



Greater Milwaukee Area

# 2016 B2B Content Marketing Survey Results

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## Introduction

We are pleased to deliver the results of our 2016 Milwaukee Area B2B Content Marketing survey. The goal of this survey was to identify how B2B companies in southeastern Wisconsin are adopting this growing marketing practice.

## Key findings

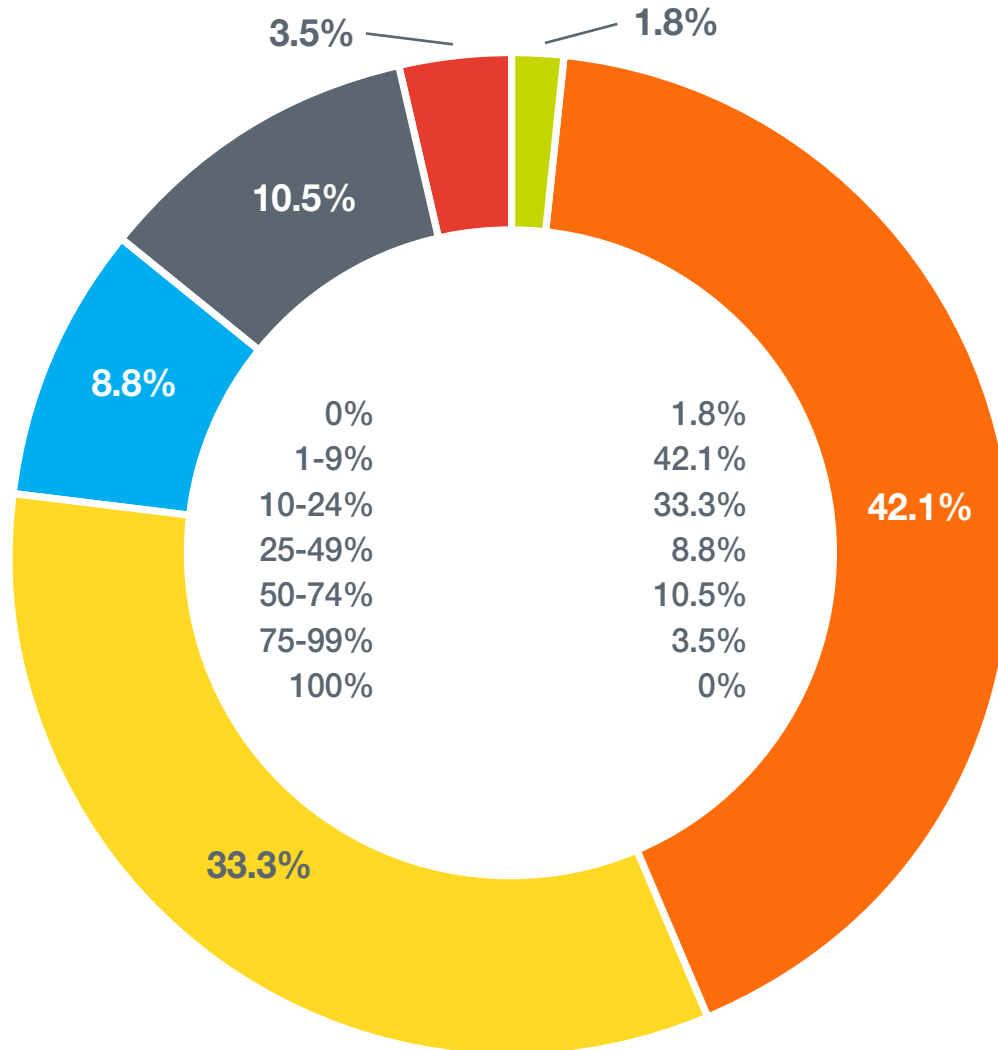
- The majority of respondents don't have a documented content marketing strategy, which limits their ability to be effective with this practice.
- Companies that have a documented content marketing strategy are more likely to have successful content initiatives.
- One-third of marketing managers are investing 10-24% of their total marketing budget on content marketing.
- The majority of respondents don't believe they're effective at content marketing. Only 12% rated themselves as *very effective*.
- Nearly half of respondents said their number one motivation for allocating budget to content marketing is to increase the effectiveness and revenue from lead generation.
- Content measurement is the number one challenge that local marketers face, followed by producing content consistently.

