

Content Marketing For Digital Commerce

A maturity index for 5 top eCommerce sites in The Netherlands

Introduction

Content and commerce is the new hot trend in marketing

In an online age where every brand is shouting for attention, truly great content is increasingly becoming the only way to stand out from the crowd.

It's how to engage on social media channels, it's what search engines are looking for when ranking your site, it's a vehicle to demonstrate brand values and a great way to drive sales by showing your products in context.

There is clear evidence emerging on the critical role of content in commerce too. According to Forrester, companies need cohesive customer experiences, so marketing and digital commerce groups must align to deliver an integrated digital presence.¹

A recent report, created by EPiServer in partnership with Econsultancy, titled Where content and commerce collide, further highlights this growing trend. B2C and B2B companies are increasingly using content marketing to drive digital commerce journeys, through editorials such as style updates, fashion trends and how-to guides in a variety of rich media formats.

Combining content with commerce, however, is where digital commerce companies are arguably behind the curve.

The reason for this, perhaps, is the difficulty of achieving a balance of priorities in using content and commerce together. The value of content in digital commerce lies in helping customers make buying decisions that they feel are risky, so the content should go beyond features and functions to show how products are used and why this product is interesting to engage with.

So how do you create content that achieves this balance successfully? How can content 'sell' without 'selling'?

The content and commerce maturity index uses some of these insights to create a scoring system that shows how well some of the Dutch leading retailers are approaching content and commerce, thereby giving you the tools to identify how well your business is doing and where your areas of improvement may lie.

We've benchmarked five retailers across B2C and B2B to show how advanced they are in combining content and commerce for high impact, enabling you to assess where they sit on the content and commerce maturity curve.

¹Forrester Research: Content and Commerce, the Odd Couple or the Power Couple, 2013

Scoring methodology

We have included the full index at the end of the report, but to identify how we have looked at each of the retailers scored, the following is a brief outline.

We have split the scoring into six core content and commerce competencies, each with three sub categories.

Breadth and depth	Distribution	Value	Effectiveness	Brand	Balance
- Multimedia	- Social	- Educational	- Social shares	- Adherence	- Prominence
- Editorial style	- Email	- Entertainment	- SEO metrics	- Demonstrative	- Integration
- Product curation	- Mobile	- Planning	- Conversions	- Business goals	- Clarity

Scoring for each sub category is on a scale from one to four, with the numbers determined as follows:

1.	2.	3.	4.
No signs of this characteristic or practice present or apparent	Occasional signs, but inconsistent demonstration	Regular demonstration of this characteristic, practices shown most of the time	Practice consistently demonstrated with strong, clear competency

This means that the total any retailer can score for each category is 12, with an overall total of 72.

Index



Breadth and depth

Content in a commerce context can simply mean the use of images, but implementing a real breadth and depth of methods enables you to engage with more of your audience.

Multimedia: Is a broad array of media in use, for example non-sales-written copy, images, video?

Editorial style: If using editorial copy or other media, are a number of editorial styles used, for example lists, comment, news?

Product curating: Is product curation, a natural fit for digital commerce, employed?



Distribution

Another core purpose of content in commerce is to provide a reason to communicate with customers at additional touch points as part of a multichannel strategy, particularly as sales messages may not work well in some channels, such as social media.

Social: Social media distribution isn't just about posting to every channel, it's about having an engaging presence on the channels that customers use. Is that the case?

Email: Email is a powerful sales channel, but it can also be used for less sales-led communication. Is non-sales-focused content used in email communication?

Mobile: Consumers are likely to browse on mobile devices without a particular buying intention, so it is an ideal channel to engage them with good content. Is content optimised for mobile?



Value

This competency is about providing value in content strategy and the planning that involves.

Educational: Is any educational content deployed that offers customers value through learning?

Entertainment: Is content used to entertain customers in any way?

