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# How Do You Compare?

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## Manufacturing and Content Marketing



# How Does Your Content Marketing Compare to Your Manufacturing Peers?



Content Marketing Institute released their 2020 report on the state of content marketing in manufacturing, *Manufacturing Content Marketing 2020: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends*, and while things are looking up across the board, some manufacturing companies are still lagging behind their peers.

I pulled a few highlights of that report and present them in this e-book. However, I do encourage you to [download the full report](#) and give it a look.

# Are Your Content Marketing Efforts Successful?

65 percent of respondents said their content marketing was either much more or somewhat more successful than a year ago.

Anyone can *say* their content marketing efforts are successful, but let's give these folks the benefit of the doubt. Let's consider they are, in fact, successful. Why might that be so?

Many of these manufacturing marketers have been doing content marketing for a while. Some companies have been at the game long before there was a term for it, but I'm referring to the new wave of marketers. The early adopters and even those who jumped on the bandwagon around 2012.

There were enough manufacturers interested in doing, or actually doing content marketing in 2013 when Content Marketing World held their first manufacturing summit. I was there and can say it was pretty well attended.

39% of manufacturing marketers say their organization is in the adolescent stage of content marketing maturity.

**These leaders were not just putting up a couple of blog posts here and there; they made a commitment.** Imagine telling your boss you're only somewhat committed to your job.

In CMI's survey, 29 percent of respondents classified their content marketing as either sophisticated or mature. Thirty-nine percent classified their content marketing program as adolescent—these are the companies that developed a business case, saw early success, and became more sophisticated with measurement and scaling. Only 6 percent said they were in the “first step” phase.

Think about this for a moment. **If you are still in the “first step” phase or the “young” phase, you are lagging behind two-thirds of manufacturing companies surveyed.**

# Do You Care About Your Audience?

Here's something that surprised me. Almost half of the respondents said they do not put their audience needs above their own desire to get their message out there. (Cue record scratch).

That's right. ***They admitted it.***

Sorry guys, but if you're not putting your audience needs above your own then you're not doing content marketing, you're advertising. Not that there is anything wrong with advertising. Some manufacturers swear traditional advertising still works well for them, yet few can say how they measure that, but I digress. **The point is, advertising is not content marketing.**

In addition to not putting their audience needs first, only 32 percent said they use storytelling in their content marketing. That makes me wonder, what exactly are they putting out there?

**Content marketing is a different mindset**, and it's hard to get marketers to adjust.

# Do You Have a Plan?

Out of all the companies surveyed, 41 percent said they had a plan and that it was documented. That's a big jump from last year so kudos to all of you who are mapping your journey before you begin.

Here's what has me stumped. Of all industries out there, manufacturing understands the value of a well documented process. How many activities take place on your manufacturing floor that do not have a documented process associated with them?

We don't need to Six Sigma the hell out of marketing and take away their creativity, but a content marketing plan would go a long way to ensure success.



# What Kind of Content Is Hot Right Now?

Per the CMI report, respondents are focusing mostly on quick hit content such as social media (92%), video (81%), blog posts/short articles (71%), infographics (59%).

This survey was conducted at the end of last year, so in person events were ranking high. What a difference a few months make, no?

I'm anxious to see the 2021 report to see how drastically everything changes due to the pandemic.



But, But...we  
have a blog!



## Are You Still Stuck on Blogging?

A few of your peers are experimenting more with longform content—long articles, white papers, case studies, ebooks, research, **and even print books!**

This uptick in longform content makes sense given the huge jump in respondents saying they **have the ability to communicate complex subjects.**

I can't help but think some of this increase in longform publishing may be due to the amount of companies bringing in professional writers to supplement their teams.

## What Are You Overlooking?

Only 43 percent of respondents say they are taking advantage of speaking events. Now I get it, no one is meeting, but that doesn't mean no one is speaking. My inbox is filled every single day with announcements of webinars and virtual events targeting manufacturers. **If you can come up with a good idea, organizers will bite.**

The same goes for media/influencer relations (only 33 percent take advantage) and guest posts/articles (only 31 percent take advantage).

People are not attending the annual meeting to get their information. They are turning to alternative forms and trade pubs, podcasts, and just about everyone else is desperate for content they can pass along to their readers/listeners.

# Are You Struggling?

If so, don't feel too bad. You're not alone. **Only 40 percent of respondents said they craft content for specific stages of the buyers journey.**

50 percent of content is focused on the top of the funnel and only 36 percent is divided up between mid and late stages. A mere 10 percent of content is created for those who have made a purchase.

This is why we see so much time spent creating social media campaigns, infographics, and blog posts. That's typical top of the funnel content.

Which brings us to...

# Are You Getting the Help You Need?

I get it. Even with the best intentions and a plan in place, it's not easy to put out that high quality content that serves the consideration and evaluation stages of the sales process. But at what cost?

Let's imagine for a moment a prospect walks into your booth at a trade show.

Oh wait...that's right, no one is walking into any booths this year.

