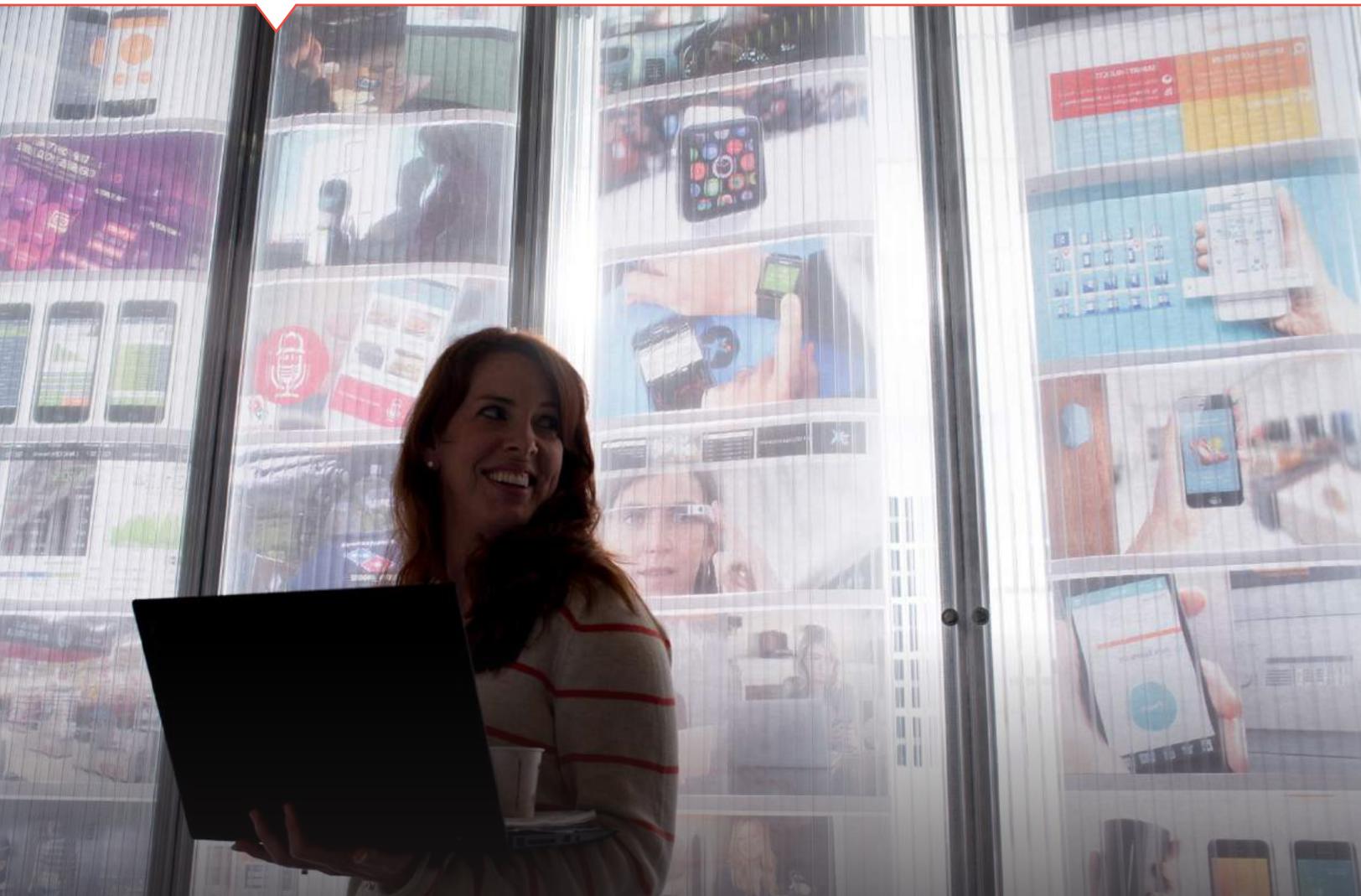


Leading with customer-focused content: driving growth through personalized experiences



Are your business and content strategies in step?

Good content has always been integral to customer engagement. From well-established types like direct mail and radio ads to newer ones, including immersive video, witty Tweets, and data-rich infographics, compelling content has the potential to engage customers. But the rules of this engagement have changed: Yesterday's content strategies revolved around pitching products via a predictable set of proven channels; today's seek to use a widening array of touchpoints to create an integrated and relevant customer experience. And that experience will be unique for each customer—whose interactions with and expectations of both business and consumer brands have also greatly evolved.

The end game now is personalization—an outcome that's constantly evolving as innovative companies find new ways to create meaningful experiences for each individual that fuse the online and offline worlds and strike the optimal balance between transaction and emotion.

Instead of blanketing current and prospective customers with the same (or even broadly targeted) messaging and media, it's about leveraging all your available data to precisely target individuals with tailored content—on the web, mobile platforms, retail outlets, even customer service channels. Using content to build unique, authentic experiences is so important because it builds the trust essential to attracting and keeping customers in our time-constrained, budget-constrained, media-saturated world.

And doing so can yield a real payoff: Companies that create personalized experiences often see substantially higher conversion rates. With revenue on the line, then, why are so many companies struggling to get a handle on content marketing and personalization?

Our survey of more than 350 executives globally confirmed what we see in our work with clients daily: many companies lack a content strategy or are making do with one that's incomplete. Often that means relegating content creation to a vacuum within the marketing department, or relying on bootstrap approaches spread throughout the organization. They may produce content but it's rarely personalized, nor is it well integrated with broader objectives like developing the brand or increasing customer loyalty.

Yet, there are also those savvy organizations that have a comprehensive strategy that furthers their business priorities by enabling them to produce and deliver personalized content in a cost-effective and sustainable way. These leading organizations are distinguished by five key practices:

- 01 Start with business priorities**
Content strategy is driven by the organization's business goals.
- 02 Appoint a content champion**
A senior-level executive, often the chief marketing officer or chief digital officer, is responsible for strategy and operating model.
- 03 Know customers through data**
Mine data to learn about the target audience, then create and deliver relevant content.
- 04 Build capabilities**
Invest in content marketing capabilities, including funding key enablers like technology and data integration and analytics.
- 05 Measure to optimize**
Consistently measure and report, then optimize content based upon learnings.

What's your type?

Based upon our work with a range of companies and our analysis of the content practices of survey respondents, we find that companies fall into three distinct groups. Understanding what drives each of these segments can help you determine where your own company sits—and how you can begin refining your own content strategy.

TRAILBLAZERS

25%

Of respondents

- Consider personalized content critical to their marketing strategy
- Create and deliver content proficiently
- See content planning and measurement as critical to their digital marketing efforts
- Plan to ramp up content investment by 25% or more in the next year
- Have executive champions in place

EXPLORERS

67%

Of respondents

- Recognize the value of delivering personalized content, and measuring content effectiveness (but they did not rank these as essential elements of their marketing strategy)
- Plan to increase their content marketing budget slightly over the next year
- Have some support at the executive level for their content strategy

NOMADS

8%

Of respondents

- Do not believe creating personalized content is critical to their marketing strategy
- Do not prioritize content planning and measurement
- Do not plan to increase their content marketing budget in the next year
- Do not have an advocate in the C-suite for their content strategy

1. Start with business priorities

Content strategy, of course, needs to support your marketing and growth strategies. When it comes to these business priorities, executives rank brand development (54%) first, followed by customer engagement (46%). Sales conversions, lead generation, and loyalty were important to about one-third of respondents. We see a similar picture looking across the three groups of respondents.

