

**THE
FAST
MODE**

The Fast Mode

B2B Content Marketing Guide

For DIGITAL MARKETERS in TELECOMMUNICATIONS

CONTENT



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#1: EVERYONE IS CREATING CONTENT

Content marketing has grown phenomenally over the last decade. Thought leadership content dished out in new whitepapers, c-level viewpoints shared in 5-minutes video clips and new research findings detailed out in webinar series have become all too common in the tech world. In the B2B market more specifically, where purchasing decisions are often based on information found on the Internet and the marketing collateral provided by vendors, content that is convincing, that is validated by real-world findings, that provides a clear and concise message and that addresses exactly the information needs of purchasers goes a long way in meeting a company's marketing/sales objectives.

But if you have been long enough in B2B marketing, you know that in reality, despite producing all the good quality content and despite putting up your own blogs and forums and creating those microsites with exclusive and engaging posts, the attention you receive often falls short of what you would have wanted, simply because everyone else is also producing the same amount of content, creating a growing heap of information which everybody contributes to, but nobody monetizes as they really should. This of course, is further exacerbated by poor quality, mundane content that impacts the willingness of users' to engage in any information.

So unless you bring your content to the top of the information pile and make it stand out, your efforts in content marketing will probably not have much impact on your marketing KPIs - forcing today's marketers to rethink their strategies for creating visibility and engagement. In B2B content marketing, you have to first market your content, before your content markets you.



Content marketing



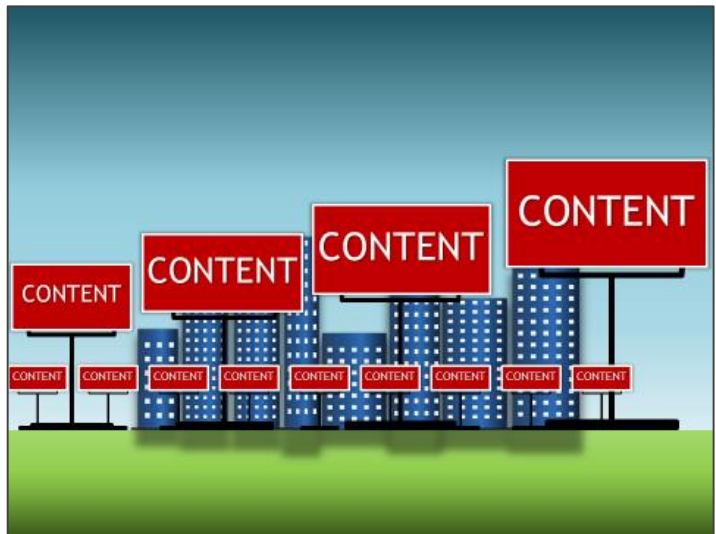
Crowding out of content

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#2: TO INFLUENCE, YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IN REPETITION

What is the shelf life of your content?

A popular news post or a really cool article stays on a publication front page typically for a day or two, before the next post pushes it down. It is simply impossible for a single post, especially that which relates to technology, to create what most marketers are after – the ‘influencer effect’. The influencer effect hinges essentially on repetition. For an idea to be picked up by third party forums, for it to earn a huge number of mentions on social media and for it to make an impact, the idea has to appear on front pages and news feeds more than once and definitely, in more than one form.



Creating the influencer effect

So, a compelling idea written in a single, despite engaging and interesting article, may have a sharp spike in first-day hits but moves off the shelf relatively quickly because of its one-time, limited appearance. It turns out that a brief appearance on a consumer’s feed leaves a short-lived impression on the consumer’s mind.

So, how do we go about creating content that achieves a longer shelf life and leaves a lasting impression? Well, first off, you have to have your content adapted into various formats/content types – from teaser videos to podcasts to GIF banners to shout-outs to multiple short posts and articles as well as ICYMI statements – while keeping to the same theme, idea, keyword(s) and styling. Push this family of content one piece at a time, over a 6-week period with a consistent interval and with the same marketing message. For example, if your goal is to maximize sign-ups on an upcoming product demonstration event, then each content piece should be promoted with a clear, consistent sign-up instruction (with the same landing page url, obviously!).

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#3: PEOPLE LIKE INFORMATION THAT IS EASY TO FIND

People get tired of scouring the web looking for bits and pieces of information. They like a single point of reference with content that has been carefully selected and curated, neatly stacked, accurately labelled and provided contextually.

So they go to places where selection and curation is readily available along with search functions and menus that offer easy navigation. With digital content fast becoming the go-to reference for technology research and learning, digital publications have begun to cater to these requirements, in addition to providing top-notch content.