We hope that you find this report useful. Let us know.

Thank you to all who participated.

# 1

What percentage of your total marketing budget do you allocate to content marketing?



**Local support for content marketing is strong.**

Are Milwaukee-area B2B companies allocating budget to content marketing? Yes, to a surprising degree. Nearly half of the respondents said they are currently allocating 1-9% of their total marketing budget on content marketing. Another one-third are devoting 10-24% of their budget to it.

**Risky: Investment without a strategy.**

Of the marketers who say they do not have a documented content marketing strategy, over a third of them have allocated 10-24% of their marketing budget to content marketing, and 41% are investing 1-9%.

**That's a lot of money being invested without a well-defined plan!**

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Does your agency understand the [strategic building blocks of content marketing?](#) There's more to it than just writing stuff.

# 2

## How do you rate the overall effectiveness of your organization's content marketing?

Across North America, many B2B firms are struggling to implement content marketing effectively. According to the Content Marketing Institute's [latest B2B benchmark study](#), only 5% of marketers view their efforts as *very effective*. In the greater Milwaukee area the survey found:

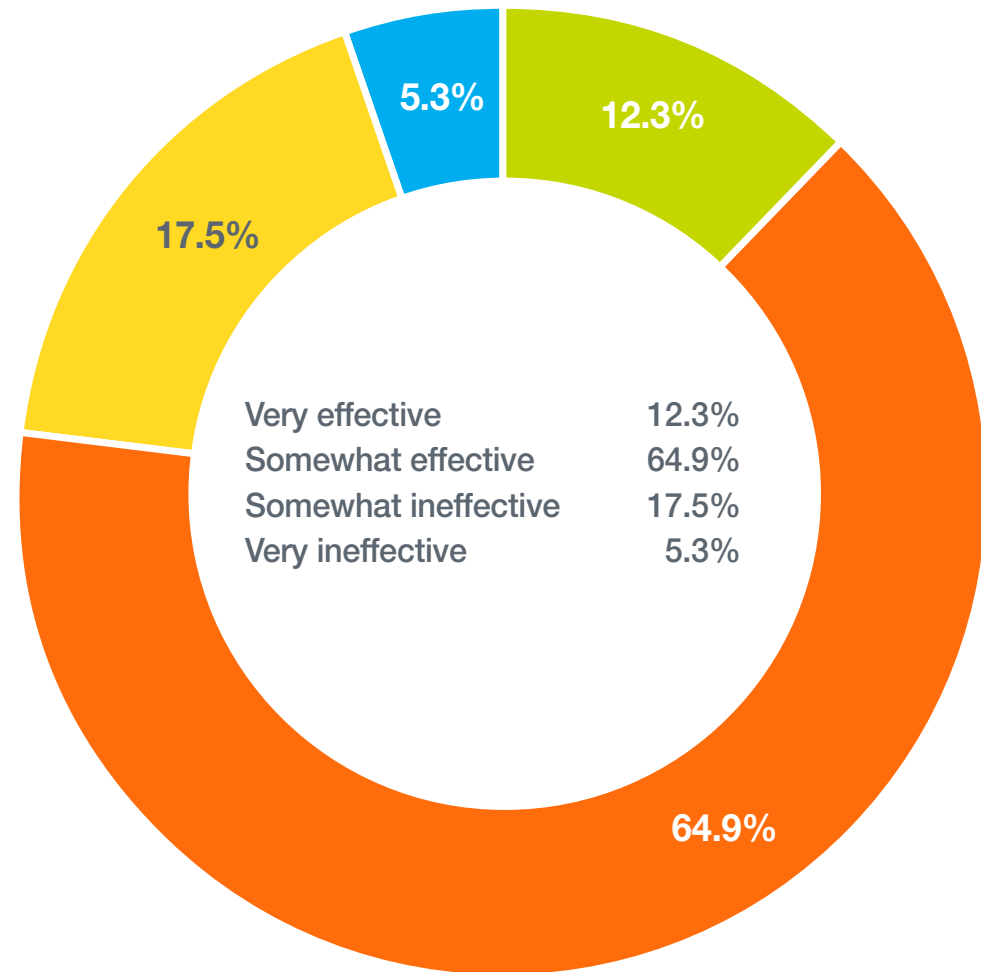
- 12% rate themselves as *very effective*
- 65% believe they're only *somewhat effective*
- 18% classify themselves as *somewhat ineffective*
- 5% rate themselves as *very ineffective*

### Failing to plan is planning to fail.

For those companies that rate their capabilities as *somewhat ineffective* and *very ineffective*, 100% of respondents do not have a documented content marketing strategy.