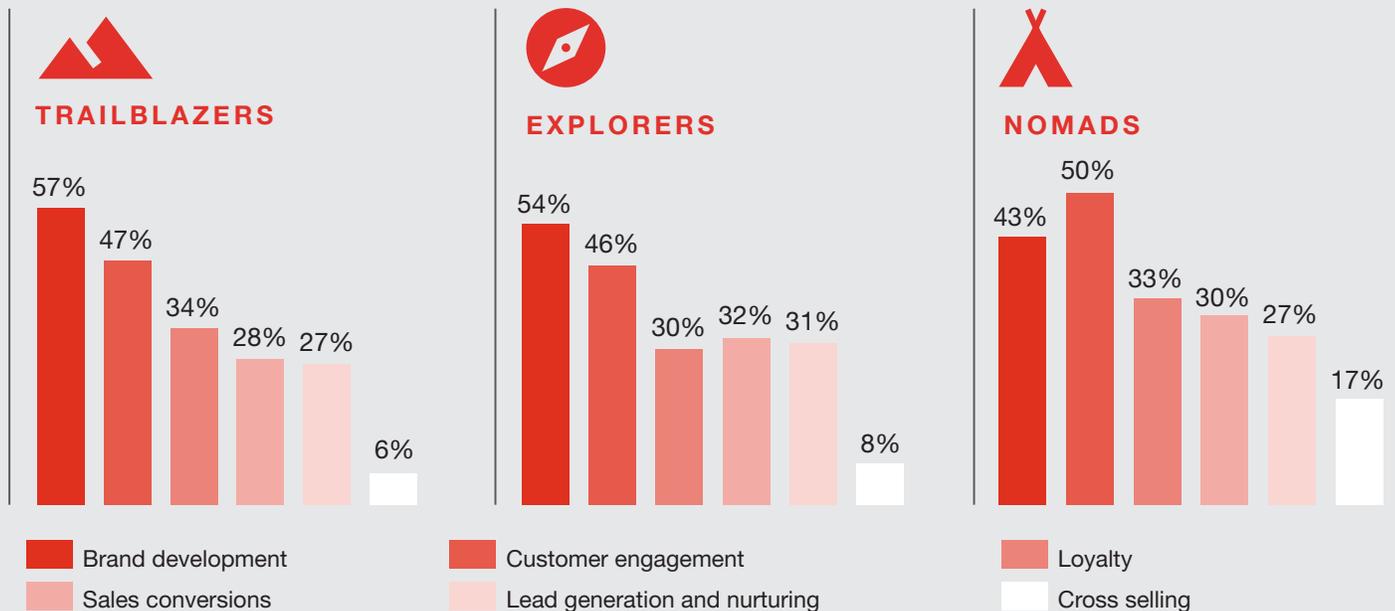
How are executives doing in matching content priorities with

business priorities? Surprisingly they are not as aligned as they need to be. The highest-ranked content strategy goals were around sales conversions and lead generation—lower-ranked business goals. At the same time, brand development was the top-ranked business goal with 54% of respondents, yet only 40% had corresponding content goals, such as differentiating the brand and creating brand fans. The biggest disconnect was around customer engagement: 46% of executives told us that it was a business priority, yet only 25%

said that supporting highly targeted digital marketing experiences was a content strategy priority.

And then there was the significant share of Nomads (27%), whom admit to lacking a content strategy altogether—compared with 2% of Trailblazers and 1% of Explorers. Their lack of a strategy puts them at a significant disadvantage.

Top business priorities by segment

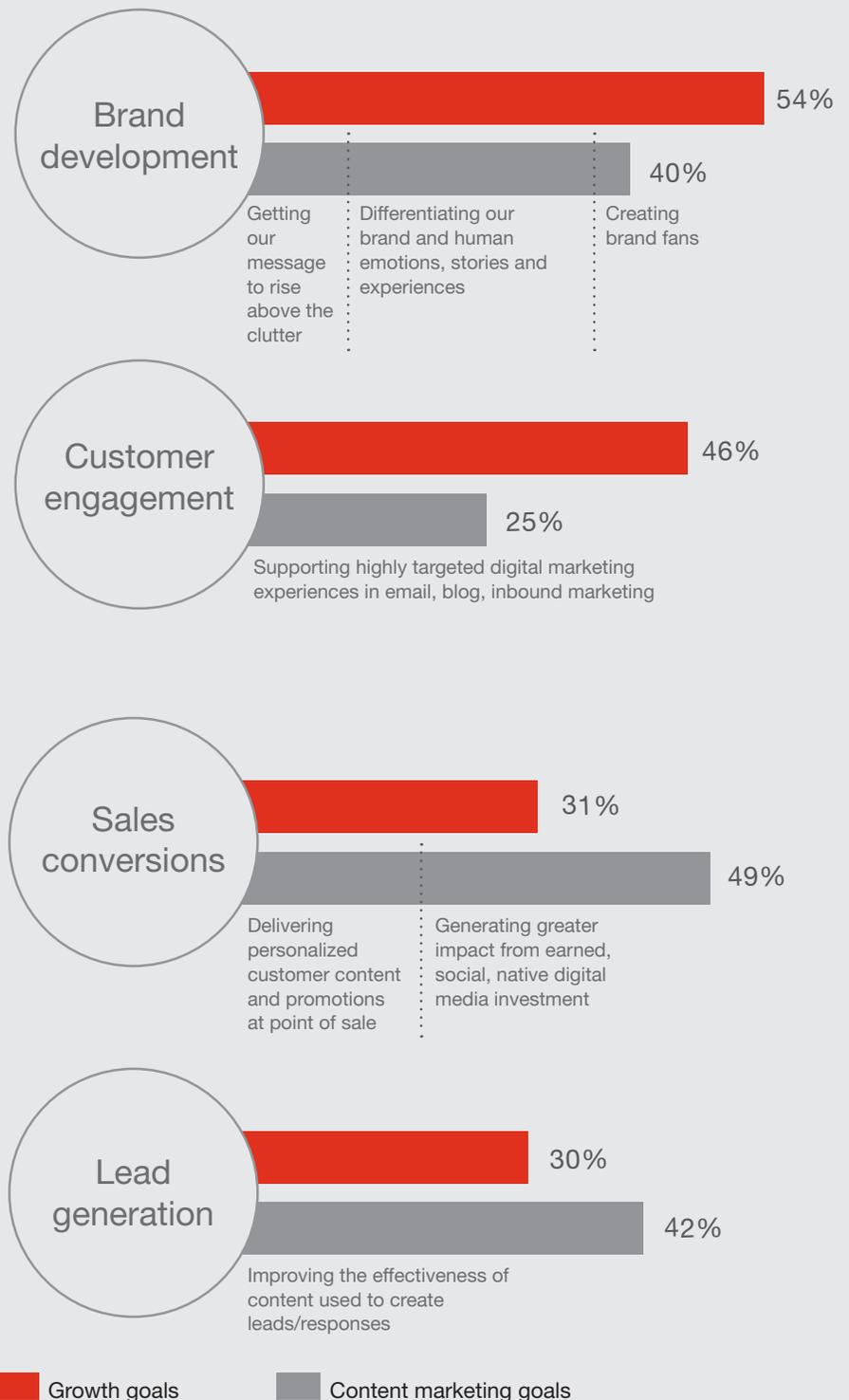


Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Bases: 93, 246, 30
 Q: What are your top growth priorities? (Select all that apply)

How content marketing goals align to growth goals

Salesforce.com takes the alignment literally. According to Alexa Schirtzinger, director of content marketing at Salesforce, the tech company's content strategy is made up of three primary pillars: awareness, engagement, and conversion. By ensuring that content is created and distributed in alignment with each of these business objectives, Schirtzinger says Salesforce is able to intersect with customers at every stage of the purchasing cycle.

In the case of Dick's Sporting Goods, the retailer is focused on building the brand through storytelling and sharing its belief that sports make people better. "Sports offer amazingly visual and emotive stories that often can't be effectively communicated through an email," says Ryan Eckel, vice president of brand marketing at Dick's Sporting Goods. One way the company supports this goal is through a content strategy that uses "high quality storytelling" to help its non-profit arm, Dick's Sporting Goods Foundation, raise awareness about today's sports funding crisis. It partnered with Tribeca Digital Studios to produce a documentary that highlighted the challenges facing two Philadelphia-area high school football programs forced to merge due to budget cuts.



Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Base: 369
 Q: What are your top growth priorities? (Select all that apply)
 Q: What are the goals of your content marketing strategy? (Select all that apply)



The film won the Sports Emmy for Outstanding Sports Documentary.

Bill Brand, president of HSN, and chief marketing officer of parent company, HSN Inc., describes the company's content strategy as creating a "boundary-less retail" —the concept that a customer's shopping experience should be "a seamless network of experiences, so customers can interact with our brand wherever and whenever

they want." That may be during a live broadcast of the show, via YouTube, through social media, or on their digital devices.

And as organizations' marketing priorities evolve, so do their content strategies. For example, some companies are focused on not simply creating loyal customers, but rather to develop brand advocates. That's what software company SAP does through its SAP Community

Network (SCN), which has more than 2 million unique visitors from 225 different countries comment on about 550 topics. SAP's Vivek Bapat, SVP, global head of marketing strategy and portfolio, describes SCN as a "learn and teach model" where customers can "test-drive and validate technology, share best practices, gain access to SAP experts, and become a leader through their content contributions."

