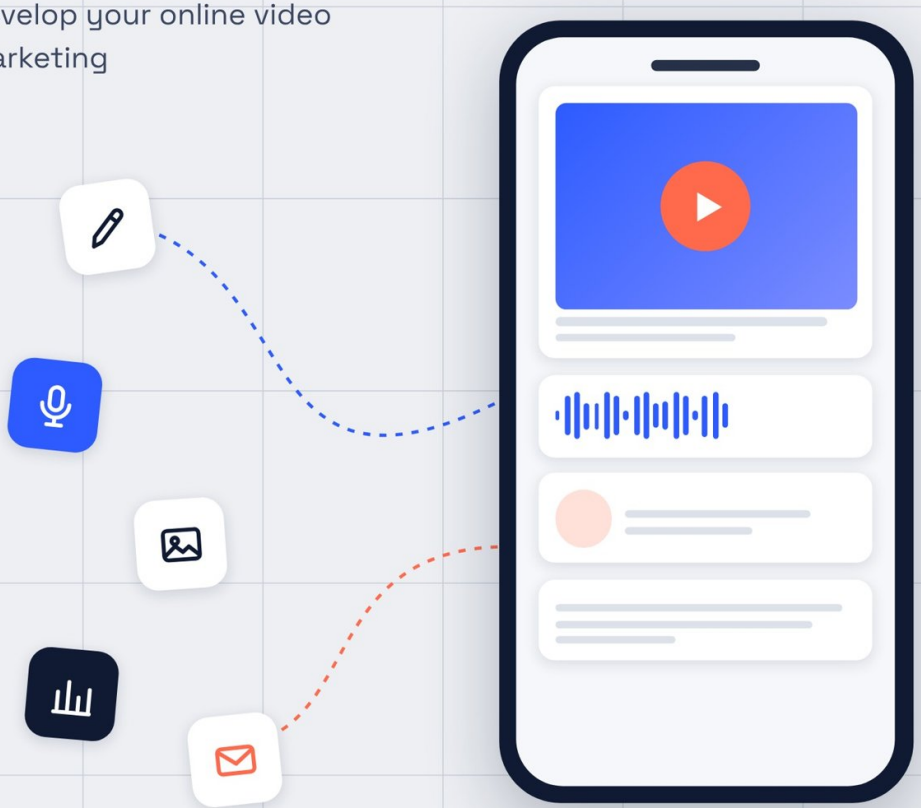
A PRACTICAL PLAYBOOK

UPDATED EDITION • 2025 • UPDATED EDITION • 2025 •
UPDATED EDITION

Content Marketing

& Online Video Marketing

Master your content strategy and develop your online video marketing



Julian Delphiki

Thinking School

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Books for readers who would rather understand than be told. Clear thinking, carefully edited.

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How to use this book

THIS IS A PRACTICAL book. It is written for marketers, founders, freelancers and creators who want their content to earn attention—and keep it—without wasting time or money.

Part I, Content marketing, explains what content marketing is and why it works (Chapter 1), the issues it raises (Chapter 2), the media and resources available (Chapter 3), how ready your organization is (Chapter 4) and how to build and publish a plan (Chapter 5). It closes with the forces changing the field right now (Chapter 6).

Part II, Online video marketing, applies the same thinking to video: strategy and platforms (Chapter 7), creating video content (Chapter 8) and video advertising (Chapter 9).

A Summary with a 90-day plan, a Toolkit of blank templates and checklists, Notes and sources, and a Glossary complete the book.

Features to look for

- **Key concept** boxes define important terms the first time they matter.
- **At a glance** tables and diagrams summarize ideas you may want to come back to.
- **Checklists** and **step-by-step** boxes turn advice into action.
- **Oatfield in practice** follows a fictional company through every chapter. Oatfield is a six-person business that sells plant-based baking mixes online. It is invented, but its problems are real, and its decisions show how the ideas in each chapter fit together.

