

7 CONTENT MARKETING TRENDS

**B2B BRANDS NEED
TO KNOW IN 2018**

THE SOCIAL MEDIA HAT

7 Content Marketing Trends B2B Brands Need to Know in 2018

It is said that traditional marketing talks at people while content marketing talks with them. The Content Marketing Institute found that there has been a rise in the number (18%) of respondents who've claimed to be focusing on content marketing. And B2B companies too have increased their use of content marketing strategies in recent years.

With B2B marketers allocating about twenty-eight percent of their marketing budgets for native advertising, it indicates the value brands give to content. With the speed of the digital revolution, it can be difficult to keep track of emerging marketing trends. And the content marketing landscape has been nothing short of a runaway train.

In this post, we'll look at seven of the latest and most effective content marketing trends B2B brands need to know this year:

Content Marketing Trends #1: Individualization

Gone are the days when customers accepted a one-size-fits-all content experience. For years, marketers have relied on segmentation to come up with relevant content for their target audiences. But today, customers appreciate a "me first" approach when it comes to content. Seeing as how the average person is exposed to roughly 600 marketing messages each day, can you really blame them?

Customers have an inherent desire to feel special. In a recent survey by Accenture, 70% of customers reported an inclination for content that was custom made for them. It's not just customers who believe in personalization. Monetate reported that 94% of digital marketers also believe that content individualization is the way to go.

But how can you achieve this? You can use tools like Leadfeeder, which will help you view information about your website visitors. And not just information about their demographics. You can actually see the companies they work for as well as the content pages on your site that they spend the most time viewing. This ensures that when you reach out to them, you no longer need to rely on cold calls or emails.

Instead, you can reach out to them using content that they might actually be interested in, which makes it a warm introduction. And if you can personalize your content, you stand an even better chance of converting them.

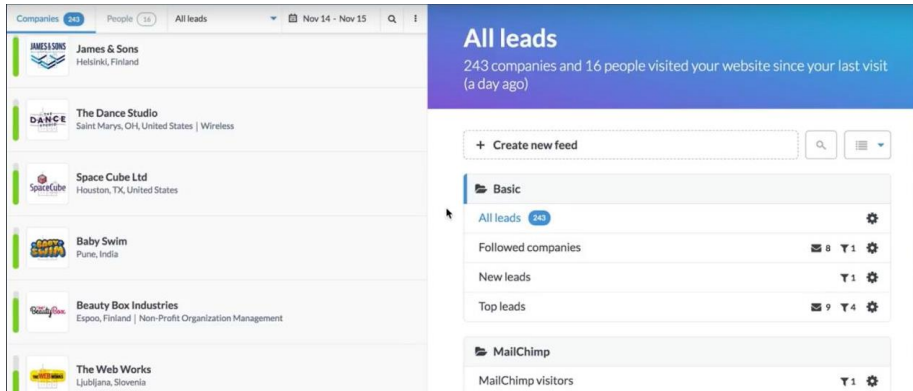


Image via Leadfeeder

Content Marketing Trends #2: Long-Form Content

While short blog posts and articles continue to attract subscribers, B2B buyers are looking for more depth and value than a simple 500 word post can provide. While short posts may continue to generate significant traffic, they tend to have a shorter lifespan.

Whether you're looking for immediate customer engagement or long-term sustainability, long-form content has proven to be more effective. It's no surprise that an increasing number of successful bloggers are working on longer posts. Orbit Media's recent study found an increase in the typical article length from around 800 in 2014 to 1100 in 2017.