“

What gets me excited about content marketing is it really has the potential to affect all these different types of buyers at all these different stages in their journey.

That gives us the opportunity to get content to people in lots of different ways at different times in their experience. **And that's when you can really see content moving the needle for the organization.”**

ALEXA SCHIRTZINGER

DIRECTOR OF CONTENT MARKETING, SALESFORCE

2. Appoint a content champion

The ability to meet both business and content goals requires a well-developed operating model and strong leadership. Trailblazers embody this approach—all say the CMO, CDO, or another senior-level executive champions their content strategy and operating model. Nearly all Explorers do too (96%), but here again Nomads fall short, with one-fifth lacking an executive champion. Trailblazers and Explorers are also focused on operating model improvements and count those among their content

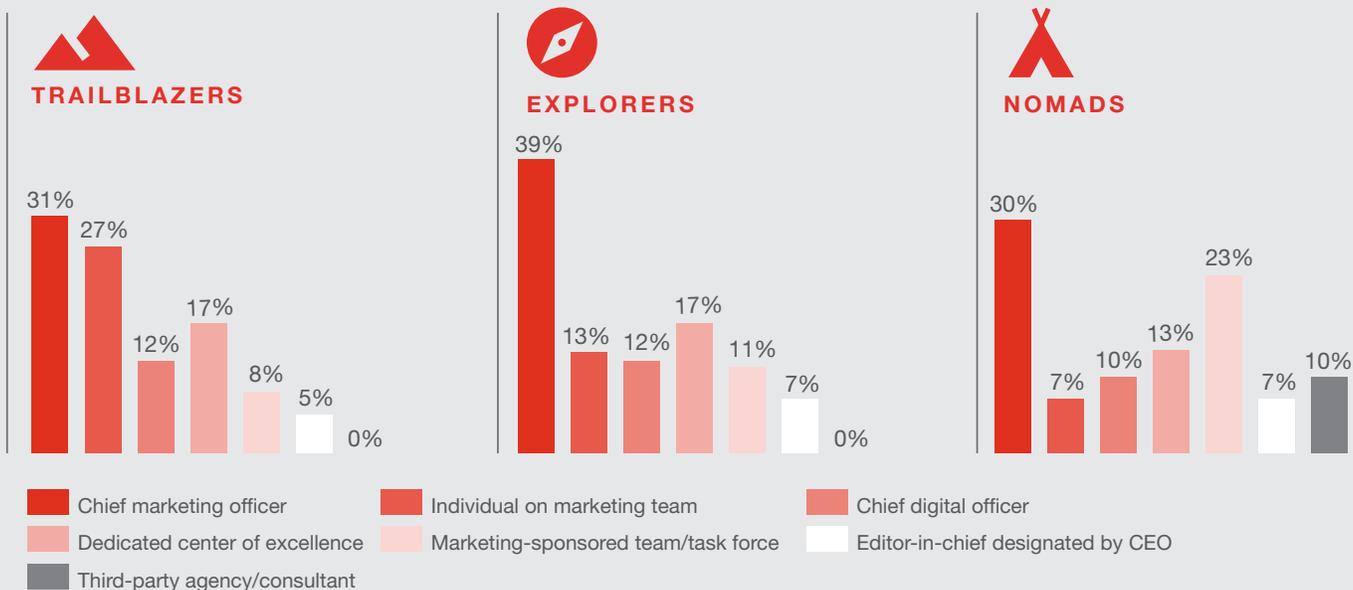
strategy goals. Trailblazers, in particular, seek to increase the efficiency of their content creation (47%, compared with 28% for Explorers and 33% for Nomads).

Zipcar can attest to the value of a seasoned content champion. The car sharing network, which serves both consumers and businesses, has an editor-in-chief who oversees a content and creative team. Brian Harrington, Zipcar’s chief marketing officer, says, “The hardest part of the business is how you create content at scale while making it relevant.”

It’s a challenge that Harrington says has been eased by putting a single individual at the helm of content development. In addition to a content champion, Zipcar has an editorial board that meets once a month to plan the company’s next six months of marketing activity and metrics.

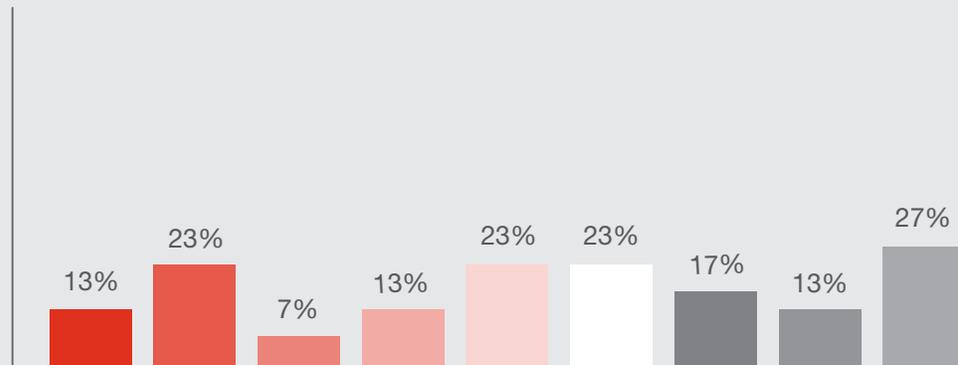
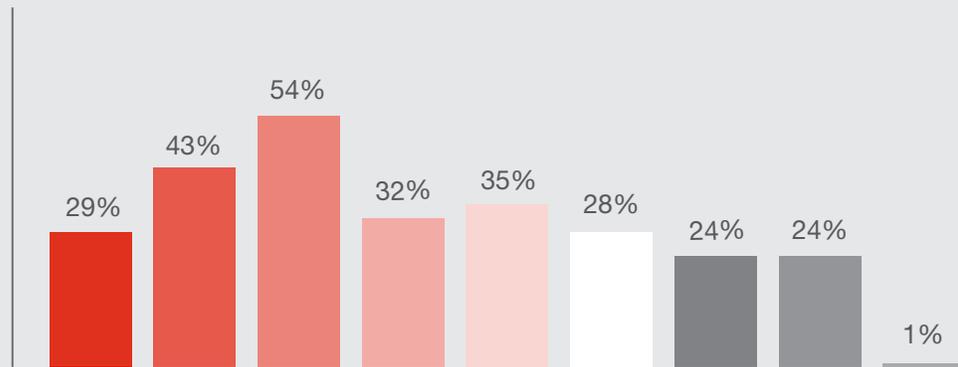
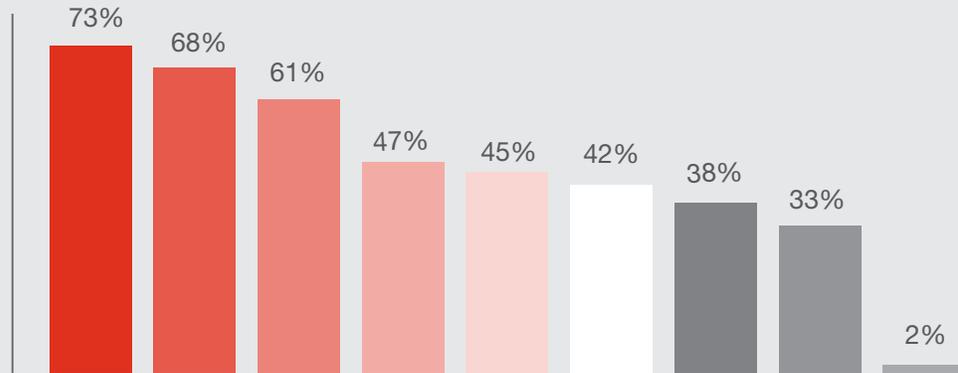
In some organizations, the champion also oversees day-to-day content operations. The CMO tends to manage it most often but is in charge in only a third of all cases. In larger organizations, the CMO is more likely to be in charge.

Who manages content in the organization?