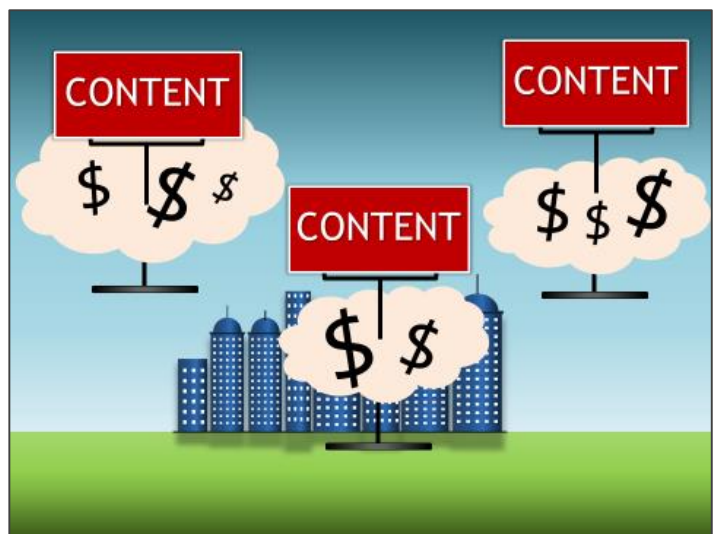
Make it easy for readers to find your content

To ensure that your content is easily available to those looking for it and is readily searchable, B2B content marketers have to find such platforms – where priority is given to organizing content in such ways that each vertical, genre and area of discussion is comprehensively populated with updated, highly relevant content that makes research and resourcing very efficient. This includes content type categorization - from videos to whitepapers to expert opinion articles to news updates – with each content stacked neatly in their respective segments.

Throwing your content onto popular technology platforms that share all and sundry will therefore be what you should never do, because though your content may occasionally catch the eye of your target audience, it will not be in the paths of those who have allocated chunks of time to really learn about a topic or make a key purchasing decision. Those who are into serious research will not be wasting time searching for sporadic, random information. The key here is to go for highly organized repositories so that your content becomes easily accessible to those looking for it.

#4: NEW BUYERS ARE FOUND IN NEW CROWDS

The telecommunications sector is moving fast. Today 4G is old story. Operators are rolling out their 5G NSA and 5G SA networks. The marketplace is rife with talks on network slicing, URLLC, virtualization, programmable networking and deep learning – concepts that none of us would have known five years back. Knowhow continues to pile higher as the telecom services market hits USD1.46 trillion in 2020¹. Every new technology is more advanced and more complex than the one before. Think about virtual RAN, cloud RAN and open RAN – it's all radio access networks, deployed in different architectures and models.



Exploring new crowds

This deepening knowhow has given rise to the mushrooming of alternative knowledge venues – where digital savvy crowds congregate to post, read, share, comment and engage on various telecom tech topics. Tech media sites, microsites, blogs, social media pages, community sites, forums, pages in social bookmarking sites and segments in content aggregation sites - have become crowd pullers especially the younger crowds that love engaging in latest topics and discussions. This crowds, inevitably, influence the purchasing decisions of their organizations.

Finding these new platforms, engaging these crowds with relevant information and insights and building a following for your brand and solutions will therefore become B2B marketers new focus. B2B marketers are already shifting from conventional channels to platforms where new crowds and new buyers abound, which enables them to enhance brand visibility and more effectively expand their company's sales funnels. The important thing here is the willingness of B2B marketers to continuously explore new opportunities in new places.

¹ <https://www.statista.com/topics/2665/telecommunication-services/>

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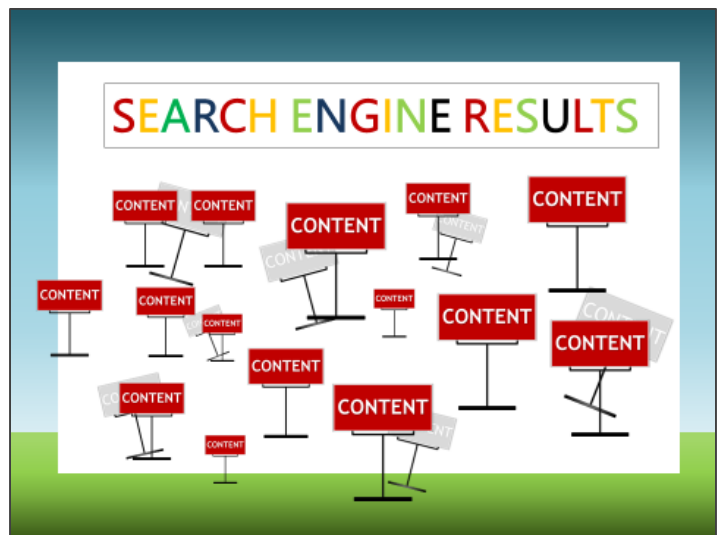
#5: INVEST IN TITLES, META TAGS AND URLS

In a digital world where search engines become the lifeline of many, tagging and labelling of a content piece has become as important as crafting the content itself. Take the title of a content for example. The title is its foremost ‘advertising’, with creative headlines helping content pieces stand out against hundreds of other similar content pieces debuting on the Internet every single day.

