

# What is content marketing & why should you care

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Everyone is talking about content marketing these days - but what exactly is it and why should you care? Content marketing is a marketing activity that focuses on creating and distributing engaging, relevant, and valuable content to acquire and retain customers, and to build a stronger brand. It is the art of attracting customers to your products without an obvious sales pitch.

Content marketing is a continuous yet subtle form of marketing that can be very effective. Some of the biggest companies in the world - American Express, GE, P&G, and Coca-Cola - already have content marketing campaigns in place for one simple reason - it works!

Unlike what most companies think, content marketing is not just about writing posts on the company blog. The content may not even always be textual. In fact, creation and distribution of visual and audio content like images, videos, podcasts, infographics, etc. are equally important for a good content marketing campaign.

## Why you need a content marketing campaign

Content marketing is essential as it helps companies expand their customer base, widen their reach, increase brand loyalty and improve brand image. It increases familiarity, trust, and likeability of the brand with the customers. Studies show that over 95% of all purchasing decisions made by customers are defined by the relationships they have with the brands. Now consider the fact that content marketing is one of the best ways of building relationships with customers on the internet. It increases the visibility that the brand has on search engines. This can have a huge impact on your sales. (For example, 92% of Americans use search engines to look for information and 71% use search engines to buy products.)

## Build stronger relationships with customers

Having a good content marketing campaign in place ensures that content is focused towards your customers and this helps create a personal relationship with them. Instead of creating generic promotional material as in conventional advertising, content marketing allows the company to create tailor-made content for its customers. They will know why exactly the product is beneficial to them without you having to make a sales pitch. This way, you are respecting the intelligence of the customers and they appreciate that. You are giving your customers all the details about the product, service or brand and letting them make educated decisions about your company and its products.

## Attract the right audience

Say you want to target fashion-conscious women between the ages of 19 and 25 for your designer handbags. So you place a billboard on a highway. How many customers from your target segment will see it? Not many. On the other hand, when you create search engine optimized content, people looking for the kind of products or services your company is offering will find you when they are searching for keywords related to designer handbags. This kind of targeting is unheard of in the conventional marketing world.

## Build a stronger brand

With content marketing, you are publishing content that reflects the true values of your brand. You control the message that you want to send out to your potential and existing customers about your brand. You can initiate and build the kind of image you want. You can engage your customers and even encourage them to contribute to the content creation process. People trust customer testimonials and reviews that they see on social networks, blogs, and forums much more than they trust ads.

This kind of content helps you build a stronger brand and you'll reap that benefit for many years.

## **Before you launch a content marketing campaign...**

Before you go ahead and launch a content marketing campaign, make sure you have a carefully thought-through strategy in place. Having a clear content marketing strategy will help you focus your efforts in this direction. Instead of publishing random blog posts without any clear purpose, the content creators in your firm will be aware of the goals the content should achieve, and in turn they will create better content.

## **ABOUT JESSICA DAVIS**

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