



WHAT'S THE ROI OF CONTENT CURATION ?

HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF YOUR CURATION PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS CONTENT CURATION, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Content marketing plays a big role in reaching prospects today, often replacing (or greatly diminishing) the role that direct mail, advertising, and trade shows once played in helping businesses cozy up to potential customers. According to a recent survey, 90% of B2C companies are now using content marketing.

For most companies, that means focusing on developing white papers, webinars, blog content, and other types of branded content to spotlight their brand's capabilities and promote themselves as industry leaders.

Content curation—in which you promote an assortment of relevant industry content from other experts on your social media platforms, blogs, and email newsletters—may not seem like such a natural fit with that marketing mix. After all, why should you bother spending time promoting other people's content instead of your own?

Au contraire. As you'll soon discover, content curation is truly a vital part of any content marketing strategy.

Let's take a look at how content curation can benefit your company in its customer nurturing efforts—and how you can measure the ROI of your content curation program to reveal its impact on your marketing organization.



1. WHY FOCUS ON CURATION?

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So, why should you consider curating content from other publishers as part of your content marketing approach? Plenty of reasons.

- **PROVIDE VALUE TO YOUR FANS AND CUSTOMERS**

One of the key goals of any content marketing approach is to provide genuine value so that your prospects will come to see you as a trustworthy resource that they can continually engage with (and buy from, when the time is right). By helping your followers and customers find informative, relevant content based around what's important to them, you're providing them with a valuable free service.

- **ENGAGE WITH YOUR PROSPECTS MORE OFTEN**

Creating original, high-quality content can be time-consuming and expensive. As a result, many companies only create a few pieces of original content each quarter—and promoting these content resources too frequently risks alienating your followers. Content curation can help you continually nurture your relationship with your fans and followers, keeping your brand top of mind and increasing their loyalty to your company.

- **SHOWCASE YOUR EXPERTISE**

Even if you don't have the time to write about a topic in-depth, curating compelling, relevant industry news and opinion pieces can help you demonstrate your own thought leadership—particularly if you add your own analysis to each piece of content that you share.

1. WHY FOCUS ON CURATION?

- **GAIN THE ATTENTION OF INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS**

By frequently promoting the work of influential writers and businesses within industries related to your own, you'll be able to get your company onto these influencers' radar in turn. That means you'll be more likely to get their help with promoting your own content across their social media platforms, and possibly even gain access to some of their valuable contacts for business deals.

- **MAXIMIZE THE IMPACT OF A MINIMAL CONTENT MARKETING BUDGET**

If you don't have the funds to hire dedicated staff to focus on developing content marketing collateral, focusing primarily on content curation requires minimal time and financial investment. It can help you increase your communication frequency and engagement level with prospects without the need to invest heavily in original content development.

Many successful brands and entrepreneurs, including the Content Marketing Institute's founder, Joe Pulizzi, follow something called the "4-1-1 rule" on social media platforms such as Twitter. That means that for every link to your brand's original content you post, you should share one relevant update from another organization, and, more importantly, curate four pieces of content to share with your followers. Even for those leading the pack in the content marketing industry, content curation is an essential tool for building your brand.



2. CASE STUDIES IN CONTENT CURATION

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To understand the positive impact that content curation can have on your brand, let's take a look at a few case studies illustrating ways that companies across a variety of industries can implement content curation as a major component of their content marketing strategies:

- **EMAIL MARKETING FOR A GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY**

A global communications agency that serves more than 2 million businesses worldwide seeks to deepen its relationship with its customers and followers by developing an email marketing program focused on curating content of interest to their customers. The company uses a content discovery platform to set up seven unique “feeds” for its monthly newsletters, allowing subscribers to choose one or more of the topics to follow. The company measures click-through rates and optimizes the content selection over time to deepen engagement with its followers.

- **A BRANDED MICROSITE FOR AN ELECTRIC CAR MANUFACTURER**

An electric car manufacturer wants to raise awareness of the issues surrounding the electric vehicle industry and increase recognition of its brand. The company develops a branded microsite, which includes a mix of original content about the electric automotive industry and a steady stream of curated content with brief analysis, spotlighting the best long-form writing about electric vehicles and broader issues such as sustainability in the automotive industry.

2. CASE STUDIES IN CONTENT CURATION

- **A SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAM FOR A SUSTAINABLE FASHION BRAND**

A sustainable-style fashion line wants to raise awareness of its brand and promote its eco-friendly products while also helping consumers become more aware of the environmental issues surrounding the fashion industry. The company uses its Facebook and Twitter social media platforms to push out a mix of intelligent, curated content that helps to educate and inform potential buyers about the importance of choosing to purchase sustainable clothing items instead of “fast fashion.”

Now that we’ve seen some ways that your company can use curation as a valuable service to help connect with prospects and customers, let’s look at strategies for measuring its success.



3. USING CONTENT CURATION TO BUILD BRAND ENGAGEMENT

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Marketers often downplay the importance of content marketing—and curated content in particular—because they have more difficulty tracking the metrics and ROI of such programs in comparison to keyword ad campaigns and other metrics-driven marketing campaigns. And, even when it comes to content marketing, it's easier to track the page views, social shares, and downloads of on-site articles and white papers than to measure the success of your curation efforts.

