

15.3: Defining content marketing

Content marketing is an umbrella term which focuses on matching content (information, inspiration, or entertainment) to your customer needs at whichever stage they are in the buying cycle or customer journey. Unlike TV, where the advertiser pushes messages to a captive audience, the focus is on engaging content, which means that marketers must think like publishers (attracting an audience) rather than seeing themselves as advertisers (buying an audience) of a product. The Internet has, in many respects, cut out the middle man. Consumers and brands can now connect directly through a number of easily accessible online platforms.

The Content Marketing Institute offers the following definition:

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action (Content Marketing Institute, 2017).

This definition applies to all the spaces in which you share content both traditional and digital. This includes printed magazines, booklets, and promotional material as well as your social media space, website, campaigns, competitions, and your company blog. The way in which that information is shared is also important.

Kristina Halvorson suggests the model illustrated below for approaching the different areas of content marketing strategy.

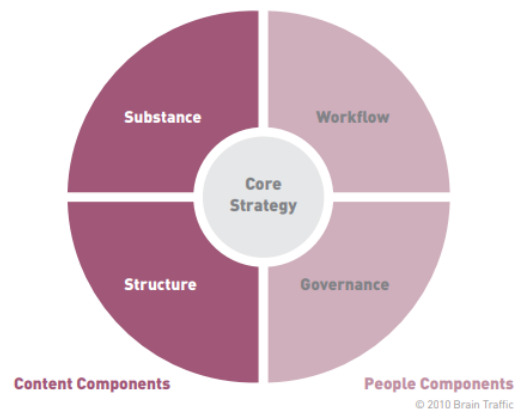


Figure 15.3.1: A model explaining content strategy *Adapted with permission, Kristina Halvorsen, 2010*

Content components

Substance: Who are you trying to reach, and why?

Structure: Where is your content? How is it organised? How do people find your content?

People components

Workflow: How does your content happen?

Governance: Politics, guidelines and standards that your brand operates in (Halvorson, 2010).

As you can see in the above discussion, Halvorson suggests that one consider the bigger picture of content creation rather than just the product which is the end result. Content marketing looks at staff, tools, processes, and outcomes. The end goal for these processes is conversion. All content should be created with a strategic outcome in mind. Such outcomes could include talkability, referral, affinity, and ultimately purchase or increased usage of your product or service.

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