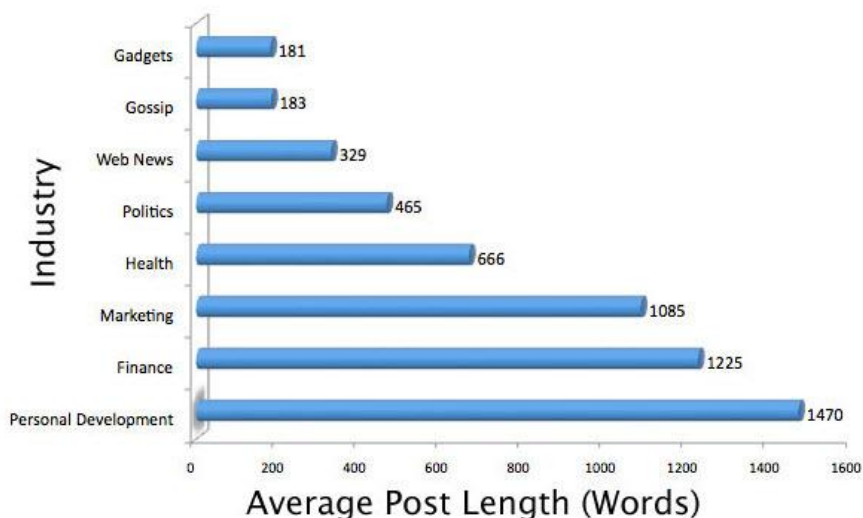


Image via Wordstream

It's true that some people prefer quick bites so that they can get a general idea about a topic. However, people truly interested in understanding a topic or an issue prefer a well-researched, informative and long-form article over a quick read.

Content Marketing Trends #3: Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has been a staple of content marketing in recent years, and will continue to be so. That's because influencer marketing works. According to data from a report by Nielsen, 92% of people trust a company if it has been endorsed by other people, even if they don't know them.

B2B content marketing derives most of its power from the endorsements of industry leaders, social media icons, and thought leaders. So social media marketers, brand specialists, and PR firms rely on influencer outmarketing to help B2B businesses grow.

IS INFLUENCER MARKETING THE FUTURE OF MARKETING?



Image via ShaneBarker.com

Content Marketing Trends #4: Analytics and Automation

Data analytics and automation are all the buzz these days. They're revolutionizing the way we do things. The bugs have bitten many a content marketers too recently. So much so that they're quickly escalating into a major industry trend in 2018. The main focus of using analytical and automation tools is to help you improve your content creation, curation, and distribution.

Automation tools can make the ideation process a lot simpler by helping you identify blog post topics that have high engagement rates. By automating your content curation, you save a lot of effort in trying to streamline your social media activities. More than creating the right content, it's crucial that it reaches the right people. Automation is imperative to help your content distribution strategy reach the audiences you are targeting.

But to be able to do any of that, you need the right kind of analytics in place. While your content may be optimized for the search engines, if you can't track your performance, how will you improve it? Analytics are particularly necessary for content distribution.

Content Marketing Trends #5: Employee Advocacy Programs

Today, B2B consumers want the brands they deal with to be more transparent, relatable, and authentic. People aren't content with simply connecting with a company on social media, they crave a more personal connection with the brand.

This is precisely why many B2B brands have reworked their branding strategies to focus on employee advocacy. In essence, it is a strategy that encourages employees to advocate on behalf of the business. Typically, employees are incentivized to share both branded and relevant third-party content. This kind of social media sharing not only helps the company grow its network, but also helps build the employees' personal brands.



Image via Klientas

In fact, it has been reported that employee advocacy programs result in a fivefold increase in site traffic, and up to a 25% increase in lead generation. As the industry grows, people more likely to find peer interactions more authentic than interactions with the brand directly.

Content Marketing Trends #6: Video Marketing

Videos continue to be a dominant tool for content marketing. Cisco reported that videos accounted for roughly 70% of site traffic by consumers and B2B buyers alike in 2017.

