

An Introduction to Content Marketing

*for Marketing, Media and
Communications Professionals*

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Q4 2014

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About this report

This report is an introduction to content marketing for marketing and communications professionals. It was developed by Rodney Gedda (see About the Author). Gedda regularly updates and maintains this report. Comments and suggests are welcome, but the report is produced without any influence or bias from a third-party.

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Content marketing at a glance

Getting started with the concept of content marketing

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Content marketing definition

- Content marketing is broadly defined as:
Objective content designed to attract a target audience to build brand awareness, trust and, if desired, ultimately lead generation and sales
- For content marketing to be useful, the content must be independent, objective and build a rapport, or “halo”, around the brand.
- Content marketing is the “flavour of the month” in 2014, but has been around for a long time.
- Content marketing can be delivered with new and existing channels. E.g., whitepapers, newsletters, blogs, social media.

The content in content marketing

- Insightful, thought provoking written content:
 - Descriptions of how the world is changing and what individuals/businesses will want or need.
 - Interviews with subject matter experts on specific areas.
- “How-to” articles and guides that help people make more informed decisions:
 - Strategy advice.
 - Technical how to articles.
 - Reviews/comparisons of different products and services.
- Market insights and trends:
 - E.g. 30% of Australian organisations use Big Data apps.
- Customer experiences:
 - Customer case studies and interviews.

What content marketing is not

- Journalism (yes, content marketing is NOT journalism).
- Advertorial or “native advertising”.
- Product/service placement:
 - Although it is often used as a conduit for this activity.
- Press releases:
 - See slide on “content marketing feeds the media”.
- All about you and your company.
- A channel for competitor bashing.



Audiences will quickly pick up on this activity and your content (and brand!) will lose credibility.

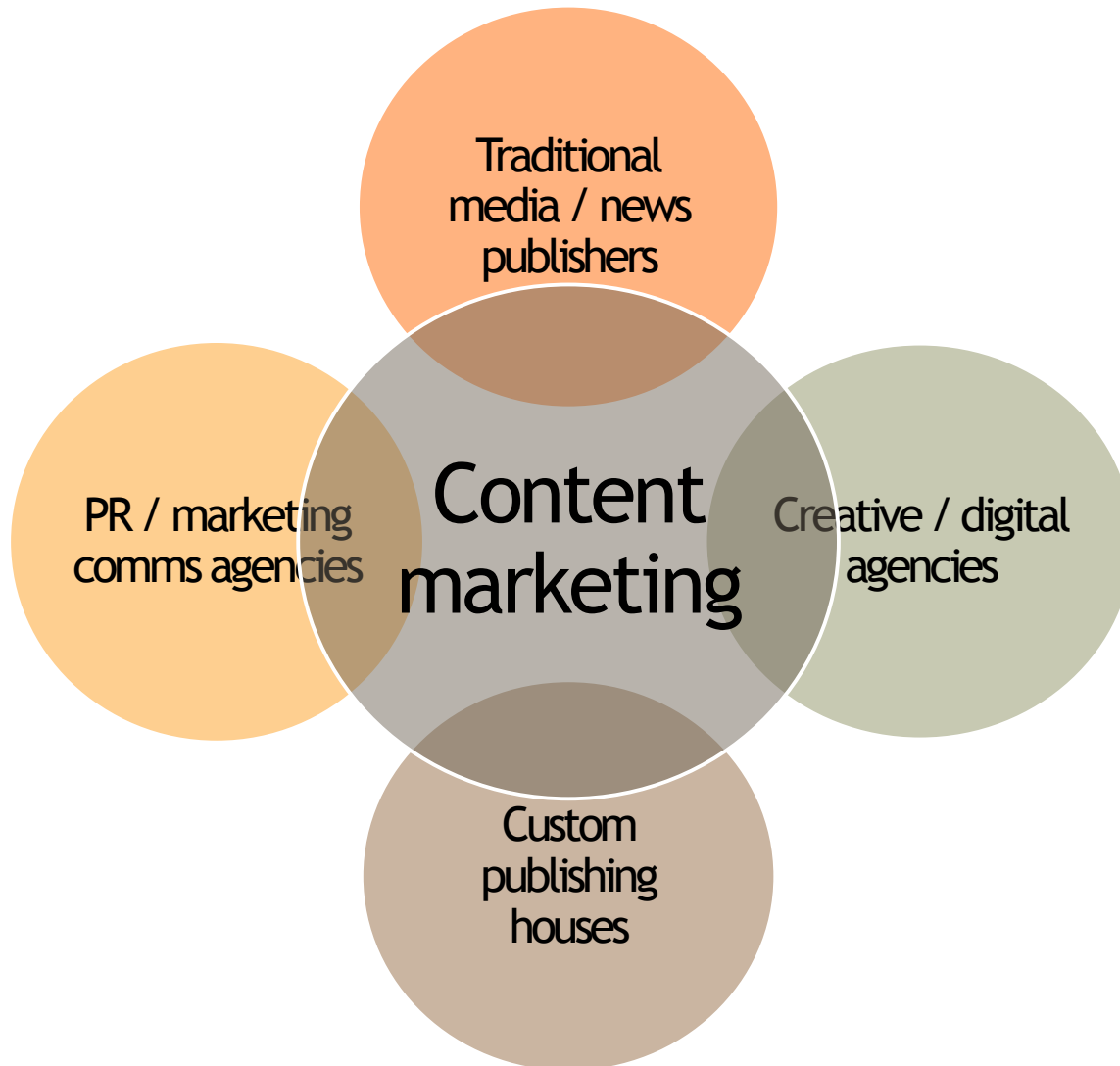
Who produces content marketing?

