
How To Think And Act Like A Publisher

A B2B Marketer's
Guide To Content
Marketing

Introduction

If you are assessing your marketing efforts and investigating ways to transform your approach to attract today's more savvy B2B buyers, undoubtedly you have run into the term **content marketing**. In almost every introduction to content marketing, you also have undoubtedly heard (or read) phrases like, "you are now the media" and "you have to think like a publisher."

What you may be having a hard time finding after learning that "you are the media" and that you must "think like a publisher" is content to help you learn how to do so.

This eBook fills that void for B2B marketers interested in learning how publishers think and act. It's a mindset that when learned and applied to your B2B marketing strategy will open up a whole new world of ideas and possibilities. If you want to be armed with a better way to reach your customers through the creation helpful, useful content, then this eBook is for you.

A side note before jumping in: this is an introduction to provide B2B marketers insight into the discipline and business of publishing. It offers suggestions on how to think and act like a publisher and how to apply that thinking to B2B content marketing. It is by no means exhaustive or all inclusive. Publishers do much more than what is presented here.

This eBook discusses six core areas of publishing:

1. Profit
2. Editorial
3. Production
4. Circulation
5. Distribution
6. Seeking The Next Opportunity

Each section provides actions and advice to help you **think and act like a publisher**. Before getting starting, let's add some context and define **content marketing**.

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Content Marketing

Content Marketing is:

- Your next competitive advantage.
- Personal, educational, and created for *SOMEONE*, not everyone.
- A discipline that requires study and practice. It's not a fad, a buzzword, or the next passing fancy. It's a skill that needs to be developed and mastered.
- Designed to ensure that your marketing speaks to all the people involved in the buying process – end-users, influencers, the project champion, the important internal stake holders, and of course, the decision makers.
- Driven by the fact that sales and marketing organizations can do very little to hasten today's B2B buying lifecycle. Today's buyers move at their own pace – you need to have the right information, at the right stage, at the moment your buyers want it.
- An approach for attracting, interacting with, and influencing today's working professionals, who source products using search engines, social networks, industry-specific web sites, peer-to-peer networks, product reviews, videos, word of mouth and more.
- A methodology for developing helpful, useful information that is used to market your products and/or services during the multiple stages of the B2B buying lifecycle. From awareness to selection, today's B2B marketers need content that influences buyers.

With this definition of content marketing as our context, let's explore how you will benefit from thinking and acting like a publisher.

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Profit

First and foremost, **a publisher thinks about profit**. Not readers, not editorial, not circulation – profit. The perfect storm of the past few years has shrunk head count, closed titles, and transitioned their content online, but never far from the publisher’s mind in any of those decisions was profit. Even in the face of eroded margins, decisions and actions were driven by the need to increase (or restore) profits.

The emphasis on “profit” here is not so much intended for you to shift your own focus to profit (though that is a good focus for anyone) – **but to demonstrate that a publisher has a laser focus on a singular objective, and every decision is guided by that**. The takeaway? Have a laser focus on your outcomes. What do you want to accomplish with your B2B content marketing strategy?

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Profit Actions:

1. Brainstorm a list of **5 goals and outcomes** for your B2B content marketing strategy.
2. Select one goal (or two at most) and make it your focus. Don’t lose sight of it. Use it as a litmus test and guiding light for all of your decisions. **Constantly ask yourself, “What’s the point of this activity?” to keep yourself and your team on track.**

Editorial

Every publisher I have ever met **obsesses about the quality and relevance of their publication for their readership** (oh right, and the advertisers too!). You will never meet a group of people harder on themselves for the misplacement of a word or comma than individuals who work in the publishing industry. A seemingly small mistake, once printed in a newspaper or magazine, serves as an indelible mark on the quality of the publication. Publishers make every effort to ensure that any piece of content produced meets an established editorial standard and is representative of their brand.

In addition to quality and relevance, **publishers also think about editorial variety – in both topic and type**. Topics are selected for their ability to:

- Attract the right readers
- Serve the needs of the readers in their daily lives
- Drive revenue during certain times of the year (when regular events occur such as trade shows or annual buyer's guides)

As for the type of editorial, **consider the last magazine you read**.

How many different article types or “departments” can you remember?

There are feature stories, how to's, lists, Q&As, product reviews, industry calendars, event recaps, and more. Every type of content has the same objective: be helpful and useful to the readership. To publishers, variety in editorial type is as important as topic in order to keep readers engaged and prevent them from becoming bored with their publication.

