



Market Data / Supplier Selection /
Event Presentations / User Experience
Benchmarking / **Best Practice** /
Template Files / Trends & Innovation



B2B Content Marketing: Formats, Distribution and Measurement

Building a framework for your B2B
content marketing process

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>

B2B Content Marketing: Formats, Distribution and Measurement



Published October, 2011

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Copyright © Econsultancy.com Ltd 2011

Econsultancy London
2nd Floor, 85 Clerkenwell Road
London EC1R 5AR
United Kingdom

Telephone:
+44 (0) 20 7681 4052

<http://econsultancy.com>
help@econsultancy.com

Econsultancy New York
41 East 11th St., 11th Floor
New York, NY 10003
United States

Telephone:
+1 212 699 3626

Contents

1. Introduction.....	7
1.1. About Econsultancy	8
1.2. About the author	9
2. What Do We Mean by Content Marketing?	10
2.1. Ownership of content marketing in B2B.....	12
3. Terminology.....	14
4. The Context for B2B Content Marketing.....	17
4.1. The role of your B2B website as a marketing communications and customer service tool.....	17
4.2. The commercial benefits for B2B e-commerce	19
4.2.1. Brand awareness.....	19
4.2.2. Lead generation	19
4.2.3. Lead management.....	19
4.2.4. Customer retention.....	20
4.2.5. Establish your company as thought leaders/innovators	20
4.3. How the use of content is changing	21
4.3.1. Social media shifted the communication paradigm.....	21
4.3.2. Web analytics makes content measurable	21
4.3.3. Content marketing can deliver return on investment.....	22
5. Building a Coherent Approach to B2B Content Marketing.....	23
5.1. Core challenges for B2B marketers	23
5.1.1. The B2B buying cycle isn't always linear.....	24
5.1.2. Emotion influences buying decisions.....	24
5.1.3. There are different types of purchases	24
5.1.4. Tackling the approved vendor list	25
5.1.5. Tackling risk.....	26
5.1.6. Producing engaging content.....	26
5.2. Catering for the lowest common denominator	27
5.3. Targeting content to each stage of the B2B buying cycle.....	28
5.3.1. Defining the sales and buying cycle.....	28
5.3.2. Mapping who is involved in the B2B buying cycle.....	30
5.4. The value of thought leadership	31



5.5.	Using technology to manage layers of content.....	33
5.6.	Making your B2B content interactive.....	33
5.6.1.	Video	33
5.6.2.	Rich media (non-video).....	34
5.6.3.	JavaScript.....	35
5.6.4.	Social media and content sharing	35
5.7.	B2B content optimization and SEO.....	37
5.8.	The domain game: deciding where to house your B2B content.....	39
5.8.1.	Main domain.....	39
5.8.2.	Sub-domain.....	39
5.8.3.	Separate domain	39
5.8.4.	External hosted solution.....	40
6.	The Different Types of B2B Digital Content	41
6.1.	Services versus Products – understanding content requirements	41
6.2.	Your written word	41
6.2.1.	On-page text/copy	41
6.2.2.	Social feeds.....	42
6.2.3.	Blog	43
6.2.4.	Articles and documents	45
6.2.5.	FAQ	45
6.2.6.	Glossaries	45
6.2.7.	Newsletters.....	46
6.2.8.	Microsites.....	46
6.2.9.	White papers	48
6.3.	Your visual and spoken word.....	48
6.3.1.	Audio files	48
6.3.2.	Video	49
6.3.3.	Infographics	52
6.4.	Your interactive content.....	53
6.4.1.	Web self-service	53
6.4.2.	Webinar content	54
6.4.3.	Competitions.....	54
6.4.4.	Games.....	55
6.5.	Event content.....	57
6.6.	Third party content	57
6.6.1.	Customer content.....	57
6.6.2.	Industry experts.....	58
6.6.3.	Guest bloggers.....	58
6.7.	Internal content.....	58