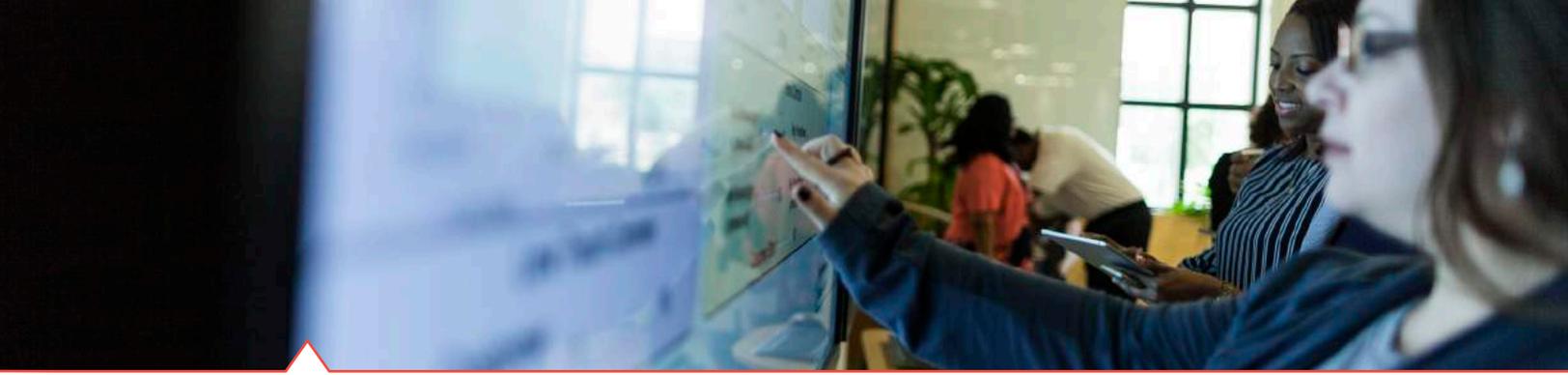
Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Bases: 93, 246, 30
 Q: Who manages the content lifecycle in your business?

What backs up content strategy?



- Audience insights into customer journeys and content engagement
- Plan for content distribution across touchpoints
- Roadmap for sequencing technology investments
- Talent management plan to evolve skills
- We do not have a content strategy
- Technology strategy to enable content creation, distribution, and measurement
- Editorial vision for creating types of content
- Consistent approach for engaging content technology vendors
- Model for managing content across organization

Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Bases: 93, 246, 30
 Q: Which of the following elements do you leverage as part of your enterprise content management strategy?



Trailblazers and Explorers are also more likely to either run content through the CMO (31% and 39%, respectively) or a single accountable individual on the marketing team (27% and 13%, respectively). Nomads, on the other hand, rely more often on a marketing-sponsored team or task force (23%) or a third-party consultancy (10%).

An effective operating model must address the fragmented way in which so many organizations manage content—within disparate functions and lines of business. This, in turn, leads to a disjointed customer experience, as well as an impersonal one. One way to remedy this is to have a center of excellence to manage the sourcing, personalization and distribution of marketing content. Yet many companies are not well positioned yet to do so, as they lack the organizational readiness and business case for the additional investment.

This requires having in place a number of elements, including customer insight about content, a model for managing content across the organization, a plan for distributing it, and the enabling talent and technology to do it all. Trailblazers rank customer insight far ahead of other elements (73%), followed by technology strategy (68%), and a content distribution plan (61%), while Explorers and Nomads also rightly value a roadmap for planning requisite technology

investments. In fact, our research into how organizations can get the most from digital investments finds that a single, multi-year roadmap—not just a marketing technology roadmap—is one of the most important practices for digital success.¹

As for where and how organizations source their content, respondents (46%) rely on product or brand marketing teams, followed by customers (42%) and distributors, such as channel marketing (42%). Trailblazers, however, know that

there are a variety of underutilized sources and more regularly turn to suppliers (56%), account management teams (51%), and even training (46%), and HR (34%).

Content quality, which has many dimensions, is a crucial element regardless of the source. Cisco, for example, hired an agency “to learn some new modern techniques and re-acquire some of the creative skills that had fallen away” over the years, says Joel Conover, senior director of marketing at the technology

Who contributes content?



Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Base: 369
 Q: Which of the following organizations, if any, contribute to your content supply chain?

“

You’ve got to have the right person in that role who is championing content as a full-time job, not as an ancillary piece of other marketing responsibilities. **And they must ultimately be held accountable for the quality of the content, as well as its effectiveness.”**

BRIAN HARRINGTON

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, ZIPCAR

company. Next, the company established a simplified language training team to help its creative team learn to write more simply. To ensure that its content remained jargon-free, Cisco began using Flesch-Kincaid readability tests to measure its complexity and user-friendliness.

Cardinal Health also regularly evaluates content to ensure it’s hitting the mark. According to Tip Rose, director of enterprise digital marketing at Cardinal Health, the company has an internal “editorial

review board that regularly meets to review content samples from across the company to ensure we aren’t drifting too far from our brand standards.” At the same time, he says the company maintains a roster of agencies and partners who know the brand and understand how to communicate it externally. To manage this complex mix of content types and producers, Rose says Cardinal Health ensures “strong alignment across the organization on brand expectations, along with a governance model.”

Progress Software also focuses on quality and credibility. The company launched a developer relations team—a group of staff developers who are responsible for engaging regularly with the developer community, sparking dialogue and plumbing these conversations for content nuggets. “When you’re targeting developers like we do, you can’t fake it—you have to be super credible,” says Melissa Puls, chief marketing officer at Progress Software.

3. Know customers through data

Connecting with a well-informed consumer takes more than a product pitch or a clever tagline. Rather, marketers need to create emotional connections around content-rich experiences across a variety of online and offline touchpoints.

“Content needs are exploding as we move to a world of precision marketing and 24/7 engagement,” says Alison Lewis, chief marketing officer at Johnson & Johnson. “Getting the right message, to the right person, at the right time has never been easier, driven by digital and data. Engagement only

happens with engagement-worthy content.” She also cautions: “You can have too much of a good thing if you don’t optimize your content across touchpoints. You need to understand what’s working and not working, promote the strategies that are working and move away from the ones that aren’t.”

As touchpoints—and data—proliferate it becomes increasingly important to personalize those experiences. Many businesses have yet to fully understand and embrace this approach: Just a little more than one-third (37%) of

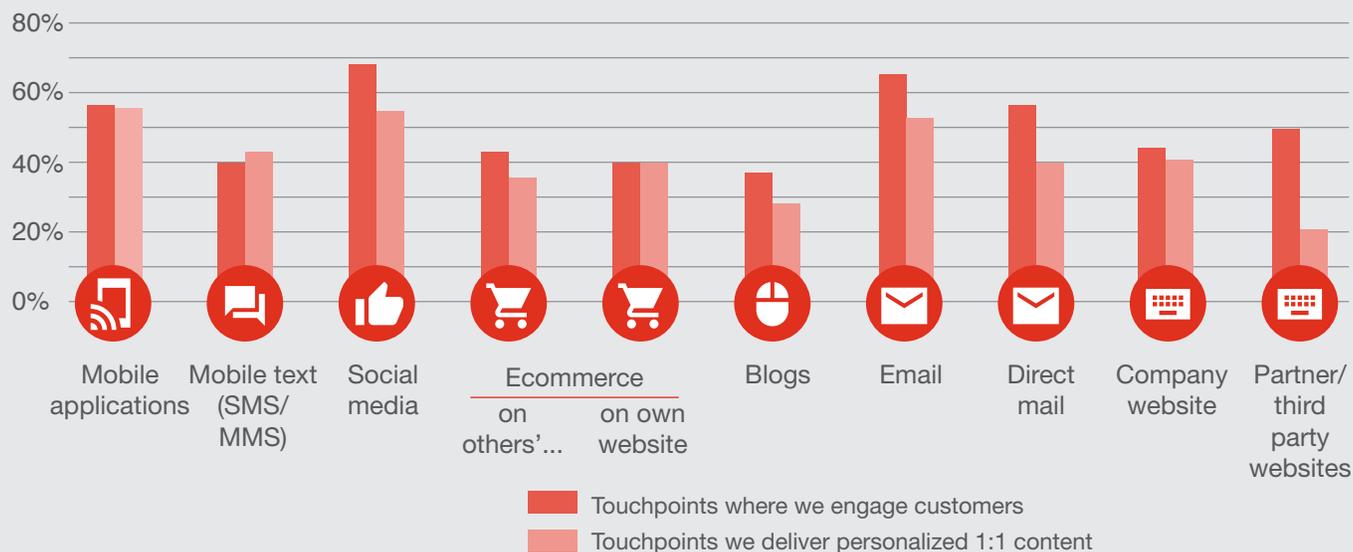
respondents rate personalization as critical. One hundred percent of Trailblazers, however, rate it that way.