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Editorial Actions:

1. Have a **high level of commitment to the quality of the content** you produce and pay attention to every detail. Make the quality of your content a top priority.
2. **If it is not important or relevant to your readership, don't spend one ounce of resources on it.** Your editorial must be for your readers, not you.
3. Create a list of content types you are capable of producing or would like to produce. **Draft guidelines** describing the requirements for producing each. (That's what publishers do – often referred to as “page philosophies”.)
4. Draft an editorial calendar by **defining the topics of the editorial and the final publication date.** Pay careful attention to the frequency at which you write about topics. Write more on the topics that are most important to your readership.

Production

The production department of a publishing company is its nerve center. Without it, the editorial never reaches the reader, online or offline. To do this, day after day, month after month, everything from article layout to cover design to proofreading is on a deadline and a schedule. Attention to detail is amongst the highest of priorities. The word “deadline” actually means something. **The dates on a production schedule are respected, and missing one is doing the unthinkable.**

Now, don't let this conjure up in your mind a world full of stress and a frantic pace where everyone is running around last minute trying to get their work done. (That only happens to those of us outside the world of publishing.) Quite the contrary actually, production departments run like well-oiled machines and are known for their ability to get the job done on time under virtually any circumstance.

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Production Actions:

- 1. Add a “Managing Editor” to your staff.** A managing editor doesn't necessarily have to be a full time employee, but someone on your staff needs to be responsible for coordinating, scheduling, and tracking the progress on your content production. Without someone fulfilling this role, you'll miss deadlines, you'll have inconsistent results, and you'll create a stress level that isn't good for anyone.
- 2. Expand your schedules to include more milestone dates.** If the only date you are tracking is the publication date (e.g. the day you want the article on the blog), you are not controlling the content production process enough. Additional dates to add to your publication schedule: **first draft, copy edit, final draft, proofread, post to CMS, optimize, and publish.**

Circulation

Circulation is readership.

As a publisher, when it comes to readership, the main objective is to **acquire and sustain** a population of people that a target advertiser will be willing to pay a premium to get in front of. Therefore from a circulation standpoint, the publisher's mind is always focused on achieving the following two outcomes:

- **driving growth** (i.e., increasing the number of readers) and
- **retention** (i.e., keeping readers loyal).

But before starting either one of those activities, the first place publishers must start is with the definition of the optimal target prospect for their advertisers. Without a qualified circulation, a publisher has little hopes of generating revenue.

Sound familiar? Where should you start your B2B content marketing strategy? That's right, just as publishers begin by defining the optimal target reader, you will begin by defining your ideal buyers. Enter [Buyer Personas](#).

Definition: A buyer persona is a description of a specific person for whom your products and services are intended. It goes beyond statistics and demographics, and defines behaviors, motivations, likes/dislikes, traits, etc. Its intent is to help you reach your customers on a human level.

Buyer personas define your optimal buyer(s) – the human beings, (the people with emotions) for whom your products and services are intended.

Once armed with the definition of the readership, publishers set out to create a marketing strategy to continuously **acquire, grow, and maintain** that readership. Publishers invest significant time, resources, and capital to ensure that their readership can support the growth of the publication.

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Circulation Actions

1. **Start your content marketing strategy by [creating buyer personas](#).** You must have a clear understanding of who you are trying to attract for your readership.
2. **Review your registration and opt-in forms.** Are they simple, easy to use? Do they have good calls to action? How many steps does it take to complete the process? Whether it be your e-mail marketing list, your newsletter, or your blog RSS feed, pay careful attention to simplicity, ease of use, and placement.
3. **Be mindful of the *age* of your subscribers** (length of time subscribed) and their level of activity (or inactivity). If you have old, inactive subscribers, make one attempt to reach them, and if you receive no response, dare I say it, **remove them**. And then acquire new ones.
4. **Create a way to track and monitor the growth of your readership.** A simple spreadsheet will do.

Distribution

Distribution, from a publishing standpoint, deals with getting the editorial product into the hands of the readers. The focus is on understanding and utilizing all of the channels through which content can be delivered and consumed, then working to spread the product as widely as necessary (to existing and potential readership) to achieve the publisher's circulation goals and deliver value to their advertisers.

This is accomplished in a variety of ways: snail mail, digital magazines, the publication's web site, newsstands, grocery store lines, events and trade shows, syndication, strategic alliances, and on and on. You see, the goal is to spread your content as far and as wide as possible, though in a very targeted way, based on where and how the defined readership interacts with the content.

Enter the social web and mobile devices, and your readership is just as capable of distributing your content as you are.

