



# THE FIVE Cs OF EFFECTIVE CONTENT MARKETING

Putting the full power of content to work for your brand

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Brands continue to expand their use of high-quality content — especially video — to engage customers, build brand relationships and ultimately increase sales.

Within the B2B space alone, over 75 percent of B2B companies [already use content marketing](#), and over 73 percent planned to increase their investment in content marketing initiatives in 2014. The use of video in B2B content marketing rose 70 percent in 2012 alone and shows no signs of slowing. More and more, brands understand that the role of video extends beyond individual initiatives, and integrate it into their content marketing strategy across the customer lifecycle.

As brands gain experience and sophistication in content marketing, they find five aspects particularly important for achieving full impact and ROI:

- › **Convergence** — Using content to support brand-building and sales throughout the customer lifecycle
- › **Conversion** — Using compelling content to increase the conversion rates of specific marketing programs
- › **Channels** — Meeting the demand for high-quality content across every device or platform people use
- › **Competitive advantage** — Achieving brand differentiation through content that educates, entertains and delights
- › **Community** — Fostering brand relationships with current followers as well as new audiences

This paper explores these five areas in order to help you realize the full value of your content marketing strategy.

## Convergence

### *Using Content To Support Brand-Building And Sales Throughout The Customer Lifecycle*

It's currently [estimated](#) that over 60 percent of the buying process takes place before customers engage directly with a potential vendor. In other words, what used to take place through stores and sales people is now happening through digital channels. This massive shift in buyer behavior puts immense pressure on content as the first (and often second and third) sales call for a company. For consumers and business-to-business decision-makers, online content provides a welcome alternative to superficial ads and high-pressure sales pitches. Long before they contact a company, they can do their own research, from background information on an issue they're trying to address, to updates on the latest trends and best practices, to reviews and comparisons of the available products. Much of this content will come from third-party sources, but there's no reason a brand's own content can't be part of the mix — as long as it's credible, authentic and substantial.

While much marketing content is ephemeral and designed to be this way — such as offers and promotions that aim to prompt an action rather than provide information — the best content marketing pieces can continue throughout the customer lifecycle, from evaluation to selection to purchase and use. Make sure your content marketing strategy is designed to provide value and meet your customers' needs every step of the way. If your content is interesting, relevant and useful, customers will continue to refer to it, generating ongoing positive impressions for your brand.

Similarly, while advertising has a limited shelf life, authentic and relevant content that addresses a key pain point or issue for your customers will retain its relevance far longer. A high-quality piece of content, optimized with appropriate keywords, can continue to boost SEO, generate traffic, and drive leads long after its premiere. This is particularly true for video. In fact, potential buyers are [40 percent more likely](#) to proactively contact a company after viewing their video. So, while advertising still plays an important role, a digital marketing strategy that accounts for both online ads and original content (namely video) will ultimately drive the greatest brand awareness and conversion.

**Citrix Systems** uses a Citrix TV portal to provide thousands of videos to help customers of its IT infrastructure and virtualization solutions at every stage, from demos to guide product evaluation and consideration, to best practices for implementation, to training and support topics for ongoing reference. Community-driven prioritization features such as “most watched,” “most popular,” and viewer ratings ensure that users' video experiences are relevant, topical and timely.



## STORYTELLING THROUGHOUT THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Storytelling has become a frequent buzzword in the content marketing arena — and for good reason. People want to be entertained, and they're naturally drawn to messages and themes in both business and everyday life that they find relatable. The Content Marketing Institute [emphasizes](#) the importance of storytelling in content marketing throughout the customer journey as a way to build both brands and sales. In particular, brands should tell their story in a way that triggers empathy and echoes universal themes, such as the rise of an underdog to become a hero, or the outsider who overturns the status quo with innovation and integrity. Brands can also tell stories about their customers to show that they relate to their experience at various points of the lifecycle: feeling pain, seeking a solution, solving their problem and enjoying a positive outcome. comScore has [reported on](#) the influence professional video can have on brand-building and sales — due to its “emotional intensity” and relatability quality.

## Channels

*Meeting the demand for high-quality content across every device or platform people use*

Consumers today have embraced a “virtual concierge” way of life where almost any information, product, or service is at their fingertips through their smartphones, tablets and laptops. E-commerce, online media, mobile apps and social connections are woven through every aspect of daily existence. People turn to online video and other sources for guidance on everything from a new pair of shoes a major enterprise software purchase, as well as for resources to help them use their new purchases effectively. In fact, recent data indicates that [35 percent of consumers](#) watch video at least several times per day. This constant appetite for information creates both opportunities and challenges for brands. A technology-enhanced lifestyle provides a natural niche for content marketing pieces — but you’ve got to deliver them in the way consumers expect and demand. And that means providing a convenient, consistent user experience on any device or platform they happen to use.

### THE DEATH OF THE PC

The shift to an anywhere, anytime online lifestyle can be seen clearly in the declining share of consumers who own a desktop computer — [from 68 percent to 64 percent in a single year](#) — and the rising popularity of tablets, which are now in the hands of 34 percent of consumers. As brands move quickly to adapt, [mobile video was projected to account for \\$520 million](#) in ad spending in the U.S. in 2013.

Even within the home, computers face new competition from Internet-connected TVs. [YuMe](#), an online video advertising solution provider, projected that smart TV adoption would near 20 percent in 2013, and that [video viewing on connected TVs would rise to 42 percent](#). Over-the-top (OTT) devices such as [Chromecast](#), [Roku](#) and Fan present yet another option. Often, people use TVs and mobile devices at the same time, whether to complement TV viewing with online content, or to provide a diversion when one screen or the other fails to satisfy.

This further fragments the viewer’s attention and makes it all the more critical to deliver content wherever their eyes may land.