Of those making inroads with personalization, they generally prioritize their mostly widely used touchpoints: mobile apps, followed by social media, email, web pages, SMS/text, and company websites. Of those respondents that rely on mobile text/SMS to deliver personalized content, 80% are Trailblazers, compared to 17% of Nomads.



94% of respondents say that **delivering personalization is critical or important** to reaching customers.

Where we engage customers with personalized content



*Not charted: 33% of respondents also engage customers via microsites, which was not a response choice when asked about where they deliver personalized content.

Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Base: 369

Q: Which of the following touchpoints do you use to engage customers?

Q: To which of the following customer touchpoints are you able to deliver personalized 1:1 content?

“People are expecting more personalized content today than ever and mobile really is the best channel to offer the most personalized and relevant content,” says Steve Ramirez, head of digital marketing at the financial institution KeyBank.

While companies are accustomed to defining customer segments and orienting marketing around them, relevant personalization goes beyond marketing to experiences and is informed by data about customer behavior and preferences. The abundance of customer touchpoints and the massive amounts of data generated by these is a double-edge sword: while you can learn a lot about each customer and provide a highly targeted experience, the amount of data available continues to mushroom.

While the majority of respondents (59%) personalize content by the

broadest means, target audience, Trailblazers, are more likely to be more precise. They are able to identify, in very specific terms, the customer being addressed, gathering data about that individual, translating the data, and ultimately serving up tailored, relevant content. The majority (51%) of Trailblazers personalize content by marketing persona, and to a lesser extent by individual (43%), in accordance with purchase history data, and other behavioral data.

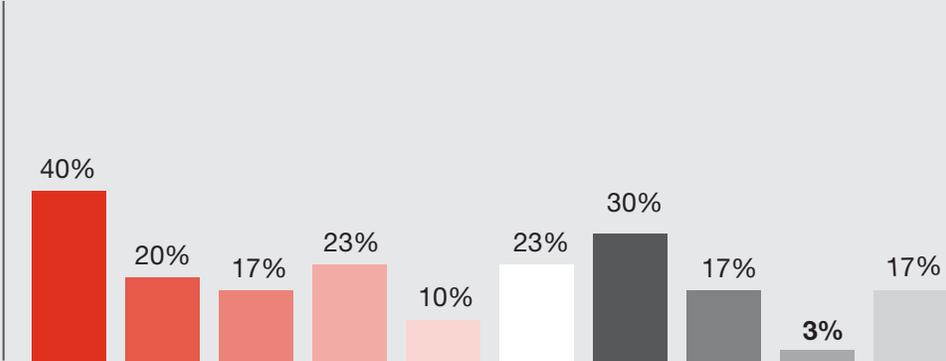
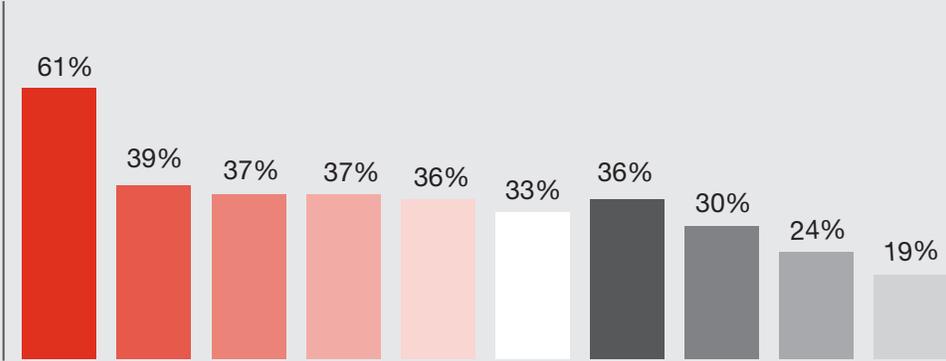
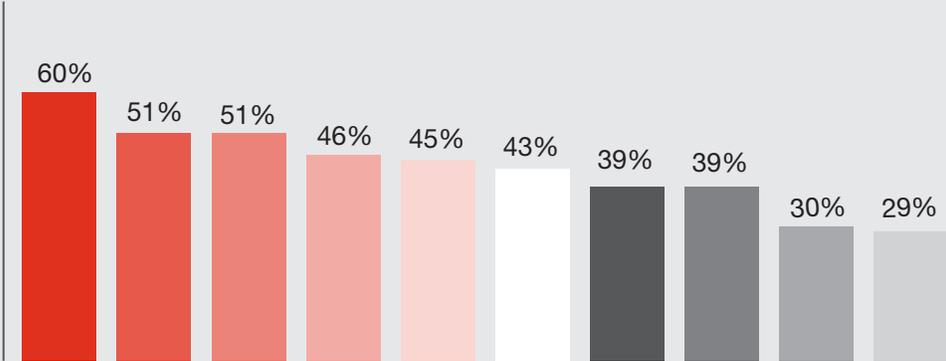
One such company that applies personalization beyond marketing is Whole Foods Market. The specialty supermarket chain relies on OneSpot’s content sequencing platform, which gathers information on a customer’s history and interests, as well as where they are on the digital journey. Based on these details, the platform ensures the

right personalized content (e.g. recipes, information on food choices, and food storage) is delivered to customers, in the right order, whether on a company website, smartphone, or social media.

“Whole Foods has lots of content —recipes, information on how to make smart food choices, how to store food, what’s healthy to eat—all kinds of content that relates to their mission and to their brand,” says Steve Sachs, CEO of OneSpot. “But the content isn’t just about their products. It’s about helping their customers or prospects have a great experience.”

Progress Software uses personas, dividing its customers into three primary groups—CIOs, developers, and CMOs—and building a matrix of the messages and content that are most relevant, based upon

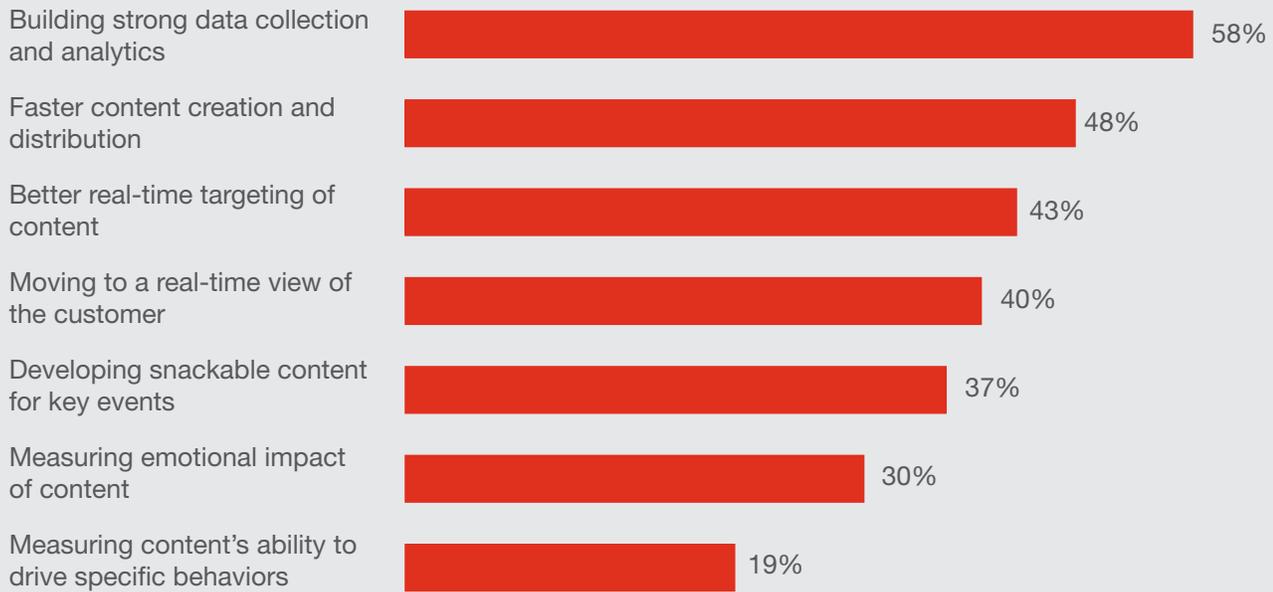
How we personalize content



- Target audience
- Individual with digital marketing interaction data
- Marketing persona
- Industry vertical
- Individual with social sentiment data
- Individual with purchase history data
- Individual with customer service data
- Job function/role in organization
- Individual with third party targeting data
- Individual with operational data

Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Bases: 93, 246, 30
 Q: How do you personalize content?