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Distribution Actions

1. Look for external outlets for your existing content. For blog feeds, consider Alltop.com and Technorati. For blog articles, of course take advantage of Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, but look for other niche destinations too – BusinessWeek Exchange is great for B2B.
2. Seek places to contribute content – distributing your thought leadership in the form of contributed articles.
3. With every piece of content you create, you must answer the question, “Have I made it easy for my readership to share it?” (And that means in all channels, on and offline. Email, Twitter, events, etc.)
4. You have time, but begin thinking about the answer to the following question: “How do we make our content more touchable?” (Think: iPad)

Seeking the next opportunity

To be honest, most publishers were not very good at this. If they had been, the industry would have fared much better over the past 10 years. Prior to the internet, publishers basically printed money. When it came along, there wasn't any urgency to act because their pockets were full. Wham! Enter the recession, open source publishing platforms, and the next thing you know everyone is a publisher, and it seemed no one was spending money on print advertising.

So publishers had to adapt, and the good ones have. And with the lesson of the past ten years learned, **keeping an eye on the horizon and seeking the next opportunity** are musts for long term sustainability and vitality.

Seeking The Next Opportunity Action (just one)

- Adapt and Think Bigger. Embrace the times in which we live and seek ways to utilize the new technologies available to you.

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Recap

The six core areas of publishing are:

1. **Profit** – define your core objective and have a laser focus on it
2. **Editorial** – focus on the importance of both editorial quality and variety
3. **Production** – have a system for content creation using schedules, deadlines, and the right people to manage the process
4. **Circulation** – define your readership, and drive the growth and retention of those individuals
5. **Distribution** – get your content (the editorial product/marketing material) into the hands of the readership
6. **Seeking the next opportunity** – always keep one eye on the horizon

When listed together (and thought of in this way), these six areas provide you with a framework to begin thinking and acting strategically with a publisher’s mindset. It becomes easier to understand the statement, “you are now the media” and “how thinking and acting like a publisher” will benefit your ability to attract and connect with today’s B2B buyers.

Be assured, there is a direct correlation between **structuring your marketing department in a way that enables you to systematically create targeted, helpful, useful content and influencing today’s B2B buyers in a way that generates demand for your products and services.**

Our purpose at [Make Good Media](#) is to help you accomplish that goal.

While hindsight tells us that publishers as a whole could have done more to embrace and adapt to the changing media landscape, we can still learn so much from publishers and the way they run their businesses. Tapping into a publisher-worthy understanding of your readership (your customers and potential customers) will help you get into the mindset that is driving the shift to content marketing, web content strategy, and ongoing content creation.

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Conclusion

We are at a pivotal time in history, where we are not only experiencing the convergence of print, digital, and social media, but also a transition in the way content is created, packaged, and consumed.

We are all publishers now.

And as a B2B marketer, it is vital that you understand how to think and act to **attract, nurture, engage, convert, and love your customers.**

At both B2Bbloggers.com and Make Good Media, it is our purpose to help you become the marketers shaping the future of B2B marketing. It's our hope that you found this eBook useful.

The challenge you are now faced with is incorporating this thinking into your day to day activities and on an even grander scale, your marketing department and how you interact with your current and future customers.

Will you implement these actions? It's one thing to find and read this eBook: it's an entirely different thing to embrace and carry out the change it proposes.

What will you do?

If you enjoyed this eBook, the kindest compliment you can offer is to share it. Thank you for your time and attention, it is sincerely appreciated.

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What will you do?

About Make Good Media

Make Good Media is a new media marketing agency helping businesses integrate **B2B social media and content marketing** with their traditional marketing practices. We help clients blend traditional marketing tactics with the new tools available through the social web to start relationships, generate demand and grow in the brave new B2B world of the social, mobile web.

Our expertise lies in our ability to work with you to develop plans that are measurable, executable, and most importantly in alignment with your long-term marketing objectives. There are no quick fixes with [B2B social media](#) and [content marketing](#). It requires a change in mindset. We help you with that process and guide you on your transition to producing helpful, useful content and developing an open, honest voice with your customers.

We believe you need a marketing agency positioned to help you capitalize on the future of the web— that is, *now*. We know how that sounds, but with the rapid pace at which technology changes, you need a partner that keeps you and your marketing at the forefront of connecting with today's B2B buyers.

That's us. We listen to your vision, add our knowledge and experience, and together we develop marketing programs that start relationships, generate demand, and grow your business.

Now that you know about us, we'd love to [learn about you](#).

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