Planning: Is there a good mix of educational and entertaining content? This is a sign that content has been planned well, as is a mix of 'news-led' content, which may be reactive to a peaking search term or story, and 'ever-green' content which will stay relevant and may be attached to a common search term.



Effectiveness

There are numerous ways to measure the effectiveness of a content strategy, depending on where your emphasis is in terms of goals.

Social shares: The volume of tweets, likes and other social shares of content is a broad indication of how well it resonates with an audience.

SEO metrics: A key benefit for content marketing is the boost it can give search visibility, both in immediate terms around a particular product or product category, but also through having regularly updated content that is shared and linked to. Do any product-led content pieces feature prominently in searches? What is the retailer and its content platform's domain authority?

Conversions: Ultimately, a retailer does want content to convert into sales. Do content pieces around products or categories convert into sales peaks?



Brand

Content must have value for customers and have potential to drive sales, but it should also be aligned with the retailer's brand.

Adherence: Does content adhere to the retailer's core brand values?

Demonstrative: Does it go beyond adherence and demonstrate those values, helping to build the brand?

Business goals: Is content aligned with the rest of the brand's business objectives? Does it reflect the goals beyond 'sales'?



Balance

Achieving a balance between sales messages, product content and calls to action is what makes marrying content and commerce difficult.

Prominence: Is content visible on the homepage and does it feature on product pages? Is content featured on relevant on-site search result pages?

Integration: Vice versa, are products linked back to from content? Are there calls to action included?

Clarity: Is it clear whether content or commerce is first in the retailer's strategy? Neither is necessarily the right strategy as that depends on the retailer's goals, but it should be clear so that customers are not confused about whether the site is a pure entertainment or a pure commerce site.

#1

Coolblue

www.coolblue.nl

The screenshot shows the Coolblue website interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the Coolblue logo, a search bar, and links for 'Inloggen' and a shopping cart. A left-hand navigation menu lists various product categories. The main content area features a large promotional banner for camping stoves with a 'Tot 30% korting' offer. To the right, a customer service box provides contact information and service guarantees. Below this, a 'HARDLOPERS' section is titled 'Klaar voor de start, verkocht.' and displays five products in a carousel: Samsung Galaxy S6 32 GB Wit, Google Chromecast, Bodum Fyrkat Zwart, HP 15-g221nd, and TomTom Start 25 M Europa. Each product has a price tag indicating a discount.

coolblue Bekijk alle categorieën ▾ Zoeken naar... Inloggen

Computer & tablets
Telefonie
Beeld & geluid
Huishouden & wonen
Printers & netwerk
Foto & video
Koken & tafelen
Tuin & klussen
Navigatie & auto
Sport & reizen
Speelgoed & games
Verzorging

actie
Tot 30% korting op alle camping kooktoestellen
Geldig t/m 26 april 2015.
> Meer informatie

Bel 010 7988999
Klantenservice | nu open

alles voor een glimlach

- Voor 23.59 uur besteld, morgen in huis
- 7 dagen per week thuisbezorgd
- Gratis verzending
- Gratis retourneren
- Advies in onze 5 échte winkels

Klantenbeoordeling **9.1/10**

234.548 vind ik leuk

Beste webwinkel 2015

HARDLOPERS.
Klaar voor de start, verkocht.