How companies are building personalization capabilities



Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Base: 369
Q: How are you improving your ability to deliver personalized 1:1 content?

typical purchasing patterns. When a customer visits the company's site, the first level of personalization is to determine their industry, so the homepage content will reflect only healthcare-related content, for example. Next, using data analytics the site can serve up the next set of persona-based content, determined by initial site activity.

The personas always remain the same, but the content is continuously refined based on data collected about each persona, as well as real-time engagement with individual customers. For example, if an increasing number of CMOs continue to skip over a particular software demo, this will inform future content creation and delivery.

Likewise, Dun & Bradstreet make use of personas and thinks about the unique pain points of each one. Rishi Dave, Dun & Bradstreet's chief marketing officer, says the company's editorial vision is very much informed by its customers' pain points. "These customer challenges drive content development in their persona-based go-to-market strategy and define specific use cases that the company focuses in its go-to-market strategy," he says.

Achieving personalization takes commitment. The largest share of executives in our survey (58%) say that they are improving their ability to deliver personalized 1:1 content by building a strong data analytics foundation. Many are also looking to speed their ability to create and distribute content,

followed by better real-time targeting and a real-time view of the customer. Of those moving to that real-time view, a full 95% are either Trailblazers or Explorers.

Contextual relevance is one way organizations are personalizing content, taking a one-to-many approach. Johnson & Johnson's skincare subsidiary Clean & Clear, for example, debuted its #SelfAcceptanceSpeech commercial during the 2015 MTV Video Music Awards show. The ad featured seven teenagers discussing everything from their large ears to their acne, and how they've grown to accept their imperfections as unique features. The effort enabled Clean & Clear to personalize its content for a broad audience.

RUN



“

To me, that's what content is all about. It has to be constantly changing based on the data that you're gathering throughout a customer's individual journey.”

MELISSA PULS

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, PROGRESS SOFTWARE

4. Build capabilities

Like any other discipline, managing your content lifecycle requires making the investment to build capabilities. For example, to develop high-quality content creation, an organization might need to add dedicated editorial staff, build a network of content partners, develop processes and standards, or implement a company-wide content management system (CMS). Or to build personalization capabilities might require integrating disparate systems like a CMS, recommendation engine, and marketing automation system,

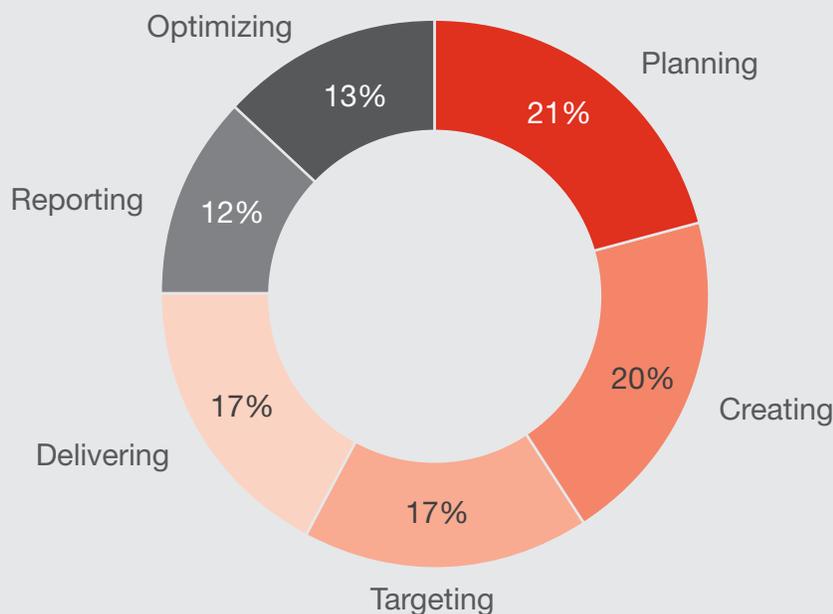
and cleansing all of the data so that it can be used together.

It's no surprise, then, that when asked about challenges to creating personalized content, executives cited budget constraints and fragmented technology infrastructure among their top challenges (legal, regulatory, and compliance challenges rounded out the top-three). Thirty-eight percent of respondents said budget was the biggest challenge to producing relevant content, despite the fact that 87% of respondents plan to

increase their content-marketing spending the next fiscal year.

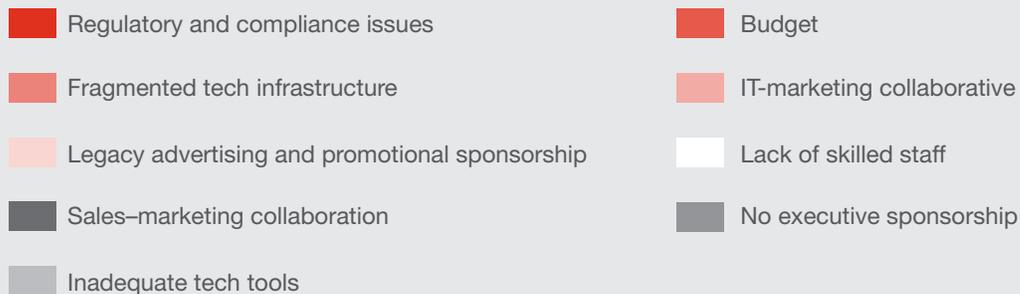
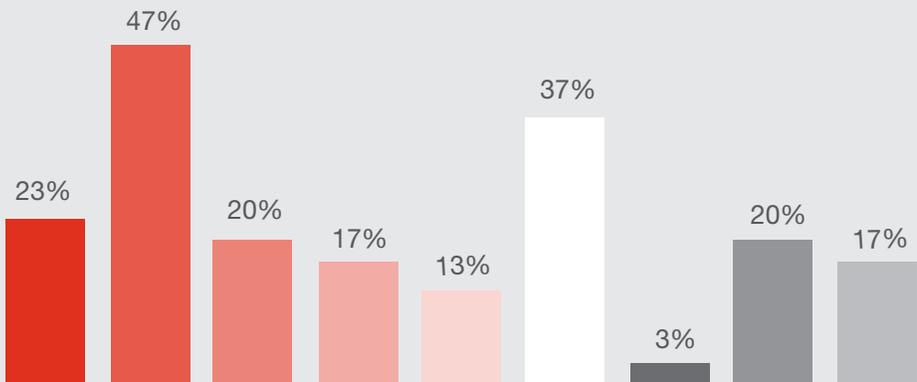
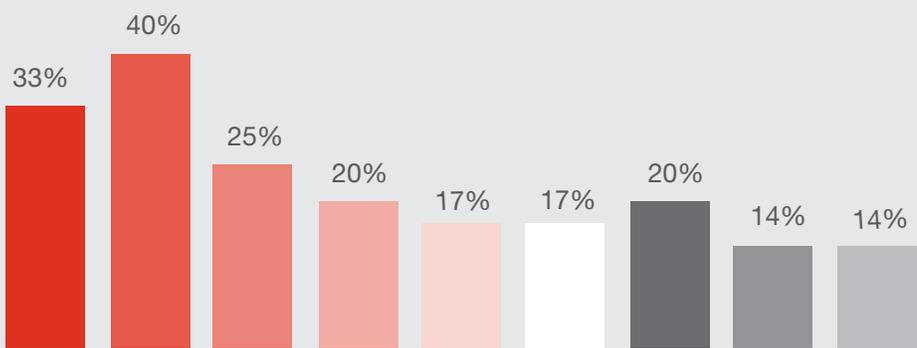
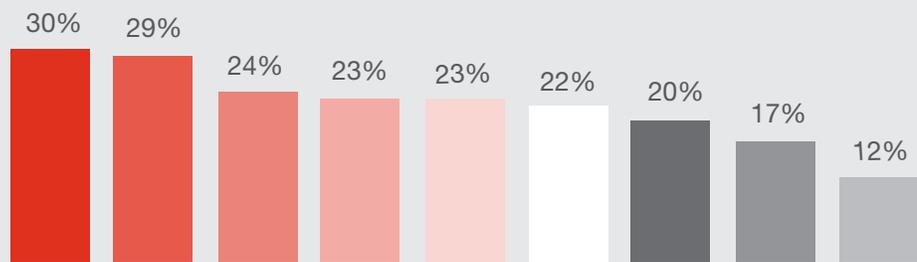
Both of these challenges point to the importance of collaboration between marketing and IT, which is instrumental to getting return on your digital investments.² This is becoming more crucial as greater spending on digital technology is happening within the Marketing function—26% of all digital investments, according to PwC's 2015 *Global Digital IQ*® Survey. While customer initiatives may be the domain of the CMO, the CIO and IT team must be highly involved

