# **Content Marketing Smarts**

## **20 Brands Creating Standout Content**





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#### Introduction

#### Welcome!

This e-book was written for you.

Perhaps you're a business owner who has heard a lot about content marketing; you picked this ebook up after learning that 9 out of 10 organizations market with content. We don't want to assume too much, though. Maybe you're actually an experienced retailer who discovered that 90% of consumers find custom content useful and that 78% believe companies providing content are interested in building good relationships.

Of course, it's entirely possible you're an in-house marketer faced with one of the 8 in 10 CMOs who believe that custom media should be an integral part of the marketing mix. Wait... are you actually a seasoned marketer totally aware that on average, content marketing costs 62% less per lead than outbound marketing?

There is something for each of you. This Content Marketing Smarts eBook is a collection of standout examples of content – written, visual, video – each with takeaways to help you more effectively attract, engage and convert your target audience.

Are you ready to get serious about your content strategy? Our goal at <u>TopRank Online Marketing</u> is to help provide brand marketers with the expertise and insights that will improve their online marketing performance and move ahead of the competition.

Hopefully, this collection of smart content marketing tactics in action will inspire you to think about content in new ways that will work for you.

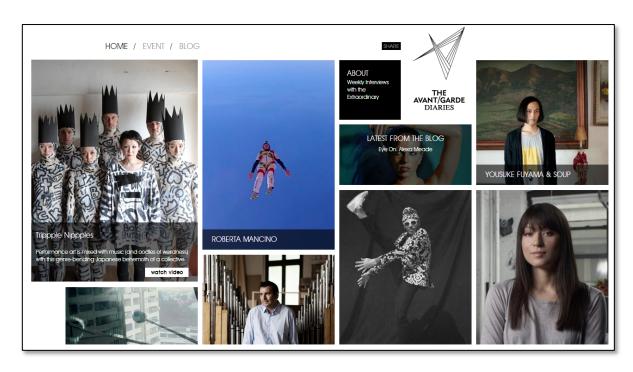
Enjoy!

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### Mercedes Benz B2C Content: The Avant/Garde Diaries

The Avant/Garde Diaries is an online magazine launched by luxury auto brand Mercedes Benz in 2011. Now approaching 50,000 <a href="Facebook">Facebook</a> fans and with a presence on <a href="Twitter">Twitter</a>, <a href="Vimeo">Vimeo</a>, and <a href="YouTube">YouTube</a>, AVGD celebrates the innovative, creative and forward thinking using a variety of online medium and real-world events.



Of course, AVGD has next to nothing to do with selling cars. However, Mercedes Benz have used their visual, written and video content to position themselves as thought leaders in the luxury lifestyle space.

They are putting their brand in front of their target audience – affluent, progressive consumers – and capturing their interest and imaginations in a way traditional marketing material simply can't touch. They've found the key to consistently appearing relevant and interesting to potential customers.

#### **B2C Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Find that way to connect with your target audience. Talking about your brand or products may not be the most effective way to attract and engage people who may be converted to customers. Like Mercedes, you may find success by thinking outside of your usual realm and identifying what it is your audience wants... and delivering it.



### Eloqua Infographics Visually Rich Sources of Useful B2B Insight

Marketing automation firm Eloqua uses infographics to demonstrate their knowledge and insight, while effectively establishing their company as an authority in the marketing industry.

The one pictured here, <u>How to Optimize Contact</u> <u>Forms for Conversions</u>, walks marketers through the process step-by-step. It proves beyond a doubt that this is a company with extensive knowledge and experience in online conversion, while the visually rich format increases social sharing.

To get more mileage out of the data feeding their infographic efforts, Eloqua publishes reports, blog posts, articles and other supporting content.

They've published over 85 pieces of B2B content to <u>SlideShare</u> and blog several times per week on their corporate blog, It's All About Revenue.

Eloqua's strategy revolves around a steady stream of accessible, high quality, optimized content and it's paying off huge by way of their positioning as an industry authority and highly visible company in search.



#### **B2B Content Marketing Takeaway:**

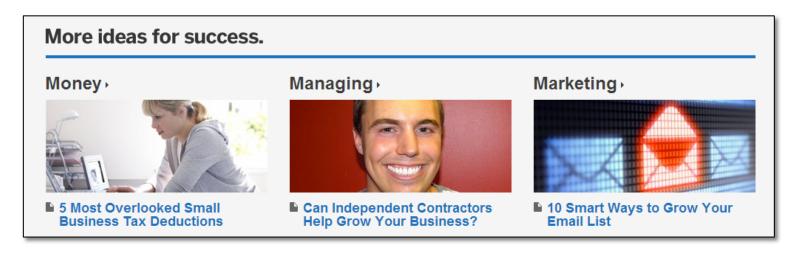
Experiment with content repurposing and publishing data/insights in a variety of formats to increase readership across the web and in mobile.