Samsung Galaxy S6 32 GB Wit 699,-

Google Chromecast 35,-

Bodum Fyrkat Zwart 69,98 ~~49,90~~

HP 15-g221nd 449,- ~~399,-~~

TomTom Start 25 M Europa 125,- ~~119,-~~

#1

Coolblue

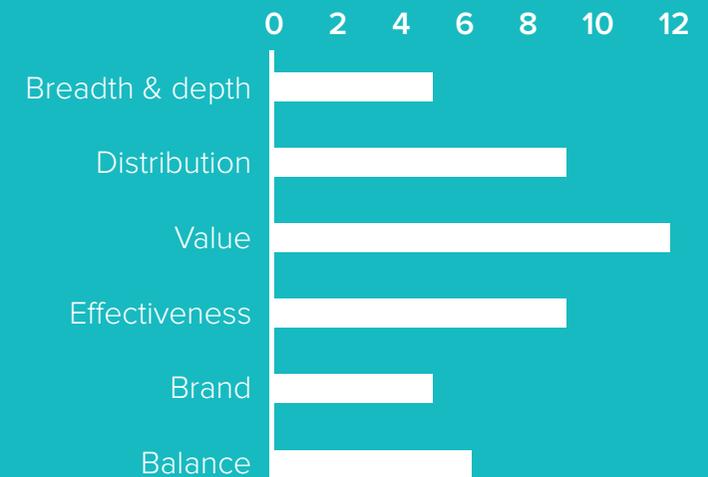
Coolblue is an online consumer goods retailer with a focus on customer service. Its content strategy is quite sophisticated, focussed specifically on video.

The retailer has a lot of video content on its YouTube channel, with the most common video style being product reviews, with clear planning put in to ensure key product launches are reviewed, as well as features about working for the company, some more entertaining content and its TV advertisements. The retailer has a strong following on social channels, and many of its videos are viewed over 100,000 times. The majority of the content used on social channels is not used on site (and subsequently not on the mobile site) and is only occasionally featured in email marketing, which seems like a missed trick.

In addition, Coolblue's Facebook posts consistently get high levels of engagement. The coolblue.nl domain is high authority in search and Google.nl queries for products that have been reviewed tend to return results from the site or others associated under the brand. Video reviewed products also tend to have a higher number of user reviews as well, suggesting that videos do convert to sales.

The Coolblue brand is all about expertise and customer service with a friendly face, and the content it produces online adhere strongly to this by featuring their employees and giving helpful advice. While the content could potentially be used on the site more, it is clearly effective.

Coolblue's score



How does Coolblue stack up?
[Compare the scores at page 16!](#)

#2

Keymusic

www.keymusic.nl

The screenshot shows the Keymusic website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text "13 winkels. Laat je inspireren." and a language selector "Selecteer land". The main header features the Keymusic logo "KEYMUSIC your music. your gear." and a search bar. A phone number "BEL 010-2111000 (Mo - Zo)" is displayed with the text "Bellen met winkel in jouw buurt?". Below the header is a main navigation menu with categories: Gitaar, Drums, Keyboard, Studio, DJ-Gear, Podium, Licht, Overig, Nieuws, and Outlet. The central banner is a large advertisement for Yamaha, featuring the Yamaha logo and the text "YAMAHA Wij zijn nr.1 dealer van Yamaha. Ontdek de beste drums, gitaren, synths en meer!" with a "MEER INFO" button. Below the banner are four featured articles: "KEYMUSIC Experience Centre" (with an image of guitars), "Rock Palace 30 jaar" (with an image of a building), "MusikMesse 2015" (with an image of a hand), and "Column Cesar Zuiderwijk" (with a portrait of Cesar Zuiderwijk). Each article has a "MEER INFO" button. At the bottom, there is a row of brand logos: Martin & Co, Ibanez, Pioneer, Epiphone, VOX, and Sennheiser.

#2

Keymusic

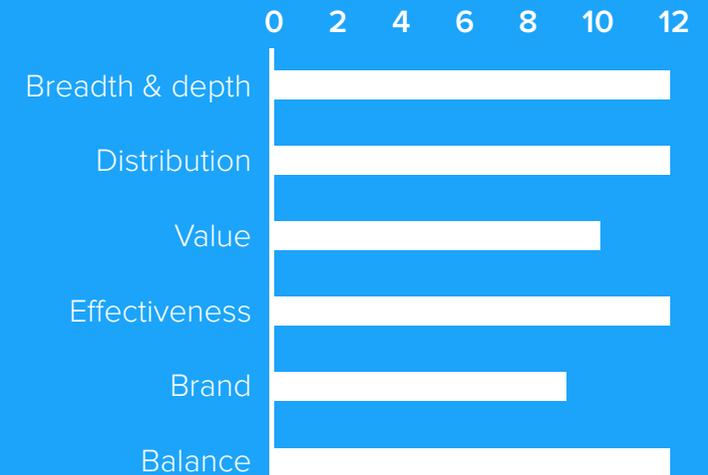
Keymusic is a European music retailer with physical stores across the Netherlands and Belgium, selling musical instruments and equipment.