For this reason, part of digital content marketing is about meta tagging. Meta tags help your content communicate with the Internet or more specifically, with search engines, on its subject matter and content type. Meta tags

include the description of the subject matter, the identification of keywords which looks at the unique attributes of that content and the identification of images, date of publishing and the authors. The Open Graph family of meta tags add to this, as means to informing social media channels the various attributes of your content, which makes it easy for these channels to pull and display your content in users’ feeds.

Apart from titles and meta tags, urls play a big role in increasing content visibility. Long senseless urls with lots of numbers and symbols will not make the cut in a world where search engine friendliness is everything. So are the pages full of slow loading rich videos and images that reduce your content’s search engine friendliness scores. To keep your content on top of your clients’ feeds and on top of any search engine results, ensure that you pay sufficient attention to how your content labels are optimized for the Internet.



Search engine friendliness

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#6: BE PICKY IN YOUR CHOICE OF AD PLATFORMS

You cannot promote your technology or solution the same way a tour agency promotes their holidays.

For example, if you are throwing your money at CPM advertising, you have to make sure that your edge computing whitepaper is not being advertised on a site that lists technology jobs or worse, on a DIY home improvement site that deals with home technologies, just because these sites seem to relate to 'technology' or seem to be dealing with 'technical' discussions. Browser cookies do a lot of tag matching, and thousands of impressions are wasted when they appear to the wrong people (happens all the time) or the right

people at the wrong time. Timing is key because unlike B2C ad content (e.g. a video that promotes a sofa cleaning device), B2B ad content (e.g. a white paper that discusses multi-tenant MVNO platform for quad-play operators) will not elicit the same response on the 'call-to-action' due to general population's reluctance to engage in time-consuming heavy content during a casual browsing session.

If you want more clicks on your B2B tech content, you have to ensure that your content appears to the right people when they are ready to zoom into the details, and dive into the complexities of the subject matter. For this, the content has to appear very contextually, often in media that is a specialist outlet for the topics being discussed or, based on the user's browsing history. This requires B2B marketers to be careful in their selection of ad placement platforms, choosing specialist platforms that have partnerships with targeted media outlets. An alternative to this would be to work directly with inventory owners so that every dollar spent on pushing ads into people's feed goes a long way in driving a company's marketing goals.



Contextual marketing of complex tech content

#7: TAKE INTEREST IN THE BIGGER PICTURE

You never know who is going to be your next customer, especially if you are providing solutions that can be adapted to multiple use cases/ applications across other industries. A lot of today's telecom solutions boast this ability and what was previously deployed by mobile/fixed operators are also being sought after by cable operators, satellite operators, IPTV providers, MVNOs, OTT/content providers and more recently, cloud service providers, M2M/telematics companies and even power and healthcare service providers. Simply look at how much cloud service providers such as Google, Facebook and Amazon are spending to build their own networking infrastructure.¹



Cross industry marketing

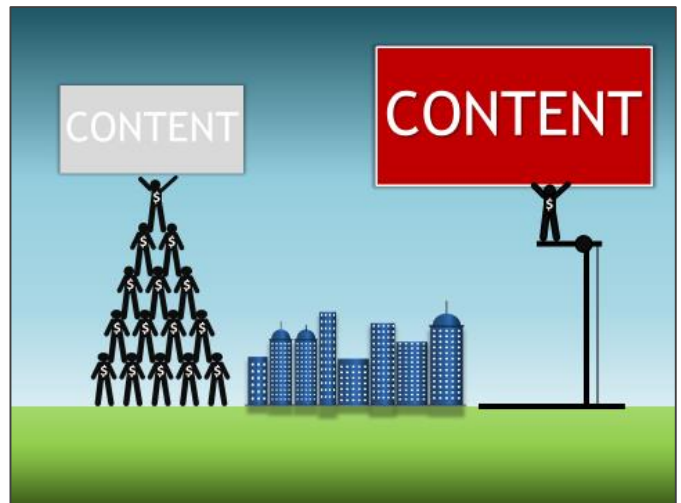
As a B2B content marketer, how do you ensure that you capitalize on these growing opportunities? Well, you simply have to develop new use cases and initiate discussion papers, or even write a whitepaper or two. Connect your solutions to the wider context. For example, you can connect your solutions to emerging ideas (e.g. programmable networking) or fast growing end-products/services (e.g. wearables, web-based real-time communications) or popular topics (network security, digital services) and wider social/economic agenda (net neutrality, internet for all) – and newer clients will find you because you relate to what matters to them. It gives them the confidence to start exploring your solutions for the development of their own services. Just make sure you place your content where it is readily visible to the audience from your new target industries.