### American Express OPEN Forum a B2B Content Powerhouse

American Express won't try to sell you on a credit card at OPEN Forum. No, they want you, the small business owner, to learn how to succeed using their fantastic advice and resources. As your business grows, who are you likely to give your business to?

OPEN Forum has a massive social presence, with over 190,000 <u>Twitter</u> followers, 329,000 <u>Facebook</u> fans, and <u>mobile apps</u> for both iPhone and Android. They tap into the wealth of knowledge in the small business community in a number of ways, not the least of which being their features by well-known marketing industry leaders like Anita Campbell and Guy Kawasaki.



Whatever you need to know, wherever you are when you need to find an answer, OPEN Forum aims to provide that information to small business owners.

#### **B2B Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Align your brand with established industry leaders and give them the incentive of massive exposure, thanks to your optimized web and mobile presences and commitment to community.



### Fannie Mae Research & Visual Analysis = B2C Content Wins

Each month, researchers and economists at <u>Fannie Mae</u>, the Federal National Mortgage Association, produce a series of content based on their analysis of industry surveys, trends and insights. Their monthly national consumer attitudinal survey report provides a window into the opinions of Americans across the country.



These statistics and insights are released in the form of a report, but <u>also in infographics</u>, podcasts, news releases, articles and presentations. Fannie Mae reports are rife with quotes and soundbites for media consumption, helping to establish their team as leading experts in the financial industry.

They're taking this content boldly where not long ago, government organizations and financial institutions were hesitant to go: social channels. FannieMae are active on Twitter and Facebook, where they host the <a href="Monty Your Options">Know Your Options</a> page dedicated to educating fans on housing issues.

Fannie Mae's content repurposing strategy makes their research and insights accessible to a far broader audience. They speak not only to industry heavyweights with their reports, but to the average person in America through their visual and audio representations of data.

#### **B2C Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Start with one dataset, like Fannie Mae, and use it as the basis for a variety of content that speaks to each of the different audience segments you want to reach.



### GE Shows B2B Video Content Doesn't Have to Be Boring

Every day, there are over 13 million video views on <u>YouTube</u>. Many tune in to be entertained – to watch music videos, or laugh at the latest viral clips. Megacorporation GE shows that people also want to be educated, inspired and discover more about companies and their initiatives.

<u>GE's YouTube</u> channel, quickly approaching 6 million views, is packed with video content on global issues across the fields of energy, power, health, media and finance. At the center of these issues: GE themselves. Becoming a publisher of high quality B2B video content allows the brand to share information people actually want to know, from their perspective.

Their "GE Stories" in particular are wildly popular. One shares the story of GE Healthcare employees meeting a group of cancer survivors. <u>That video</u> alone accounts for over 1/3 of all GE's video traffic, with 2.1 million views.

GE's strategy of tapping into the human element of their technology and business stories shows their deep understanding of what it is people actually want to see and share.



#### **B2B Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Positioning your brand as a publisher means truly focusing on your audience and their needs; understanding what motivates them to click, consume and share, over your own desire to get a message across.



### Pepsi Viral Jeff Gordon Video Fantastically Clever B2C Content



Beverage giant Pepsi hit a homerun with this viral video featuring prankster Jeff Gordon test driving a Camaro. Of course, his antics and the reaction of the car salesman were all captured on a handy "Pepsi MAX can-cam." In the first three days after its release, Pepsi MAX & Jeff Gordon Present: "Test Drive" earned over 16 million views on YouTube.

Between two social posts on Facebook announcing the video – one by Pepsi Max and one by Jeff Gordon – it was shared over 700 times and had almost as many Likes.

A series of stills from the video are also making their way around Facebook, Twitter and

Google+.

Test Drive was just the latest in a series of celebrity videos from Pepsi, in which they present pranks, dancing, and other fun stunts from well-known personalities. Gordon has done several of these videos with Pepsi, including their recent Harlem Shake video with his entire crew.

Test Drive did generate some controversy, as car aficionados cried foul and pegged the piece a fake. Whether real or staged, the video was then picked up, analyzed and reported on by the likes of the Washington Post.