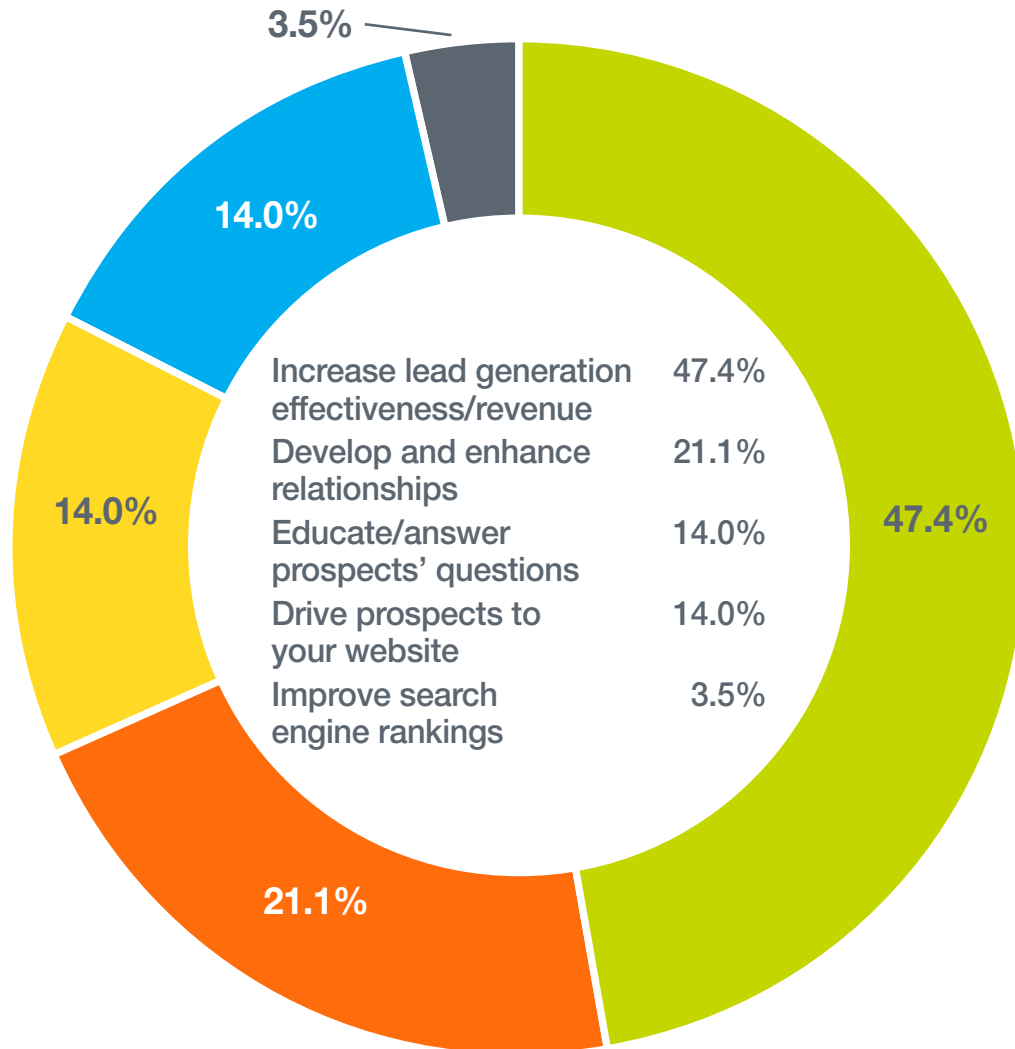
[LEARN MORE](#)

If you don't have a plan for nurturing your prospects, [up to 80% of them could be going to waste.](#)



# 3

What is your number one motivation for allocating your marketing budget to content marketing?



B2B marketers want to sell stuff.