Achieving this pervasive reach across channels can pose a challenge. [Mobile platform fragmentation](#) continues to be a considerable issue, from proliferating versions of the Android operating system and the device types on which they run, to the multiple versions of iOS currently in use. As brands struggle with various platforms, devices and connection types, they face the risk of [compromised video content quality](#) in some scenarios and an inconsistent viewing experience for parts of their audience. Still, the content business, like the concierge business, is built on customer service. Success — or failure — is determined by the provider’s ability to meet the viewer’s needs. Brightcove customers rely on [Brightcove Video Cloud](#) to deliver online video assets in the highest quality for every stream so they can meet viewer expectations wherever and however they watch.

## Community

*Fostering brand relationships with current followers as well as new audiences*

People value the opportunity to take part in smart, compelling conversations around topics and issues that they care about. By providing high-quality content relevant to the interests of their audiences, marketers can fuel these discussions, create a sense of community around their brand, and build stronger relationships with their existing followers. Even more powerfully, the best content will spark longer-term engagement and motivate audience members to share its educational information, entertainment experience, or advocacy with their peers. This social sharing will help you reach new audiences with a high likelihood of similarity and affinity with your current customers.

Several functional components are essential to harness the full potential of content marketing to build a community around your brand.

- › **Social sharing controls** — You should make it easy for members of your community to share your compelling and thought-provoking content across their broader network. For example, Video Cloud customers have the option to allow viewers to immediately share video content to Facebook and Twitter with a single click.
- › **Facebook whitelisting** — It's important that the online video platform technology that you choose is whitelisted by Facebook. This allows your branded video player to automatically appear on fan pages and in Facebook news feeds, rather than forcing people to click through to a non-approved player.
- › **Social content extensions** — Ratings capabilities, chat functions, and in-player comments can generate further dialogue and excitement around your video content. This is particularly powerful during live video events.

While the quality and production value of your content is paramount, of course, it's just as important to pay attention to ease of distribution, sharing options and immediate gratification through chat to achieve broader reach and virality.

**PUMA** builds relationships and community around its brand by publishing a wide range of video content on sports and active lifestyles around the world. The company brings customers on a journey through interactive, multi-screen experiences such as a brand environment created for the 2012 London Olympics, where consumers could interact in person, as well as remotely through live video content, with events and content timed around PUMA-sponsored Jamaican sprinter, Usain Bolt, and his epic performances in the 100 and 200 meters.

## Conversion

*Using compelling content to increase the conversion rates of specific marketing programs*

Content marketing isn't just effective for building brand awareness and customer engagement. Online video and other high-quality assets can drive improved conversion rates that not only make the rest of your marketing programs work harder, but also improve the impact of your overall marketing strategy.

A conversion can mean different things in different contexts. Aside from prompting a purchase or the signing of a contract, a conversion can also consist of a response to a call to action such as downloading a white paper, requesting a meeting with the sales team, signing up for a product trial, or even clicking on a banner ad. Indeed, anything that moves the customer further through the purchase funnel and closer to a sale can be considered a conversion. Whatever metrics are used to measure a marketing program, content marketing can have a powerful multiplier effect on its results: more downloads, more meeting requests, more product trials or more clicks.

Many brands now integrate video into landing pages and other assets as a relatively easy, low-cost way to increase their effectiveness. Research suggests that this can actually [double the resulting conversions](#) — delivering twice the impact of the advertising spend without increasing its cost. This further illustrates the potency of video-based content marketing to engage customers, hold their attention and entice them to continue their conversation with the brand.

## Competitive Advantage

*Achieving brand differentiation through content that educates, entertains and delights*

Brands succeed and thrive when they make the best possible use of the tools at their disposal to highlight their strengths, mitigate their shortcomings and establish clear differentiation from the competition. Content marketing — whether video, blog posts, infographics or other forms — offers a unique opportunity for brands to define themselves in their own terms. Unlike earned media, the owned media generated through content marketing is completely under the brand's control. The best brands tell their story in an authentic, entertaining, informative manner, then promote it energetically to establish a strong identity in the marketplace.

The following brands illustrate effective use of content marketing for competitive advantage:

- › [Oracle Eloqua](#) — Eloqua is a marketing automation tool, so effective content marketing is an especially important element of its brand identity. The company offers a wealth of resources on its website and social properties, including its "[Modern Marketing Essentials](#)" library of helpful marketing and content planning tools, the integration of contextual video across its website and a robust blog.

- › [HubSpot](#) — An inbound marketing leader, HubSpot practices what it preaches with an arsenal of content that educates customers on marketing techniques and best practices, including video, webinars, ebooks and more.
- › [PUMA](#) — In addition to [video](#) content about its own products, PUMA produces a variety of content about its [Creative Art Network](#), an initiative to promote creative initiatives globally. This makes its website a destination for people beyond those looking to purchase athletic apparel, helping it reach new prospects and begin cultivating brand relationships earlier in the consideration phase.

Building on its identity as one of the world's leading fashion brands **HUGO BOSS** used online video and social media to reinvent the fashion show for a new era. To bring its May 2012 Beijing Fashion Show to a global audience—in a way they'd never seen before—the company made live and on-demand video available in both 2D and 3D on its own website, as well as on Facebook and YouTube. Limited-edition 3D glasses distributed throughout store locations around the world included a time stamp for local audiences to tune in to the live streams. The campaign was a tremendous success, generating active participation among the audience most important to the company and its industry..

## Conclusion

The insatiable appetite of consumers for relevant, interesting and useful content provides rich opportunities for brands. Content marketing can help you build new kinds of relationships with customers and prospects, define your brand, and make every part of your marketing strategy more effective. For more information about content marketing and online video, please visit Brightcove's [digital marketing solutions](#).