#### **B2C Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Leverage your connections to partner with non-competitors on content projects. Plan to co-promote your content for maximum exposure across the networks of each participating party.

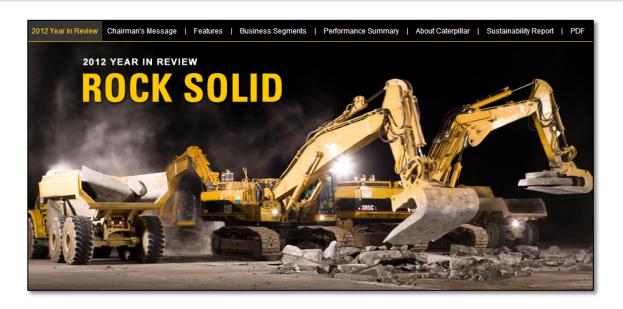




### Caterpillar Inc. Interactive Content Builds Brand & Celebrates Success

For an 85-year old company, industrial equipment manufacturer Caterpillar Inc hasn't missed a beat in the digital marketing department. Their recent 2012 Year in Review interactive report was a hit across social channels, including their 119,000 fans strong Facebook Page. On that community alone, the report had over 650 Likes and 70 Shares.

As a reflection of their status as an international brand, Caterpillar released the report in seven languages, making it accessible to a wider audience of potential B2B buyers. 2012 Year in



*Review* was written for investors, though its format and message has a much broader appeal. Each section is an opportunity for the brand to reiterate their prowess in the industrial space through their positioning, plan, people, performance and potential.

Their <u>YouTube channel</u> is organized in a similar fashion, with Featured Playlists organized around and titled for the qualities or priorities they most want to be recognized for: Maintenance, Sustainability, Progress and Safety.

Each piece of Caterpillar Inc.'s content is focused, relevant to their B2B audience, purposeful and therefore highly effective.

#### **B2B Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Think of your audience and what problem or question your content will solve and position your company as the logical solution to help them make their business better.



### TopRank & MarketingProfs Co-Create B2B E-Book

There are massive benefits to content co-creation, not the least of which is the combining of two separate audiences for content promotion. In addition, resources from each partner can help make the content itself better and more relevant to each audience.

TopRank Online Marketing and MarketingProfs partnered for the creation of their <u>B2B Marketing Innovation e-Book</u>, a collection of tips, advice and insights from marketing industry influencers. Drawing on their respective professional networks and connecting it to the B2B Marketing Forum event, together they were able to inspire over 30 marketing professionals to participate by sharing their



knowledge for readers. Brands including Cisco, IBM, Salesforce, Silverpop and Eloqua all contributed their expertise to the e-book.

Each party was able to write blog posts around the book, share images and tips across social channels, and send the book announcement to their respective email subscribers.

As a result, the e-book was viewed on SlideShare more than 65,000 times, embedded across the web over 100 times, and downloaded by 780 readers.

In addition, it was covered and promoted by top industry blogs and publications including V3 Integrated Marketing, Adobe's CMO.com, and Business Week's Business Exchange.

#### **B2B Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Leverage your industry connections to source content, add variety and bake promotion into your content objects. Partner with other organizations to make best use of your networks, in-house talent and expertise.



### Red Bull B2C Content Marketing Empire Spans Video, Print, & More

If there's one thing to be learned from Red Bull's content marketing strategy, it is persistence. Over the past few years, they've built such an empire in content that one almost has to be reminded they also sell a sports drink. Red Bull has taken "think like a publisher" to the extreme that they've become one.... and a successful one at that.

Their print magazine, The Red Bulletin, has an audience of over 5 million. Their YouTube channel has a whopping 519 million views and shows no signs of slowing down. Their Harlem Shake skydiving video, as just one example, was viewed over 5 million times.

Across social channels, Red Bull remains wildly popular, thanks to their steady stream of diverse and entertaining content.

Red Bull are all about the visually fascinating. Their Instagram channel, with well over 600,000 subscribers, is a veritable buffet of colourful, even artistic, action shots, capturing extreme athletes in motion. These individual content items all play into their overarching strategy: to capture the attention of their audience, to entertain and engage; to inspire people to connect and subscribe.

#### **B2C Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Plan to release original, creative content on a regular



basis. Set expectations among your followers by consistently delivering exactly what it is you promised them when they subscribed and chose to allow you to be a part of their online experience.



