

GlobalFluency™



AUTHORITY LEADERSHIP MARKETING

Making Content
the Cornerstone of
Customer Engagement
and Relevance

➤ *A GlobalFluency White Paper and Opinion Editorial*

GlobalFluency powers global
affinity networks including



TABLE *of* CONTENTS

03 PAGE

THE KEY TO ENGAGEMENT

Marketers increasingly recognize they must become thought leaders, knowledge brokers, and insightful publishers to build rapport with target audiences.

04 PAGE

RELEVANCE DRIVES CONSUMPTION

In today's multi-channel, search-oriented media landscape, corporate buyers, specifiers, and influencers tend to tune out traditional marketing and communications.

05 PAGE

ADVANCING CONTENT ROI

The real challenge for marketers is to define strategic agendas and advocacy platforms that condition and predispose decision makers, as well as harvest opportunities and prospects for sales.

06 PAGE

ABOUT GLOBALFLUENCY

GlobalFluency's special competency is Intelligent Market Engagement™, an integrated approach that leverages best-in-class content marketing and thought leadership practices to accent market needs, predispose decision makers, and rapidly accelerate lead generation.

THE KEY TO ENGAGEMENT

Why did Symantec fund a study on the impact of customer data breaches on brand trust and reputation? What made SGI and Intel embrace an IT sustainability agenda called Think Eco-Logical? Why does Adaptive Planning conduct a quarterly Business Volatility and Variables Audit targeting mid-market CFOs?

These are just a few examples of successful authority leadership marketing initiatives at work as B2B companies seek to connect and engage with their markets using more relevant, customer-centric content delivered in new digital formats and channels. Marketers increasingly recognize that they must become thought leaders, knowledge brokers, and insightful publishers to build rapport with target audiences and create strategic conversations with decision makers and influencers. This means paying more attention to content marketing performance, impact, and return on investment, particularly as it relates to lead acquisition, customer predisposition, trust building, and shortening of selling cycles.

Bringing more rigor, creativity, and strategic thinking to content specification, origination, packaging, and delivery is now a strategic imperative for marketers as they seek to drive content consumption and knowledge sharing. Sales and channel organizations recognize the need to prime their pipelines and upsell and cross-sell customers with credible, strategic content. Companies, both global and emerging, realize the need to use content to drive brand relevance and authority. Content investments by B2B technology companies now account for as much as 25 percent of marketing budgets (CMO Council). And this percentage will continue to grow, fueled by multiplying formats, delivery channels, platforms, audiences, device types, and consumption rates worldwide.

Content marketing within the B2B sector is being driven by an upsurge in executive participation in the strategic procurement process, as well as the ready availability of meaningful decision support content, affinity groups, and professional peer networks on the Internet. There is an increasing opportunity for direct market engagement—

for reaching, aggregating, and segmenting customer audiences while bypassing traditional media and analyst avenues. To do so, marketers are developing and outsourcing some of the same skill sets and resources of those more traditional media and analyst groups. They are forming their own shared interest communities and channels of insight, access, and influence.

Today's "digital content factories" have to run at full capacity to keep pace with rapid changes in market conditions, customer sentiments, competitive threats, and technology advancements. Marketers have to become adept at listening and responding to the "voice of the customer," which requires a new form of intelligent market engagement and continuous interaction around customer issues, problems, pain points, risks, vulnerabilities, deficiencies, and challenges.

With more and more digital content publishing, syndication, conversation, and distribution channels proliferating—such as websites, customer communities, social media channels, online business networks, Internet forums, discussion groups, blogs, podcasts, on-demand webcasts, video portals, mobile devices, email, SMS text messaging, IPTV, web conferencing systems, and live virtual event environments—content has to be configured and produced in a multiplicity of formats and delivery modes to optimize consumption, recall, sharing, influence, and action.

To be successful in this new ethos, marketers must put into place clear content development strategies and effectiveness auditing protocols. Rather than delivering self-serving messages, they must speak to relevant themes and topic areas, author higher-quality content that is more visual and engaging, as well as build efficient content syndication networks that maximize audience reach and activation. They must put into place performance measurement and tracking systems to assess the performance, impact, and payback of their content marketing programs.

"Bringing more rigor, creativity, and strategic thinking to content origination and delivery is now a strategic imperative."

Content investments by B2B technology companies now account for 25 percent of marketing budgets.

CMO Council

Interesting content is one of the top three reasons people follow brands on social media.

Content+

LinkedIn generates more leads for B2B companies than Facebook, Twitter, or blogs individually. Yet only 47 percent of B2B marketers say they use LinkedIn versus 90 percent on Facebook.

Inside View

Social media sites and blogs reach 8 out of 10 of all U.S. Internet users and account for 23 percent of all time spent online.

Content Marketing Institute

Sixty percent of marketers plan to increase their spending on content marketing over the next 12 months.

