or how to choose equipment. So if we know what is our product or service we have to ask a few questions such as the following:

E.g. My product/service is: recording HD marketing videos to be used online.

My product/service is:.....

.....

.....

5.2.2 WHAT IS YOUR UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION?

E.g. USP is something that distinguishes your product/service from others in the same sector. It helps to build the foundations of the advertising message. Your proposition has to attract new customers as well as potential customers. USP for recording HD marketing videos can be very advanced equipment to record.

My USP is:.....

.....

.....

5.2.3 HOW DO YOUR CLIENTS USE YOUR COMPANY PRODUCT/SERVICE?

E.g. Our clients are using our video services to prepare videos in different formats to be used online. Those videos usually are used in communications and marketing campaigns and inform final clients about their products, their efficient use and conservation.

Our clients are using:.....

.....

.....

5.2.4 WHAT DO YOUR CLIENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR PRODUCT'S PROPER USE?

E.g. Our clients need to know: How to use video for online marketing. This topic includes subtopics such as: how to promote online video, how to measure conversion rates from video, good practices of online video use, how to choose the topic for efficient video marketing, etc.

Our clients need to know:.....

.....

.....

5.2.5 WHAT IS THE MAIN BENEFIT OF YOUR PRODUCT FOR THE CUSTOMER?

E.g. Our customer needs to know why he should buy your product instead of your competitor's product. You should then explain it in a simple way, using strong arguments, that your product is better than others. The main benefit of recording service can be your own studio.

The main benefit of my product is:.....
.....
.....

5.2.6 HOW DO YOUR CLIENT'S BUSINESS NEEDS RELATE TO YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE?

E.g. We are preparing HD marketing videos. Our clients need support in using our service properly, allowing them to have real benefits in: SEO, conversion rates and sales. They could have limited experience in preparation of online marketing videos, choosing right video formats for their purpose, choosing the right topic for the video. With our CM activities we will support our clients with knowledge that will allow them to successfully use our product. At the same time we are promoting ourselves as experts in the area, and as such, probably the best choice for our client.

.....
.....
.....

5.3 TYPICAL CUSTOMER

After answering few questions regarding the use of your company product/service, you should take a more in depth look at your clients and find out who they are. The most important questions able to be answered refer to how your clients are:

- » searching for information,
- » communicating,
- » gathering information,
- » and buying products.

This knowledge will allow you to choose the most appropriate formats, language, culture and connections between formats to be used in your CM strategy.

Please describe your typical client, answering a few questions. It will allow you to construct a full picture of your client, so that you can choose a proper CM strategy to contact him, to communicate and to convince the client to buy at the end.

5.3.1 THE TYPICAL CLIENT OF YOUR COMPANY

E.g. Our typical client is a marketer, located in Warsaw and the Mazowia region in Poland, extensively using digital media and social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter) but preferring to discuss details in the face-to-face meetings.

Our typical client is:.....
.....
.....

5.3.2 HOW DOES YOUR CLIENT SEARCH FOR INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PRODUCT?

E.g. Our clients usually are searching for information regarding video marketing and video production online. They read national and international reports, websites, magazines, participate in trainings and conferences, to gather knowledge and get inspired.

Our typical client is:.....
.....
.....

5.3.3 WHAT CAN BE AN EMOTIONAL, RATIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL MOTIVATORS TO BUY/ CONSUME YOUR PRODUCT?

E.g. Your product has to induce emotions and your clients need to know that there is a rational reason to have it. Otherwise customers won't buy it. They should be motivated in a positive way to pay attention to it. Think about what emotions your products could induce. It could be joy, safety, enthusiasm.

Motivators to buy/consume my product is:.....
.....
.....

5.3.4 HOW IS YOUR CLIENT BUYING YOUR PRODUCTS/SERVICES?

E.g. Our clients are looking for subcontractors if they have already planned video marketing activities. They ask for a portfolio of previously prepared videos and pricing for their planned project. After gathering a number of offers, they choose the best one.

Our clients are:.....
.....
.....

5.3.5 WHAT IS YOUR MARKET?

The next important question is the market that you are operating in, which can be important for certain formats and media for CM. If you are operating on the regional level and do not provide your services nationally, it makes no sense to target the whole country with your marketing efforts. If you are planning to sell your products outside of your country, you have to think about working in English or even international languages. It requires additional costs and efforts.

E.g. We can produce videos for clients in every part of the country but our preferred market is our city and region. In this area our costs are lower and available technology better. In our region we are more competitive and the provisions are higher.

Our market is:.....
.....
.....

5.4 GOALS

Bearing in mind your product/service, your preferred market, clients' communication and buying habits, you are ready to set a content marketing strategy for your company. You probably would like this strategy to support the company's business goals and sales. To achieve this, you have to set specific goals for the CM strategy. Typically marketers choose 8 standard CM goals. Those goals are:

- » Brand awareness
- » Thought Leadership
- » Customer Acquisition
- » Website traffic
- » Engagement
- » Customer Retention/Loyalty
- » Lead Generation/Management/Nurturing
- » Sales

Try to choose the most important goals. Good campaign can't achieve them all, so select up to three. It does not mean that other goals are not important to your business. Just this campaign will not focus on them. For any subsequent actions always remember about the goals you have chosen.

The question is, which of those standard goals are most important for your business? Are you able to concentrate on the achievement all of those goals, with your marketing efforts? Do you have tools, time and budget to measure the level of accomplishments of every goal?

5.4.1 WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT GOALS FOR YOUR CM?

E.g.: Our CM goals are Customer Acquisition, Lead Generation/Management/Nurturing, Sales

My CM goals are:.....

.....

.....

5.5 CONTENT MARKETING MIX

We have already presented you a number of formats ready to be used in your CM mix. Each format has different potentials and area of use.

They are also differentiated in cost and in complexity of preparation. You should know its potential before including it in your CM strategy, in order to check its use or other factors and refer back to the section describing tactics.

Additionally, it is usually good to start with formats that you have experience with. This will minimise potential risks of its wrong use, and start your CM activities with success.

On the next pages you will find a matrix with CM formats.

Please mark which ones you plan to use, note the reasons for using those formats and the proposed frequency of use. This is the first step in preparation of your CMM. So please fill in the following matrix:

Format	Will you use it?	Why will you use it?	How often will you be using it?
Blog	Yes/No		
Branch guide/folder	Yes/No		
Social media	Yes/No		
Case studies	Yes/No		
Webinars	Yes/No		
Online transmissions	Yes/No		
Video publications	Yes/No		
Webcasts	Yes/No		
Sponsored articles	Yes/No		
Newsletters	Yes/No		
Presentations	Yes/No		
Mobile applications	Yes/No		
Infographics	Yes/No		
eBooks	Yes/No		
White papers	Yes/No		
Events	Yes/No		

I am very interested which formats you have chosen and why. It is very important to plan your CM activities realistically and be aware of the connections and the supporting actions between them.

5.5.1 STRUCTURE OF YOUR CM

It is important to prepare an inbound marketing ecosystem that allows you to nurture and support your existing group of clients and contact new ones who will be interested in your offer. This system could consist of few elements with different functions. The core of your ecosystem could be to update your website or blog at least 3 times a week. This central point will be supported by other websites, landing pages and media channels. Social media channels are a natural support to your website, where you inform clients of your offer and support them with knowledge concerning its efficient use.

5.5.2 HOW WILL YOU SUPPORT CONTENT MARKETING WITH OUTBOUND MARKETING?

In the case of content marketing activities you can use two different approaches. This is most easily understood if lead generating is the aim.

Model A – Pre-leading. In this model, you promise the recipient access to interesting content, tempting him by samples or other materials. Often these are pieces of a larger whole (e-book, video etc.), which the recipient receives in exchange for his contact details. In this case outbound marketing is the core. The marketing manager concentrates on “getting” the recipient by traditional methods and encouraging him to leaving his contact data in advance.

This model is suitable for actions which have a short deadline, but it isn’t useful to build a community and it’s pretty expensive. We just need to generate sufficiently large traffic on the website to collect the required number of leads. Simple, but expensive.

Model B – Post-leading. In this model you focus on providing relevant and interesting content and (as a result) they share that content with more people. After the initial outbound action, inbound marketing begins to operate.

This model allows you to implement long-term strategies. Leads are of better quality, because the recipient leaves his contact data voluntarily (that is not dependent on access to the content). This model also allows you to reduce the costs of marketing, because the main activities are focused on inbound marketing.

From the point of view of content marketing, only model B makes long-term sense. In model A we pay a lot for outbound marketing and cannot expect inbound. No one will be recommending our content further if a mandatory lead form is presented too early. Also, it will not positively affect your SEO. In model B the community executes a large part of the work for us. As a result the mechanism will operate independently without costly outbound actions.

5.5.3 PHASES OF CAMPAIGN

Your content reaches the recipient in three consecutive phases:

- » **Phase 1:** Outbound – the audience reaches the outgoing message from you in the traditional form. No matter how much you believe in inbound marketing, you first need to tell your audience that you distribute interesting content. You can rely on organic traffic, but such actions take a long time and are not very effective. Better left to the classic methods like mailing, display etc. In some cases, you can also bet on ambient marketing. Your goal for this phase: to inform the largest group of recipients about the content.
- » **Phase 2:** From outbound to inbound – with time recipients will recommend your content. Links leading to it will be popular in social media and on blogs. It will be easier to find it using search engines, because thanks to its quality and unique character, it will be indexed higher. Your goal for this phase: implement carefully planned activities and control the effects.
- » **Phase 3:** The objective – if your content is adequately popular, more and more people will leave their contact data in the framework of the rule of reciprocity appreciating your work. Your goal for this phase: measure the implementation of the goals.

As you can see, the movement of each of these phases is a challenging task. Therefore, now we will focus on the relevant planning throughout the marketing campaign. Many companies are not able to move from Phase 1 to Phase 2. They create interesting content, but for some reason not many people recommend them further. These companies spend more resources on outbound marketing, not realizing that in the long run it may not achieve the result.

One of the basic problems in this case is skilful planning of the content marketing strategy at a time so that all the elements were in place and in the right proportions. You can compare it to the situation of lighting a bonfire. Not only is the material important, but also the sequence and intensity of activity. You can't "stifle" a campaign in the possession, nor make it too fast or it will "burn".

5.6 TIMETABLE

You have already established your materials, people, subject etc. you may have. You know what purpose you have in front of you. Surely you realize that not everything can be done right away – some content requires time and commitment of both – the creator and the recipient.

First: Create an action plan based on real resources. Do not plan activities if you know that their implementation is not very possible. If you assume creating a blog based on 8 articles a month, it cannot be less. Writing eight texts requires time not only of the author, but the editor, who will work out the text. You must also allocate resources for response to comments, etc.

Second: In practice no action starts from scratch. When a debut (launch of campaign), the recipient immediately receives a bigger portion of the content that he hadn't the impression that the project just takes off from zero and its future is uncertain. If you publish content periodically (e.g. video channel on YouTube) it is good to protect yourself by reserving a bit of content for the future as a "safety buffer". Thus, the answer to the question: how much and what content you need to start the action.

In various publications you can find many tips and suggestions about how to implement actions in content marketing. This information is helpful and often inspiring, but when you take this challenge for the first time, you need clear procedure schemes. Here is how you can prepare your own schedule, step by step. Everything you'll do is based on the knowledge contained in this and previous chapters:

Step 1. Facts – collect the information that is crucial for your client. First of all – deadlines. They will be a great indicator measures the plan that you will develop in the following steps.

- » Campaign launch
- » Campaign deadline
- » Indicators

Step 2. Formats – collect the information about formats you selected and quantities. The exercise with the table in the preceding paragraphs should be helpful, so that you already know which formats work best.

- » Format types
- » Quantity

Step 3. The Creators – collect the information on human resources, which you use for your project – both internal and external.

- » Internal people assigned according to their skills
- » External people, when it is reasonable
- » Possibilities and limitations of time

Step 4. Wages and salaries – estimate what will be the cost of implementing the format.

- » Deployment of workers – how many working hours they need?
- » Fees for externals experts – how much it will cost?

Step 5. Marketing – describe what marketing activities you perform to promote your content. Specify the costs that will be associated with this. Also remember about indirect costs, such as developing a YouTube channel or running social media – it is an integral part of your campaign.

- » Select outbound media You will use for promotion
- » Select social media You will use for promotion

Step 6. Time plan – sketch a simple table that shows in what order formats should be developed and what are the relationships between them. Take into account the size and complexity of that work. Remember also about the time for amendments and unforeseen delays.

- » Describe all activities on time, like in Gantt chart
- » Add connection between activities

5.7 TEAM

Any company that wants to implement marketing content must have an appropriate team of specialists. The following may be included in it:

- » Employees of the company, e.g. product managers
- » Cooperating people (freelancers), e.g. graphic designer
- » People and companies from outside, such as specialized marketing agencies that will provide specialists in the relevant field, e.g. copywriters, bloggers, ghostwriters, media planners.

It's up to you to choose how to plan the division of responsibilities. Most of the companies takes some of the tasks inside, using their own resources. This applies to both small and large organizations. Some of the work may be delegated to specialists, especially content creation and marketing.

Consider what human resources you have. This makes it easier to make a decision about what help you will need.

You and your employees surely know your business best. You will be such excellent providers of knowledge. If, however, this knowledge requires commitment to the people you do not collaborate closely, you'll need to take care of an efficient knowledge transfer. Time is money. A person of high position in your organization surely gives an interview or provides interesting material, if you will take the impression that the whole project is meaningful and translate into business success.

Some of the tasks you can outsource to marketing agency. This mainly concerns creative work and promotion campaign. That you are perfectly familiar with your industry does not automatically mean that you can write articles on this. Texts should be digestible and sometimes even funny. A pro writer will do it not only better, but also cheaper.

