Content marketing spend increases globally

By Louise Marsland

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80% of B2C marketers rate social media content marketing as the most effective.

The Content Marketing Institute reports that 77% of B2C marketers and 86% of B2B marketers surveyed globally are using content marketing in 2015. And 59% of B2C marketers say they will increase spending on content marketing in 2015.
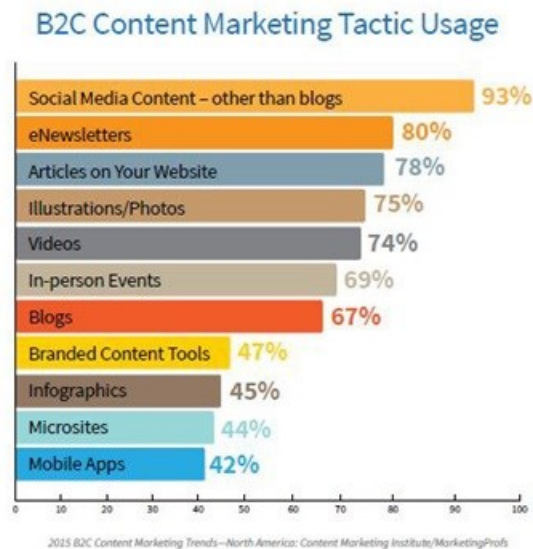
The Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs' fifth annual B2B Content Marketing 2015 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends and B2C Content Marketing 2015 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends, surveyed 5000 marketers across the United States and in 108 other countries across 25 different industries. The key theme that emerged in 2015 was that content marketers need to "document" their content strategy.

Both business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) and non-profit marketers struggle with measurement of content marketing. Only 23% of B2C marketers are successful at tracking the return on investment (ROI) of their content marketing program. Additionally, 51% say measuring content effectiveness is a challenge, compared with 36% in 2014.

Key challenges highlighted included:

- Creating engaging content.
- Producing content consistently.

- Measuring content effectiveness.

And this is what marketers want to know more about: metrics and tracking ROI; content curation; content discovery tools; content marketing strategy; engagement; optimising content; paid promotion; personalisation; storytelling; and video.

B2C Content Marketing Tactic Usage

Tactic	Usage
Social Media Content – other than blogs	93%
eNewsletters	80%
Articles on Your Website	78%
Illustrations/Photos	75%
Videos	74%
In-person Events	69%
Blogs	67%
Branded Content Tools	47%
Infographics	45%
Microsites	44%
Mobile Apps	42%

2015 B2C Content Marketing Trends–North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

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The Content Marketing Institute has refined its definition of Content Marketing as "a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience-and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action".

For B2C marketers, the key takeaways of the research for this year were:

- 45% of B2C marketers have a dedicated content marketing group in their organisation.
- 69% are creating more content now than they did one year ago.
- The use of blogs dropped from 72% last year to 67% this year; the biggest increase in tactic usage has been for branded content tools (from 37% to 47%).
- B2C marketers are using, on average, seven social media platforms this year, compared with six last year.
- 71% of B2C marketers use print or other offline promotion, making it the paid method they use most frequently to promote/distribute content, yet only 46% of them say it's effective; the method they find most effective is search engine marketing (57%).

- More B2C marketers are challenged with finding trained content marketing professionals this year (32%) than they were in the previous year (10%).

B2B marketers (84%) say brand awareness is the most important goal, but only 21% say their organisation is successful at tracking the ROI of content marketing programmes. Importantly, 70% of B2B marketers are creating more content. Fewer than 40% of B2B marketers said they use the following tactics: Branded Content Tools (38%), eBooks (37%), Print Magazines (32%), Books (30%), Mobile Apps (30%), Digital Magazines (27%), Virtual Conferences (23%), Podcasts (22%), Print Newsletters (21%), and Games/Gamification (12%).

There is a clear rise in social media numbers, with LinkedIn and Twitter used mostly by B2B marketers.

Priorities

B2B and B2C marketers have prioritised many of the same initiatives over this year: creating more engaging content, doing a better job of converting website visitors, measuring content marketing ROI, etc.

Where they differ significantly, Content Marketing Institute research found, was in mobile strategy and leveraging user or fan-based content, which are both prioritised more by B2C marketers than B2B marketers. This year, all marketers will be engaged in: better understanding content marketing technology; real-time content marketing; content personalisation; and developing a channel plan for social media.

The organisational goals for B2C content marketers were:

Customer Retention/Loyalty: 88%
Engagement: 88%
Brand Awareness: 87%
Sales: 77%
Customer Evangelism: 69%
Lead Generation: 69%
Lead Nurturing: 61%

Upsell/Cross sell: 50%

B2C marketers (80%) rate social media content as most effective.

This is what B2C content marketers are working on in 2015, according to the Content Marketing Institute:

• Better converting visitors on website: 65%
• Creating more engaging/higher-quality content: 62%
• Becoming better storytellers: 61%
• Optimising content: 61%

• Organising website content: 61%

As for which they are planning to begin working on within 12 months, the highest percentages selected:

• Better mobile strategy: 38%
• Marketing automation/lead nurturing: 38%
• Measuring content marketing ROI: 37%
• Better understanding of what content is effective-and what isn't: 35%
• Leveraging user- or fan-generated content: 35%

• Understanding/using content marketing technology: 35%.

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

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