**Content RULES !!!**

Now, thanks to the Internet, you can create online content - blog posts, videos, webinars, and websites - that will attract customers to you, so you won't have to chase after them (by annoying them with advertising, bugging them with direct mail or interrupting them with a phone call during dinner). What's more, you can entice your customers to share that content with each other, all across the Web.

Produce great stuff, and your customers will come to you. Produce really great stuff, and your customers will share and disseminate your message for you. More than ever before, content is king! Content rules!

Of course, like most things in life, such luck - the opportunity to have your customers tell your story for you - comes with a hitch. Content may rule, but your online content must be the right sort of content: Customer-focused. Authentic. Compelling. Entertaining. Surprising. Valuable. Interesting. In other words, you must earn the attention of people.

That sounds like work, doesn't it? It is. It's work to create and publich compelling stuff that will:

* Appeal to would-be constituents.
* Give them something they find value in.
* Keep them coming back for more.

Today, however, every company has become a de facto publisher, creating content that’s valued by those they want to reach. We’re hesitating as we write that word *publisher*, by the way, because to many of you it implies the production of books, magazines, and the like. Most businesses don’t have a lot of experience with publishing, nor do they see themselves as publishers. Rather, they are in the business of whatever they are in the business of (making things, or selling services, or what have you).

But when we say businesses are becoming publishers, we’re referring not to the process of putting ink to paper or printing and binding books but to the notion that creating and delivering relevant, valuable information to people will drive new business to you. Figuring out what your prospective customers are interested in, creating stuff that meets those needs, and delivering it to them is what you need to do. And that, by the way, is exactly what publishers do.

But organizations or individuals like you looking to build their business online have to take it further: You need to create stuff that will help your clients, your need to become a trusted resource your customers can then look to, and you need to get buyers to take action when they are ready. Your company can now publish the kind of content that will cultivate a base of fans, arouse passion for your products or services, and, ultimately, ignite your business.

The problem, of course, is that doing so successfully is a challenge. What does it mean to create content that is remarkable? And how can you be heard above the noise? Why doesn’t your blog have any comments? It’s *hard* work, right?

Yes, it is. A survey of more than 1,000 businesses this past spring found that “producing engaging content” is the top challenge in content marketing programs. (See figure 1.1.)



That’s where this book comes in. It desystifies the publishing process and shares the secrets of creating remarkable blogs, podcasts, webinars, ebooks, and other web content that will attract would-be customers to you. It walks you through the fundamentals of how to create bold stories, videos, and bold posts. And then, once you’ve created the content, it tells you how to share it widely online to cultivate fans, arouse passion for your products or services, and ignite your business.

In other words, this book equips you for success. It will serve as a one-stop source on the art and science of developing content that people care about, content that will drive your business. Some companies have already figured it out; they are already publishing great content to establish credibility and build a loyal customer base. To inspire and inform your own clients, here we’ll share how they are doing it.

**How This Book Works (and Three Promises to You)**

This book is part of the New Rules of Social Media Series, produced by John Wiley & Sons with David Meerman Scott. With his *The New Rules of Marketing & PR* (John Wiley & Sons, 2007, completely revised in 2010), David pioneered the idea of creating remarkable content to connect online with buyes. David’s book (and others in this series, including *Inbound Marketing* by Brian Halligan and Dharmesh Shah, and Steve Garfield’s *Get Seen*) examines the importance of creating remarkable content but does not delve into the nitty-gritty of how you might go about doing so. And that is where this book comes in. It compliments the others in the series by laying out the how-to.

Think of it as a little like the notion of having a baby; It’s easy enough (and loads of fun!) to imagine and conceive a child. But tending to the demands of a wriggling, persistent creature – *and consistently! Forever and ever! Like for the rest of your life! –* is another thing entirely. That’s’ where the hard work comes in. But like parenting itself, content done right delivers in amazing ways and is ultimately a rich and rewarding experience. In other words, it’s worth it.

**Good Content as a Competitive Advantage**

Marcus Sheridan is one of three owners of River Pools and Spa in Warsaw, Virginia. The company installs swimming pools and hot tubs throughout Maryland and Virginia. Since joining the business in 2002, Marcus has spearheaded tremendous growth at the company. Despite years of record rainfall, a housing slump, and the slacker economy, River Pools continues to grow: In 2009, it sold more fiberglass pools than any other company in the United States, where it’s among the top 5 percent of all in-ground pool companies.

A big reason for that, Marcus says, is his company’s approach to business. “I used to see my company as a ‘pool company.’ [We] installed lots of swimming pools and therefore we were a pool company.

“In hindsight, though this mentality was all wrong,” he says. “Today, I see my business as a content marketing company. In other words, my entire goal is to give more valuable, helpful, and remarkable content to consumers than anyone else in my field, which will in turn lead to more sales.”