- Journalists.
- Editors/editorial managers.
- Copywriters.
- Publishers (news media and custom/contract).
- PR and communications professionals.
- Creative professionals.
- Marketing professionals.
- Anyone who works with, or values, content creation.

Content feeds into other forms of marketing



No one “owns” content marketing



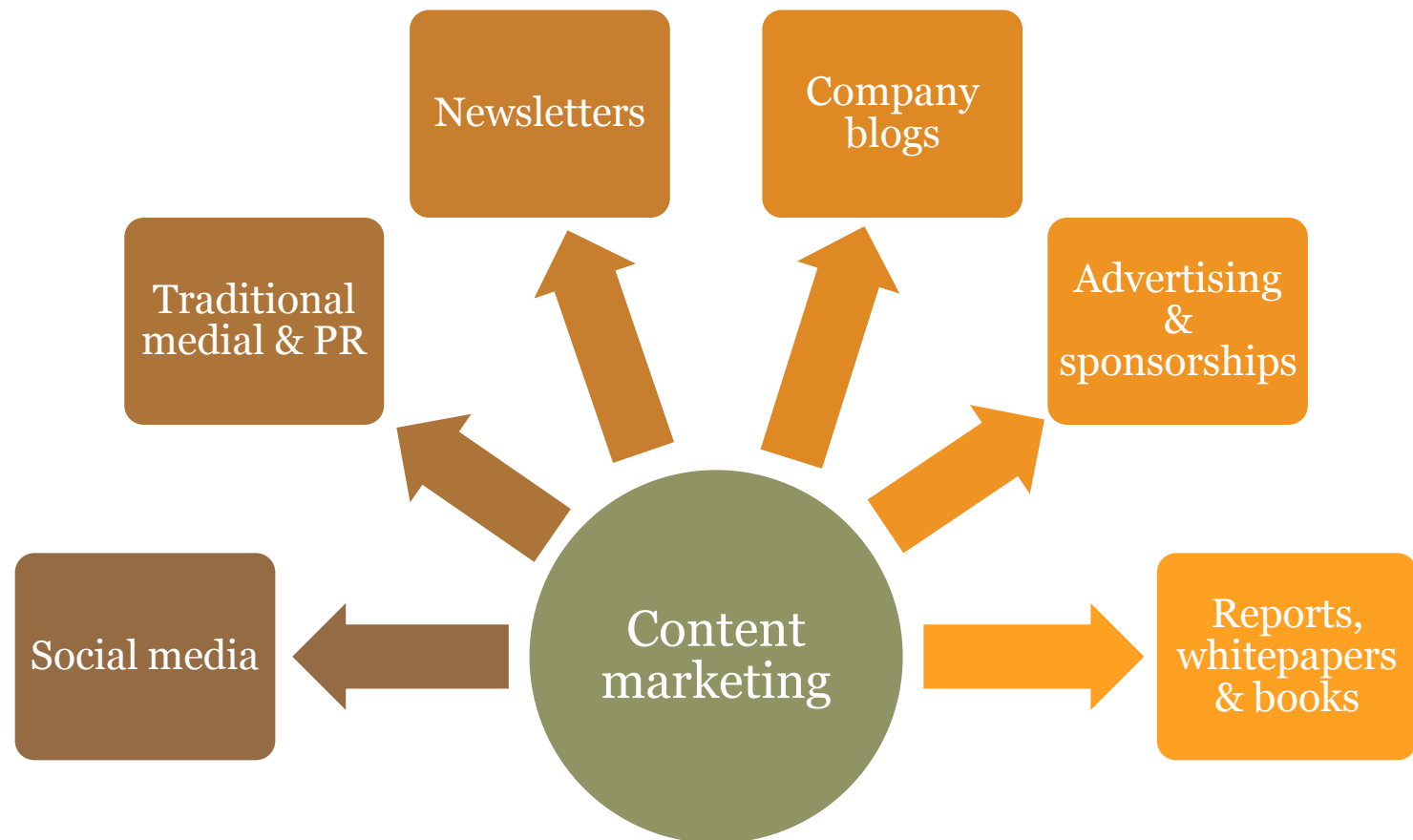
- In-house marketing departments can count as a “fifth pillar” on the left, but they often engage with agencies for this type of service.
- IT analyst firms have also entered the content marketing fold, but their content is heavily tied to their own data, analysis.
- And, in keeping with the trend, numerous dedicated “content marketing” firms now exist.