- **Key takeaways** close each chapter, followed by **Try this**: two or three short exercises to apply what you have read.

A note on facts and figures

Digital marketing changes fast. Platform features, ad formats and statistics in this edition were checked in 2026, and the main sources are listed in the Notes and sources at the back of the book. Before you rely on a specific limit or figure, check the platform's current guidance: the principles in this book will last much longer than the numbers.

PART I

Content marketing

1 *The basics of content marketing*

2 *What issues does content marketing raise?*

3 *Tools, resources and considerations*

4 *Understanding your organization*

5 *Customer models and publishing your content*

6 *What's changing now*

CHAPTER 1

The basics of content marketing

IN THIS CHAPTER

Introduction
Why use content marketing?
How are brands using content marketing?

Introduction

IT SHOULD COME AS no surprise that the way in which businesses and their customers interact has evolved. With an almost constant connection online, there are more opportunities than ever for brands to communicate with their audiences.

Content marketing is the way in which businesses are responding to this changing landscape: it is a product of, and addresses the needs presented by, the "digitization" of what, how, when and where customers get information relevant to their purchase decisions. Brands now have the opportunity to manage who they talk to, what they say, and when and where they do it, instead of being limited by the constraints of form and function imposed by traditional advertising.

This chapter covers what content marketing is, why it works and how brands are using it. Chapter 2 then looks at the issues you should weigh before diving in.

Why use content marketing?

The term "content marketing" can seem a little misleading. After all, there is no marketing without content, right? Even an ad or social media post consisting of nothing but a single word or your logo still contains content. So it helps to start with a clear definition.

> KEY CONCEPT
>
> **Content marketing**
>
> Creating and distributing content that your audience finds useful, interesting or entertaining in its own right, so that people choose to spend time with your brand. It earns attention instead of buying it, and it builds the trust and the audience that sales depend on.

To see why this approach has become so important, we need to look first at technology.

Thanks to the prevalence of mobile devices, each of us can access every bit of information we seek online, and we can do it whenever and just about wherever we want.

This has changed our relationship with the things we buy and use.

Today, most shoppers begin their research online, and the influences on their subsequent decisions are far more varied than they were in the past. Articles, reviews, user comments, various bits of how-to information, even entertainment content can factor into what we think and do.

As a result, customers rarely turn to advertising when they research a purchase. The influence of people we like, respect or know personally is often far more trustworthy and useful than messages from marketers. Just ask yourself: have you seen an ad recently that made you run out and buy something? And if you have, was it a rare exception?

Since customers are getting most of their information digitally, it would seem to make sense simply to move advertising to those platforms. It does not. Most people dislike ads interrupting their digital experiences, and that is where content marketing comes in.

Its premise is that the tools customers use to make purchase decisions can be made accessible to marketers if we stop thinking about selling something, and reorient ourselves to communicating the things that help customers reach some conclusion.

Traditional advertising was essentially a "push" mechanism that offered businesses relatively few opportunities to form a dialogue with customers, so it made sense to pack every communication with the most memorable content possible. The ideas presented in ads had to survive the scrutiny and interpretation that occurred outside the view of marketers: all of the researching, vetting and reviewing that happened between people.

However, these activities now happen online and within reach of marketers. Businesses can be a part of those activities, whether as an active participant in conversations, or as a source of information and expertise. The "journey" that customers undertake —from the moment they first identify a need they wish to fulfill, all the way through to making a purchase—is now visible to marketers, and digital insights allow for the identification and understanding of each step of it.

Content marketing represents the liberation of businesses from the constraints of the infrequent, limited communications activities of the past, and instead opens up a far wider range of communications options for companies.

In fact, the best way to think about content marketing is not just as a marketing tactic or tool, but as an entirely new way to think about, and act upon, your relationships with your customers. It is really a management system: it allows you to organize who you talk to, what you say, where and when you do it and, most importantly, to define your expectations in measurable outcomes that justify your communications spending.