With music naturally being a form of entertainment, and musicians buying instruments often requiring expert advice, music retail lends itself very well to a content led commerce strategy. Keymusic capitalises on this effectively, with video employed, as well as high quality images and editorial. The retailer employs a number of professional music journalists to create content, including reviews and helpful 'how tos', while videos include performances from professional musicians, and there are products curated into buyer's guides. Editorial content is even packaged into a quarterly magazine, which offers interviews, features and more reviews.

Keymusic has built a healthy following on social channels with this great content. Email is easy to sign up to with recipients able to tailor what kind of content they receive (e.g. related to the instrument they play, whether they want general news etc). However, the site is not mobile optimised, so this is one area for future consideration.

The clear and careful planning Keymusic has put into its content strategy appears to be paying dividends, not only seen in its health social following but in assisting search engine optimisation. Products that have been featured in content regularly appear on the first page of Google.nl.

Keymusic's score



How does Keymusic stack up?
[Compare the scores at page 16!](#)

#3

Plasma-Discounter.nl

www.plasma-discounter.nl

The screenshot shows the homepage of Plasma-Discounter.nl. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Meer informatie', 'Home', 'LED televisie', 'Soundbars', 'FullHD', 'Digitale tv', 'Demodagen', 'Energie labels', and 'Nieuws'. A shopping cart icon shows 0 items. Below the navigation is the 'PLASMA DISCOUNTER.NL' logo and a status message: 'Vandaag is onze showroom tot 18uur open!'. A search bar contains the text 'Vind makkelijk en snel!' and 'Waar ben jij naar op zoek?' with a 'Zoek' button. To the right of the search bar are links for 'Klantenservice | Contact' and a phone number '0900-0114 (0,80 pm)'. The main content area is divided into three sections. The left section, titled 'POPULAIR', lists 'Top 10 Televisies', 'Top 10 Home Cinema', 'Samsung', 'Sonos', and 'Opruimkelder!'. The middle section, titled 'ONTDEK HET VOORDEEL VAN DRAADLOOS', features a Sonos speaker and the text 'OFFICIEEL DEALER VAN ALLE SONOS AUDIO', 'JOUW FAVORIETE MUZIEK WIRELESS', and 'MEESLEPEND GELUID • ALLE MUZIEK TER WERELD'. The right section, titled 'GRATIS LED TV BIJ JE NIEUWE PHILIPS TV!', features a Philips TV and the text 'KIES JE AMBLIGHT PHILIPS TV' and 'En krijg een GRATIS 56 cm LED tv t.w.v. € 229,-'. At the bottom, there are icons for a clock, a location pin, and a calendar, along with the text 'Onze score op KESKELRIG'.

#3

Plasma Discounter

Plasma Discounter is part of Create2Fit, a series of online shops selling electricals, white goods and appliances. The retailer has a strong focus on price and providing customers good cost savings on products.

Its website is generally quite product focussed, but with some editorial. Video is employed, but editorial style is generally focussed on new offers and discounts with little variation from this topic. Products are curated in the news pages, but not in search results or any other inventive ways.

Content is distributed on Facebook, twitter and YouTube, with additional content on each channel used as appropriate. Email sign up is easy and includes news as well as offers, while the site is optimised for mobile with the news section relatively easy to find.