Content Marketing Institute

RELEVANCE DRIVES CONSUMPTION

Relevance is the essential attribute B2B marketers must deliver in order to be successful in content marketing. Content cannot just be about your company and your product; it has to be about your audience. Content being generated by winning companies today goes well beyond traditional trumpeting of product features and functions, speeds and feeds, and deals and deployments. In today's multi-channel, search-oriented media landscape, corporate buyers, specifiers, and influencers tend to tune out traditional marketing communications. They spend more time conducting independent research on the web and obtaining information and advice from peers and other trusted third-party sources.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that peers are the most trusted and influential sources of advice and information among B2B decision makers. B2B buyers depend on peer advice more than any other source in forming purchase decisions. Thus, affinity networks of professionals who share similar challenges and needs are a rich resource for content creation and insights.

Central to an effective content marketing program is the definition of a strategic advocacy agenda and point of view. This comes out of exhaustive online and offline discovery as well as invention sessions and continuous engagement with partners, customers, and the channel. Online surveying and perception polling, as well as social and live interactions, can add credibility and substance to this form of advocacy and thought leadership.

For example, with the Think Eco-Logical advocacy program, SGI and Intel were able to engage CIOs and other IT executives in an in-depth conversation about the cost savings and environmental improvements obtainable through server consolidation and more power-efficient platforms. An executive survey and study report advocating energy-saving practices generated more than 1,000 downloads while driving significant online discussion and media coverage. The Think Eco-Logical program created further advocacy and interaction with its target

audience through the creation of a graphical appealing, "video game-like" eco-IT monitor that executives used to calculate the impact of data center changes on energy costs and carbon emissions. This not only delivered a value-added service, but also generated rich customer profiling information and contact data for further nurturing and cultivation. Peer networks of executives provide built-in communities for content marketing engagement. Professionals with shared challenges and issues can spark highly relevant insights and discussions for others inside and outside of the network. When Oracle's on-demand CRM business unit teamed with the CMO Council to launch a campaign to improve integration and alignment of traditionally divided sales and marketing functions, the result was the creation of The Coalition to Leverage and Optimize Sales Effectiveness (CLOSE—www.closebiz.org).

"Peer networks of executives provide built-in communities for content marketing engagement."

High-level brainstorm sessions on sales and marketing integration engaged targeted audiences in Paris, London, Sydney, Sao Paulo, New York, and Silicon Valley, each creating a best-practice report that was syndicated worldwide and generating some 15,000 leads. During a six-month period, this affinity network aggregated and touched more than 27,000 executives and professionals worldwide through outreach, events, surveys, and global media relations. The dedicated www.closebiz.org website continues to aggregate content, commentary, and community, providing a rich and robust channel of market engagement for sponsoring brands.

To underscore and highlight the need for improved business intelligence systems and better decision economics, Cognos teamed with the Business Performance Management (BPM) Forum—now the Business Performance Innovation (BPI) Network. This C-level peer network brought together executives concerned with the speed and quality of decision making within their enterprises. DecisionROI put the

Sixty-two percent of companies outsource their content marketing, up 7 percent from last year.

Mashable

Forty percent of U.S. tablet owners read newspapers and magazines on their devices.

comScore

Google's Android holds a 68 percent share of the smart phone market versus 17 percent by Apple as of the second quarter of 2012.

IDC

issue of decision economics into play and aggregated a large executive audience through the creation of a dedicated campaign site, social and traditional media engagement, and publication of a variety of reports and online advocacy content, including insights from interviews with top executives and an online survey of hundreds more.

Symantec took another innovative approach to generating customer demand by making data security a strategic business issue that embraced a broad set of business decision makers across the marketing, finance, investor relations, operations, and supply chain sectors. It implemented a content marketing campaign called "Secure the Trust of Your Brand," which included executive and consumer surveys in North America and Europe, as well as a study by Emory University of 15 leading brands that had been compromised by customer data breaches. This analysis included a look at the loss of shareholder value, tonality and sentiment of media coverage relating to reputation, and the business continuity impact relative to both suppliers and customers. Survey data revealed a significant percentage of consumers were concerned about digital security and would not continue to do business with a company that exposed their personal information to hackers and cyber bandits. Not only did the study attract worldwide attention, but authors of the report were invited to present findings at the seminal Visa Security Summit in Washington, D.C., which was attended by leading government agencies, bankers, retailers, and other key customer targets for Symantec.

ADVANCING CONTENT ROI

Most companies in complex, multi-channel markets such as information technology, business solutions, communications, connectivity, security, audio/video, professional services, and industrial systems need to assume thought leadership positions and provide meaningful insights, perspectives, and commentary on market needs, problems, issues, trends, and requirements. In most cases, the knowledge capital and authority leadership come from effective market engagement, real-time customer feedback and listening, primary research, media analytics, as well as regular monitoring and mining

of conversations and discussions in online communities, affinity groups, forums, blogs, newsgroups, and bulletin boards. The real challenge for marketers is to define strategic agendas and develop advocacy platforms that condition and predispose decision makers, enable conversations and introductions, gain prominence and visibility, as well as harvest opportunities and prospects for sales, business development, and partnering.

