

[Back](#)



## Content Marketing

### Content Marketer Spotlight Series: A Q&A With Brian Honigman

By Rebecca McIntyre on June 19, 2014

We're excited to introduce Opentopic's *Content Marketer Spotlight Series*, a new, regular feature that provides valuable insights from thought leaders in the content marketing space. Opentopic's Content Marketer Spotlight series is part of our ongoing mission to help marketers succeed in content marketing. Be sure to subscribe to the blog so you don't miss future posts.

Brian Honigman is the perfect influencer to jump-start Opentopic's Content Marketer Spotlight Series. Brian (@BrianHonigman) is a [marketing consultant](#), [freelance writer](#), and [professional speaker](#) who works with both startups and other marketing-, business-, and technology-focused brands. He's spoken for other organizations and conferences and is a contributing writer to Entrepreneur, Huffington Post, Forbes, the Next Web, Mashable, and others.

We picked Brian's brain to learn more about this elusive, yet popular, trending topic: content marketing, and how it's changing the marketing landscape. He educates us on its fundamentals and offers valuable advice to marketers on how to embrace content marketing as part of their overall marketing plan. Brian also discusses the wildly popular sentiment—which is spreading more every day—that content is the key to future marketing success and explains how marketers can leverage this trend to their advantage. Enjoy!

**Question: There's a lot of talk about content marketing today, but it seems that there are a number of different interpretations of what it actually is. What is your definition of content marketing?**

Content marketing is using any form of content to build a stronger relationship with an audience. Content can build trust between a company and its customer base by helping an organization to achieve a variety of goals by providing greater visibility, increased traffic, fuel for social channels, a channel for building a stronger affinity for a business, and a means by which customers move across the sales funnel toward a conversion.

Content marketing is different than traditional advertising in that it isn't promotional, educates its audience, doesn't disrupt a person's experience on a channel, and often acts as a low-touch marketing moment meant as one part of a larger ongoing strategy.

There are many interpretations as to [what content marketing is](#) and is not today, due to the effectiveness of its form of marketing. Many businesses are using it to reach their goals and stimulating discussions on the subject, which can ultimately lead to a lot of hype, speculation, and buzz about this marketing industry topic. Unfortunately, this can sometimes distort the meaning of a highly popular and effective marketing technique.

**Question: Is content marketing more critical today than it was ten years ago? Why or why not?**

Content marketing has been around for decades, but it has become a more essential part of a marketer's toolkit due to the widespread changes in technology that's now accessible to consumers.

Today, the average consumer sees hundreds—or even thousands—of marketing messages every day via emails, tweets, snapchats, billboards, text messages, and more. This bombardment of messaging means that in order for businesses to cut through all the noise, they must come up with the right content that suits the interests of their particular audience.

Because of the availability of technology in the form of mobile devices, the internet, and more, consumers are much smarter and more easily annoyed by marketing messages that are overly promotional, disruptive, or irrelevant. Today's consumer chooses to subscribe to companies' messaging, whether by following them on

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Twitter, subscribing to their emails, or opting in to their content stream in some other capacity.

The reason content marketing is so prevalent is because it delivers results, is cost effective compared to other channels, helps cut through the noise of the crowded landscape, and is targeted to the unique interests of today's savvy consumer.

#### **Question: How does content curation fit into content marketing? Is there an optimal balance?**

**Content curation** is a critical aspect of content marketing, because it allows individuals and businesses to repurpose others' content and provide their own perspectives and/or format to the original content. This also reduces the amount of work it takes to create content in the first place, which saves valuable time for performing other marketing duties.

Curation isn't the end-all-be-all of content marketing; rather, it's merely one of the many techniques a business or individual can—or, arguably, should—use to regularly reach its audience with engaging content. It's all about finding the right mix of marketing techniques and channels that work best for your organization or yourself.

There's no such thing as a perfect balance of original content to curated content, but a good rule of thumb is to focus 70% of your efforts on creating original content and 30% of your time curating others' content. In other words, the majority of your content should be original and then supported by others' repurposed content. You'll see the most success from this approach by getting your unique voice or perspective "out there" to address the quality aspect of your content strategy, while curation can help deal with the quantity aspect of content marketing.

#### **Question: What two pieces of advice would you offer to a marketer who wants to get started in content marketing?**

Understand your audience from the very beginning, because this will dictate the topics addressed in your content, the type of content to produce, what channels to use to distribute your content, and how often your content needs to be produced.

Focus on the goals you aim to achieve so you can understand how content marketing can best help you or your company reach those goals effectively. With no benchmarks in mind, it's hard to measure the ongoing success or failure of your content efforts.

#### **Question: Are there any particular trends that you think content marketers should look out for in the next 6 to 12 months?**


There's a heavy focus on creating blog articles, because this type of content is one of the most effective for a broad range of businesses; however, it's important to understand that there are many other forms of marketing that your business should take into consideration. Two areas content marketers should continue to focus on are micro content and authorship.

Micro content is any type of content that is a small moment, like a tweet, a Google+ post, a Pinterest pin, a Snapchat, or another piece of content that's snackable and light for a consumer to process. Since consumers, especially on mobile devices, continue to prefer to consume content in this capacity, it's up to businesses to produce content in this format. Experiment with creating micro content, because it's how people will continue to consume content in the future and can also help to build a larger story on behalf of your business as each micro moment adds ongoing value over time.

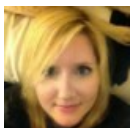
Google authorship will continue to become a more important factor in terms of how Google ranks content in relation to a person's influence, reputation, and expertise in a particular area. Content marketers should be extremely aware of who's producing content on behalf of their business, as well as their own personal authorship when it comes to how they are viewed professionally in the industry. Focus more on how an author's network impacts the visibility of certain types of content in search engines in order to continue to see an impact for your business and its content.

*If you or someone you know would like to be featured as an influencer in our Content Marketer Spotlight Series, please email Rebecca McIntyre at [rebecca@opentopic.com](mailto:rebecca@opentopic.com).*

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#### **About Rebecca McIntyre**

Rebecca is the Marketing Manager at Opentopic. She has worked as a

marketing communicator in a wide variety of fields, ranging from architecture to financial services to communications consultancies. As a passionate writer and content marketer, she decided to join the startup world--and is loving it! She enjoys connecting with people, so feel free to reach out to her on Twitter.



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**Brian Honigman** · Marketing Consultant, Speaker & Writer at Brian Honigman · 526 followers

Thanks Rebecca for interviewing me! I'm thrilled to be included in your first interview of the series and loved the questions you decided to ask. Looking forward to seeing the next interview. :)

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**Rebecca McIntyre** · Brooklyn, New York

Thanks, Brian, for agreeing to participate in our exciting new series! :) I loved your responses and look forward to staying in contact -- you always have great things to say.

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