5.8 BUDGET

To control the implementation of actions we need to develop a campaign budget and execute it accordingly. In brief, our campaign costs can be divided into 4 categories:

- » Cost of in-house personnel engaged in the CM;
- » Cost of outbound media purchase: email marketing, display marketing, retargeting;
- » Cost of subcontracting (video, white paper preparation, IT support, SEO, webinar presenters, articles, mobile application, infographic, ebook preparation, events: cost of conference room/coffee/lunch/visualization/transmission);
- » Cost of office space.

As you can see, in many cases, you can decide for yourself about using an internal or an external resource. It is best illustrated in the example of personal resources. It often happens that within the company there are people who have the knowledge to create content. Just as often they do not have the time, experience or skill to create that content. Just because someone is an expert on the subject does not mean that he can write a fascinating article, or is "a natural in front of the camera".

5.9 MEASUREMENT

To setting proper CM goals we have to know how to measure the level of accomplishments of those goals. If we will not be measuring our efforts, we cannot correct them and make improvements in the future. Below are some indicators to be used when measuring CM goal accomplishments.

Brand awareness can be measured by:

- » online and offline research measuring brand awareness,
- » press monitoring services,
- » SocialMention.com.

Thought Leadership can be measured by the number of:

- » link backs to your pages,
- » subscribers to your pages,
- » appearances on blog rolls,
- » publications in magazines,
- » presentations on conferences.

Customer Acquisition can be measured by:

- » new contacts in emailing lists,
- » newsletter subscribers,
- » new clients by CRM.

Website traffic can be measured by:

- » clicks,
- » unique users,
- » time spent on the website,
- » repeated visits,
- » RSS feeds,
- » comments left by website visitors,
- » track backs.

Engagement can be measured by:

- » time spent on the website,
- » participation of clients in company events,
- » feedback from clients.

Customer Retention/Loyalty can be measured by:

- » % of returning,
- » authority rank of linkers,
- » time spent on the website,
- » repeated visits.

Lead Generation/Management/Nurturing can be measured by:

- » number of leads,
- » quality of leads,
- » sales accepted leads,
- » sales rejected leads – need nurturing,
- » sales rejected leads – dead,
- » lead velocity,
- » leads-to-close conversion ratio,
- » cost per lead,
- » cost per sale.

Sales can be measured by:

- » monthly income,
- » monthly income by products,
- » weekly income,
- » number of transactions,
- » number of transactions from leads.

Which indicators will allow you to measure the success ratio of your CM goals? E.g. I will be using indicators such as: monthly number of unique users on the website, repeated visits, time spent on the website, increase in emailing lists, newsletter subscribers, number of leads, quality of leads, sales accepted leads, sales rejected leads – nurturing need, sales rejected leads – dead, monthly income, monthly income by products, weekly income, number of transactions.

I will be using indicators such as:.....
.....
.....

A SCHEME TO HELP YOU CREATE EFFECTIVE CM STRATEGY

STEP 1 ANALYZE YOUR COMPANY'S BUSINESS

What is your company product/service?
 How your company use your product/service?
 What do your customers need to know about your product's proper use?
 How do your customers connect to your product or service?
 What is your company's market?

STEP 2

GOALS

Set **MAX 3 GOALS** and focus on them

- Brand awareness
- Thought Leadership
- Customer Acquisition
- Website Traffic
- Engagement
- Customer Retention, Loyalty
- Lead Generation, Management,
- Nurturing
- Sales

STEP 3

TYPICAL CUSTOMER

Analyse your current customers and trace your **TYPICAL CUSTOMER PROFILE**

age, gender, cultural level, geographical location
 needs, taste, wants
 buying habits
 information tools used
 media channels used
 perception of your product

STEP 4

CONTENT MKTG MIX

Define your **CONTENT MARKETING MIX**

IDEA PLANNING	SOCIAL MEDIA
message to transmit/story to tell to your customers	YouTube Facebook Twitter LinkedIn WhatsApp Instagram Google+ Pinterest ...
CM TOOLS	
branch guide/folders, webinars, case studies, videos, infographics, newsletter, web-cast, sponsored articles, e-books, e-journals, mobile applications, blogs, events ...	

STEP 5

PUBLISHING TIMETABLE

Plan your **PUBLISHING SCHEDULE**

campaign launch/deadline timing for content creation
 measurement indicators
 format types and quantity
 content creators

STEP 6

TEAM

Choose the working team for CM

INTERNAL PERSONNEL/ EXTERNAL PERSONNEL (freelance, web agency,...)

STEP 7

BUDGET

Estimate the cost of CM

PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

cost of in house personnel
 cost of outbound media purchase (email marketing, display marketing, retargeting)
 cost of subcontracting (video, white papers preparation, IT, SEO, webinar presenters, articles, mobile application, infographic, e-books preparation, events: cost of conference room/coffee/lunch/visualization/transmission,...)
 office cost

FINAL STEP

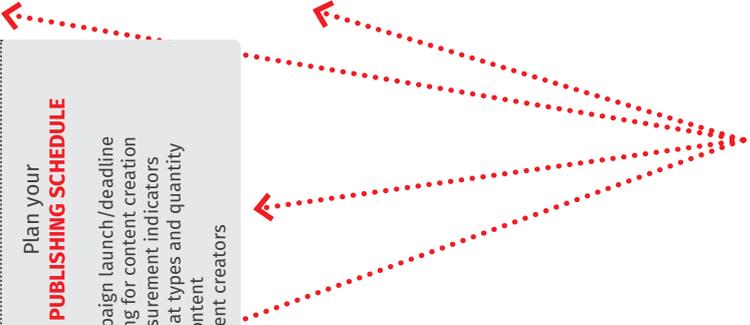
MEASUREMENT

Measure the effectiveness of your CM

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	ROI	CONVERSION INDICATORS
n. of visitors, time spent on the website, page views/ranks/shares, form submission rates, subscription increase, content downloaded, n. of opens (for emails/newsletters), click-throughs, inbound links, funnel conversion, comments closed deals, sales accepted leads.....	ROI (%) = Net profit/investment x 100	conversion numbers, number of leads, lead quality, the lead's life time value, sales cycle length, retention period of that lead...

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

↑ (Blue arrow pointing up)
 ↓ (Red arrow pointing down)



CHAPTER

INTERNATIONAL BEST
PRACTICES IN THE
USE OF CM



6

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a short list of international best practices in the use of content marketing: CMEX project partners selected four companies located in different European countries which have established themselves as leaders in their business area thanks to the use of content marketing tools/tactics. These success cases can be taken as examples by companies which want to get further knowledge about the usefulness of CM practices. The chosen companies can be categorized as follows:

1. Homegrown companies:

- › Terre di Guagnano¹
Country: Italy
Sector: winery
- › Ströck
Country: Austria
Sector: bakery and pastry

2. International companies:

- › Ogilvy Malta
Country: Malta
Sector: branding, advertising
- › IKEA Poland
Country: Poland
Sector: furniture, home accessories

NOTE: All of the above mentioned companies have given their consent for publication of images and links to their websites.

6.2 METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used is based on the analysis of other best practices examples, which helped in defining the most important aspects to be investigated when approaching the case studies included in this chapter. To this purpose, a specific data collection grid (please check Annex 1) was developed to be filled up with the desired information.

Face to face interviews as well as e-mail and telephone contact were then organized with key-figures within the selected organizations, who were asked to provide details regarding the nature of the practice, its objective, main stakeholders involved, key success factors and, if possible, conditions for transfer to Small and Medium Enterprises.

1 Even if a homegrown firm, Terre di Guagnano is an established exporter.

6.3 ANALYSIS

This section features a list of selected international best practices: each paragraph presents an overview of the company, information about how content marketing is implemented, evidence showing why the case study can be considered as a best practice and why/how it can be transferred to SMEs. Images chosen from different online platforms/resources have also been incorporated. Such structure should be appropriate to give the reader a comprehensive portrait of the best practice characteristics.

6.3.1 TERRE DI GUAGNANO – ITALY

The winery was founded in 2011, in Erchie (Brindisi), Puglia Region, by Aldo Di Giulio who pioneered the promotion of the Salento wine denomination in the 90s. Aldo's sons Thomas (then 26) and Ruben (aged 23) took over the management of the company in 2013 after their father's death. The brothers intend to guide the company according to the love for the land and the passion for traditions that they learned from their father.

Terre di Guagnano winery is located on the eastern side of the fertile plain of Salento and between the territories of Guagnano, in the province of Lecce, and the historic Manduria, in the province of Taranto. It is a winery with strong associations to its location and tradition, on land which has been family owned for several generations, and now aims to build up not only the brand but the entire area.

Terre di Guagnano is a company based on tradition and innovation. They interpret tradition as continuous innovation and improvement, integrating traditional strategies with new web-enabled channels: e-commerce, social media, blogging, content marketing, with the publication of recipes to be matched with wines and the most modern systems of augmented reality for sharing.

The content marketing adopted by Terre di Guagnano is carried out in three phases:

Terre di Guagnano aims to:

- » Put into place an effective action to promote customer loyalty and purchases;
- » Promote the brand, through the traditions and flavours of the Salento area;
- » Foster the process of brand awareness at the international level.

Terre di Guagnano periodically publishes on its own website (<http://www.en.terrediguagnano.com/>) recipes from Salento to match with the flavours of its wines (One Essence, Top Line and Obsession Primitivo).

The mission is to provide content and not just products; preparation of local dishes and recipes, news about events and traditional culture, as well as a thematic area dedicated to more technical aspects of wine and winemaking, such as must, the wine's fermentation characteristics, etc.

In the age of conversational marketing, companies can't make it without using social media to expand the spread of their content and raise brand visibility. Terre di Guagnano besides having a presence on the main social media, i.e. Twitter (<https://twitter.com/Terrediguagnano>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/TerreDiGuagnano>) has focused on thematic channels and targeting strategies (announcements on DoctorWine, interviews with B2corporate

web collaborative magazine, use of the Storeitaly channel, articles on the portals bereilvino.it and cantinedelvino.it, presence on winesearcher to support the process of internationalisation, etc.).

Evidence of Success

Terre di Guagnano is considered a model because it has shown the ability to make quality products that are appreciated abroad by focusing not only on brand visibility but also on the development of the area. The vineyard owners have realized that, in the age of conversational marketing, it is no longer enough to have a website to promote their wines. Now it is necessary to provide added value to their customers by enabling a process of engagement and involvement (hence, the idea of posting recipes on the website, matching them with suitable wines).

The company has achieved great success in international markets thanks to innovation in different communication strategies, both on-line and off-line. First among these is content marketing. Terre di Guagnano is at the forefront in the use of communication tools: it was one of the first wineries in the world to use the augmented reality systems for sharing, simply by framing the bottle with a smartphone.

The company has sponsored a restaurant management course, providing financial support for much of the cost. Despite the economic crisis of the last few years, the company has been growing; it has almost doubled in terms of market's share (i.e. sales) and profits since 2011. Its owners, deeply linked to the territory, to cope with reduced domestic demand, aimed at expanding exports, and now 95% of the company revenue comes from abroad, especially from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden and Poland.

Transferability of the Best Practice to SMEs

The "Terre di Guagnano" best practice can be transferred to other companies, even those active in traditional areas such as winemaking, which in Italy represents an area of world-class excellence and which has a high number of small and medium enterprises. This example demonstrates to other SMEs that it is possible, simple and cost-effective to raise their own visibility and exploit their potential by using digital technologies.

Figure 6.1 – Terre di Guagnano's cover photo on company's Facebook account²



² Source: <https://www.facebook.com/TerreDiGuagnano>

Figure 6.2 – Terre di Guagnano’s cover photo on company’s Facebook account³



Figure 6.3 – Example of a typical Apulian recipe posted on Terre di Guagnano’s own website⁴

Recipes

Cozze Arraganate (Mussels)

POSTED BY TERREDIGUAGNANO ON 11:49 IN RECIPES | 0 COMMENTS



Cozze Arraganate Difficulty ** 2/5 Mussels 1 Kg Breadcrumbs 150 gr. Capers as required Pepper as required Egg 1 Oil as required Preparation Method for Cozze Arraganate Knead breadcrumbs with capers, egg, pepper, parsley and mussels' water, someone prefers to add sweet cheese grated and oregano. The Mussels, firstly opened by hand or, if unable to open, warmed on low heat with a cover for about 15 minutes, should be deprived of one of their valves(the one without the mussel) and in the other one we should put the kneading we...

[read more](#)

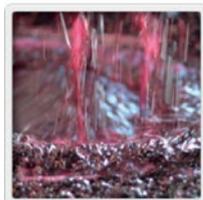
Figure 6.4 – Example of a post related to wine and winemaking on Terre di Guagnano’s own website⁵

Wineblog

Il blog divino

The must

POSTED BY TERREDIGUAGNANO ON 11:40 IN WINEBLOG | 0 COMMENTS



Composition of the must The must is a complex acid-sugar solution that comes from crushing or pressing of the grapes. The wort is made for the 70-80% water, for 15-30% by hexose sugars, mostly from 0.5-1.5% organic acids and for the remaining part of many substances such as vitamins, tannins, substances protein and still others which will gradually be taken into consideration.

[read more](#)

3 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/TerreDiGuagnano>

4 Source: <http://www.en.terrediguagnano.com/recipes/>

5 Source: <http://www.en.terrediguagnano.com/wineblog/>

6.3.2 STRÖCK – AUSTRIA

Ströck is a traditional family business located in Vienna and the surroundings. It is a big enterprise (more than 1600 employees and 76 stores) established in 1970.

The company's website provides some interesting subsections which are clearly content marketing oriented: one section features nutrition recommendations and offers the possibility to contact a nutritionist for free and ask questions; other subsections on the website offer baking recipes for different occasions, information about how raw materials/ingredients are produced or how the first processing steps generally work.