Not surprisingly, nearly half of respondents said their number-one motivation for allocating budget to content marketing is to increase the effectiveness and revenue from lead generation. One-fifth aim to develop and enhance relationships with their target audience. This number is surprisingly low, considering that a necessary step after generating a lead is to nurture it toward a sale.

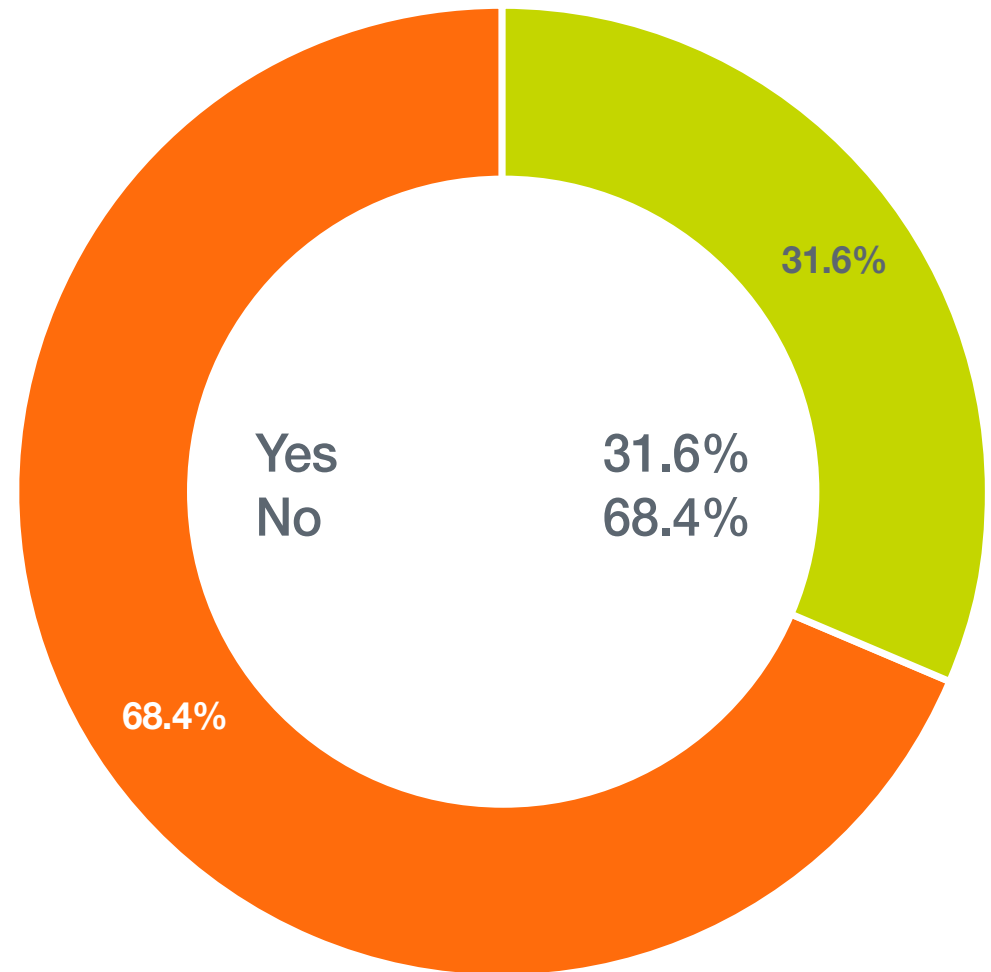
Oddly, the goal of *educating and answering prospects' questions* only resonated with 14% of survey respondents. This is actually a cornerstone purpose of content marketing and prospect nurturing. *Driving prospects to your website* and *improving search engine rankings* round out the bottom of the list.

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In today's world, customer education is the key to successful marketing. [Learn why here.](#)

# 4

Do you currently have a documented (written) content marketing strategy?



Without a documented strategy, it's hard to build a base of support for your content initiative. Not only that, but you're likely to be wasting time and resources on activities that aren't helping you achieve your objectives. That's why it's surprising that over two-thirds of respondents don't have a documented content marketing strategy.

Not surprisingly, marketers who have a documented content marketing strategy are much more likely to give high ratings to the effectiveness of their content initiatives: 78% say they are *somewhat effective* and 22% are *very effective*.