Investments in content lifecycle capabilities

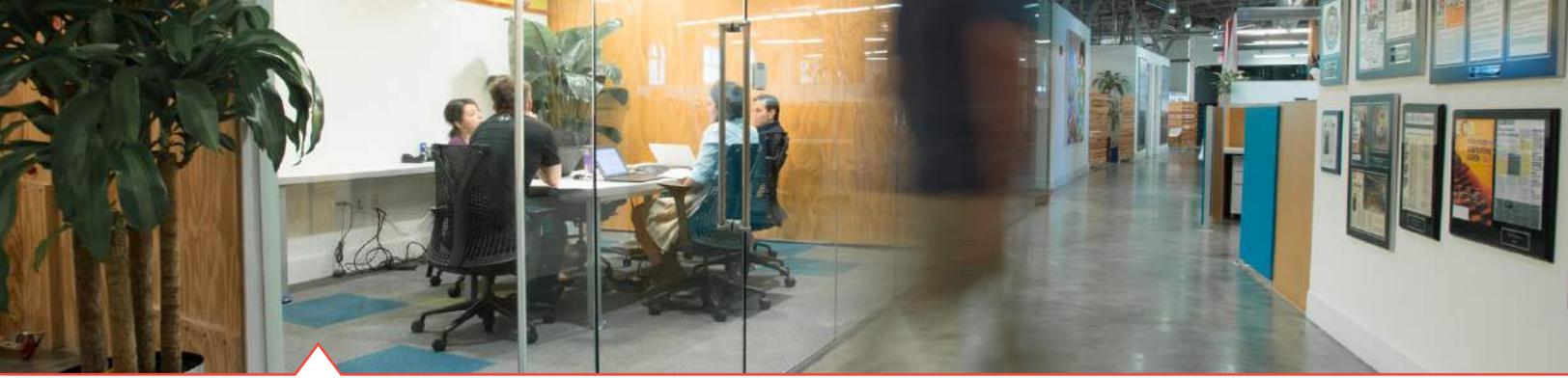


Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Base: 369
Q: Please allocate where you are investing in the content creation supply chain this year.

Biggest challenges to producing relevant content



Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Bases: 93, 246, 30
 Q: Which, if any, of the following operational hurdles is the greatest challenge to sourcing and producing relevant content to support targeted digital engagement channels?



in aspects like digital architecture, vendor management, and integration.

A minority of Trailblazers said monetary constraints are a key challenge, and more than one-third plan on increasing their spending on content by more than 50%—more than any other group. In other words, more mature content producers are more likely to continue to invest in their capabilities.

Where are companies investing? When asked to allocate their budgets among the different content lifecycle activities, executives ranked content planning and creation just above the others. They allocated 17% of

their budgets to targeting, an area that is especially ripe for investment if companies are to achieve meaningful personalization. This requires making investments across a range of more established tools like recommendation engines and campaign management solutions, as well as looking to more sophisticated technologies like predictive analytics and machine learning that make it possible to do 1:1 personalization on a large scale.³

Executives are also bolstering resources through smart partnering. For example, Bank of America partnered with Pinterest and Vice on a marketing effort for the bank called The Business of

Life. The digital video series is produced by Vice, sponsored by Bank of America, and promoted on Pinterest—a collaboration aimed at reaching Millennials.

Rather than struggle to “find the right and authentic ways to distribute that content,” Meredith Verdone, Bank of America’s head of enterprise, consumer and global wealth and investment management marketing, opted for “a distribution channel that has a voice Millennials trust. Not only does the content need to have a trusted voice, but so does the partner contributing the content.”

“

We’ve begun to build our team with content marketing in mind and over the next few years, **our goal is to have a center of excellence** where we run the lifecycles, strategic planning, and execution of our content.”

STEVE RAMIREZ

HEAD OF DIGITAL MARKETING, KEYBANK

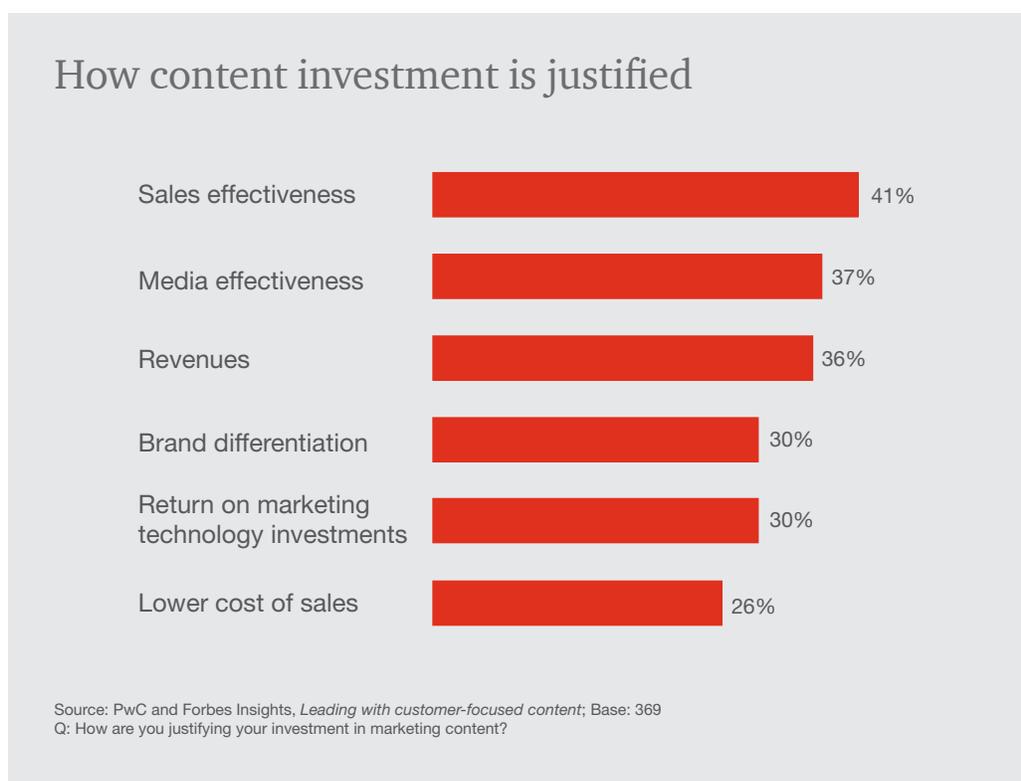
5. Measure to optimize

Few organizations would argue that measuring the return on their content investment is important, but the challenge is how to do it. Forty-four percent of respondents view reporting and measuring content effectiveness as critical to digital marketing efforts, and 50% see it as important. Only a negligible 1% perceive reporting and measuring to be irrelevant.

The most frequently cited measure of return on content is sales effectiveness (leads, responses, meetings, proposals). Media effectiveness (earned, social, native, digital) also ranks high, as does revenue. Across each dimension, a company can define the most appropriate measurements.

Cisco falls into this revenue-focused group. “We are moving towards revenue as the actual measure of our success,” says senior director of marketing Joel Conover. That’s a far cry from Cisco’s earlier focus on brand awareness and customer engagement. In fact, the company recently designed a new framework for determining ROI which has metrics that range from awareness like total impressions to marketing-qualified leads, sales-qualified leads, and bookings in order to gauge success.

AT&T, on the other hand, “tends to measure in terms of engagement,” says Alicia Dietsch, AT&T’s



vice president of marketing communications. “We’re working on creating a dashboard that maps a lot of our content to different states of engagement, ranging from, ‘Have you viewed the content?’ to ‘Have you interacted with the content?’ and ‘Have you amplified the content?’ We’re trying to be rigorous as we move forward in terms of how we set targets for our content programs.”

Other organizations, like Progress, prefer a more comprehensive approach to gauging content’s business value. “We look at the total

journey that customers take in terms of their buying patterns and what content they looked at throughout that buying cycle. Whether it was a video that cost us \$15,000 to produce, or a whitepaper that cost us \$25,000, we examine all of the touchpoints taken to reach a sale, and the total returns.”