This information is offered through short articles that can be rated, commented, emailed, printed and chosen as RSS feed.

On one hand, the objective of this practice is to offer information to interested customers (individuals as well as companies); on the other hand, it is to let persons who are generally looking for this kind of information land on the Ströck website.

The service of a nutritionist responding to customer questions is a way to personalize the relation with the customer, while guaranteeing that he/she may rely on a competent contact person within the company.

The publication of articles on a company's own website is one of the most popular content marketing tactics and Ströck is a good example when it comes to short articles about product related topics. When deciding to extend the company web presence, producing short articles (5-10 sentences, simple to read and to understand) will be a good way to influence customer loyalty and acquisition. Offering a free of charge service such as advices from a professional (inside or outside the company) can be a very good way to get in touch with customers and demonstrate that you care for more than just making profit.

Evidence of Success⁶

The articles engage customers to use the website as a source of general information about bakery products, raw materials and nutrition. The company thus makes a mark as expert in this field and as reliable source of information to the (potential) customer.

The information provided doesn't target persons who are just interested in buying bread or pastry, but those interested in baking as a hobby and getting knowledge about the production and the quality of the products. The latter especially refers to the organic products and certificates which are applying for many of Ströck's products.

Transferability of the Best Practice to SMEs

What is needed: some logical topics, a writer and maybe someone who would be ready to reply to customer questions and advice. Each article should be classified into categories (e.g. "Good to know", "Tips for ...", "How to do it yourself", "Book recommendations about..."). They should be illustrated with at least a picture (it is important to check that no copyright infringement is being committed) or maybe graphics, embedded videos or animation. These elements will make articles more vivid and attractive to the reader (focus must be placed on the preferences of the target group).

⁶ This is the author's view: since the company does not measure effects of content marketing, no specific indicators are available.

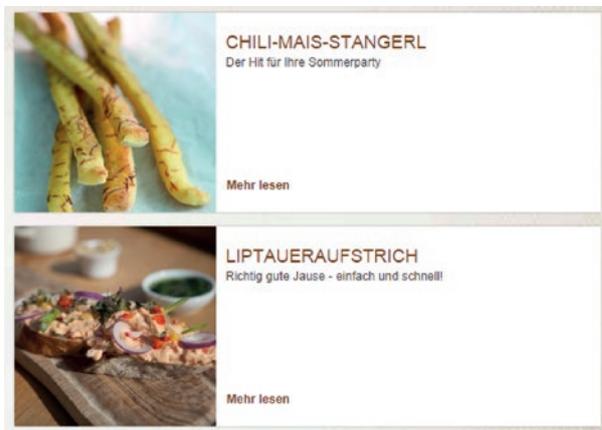
Figure 6.5 – Ströck logo⁷



Figure 6.6 – Snapshot from the Nutrition Tips section on Ströck's own website⁸



Figure 6.7 – Snapshots from the Recipes section on Ströck's own website⁹



7 Source: <http://www.stroeck.at/>

8 Source: <http://www.stroeck.at/service/ernaehrungstipps>

9 Source: <http://www.stroeck.at/service/rezepte>

Figure 6.8 – Ströck’s cover photo on Facebook account¹⁰

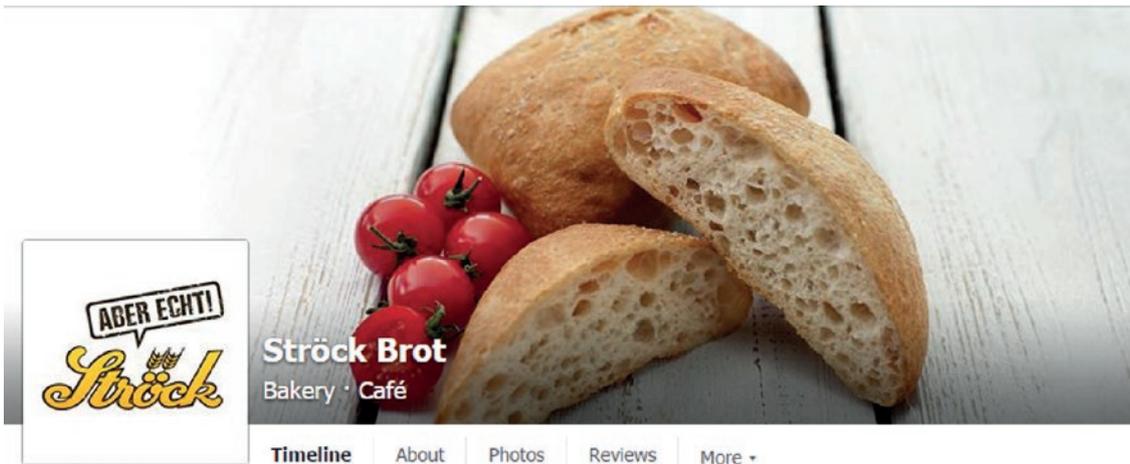


Image 6.9 – Example of a post on Ströck’s Facebook account¹¹



Figure 6.10 – Example of certification proving that Ströck only uses flour made from Austrian cereals¹²



10 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Stroeck>

11 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Stroeck>

12 Source: <http://www.stroeck.at/businesskunden/lebensmitteleinzelhandel/100-getreide-aus-%C3%B6sterreich>

6.3.3 OGILVY MALTA

Ogilvy was founded in 1948 in New York City by David Ogilvy, with the aim to represent UK brands willing to penetrate the US market. The agency grew up fast and was the first advertising agency to be listed in the stock exchange. In 1989 it was taken over by the Wire and Plastic Products plc group (WPP), of which Mr. Ogilvy became chairman. During the last 25 years services offered have been expanded and business value has increased 11 times.

Ogilvy's distinctive point lies in the specific focus that is put on brands, something that was conceptualised by David Ogilvy himself as he was the first to talk about the role of brands. The deep thought process that was practiced and implemented originally by him has become the company's corporate culture.

Ogilvy Malta started off in 1989 as graphic design studio 'Peak', became an affiliate of Ogilvy in 1997 and in December 2004 joined Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide as a full-service advertising agency.

When asked about the company vision and mission, Mr. David Ward, director at Ogilvy Malta answers: "To be the agency most valued by those that most value brands, by offering 360 degree brand stewardship". Ogilvy Malta represents a "Mirror-image of Ogilvy Group offering in any major centre worldwide, our clients have access to all Ogilvy Group resources here and worldwide".

Ogilvy group relies on a social media academy and a social marketing academy, which take care of aspects related to content marketing development and analysis. One of the divisions, Social@Ogilvy, specialises in branded content and runs a global education platform for all Ogilvy staff called the "social media belts". There are three initial levels of proficiency, based on online learning and successful completion of study modules and testing. Social@Ogilvy courses have been the benchmark in the company's global network for end-market implementation. Malta is no exception.

What gives Ogilvy an edge is the worldwide proprietary system based on best practice. The primary stakeholders at Ogilvy Malta are the social media team who are framing content and working to a strategy that focuses on delivering the Ogilvy brand in a meaningful way to brand marketing professionals, CEO's and Board-level individuals. Strategic content related to company operations is published, targeting people following the company¹³. White papers, research, essays are the resources that are published and social media which are mainly used are Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/OgilvyMalta?fref=nf>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/OgilvyMalta>).

Evidence of Success

In 2013, the Holmes Report has named Social@Ogilvy "Best Digital Consultancy in the World"¹⁴ for a reason: the practice developed by the Ogilvy Group in this area is world-class. With regards to Ogilvy Malta, in 24 months it has managed to attract a community of almost 1000 "likers" in its Facebook channel (<https://www.facebook.com/OgilvyMalta>) alone.

Another major indicator of Ogilvy's success is represented by the abundance of requests received, some of which are eventually turned down. A dashboard is used to evaluate and rate prospect clients, i.e. the Business Evaluator incorporating 7 dimensions related to prospect

¹³ Content Marketing is mainly used for customer acquisition.

¹⁴ <http://www.holmesreport.com/news-info/14071/Edelman-Wins-Global-Agency-Of-The-Year-Honors.aspx>

(prestige, probability, access to decision makers, international scope, learning and partners mindset, match to skillbase and growth and profit potentials). Clients are then selected according to the overall rating they are assigned.

Transferability of the Best Practice to SMEs

Professional practitioners are best placed to develop strategy and to assist in creating content which will be used for marketing and reputational purposes. Budgets on content marketing in Malta have been some 7% to 12% of total marketing budget¹⁵, and the area remains experimental for many businesses. It is a mistake for SME's to think that using a platform as part of a lifestyle is the same as using social media and digital platforms for business marketing and brand marketing. One does not become an accountant by purchasing Sage software. Training and testing is key. SMEs need to be properly trained in order to be in a position to assess how to leverage brand equity using content marketing. To get the greatest gains, however, SME's should engage professionals to get the best results.

Figure 6.11 – Ogilvy logo¹⁶



Figure 6.12 – Home of Social@Ogilvy's website¹⁷



15 As stated by the interviewee, Mr. Edwin Ward, director at Ogilvy Malta

16 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/OgilvyMalta>

17 Source: <http://social.ogilvy.com/>

Figure 6.13 – Cover photo on the Ogilvy Malta Facebook profile¹⁸



Figure 6.14 – Example of a post on the Ogilvy Malta Facebook profile¹⁹



6.3.4 IKEA – POLAND

Inter IKEA Systems B.V. was established in 1983 in the Netherlands. It’s a company within the Franchise Division of Inter IKEA Group. The Franchise Division also includes service companies and companies selling IKEA products to franchisees on certain markets. IKEA’s vision is to create a better everyday life for people. The business idea is to offer a wide range of functional and well-designed home furnishing products at prices that many people could afford. Ikea Group has 303 stores in 26 countries and 135 000 employees. There are 8 IKEA stores in Poland.

IKEA’s „Ty Tu Urządź się” blog (<http://tytuurzadzisz.pl/>) has recently been introduced as one of the company’s tool in social media marketing. Its main objective is to inspire the audience with house arrangement ideas as well as to highlight IKEA’s products in various arrangements. Each post is enriched by a photo which always makes the entry attractive to user thanks to its fresh and lifestyle form. Blog’s traffic is driven by the company’s Facebook Page

18 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/OgilvyMalta>

19 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/OgilvyMalta>

(IKEA Polska – <https://pl-pl.facebook.com/IKEApl>), an additional communication channel between IKEA and its consumers in social media. Being itself an excellent source of information about interior design, the Blog's role is to educate and inspire IKEA's target customers by pointing out trends and home decorating ideas. IKEA's blog is an invitation to the world of sophisticated design and, at the same time, proves that the company meets all needs for professional interior equipment: ranging from basic and advanced furnishing to toys and books for children.

„Ty Tu Urządzisz” Blog run for IKEA is a website composed of an informative, educational, inspiring and lifestyle content. Blog's target audience seeks source of exciting, practical and clever ideas for interior apartment arrangements, including articles and short pieces of advice as well. They search for solutions appropriate to their needs and wants, whether they have already started designing their spaces or not. IKEA launched the Blog with a goal clearly defined – to reach consumers who use IKEA's catalogue on a daily basis and provide them with general knowledge related to design and the art of interior arrangements. „Ty Tu Urządzisz” has become the first Polish source of inspiration and home decorating ideas in the way designed “by IKEA”. It's a website where tips derived from professional interior designers and “ready-to-go” concepts can be found, including those about dealing with small and narrow spaces. The way IKEA's products and arrangement ideas are presented is reasonable and allows consumers to implement them straight away. Entries are divided into 16 categories. Three different editors present the IKEA's world in three different perspectives. The first one gives professional and canny pieces of advice about interior decor, another one who runs the “DIY” section, shows examples of unconventional arrangements with the use of IKEA products and the third one presents shopping at IKEA stores from the consumer's point of view. The general content of “Ty Tu Urządzisz” is based on both analysis of internet users' needs (for example: interior decor, textiles or IKEA for children) and IKEA's offer available at a moment. Not only can consumers read useful descriptions, but also see and check each product in 3D view as well as in various colour variants. The scope of topics stays always proper to each catalogue's offer. Moreover, each entry refers to the landing page of a product, where detailed technical description can be found as well as information regarding availability.

Evidence of Success

Running this Blog has led IKEA to increase a number of communication channels with its target consumers and has positioned the Blog as a repository of the brand. The entries containing inspirational interior arrangements not only are shared by particular users, but also by other blogs dedicated to interior design. Blog statistics show a regular increase in both number of unique users and time spent on the website. The constantly implemented strategy of communication engagement which includes all social media channels owned by IKEA, has become a guarantee of success. The mixture of lifestyle and informative elements enriched by interior design expertise turned out to be the most effective way of running the blog for Polish internet audience by such brand as IKEA.