Through a steady stream of blog posts and videos (the company publishes one to three a week) and an ebook on the subject of “how to buy a pool” (with subtext “without getting ripped off”), Marcus set out to create the most educational and informative swimming pool web site on the Internet.

“I want our web site to be an encyclopedia of pool buying,” he says, not unlike a business trade magazine publisher might seek to have similar authority in any given industry.

# I Have A Secret… Content Is Not King

Is content king? I think that’s overrated.

The way I see it…

Marketing is king.

Let me throw some examples first:

#### Case 1: Coca Cola vs Pepsi

Since 1975, Pepsi has been running “The Pepsi Challenge” wherein they hand 2 blank cups to bystanders in malls – one containing Pepsi and the other one, Coke, and then they’d ask which tastes better.

The result? Pepsi topped the challenge.

But Coca Cola is still the number one soft drink. Why? Advertising.

#### Case 2: Problogger.net

It’s widely accepted that Darren is the #1 blogger who blogs about how to make money blogging (And I amen to that) but does Darren give “the” best content about blogging to make money? I’m not saying that Darren’s content sucks, Darren gives high octane info. But does he give the best content around the blogosphere?

Of course not, there are a lot of bloggers out there who give hard core advice on blogging but they’re unnoticed. Why? Because they didn’t market themselves enough. They haven’t positioned themselves properly. Darren positioned himself as THE Problogger.

#### Case 3: McDonalds

Let’s face it.

They don’t have the best tasting burgers.

They don’t have the best tasting french fries.

But they do know where to put their branches.

One of my dad’s MBA teachers once said “McDonalds is not in the fast food business, they’re in the real estate business.”

#### Content is just a part of marketing

I personally believe, and the way I apply it to my business, content – is just part of marketing.

There are a lot of people out there who are topping the charts but are not really “the” best or don’t really posses the best skills – but they know how to market themselves.

Another quick example: Bruce Lee, not the strongest, not the quickest but the most popular martial artist ever.

There are a lot of people too who have “the” best content, but are unknown.

Of course, I’m not saying that you should just put all your efforts into marketing – again, content is part of marketing – you have to deliver.

Not necessarily the best content, but “good enough” content to keep them coming back.

So in conclusion: Marketing is king.

\*PHEW! END RANT\*

**Curation Nation Assets**

CrowdFusion

Brands use Crowd Fusion to collaborate on original content, aggregated content and topic data. Crowd Fusion's powerful rendering engine powers personalized, engaging mobile applications in addition to traditional websites. And we do it all in the cloud.

Page 157 – buzzd.com

CurationStation.com

Ejp – It seems to me that so much of this is really simple common sense, with a minimum of intelligence and wisdom.

Do what’s right.

Don’t do what’s wrong – or what you even think MIGHT be wrong.

Care what you say.

Don’t lie.

Provide real value to the best of your ability.

For companies, it means talking about your competition honestly. It means talking about your faults. It means engaging unhappy customers and solving their problems.



## Content Needs Partners: Context, Community and Convenience

The definition of news is expanding, and it’s more than just the idea that news is no longer a one-way street. It is that news is no longer just the fragment of information about something that just happened yesterday. Traditional news organizations often struggle to keep up with this ongoing revolution. At the same time, while a few news organizations scheme about ways to get their users to pay for the content they choose to produce, they may be better off thinking about ways to package content as a service that users will pay for. Three elements are crucial:

- **Accessibility**. Information must be available on time and on demand on a variety of platforms. **People pay for convenience.** This is why people buy apps for their iPhones, iPads and other mobile devices even if they will ***not pay for the content*** the apps deliver. It’s why locational services that enable users to quickly access information based on their immediate surroundings promises to pay.

- **Context**. In contrast to the ubiquity of news headlines, **sources of understanding the news are scarce**.  Matt Thompson, now of National Public Radio, explored this issue with great creativity as a Reynolds Journalism Institute fellow in 2008-09. A few sites, notably Texas Tribune, are developing topic pages that bring users not only the latest headlines but the background on the issue as well as ***rich sets of links to other sources*.**

- **Engagement**. This is a tough one for established news organizations that succeeded for decades with a one way model of news delivery. Past-bound journalists have only to point to the sewers of comments on their Web sites to confirm their contention that the online public is incapable of constructive conversation online. They’re wrong, of course, and any number of news sites confirm this. I’ve concluded that as long as news publishers see their sites as merely news delivery platforms, they are going to get drive-by comments in response to their drive-by news. By contrast, sites such as Blogher and The Batavian that define themselves as communities seem to do much better. Of course, comments are only one way to engage users, as marketers and fundraisers are discovering.