### Intuit Builds Trust & Authority with Original B2B Blog & Video Content

What role would your brand like to play in the lives of consumers? B2B accounting software brand Intuit have successfully positioned themselves as an authoritative source of information and advice for small business owners with their blog and video content.

Intuit employees have become topic experts by participating in the blog, which publishes an average of three posts per day. They

blog about Intuit products, though rarely. More often, you'll see posts about social media, local business, starting a business, and other topics of interest to small business owners. They also have an active social community over 70,000 members strong on Facebook and Twitter alone.

One of their recent campaigns, *Love Our Local Business*, uses a microsite, Twitter and user-generated content to promote their local business solutions. Intuit have pledged to make small business wishes come true and cleverly used this campaign to reiterate their positioning as a small business authority and resource. Their nominations and voting system mean small business owners have a great incentive to share Intuit content and drive traffic to their website.

#### **B2B Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Harness the power of your community and tap into the social networks of followers by giving incentives for social sharing and community participation.





### Grey Poupon Shows Us How Cross-Channel B2C Content is Done

You probably remember Grey Poupon's iconic mustard commercials from the 1980s. Well, they're back and more creative, relevant and engaging than ever.

The brand reinvented their successful earlier commercial and created audience anticipation with a "Lost Footage" video, which was first pre-screened to members of the Grey Poupon Facebook-based loyalty club, Society of Good Taste. A shorter version was created to air on television during the Oscars. The video was used for a time to promote an associated web-based sweepstake and autoplayed from the front page of the company's website. Since then, it lives on in YouTube, where it has been viewed over 1.6





A <u>shorter series of videos</u> featuring interviews about the "Lost Footage" concept drew further attention their efforts and made for great content across their social networks. Social fans love to feel they are getting something exclusive from the brand; a sneak peek, or an insider's look behind the scenes. Their shorter video series was fantastic for serving this purpose.

Social analysis and amplification company <u>Kontera</u> found that Grey Poupon outperformed all other advertisers they analyzed during the Oscars.

#### **B2C Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Resurrect previously successful campaigns and concepts with fresh content that brings familiar, much-loved characters or ideas back to life.



#### FedEx YouTube Channel a Hub of B2B Information

Each month, over 800 million unique visitors descend on <u>YouTube</u>, taking in more than 4 billion hours of video. Seventy percent of <u>B2B marketers</u> use some form of online video with their overall strategies and it's no wonder; 46% of people say they'd be more likely to seek out information about a product or service after seeing it in an online video.

Fedex capitalizes on this opportunity with a <u>YouTube</u> channel that is a veritable hub of information, from how-to videos, to commercials, to videos about their sponsorships and other initiatives. To date, their videos have been viewed over 2.2 million times and over 3,500 people have subscribed to their channel.

Their channel features a main navigational menu with drop-down categories that allow different types of users to immediately identify the most relevant content for them. Companies can learn about their Ground, Freight, or Express solutions. They can browse videos for small businesses, or online retailers.



The shipping company has done an excellent job optimizing their videos, with descriptive titles and video descriptions that link viewers to the logical next step, effectively nurturing people through the funnel.

#### **B2B Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Video is an effective content marketing medium, but marketers need to remember its place in the grander scheme of things and connect video viewers with the next resource to assist them in a buying decision.



### NewEgg Embeds B2C Videos On-Site for Search & Conversion Power

You could host your B2C videos on your own site, but why would you? As <u>Content Marketing Institute</u> reiterated recently, a YouTube embed on your site is not just web content – it's a great tool for search visibility and conversion.

Tech retailer <u>NewEgg.com</u> embeds their YouTube videos in product descriptions, offering "Product Tours that give customers a rich media experience to help in their buying decision-making process. These videos also make the products more visible in search, both on Google and YouTube.

Hosting these videos on their own site would also mean NewEgg.com would be missing out on their incredible YouTube community of over 180,000 subscribers. Incredibly, this tech retailer has over 45 million video views, a good portion of which will be happening on their own site, on their own product descriptions.

NewEgg's success in video content marketing using YouTube embeds in their product descriptions makes a great case for the tactic, particularly for online retailers looking to increase their search presence and conversion.

#### **B2C Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Increase visibility in search and across the web by using video to enhance product descriptions. Use these videos to showcase features, benefits and uses in a visual and interactive way.





### Cisco Employees a Powerful Force for B2B Brand on Twitter

Cisco's content marketing prowess is well-known and documented; we've referred to them more than once in best practices posts at <a href="Online Marketing Blog">Online Marketing Blog</a>. What you might not have realized is what a great network of in-house influencers they have creating and distributing their content on Twitter.