Statistics: February, 5th – May, 20th 2014:

- » 307% boost in page views and 324% more sessions during a period of the last six months comparing to first six months after the Blog launch
- » Average time spent on Site – 4:37 min
- » Number of articles published: 223

Transferability of the Best Practice to SMEs

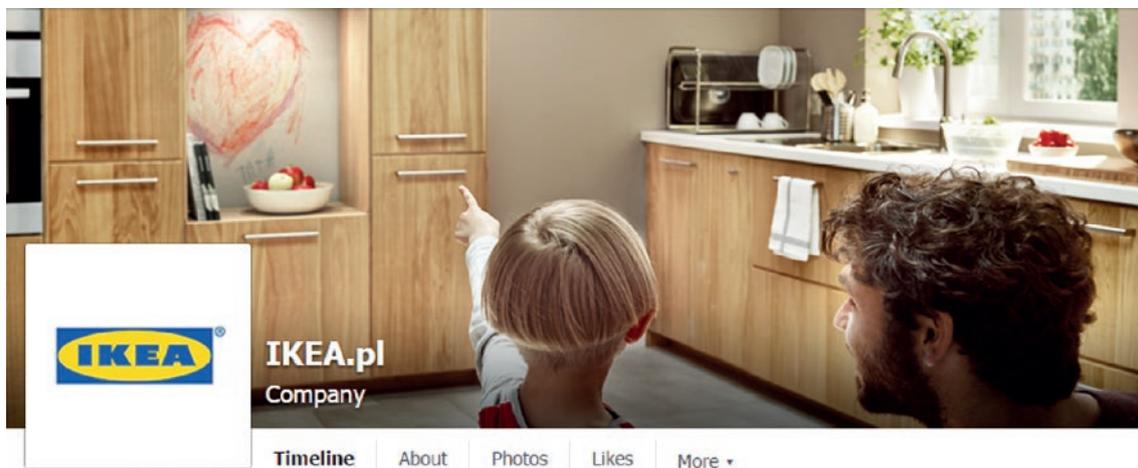
IKEA's best practice is a very useful example which can help small and medium companies to create a blog. It contains the most important features which a good blog should contain: experts' advices, tips for customers, dedicated photos and information about the latest trends.

The blog plays an educational role and shows additional usage of IKEA's products. Moreover, it's the next channel of communication with customers and fans in social media. The blog presents a world of home design and at the same time informs that everything the customer needs is right there, in the IKEA store, which is a very useful hint for SMEs (the first step is showing the knowledge about the subject your product is referred to and then trying to convince customers that you have everything they're looking for).

Figure 6.15 – Ikea logo²⁰



Figure 6.16 – Ikea Polska cover photo on the company's Facebook account²¹



20 Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IKEA>

21 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/IKEApl>

Figure 6.17 – Example of a post from Ty Tu Urządź się blog²²

UTRUSTA –wyposażenie mebli kuchennych METOD

Sam zaprojektujesz



Wraz z wprowadzeniem systemu METOD i we wnętrzach szafek nastąpiły duże zmiany.

Seria wyposażenia wewnętrznych szafek kuchennych METOD to UTRUSTA. Dla tych, którzy ze szwedzkim są za pan brat ta nazwa mówi wszystko. „Utrusta” znaczy bowiem „wyposażać”. I tak, UTRUSTA to: zawiasy, amortyzatory do drzwi, wewnętrzne fronty szuflad, półki melaminowe, półki szklane (do szafek o szerokości 40,60 i 80 cm, a także do szafek narożnych), elementy mocujące szufladę na drzwiach i wiele innych praktycznych rozwiązań. Zobaczcie sami.



Kosz UTRUSTA do szafek o szerokości 40 i 60 cm. Zastąpi półkę. Jest tak wygodny, jak szuflada. Kosze wysuwają się łagodnie i cicho. Mają blokadę, która gwarantuje, że nie wypadną z szyn, a niska przednia krawędź ułatwia wkładanie i wyjmowanie rzeczy. Doskonale nadają się do przechowywania garnków, patelni, form do pieczenia. Maksymalne obciążenie koszy to 10 kg.

6.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that both established international companies as well as locally-based, home grown firms are successfully engaging their audience thanks to the implementation of content marketing tactics. The mentioned best practices can be summarized as follows:

- » Publication of content related to preparation of local dishes, recipes, events, traditional culture and technical aspects of winemaking; presence on online portals dedicated to wine culture – Terre di Guagnano.
- » Publication of informative articles related to the products' quality and aspects of bakery on the company's website; provision of advice service to customers by the employment of a dedicated professional with expertise in nutrition aspects – Ströck.
- » Dedicated corporate division taking care of content development, publication and analysis to ensure that the company's vision reaches its target audience via social media and proprietary tools – Ogilvy Malta.
- » Use of a dedicated blog to engage, inspire and educate customers by providing them with content related to lifestyle, products, trends and home decorating ideas – IKEA Poland.

22 Source: <http://tytuurzadzisz.pl/>

All these practices can be considered as potentially transferable to SMEs, as content marketing tools and tactics described that are not out of reach for small and medium firms in terms of financial resources, instead being highly cost-effective.

What has to be borne in mind is that the effectiveness of CM tactics ultimately depends on the preparedness and knowledge of the people who implement them: the four companies included in this chapter, even if different in terms of size and alignment, rely on professionals that know how to make the most out of a CM strategy.

SMEs need to be first alerted to the impact that content marketing can have on their sales of products and services and secondly, properly trained in this field to gain their customers' loyalty and increase their sales. The handbook and the workshops to be organized within the CMEX project serve this exact purpose and will allow interested SMEs to further familiarize themselves with such practices, therefore building their CM expertise.

CHAPTER

THE RESULTS OF A SURVEY
CARRIED OUT IN THE FOUR
PARTNER AREAS

7

7.1 EXPLORATIVE SURVEY IN POLAND, ITALY, AUSTRIA AND MALTA

In order to gain a closer insight to the ways, extent and characteristics of Content Marketing use in the partner countries, the authors of the Content Marketing Handbook launched a survey in Poland, Malta, Italy and Austria in Spring of 2014. The aim was to gather information especially regarding the following questions:

- » Do companies know what CM is?
- » Do companies use CM?
- » Which tools do they use and which they don't use and why?
- » How do they organize CM (time, staff, budget)?
- » What is their intent of using CM and do they observe/measure effects?
- » Do they see the need to learn more about the CM? What do they want to learn?

7.2 METHOD

The survey is explorative and not representative. The selection method and the number of companies differs between the countries.

The questionnaire used for the survey was developed by the partners to ensure that all topics relevant to the CMH will be covered. The questionnaire was finalized by the partner responsible for quality assurance and accompanying research. The questionnaire was the same in all countries¹.

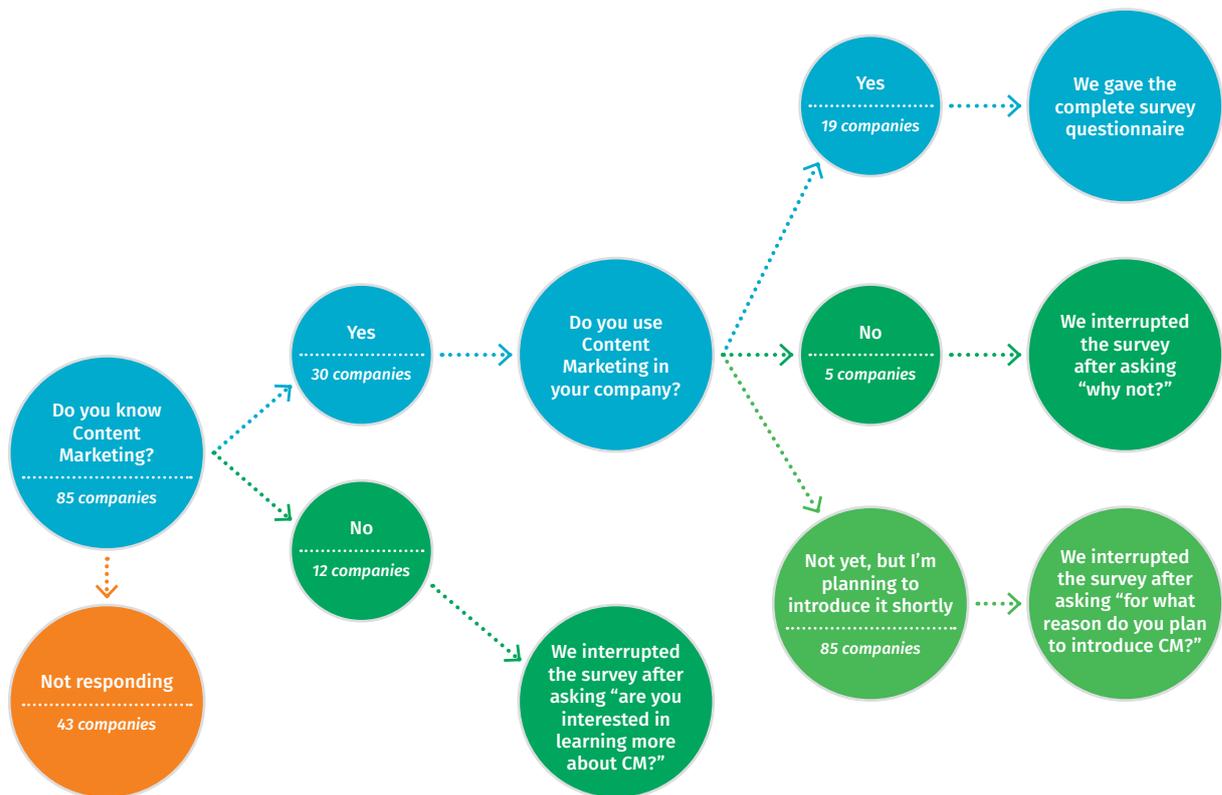
Since it was clear from the beginning that access, connections, resources and the scope of companies would differ between the partner organizations, the partners could adapt the approach according to those preconditions.

In **Austria** the survey was carried out in the form of guided interviews. This survey method allows for gathering information provided by the interviewee, which were initially not considered but seem to be relevant to interviewees to mention or help to explain the context or interrelations. Persons were interviewed either by telephone or personally. The interviews were recorded and protocolled. With this qualitative approach 5 preselected companies were contacted and interviewed.

In **Poland** the survey was conducted as an online survey, since it was clear that in Poland a high number of companies would be reached by this approach. The survey was set online and companies of the partner organization's database invited to participate. The total of 229 of those companies took part in the survey.

In **Italy** 85 companies were approached via email to inform about the survey and to contact persons responsible for marketing. Of the contacted companies 42 companies responded to the questions whether they knew CM and whether they used CM. A total of 19 were finally included to the full survey which was conducted by telephone interviews. The scheme was the following:

¹ See full questionnaire in the appendix.

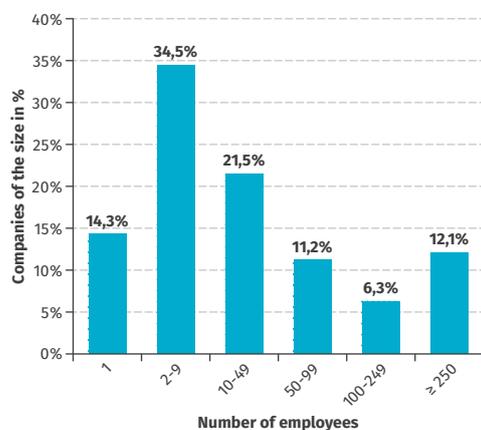


In **Malta** initially 100 companies were contacted via email to encourage them to participate in the survey. After a part of them did not want to participate in the survey for reasons such as unsuitability for the survey, not knowing what CM is or not having someone dealing with marketing within their organization who could answer the questionnaire, the 27 remaining were surveyed. The questionnaire was sent to them via email.

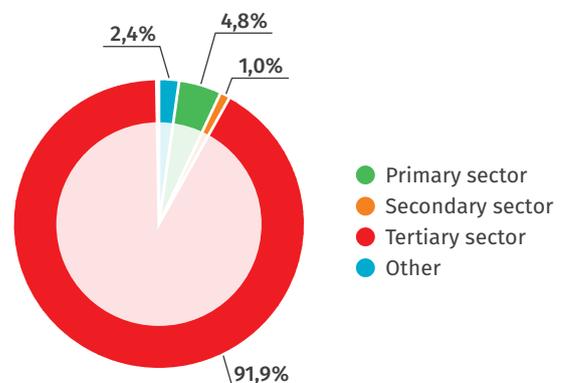
7.3 POLAND

In Poland, all in all, 223 companies took part in the online-based survey. The majority represents small companies but overall companies of all sizes were included to the survey in Poland.

Size of companies in the Polish sample



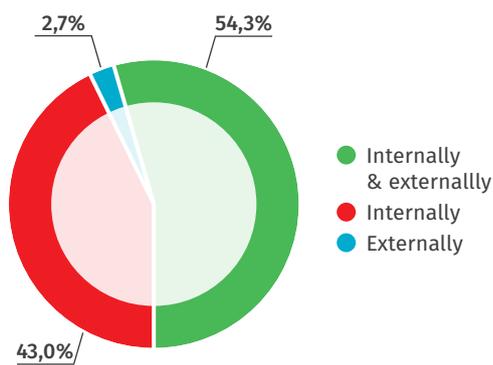
Sectors of companies in the sample



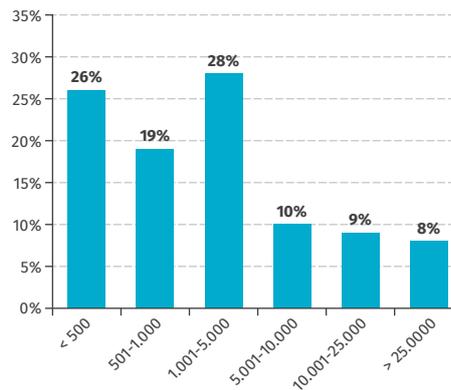
The surveyed organizations belong to the tertiary sector (e.g. commercial, financial & personal services). When it comes to more specific sectors most of the companies represent finance and banking, education, consulting and trade sectors. The vast majority of the Polish sample has a profit structure and has a national wide business alignment. However, a considerable part of the companies is involved in national and international business alignments.

The majority of the surveyed Polish companies organise their content marketing internally as well as externally as the diagram illustrates. According to their response, 137 of 223 have a person who is exclusively responsible for marketing. This means 86 of the surveyed companies in Poland have one or more persons responsible for marketing but who is also concerned with other tasks.

Organisation of CM



Marketing budget of sample companies in %



Not surprisingly the vast majority of the companies of the survey do not have big budgets for marketing activities. The size of the marketing budget is assumed to be corresponding with the size of the companies (see also bar chart with the size of companies).