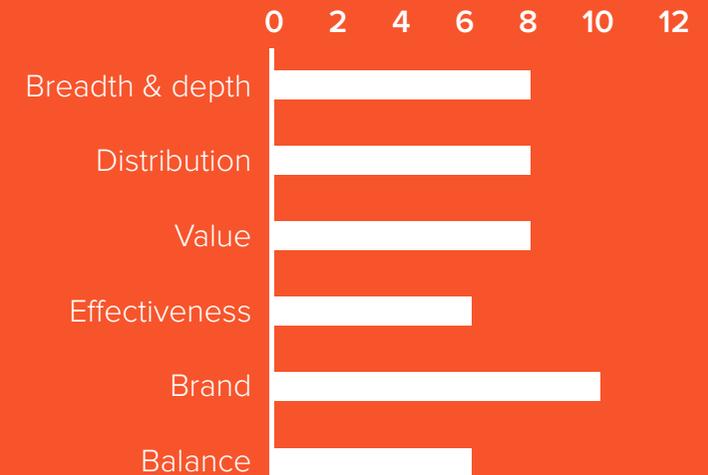
As most content is focussed on offers, there is not a lot of educational or entertainment focussed content. There is the occasional news item about new products however, and some educational video content is included

on product pages. There does not appear to be any evidence of planning with longer features or videos, with everything appearing to be quite ad-hoc, so this is an area the retailer could potentially improve.

The retailer has a good following on Facebook with an engaged audience, but does not appear to be resonating on other channels at the moment. Its domain authority isn't particularly strong, but the site is appearing on the first page of Google.nl for several products featured in its news pages recently.

Being a brand naturally focussed on offers and discounts, it makes sense that Plasma Discounter's content does not stray far from this topic. The purpose of the site is always clear, and there are some strong distribution channels that the retailer has built.

Plasma Discounter's score



How does Plasma Discounter stack up?
[Compare the scores at page 16!](#)

#4

Roompot Vakanties

www.roompot.nl

The screenshot shows the Roompot website homepage. At the top left is the Roompot logo. To its right is a search bar with the placeholder text "Zoek uw vakantieverblijf". Further right are navigation links: "Recent bekeken", "Klantenservice", "Mijn Roompot", and a Dutch flag icon. The main visual is a large photograph of a family (a woman, a man, and a child) sitting on a grassy bank next to a lake, with ducks in the water. Overlaid on this image is the text "BEN JIJ ERBIJ IN MEI?". Below the image is a pink navigation bar with three buttons: "VAKANTIEHUIS", "KAMPEREN", and "HOTEL". Underneath this is a search bar with the text "Zoek uw vakantieverblijf" and a "Zoek" button. To the right of the search bar is a link "Toon alle vakantiehuizen". Below the search bar are four input fields: "bijk. land, regio, stad of parknaam", "Aankomstdatum", "Verblijfsduur", and "Aantal personen". At the bottom of the page is a grey bar with the text "POPULAIRE THEMA'S".

Roompot

Zoek uw vakantieverblijf

Recent bekeken Klantenservice Mijn Roompot

BEN JIJ ERBIJ IN MEI?

VAKANTIEHUIS KAMPEREN HOTEL

Zoek uw vakantieverblijf

bijk. land, regio, stad of parknaam Aankomstdatum Verblijfsduur Aantal personen

ZOEK

Toon alle vakantiehuizen

Boek nu uw welverdiende meivakantie
Bezoek onze voordelige aanbiedingen

POPULAIRE THEMA'S

Roompot Vakanties

Roompot Vakanties is a travel and tour operator. Its website has recently undergone a revamp, so for the purposes of this report we looked at the new version.