6.8.	How content is used by different industries.....	59
7.	Content Distribution: Extending the Reach of Your Content.....	60
7.1.	The role of DAM and CMS systems	61
7.2.	Traditional digital marketing channels	62
7.2.1.	Search marketing	62
7.2.2.	Email marketing	67
7.2.3.	Affiliate marketing	69
7.2.4.	Online advertising.....	70
7.3.	The role of offline marketing channels.....	71
7.4.	Mobile marketing	71
7.4.1.	Mobile websites.....	72
7.4.2.	QR (Quick Response) Codes.....	73
7.4.3.	Mobile apps.....	74
7.4.4.	SMS alerts	77
7.5.	Social media.....	77
7.5.1.	Twitter	78
7.5.2.	Facebook	79
7.5.3.	LinkedIn.....	80
7.5.4.	Working with influencers	82
7.6.	Content sharing and interactivity	82
7.6.1.	Video syndication channels	82
7.6.2.	SlideShare	84
7.6.3.	Live chat	86
7.7.	Web apps	87
7.8.	RSS content syndication	88
7.9.	Article marketing.....	88
7.10.	Channel integration.....	90
8.	Measuring the Impact of Your Content.....	91
8.1.	Defining success and what you need to measure	92
8.1.1.	Basic ROI calculation.....	93
8.2.	Role of web analytics tools	94
8.2.1.	Understanding how to configure your web analytics tool	96
8.3.	Measuring social media	97
8.3.1.	Using Twitter platforms for reporting.....	99
8.3.2.	Using services that provide brand insight.....	99
8.4.	Measuring the impact of shared content.....	99
8.5.	Importance of testing	100
8.5.1.	Segmentation of content.....	101



8.6. The value of website optimization	103
9. Takeaway Thoughts	104



1. Introduction

This report is focused on what we consider to be the three pillars of B2B content marketing:

1. Content formats

This relates to the different types of content available in the marketing armory, including written, spoken and visual content.

2. Content distribution

This relates to the marketing channels at your disposal for publishing and distributing your content to secure maximum exposure.

3. Content measurement

This relates to the evaluation toolkit at your disposal to help identify the impact that your content is having on e-commerce KPIs such as traffic and conversion and to then fine tune performance to improve those KPIs.

This report is intended to provide a framework within which to evaluate your current content marketing process and plan how you can make the most of your content in the future. The tools and techniques discussed are designed to help you manage and streamline the tactical execution of content marketing in a B2B environment. ¹

Whilst this report is dedicated to B2B practitioners, it should be noted that the principles and techniques involved in content marketing are broadly similar for B2C. Where we believe B2B differs is in the tactical execution and the channel mix used to target B2B buyers throughout the purchase cycle.

It's also important to understand what this report does not cover. We have deliberately avoided using the phrase "content strategy" because we believe that content marketing is a tactical execution, an integral part of your overall business strategy.

Whilst content management, or digital asset management (DAM), are close cousins to content marketing, this report does not cover in any detail the technology and techniques required for content management.

It does reference the role of Content Management Systems (CMS) as a key tool in the content marketing process but if you are looking for a detailed evaluation of CMS solutions then please refer to our [Content Management Systems \(CMS\) Buyer's Guide](#).

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>

¹ *Disclaimer: Throughout the report we are using screenshots to illustrate how B2B companies are using content marketing. Please note that the examples we give do not necessarily mean that we consider these companies to be the market leaders in content marketing; the inclusions are intended to help you visualise the information we are presenting.*



1.1. About Econsultancy

Econsultancy is a [global independent community-based publisher](#), focused on best practice digital marketing and e-commerce, and used by over 240,000 internet professionals every month.

Our hub has 105,000+ members worldwide from clients, agencies and suppliers alike with over 90% member retention rate. We help our members build their internal capabilities via a combination of research reports and how-to guides, training and development, consultancy, face-to-face conferences, forums and professional networking.

For the last ten years, our resources have helped members learn, make better decisions, build business cases, find the best suppliers, accelerate their careers and lead the way in best practice and innovation.

Econsultancy has offices in London, New York and Dubai and we are a leading provider of digital marketing training and consultancy. We are providing consultancy and custom training in the Middle East, and extensively across Europe and Asia. We trained over 3,000 marketers and ran over 200 public training courses in 2010.

[Join Econsultancy](#) today to learn what's happening in digital marketing – and what works.

Call us to find out more on +44 (0)20 7269 1450 (London) or +1 212 699 3626 (New York). You can also [contact us online](#).

Other related Econsultancy reports and content

Internet Marketing Strategy Briefing

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/internet-marketing-strategy>

Quarterly Digital Intelligence Briefing

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/quarterly-digital-intelligence-briefing>

Online Video Best Practice Guide

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/online-video-best-practice-guide>

Marketing Automation Best Practices

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/marketing-automation-best-practices>

Marketing Automation Buyer's Guide

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/marketing-automation-buyers-guide>

Location-based Marketing Smart Pack

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/location-based-marketing-smart-pack>

Marketing Budgets 2011

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/marketing-budgets>

B2B Internet Statistics Compendium

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-internet-statistics-compendium>



1.2. About the author

James led a carefree existence until he discovered a nascent desire to embrace e-commerce in 1999 while working for the IBM Software Team in Portsmouth.