Regarding time spent on CM per month responses differ a lot. Respondents indicate 10, 16, 20 or even 60 hours per month. The highest number is 200 hours, the lowest is 1 hour. However, it can be assumed that the surveyed persons were referring their indications to the time spent on marketing activities as a whole and not CM specifically. So these numbers should be treated carefully.

When it comes to the use of Content Marketing tools and rating them, the surveyed companies in Poland show, all in all, a very high affinity to the entire “toolbox”. Even though the most popular tools are in principle the same as in the other surveyed countries in Poland, the other tools have a higher rate of use.

The lowest use is indicated for microsities and podcasts.

TOOL	Number of companies using this tool	%	Useful*	Not useful*	Don't know*
blogs	147	65,9%	57,6%	12,4%	30%
social media	190	85,2%	78,8%	8,8%	12,4%
articles on the website	194	87,0%	83,6%	5,0%	11,4%
newsletters	167	74,9%	69,6%	11,1%	19,3%
case studies	128	57,4%	55,3%	9,0%	35,7%
videos	144	64,6%	63,2%	7,4%	29,4%

articles on other website	161	72,2%	69,1%	8,7%	22,2%
in person events	168	73,4%	72,4%	7,6%	20,0%
infographics	133	58,1%	56,5%	9,5%	34,0%
online presentations	140	61,1%	55,0%	15,0%	30,0%
white papers	149	65,1%	63,7%	9,3%	27,0%
mobile content	97	42,3%	34,7%	14,8%	50,5%
researches and reports	149	65,1%	63,7%	9,3%	27,0%
webinars/webcasts	107	46,7%	40,4%	13,6%	46,0%
press articles	170	74,2%	72,2%	9,1%	18,7%
microsites	91	39,7%	32,0%	13,5%	54,5%
books	117	51,1%	40,6%	18,8%	40,6%
e-magazines	114	49,8%	40,9%	18,1%	40,9%
annual reports	118	51,5%	42,9%	16,7%	40,4%
mobile applications	118	51,5%	44,3%	14,4%	41,3%
traditional newspapers	170	74,2%	72,2%	9,1%	18,7%
e-books	119	52,0%	44,5%	15,0%	40,5%
podcasts	81	35,4%	24,5%	16,8%	58,7%
games	98	42,8%	26,6%	22,6%	50,8%
others	0				

* The percentages related to usefulness refer to the number of companies using the tool, not to the whole sample.

The lowest use is indicated for microsites and podcasts, but also games and mobile contents have a lower rate. All of these four tools have consistently the highest number of uncertainty of users about their usefulness.

7.3.1 SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Social media is a very popular among all Polish companies – everybody knows them and likes using them. Facebook, YouTube and Goldenline are the most popular. Polish companies use not only global, invented social media but also country specific platforms such as GoldenLine. Goldenline is a Polish company. It is a professional network in Poland with over 1,5 million members. Its mission is to connect people and companies. It strives to help recruiters find the right employees and to help people landing jobs. Since on the one hand, there is social media which is globally used and which reaches many people, and on the other hand, nationally specific tools which are popular, too. It seems just consequent to use both of them.

7.3.2 REASONS FOR NOT USING CM TOOLS

The most important factor which prevents a company from using content marketing tools are time/human resources. Especially blogs (53%) and case studies (44%) are rated as highly time consuming and with a high HR requirement. But also the factors of limited budget, lack of knowledge how to measure the impact and the lack of expertise are often obstacles for companies.

Other tools such as mobile content (21%), microsites (25%), podcasts (24%) and games/gamification (20%) are significantly more often not known to the survey participants than the other tools.

Limited budget is the most important factor which prevents companies to use mobile applications (34%) in person events (34%), videos (37%), and is also decisive for not using books (29%), e-magazines (29%) and annual reports (28%).

The lack of knowledge on how to measure the impact of a tool is never the most important factor which prevents Polish companies from using a tool but it still has an influence in the range between 13-20%.

7.3.3 PURPOSES FOR CM USE AND IMPACT MEASURING

When it comes to the most important purposes of Content Marketing use, the factors of brand awareness (72%) and credibility (69%) are the most important. Customer acquisition and an increase of sales are following with 65% each.

More than half of the surveyed companies in Poland do not measure the effects of their content marketing: 124 companies (55,6%) who do not measure it compared to 99 companies (44,4%) which do it. Among metrics used to measure the ROI (return on investment) the most popular are: web traffic (57%), growth in sales (51%) and time spent on website (42%). Metrics like growth in advocacy/funds obtained (4%), quality of feedback (28%) and SEO ranking (29%) are used very rarely.

7.3.4 CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS

For the surveyed companies, the most challenging aspects of Content Marketing use are the production of interesting content (assuring the quality of content), but also the pure fact of limited time, limited budget and finding an adequate (qualified) person to take care of content marketing activities and strategy. Others think that the lack of a coherent vision of a company and the lack of a strategy are clear obstacles of using CM, effectively.

Among aspects which were already summarized for the purposes of CM Polish respondents name foremost the ability to build a positive image among customers and in the market, the way of communication with a client and the possibility of getting to clients through many different channels as the greatest benefits to the enterprises of Content Marketing use. Also, the ability to gain trust of clients as well as a facilitated access to the company's target group are assumed to be a benefit.

7.3.5 FUTURE ASPECTS

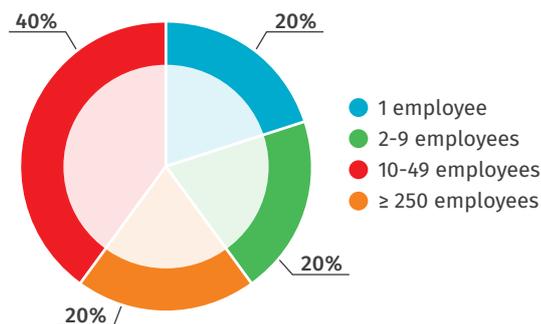
The results point to the conclusion that there is a lot of knowledge already about CM among Polish companies. However, other facts point also to the assumption that CM needs to be handled by a professional who is well trained and able to sketch a CM strategy. The best way to gain this competence and HR respectively is to increase the level of knowledge among the company's own employees.

It can be assumed that companies are willing to work on their CM implementation since the great majority of respondents think Content Marketing will be more important for their organization in the future and would like to find out more – especially about mobile applications, SEO, how to write interesting and high quality texts, and finally, they intend to identify what are the best tools of Content Marketing for their company.

7.4 AUSTRIA

The range of company size varied from micro to large company. There was no medium size enterprise (49-249 employees).

Companies according to number of employees



All five companies had in common that the term “content marketing” was best known to the interviewed persons. All interviewed persons were responsible for marketing in their company. However, when asked about the use of specific CM tools, it turned out that all companies do use the tools of CM.

The companies were selected from very different sectors and none of them are professionally concerned with marketing, advertisement or web design.

The table below is an overview concerning the characteristics of the surveyed companies in Austria.

	Sector	Specific sector	Business structure	Business alignment	Business model	Yearly marketing budget
Company 1	Culture	Theatre	Non profit	National	B2C	5.000-10.001
Company 2	Services	Training and moderation	Profit	National/International	B2C	--
Company 3	Trade	Food trade	Profit	National	B2C	>25.000
Company 4	Services	Audio recording & editing	Profit	National	B2B & B2C	1.001-5.000
Company 5	Trade	Food and beverages	Profit	National	B2B & B2C	>25.000

The most popular tools of CM were social media use, articles on their own homepage and newsletters. The table below shows in detail the companies’ experience with the CM tools.

TOOL	Absolute number of companies using the tool	Useful	Not useful	Don't know
Blogs	2	1	0	1
Social media	4	4	0	0
Articles on own website	5	5	0	0
Newsletters	4	4	0	0
Case studies	0			
Videos	1	1	0	0
Articles on other websites	1	0	0	1
Personal events	1	0	0	1
Infographics	1	1	0	0
Online presentations	0			
White papers	0			
Mobile content	0			
Researches and reports	0			
Webinars/webcasts	0			
Press articles	2	2	0	0
Microsites	1	1	0	0
Books	0			
E-magazines	0			
Annual reports	0			
Mobile applications	0			
Traditional newspapers	2	2	0	0
E-books	0			
Podcasts	0			
Games	1	1	0	0
Others	1	0	0	1

The fact that many of the interviewed Austrian companies did not know exactly what Content Marketing (exactly) is, but use the tools of CM within their overall marketing activities, shows that there is a marketing strategy but usually no separate CM strategy. However, there were enough tools of CM which are not even known and thus – as one interviewee states – could not be judged if they are useful or not. So introducing the wide range of CM tools is the first and most important step. The second step then will be to decide which tools are appropriate and feasible.

When asked about the choice of social media used for CM activities, Facebook is clearly the preferred tool to communicate with customers. At the same time the personnel responsible for marketing are sure that this tool is useful to them. In Austria, YouTube and Twitter are also used by each two companies and LinkedIn and Xing are used by one company.

MEDIA	Number of companies using the tool	Useful	Not useful	Don't know
Facebook	4	4	0	0
Youtube	2	1	0	1
Linkedin	1	1	0	0
Goldenline	0	–	–	–
Twitter	2	1	0	1
Pinterest	0	–	–	–
Vimeo	1	1	0	0
Slideshare	0	–	–	–
Others (Xing)	1	0	0	1

Another finding is that rather than money it is time that prevents companies from using specific tools of CM. It is, however, stressed that in the end, time is money, too.

The most important reasons for not using specific CM tools are, on the one hand, lack of time/human resources and limited budget, on the other hand (explicit) lack of expertise. This is regarding for instance blogs, case studies, in person events, books, videos, mobile content, apps or podcasts.

Two things are noteworthy: First, many tools were commented with the remark “not necessary” or “not relevant at this point”. Second, many of the tools were not known to the interviewees. For example white papers, infographics, webinars, microsites, podcasts and games were the tools most often not known or misunderstood. The interviewer, in most cases had the opportunity to shortly describe what these tools are. However, some persons could not say clearly what exact reasons prevent them from using a tool as they could not even consider it because they don't know about it.

This fact is important because when it comes to (re)considering one's own (content) marketing strategy also the tools which were initially not considered, should be revised – since it is possible that they might not have been fully understood in all their possibilities, or the expertise of how to employ them was not provided to the necessary extent.

When asked about the assessment of impact of Content Marketing, nearly all interviewees state that they use the means of measuring the impact. Most important were: measuring the web traffic, social media sharing and quality of feedback, but also growth in sales and growth in subscribers were specified. It is important to notice that even though almost all companies used several tools of CM, they did not necessarily use the corresponding tool to assess its impact.

However, most of them were very satisfied as they reported they were able to observe the higher attention of customers, increase of sales, growth of subscribers or recommendations of their clients/customers. Only one company (surprisingly the one with the most extensive CM use and with the most professional marketing) claimed not to measure the impact of their CM activities at all.

7.4.1 CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF CM

When it comes to the biggest challenges of CM for one's own company the interviewees state for example that it is "hard to produce really valuable contents", that the "time investment is very high" or that there are "enough good ideas but difficulties to text". And again the time/costs-argument is taken under consideration.

On the other hand, the Austrian companies also stress the benefits of Content Marketing for their enterprises:

- » Establishing additional benefits and linking for customers
- » Establishing the trademark with value
- » Offer identification and customer friendliness
- » Demonstrating competence indirectly
- » Better transport of own image
- » Increasing web traffic
- » Raising of brand awareness and sales

The most important aims of using CM within the overall marketing strategy in Austria were:

- » Customer engagement
- » Customer loyalty
- » Customer acquisition
- » Brand awareness
- » Increase of sales

7.4.2 FUTURE ASPECTS

In reference to future CM activities all interviewees expressed interest in learning more about professional and the effective use of CM tools. Some of the companies name specific aspects they would like to learn about more. Here for instance "measuring the impact" as well as "Yoast SEO" and "case studies" are specified; but also the general wish to get to know more tools with the intention to decide which would be useful to their own purposes and fit the companies' profile and clientele.

This awareness concerning the importance of Content Marketing in the future, as well as the fact that some of the interviewees mentioned that they already plan to widen the "toolbox" of CM and/or plan to hire a new employee (whose task will be to take care of marketing and Content Marketing), point to the conclusion that interest in the topic is high and the knowledge of it is growing.

7.5 MALTA

The sample is largely composed by companies which operate in the services sector (mostly in the marketing, publishing and advertising industries).

Most of the primary and secondary sector businesses that have been contacted claimed not to be suitable for the survey or not willing to collaborate. In the end, in Malta 27 companies were surveyed.

The vast majority of surveyed companies in Malta were from the tertiary sector (81%). They represent the fields IT/web and software solutions, video and media production, marketing, publishing and advertising and networking².

Four companies are situated in the secondary sector (food manufacturing, winery and construction) and one company is from the primary sector (agricultural business). All of the companies are profit enterprises.

Half of the companies are conducting business-to-business as well as business-to-customer relations. About 40% are exclusively conducting business-to-business relations.

A total of 16 companies out of 27 (59%) employ between 2 and 9 persons, 8 companies (29%) have between 10-49 employees, one company employ between 49 and 99 persons and another one between 100 and 250 employees.

A total of 18 companies (67%) do business exclusively nationally, 7 nationally and internationally and 2 of them only internationally. There are 11 B2B companies, 14 B2B and B2C companies and 2 B2C companies.

On an average basis, companies spend 43% of the marketing budget on CM. In this case, data collected must be interpreted prudently, since 48% of the interviewed didn't answer about the budget bound to CM and 37% chose not to reveal information about the entity of marketing budget.

Therefore, it could be possible that the ones who answered the question spent a greater part of their total marketing budget on CM.

