



# The Evolution of Content Marketing, PR and Blogging

*And why tech companies should care*



# Contents

The Evolution

01

The Art of Blogging

06

Contented PR

09

The Way Forward

14

# INTRODUCTION

## **Twenty years ago, the world was a very different place. More newspapers. Fewer tweets. Cassettes.**

The Internet has changed all that. And PR has changed, too. Especially tech PR. As tech solutions become increasingly complex, using the Internet to educate customers is all part of the sales process. Digital has become integral to PR and marketing campaigns, too, because companies have to become trusted sources of expertise and information online.

Today, PR firms help manage that presence: social media networks, blogs, landing pages, comments, bylines and press releases help build a brand and show the benefits of a solution. Finding somewhere to place content is no longer a problem, either. Now, it's about getting that article validated by a third party in the right place, with the right audience. Do the readers know the company and the product? Are they interested? Are they decision-makers?

Aside from securing interviews and building relationships, PR firms have a new job as serious content creators. What does that mean for firms? What does it mean for clients?

This eBook will set out to explain how and why we got here, what it means for tech companies and why PR firms are integral to the world of content marketing.

# 1. THE EVOLUTION

PR has historically worked with news outlets to publish a story about a client. Publications were gatekeepers. The Internet has changed everything. News has gone online and the barriers to publication have been eliminated. Editors need more content than ever, but often don't have the resources to produce it.

This has opened the door for PR firms, because firms can now directly create content for client audiences, rather than just pitching to the media. In addition to case studies and whitepapers, firms are developing blog posts, eBooks, infographics and videos.

Why? Because consumers demand more content from companies than before.

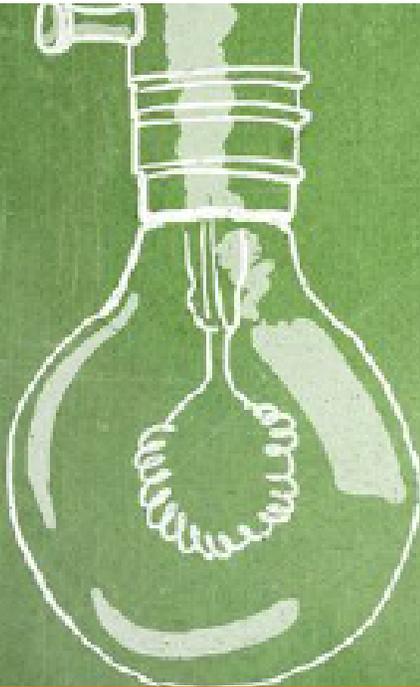
Creating and promoting unique content is more important than ever for both businesses and media outlets, so PR agencies have a lot of work to do. Firms don't just create the buzz around a story, they often create the story itself, along with additional material to distribute and promote via social media channels.

A publication cycle that used to take months now takes days. Anyone can get "published," but an article is only as good as the number of readers it generates. Firms have to become experts at writing content that can resonate with the audiences of different publications.



## CONTENT MARKETING

is the art of creating content that's so compelling and educational that readers want to take the next step.



**52%**  
of consumers say blogs have  
impacted their purchasing  
decisions.

**61%**  
are more likely to buy  
from a site with custom  
content.

## THE EQUATION

The premise of content marketing is that, by the time you're ready to sell your product to potential customers, they already know what it can do and why it's good for their business. In an ideal world, content marketing is so effective that there's no sales pitch necessary.

When PR agencies create and manage channels such as blogs and social media networks and communicate directly with consumers, it's clear that PR isn't just about media placements and press releases. Blog posts, whitepapers, case studies and presentations are all getting created by PR professionals, too. Third-party placement is still key to getting validated, but so is providing content for someone to validate in the first place.

**PR**

**can use content to build a new  
kind of lead generation engine.**

Meanwhile, additional content can help build a brand to the point where third parties will want to look at contributed content and prospects will want to look at the solution in more detail.

When PR is working with clients to create content marketing strategies, everything can work in tandem. Whether a prospect finds out about your company from social media, a blog post, a byline or a random tweet, there needs to be strategic content waiting for them when they get interested enough to find out more. PR is already in a perfect position to help.



BY

EMAIL

COM  
L

PRESS  
RELEASES

S

HEADLINES

VIDEOS

PR =  
CONTENT =  
LEADS

EBOOKS

CASE  
STUDIES

BLOG  
POSTS



# 2. THE ART OF BLOGGING

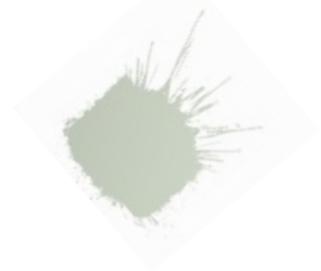
If you have a blog, take a look at it right now.

Now, ask yourself who the target audience is. Prospective clients? Current customers? Potential new hires? If you're not sure, then you need to think about how you can align your blog with an overall marketing and PR strategy.