87 percent of respondents are outsourcing their content creation. **Let's stop spending money on all that 10 cents a word blog crap that doesn't do anything to differentiate you.**

Let's take that spending and some of your trade show money and invest it in developing some content that actually helps you make a sale.



# Biggest Challenges

A few things that really stand out as big trouble spots for respondents.

- Creating content that appeals to multi-level roles within the target audience(s)
- Knowing our audience(s) better
- Difficulty in reaching target audience(s)
- Making it through multiple levels of purchasing decision-makers

## How Do You Fix It?

**I've had crazy success overcoming all four challenges by creating personas** for clients and actually using them. Not just with content but with ads, story pitches, and messaging.

Given you will have separate personas for each role that influences a purchase, creating content that directly appeals to each role becomes much easier.

Once you get to know your target audience better—by interviewing them to create personas—you will know how to reach them.

When you have content that is relevant to each of your personas and you are placing it where they will see it, you will be moving faster through those multiple decision-making layers.



# What's Next?

If you think your company has room for improvement, or even just get started, then you need to first develop a plan. It doesn't have to be anything crazy. Just start with what you want to accomplish, how you'll measure success (please not vanity metrics), and who your target audience is. Developing personas must be a part of that plan.

**Then, stick to the plan, plan for the plan, and outsource if you don't have the expertise in house.**

If you don't have the resources you need, you're going to start blogging every couple of weeks, and soon that's going to dwindle to once a quarter. The white paper you planned on writing in preparation for the big launch? That's never going to happen. Everything else going to get priority and your content will fall by the wayside.

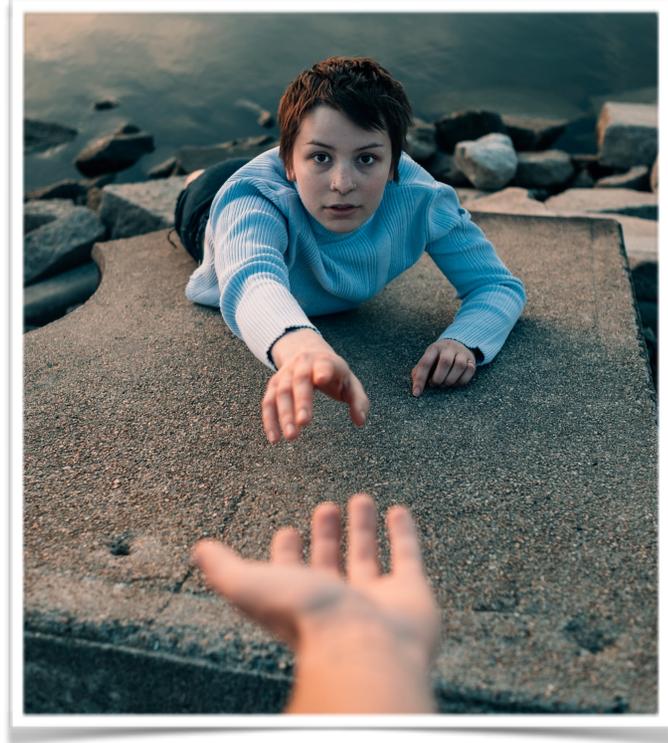
Meanwhile your competition has their content game going and is scooping up all those people who fall out of your funnel because they couldn't find the information they needed to make a decision.

Who would you want to spend a lot of money with? The company who provided you case studies, research papers, and has a plethora of training material you can use once you're onboard? Or the company that just has a flashy brochure and ad campaign?

Do you need help getting started? I can help you create a [roadmap and strategy](#). We'll go through all the content you have (you probably have some and didn't even realize it) and see if we can repurpose it or get it into better shape.

Then we'll start knocking out the important stuff. Like a few case studies, a white paper or ebook, maybe even a presentation for the next trade show.

You too can be one of the 87 percent who are wisely investing in outsourcing!





# How Can I Help You?

I specialize in manufacturing with a focus on Emerging Technology, Engineering, Robotics, and IIoT. Why does that benefit you? I understand your business, and I can tell your story in a compelling way.

I love writing for manufacturing clients. Why? Because I love companies who make things. I could care less about an app; someone else can write about those. I want to hang out and talk to people who make the stuff that helps other companies change the world.

I don't believe there is any such thing as a "boring" product. Behind every product or service is a fascinating story waiting to be told. That's what I do. I find fascinating stories behind your products and services. I tell stories about your customers. Stories your customers want to read.

Do you already have a documented content marketing plan, but need a little help getting some of those more significant pieces of content completed?

Let's talk about publishing a mix of **quarterly white papers, e-books, case studies, webinars, industry presentations, or ghostwritten trade pub articles.**

If you don't have a documented content marketing plan and want some help creating one and then publishing regular customer-centric content, I'm here for you.

We'll work together to come up with a realistic plan that draws people to your website, generates leads, and convinces people to buy.

**Give me a call today, and  
let's get started.**

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