In Malta, the social media are the most important CM tool. It is followed by the use of articles on the company's own website. These are the most popular ways to communicate with the target audience. Also, the companies rate the effectiveness of these means as useful.

TOOL	Number (and %) of companies using this tool		Useful*	Not useful*	Don't know*
Blogs	6	(22%)	100%	0%	0%
Social media	26	(96%)	85%	11%	4%
Articles on own website	19	(70%)	84%	11%	5%
Newsletters	12	(44.5%)	75%	25%	0%
Case studies	6	(22%)	67%	33%	0%
Videos	13	(48%)	69%	31%	0%
Articles on other websites	12	(44.5%)	59%	33%	8%
Personal events	10	(37%)	70%	20%	10%
Infographics	6	(22%)	100%	0%	0%
Online presentations	5	(18.5%)	80%	0%	20%
White papers	3	(11%)	67%	0%	33%
Mobile content	11	(41%)	55%	36%	9%
Researches and reports	7	(26%)	72%	14%	14%

² It should be noticed that a considerable percentage of the surveyed Maltese companies are from sectors like marketing, advertisement and web solutions which suggests that they have a higher affinity and knowledge about the topic of content marketing.

Webinars/webcasts	2	(7%)	100%	0%	0%
Press articles	11	(41%)	64%	27%	9%
Microsites	5	(18.5%)	80%	20%	0%
Books	2	(7%)	50%	50%	0%
E-magazines	7	(26%)	57%	29%	14%
Annual reports	2	(7%)	50%	50%	0%
Mobile applications	4	(15%)	100%	0%	0%
Traditional newspapers	14	(52%)	64%	29%	7%
E-books	2	(7%)	100%	0%	0%
Podcasts	1	(4%)	100%	0%	0%
Games	1	(4%)	100%	0%	0%
Others	0	(0%)	0%	0%	0%

* The percentages related to usefulness refer to the number of companies using the tool, not to the whole sample.

Facebook stands out as the most popular social medium amongst the surveyed companies in Malta, since 26 respondents out of 27 claimed to use this platform; in addition, Facebook is largely considered as a useful tool, since 88.5% of the firms think so.

LinkedIn and Twitter follow at a considerable distance, since they are being used by 29% and 22% of the companies respectively; both SME have a lower rate of usefulness (62.5% and 67%) when compared with Facebook.

Among other social media mentioned by the respondents, there is Google+, which is being used by two companies and rated useful by both.

MEDIA	Number of companies using the tool	%	Useful*	Not useful*	Don't know*
Facebook	26	96%	88.5%	7.5%	4%
Youtube	4	15%	75%	25%	0%
Linkedin	8	29%	62.5%	37.5%	0%
Goldenline	1	4%	100%	0%	0%
Twitter	6	22%	67%	16.5%	16.5%
Pinterest	3	11%	100%	0%	0%
Vimeo	2	7%	100%	0%	0%
Slideshare	1	4%	100%	0%	0%
Others (Google+)	2	7%	100%	0%	0%

As can be seen from the following table, the lack of time, human resources and expertise seem to be the major challenges in the use of CM tools. This outcome reflects what was anticipated in the report's introduction with reference to such topic.

TOOL	Number of companies using this tool	Tool unknown*	Lack of time/HR*	Lack of expertise*	Limited budget*	Don't know how to measure impact*	Other*
Blogs	21	19%	52%	48%	19%	29%	19%
Social media	1	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Articles on the website	8	13%	63%	38%	13%	50%	13%
Newsletters	15	20%	53%	47%	13%	40%	20%
Case studies	21	10%	52%	24%	10%	29%	19%
Videos	14	14%	57%	36%	7%	21%	29%
Articles other websites	15	13%	47%	40%	20%	40%	13%
Personal events	17	18%	53%	35%	29%	35%	18%
Infographics	21	24%	52%	38%	24%	33%	10%
Online presentations	22	9%	45%	27%	18%	27%	18%
White papers	24	17%	46%	29%	21%	33%	17%
Mobile content	16	13%	38%	50%	25%	31%	19%
Researches and reports	20	10%	40%	30%	20%	30%	15%
Webinars/webcasts	25	16%	40%	44%	20%	32%	16%
Press articles	16	19%	44%	38%	38%	38%	19%
Microsites	22	27%	45%	41%	23%	27%	14%
Books	25	20%	48%	32%	20%	28%	20%
E-magazines	20	10%	45%	30%	20%	30%	15%
Annual reports	25	20%	44%	32%	20%	28%	20%
Mobile applications	23	17%	35%	48%	22%	26%	22%
Traditional newspapers	13	15%	38%	38%	23%	46%	23%
E-books	25	16%	44%	32%	20%	32%	20%
Podcasts	26	15%	50%	31%	19%	31%	19%
Games	26	15%	38%	38%	19%	31%	23%
Others	N/A	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

A total of 63% of respondents claimed to measure the effects of their CM activities. In reference to metrics used, the growth in sales is the one in which companies are mostly interested (42%), followed by web traffic and social media sharing (both 31%)³. A total of 19% of the companies demonstrated their willingness to measure even other aspects by using Google Analytics and Mailchimp.

3 One company didn't answer, so the percentages refer to a sample of 26 companies.

Brand awareness (56%) and increase of sales (59%) are the most important targets that Maltese companies try to achieve through their marketing activities; customer engagement also seems to be a relevant objective, since 37% of respondents chose it among the purposes.

Respondents also demonstrated their willingness to use CM for other reasons, including: customer care, products' promotion, branding, HR, diversification of the company's strategies. One respondent answered that the use of CM is part of the business core of the company, another one that it helps in expressing the company's voice.

The great majority of the sample (89%) stated that CM is likely to increase its importance for their company in the future and, when asked if they are willing to learn more about CM, 81% of those addressed have replied positively.

What do companies want to learn?

ANSWER	Number of companies	%
How to write good content	2	8%
How to make posts and videos go viral	1	4%
Be generally trained in CM	7	29%
New techniques and strategies	2	8%
How to choose and use CM tools and technologies	10	42%
How to measure impact of CM	3	12.5%

Answers have been grouped as shown in the table above: Most of the companies are focused on learning more about CM tools and IT aspects (42%), while 29% of respondents didn't identify a specific aspect on which training is needed, but they generally expressed their interest in learning more about Content Marketing. One addressee stated that he was interested in learning both how the use of CM would affect ROI and how to choose the best tools for advertisement⁴.

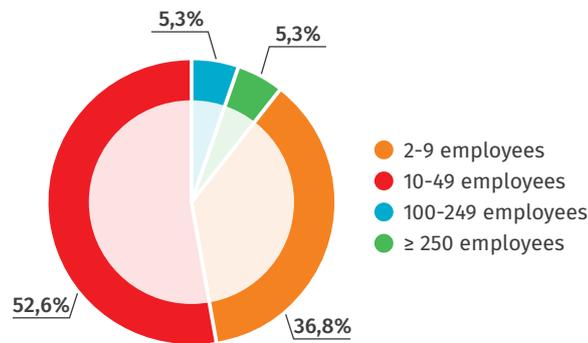
In conclusion, it can be said that respondents showed to be aware about what Content Marketing basically is and its growing popularity, but not so much about how to make the most out of it and how to gauge its effects. What can be seen as an important result of this research is that 81% of those addressed, welcomed the possibility to be trained in this area, and therefore, qualified themselves as potential audience for future workshops within the CMEX project.

⁴ Three companies didn't answer, so the percentages refer to a sample of 24 respondents.

7.6 ITALY

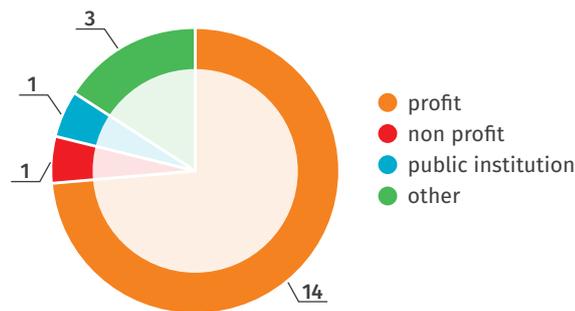
In Italy, 19 companies were surveyed. Most of them are small and medium size companies as the diagram shows below.

Companies according to number of employees



Three quarters of the surveyed Italian companies are profit enterprises

Companies according to sectors in absolute numbers



A total of 42% of sampled companies handle marketing activities exclusively internally, while 47% outsource part of these activities to external professionals. A total of 11% of the companies completely outsource their marketing activities.

On an average basis, the companies included in the sample dedicate 33.2 hours per month to Content Marketing (three companies didn't answer the question regarding hours spent, so the data refers to a sample of 16 companies).

Most of those interviewed (58%) answered that the person in charge for marketing also performs other kinds of activities. Only 37% of the companies have a person employed solely for managing marketing. One company didn't answer this question.

When it comes to the CM tools used, the rated Italian companies have a similar pattern as the companies in Poland, Austria and Malta: social media, articles on the own website, and newsletters are the most important tools followed by videos and in person events. Interestingly, in Italy online presentations, articles on other websites and case studies are also popular means of CM.

TOOL	Number of companies using this tool	%	Useful*	Not useful*	Don't know*
blogs	9	47%	62%	13%	25%
social media	16	84%	93%	0%	7%
articles on the website	15	79%	86%	0%	14%
newsletters	14	74%	100%	0%	0%
case studies	7	37%	80%	0%	20%
videos	11	58%	100%	0%	0%
articles on other website	9	47%	100%	0%	0%
in person events	11	58%	90%	0%	10%
infographics	7	37%	100%	0%	0%
online presentations	10	53%	100%	0%	0%
white papers	1	5%	0%	0%	100%
mobile content	8	42%	75%	12%	13%
researches and reports	6	32%	100%	0%	0%
webinars/webcasts	5	26%	60%	40%	0%
press articles	8	42%	87%	13%	0%
microsites	5	26%	80%	0%	20%
books	3	16%	67%	0%	33%
e-magazines	6	32%	67%	16%	17%
annual reports	3	16%	0%	100%	0%
mobile applications	6	32%	67%	16%	17%
traditional newspapers	7	37%	71%	29%	0%
e-books	3	16%	33%	0%	67%
podcasts	2	11%	0%	50%	50%
games	4	21%	25%	25%	50%
others	2	11%	100%	0%	0%

* The percentages reporting usefulness are based on the number of companies using that tool, not on the entire sample.

Facebook stands out as the most popular social medium among the sampled companies since 15 out of 19 respondents report to use this platform (79%). In addition, 93% of the companies say they consider Facebook as a useful tool.

Other Social Media like Google+, Instagram, WhatsApp and Flickr are used by 68% of the sampled companies; they say that they consider these social media completely effective (the effectiveness rate attributed is 100% useful).

The next most popular are Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube which are used by 63%, 53% and 47% of the companies respectively.

Use and Utility of Social Media

Social media	Number of companies using this tool	%	Useful*	Not useful*	Don't know*
Facebook	15	79%	93%	0%	7%
YouTube	9	47%	100%	0%	0%
LinkedIn	10	53%	90%	0%	10%
Goldenline	2	11%	50%	0%	50%
Twitter	12	63%	67%	8%	25%
Pinterest	4	21%	75%	0%	25%
Vimeo	6	32%	83%	0%	17%
Slideshare	5	26%	74%	0%	26%
Others	13	68%	100%	0%	0%

* The percentages reporting usefulness are based on the number of companies using that tool, not on the entire sample.

The sampled companies use Content Marketing for different reasons. Customer acquisition (89%) and brand awareness (79%) are the most important objectives that companies intend to achieve through their Content Marketing activities. Raising credibility and customer loyalty also seem to be relevant objectives, since 68% of respondents chose it among their most important purposes.

Respondents also stated that they use CM for other reasons, including raising the company's reputation and the company's online visibility.

Reasons for using CM

PURPOSE	Number of companies	%
Raising credibility	13	68%
Brand awareness	15	79%
Customer engagement	10	53%
Customer acquisition	17	89%
Customer loyalty	13	68%
Increasing website traffic	12	63%
Increasing sales	10	53%
Create/grow leadership	6	32%
Fund raising	4	21%
Volunteer recruitment	4	21%
Others	2	11%

All the interviewed companies measure the effects of their Content Marketing actions.

For the measurement of the ROI deriving from the adopted platform or tools, the most-used metric is web traffic (79%), followed by the growth in sales (63%), the SEO ranking (53%) and the quality of feedback (47%).

A total of 32% of the companies stated that they also measure other aspects by using Google Analytics, Registration to the Website, RSS, Conversion Rate, Analytics, Page Views.

Metrics used to measure effects of CM

METRIC	Number of companies	%
Web Traffic	15	79%
Social Media Sharing	7	37%
SEO Ranking	10	53%
Time spent on website	4	21%
Growth in subscribers	7	37%
Growth in advocacy/funds obtained	1	5%
Growth in sales	7	63%
Quality of feedback	9	47%
Others*	6	32%

* Registration to the Website, RSS, Conversion Rate, Analytics, Page View.

The most challenging aspect of Content Marketing use among the sampled companies are the difficulties with content curation (68%), i.e. in assuring a regular and original flow of content over time and the lack of financial resources (63%).

7.7 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

After the rather detailed views on the country-specific results of our survey, it is worthwhile to take into account the overall results and commonalities of use and needs regarding Content Marketing across countries.

Country	Number of companies surveyed	Number of employees					
		1	2-9	10-49	50-99	100-249	>= 250
Poland	223	30	72	47	31	14	29
Malta	27	1	16	8	1	1	0
Italy	19	0	7	10	0	1	1
Austria	5	1	1	2	0	0	1

In all participating countries, many companies did not reveal their yearly marketing budget and/or did not describe their budget for Content Marketing. So a general statement cannot be made about a cross country trend.

