2018 CONTENT MARKETING TRENDS
Marketing Advisory Committee (MAC), May 3, 2018
What Is Content Marketing?

Talking to instead of at customers

Old school (‘Mad Men’)
- Make noise and sell stuff
- Force your will upon the world
- Branded content is a form of advertising

New school
- Produce content that people want and share (i.e. audience building)
- It’s more about mattering in the world than collecting pageviews
- Content marketing is all that’s left

“Will people miss you if you’re gone?”

—Seth Godin
Evolution of Content Marketing

Brands become publishers

Late 1800s/early 1900s: high-quality magazines

John Deere’s The Furrow
- Help farmers become more profitable

The Michelin Guide
- Sell more cars/tires

1930s-‘50s: TV/radio, broadcasting
Procter & Gamble’s soap operas

2000s: digital era, content explosion, early adopters
blogs, ebooks, podcasts, videos, infographics, social media, user-generated content, virtual reality, augmented reality, etc.
Blog posts written per month
59 million on WordPress alone

YouTube uploads per minute
400 hours of content

Human attention span
12 seconds (2000)
8 seconds (2017)*
Goldfish urban legend

What does this mean?
Forget attention span, people have become choosier about how they spend their time

*Not enough data to support this
"Washington Post’s Pulitzer Prize-winning social experiment"

Joshua Bell (incognito) playing a $3.5 million Stradivarius at a D.C. metro station during rush hour

- Out of 1,000 people, only a handful cared to notice
- He made $32.17 for 43 minutes of playing
- Content, context, audience
- Swiss cheese model: getting the holes to line up
It’s never been easier to be average

- Internet is full of advice, don’t copy
- Use your intuition
- Pay more attention to customers and they will pay more attention to you
- Don’t demand action, inspire it
- Focus on true believers rather than coercing skeptics

—Jay Acunzo, speaking at Content Marketing World 2017

Denver’s “Love This City” mural campaign stands out
The human touch is more important than ever

- Show up as a person not a company
- Content should be trustworthy, relevant and memorable
- Be authentic/real (avoid using actors)
- Algorithms don’t feel, people feel
- Look for emotionally charged experiences
- Let users personalize your content in real time (Dog-A-Like campaign)
- Make content about them not you: less than 5 percent of social conversations mention a brand or product (ex. talk about money instead of credit cards)
Creating Less Content

Case study: Virgin Group

Content team used to produce 9 pieces of new content per day on Virgin.com. Now 6 pieces.

Frees up team to:
- Spend longer on the creation and distribution of content
- Make each piece work harder and have a greater impact
- Look at the bigger picture
- Experiment with new formats and tools

—Virgin’s Greg Rose via NewsCred
Lost and found

- Gaming the system
- Content wars
- Keyword stuffing
- User intent and voice search
Storytelling

- Story: a thread connecting a series of events
- Narrative arc: beginning, middle, end
- Going above the genre
- Imagination is the only limiting factor

Mark Twain wrote for the masses with simple language and humor (sometimes dark), which still holds up
Examples of Modern Content Marketing

- **REI’s ‘How to Lace Hiking Boots’** (Web article)
- **Santander’s ‘Prosper and Thrive’** (Website)
- **Kona Bikes’ ‘Not Far From Home II – Destination North’** (video)
- **National Geographic’s ‘Mars’ 360-degree set tour** (virtual reality)
- **Nike’s ‘Breaking2’** (interactive)
- **Patagonia’s ‘The Cleanest Line’** (blog)
- **Visit Seattle’s ‘Scent of a Sasquatch’** (video)
- **Generali Spain** (Website)
- **Away’s ‘Here Magazine’** (print magazine)
- **IKEA’s ‘Oddly IKEA’** (AMSR, autonomous sensory meridian response)