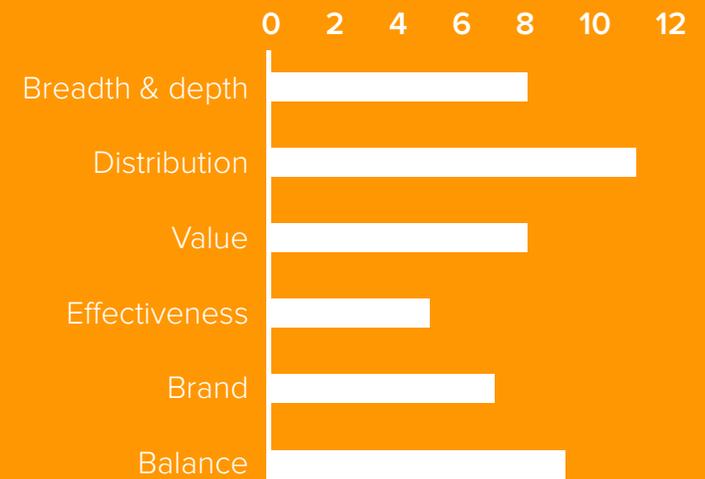
The travel and tourism sector is another that lends itself very naturally to a content strategy, with a relatively long buying process and customers often browsing for inspiration. Roompot Vakanties' main content vehicle is its online magazine, which is also available as an iPad and Android app. It is interactive, and does a great job of curating holidays and highlighting experiences.

The travel brand has a very large social following, with great levels of engagement on Facebook in particular, but the content shared is not content from the website, rather custom images created specifically for the channel. This means that there is potentially a lost opportunity there for driving conversions. Content is used in email however, and the site works very well on mobile, with the magazine's mobile app versions.

The well planned presented content does tend to be quite product orientated, however this does work well as being around travel experiences it is naturally engaging and encourages browsing.

The brand has a nostalgia factor for its customers, clearly well loved for the travel experiences it provides, and it capitalises on this in its content. The only potential areas for improvement are broadening the variety of content used (we didn't see any instances of video, which can be powerful for showing travel experiences) and integrating the content more with its product pages.

Roompot Vakanties' score



How does Roompot Vakanties stack up?
[Compare the scores at page 16!](#)

#5

Thuisbezorgd

www.thuisbezorgd.nl

Thuisbezorgd.nl

Eten bestellen | Klantenservice | Zakelijk | Inloggen | NL

1 Bezorgadres 2 Bezorgrestaurants 3 Menukaart 4 Eten bestellen Takeaway.com Nederland

Eten bestellen

Waar wil je eten bestellen?

Vul je straatnaam of postcode in:

Vind ik leuk 254.816 personen vinden dit leuk. Wees de eerste van je vrienden.

- Pizza bestellen, Chinees, shoarma & meer. Geen servicekosten.
- Contant bij bezorgen of online betalen met IDEAL, PayPal of creditcard
- Prijsgarantie op alle gerechten!
- Eten bestellen en volgen met Food Tracker®
- Bestellen bij 6000+ bezorgrestaurants met echte beoordelingen

Jouw mening:
Z.reisch | Vandaag om 15:49 | Istanbul, Eindhoven
pizza shoarma besteld was erg lekker vriendelijke chauffeur besteld ...
Kwaliteit: ★★★★★ Bezorging: ★★★★★

Available on the App Store | Google play | Windows Phone

bitcoin PayPal MasterCard VISA dinner site

Restaurant leveringen | Werkturen | Algemene voorwaarden | Privacy statement | Cookieverklaring | Contact | Missie.nl | Affiliate marketing

#5

Thuisbezorgd

Thuisbezorgd.nl is Takeaway.com's site for the Netherlands, offering takeaway food from a network of restaurants.