Also in reference to the time spent per day or month, it is not reliable to make statements. In Austria, but also for instance in Poland, the interviews and the numbers in the questionnaires show that part of the surveyed persons announced the time spent on marketing in general but who were not able to define a time frame spent only for CM activities.

7.7.1 USE OF CM TOOLS

There are several important commonalities across the four countries that could be found in the results of the survey. For one, the use of social media and the opinion that they are useful to the companies' overall marketing success is nearly without exception. Second, further the most important tools are newsletters, articles on their own homepage and blogs. Among the social media, Facebook is the most used and favoured one. In three of the four countries

(Austria, Malta and Poland) a rather traditional medium is also popular: Newspapers. In Poland and Austria also press articles have noteworthy value in CM. In Malta and Italy videos are more popular than in Poland or Austria.

Also, the country reports indicate that a couple of CM tools are not well known or are not known at all among companies (and the respective marketing section). These are for example white papers, podcasts, mobile contents or infographics.

The most important reasons for not applying specific CM tools across countries were lack of time/human resources and limited budget. However, the lack of expertise often was the reason. These factors, for instance, prevent many companies to use blogs, mobile applications, videos, books or in person events.

Many companies indicated CM tools which they don't consider as useful for their purposes. This can, however, not be assessed as a general rejection: there are in fact tools which seem to be more "omnipotent" than others – while "the others" have their advantages, too, but need more thought how to use them properly in different contexts. So at the one hand they seem not so popular at first sight, on the other hand, whoever uses them (well-considered) will surely make a difference.

7.7.2 PURPOSES OF CM USE AND MEASURING IMPACT OF CM

Among all countries, the aspects of brand awareness, customer acquisition and loyalty, credibility and increase of sales are decisive for using Content Marketing. However, it varies between the four countries to what extent and with which means the impact actually is measured. Also, the results regarding the question what prevents companies from using one or another CM tool indicates that the lack of knowledge about how to measure the impact of the company's CM activities is relevant.

So with reference to motivation, the actual outcome and simple cost-benefit-calculation, as well as more in depth knowledge and a consequent use of analytical tools of assessing CM effects on the desired purposes are required.

7.7.3 FUTURE ASPECTS

Especially in the Italian survey, it turned out that those companies who were not yet having Content Marketing, a considerable majority plans to do so in the future. This indicates – beyond the agreement among the surveyed companies on the growing importance of CM – that Content Marketing is most likely getting more important to companies and their relation and service to customers.

Also, during the survey, several interviewees mentioned that they want to start using specific CM tools soon. This shows that even rather skeptical persons and those who are naturally affine to the topic, recognize the relevance of Content Marketing to their own business and try to figure out what could be useful.

Not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority of companies participating in the survey (or initially contacted to participate) showed further interest to learn more about Content Marketing and how to find a tailored CM strategy according to their own needs. Some of the needed advice they – and our other readers – hopefully found in the previous chapters of this Content Marketing Handbook.

CHAPTER

8

FUTURE TRENDS AND
PREDICTIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Content won't just be a buzzword throughout 2014 and onwards, but will rather become an important part within most companies' marketing strategy. Influential brands worldwide, as well as SMEs, will have to develop a sound understanding of what content marketing actually is and how it can affect in a positive way their business goals and image.

Even if it has been clarified in the previous pages (Cfr. Chapter 2) that content has always been an important element in advertising and branding, CM still represents something new and revolutionary: most of its potentialities could even be unknown, as the tools and platforms that are currently associated with it can evolve in many possible ways.

This chapter is based on desk research and focuses on identifying a series of CM trends that are likely to arise in the future, by reviewing interesting predictions and hypotheses outlined by international experts and several studies in the sector.

8.2 QUALITY WILL BE THE KEY, NOT QUANTITY

In the era of Twitter, compact messages must be created in a "140-character format". Focusing on the quality of communication and not on the amount of information provided, will probably be crucial. In fact, most of the time users give a quick glance to web content, rapidly moving on to another topic or website in a few seconds. Therefore, conciseness will be a synonym for effectiveness: content that is short, simple and goes straight to the point can make the difference in catching the reader's eye and will help in differentiating one message from a competitors'.

Quality content shall also be visually rich: providing prospects with videos (according to Cisco, by 2017, video will account for 69% of all consumer internet traffic)¹, images, infographics, etc., instead of just relying on textual messages, it will be a winning move.

Content will also have to be developed in a way that is responsive and suitable for visualization on mobile devices², since smartphones and tablets have now become a powerful tool for customers when searching for information and even for making a purchase. Creating less content but with greater impact will be imperative for marketers.

8.3 FUTURE USE OF CONTENT MARKETING TOOLS AND PLATFORMS

Many tools and platforms are being used by brands to engage their audience and share content. The following resources are very likely to consolidate their importance and become more popular among marketers in the future:

- » **Social Media (SM)** – According to two surveys carried out by the Content Marketing Institute in 2013³, 88% of B2C and 87% of B2B marketers use social media other than blogs. Even in the future, SM will probably continue to dominate the world of content marketing and B2B

1 Cisco (2013), "Visual Networking Index: Forecast and Methodology – 2012–2017", white paper

2 Digital Surgeons (2014), "2014 Marketing Outlook", online presentation

3 Content Marketing Institute (2014), "B2C Content Marketing 2014 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends – North America", report

and B2C businesses will also learn to use them more efficiently. Facebook and Twitter will continue to be the most used but LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram, Slideshare and Youtube will continue gaining users.

- » **Blogs** – They are widely considered effective by marketers. In particular, WordPress seems to be the ruling publishing platform/CMS because of its wide range of customisation options. The number of sites using WordPress, which now amount to more than 70 million, will rise in the future.
- » **Webinars and real time presentations** – These tools can be considered highly effective because they allow real time interactions between marketers and the target audience, which will probably lead to an increase in their use. It must be borne in mind, however, that audiences are probably going to be more interested in short webinars and presentations that provide rich information in a short timeframe⁴.
- » **Infographics** – The power of infographics, which can be incorporated into social media, blogs, and e-letters and therefore have the potential to go viral, lies in their particular format which allows the reader to easily understand information, while being entertained by the catchy, enjoyable way in which content is presented. Their popularity will surely increase more and more.
- » **Google Analytics** – Since brands will have to gauge the effectiveness of social media campaigns etc., the use of Google Analytics will grow, since it incorporates a series of analytic tools that can measure web traffic, conversion rates and a series of other metrics.
- » In addition to those mentioned above, a series of **specific CM tools** have been created during the last years, especially thanks to developments in digital technology. Such tools serve different purposes, which include content creation, curation, promotion, licensing, distribution and measurement of content's effectiveness (NewsCred, Curata, Outbrain, Storify, Copify etc.). As a consequence of CM worldwide, use of dedicated software and platforms will probably rise.

8.3.1 COMPANIES WILL RELY ON DEDICATED CONTENT STRATEGIES AND PROFESSIONALS

The development of a specific content marketing strategy will become a key step for companies: target audience, goals, budgetary resources bound to CM will have to be planned carefully. As a consequence, CM roles and tasks within businesses will become more formalised: in some major companies there are already Chief Content Officers or Directors of Content who head teams of writers, designers, videographers, etc.⁵. This trend is going to increase, as professionals with specific expertise in content are going to be fundamental within every organisation: teams will include executives who can oversee content development and strategy, as well as brand journalists who are able to create engaging content and so on.^{6 7 8}

4 Cf. Puneet Nagpal (2014), "Five Content Marketing trends for 2014 and beyond", online article.

5 Cf. Alan Herrick (2014), "2014 Insights – Connecting Technology and Story in an Always-On World", SapientNitro, report.

6 Paul Marsden (2014), "The future of content marketing for consumer brands: round up of top 20 predictions" Digital Intelligence Today, online article

7 Brandon Leibowitz (2014), "5 Content Marketing Trends For 2014", Business2community, online article

8 Jason DeMers (2013), "The Top 7 Content Marketing Trends That Will Dominate 2014", Forbes, online article

Some businesses will probably outsource specific tasks to external specialists who are able to create, curate and promote quality content, but dedicated in-house human resources will increase.

8.3.2 BUDGETS BOUND TO CONTENT MARKETING WILL INCREASE

As Content Marketing is going to become a strategic pillar for many organisations, related budgets are very likely to increase in the years to come. This has been confirmed by several authoritative studies: the first is a UK-based survey conducted by Econsultancy in collaboration with Responsys⁹, which discovered that 71% of surveyed brands plan to increase their digital marketing budget; the second is represented by a research carried out by Curata¹⁰, revealing that almost three quarters of the companies surveyed will increase their CM budget in the coming year, about a quarter will maintain it at the same level as 2013, while only 4% plan to decrease it. Finally, CMI studies¹¹ carried out in North America confirm that most B2C and B2B firms are going to increase their content marketing budget for 2014 (respectively 60% and 58% of the surveyed companies).

8.3.3 COMPANIES WILL LEARN HOW TO MEASURE CONTENT EFFECTIVENESS

Companies will not be able to make the most out of CM if they don't learn how to measure how CM activities contribute to their growth: the choice of the metrics to be used really depends on the organization's specific targets, which may vary from increasing brand awareness or sales to customer engagement etc.

Usually, in order to measure content's success, traffic and webpage views are the most used metrics, but focusing on just one or two metrics can generate misleading assumptions¹²: this is why brands will have to combine metrics.

According to Marc Landsberg, CEO and Founder of SocialDeviant, brands will elaborate specific metrics to gauge engagement: *“Engagement will be measured content unit by content unit or campaign by campaign [...] rather than by aggregate measures over a period of time. The success of one piece of content might be measured by referral traffic while another piece might be measured by conversions. Likewise, social content and interactions will drive more readily to e-commerce platforms.”*¹³

9 Cf. Econsultancy (2014), “Marketing Budgets 2014”, report.

10 Cf. Curata (2014), “2014 Content Marketing Tactics Planner Creation, Curation & Syndication”, report.

11 Cf. Content Marketing Institute, Op. cit.

12 Cf. Stephanie Chang (2013), “The future of content: upcoming trends in 2014”, Moz, online article.

13 Cf. Vignesh Subramanian (2013), “The Future of Content Marketing: Experts Share Their 2014 Predictions”, Business2Community, online article.

8.4 CONCLUSION

Content's impact on the world of marketing is probably going to increase in the next years: companies will enlarge their CM budgets and reorganise their internal structure by incorporating professionals with expertise in writing and publishing; they will also learn how to make the most out of the newest digital technologies, as well as to gauge the impact of CM on their business operations by the precise use of metrics and indicators.

The creation, curation and distribution of high-quality, well-designed content will help brands in differentiating from competitors and engaging prospects, while building their loyalty. To these purposes, a number of specific software and platforms will be developed, augmenting the range of CM potentialities.

What has to be remembered is that, even if the choice of the right strategies and technologies is important, the companies' ultimate aim shall be to communicate with, not just to, customers: the success of their content marketing will depend on this very aspect.

APPENDIX



DATA COLLECTION GRID

Description of good practice	
<p>The aim of this chapter is to identify good practices in Content Marketing practices of established as well as small companies. In particular, this information should be well written and easily understandable for external readers. One good practice should be used per form. There is no limit on the number of good practices that can be submitted, but a minimum of one per partner country is required.</p>	
1. PROJECT INFORMATION	
1.1 Project title	Content Marketing Expert
1.2 Project acronym	CMEX
1.3 Action	Transfer of Innovation
2. GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION	
2.1 Title of the best practice	
2.2 Topic of the practice <i>Please specify the precise topic of the practice in a few words (e.g. website, branding, blog, etc.).</i>	
2.3 Location of the practice	2.4 Country
2.5 Detailed description of the practice	
<p>Please provide a detailed description of the practice itself in a form of an abstract. The description should include information on the nature of the perspective, its objective, the main stakeholders involved (if any) and the financial resources required for its implementation. If known, please also indicate key success factors and conditions for potential transfer to other SMEs.</p>	
2.6 Evidence of success	
<p>Please explain why this practice is considered as good. Objective result and/or impact indicators are welcome in this section to demonstrate the success of the practice (e.g. the value of ROI achieved, volume of traffic generated, % sales increase).</p>	
2.7 Contact details to obtain further information on the practice	
Name	
Organisation	
Website	
2.8 Date of Best Practice Compilation	

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

What's it about?

Content Marketing Expert (CMEx) is a project, founded by the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme, realized in Poland, Italy, Austria and Malta. The project mainly aims to develop a practical handbook on content marketing use for SMEs.

In this context we would like to gather information about experience with and needs for content marketing in selected companies. We chose your company for the survey, because we believe that your content marketing is especially elaborated and interesting!

Our understanding of “Content Marketing” (CM)

CM aims to create and share valuable content, which is designed to attract a specific audience (potential customers/users). In the business sector content marketing is used to bring potential customers/clients to a profitable action.

.....

Thank you for taking the time to support us with your expertise and experience!

Please answer the following questions as completely as possible by ticking answer options or by marking answer options and filling out text fields.

Your data will be used solely for internal project purposes and will not be passed to any third parties!

(For project reports, the collected information will be used only in an aggregated form, which does not allow any conclusions about single individuals or companies.)

.....

Optional question in advance:

- » Do you use Content Marketing in your Company? Yes/no/I'm not sure
- » If no: Do you plan to introduce CM?
- » If I'm not sure: Please skim at least the questionnaire, perhaps you notice something you already use!