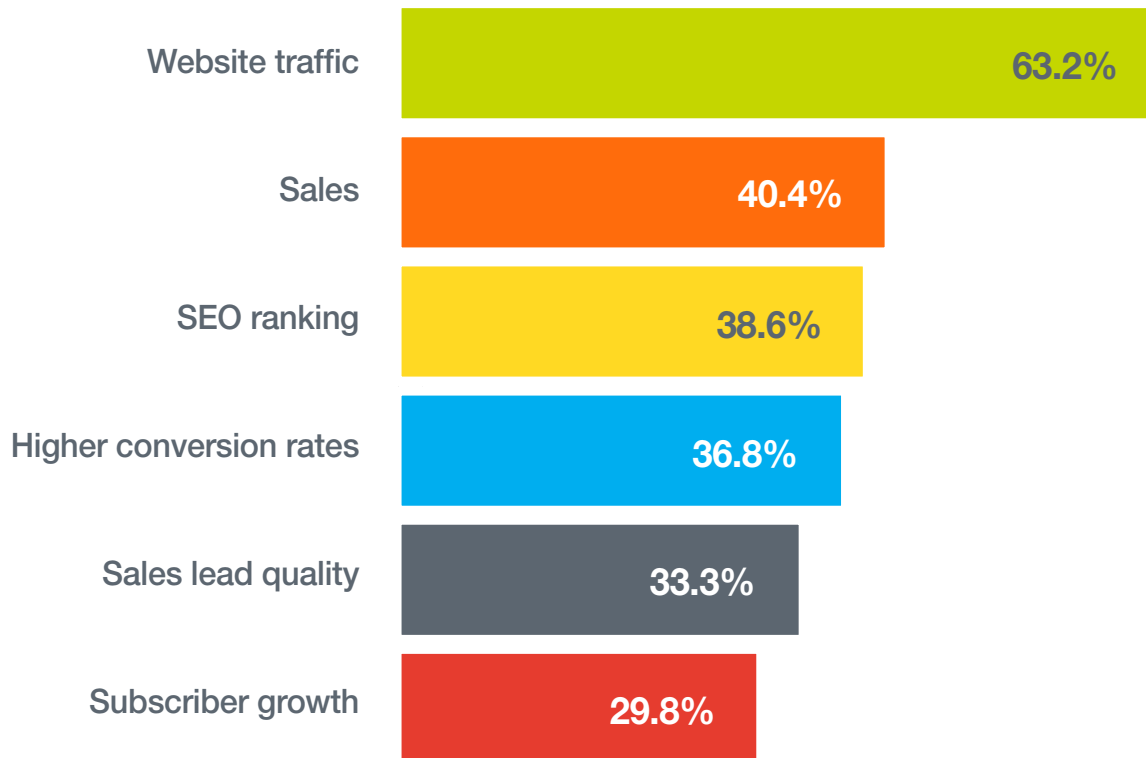
**No respondents with documented strategies responded that they are *somewhat ineffective* or *very ineffective*.**

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Are you just trying to improve the content you're already producing? That's not content strategy. [It's time to take the blinders off.](#)

# 5

## How do you measure the overall effectiveness of your organization's content marketing?



Our observation is that many local B2B marketers are still at the early stages of developing and launching their content marketing initiative. 63% are using website traffic as their primary measure of effectiveness. But this only represents eyeballs to their websites – not engagement. Traffic is important - but only if prospects take desirable action once they get to your website.

The second most common measure of content marketing success is sales, followed by SEO ranking and higher conversion rate. The least popular answer was *subscriber growth* at 30%. This is a bit disappointing, because acquiring email addresses from prospects enables you to build relationships with them and nurture them until they're ready to make a purchase.

**Unfortunately, many companies tend to undervalue email marketing.**

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[Why are your sales flatlining?](#) A growing body of research documents what has changed in the ways customers buy today.

Content measurement is the number-one challenge that Milwaukee-area content marketers face, according to nearly half of the respondents. Marketers told us their number two challenge is producing content consistently. This isn't surprising. Content marketing isn't a sprint, but a marathon. In order to gain the attention of a target audience and build trust with it, marketers must consistently create and publish valuable content over a long period of time. Unfortunately, for many B2B marketers, this type of long-term commitment is hard to sustain.