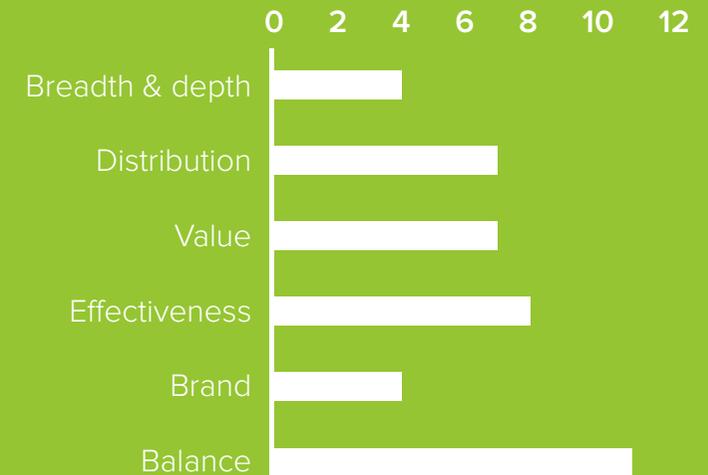
On its site, Thuisbezorgd.nl regularly uses video, as well as a mix of editorial styles that mainly focuses on lists (e.g. of types of cuisine, or food based on locations), which also function as curated product. The site has a relatively strong social following, but the content produced on the blog does not seem to be shared on the social channels. Instead the focus is on vouchers and discounts. It also is not used in email, and when the site is optimised for mobile, links to the blog and social channels are not apparent.

The lists employed on the blog are quite educational in that they provide inspiration for what you might want to eat, while the content on the YouTube channel is more entertaining, though does not tend to receive a huge volume of views. This suggests it does not lead to a large amount of direct business, whereas the voucher codes that are shared on social channels are perhaps more likely to.

The brand has a focus on offering breadth of choice with food, and the content adheres to this quite well through the use of lists. It's also got a 'cheeky'/'quirky' tone which is reflected.

One area that Thuisbezorgd.nl could potentially consider is visibility of its content. The blog and social channels are not easy to find on the site, and considering blog posts are not shared it would seem the only way you might normally find them is via search. Considering the effort that has been made to create good quality content, there is potential to utilise it more.

Thuisbezorgd's score



How does Thuisbezorgd stack up?
[Compare the scores at page 16!](#)

Summary

#1. Coolblue



#2. Keymusic



#3. Plasma Discounter



#4. Roompot Vakanties



#5. Thuisbezorgd



Three simple steps to get started on content and commerce

1. Create a content strategy that aligns with your digital commerce goals

According to the EPiServer and Econsultancy report, 60% of retailers have a defined content strategy for their digital commerce goals. Your content strategy should aim to 'romance' your customers into buying a product, by creating affinity and trust well before a purchase is made, and be demonstrative of your brands.

As a retailer, you need to think about the kind of content that will interest your target customers beyond products. Customers want to know how your products can add value to their experience and not just what the products are. Achieving a balance between content and selling is the trickiest part for most retailers. The key is to make sure you have real understanding of your customer behaviour and strung your content pieces together effectively to drive them through the digital commerce journey.

2. Dry doesn't mean boring — focus your content on value and SEO

Whatever sector or subject your business deals in there is a way to make it of value to your customers. Focus on what is going to engage them, be that informational, educational, inspirational, entertaining or news driven content that you can use to create conversations beyond the product. Ensuring content matches your audience's interests and is of high quality will help you meet your SEO objectives too. Types of content commonly used by commerce companies include:

- **Product content (to sell):** Product content such as high definition photography, image enlargers, 360° views, catwalk videos and the ability to show products in all available colours are frequently used by apparel and luxury retailers to help with decision-making and enhance the online shopping experience

- **Curated product lists (to inspire):** More and more retailers are curating their products into style edits, such as winter whites and trends for example the hottest travel destinations for 2015, to put their products into context and appeal to customer interests
- **How-to guides (to educate):** (to educate): As demonstrated by Coolblue and KeyMusic, a step-by-step shopping guide that helps you to make the right choice in selecting the washing machine or electric guitar that suits your needs.
- **News (to inform or entertain):** (to inform or entertain): This kind of content is commonly used to build affinity by connecting news stories to brand values that the company wants to be associated with. Think of how brands use news content like 'Queen Maxima of the Netherlands wears orange Valentino in Aruba'.