Content marketing benefits

Benefit	Reasons
Low barrier to entry	No need to invest large sums upfront, start small. A few articles and whitepapers gets you started. Content marketing goes a long way compared to other forms of marketing.
Specific coverage	If you sell a specific product or service the media may not have an interest in, content marketing can be used to publicise it. Allows marketers to hone in on content they know is of interest to their target customers.
Democratic	Good content is trusted whether it comes from the world's largest companies or a startup. Like media relations, content marketing "levels the publicity playing field".
Attract the leads you want	People are always searching the Internet for content. Content marketing "taps in" to this army of searchers and appeals to a desired audience. One of the best forms of lead generation.
Longevity	Depending on the type, the marketing "shelf life" of content can be very long. Articles written years ago can continue to attract regular visitors. And it feeds into other forms of marketing.

How objective content is used

Content feeds into many channels, both internal and third-party



Content marketing & the media

Where content marketing is both a threat and an opportunity

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Another wave of disruption for independent media

- Independent, or “traditional”, news media organisations have seen waves of disruption since 2000.
 - 2002: Web 2.0, personal publishing and blogging
 - 2006: The rise of social media
 - 2010: Mobile apps as a media/advertising channel
- Hence, a lot more competition for advertising spend.
- Content marketing now shifting marketing funds from advertising and PR to content production.
- Now “everyone is a publisher” (or at least they think they are).
- That is the bad news.

The good news for media outfits

- Media businesses are well placed to offer content marketing services.
- They have been doing “content marketing” for a long time.
- Media account managers already have relationships with marketing executives through ad sales and other partnership programs.
- They have the required skills (e.g journalism) and are “geared” for content production.
- They understand the value of independent editorial.
- They already have good publicity channels in place.

News media journalists and content marketing

- Publishers should (and do) respect the boundaries of independent editorial and content production.
- Journalists can add an independent viewpoint to content marketing.
- The boundaries between sponsored editorial programs and content marketing can blur (that doesn't mean the editorial itself is any less independent or insightful).
- Good journalists distinguish between news reporting and content production – and most don't take long to learn.

What publications want to avoid

- Publishers shouldn't assume clients interested in content will also be well served by “native advertising” and other forms of advertorial.
- As is the case with “church and state” separation between advertising and editorial, content production should avoid blurring that line. These activities risk the integrity of the media company.
- When I was doing a sponsored named blogging piece the company hired a social media person to help publicise them and asked me to participate. I refused on the grounds that I'd rather hold onto my independent reputation. Don't assume journos will be happy about client messaging once the content has been produced.