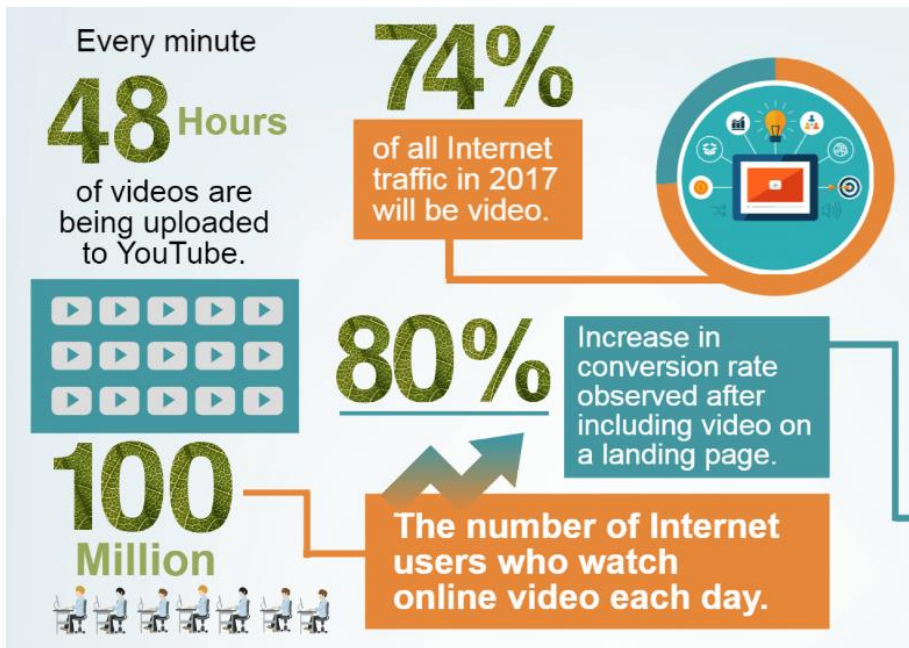


Image via NicheHacks

So what is it about videos that attract consumers like moths to a flame? A major reason is the ease of access and ready availability of such content. Then there's the fact that videos are easy to share and most importantly easy to consume.

They allow for details and information, cumbersome in the text, to be dynamic and easier to comprehend. They appeal to two of our senses (sight and sound) simultaneously, making the information easier to retain as well.

2018 will definitely see more B2B companies trying to build a content marketing strategy involving videos to augment sales. Whether they take the form of product demos, tutorials, or customer testimonials, it's time to incorporate videos in your

content marketing strategy.

Content Marketing Trends #7: Augmented Reality Related Content

While all of the above points are tried and tested strategies that will continue to be major marketing trends in 2018, the final point in this list is a bit of wildcard.

Pokémon Go's unprecedented success two summers ago has launched augmented reality (AR) into the limelight. And since then, the technology has only grown and become more accessible.



Image via MarTech

AR can help consumers gain an in-depth understanding of products and how they work. Consider the Ikea Place app or iPhone X's animoji feature. Or the success GE Aviation has had in the manufacturing and maintenance field with AR glasses.

While the demand for AR content in a B2B scenario is still some way off, content marketers should stay abreast of innovations in AR technology. Augmented reality has the potential to change the way companies go about product testing and

consumer education.

Conclusion

Content marketing is constantly evolving. While it continues to have strong connections to past trends, it is growing rapidly towards the future. And while there is plenty of data that back these trends, it's important to remember that marketing trends come and go. It's crucial, therefore, for your brand to remain flexible with your content strategies. The ability to quickly adapt to the ever-changing needs of your target audience is the key to making your business shine brighter than others.

About **The Social Media Hat**

The Social Media Hat is first and foremost a resource for small businesses and organizations. We strive to provide business owners with news and information on Social Media, Blogging, Internet Marketing, SEO, Mobile Apps and Technology to help promote and grow their business. With this resource, we are able to:

Tell you what to do

Tell you what to do and how to do it

Tell you what to do and do it for you

The Social Media Hat is led by Mike Allton, a leading Blogging and Social Media Consultant.

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