And measurement isn’t necessarily about initial consumption. Rather, Chris Clark, HSBC’s global head of marketing, says it’s equally important for organizations to continue measuring audience engagement



post-consumption. Clark offers the example of an HSBC-hosted Google Hangout session where 17,000 people participated in a discussion about China's currency. He then compares that to a TV commercial viewed by more than two million audience members. While two million sounds better than 17,000, what if half of those on the Hangout requested a face-to-face meeting?

And another example that shows the importance of looking beyond

initial consumption: the Mayo Clinic shared a video through social media of a patient seeing his wife for the first time in years after receiving a bionic eye implant. The emotionally stirring video generated more than 200 appointment requests from patients around the world, many of which could potentially lead to long-term care and research. In addition, attention surrounding the video helped attract new hires, including much-sought after researchers and physicians.

Most importantly, organizations that measure their content effectiveness can continually optimize their approach. For example, one CMO we know routinely uses data to optimize the company's content, and recounted how recent A/B testing that surfaced 30% more conversions with one type of content over another ultimately yielded "multiple millions of dollars in the pipeline."

“

You have to understand whether or not your **content is driving** the kind of customer behavior and engagements that you need.”

CHRIS CLARK

GLOBAL HEAD OF MARKETING, HSBC

Conclusion

The right content strategy can significantly enhance an organization's ability to drive top-line growth and better support core selling programs. But if content is truly to deliver value, it must contribute significantly to a holistic customer experience.

To be certain, there are plenty of costs and complexities that come with creating and distributing content. And then there's the risk of creating content simply for the sake of it, without any real consideration for customer impact or business outcomes. However, savvy organizations that take the time to create connected, relevant content that aligns with business objectives and leverages data are far

more likely to unlock value for both the company and their customers.

The good news is there are clear-cut ways for marketers and content strategists to produce high-quality and carefully crafted content. The answer is a solid and sustainable strategy characterized by the following key practices:

- 1. Start with business priorities**
- 2. Appoint a content champion**
- 3. Know your customers through data**
- 4. Build capabilities**
- 5. Measure to optimize**

Armed with this roadmap, marketers and content strategists stand a far better chance of creating the emotional connections

customers crave across targeted digital channels.

There are also lessons to be learned from today's Trailblazers who are breaking from traditional content creation practices and embracing more innovative approaches to building customer-focused content. Building brand advocates, forming partnerships with Hollywood studios and other third-parties, experimenting with unconventional touchpoints—they're all emerging practices smart organizations would be wise to embrace as we enter a new era of content-rich, personalized experiences.



Lessons from B2C companies

Are there differences in the way consumer companies think about content strategy?

Yes—and business-to-business ones can learn from their practices.

For business-to-consumer companies, social media is a priority for engaging customers—more than mobile applications, email, and direct mail.

The B2C segment’s interest in social media is no surprise to Raj Rao, vice president for global e-transformation at 3M. Unlike traditional channels such as direct mail, social media presents B2C organizations with the unique opportunity to serve as “curators” rather than “creators” of content, Rao says.

Rao offers as an example 3M’s Scotch Scissors product line, which features user-generated content from its social channels that he believes contributes to a more authentic customer experience.

Mobile applications are another popular touchpoint among B2C organizations. Just ask Diane Kegley, chief marketing officer at RichRelevance, a global provider of omnichannel personalization.

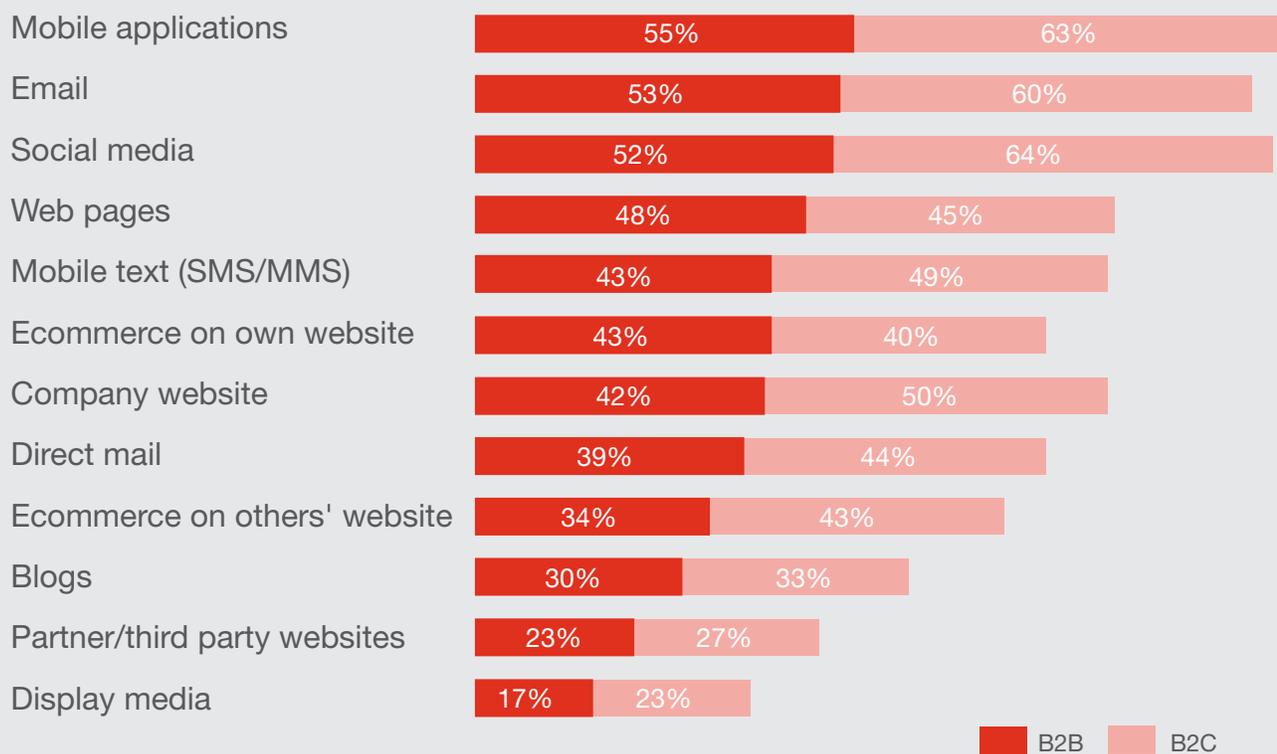
Kegley points to RichRelevance client Monsoon Accessorize. The UK fashion and accessories retailer deployed tablet devices, loaded with a customized mobile app, to help its sales associates better engage customers and offer personalized recommendations. The app enables associates to “upsell and cross-sell inventory that’s either in the store or beyond the stores’ walls,” she says. In fact, Kegley says the app now accounts for seven percent of Monsoon Accessorize’s in-store revenue. Sixty percent of customers that use the retailer’s in-store tablet devices opt for click-and-collect transactions while approximately 30% of customers make another transaction when picking up an order.

But organizations must proceed with caution when using mobile

technology to create personalized content. Take, Saks Fifth Avenue, for instance. The luxury department store chain prides itself on being a personal shopping mecca—a heritage it celebrates with a high-fashion editorial featuring some of the world’s best photographers, stylists, fashion editors, and models.

But when it came time to build out its mobile site, Saks ruled against uploading all of its rich content to a mobile platform. “We spent a lot of time building really robust, interactive editorial to drive engagement on our website,” says Jordan Lustig, vice president of product management at Saks. “But that doesn’t really translate to a mobile device for a number of reasons, including bandwidth constraints and performance issues.”

Personalized touchpoints — B2B vs B2C



Source: PwC and Forbes Insights, *Leading with customer-focused content*; Bases: 203, 112
 Q: To which of the following customer touch points are you able to deliver personalized 1:1 content?

Research methodology

How are organizations creating emotional connections around content-rich experiences? What media assets support these personalized experiences? What best practices lead to a steady and consistent distribution of targeted content at greater scale and with reduced cost and complexity?

We set out to answer these important questions—and to

understand how today's leading B2B and B2C organizations are achieving business benefits such as increased brand awareness and enhanced customer engagement via customer-focused content.

To explore this landscape and its key players, Forbes Insights and PwC launched a survey of 369 senior-level executives at large companies around the world, from

North America to the Middle East. The survey, which was fielded in May and June 2015, included financial services, technology, retail, telecommunications, healthcare, and consumer products industries.

Forbes Insights and PwC also conducted in-depth interviews with 18 executives to provide context for the findings.



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End notes

- 1 PwC, [2015 Global Digital IQ® Survey](#).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 PwC and Forrester, [The Power of Personalization](#), December 2015.

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