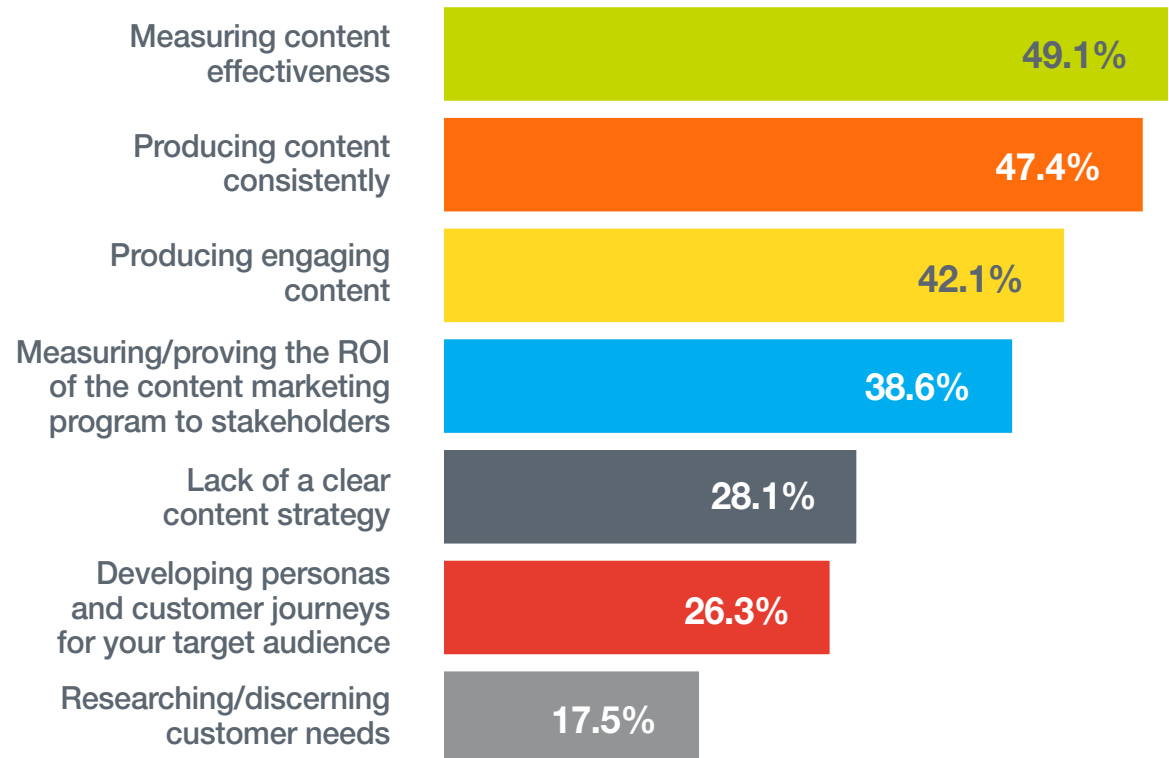
The third biggest challenge for content marketers is producing engaging content. Engagement is directly related to customer needs. If your content doesn't resonate with your audience's needs, it will be ignored. Worse yet, some prospects may decide that they will ignore all future content from your company. Bad content can destroy trust.

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Data is the most valuable (but little understood) benefit of content marketing. [Learn how to leverage it effectively here.](#)

## What are your biggest content challenges this year?

# 6



# Recommendations

## 1. If you don't have a documented content strategy, now is the time to create one.

A detailed plan is a must. It ensures that your marketing team, outside vendors and stakeholders share and support a common vision of what you're trying to accomplish. It is the foundation of your success!

## 2. Consistent production of high-quality content is a big challenge.

This goes hand in hand with the first conclusion: If you don't have a deep understanding of the needs of your target audience, you won't know what content you need to produce, nor the topics that will resonate with your target audience.

## 3. Improve your content measurement skills.

Content marketing as a skunk works experiment isn't sustainable. It needs to be tied to your corporate objectives. If marketers don't master this skill soon, many content initiatives will die premature deaths at the hands of the C-suite. If it doesn't contribute to the bottom line, it won't get staffed or funded. What should you measure?

## 4. Clearly define your target audience's buying cycle and the content needed to nurture them through it.

Then map this to a content editorial calendar that ensures you're publishing information that meets your audience's needs on a consistent basis. We call this *Growth Cycle Marketing*, and it's a proven way to grow the results from your sales funnel.



Contact us to learn more.

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