

CONTENT MARKETING SECRETS

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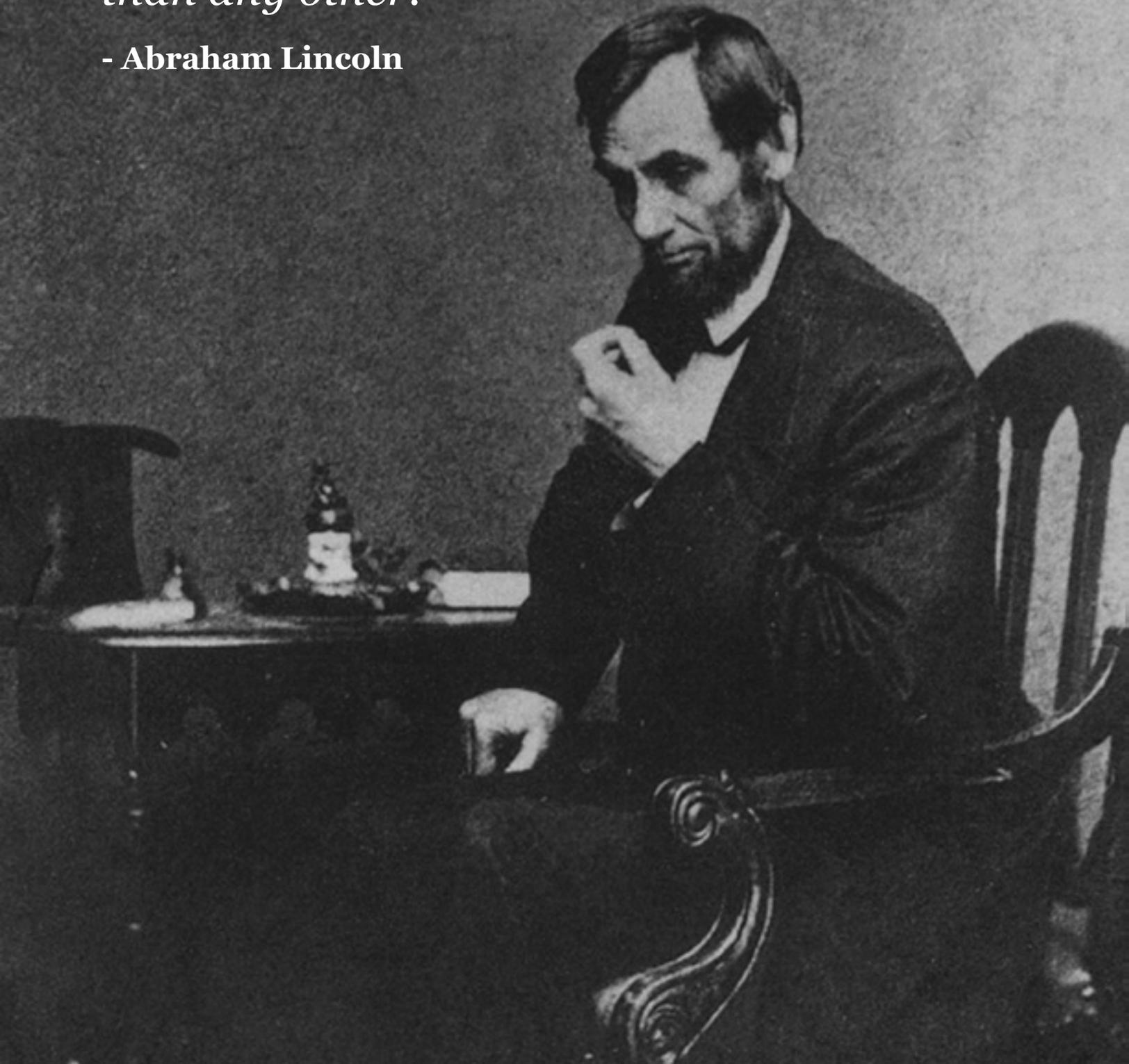
Content Marketing Done Right

White Paper

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Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other.

- Abraham Lincoln



What is Content Marketing?

Content marketing is a marketing technique that uses high quality, relevant content to educate, engage and acquire your target customer. The true potential of content marketing lies in its ability to provide a conversion path for your leads to follow, on their own schedule and convenience.

Content marketing succeeds when you provide your prospect with educational information and context about your products or services, minus a sales pitch. It's the opposite of outbound marketing; your goal is to educate.

Why Content Marketing?

Today's consumer sees an average of 5,000 advertisements a day¹, very few of which are relevant to him or her. At the same time, most people are in the market for something during the course of the year, and are active researchers of the issues, solutions and providers of interest. Content marketing addresses the prospect's keen interest in detailed information.

Content marketing puts the prospect in charge of the initial stages of the sales cycle, learning about your company's approach to the market or problem that needs addressing. Prospects are reluctant to initiate a conversation with a sales representative too early in the sales cycle. Content marketing ensures that their interest remains high – on their own terms.

