

Content marketing: What could possibly go wrong?

 By Dylan Balkind

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If you've heard the term 'Content Marketing Matters Most' and felt your jaw slack with the lack of enthusiasm, you are not alone. If you felt this way because of how this content generally inundates your day and leaves you overcome with an acute case of the discombobulations - you are not alone. And if you are thankful that Angela Lansbury has devoted her time to opposing a remake of 'Murder, She Wrote' rather than filming videos of herself twerking and uploading these to YouTube - you too, are not alone.



Disclaimer: I'm going to use the term 'they' a lot in this piece. When I'm sure of my brevity to put **me**, **myself** and **my** irie behind something, I will say "I".

They say that all content is marketing. If this was 2006, such doolally-tap would elicit many a raucous guffaw. Granted, back then tweeting was something only well-hidden crickets did in your lounge all night before the birds took over at dawn and although social media (as we know it) was gathering steam in the form of MySpace, it wasn't considered content; content. Like, for realsies content. But hey, 2006 wasn't *that* long ago. Not Angela Lansbury long ago, #nomsayin?

They¹ say that content marketing is "any marketing format that involves the creation and sharing of media and publishing content..." - which because we're in the business of being in business, would be designed to generate revenue streams.

If you look at Lily Allen's route to rockstar, using MySpace as her playground was content marketing before it was being called content marketing. So yes, things do change - but they also stay the same. Content marketing comes down to creating content that provides relevant, contextual information about your business through smart storytelling that inspires people to action. What if that's the wrong action?

Hotel camera content

For example, there's an innovative entrepreneur in Cape Town who offers a five star concierge service. He says that if you want it, dream it and can afford it, he'll get it. He has posted an article on his blog called '[My 10 Commandments for Hotel Guests and Visitors](#)' in which he dishes the skinny on what their industry considers tasteful guest behavior versus tasteless plebby slouch. His ninth commandment is: "We have cameras everywhere. No, really. EVERYWHERE." I can understand the context of his post. I see that he is generating content about the industry, for the industry and its customers, and I can see that he deems this buzz work for the service he offers.

Straight off though, I don't think the post in its entirety captures the essence of the ultimate dapper concierge extraordinaire. Aren't we talking the gentlemanliness of Michael Caine in... well anything he has ever been in, rather than say, Mark from Ugly Betty? Content marketing should portray the personality of your brand and what it is you're selling, right? Aside from the sass (which coming from me I know is a big ask), the implied disrespect opens a whole new can of content we need to talk about.

Sh*ts and giggles content

They say that having to ask permission to create something is where creativity dies. I say that that's for art or for business, or for the business of art - in all its shapes and forms. Its ultimate goal lies in the revenue streams it leads to.

Alas, we're on the doorstep of the silly season. The weeks are feeling longer and heavier with each passing minute, and

anyone with any experience in this industry will grasp how the pendulum between the celebrations and the commiserations have us drinking like dehydrated blue whales after the longest stretch in the office. Then it's Tuesday morning and we're set poised for a whole new day of challenges. But what happens when the light bulb struck after the fourth jager bomb and before you know it there's a hilarious new video of your hotshot designer doing his best Jean Claude Van Damme impression across the tables at the Jolly Roger? Picture it: the splits to end all splits. And then he slips. It's all *vrre* funny. Or it could just be the office nice-girl who accidentally scrapes another car trying to get out of the parking lot to get to a client meeting. So both are captured on devices and shared. Is that content marketing?

Yes, because it involves the *creation and sharing of media*. Except that the brand is now a person and one colleague's good intentions is another's even-score. Creating content that celebrates cyber bullying in any shape or form is not art, business, or the business of art. It's just a way of doing things behind that faux wall of anonymity called the internet. (Except not really.)

Email - external and internal-bound - to content around campaigns designed to drive traffic through blogs to web or mobile and/or leverage awareness through pre-roll videos on YouTube; no matter how you look at it, content is just about everything, everywhere and so we're more on the hook now than ever. There's just no room for *they* when it comes to content marketing.

It comes from someone, somewhere, so make sure it ticks the boxes of its purpose:

- Is it well timed?
- Does it reach the audience it was created for rather than spamming just anyone whose face is washed?
- Does it embrace smart storytelling to cover the brand rather than smack of being overly self-promotional?
- Is it trying too hard to appear on all platforms rather than a few, and well?
- Does it entertain without doing harm?



Here's Angela with a list of people who nailed content marketing first time.

It's not supposed to be easy. But it is supposed to be smart, so that when you are willing to put **you, yourself** and **your** irie behind something - it's because it is cognizant, contextual and conscientious - or at best, considerate. Why? Because things that are seen cannot be unseen... and it is for this very reason that Angela Lansbury's devotion to opposing a remake of 'Murder, She Wrote' rather than making videos of herself twerking and posting them on YouTube is something I am not alone in celebrating.

So on behalf of they and I - and everyone in between - thank you Angela. Thank you.

For content that matters and lots that doesn't, follow me [@DylanBalkind](#).

¹ Wikipedia Web Definitions

ABOUT DYLAN BALKIND

Even the person who can sell ice to Eskimos needs have a way of letting the world know. Words. They're wonderful warriors with the potential for worry. Use a writer who takes his passion seriously. Here's more about me and mine: <http://goo.gl/68Rsse> | Twitter [@DylanBalkind](#)

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