Rather than thinking of content marketing as a campaign with a defined start and end date, however, it's important to consider your content marketing strategy as an ongoing relationship with your prospects and customers. It's less important to tie each interaction to a sale—the point is to raise your company's profile and develop trust in your brand.

Nonetheless, you can pay attention to a number of firm metrics to see how successful your content curation efforts are with your followers, such as:

- **FOLLOWER AND SUBSCRIBER NUMBERS**

Are you seeing a steady increase in followers on your social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, now that you've begun curating content there? If you've begun developing a curated email newsletter, rather than simply sharing your own advice, are you seeing your subscriber numbers increase more steadily than they have in the past?

2. USING CONTENT CURATION TO BUILD BRAND ENGAGEMENT

● ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

By using software that can help you track when a user clicks on one of your links, you'll be able to measure how frequently your social audiences are visiting your curated off-site links. You can also assess how often they are "liking" a piece on Facebook or LinkedIn or marking a Twitter update as a "favorite." Users with the highest engagement levels will actively respond to your updates by sharing (or retweeting) or commenting on your posts.

● BRAND RECOGNITION

One of the major reasons to engage in content marketing is to increase "brand lift"—how familiar an average person is with your brand and what you do. While this metric can't be measured based on your website visits alone, an increase in branded keyword searches to your website when you are not running any concurrent digital marketing campaigns is a sure sign that your brand recognition is increasing. You can also conduct your own research with a brand lift survey to help you identify how much your content curation and content marketing efforts have boosted recognition of your company. Curation should be thought of as a long-term initiative—with long-term, sustainable results.



3. HOW CONTENT CURATION BUILDS UP YOUR **BOTTOM LINE**

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Now, let's look at the other side of the equation: While curation can help you develop more engaged relationships with prospects and customers, how can it help you directly increase your company's profits?

Consider these metrics when tracking your content curation's impact on your business' financials:

- **CONVERSIONS**

While content curation's goals should be focused on building relationships rather than directly driving sales, you can use your analytics software to track how a prospect came to fill out a response form or make a purchase. If you can trace a sale back to your curated email newsletter or a link from Twitter or Facebook, it's a sign that your curation strategy is a driving force in your sales strategy.

- **COSTS**

Choosing a curation-focused content strategy can help you save substantially on your marketing budget compared to relying heavily on original content. For instance, a company choosing to rely solely on original content might outsource a budget of \$4,000 per month for blog posts five days a week. In contrast, by reducing your blog output to one post per week and promoting a curated mix of content through your social feeds and email newsletter, you can substantially reduce your need for external support while driving the same (or higher) engagement levels with your supporters.

3. HOW CONTENT CURATION BUILDS UP YOUR BOTTOM LINE

- **TIME**

Whether your content development is handled in house or outsourced, content marketing can take a disproportionate amount of your marketing team's time. Even if you outsource many of your blog posts, your marketing team will likely be involved in editing and producing the articles for your website. If you manage the process in house, your employees may spend a day or more writing each article, reducing their availability to take on other important tasks that help to drive the business. And when it comes to social media promotion, having an effective curation strategy in play can help you save time on developing messages for your social media platforms: Curating content gives you an arsenal of relevant links to share with your followers, helping you to quickly and effectively build audiences on multiple platforms.

By focusing your content marketing efforts on curation, you can reduce the amount of time that your team is spending on content creation and production, freeing them up for other business priorities. You can reduce the time investment even further by making use of content discovery software tools that help you quickly find relevant content to share with your audiences.



4. WHY CURATION IS KEY TO **SUCCESSFUL CONTENT MARKETING**

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If your company has not yet implemented a content marketing strategy, it's time to hop on board.

These days, prospective customers are taking longer than ever to make a purchasing decision—and they're educating themselves rather than immediately reaching out to a sales representative. In fact, B2B buyers may be as much as 95% of the way through their buying journey before opting to reach out to the sales team. That makes it critical for your marketing team to develop relationships with prospects early in the game—before one of your competitors has won them over.

In order to build awareness of your company and drive engagement with your brand, it's important to develop a content strategy that helps your prospects educate themselves about your industry and why your solution could be valuable to them.

Developing custom blog content, white papers, and other content marketing collateral can be great tools for sharing your messaging with prospects, but many companies don't have the huge budgets to invest heavily in content creation.

4. WHY CURATION IS KEY TO SUCCESSFUL CONTENT MARKETING

By bringing curation into your content marketing mix, you can build the same levels of engagement and brand trust as you would with a content generation-focused approach, with minimal time or financial investment. And even for companies with substantial resources, partnering content development with curation can help them deepen their engagement levels with prospects, customers, and industry influencers.

Content curation is an affordable, sustainable strategy that can help your business achieve tangible results, both in the form of higher engagement levels and increased profitability. If you want to make the biggest impact from your content marketing program, it's time to get started with content curation.

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