Content marketing & media relations

How independent media and content marketing co-exist

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Traditional media under pressure

- Traditional media becoming more fragmented:
 - Large publishers closing titles, niche publishers stepping in
- Switch from print to digital channels has reduced revenues for many media outfits.
- Independent reporters pressured for “quantity, not quality”.
- Media companies are being caught out for more conflicts of interests and advertiser agendas (even criminal activities like phone tapping).
- More media companies now venturing into content marketing...

Content marketing feeds the media

- Content marketing feeds into traditional media – not just social media!
- Content and insights can be used in press releases and regular PR activities, including exclusive story offers to journalists.
- Journalists have always appreciated good content and content marketing raises the standard to a new level.
- Journalists love... subject matter experts, thought leaders, end-customers, market insights, technical advice...

I already do PR, am I the media?

- “The media” doesn’t have an exclusive licence to produce objective content.
- Just because your in-house communications people, or PR agency, are producing objective content that doesn’t mean you want to “become the media” in the traditional sense.
- In most cases, content marketing will be quite different from independent news media content.
- You and your PR firm continue to maintain your relationship with “the media”.
- Again, good content is good for traditional PR!

Content marketing for PR firms

- Media relations firms also have good reasons to get into content marketing.
- Content generation reduces the reliance on media relations for client messaging.
- Ideal “cross sell” within an existing client base.
- Clients already producing some content with you, even if just press releases.
- Already have relationships with journalists and writers: source of skills and a channel.
- Good revenue opportunity in its own right.