Too few companies have formal content development strategies, relevant content creation themes and topic areas, efficient content origination capabilities, effective content delivery networks or channels, or measurable content performance and tracking systems.

Random acts of content development occur across the organization without unifying and consistent themes, messages, brand value, or visual identity reinforcement. The CMO Council's new Content ROI Center is aimed at raising the caliber of content produced in organizations, as well as the impact and influence this content might have on brand awareness, perception, deal contention, and buyer/specifier consideration. It will also look at the role and value of marketing content in the process of sales lead acquisition, qualification, conversion, and closure, as well as its contribution to ongoing customer retention and revenue generation.



By Dave Murray

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An innovator and architect of authority leadership marketing, Murray leads the content marketing practice of GlobalFluency, which is based in Silicon Valley. His firm operates a number of international executive affinity networks, including the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Council and the Business Performance Innovation (BPI) Network.

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About GlobalFluency



GlobalFluency is a high-performance marketing and communications services firm offering clients breakthrough programs for influencing markets, growing customer relationships, and building valued brands. Its capabilities span brand activation, content marketing, creative and digital services, public relations, social engagement, lead generation, and executive affinity network management.

GlobalFluency's special competency is Intelligent Market Engagement™, an integrated approach that leverages best-in-class content marketing and thought leadership practices to accent market needs, predispose decision makers, and rapidly accelerate lead generation and prospect harvesting.

Headquartered in Palo Alto, Calif., GlobalFluency has aggregated important executive audiences into vibrant channels of insight, access, and influence, including the Chief Marketing Officer Council, the Business Performance Innovation Network, the Global Renewable Energy and Environmental Network (GREEN), and others. It has also developed the creative and practical competencies required to design, integrate, execute, and measure campaigns worldwide. www.globalfluency.com

GlobalFluency powers



The Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Council is dedicated to high-level knowledge exchange, thought leadership, and personal relationship building among senior corporate marketing leaders and brand decision-makers across a wide range of global industries. The CMO Council's 6,000 members control more than \$300 billion in aggregated annual marketing expenditures and run complex, distributed marketing and sales operations worldwide. In total, the CMO Council and its strategic interest communities include more than 20,000 global executives in more than 110 countries covering multiple industries, segments, and markets. Regional chapters and advisory boards are active in the Americas, Europe, Asia-Pacific, India, Middle East, and Africa. The CMO Council's strategic interest groups include the Coalition to Leverage and Optimize Sales Effectiveness (CLOSE), LoyaltyLeaders.org, Marketing Supply Chain Institute, Customer Experience Board, Market Sense-Ability Center, Digital Marketing Performance Institute, GeoBranding Center, the Forum to Advance the Mobile Experience (FAME), and the cause-directed research initiative, Pause to Support a Cause. More information on the CMO Council is available at www.cmocouncil.org.



The Digital Marketing Performance Institute is a dedicated research center of the CMO Council focused on measuring and tracking the effectiveness, relevance, and value of online marketing practices, programs, and spending. It advocates the need for unified and integrated approaches to managing and optimizing today's fragmented interactive marketing discipline, especially across leading vertical markets. Authority leadership and content aggregation by the Digital Marketing Performance Institute will drive best practice adoption; audit and assess competencies and proficiencies; establish measurement models and techniques; evaluate enabling platforms, solutions, and technologies; and help marketers increase visibility, compliance, accountability, and ROI. Areas of special focus include CMO strategy, talent sourcing, social media, search marketing, online advertising, campaign localization, mobile marketing, marketing automation platforms, eCommerce, and online brand protection. www.onlineperformance.org



The Business Performance Innovation (BPI) Network is a global community of executives dedicated to identifying, exploring, and sharing emerging trends, transformational ideas, and inventive practices and business models. The BPI Network aims to help senior-level executives and their organizations become more adaptive, agile, and relevant in a digitally driven, resource-constrained, and highly complex and competitive global marketplace. The BPI Network researches, develops, and promotes peer-powered thought leadership content and conversations. Its membership includes senior executives across multiple industries and disciplines who are responsible for how their companies identify strategic opportunity, serve and develop customer markets, measure and improve operational effectiveness, manage growth and risk, and source, develop, and motivate talent worldwide. www.bpinetwork.org

BRAND CONTENT IS NOT UNLIKE TAKING FRESH PRODUCE TO MARKET

- Invest in careful cultivation
- Keep it fresh and appealing
- Pick and ship at the right time
- Assure proper display and handling
- Watch shelf life and spoilage
- Pack for all channels of distribution



Find out more about “**Keeping a Closer Eye on Content ROI**” with the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Council and the Custom Publishing Council. Visit : www.cmocouncil.org/r/content-roi-whitepaper