A February 2013 study by <u>SociaLook</u> takes a deep dive into the Twitter activity of the Cisco corporate accounts and their employees; in all, 1866 accounts were analyzed. Among their findings, one was particularly surprising: the social influence of Cisco employees had no correlation with department or level.

Amazingly, the social audience of Cisco employees is ten times larger than any one of the corporate accounts. One out of every two Cisco corporate account tweets contains a link to a Cisco web property, while just 1 in 15 of employee tweets does the same. Still, that they are using their personal accounts at all to promote the brand is a feat.

Corporate sees higher engagement on their tweets, though employee tweets containing Cisco URLs reach 2.3 times more accounts than their corporate counterparts. This is largely a new audience, as well; there was only 2% overlap between the employees' and the corporate accounts. Clearly, building a team of socially connected and active employees is a coup for a business in the digital age.

Twitter Handle	Influence Score	
1. @padmasree	70	
2. @commsninja	67	
3. @albertqian	65	
4. @timwasher	62	
5. @susiewee	62	
6. @lasandrabrill	62	
7. @carlosdominguez	62	
8. @urnhart	60	
9. @michelleragusa	62	
10. @slovoman	62	

#### **B2B Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Empower employees to build their own personal brands in social channels without prohibiting association with the brand (as some do). Incentivize sharing content about the company.



### Kraft Engages Community & Curates User-Generated B2C Content

Content curation is a fantastic tool for marketers and one employed by Kraft Foods on their recipes website. "20,000 recipes on <a href="KraftRecipes.com">KraftRecipes.com</a> have been contributed by our member community. Engaged, passionate consumers can be your best source of content," Kraft's Julie Fleischer told TopRank recently.

User-generated content offers a number of benefits. There is a balance between cost/time savings and quality control that must be reached, yet customer contributors have a vested interest in socially promoting the content they create. On social networks like Facebook, interactions with brands appear in front of the user's social network automatically, allowing content to spread virally.

Kraft has built an online community where cooks of all skill levels can gather to access tips or recipes, share content of their own, join in a discussion, or simply ask a question.



"So long as you have a content management system in place that enables smart curation and you have business rules around that curation, your consumers can be more than your best advocates, they can be your best creators," Fleischer said.

#### **B2C Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Engage your community; empower them to take part in the greater discussion and create content around your products and services, in order to convert fans to loyal brand advocates.



### Deloitte's B2B Guides and Reports Top Quality Global Content

Boston-based consulting firm Deloitte are absolutely killing it with their series of material and information on doing business across borders. Their Highlights reports are a high-level overview of finance and economic issues specific to one country, while <u>Guides</u> are an in-depth exploration into taxation, banking and other business considerations.

Did we mention they publish their reports for over 150 different countries?

Deloitte experts contribute to their corporate blog and the firm is active on Google+, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

In addition, they host a <u>LinkedIn Group</u> with over 100,000 global members.

Deloitte podcasts. They write books and publish newsletters.

They might be the best connected and least boring consulting firm on the planet.



#### **B2B Content Marketing**

#### Takeaway:

Become *the* source of rich, relevant content in your industry. Make competitors and media turn to you for analysis, insights and statistics. Commit to producing top quality content that becomes the industry standard and appears across search and social to anyone and everyone who has a question you can answer.



### Wegmans Food Markets Serve Delicious B2C Content Up Hot & Fresh

In their profile description on <u>Twitter</u>, Wegmans Food Markets promises, "Can't wait to talk to you!" True to their word, the grocery brand is highly responsive in social, but also proactive in reaching out to customers through their digital content strategy.

Wegmans YouTube videos share cooking tips, recipes, nutritional information and more, earning the brand's videos over 1.3 million views to date. Their Fresh Stories blog aims to provide an insider look at the products they carry and inspire their customers to eat fresher, healthier food.

Through this content, their brand feeds into the modern consumers' desire to know more about their food in order to make better buying decisions.



Wegmans understands that by the time a customer reaches the grocery store checkout counter, their purchasing decisions are made. Influencing their customers means building relationships and reaching out to their community to position themselves as a trusted source of inspiration, knowledge and guidance.

#### **B2C Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Understand where customers are when they're open to connecting with your brand in a way that allows influence over their purchasing decisions. In a real-world retail or similar setting, this probably isn't at the till. Connect while people are browsing the web, either passively or actively searching for information of interest to them. Be there.