Content marketing & lead generation

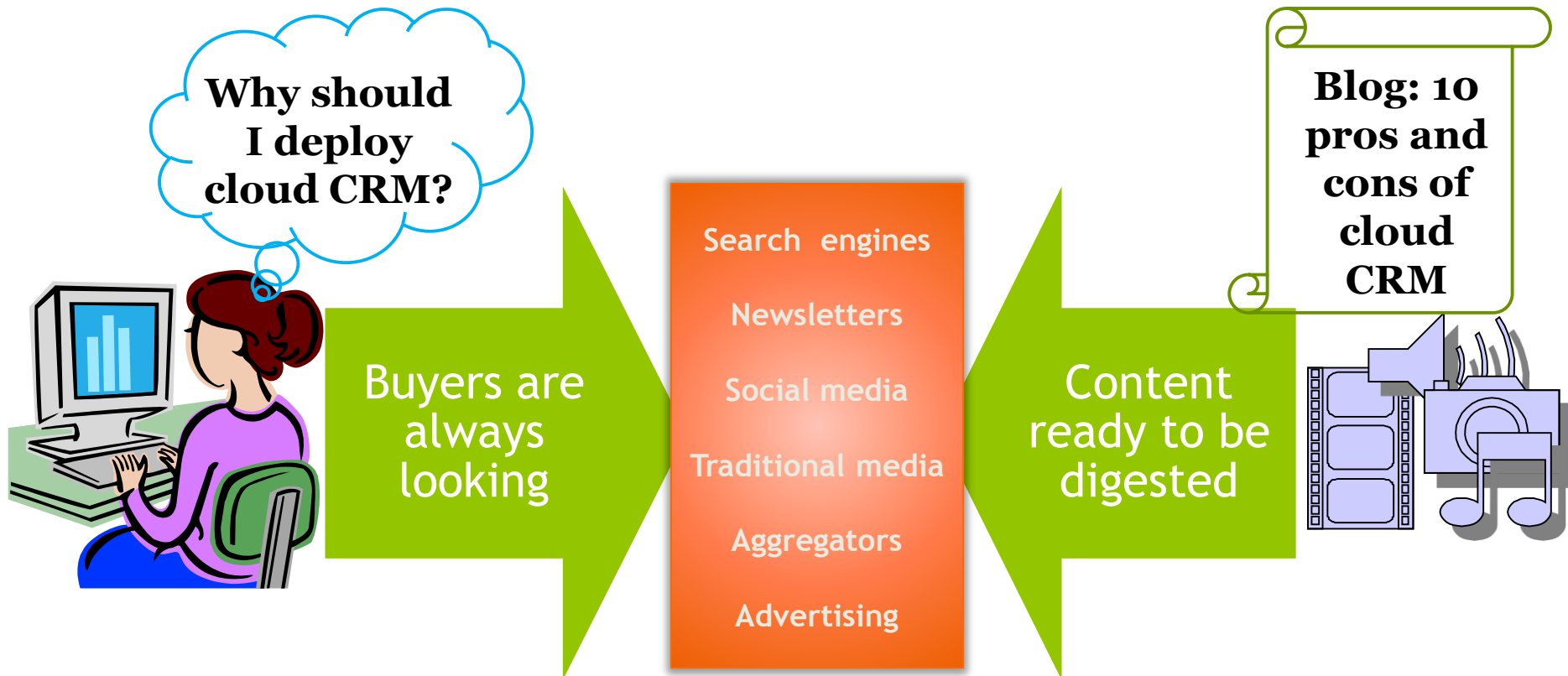
Using content to attract buyers

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Lead generation a tangible content marketing outcome

- Content can be freely available to attract regular, or casual, readers for brand recognition or it can be used strategically to attract “leads”.
- Content can be “gated” behind:
 - Ad-hoc sign up pages
 - Report/whitepaper download pages
 - Newsletter subscriptions
 - Premium content areas
 - Membership applications
- The content is revealed after a lead has been captured.
- Regular marketing lead conversion and metrics then apply.

Reach and “pull” of content is key



Content marketing strategy planning

*Start with well-defined content
strategy*

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Develop a content marketing plan

- What types of “content marketing” am I already doing?
 - Take a look, you might be surprised!
- What objectives will content marketing achieve?
- Decide on the best content channels for your target audience: print, online, PR, social, newsletters...
- Plan a balanced mix of content types: articles, whitepapers, infographics, videos, case studies.
- Release content over a moderate time frame:
 - 50 pieces of content over 10 months is better than 20 pieces in one or two months – build up your audience!

Good content is not always about you

- Content marketing is used by brands to garner audiences and trust, so the content does not need to directly relate to the brand's products.
- For example, a CRM software company (see next slides) could write about:
 - Business climate.
 - Skills.
 - Ways to attract and retain customers.
 - Other products: “10 things to look out for with Gmail”.
 - Usability, how to get staff to use your apps.

Example content marketing strategy

- A medium-size CRM software company is struggling with brand awareness, media coverage.
- Begins a content marketing strategy to produce:
 - Short articles and opinion pieces.
 - Whitepaper reports.
 - Advisory pieces (e.g. “10 things to look for before you buy CRM”).
- The company distributes the content via numerous channels:
 - PR/media relations and social media.
 - Company blogs.
 - Customer newsletters.

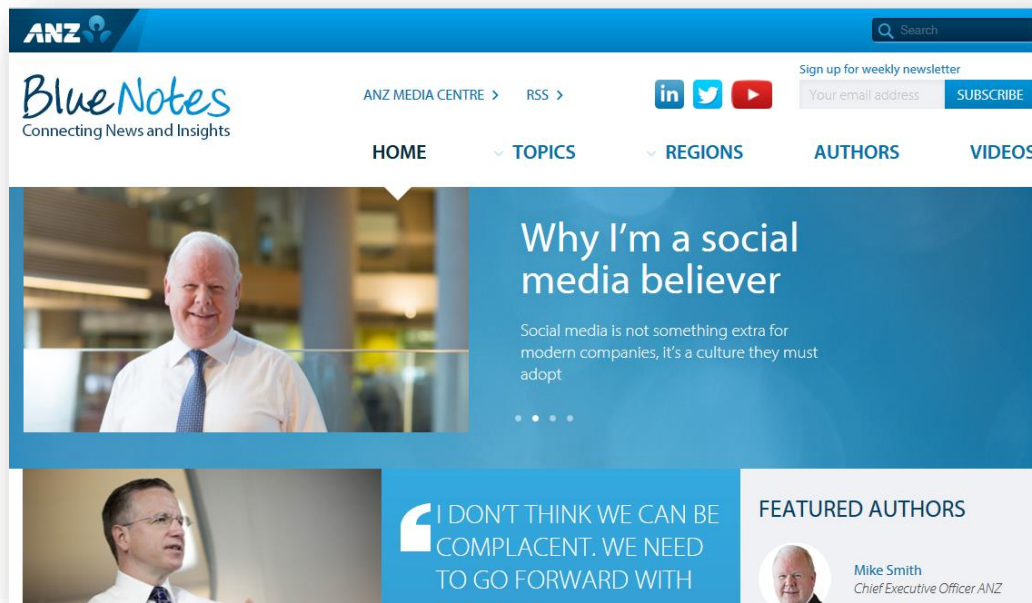
Example content marketing strategy (cont.)