(1) BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COMPANY/THE COMPANY YOU WORK FOR

a) Number of employees:

1	2-9	10-49	50-99	100-249	> 250
---	-----	-------	-------	---------	-------

b) Economic sector:

Primary sector: Production or extraction of resources/materials (e.g. agriculture, forestry & fishery)	Secondary sector: Manufacturing, processing, construction (e.g. industry, trade and craft)	Tertiary sector: services (e.g. commercial, financial & personal services)	Other:
--	--	---	--------

c) More specific sector (e.g. automotive; food and beverages, media & entertainment; travel, tourism, & hospitality; financial services, education...):

.....

d) Business structure:

Profit	Non profit	Public institution	Other:
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e) Business alignment:

National	International	Both	Other:
----------	---------------	------	--------

f) Business model:

Business to business	Business to customer	Both	Other:
-------------------------	-------------------------	------	--------

(2) CONTENT MARKETING IN YOUR COMPANY/THE COMPANY YOU WORK FOR...

a) Handling of Marketing activities in the company:

Exclusively internally	Exclusively externally	Partly internally, partly externally
------------------------	------------------------	--------------------------------------

b) If **Content Marketing** is realized completely or partly internally, please estimate how much working time is bound to this task?

_____ hours per day **or** _____ hours per month

c) If marketing is realized completely or partly internally, is the responsible person solely employed for managing marketing?

Yes	No
-----	----

d) Please give us some information about use and utility of the following **Content Marketing** tools:

TOOLS: Please tick all tools that are currently used in the company or have been used in the past!	RATING: Please rate how useful the tools are (or were) according to the purposes.		
	It is/was useful 😊	It is/was not useful ☹️	I don't know 😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Blogs	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Social media	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Articles on the website	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Case studies	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Video	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Articles on other websites	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> In person events	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Infographics	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Online presentations	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> White papers	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile content	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Researches and reports	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Webinars/webcasts	😊	☹️	😐
<input type="checkbox"/> Press articles	😊	☹️	😐

<input type="checkbox"/> Microsites			
<input type="checkbox"/> Books			
<input type="checkbox"/> e-magazines			
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual reports			
<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile applications			
<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional newspapers			
<input type="checkbox"/> e-books			
<input type="checkbox"/> Podcasts			
<input type="checkbox"/> Games/gameification			
<input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify:			

e) If some social media are (or were) used, please asses also utility of them according to the purposes:

MEDIA: Please tick all media that are currently used in the company or have been used in the past!	RATING: Please rate how useful the media are (or were).		
	It is/was useful 	It is/was not useful 	I don't know 
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook			
<input type="checkbox"/> YouTube			
<input type="checkbox"/> LinkedIn			
<input type="checkbox"/> Goldenline			
<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pinterest			
<input type="checkbox"/> Vimeo			
<input type="checkbox"/> Slideshare			
<input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify:			

f) What prevents the company/the marketing management from using specific Content Marketing tools? Please tick/fill in all that apply...

TOOLS:	This tool was not known	Lack of time/ human resources	Lack of expertise	Limited budget	Lack of knowledge on how to measure impact	Other, please specify:
Blogs						
Social media						
Articles on the website						
Newsletters						
Case studies						
Video						
Articles on other websites						
In person events						
Infographics						
Online presentations						
White papers						
Mobile content						
Researches and reports						
Webinars/webcasts						
Press articles						
Microsites						
Books						
e-magazines						
Annual reports						
Mobile applications						
Traditional newspapers						
e-books						
Podcasts						
Games/gameification						
Other, please specify:						

g) For which purposes is Content Marketing mainly used in your company?

Please tick max. 5 options	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Raising credibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brand awareness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Customer engagement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Customer acquisition
<input type="checkbox"/>	Customer loyalty
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increasing website traffic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase of sales
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create/grow leadership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fund raising
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer recruitment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Others, please specify:

h) Do you measure effects of your Content Marketing?

Yes	No
-----	----

i) Which metrics do you use to measure the ROI (return on investment) deriving from above mentioned platforms or tools? Please check all that apply..

Please tick max. 5 options	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Web traffic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social media sharing
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEO Ranking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Time spent on website
<input type="checkbox"/>	Growth in subscribers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Growth in advocacy/funds obtained
<input type="checkbox"/>	Growth in sales
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality of feedbacks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify:

j) What is/was the most challenging about **Content Marketing use in your company?**

.....
.....

k) What is the greatest benefit of Content Marketing use for your company?

.....
.....
.....

**l) What is the yearly overall marketing budget in your company?
Please check applicable option...**

< 500€	501-1.000€	1.001-5.000€	5.001-10.000€	10.001-25.000€	> 25.000€
--------	------------	--------------	---------------	----------------	-----------

**m) Please specify/estimate how much percent of this budget is spent for
Content Marketing:**

_____ %

(3) FUTURE ASPECTS...

a) What do you think? Will **Content Marketing** be more or less important for your organization in the future?

Yes, more important	No, less important	I'm not sure
---------------------	--------------------	--------------

b) Would you like to learn more about CM?

Yes	No	Maybe
-----	----	-------

c) What would you like to learn?

.....

We thank you for your participation in the survey!

**If you are interested in our project or want to participate
in one of our trainings, keep track at**

www.cmex.eu

**Leave your contact
or contact us directly**

RESPECTIVE PARTNER ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBLE CONTACT PERSONS NAME

THE 5Ws OF CONTENT CREATION

Task		
WHO?	 <p>define your TARGET AUDIENCE (customers, followers, leads, ...)</p>	
WHAT?	 <p>identify the NEEDS, INTERESTS, WANTS of your target audience</p>	
WHERE?	 <p>locate your targets' SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS (YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn...)</p>	
WHEN?	 <p>plan publishing SCHEDULE (ideal times, i.e. days, times...)</p>	
WHY?	 <p>set and clarify your OBJECTIVES (brand awareness, increase sales...)</p>	



HOW?	<p>produce engaging value-added creative CONTENT (infographics, videos, blogs, ...)</p>	
-------------	--	---

A SCHEME TO HELP YOU CREATE AN EFFECTIVE CM STRATEGY

This 5Ws model allows to take into account the most important dimensions to implement a Content Marketing project able to optimize the Return on Investment

Question	Answer
----------	--------

WHY?



Why is CM good for my business?

CM can effectively improve a number of important metrics:

- » Brand awareness
- » Thought Leadership
- » Customer Acquisition
- » Website Traffic
- » Engagement
- » Customer Retention/Loyalty
- » Lead Generation/Management/Nurturing
- » Sales

WHO?



Who are my customers?

Trace the profile of your **TYPICAL CUSTOMER** (collect information about: gender, age, cultural level, geographical location, buying habits, research of information methods...)

WHAT?



What are the best types of content for my company?

Define the best **CONTENT MARKETING MIX** and choose the best CM tools to use (infographics, articles, blog posts, videos, e-books, podcast, audios, with the paper, webinar, web series, case histories, newsletter, digital magazines, ...)

WHERE? > Where should my company distribute digital content?

Choose the best
SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS
(Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, ...)

WHEN? > When should my company publish digital content?

Prepare your
CM TIMETABLE
(plan of content publication
i.e. days, times, ...)



HOW? > How should my company implementing an effective CM strategy?

Define your
GOALS
and select the three most important goals for your CM to focus on

Choose the CM
TEAM
(select internal/external people involved in the content creation)

Fix your CM
BUDGET
by planning

- » cost of in house personnel
- » cost of outbound media purchase
- » cost of subcontracting
- » office's cost

Measure the
EFFECTIVENESS
of your CM strategy
(use indicators for measuring the accomplishment of your goals)

IMPLEMENTING CM IN YOUR COMPANY: A SUMMARY SCHEME

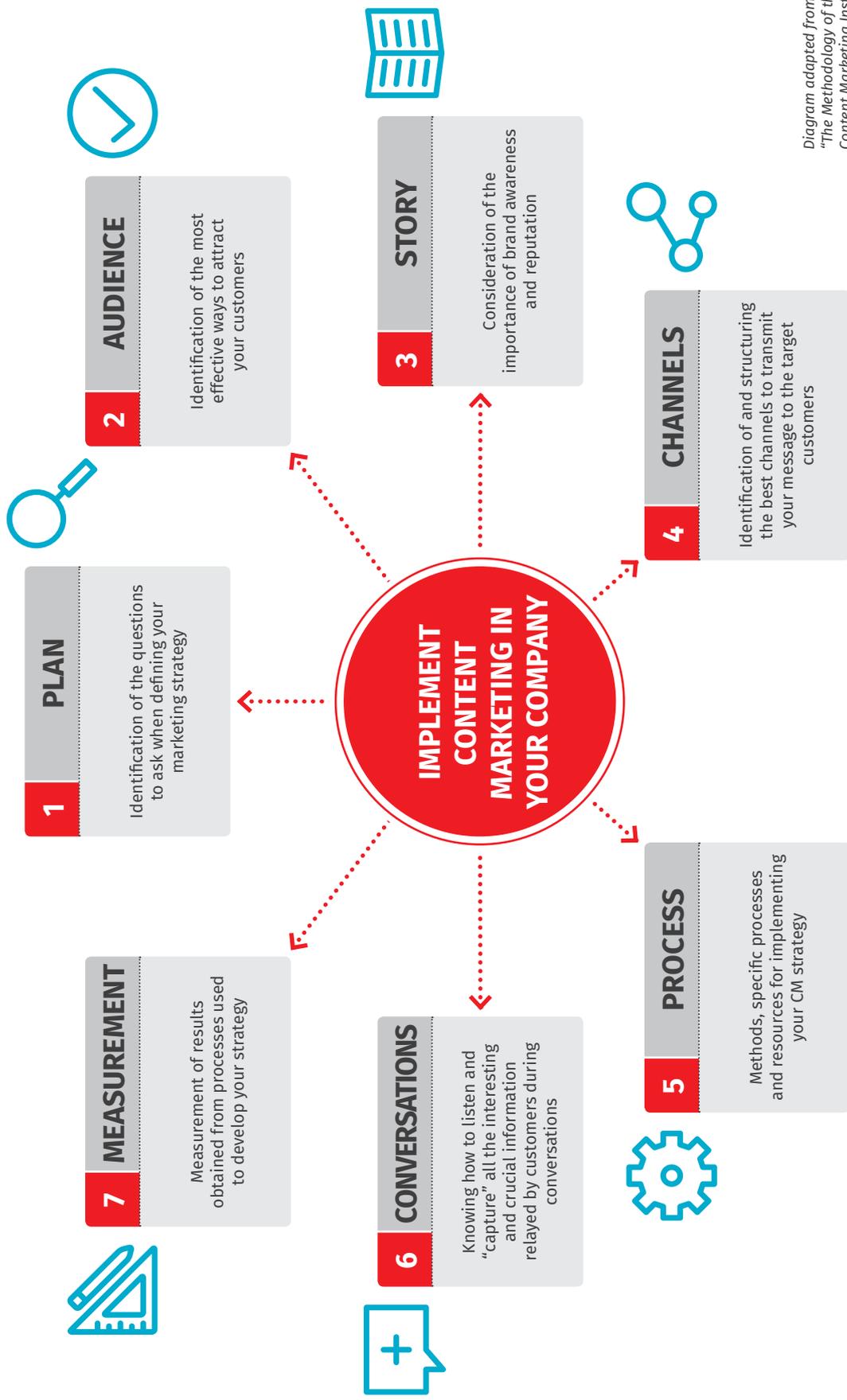


Diagram adapted from
"The Methodology of the
Content Marketing Institute"

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Analytics. It is a software which allows you to track your page views, user paths, and conversion statistics based upon interpreting your log files or through including a JavaScript tracking code on your site.

Blog. It is a discussion or informational site published on the World Wide Web and consisting of discrete entries (“posts”) typically displayed in reverse chronological order (the most recent post appears first).

Browser. It is the client used to view the world wide web.

Content Management System (CMS). It’s a tool used to help make it easy to update and add information to a website.

Content Marketing. It’s a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action.

Cost Per Thousand Ad Impressions (CPM). It’s a way for measuring of how profitable a website is or has the potential of becoming.

Dynamic Content. It’s a content which changes over time or uses a dynamic language such as PHP to help render the page.

e-Book. It’s a book-length publication in digital form, consisting of text, images, or both, readable on computers or other electronic devices.

Inbound Link. It’s a link pointing to one website from another website.

Inbound Marketing. It’s the promotion of a company through blogs, podcasts, video, eBooks, e-newsletters, whitepapers, SEO, social media marketing, and other forms of content marketing which serve to bring customers in closer to the brand, where they want to be. Inbound marketing refers to marketing activities that bring visitors in, rather than marketers having to go out to get prospect’s attention; it earns the attention of customers, makes the company easy to be found and draws customers to the website by producing interesting content.

Infographic. It’s a graphic visual representation of information, data or knowledge intended to present complex information quickly and clearly. It can improve cognition by utilizing graphics to enhance the human visual system’s ability to see patterns and trends.

Link. It’s a citation from one web document to another web document or another position in the same document.

Microsite. It’s a dedicated web sites for specific campaigns, promotions or to serve as a social hub can provide a focus for content that doesn’t really fit on the corporate website or blog.

Newsletter. It’s a regularly distributed publication that is generally about one main topic of interest to its subscribers.

Podcast. It’s a program (as of music or talk) made available in digital format for automatic download over the Internet.

Search engine optimization (SEO). It's the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a search engine's "natural" or un-paid ("organic") search results. In general, the earlier (or higher ranked on the search results page), and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine's users.

Video. It's an electronic medium for the recording, copying and broadcasting of moving visual images.

Webinar. It's a live online educational presentation during which participating viewers can submit questions and comments.

Website. It's a set of related web pages served from a single web domain. It is hosted on at least one web server, accessible via a network such as the Internet or a private local area network through an Internet address known as a URL (Uniform Resource Locator).

White paper. A white paper is an authoritative report or guide helping readers understand an issue, solve a problem, or make a decision. It is used in two main spheres: government and business-to-business marketing.

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