And the numbers bear this out: Seven out of ten consumers say they prefer to learn about companies and solution providers by reading articles or viewing videos over traditional outbound marketing, which many deem "disruptive." More than three-quarters of these consumers understand that content marketing seeks to promote a product point of view, but sees the value in having insight information and context about the product. Two-thirds feel it helps them make better purchasing decisions.²

Given the consumer's embrace of content marketing, it's no surprise that marketers now spend over a quarter of their marketing budget on content marketing.³ B2B companies that pay attention to content, via blogs and other efforts, generate 67% more leads per month on average.⁴ And the number of leads rise substantially when companies use content ad networks to amplify this work.

There are three pillars to successful content marketing:

1. Search

Search engine marketing succeeds when well-crafted content is correlated with the most appropriate keywords in your industry. Emphasis on well-crafted. Thanks to Google's renewed efforts to crack down on low quality Exact Match Domains and other SEO tricks of the trade, marketers must return to the basics adequately describing their approach to the market with quality content.

In short, Google search algorithms place a premium on high quality content; the marketer's job is to supply it.

2. Social Media Integration

Social media is a smart strategy to amplify your message. High quality content is shared by interested parties among their networks giving you exposure to a greater pool of potential prospects. But take note: Leveraging content created by other people or companies will only take you so far; you must have good content to bring to the party.

3. Outbound marketing

Outbound marketing will always be in fashion for marketers but having great inbound content to send them to increases conversion rates and lowers your cost of acquisition. The average cost to generate a lead through inbound marketing (\$143) is about half the average for outbound marketing (\$373.)⁵ Using both inbound and outbound marketing together lowers your overall marketing costs and grows your number of acquisitions exponentially.

6 Rules to Making Great Content

1. Understand your customer

Really knowing your customer will enable you to tailor your content to his or her needs and concerns. Developing a simplified profile of our prospect goes along way in helping content writers understand how they should position all content. Surveys and analytics tools can help you gain insight into your customers. Who is engaging with your social posts also a way to get insight on what their main concerns and needs are.

2. Commit to Content Creation

Putting up a blog and writing an article every 6 months won't deliver the results you need. You need to commit to a strategy, get all the internal buy-in you need from senior management, and plan accordingly. Establish an editorial calendar of topics, and revise as necessary. The goal is to have at least 6 to 8 content pieces ready to go.

3. Become the thought leader

Find the area of expertise most valuable to your customers, and write passionately about it. Amplify your message on social networks.

4. Consider outsourcing

Writing content may be hard for some people; if your organization lacks a reliable writer who can generate relevant content on a regular basis, consider finding an outside writer. Over 70% of marketers plan on outsourcing one form of content within the next 12 months⁶. Finding amazing talented writers is easy these days with sites such as eLance or oDesk. Or, check out the LinkedIn groups for your industry, chances are there's a freelance writer with domain expertise participating in the discussions.

5. Produce a bounty of content

Content marketing is a marathon, not a sprint. Read voraciously about your field. Write down article ideas whenever you get them, and talk to others in your field for additional perspectives. Set goals and stick to them!

6. Review your strategy often

As Winston Churchill said "However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results." You need to ask yourself, are you following your strategy? Are you getting the results your looking for? Are your headlines engaging? Are you being lazy and slacking? Do you need to outsource some of your writing rather than trying to do it all yourself? Review and revise your strategy often.

Content Amplification

Content amplification is a technique that leverages paid placement to increase distribution of your content. For instance, Facebook offers Sponsored Stories to distribute your content to your existing network and their friends; Twitter offers Promoted Tweets, which offers targeting options to ensure it's seen by interested prospects.

Additionally, you can increase amplification to reach millions via the Adblade Content Ad Network. The Adblade Content Ad Network offers sponsored stories on the world's largest collection of news publications in the world. Over 1,000 of the world's leading news properties work with Adblade to reach a combined 200 million users worldwide every month.

Content amplification also supports your PR efforts and strategy by extending the period of time for which it's top of mind for prospects... Every marketer has this experience with PR, it takes weeks to get a story published. You finally land some amazing earned media and you get a huge pop for a few hours and everyone in the company is excited. The article is amazing and puts your company in an amazing light but slowly that light fades. The headline is only up for a single day and traffic dies down to a wimpier. Now imagine throwing gasoline into that fire and keep the light blazing for weeks or months. That's what content amplification can do for you.

Notes

1. Average city dweller sees up to 5,000 ads a day versus 2,000 30 years ago.
Source: Yankelovich Research via the New York Times -January 15, 2007
2. This research was conducted via phone interviews with 1,005 American adults on March 11-13, 2011 through Omnitel, a product of GfK Roper.
3. b2bmarketinginsider.com - The Cost of Bad Content
4. socialmediab2b.com
5. hightable.com
6. brandpoint 2012 survey – 389 respondents