- The content channels are given a sub-brand:
 - E.g.. “CRM Medium”, or “Inside CRM”, etc.
 - Sub-brand goes on blog, newsletter, PR, social feeds.
- The content gains traction among:
 - Traditional media (including exclusives).
 - Social media.
 - Customer reception/feedback.
 - SEO (people are always searching for CRM content).
- The same content is also used for:
 - Marketing campaigns (e.g., a DM campaign to prospects).
 - Sales support for new customer acquisition.
 - Upselling and cross-selling existing customers.

Content marketing samples

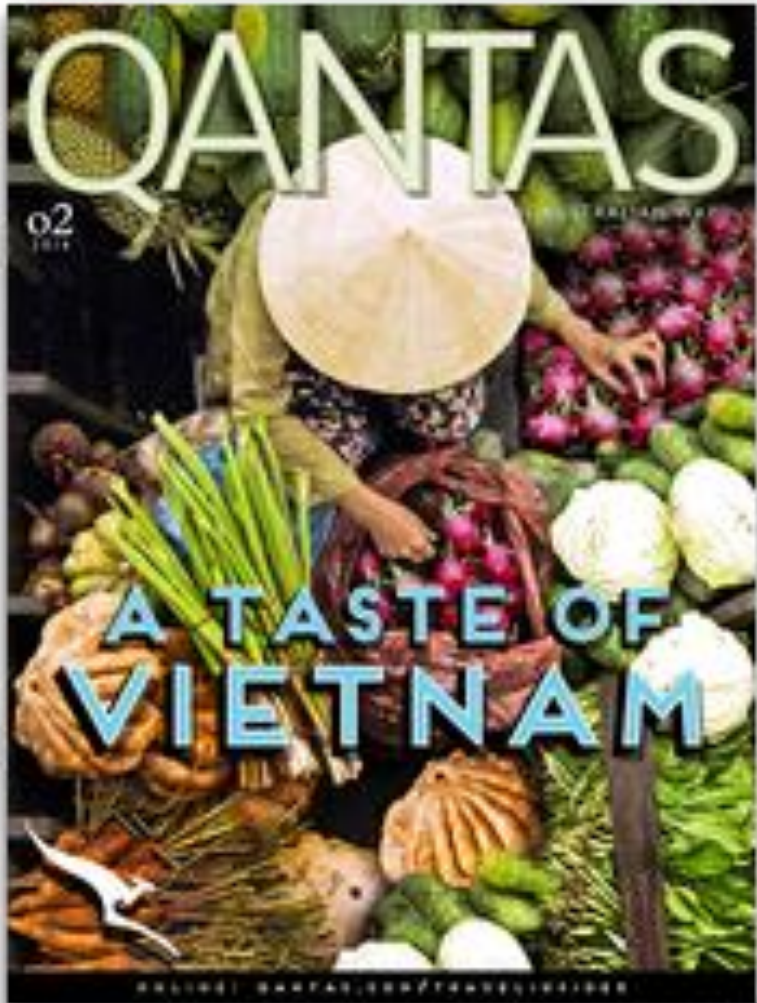
*Take a look at what others are
producing*

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Content marketing example: ANZ BlueNotes

- Recent entrant by a “Big 4” bank.
- Articles written by journalists and ANZ staff.
- Good example of how a content marketing initiative can create a good sub-brand.
- BlueNotes is sub-brand of ANZ that has a similar “blue” theme, but it does not distract from the main brand.
- The sub-brand is also closely aligned to the main brand – your content marketing does not need to be distant to be seen as independent.