Where content marketing fits

Content marketing sits alongside other disciplines that also produce content. The differences lie in who pays, who speaks and what success looks like.

AT A GLANCE **Content marketing and its neighbors**

	CONTENT MARKETING	ADVERTISING	PUBLIC RELATIONS
Goal	Earn attention and trust over time	Reach and persuade people now	Shape reputation through third parties
Who controls the message	The brand, on its own and rented channels	The brand, in paid space	Journalists, analysts and other intermediaries
Typical formats	Guides, videos, newsletters, podcasts, tools	Ads, sponsored posts, commercials	Press releases, interviews, events
How success is measured	Audience growth, engagement, leads, retention	Reach, clicks, conversions, cost per result	Coverage, share of voice, sentiment
Time horizon	Months to years	Days to weeks	Weeks to months

A fourth neighbor, brand journalism, sits between content marketing and PR. A company runs its own newsroom and tells stories about its people, customers and industry in a journalistic style. In practice, the lines blur: a strong content program often feeds PR with stories and gives advertising something worth amplifying.

What content marketing delivers

Content marketing enables brand marketers to see quantitative improvements from at least three core activities.

The first is in the ability to share substantive information. Freed from the necessity of guessing what might prompt a customer to buy something, brands can provide content that helps educate, inform and illustrate product or service benefits. Combined with the greater number of digital platforms available to communicate through, and their relatively lower expense compared with print or broadcast advertising, this opens up many more opportunities to share information that is likely to interest customers.

The second quantitative improvement can be found in businesses' ability to be more agile. By "agile," we mean an iterative way of working that aims to enable companies to react quickly to any changes in environment and customer needs. A greater number of touch points, and more open criteria for what constitutes "content," allows marketers to be more responsive to the changing needs of their customers, and react to newly emerging challenges from competitors. These conversations are not just more substantive and frequent, but also more relevant.

And finally, content marketing allows you to reach new customers. In the past, there was often little budget put aside for trying to reach entirely new or uninvolved customers, as it would just take too long to convince them to buy, and the medium of advertising was not suited for this purpose. Now, marketers can use digital media to create content that might attract those customers, casting a wider net with information that might not sell anything, but instead starts customers on the path to buying.

Beyond quantitative improvements, marketers who embrace these new opportunities to create and share content can also expect three qualitative benefits.

Firstly, content marketing can improve credibility. It has been said that sale pricing or discounts are what companies offer to make up for the lack of value customers see in their brands. However, content marketing can address this shortcoming head on by enabling businesses to maintain more meaningful and authentic conversations with their customers. Informed customers are usually better ones, because they are more likely to believe what you are telling them.

Next, content marketing can increase efficacy. Salespeople know that selling all the time is the worst possible way to sell—nobody purchases a product just because you want to sell it to them, but rather they do so because they want to buy it. Content marketing allows companies to "collaborate" with customers in reaching their own purchase decisions.

The final qualitative benefit can be found in making brand value sustainable. Because content marketing makes your communications more efficient and reliably effective, it can make your customers' perceptions of value more sustainable over time. It is a departure from the "episodic" nature of traditional marketing, which gives customers discrete sales offers. Instead, it maintains an ongoing conversation that supports their desire to make better purchase decisions. This is better for your brand, as an ongoing conversation with customers is more likely to be meaningful and reliable.

In short, content marketing is more than simply a marketing tactic: it gives you control over your communications. And when it is done well, it can come with huge benefits to both brands and audiences.

AT A GLANCE **Benefits of content marketing at a glance**

QUANTITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS	QUALITATIVE BENEFITS
Share substantive information	Improve credibility
Be more agile	Increase efficacy
Reach new customers	Make brand value sustainable

How are brands using content marketing?

There are a number of good reasons why content marketing is redefining communications for businesses around the world. But how exactly are brands using it?

Content marketing is a broad concept, and it takes on a number of forms. Despite there being no "right way to do it," there are a few go-to ways that companies employ it to their advantage. Here are three of them.