Three simple steps to get started on content marketing for digital commerce

3. Run a marketing programme, not a campaign

No marketing tactic works well if it is run in isolation. Unify your content and the channels at your disposal to distribute. There is little point in putting effort into creating content if you're not going to tell people about it, so don't hide it on your site or fail to include it in your email marketing.

Atomising and delivering the right content to the right customer at the right time is essential. Instead of giving your customers a 12-page product guide that describes why this sweater is really great, give the key points from the guide in bite size chunks.

Break them down into successive pieces that can be individually managed and presented to the visitor, possibly in different channels.

Ideally, you want the visitor to progress through each of those small pieces of content, enabling the potential customer to advance in their thinking and create purchase intent in their mind, as they consume more of that content.

Change the way you think about small pieces of content or campaigns and use them together across all the different channels, to digitally guide your customer all the way down the path to purchase.

Conclusion

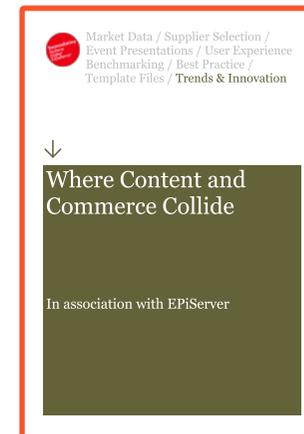
We have established that the trickiest aspect of a content and commerce strategy is striking the balance between the two. When do you push content? And when do you push for the sale?

There is no proven formula to this, and the approach will differ across brands and channels. What works for one retailer and its audience won't necessarily work for another, and what works on social may not be the right approach for search, and so on.

This likely explains why, when we look at the retailers we've scored in this report, we get a bit of a mixed bag. Some appear to be getting very close to their own 'perfect formula', whereas others are creating really strong content but failing to gain from its value.

What is clear, however, is that all the retailers here are making significant investments into their content strategies, and those that are getting it right are reaping the rewards. Your strategy should be continuous and adaptive, not just ad hoc, to keep momentum and stay at the forefront of your customers' minds.

To find out more about how other digital commerce companies are combining their content and commerce experience read the Econsultancy report ['Where Content and Commerce Collide'](#) here.



Download report



EPiServer

We empower our customers to create standout experiences.

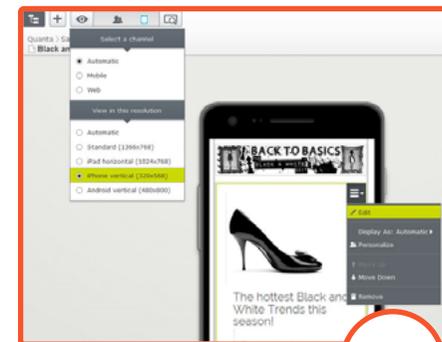
Finding the right balance in your content and commerce strategies can produce amazing results. EPiServer has created a platform – The Digital Experience Cloud™ – that helps you deliver experiences that matter to your customers, while driving sales growth for you. Our unified content and commerce platform supports you from lead generation through conversion and repeat sales, across multiple channels. We've made it easy to put your business in the cloud, so you can focus more on engaging with your customers – wherever they are online. It's what we call Digital Experience Delivered™.

At EPiServer, we believe that digital transformation is a journey. We have been guiding customers for more than 20 years in providing outstanding digital experiences. Today our network of 880 partners, in 30 countries, supports 8,800 customers with 30,000 websites. Our customers include American Express, Canal Digital, Electrolux, KLM, Lloyds Bank, Mazda, Pizza Hut, Sony, Toshiba, and Walmart.

For more information visit www.episerver.com

60% of surveyed customers purchased EPiServer because they needed a seamlessly integrated content management and e-commerce platform.

– TechValidate 2015



Request a demo



EPiSERVER

Digital Experience Delivered™