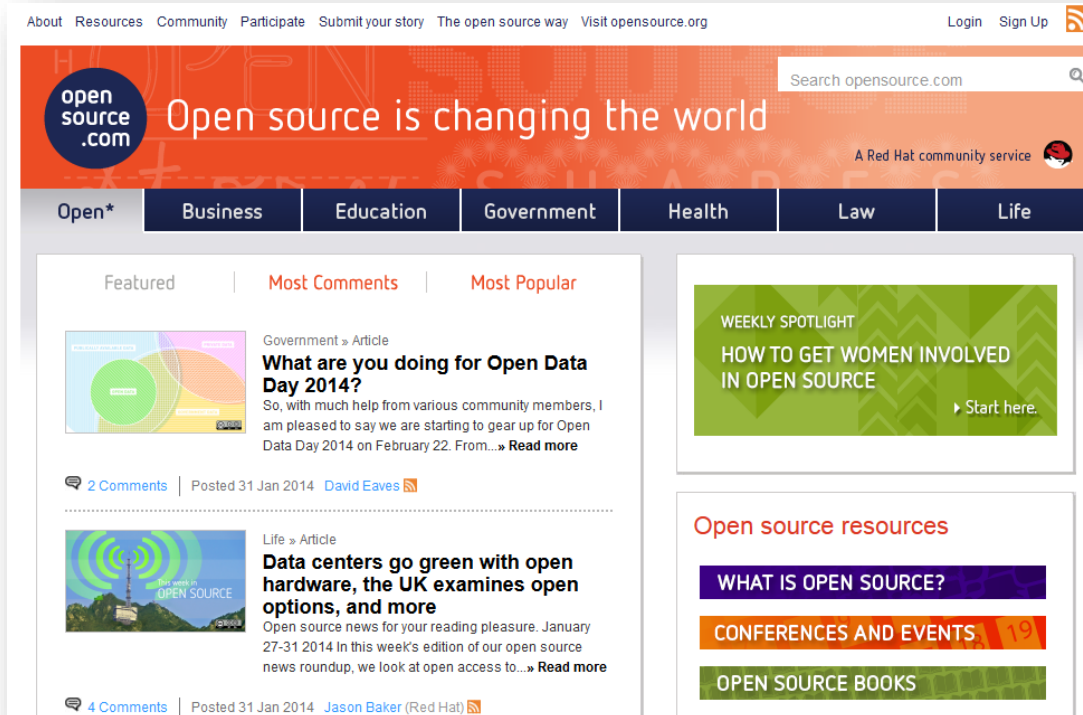


Content marketing example: Qantas magazine

- Was once known as custom publishing, now it's "content marketing".
- Objective travel articles written by journalists.
- Readers free to use information for whatever travel plans they have, and choose which airline to get there!
- Content not just about travel, but aimed at general business/prof audience.
- The content builds trust in Qantas brand as a transport and holiday provider.
- Was once an in-flight only, print product . Now available on iTunes.
- Channel for Qantas advertising promotions.

Content marketing example: Opensource.com

- Objective content on open source technologies published by Linux vendor Red Hat.
- Branded as “A Red Hat community service”, which makes sense for a company like Red Hat.
- A wide variety of content about open source, not just Linux.
- Articles with Red Hat competitors, like OpenSUSE, are published (some content marketing strategies exclude naming competitors).
- CEO Jim Whitehurst is a contributor.





Content marketing example: Smarter Business Ideas

- Advice for small businesses on general management and strategy.
- Not directly related to Telstra's services.
- Print and online channels (and mobile).
- Telstra has dabbled with being a media company for a long time, SBI is more niche than BigPond News.
- Weekly newsletter.
- Closely aligned with the Telstra-sponsored Australian Business Awards.



Content marketing example: IBM DeveloperWorks

- Content on developer techniques and technologies published by IBM.
- Good example of content marketing before it was known as such.
- Content general and not specific to IBM.
- The portal/blog is well integrated into IBM's offerings. E.g., links to IBM cloud services.
- Subject matter categorised around "buzzword" topics like cloud and big data.
- Links to downloads of evaluation software.

About the author

Author bio and contact details

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About Rodney Gedda

15 years experience as a:

- Journalist
- Editor
- Copywriter
- Named writer
- Marketing reporter/editor
- Analyst (marketing, IT & business)
- Report writer
- Creative manager
- Book author
- Blog, social media producer
- Marketing and business development professional

Rodney is available for:

- Writing and content production (named and ghost)
- Content marketing strategy
- Editing
- Blogs, newsletters and social media.
- Content distribution strategy

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About Rodney Gedda (cont.)

Rodney has written for, or been quoted in, many national media publications



INDEPENDENT. ALWAYS.

