

## Content overload and 5 tips to help brands get it right

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Focus on distribution as much as content creation, says **Adam Fulford**, partner at Mindshare, who offers five key behaviours all **brands** should adopt as part of their content strategy.

The power of content sits at the heart of what it means to be human. It has the power to transform **brands** simply because it's what people go online to find. Whether that is in the form of information on cinema times or how-to videos, or entertainment through status updates and trailers for The Force Awakens, it's at the root of why we love the web.

### Hunger for content

Two recent studies demonstrate just how important content has become for **brands**, a growth fuelled by consumers' appetite for content.

First, [research from the Content Marketing Association](#) indicates content **marketing** now represents around 25% of total **marketing** spend. While the research was undoubtedly **designed** to show an emphasis in this area, the interesting thing is the growth shown by the same research over the past three years.

Second, back in May this year, Econsultancy said **brands** should spend 50% of their content **marketing** budget on distribution.

It believes we in the industry should learn from the "explosion of viral publishers", citing both industry behemoths such as **BuzzFeed** and the growth of others such as Upworthy (80 million monthly unique users in 18 months) and Lad Bible (40 million unique users and a [Facebook](#) reach of more than 10.5 million likes).

Like it or not, [content marketing](#) continues to grow. When done well it has the power to both build and transform **brands**. Studies by the Institute of Practitioners in **Advertising** for the likes of [O2](#) Guru, Sainsbury's Magazine and BT Sport reveal the positive effect that it can have on the bottom line when done with enough focus, skill and scale.

**Brands** such as **GoPro**, **Lululemon**, **AirBnB** and **Lego** continue to build their presence with

minimal to no investment in traditional paid **advertising**.

Done well, content trashes the interruptive paid-for **advertising** model, getting straight to our hearts and minds by simply giving us what we're looking for.

### Things aren't so rosy for some

But, for many **brands**, things are currently out of control. Many have latched onto content across the business and are oozing it from every pore. In most **brands**, siloed teams produce this content with little co-ordination.

[YouTube](#) pages increasingly resemble a stockpile of all the content that **brand** has ever produced. Exploring and engaging in it is less of a user experience and more an archaeological dig.

The net effect of this growing scrapheap is disorganised **brand** personalities and a sea of irrelevant content, content that will never be engaged with or shared as our patterns of consumption continue to shift inexorably into feeds. This is obsolescence through changed behaviour.

It's now time for **brands** to refocus and channel their energies in a more co-ordinated way.

For many companies this will mean a more editorial approach to managing the sheer volume of content that they produce. It's a case of shifting towards a more holistic approach that's based on an understanding of what we as users want from them.

To be effective they need to learn from traditional broadcasters such as the **BBC**, which has long been an expert at curating the sheer volume of content it produces. More recently it has evolved to accept that its content will be consumed in ways it had never imagined.

The organisation now focuses as much on the creation of content as its distribution, and seeks to learn what works – and what doesn't – every second of every day.

### Unlocking the brand message

Over the past year or so, Mindshare has spent a significant amount of time working with some of its biggest clients to realign their content strategies and implement new working methodologies underneath them.

The [media agency](#) is actively exploring how partnerships with **BuzzFeed**, for example, might unlock different opportunities to reach key audiences.

**Jonah Peretti**, founder of **BuzzFeed**, appeared at one of **Mindshare's** keynote sessions at [Huddle 2015](#), discussing [how changing human behaviour is transforming content consumption](#).

These changes are fundamentally influencing strategies of many of **Mindshare's** clients. Across this work, there are five key behaviours that the agency believes all **brands** should adopt if they are to become true broadcaster **brands**.

1. **Accept and adopt**

Successful **brands** have a clear, documented strategy for content at each stage.

2. **Content brands, not branded content**

Consider content over the long term, not campaign by campaign. **Design** content that audiences want, not just what suits the business.

3. **Do one thing well**

**Brands** are generally known for doing one thing well – so audiences know what to expect, which is why they gravitate towards that **brand**. A simplified approach is often more effective. Ensure you have the right level of staffing to achieve your objective.

4. **Create, measure, iterate**

**Brands** have realised the value of the data that underpins content and have an established measurement platform that allows them to learn and respond fast to what works, and what doesn't.

5. **Think feeds**

Consider not just the core content, but where it will go, **designing** it for the medium in mind. It's a good idea to work with people with a good understanding of what works in the appropriate channel. Creating continuing partnerships with a handful of new school publishers and **social** networks to produce and adapt content is likely to be a focus for many of Mindshare's clients over the next year or so.

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