He spent four years in business development at BCA learning how to integrate e-commerce with traditional DM. The seeds were sown and three years as Head of E-commerce with Robert Dyas and Betterware led to increased financial responsibility and management of the customer service team.

Two years as Head of Client Development followed at a UK e-commerce agency helping a range of leading retailers like The Conran Shop, Radley and New Look to evolve their online presence.

James has worked as a freelance e-commerce consultant since 2009 and has helped media organizations, high street retailers and internet start-ups to manage their ITT process. He is a keen traveller, just returned from nine months exploring Africa, the Sub-Indian Continent and South East Asia. He speaks good French, passable Spanish and is currently learning Urdu to impress the soon to be in-laws. He dreams of a simple life walking dogs in the country.

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>



2. What Do We Mean by Content Marketing?

For the purposes of this report, we are going to use a definition of content marketing espoused by [Joe Pulizzi](#), Founder of Junta42 and Content Marketing Institute:

“Content marketing is marketers becoming publishers; owning the media instead of renting it. Attracting and retaining customers by creating / curating valuable, compelling and relevant content to maintain or change behavior.”

For a more expansive definition, please refer to [Wikipedia](#).

Marketers are producing more and more content. At the heart of content marketing is the ownership of content and its use as a communication tool to help and influence prospective and existing customers.

Content marketing is the process of identifying the needs of stakeholders, mapping the content requirements to satisfy these needs, creating and distributing the necessary content across relevant marketing channels and measuring the impact this content is having on KPIs.

Using the analogy of an orchestra, the content marketer is the conductor and the various content assets and formats are the musicians: The conductor’s primary role is to coordinate all the musicians, making sure they produce a beautiful sound which remains faithful to the score. The musicians take their lead from the conductor and their ability to deliver what is required depends not only on how well they are led but also how well prepared they are. Behind the scenes is the director, who is the measurement toolkit, constantly evaluating how well the conductor and musicians are performing, how true the music is to the score and how satisfied the audience is. These three elements work together to deliver results.

In our first 2011 [Quarterly Digital Intelligence Briefing](#)², produced in association with Adobe, we found that the majority of survey respondents agreed that content marketing is more important than advertising. Content has always been important to B2B marketing.

However, the ways in which content is being accessed and used by B2B decision makers have been fundamentally changed by the emergence of the internet as the principal playground for content consumption.

In MarketingSherpa’s recently released 2012 SEO Benchmark Report, content creation is flagged as one of the most effective SEO tactics for marketers. Let’s start with a few key stats:

- ...

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>

² <http://econsultancy.com/reports/quarterly-digital-intelligence-briefing>



2.1. Ownership of content marketing in B2B

Econsultancy's August 2011 survey of B2B marketers revealed that ownership of content marketing is fragmented, with 38% respondents saying that different people own different parts of content marketing.

Ownership of content marketing in B2B companies

<Sample>

Source: Econsultancy survey of B2B marketers, August 2011

Other interesting insights:

- For companies...

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>



3. Terminology

Differentiating between content formats

Before we launch into the report, it's important to be clear on definitions of the content formats being discussed. The definitions below represent our guide to content marketing formats.

Infographic

This is a visual representation of information, data or knowledge intended to communicate often complex ideas and information quickly. There's a great example below from Eloqua³ that illustrates how you can map the use of content marketing at different stages of the buying cycle.

Infographic mapping content formats at various stages of the buying cycle

<Sample>

Webinar

A Webinar is a seminar conducted over the internet. This can be done in real-time, whereby people...

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>

Sourced from Komarketing Associates, LLC blog post on [Understanding Content Marketing Strategy](#). [View Fantastic Infographics](#)



4. The Context for B2B Content Marketing

The Marketing Data Box released recently by Hubspot⁴ supports the belief that print has suffered in the past 10 years in B2B marketing as the internet extends its role in content marketing and the costs per lead are lower online. Trade magazines in particular are struggling as they compete with industry analysts and commentators putting their content and opinions online via articles and blogs. That's not to say the B2B magazine and print are dead, far from it; just that the audience has shrunk and is becoming more targeted, which conversely leads to falling advertising prices for the savvy marketer. The net result however is a pressing challenge to understand how to use the digital arena to create, distribute and measure content.

4.1. The role of your B2B website as a marketing communications and customer service tool

According to Nielsen Norman Group research, in terms of website visitors being able to complete their goals, B2B websites measure a 58% success rate compared to 66% for mainstream websites.

What distinguishes a good B2B website from a bad one? The answer is...