¹ <https://broadbandnow.com/report/google-content-providers-submarine-cable-ownership/>

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#8: BE PENNY WISE AND POUND WISE

Most often, B2B content marketing is formulated without a distribution strategy and in most cases, leverages the companies' standard communication channels. The reason for this is that the perception that customized distribution of B2B content is expensive and is not something that most companies can afford. Well, maybe it is time to dispel this myth. Newer B2B publications are mostly channels that are 'digital first' / 'digital only' and are operated at a fraction of the cost of traditional B2B publications. They are highly flexible and very scalable. With advancements in web technologies and UI/UX, digital publications are able to run thousands of advertorials, webinars, live forums, videos and chats each month while publishing unlimited news stories and articles alongside each other, with updates incorporated instantaneously. Combining this with automated social media sharing and cross publishing on affiliate channels, these publications deliver impactful campaigns at a fraction of the cost that marketers used to pay in the past.



Cost effectiveness

As a B2B content marketer, the digital world offers unlimited opportunities. What is essential is the creativity to leverage the vast inventory and the many features offered by today's digital platforms. In the past, B2B marketers put a lot of focus on readership and distribution given that ad spaces/formats were fixed across all publications. With digital platforms, B2B marketers have infinite choices of ad spaces and ad formats that work for any budget. They can go for a 5-day mini banner ad or a one month page takeover. They can place different GIFs every week, and have their advertorials filled up with call-to action buttons that prompt readers to engage in surveys, sign up on newsletters or tune into a podcast session. B2B marketers just have to find the right platforms, explore new ideas for pushing content and start developing partnerships that enables them to deliver their messages as creatively, and as impactful as possible, at any budget!

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#9: CREATE AN AVALANCHE

Lastly, and the most important of all, B2B content marketing is all about impact. To create impact, there must be quantity, intensity and engagement. This is precisely why more and more companies are running campaigns.

Campaigns are different from year-long promotions in the sense that they have a start and end date, they come with clear campaign KPIs, they have a specific idea/product/solution focus and they deliver a consistent theme/message that ties together all the content that is created and marketed. Digital campaigns are

essentially a targeted, time-limited, multi-form, multi-channel, intensive content distribution exercises that involve banner advertisements, webinars, forums, online hangouts, special reports, survey findings, executive interviews, videos and feature articles coming out in succession and in cohesion across your own and third party media/distribution channels, leading to maximum brand marketing and maximum interaction for your products/solutions. Campaigns enable a more focused approach to content marketing, with only specific solutions or customer groups or geographies being targeted at any one time. Typical campaign KPIs can range from click rates, content downloads, sign-ups on newsletters, brand interaction to conversion rates and customer acquisition.

With campaigns, you can maximize the resources put into content marketing. From ads on your website to posts on your social media channels to your staff's t-shirt quotes and tweets and coverage of ground activities, campaigns clearly deliver more impact than routine marketing. The important point to remember is to choose your distribution partners who can maximize your campaign exposure and help you multiply those impressions, views and leads.



Making an impact through campaigns

About The Fast Mode



The Fast Mode is a leading independent research and media brand, providing breaking news, analysis and insights for global IT/telecommunications sector. Founded in 2013, The Fast Mode has grown from a niche media label to a world class brand with a global reach spanning millions of readers annually. With an Alexa ranking of 122,000 in February 2020 and tens of thousands of followers on social media, The Fast Mode emerges as one of the top five global digital publications for telecom news, updates and thought leadership.

Over the last 8 years, The Fast Mode has partnered with more than 500 technology companies, ranging from start-ups to leading multi-nationals with turnovers of more than a billion, to publish breakthrough ideas, forward concepts, critical analysis and up-to-date news on initiatives in the IT and telecoms space, with focus on IP connectivity, network management, content delivery, Internet of Everything, the Cloud, digital services and operator service innovations.

With its ever expanding repository and reach, The Fast Mode has today emerged as a partner of choice for telecom technology providers for creating visibility and awareness on new and emerging telecom technologies, for accelerating the adoption of these technologies across various verticals, and for translating these technologies into economic and social outcomes for individuals, businesses and nations.

For more information about The Fast Mode or to request our Media Kit, please write to andrea@thefastmode.com.