### Adobe Releases B2B Video Relevant & Entertaining to Marketers

In order to promote their marketing suite, Adobe created a tongue-in-cheek video in which marketers are chastised for using industry buzzwords. Chastised may actually be too delicate a word; in "BS Detector," marketers are shocked by electrodes each time they use buzzwords like ripple effect, influencers or cross-segment synergies.

Since its release late in October 2011, BS Detector has been viewed close to a half a million times between YouTube and Adobe TV.

This video was one facet of a larger Adobe campaign, *Metrics Not Myths*, in which the marketing software brand set out to offer their products as a credible solution in a time many are disenchanted with the marketing industry. Their goal was to prove that despite what some say, online marketing is measurable and can be highly effective.

This particular message required creativity and a clever angle to engage viewers. Industry professionals can relate to Adobe's point, that buzzwords are prevalent in marketing and don't serve companies or professionals well at all. The story they tell in their video is one their target audience can get on board with and actually enjoy, given the element of humor they hit just right.

Other elements of the *Metrics Not Myths* campaign included media outreach, blogging, livestreamed debates and viral visuals for their social channels.



#### **B2B Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Entertain your audience by finding a humorous angle on a common problem you can exploit and use to position your company as the solution.



### Esquire Perfects Brand Voice for B2C Content "That Speaks For Us"

Esquire Magazine wanted their social presence to be a true extension of their brand: intelligent, thought-provoking, entertaining and sophisticated. "Traffic is nice, but conversation with the reader is nicer," web director Matt Sullivan told <u>Mashable</u>. "A glorified RSS feed is a waste of time."

Their brand voice needed to be all-encompassing, to meet the expectations of their loyal audience. Social content isn't a task for an intern or whomever in marketing has time for it, he cautioned.

Browsing through their <u>Twitter feed</u> shows they've stayed true to form. Unlike many publications, they don't blast out the headline and link to every piece of content they post. Tweets and other social content are crafted to highlight the content, to pose a question, share an opinion, make a reader laugh or simply catch their attention.

Call this micro-repurposing; each blog post, article or other piece of content Esquire publishes is an opportunity to make a quip, share an observation or otherwise add the unique spin their social followers love.

Where content titles may be optimized for search and meant to convert browsers to clickers, the same content can be used in social to start a conversation.

#### **B2C Content Marketing Takeaway:**

Create content that reflects your brand voice tailored to the platform on which it will be shared. Force yourself to really put some thought into your social content by not relying on feeds alone to promote your blog or other digital content.





### Monetate B2B Blog Showcases In-House Expertise

Online marketing technology providers Monetate publish original, high quality content to their blog on a regular basis. Their blog offers insight and expertise in big data, analytics, segmentation, personalization and more. Who better to share that knowledge than their in-house team members?



Monetate's Content Marketing Director, Rob Yoegel, sat down for an interview with Lee Odden at Online Marketing Blog and explained why their marketing manager, product specialists, client success director and others are also their blog authors.

"Compelling content will come from throughout an organization. If content marketers don't think outside their own department or even worse, believe they can or must do it all on their own, they'll likely fail. For instance, our services team works directly with our clients and contributes so much, whether it's blogging, interviews, ideas, or just critical input on how to tell a story. I really believe the most successful content marketers will be those who see their entire organization as members of their team."

Yoegel attributes the brand's success in content marketing to their team of smart and talented people. "Everyone talks about brands becoming publishers. I believe that's not enough. Brands need to do more than what publishers traditionally have done, or

ultimately they will become what many publishers have become today: obsolete and irrelevant," he said.

**B2B Content Marketing Takeaway:** Make content creation and promotion happen across the organization. Inspire and empower employees to blog or share their own brand-related content in social channels. These are the people who know your brand better than any others; they are who your audience wants to read and watch.



### Get Social with TopRank Online Marketing







#### **About TopRank Online Marketing:**

Since 2001, <u>TopRank Online Marketing</u> has helped Fortune 500 companies (and a few Fortune 20's, as well) increase traffic, sales and brand visibility online through a holistic internet marketing approach. We specialize in developing an integrated online marketing strategy through a 360-degree approach that attracts, engages and converts more new business for our clients.

Our team of smart, creative and results driven marketers are trusted by some of the top B2B and B2C brands for services that include: content marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization, online public relations, email marketing, conversion rate optimization and web analytics.

<u>Contact us</u> (1-877-872-6628 or info@toprankmarketing.com) for a free consultation or visit our top rated <u>marketing blog</u> for thousands of articles on search, social and content marketing topics.