

10 Ways Technology Companies Can Market Content Now

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Why Is Content Marketing Important to You?

Since 1932, academics have furthered their careers by operating under the axiom, "Publish or perish." In 2012, technology marketers should adopt the same do-or-die practice because creating and publishing content no longer is optional. Content marketing is a vitally important requirement to engage communities, explain products and services, motivate decision-makers and foster brand loyalty.

You probably know you need to make once-proprietary assets available to all audiences and create shareable information for all media channels. Although most tech companies write white papers, capture customer application stories or develop product videos, most marketers still do not promote this content beyond the real estate of their own websites. The single biggest opportunity you have today is to market content. Fortunately for technology marketers, you have an abundance of ways — some even free — to curate company or product content and connect it with audiences. Here are 10 ways technology companies can market content now:

1 – Automate Your Email Signature

The 1.9 billion email users in the world don't have to look further than their own email signatures to market content. Think of your own company and the number of people who use an auto-generated email signature file on outgoing messages. By adding a link to your company blog or online content library, every outbound email could become a channel driving traffic to your content and rich media assets. You might even consider installing an app that will put your latest blog post headline automatically into an email signature file.

2 – Design Infographics

Information graphics, or infographics, are visual representations of information, data or knowledge. Although meteorologists have used simple infographics for decades to display weather forecasts, we are just at the beginning of this visual revolution. Technology marketers today can use infographics to present complex content clearly, so a viewer can process the information quickly. Static graphics are the most common display because they are easiest to create and distribute. However, you might want to consider some trends that advanced info-marketers are pioneering, such as developing Flash-based interactive infographics; combining motion graphics, illustration, kinetic type and animation into narrative-based infographics; using HTML5 to infuse interactivity into graphics viewable on iPad and iPhone devices; or deploying the use of real-time data visualization to provide updated visual representations of trending events. Once developed, integrate these infographics into your search engine optimization (SEO) efforts. By tagging and linking to and from these graphics, you can gain additional organic visibility in Google Image searches. For immediate pop, ride the Pinterest fan wave and “pin” your infographics to industry boards.

3 – Invent an Industry Award

A lot of technology marketing is about creating thought leadership. You can market your content to target audiences by embracing those who are helping to innovate your industry. To get their attention, create relevant content about your market — perhaps even dedicate a microsite to the effort — and create an award naming the most influential people who are defining that market. When promoting the award, you will build engagement with the winners, all of whom will have traction among social media channels, news organizations and industry associations. You can draft their industry thought leadership and pick up links from them back to your content.

4 – Write for Search Engines

Technology marketers will benefit from SEO and keyword integration into their content. Your goal is to make it easy for search engines — Google, of course, is the behemoth — to find, rank and report on your content. Although the irrefutable foundation of good content marketing is great content written for human consumption, you will want to write copy rich with “Google bait” — keywords and phrases that rank high among search engines for your industry, product or service. After you have created the first draft of a blog, news release, white paper or other asset, identify the top three topics presented. Then cross-reference those concepts against the free Google Adwords Keyword Tool to learn the most popular search terms and variations for your topics. Tech companies will benefit by copywriting these keywords into headlines, titles, leads and meta descriptions to create SEO-optimized content.

5 – Produce an Online Talk Show

No, you won't unseat Ellen, but you could interview on video customers, technology partners, channel resellers, industry analysts or other industry influencers who have great technology stories to tell about your brand or category and your interaction with them. In addition to capturing video and syndicating it to your website and YouTube channel, you could transcribe interviews and publish this content to blogs, newsletters or enterprise wikis to facilitate knowledge-sharing. The Outbrain State of Content Marketing 2012 report found that 87 percent of the senior-level brand marketers and agency executives who responded use video, making it the second most popular form of content created and syndicated.

6 – Get Social

Also according to the Outbrain State of Content Marketing 2012 report, social media is the most popular platform marketers use to promote content, with 96 percent of respondents utilizing channels. That figure jumped 12 percent points from the 2011 survey. The 2012 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, sponsored by Social Media Examiner, revealed that we like to “like.” As you might expect, Facebook was cited as the most popular social networking site, with a solid 92 percent adoption, yet Twitter stands confidently in second place. Technology marketers can get more mileage out of Twitter by establishing and using a hashtag to brand and track content.

7 – Bookmark Content

The practice of submitting your content to social aggregators, such as Digg, Reddit and StumbleUpon, is called social bookmarking. Although the popularity of social bookmarking sites dipped last year, these destinations remain relevant to generate traffic, backlinks and brand exposure. Social booking sites suit technology marketers well because they feature peer-reviewed content, lending credibility and importance to your content and cultivating thought leadership. Newer forms of aggregation in the form of content-scraping publishers, such as Paper.li and ScoopIt, also help to promote your content.

8 – Blog Your Way to Relevancy

Make 2012 the year you assume publishing control of your ideas and start a business blog to create a direct conduit to your customers, prospects and partners. The most effective blogs from technology marketers bypass corporate-speak to share product roadmaps, give behind-the-scenes glimpses into your company and address real-world applications — even glitches — transparently. With good reason, tech marketers are spending time blogging. As revealed in HubSpot's 2012 State of Inbound Marketing Report, 57 percent of companies with a blog have acquired a customer from their blog, and a whopping 92 percent of companies that blog multiple times per day have acquired a customer from their blog. You can extend your reach by writing guest posts for other tech industry blogs and introduce your content to their established communities and readers. But don't stop there: Network on other sites by commenting on industry blogs to reveal your insight and direct traffic back to your content.

9 – Build a Mobile App

Mobile application usage is on the way up — way up, in fact. According to the analytics firm Flurry, smartphone users spend 94 minutes per day on average using mobile applications. A B2C tech company could build a mobile app that blends the shopping experience with original editorial content. A B2B tech company could create an app that streamlines order processing, calculate ROI on complex investments or addresses legal compliance issues for regulated markets. Tech marketers who have limited time, resources or inspiration for an app still could benefit from the mobile trend by focusing on optimizing their websites for mobile web browsing.

10 – Invest in Paid Search

Many of the channels tech companies use to market content are associated with organic SEO. However, tech marketers committed to maximum ROI on their content strategies also should consider the benefits of paid search. Strategic SEO content development can be fundamental to driving PPC traffic. For example, you can boost the payback of a pay-per-click (PPC) campaign by writing landing page content that educates prospects and creates a natural sales conversation path for them. Plus, PPC can boost your content marketing efforts in the near term, giving tech marketers a longer time to allow their website traffic and conversion rates to grow organically. Your goal should be to balance content for SEO with a clear call to action and conversation path for PPC.

Don't stop at these 10 ideas. Content marketing must take on an executive-level commitment and daily execution to be successful. Technology companies that commit to a strategy will reap significant benefits with branding, sales and customer experience.

Who are these guys?

Binary Pulse Technology Marketing is an interactive marketing firm for technology companies. With clients ranking among the elite technology organizations in the world, Binary Pulse pursues integrated campaigns for leading computer hardware and software, B2B services and medical device companies, as well as visionary organizations using existing and emerging technologies to actively break new ground.

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