

**CONTENT MARKETING  
REVOLUTION**

*SEIZE CONTROL OF YOUR MARKET  
IN FIVE KEY STEPS*

**DANE BROOKES**

# FOREWORD

By Matt Warnock

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These are difficult times to be a marketer. After decades of doing the same old things in the same old ways, the digital revolution came along and changed everything. Not only have functions changed, but the internet has also opened up borders. Your competitors are no longer just in your city, area or country; they're in India, Brazil and China.

The result is that 'the company' as we know it is no longer something of longevity. According to Professor Richard Foster from Yale University<sup>[117]</sup>, the average lifespan of S&P 500 Index companies has plummeted from 67 years in the 1920s to just 15 years today.

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The message is clear: you are replaceable. No matter what product or service your company offers, someone can offer it better, cheaper or faster. And they will replace you.

And yet, there are brands that make a mockery of that logic. People pay large amounts of money for a MacBook Pro when a standard laptop – a third of the price – would fit their need. A trip to the supermarket or drugstore reveals a plethora of soaps, shower gels and skin creams – most undistinguishable from the next – but Dove stands out as being pure, natural and gentle. IBM operates in a variety of hugely competitive sectors and yet none of its rivals come close to matching it for trustworthiness. I don't even drink Coca-Cola but I still associate the can of Coke with a sense of fun and good times.

So, in this ultra-competitive landscape, creating an emotional connection between your brand and your customer is how you can immunise yourself from the 'better, cheaper, faster' model. If people feel a true connection to your brand, if it reflects their values, and maybe even their sense of status, then not only will you stand out in a crowded market place, but customers may even pay a premium for your products or services.

That's where content comes in. Not brochures, flyers, banner ads or promotions, but valuable, remarkable content that creates an authentic experience for your consumers. Whether it's an educational how-to video, a game-changing whitepaper, a hilarious GIF, an expert webinar, or a broader campaign that spans multiple touchpoints, these are all opportunities to create an emotional bond with your consumer.

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This might seem like a new phenomenon; the ‘brand as publisher’ is the hippest phrase being thrown around marketing departments the world over right now, with Kraft, Red Bull and Marriott the seemingly obligatory examples discussed and analysed at every single marketing event. But, as Dane Brookes entertainingly explains in chapter two, if you think content marketing is something new then you are very much mistaken.

Think you’re immune to content marketing? Well, if you ever joined the *Kiss*, *Duran Duran* or even *The Beatles* fan club, then you were being content marketed to. Likewise, if you’ve ever picked up an in-flight magazine on a business trip or watched *The LEGO Movie* with your kids.

The beauty of all these examples is that they provide true value. It may be entertainment or education, it may even be monetary, but it places that value to the customer before the short-term needs of the business.

During my time at Philips, I’ve been part of that shifting focus; the transition from branded content – content that serves the business – to becoming a true content brand, which delivers a value to its audience through the content it creates and publishes.

As a key player in the new and emerging HealthTech space, Philips content often takes the form of whitepapers and technical blogs from thought leaders aimed at educating, informing and supporting healthcare professionals. At the same time, we still innovate in the consumer space with home health products; navigating that line between B2B and B2C can be challenging from a content perspective. Awards and recognition suggest that we’re doing it pretty well, but this is because we made sure we had a clear and robust strategy in place before producing the content.

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If big brands like Philips, with hundreds of digital properties and large resources find the demands of creating compelling content marketing challenging, then what chance do smaller businesses have?

I'm a bit of a health nut. I believe in eating as clean and healthily as possible, so I was overjoyed to find a nearby farm, on the outskirts of Amsterdam, which delivers organic, grass-fed meat. The website is easy to use, the service is quick and polite, and the meat is excellent, particularly their spare ribs. When signing up for the home delivery service, I provided details such as my email address and, once in a while – not so frequently I deem it spam nor so rare I forget who they are – I receive a newsletter from them. I look forward to it every time. It isn't a list of products or promotions; instead, it's a charming update on what ingredients are currently in season, information about different cuts of meats, and some tasty, seasonal recipe suggestions. The result is that I feel loyal to my meat supplier, and have often tried a new cut and even bought cheese or olive oil through the service.

In many cases, businesses are already producing (or have the potential to produce) excellent content. The key is developing a strategy for using that content and identifying the best channels for it to thrive and serve an audience.

Which is of course why you have bought this book. And what safe hands you're in.

I believe that marketers are terrible choices to lead content marketing programmes. They're too indoctrinated in the 'let's talk about us and push products' mentality. If you want to excel in storytelling, hire a storyteller. Dane Brookes is amongst the new

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breed of true content marketers – professionals who are pairing backgrounds in journalism, photography and film making with marketing expertise and experience to produce truly compelling customer-centric content.

By following Dane’s advice in this book, you’ll be able to devise a solid content strategy, with insights into how you can test, measure and improve. But then it’s your turn to take the first steps into the brave (not all that) new world of content.

The famous US general George S Patten once said “A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow.” He would have made a fine content marketer!

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