

# Content Marketing Isn't Really About Your Content

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Marketers put an incredible amount of focus on their content. And you can't blame them, considering how important [quality content](#) is for reaching business goals. According to Hubspot, “**brands** relying on inbound marketing [save over \\$14](#) for every new customer acquired.”

Further data from the Custom Content Council finds that “61 percent of consumers say they feel better about a company that delivers custom content, and [are more likely to buy from that company](#).” That's why the mantra has become: [Create killer content](#), and create as much of it as possible.

Content makes up most of what marketers research and discuss these days. On marketing blogs, the conversation is mostly about [how to create specific content pieces](#) and [build a content strategy](#), while research reports and white papers focus on the performance of different content types.

In reality, content **marketing** isn't really about content.

Few marketers focus on the real purpose of the content they create: the goals they're trying to achieve in business, and for their audience. Even worse, no one seems to talk about how implementation, [distribution](#), user experience, and other components of a **marketing** strategy come together to significantly affect the audience's thoughts, feelings, and actions.

## Content marketing is about consumer behavior.

Really, content marketing is all about maintaining or [changing consumer behavior](#). Every component of the **marketing** process, including the content itself, must be geared towards these goals:

- Customer loyalty and retention
- Activating latent demand
- Driving conversions

These goals can't be achieved with one piece of content, no matter how amazing. All content must have ties to your business goals and be distributed strategically in order for content

**marketing** to work.

According to **David Zbar, Senior Vice President, Digital** at [Marshall Fenn Communications](#) : “Content marketing will become increasingly more important for businesses. If you can change a person’s behavior, meet their needs, and provide value at every turn along their journey, you have a great chance of earning their loyalty and their business.”

The less your content **marketing** is geared towards demand generation, the less likely it is your strategy will succeed.

I know what you’re thinking: content **marketing** is supposed to prioritize the audience’s needs over business goals. But in reality, meeting your audience’s needs is how you meet your business goals.

## How it’s done.

Brands are able to [influence consumer behavior](#) by creating and delivering content that speaks to their specific needs, and by convincing them that their product or service is the solution. This is done by:

- Building an emotional connection
- Inspiring feelings
- Building trust
- Giving a positive user experience

Content is definitely at the core of how it's done, but it can't be achieved by producing content for content's sake.

You see many marketers creating [impressive one-off pieces](#) that make great examples of quality content, but they don't always have much of a relationship with the thoughts and feelings of their audience, or an effect on their behavior.

To see it done right, consider **Volkswagen** China's [Sports Car Challenge 2](#) as an example. The 2013 mobile game was a super-creative way to showcase premium models such as **Audi**, **Bentley**, and **Porsche**, all **brands** of the VW group.



The game got more than [1,000,000 downloads](#) during the first 10 weeks -- strong evidence that it met the definition of 'killer content.' But the Sports Car Challenge 2 wasn't created to entertain mobile users. It was created to generate leads. The game's real success came when it generated more than 25,000 dealership inquiries and test drives during the same period. The game connected with Volkswagen's audience, inspired feelings, and motivated them to change their behavior.

If you aren't working with a Volkswagen budget, and creating interactive games is far out of your financial reach, don't worry. You don't have to pour tons of money into content creation for it to be successful.

## Being genuinely helpful.

Take a [blackjack betting strategy article](#) published by CasinoRoom: It described the specific actions players should take when presented with different hands.

Presenting clear, actionable advice inspired feelings of confidence in readers and [built their trust in the company](#). The result? The company saw a significantly higher number of post-read sign-ups compared to other pieces of content it's published.

At the end of the day, marketers need to switch their focus from awesome content to the real purpose of content marketing -- influencing behavior. This is most easily done with a [holistic marketing strategy](#).

## Having a holistic strategy.

A holistic marketing strategy involves all the major factors that affect your audience's behavior, including:

- Audience and competitor analysis
- Content geared towards audience engagement and goals
- Publishing strategies that optimize reach and discussion
- Planning [distribution channels](#)
- Performance monitoring and impact analysis

Content is at the center of all of these factors, but a marketer's focus on each will greatly affect their success -- and the absence of any of them will render their killer content largely useless. And while each factor ultimately serves the business's goals by driving consumer behavior, they do so in a consumer-centric fashion.

A holistic strategy gives audiences the content, channels, and resources to answer their questions and achieve their goals online, but it does so by getting them to take the kinds of actions that are good for business. So, while content is undeniably important, it's not what content **marketing** is all about.

There's a reason that marketers who track ROI and prove success are [more likely to succeed](#) -- these activities prevent them from becoming hyper-focused on content over other important parts of marketing.

Content marketing is about bringing in customers and keeping them, which is done by giving them positive experiences with customer-centric **marketing**. In retrospect, the term content marketing might have made the focus clearer for many marketers if it had been called consumer-centric **marketing**.

The time is ripe for marketers to slow down on their research of the latest and greatest content types, and to spend more time thinking about how their content will bring about changes in consumer behavior that will help them succeed.

Image: [Proelios](#)

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