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>

⁴ Hubspot Marketing Data Box available as a free download from <http://www.hubspot.com/the-marketing-data-box-Q1-2011/?source=email-the-marketing-data-box-p-l-20110511>



4.2. The commercial benefits for B2B e-commerce

The impact of intelligent content marketing isn't just felt in the warm glow you give your customers; there are tangible commercial benefits, both financial and non-financial, most of which can be measured. Here we pick out those we consider most important.

4.2.1. Brand awareness

Let's start with an intangible; it's almost impossible to put an accurate figure on the value of brand awareness to your bottom line. Generating brand awareness is a...

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>



5. Building a Coherent Approach to B2B Content Marketing

There is a commercial necessity to being coherent with your content marketing; producing and distributing content costs money and the resource invested has an opportunity cost, so you need to ensure there is a return on this investment, however your company defines that ROI.

There's a neat analogy given by Enquiro in their Investor Newsletter (2009) "The BuyerSphere":

One thinks of the old joke about the drunken man searching for his glasses outside the bar at night. A passerby stops to help and after several minutes of searching, asks the man "where exactly did you lose them?" The drunkard points into a shadowy alley in the distance. The good Samaritan, exasperated, asks, "Why are you looking here then?"

"The light's a lot better here."

Sticking to...

5.1. Core challenges for B2B marketers

<Sample> Stop press: humans aren't always logical or rational

Whilst many of the processes surrounding business buying have been formalized using documentation such as...

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>



6. The Different Types of B2B Digital Content

In this section we outline the different types of content that are at your disposal. Please note that the decision regarding which formats to use - and when - comes down to matching the use of content to the needs of your target audience. There is no right answer and we would recommend evaluating the needs of customers before committing to producing new content. On average B2B marketers use eight different content marketing tactics but there is uncertainty about the effectiveness of different content types; this uncertainty is consistent across different industries and company sizes⁵.

6.1. Services versus Products – understanding content requirements

To know which content formats are appropriate to your business, first you need to define what it is you are trying to communicate.

The style, tone and language used can vary based on the type of product or service being offered and the intended audience.

For example...

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>

Research funding from B2B Content Marketing. 2010 Benchmarks, Budgets & Trends by MarketingProfs and Junta42.



7. Content Distribution: Extending the Reach of Your Content

The world is constantly online. The advent of fast speed broadband, wireless connectivity and mobile penetration means that your digital content is always accessible. This presents an opportunity to make your content easily accessible to people when they want it. The challenge is to know how to distribute this content to make sure it's visible and accessible.

The 2011 Marketing Outlook report⁶, commissioned by Google, reveals that B2B marketers believe that eight of the ten most effective distribution channels for reaching the B2B audience are digital.

Top 10 media channels for reaching the B2B audience

<Sample>

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>

http://static.googleusercontent.com/external_content/untrusted_dlcp/www.google.com/en/us/pdf/2011/B2BMarketingOutlook.pdf



8. Measuring the Impact of Your Content

The B2B Content Marketing: 2010 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends report indicates that there is a gap between the perceived effectiveness of certain content marketing tactics and their adoption. For example, 79% of businesses are using social media but only 31% rate the tactic as effective. Why is that? One reason is the underutilization of measuring tools.

Whilst research proves that marketers are embracing content marketing, there remains a great deal of uncertainty about how to measure the effectiveness and impact of individual tactics and distribution channels. First, let's give you the bad news; you can't track and measure everything. Nor would you want to because you'd never have time to make any decisions. However, the tools and techniques exist to help you qualify the impact your content marketing is having on your business, enabling you to make commercial decisions regarding where to focus finite resource.

Please note that the terminology we are using for this section comes from Google Analytics due to the high adoption rate of Google Analytics, especially for SMEs, in comparison to the paid-for models like Omniture and Coremetrics.

To measure impact effectively, you need to combine two disciplines:

1. ...

B2B insight from BT – why measuring the impact of content is important

"It helps us measure our..."

<Sample quote>

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>



9. Takeaway Thoughts

The rules of engagement may have evolved but content marketing is as important as ever for B2B marketers. The proliferation of mobile smart devices has changed how decision makers access content, which in turn has raised new challenges for marketers when deciding where to invest their content marketing budget.

In the content marketing universe, your website is the sun, the beating heart. No website is perfect because it has to cater for a diverse audience. However, with a clear focus on content marketing and the use of analytics tools to measure impact, you can improve the effect of your content and use it to drive goal completion. The web analytics tools are out there to help you make sensible business decisions to improve KPIs and increase impact.

What's clear is that...

Sample only, please download the full report from:



<http://econsultancy.com/reports/b2b-content-marketing-best-practice-guide>