Just like Facebook, the blog is going through a period of experimentation as companies try to figure out how to turn this channel into something that produces results. And there's no doubt that blogs can work wonders when it comes to brand awareness and lead generation.

Companies that blog get **5x more traffic** than companies that don't. Likewise, blogging more frequently can pay off. Research shows that if you go from blogging 3-5 times a month to 6-8 times a month, you can **double the number of leads** the blog generates.

Your blog is a cornerstone for your PR and content marketing efforts. It should be a place where you can offer prospects and customers valuable, helpful information. That's the kind of information more likely to be shared, read and boost your website's search ranking. In other words, you earn your audience's trust through content they want to see, instead of flashing ads in their faces.





## THE RISK OF THIRD PARTIES

The explosion of third-party properties like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn has made blogs vital. As social media channels attempt to monetize content and advertising, the platforms become less predictable.

For example, last year, Facebook subtly tweaked its EdgeRank algorithm so that a brand's content only reaches 15 to 20 percent of fans.

The lesson here is that third-party platforms can be useful, but unpredictable. Businesses should direct all the people interested in your content to your blog because it's on your website, where people can look more closely at your products and services.

Email marketing, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, SlideShare and anything else should be directing traffic (and business) to you, not a third-party platform.



**FANS DON'T MATTER**  
**if brands aren't willing**  
**to pay for extra visibility.**

# FIXING YOUR BLOG

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A blog has to help the business by generating and nurturing leads with engaging content. Here are five easy ways to do that:

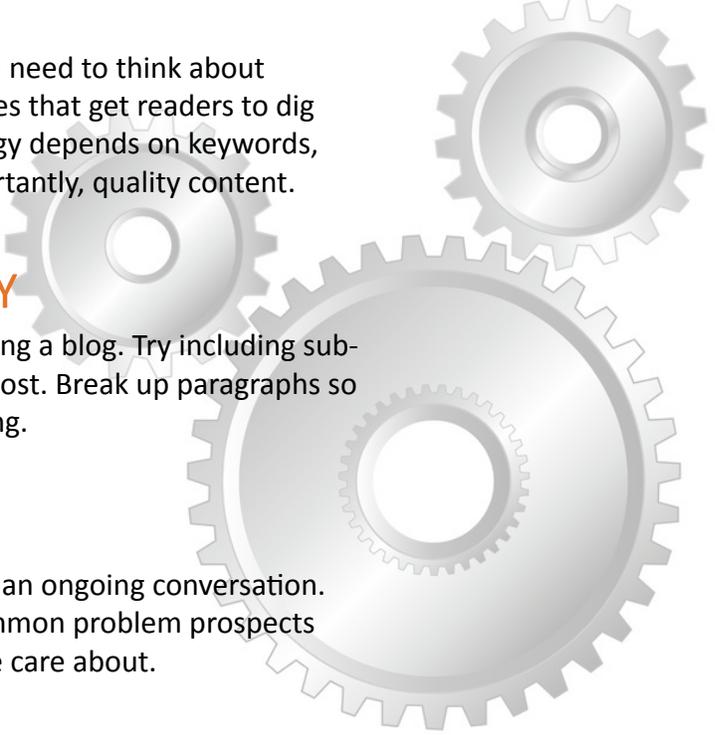
- ## 1 STOP SELLING

Use blog posts to help people, not sell to them. Say that you're a B2B tech company that sells social media marketing software to small businesses. Don't write a blog post that talks about the features of the product. Write a blog post like "How to Make an Awesome Facebook Cover Photo."
  - ## 2 THINK SEO

To really boost your search rankings, you need to think about creating helpful thought leadership pieces that get readers to dig deeper into your website. An SEO strategy depends on keywords, inbound links, backlinks and, most importantly, quality content.
  - ## 3 OPTIMIZE SKIMMABILITY

People are impatient when they're reading a blog. Try including sub-headers for different sections of a blog post. Break up paragraphs so that most are one to three sentences long.
  - ## 4 CONTRIBUTE

Make sure your blog posts contribute to an ongoing conversation. Offer an insight on a news story or a common problem prospects face. Basically, write about things people care about.
  - ## 5 ADD CALLS-TO-ACTION

Marketing software company HubSpot claims to have generated 2.5x more leads by adding calls-to-action to blog posts. Calls-to-action are difficult, because they require more content. The content should be something more substantial: an eBook, a guide, a presentation, a webinar, a demo.
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# 3. CONTENTED PR

Press releases, which used to be about getting the attention of the media, are becoming a gateway to education.

Since an online release is easily visible to prospects as well as media, the goal is to intrigue by showing off new products, services, business development or research. Supplemental content should educate.

If your readers are journalists, they'll know even more about your product or service and can write a more compelling article. If they're potential customers, they'll start to see how your company can help them.

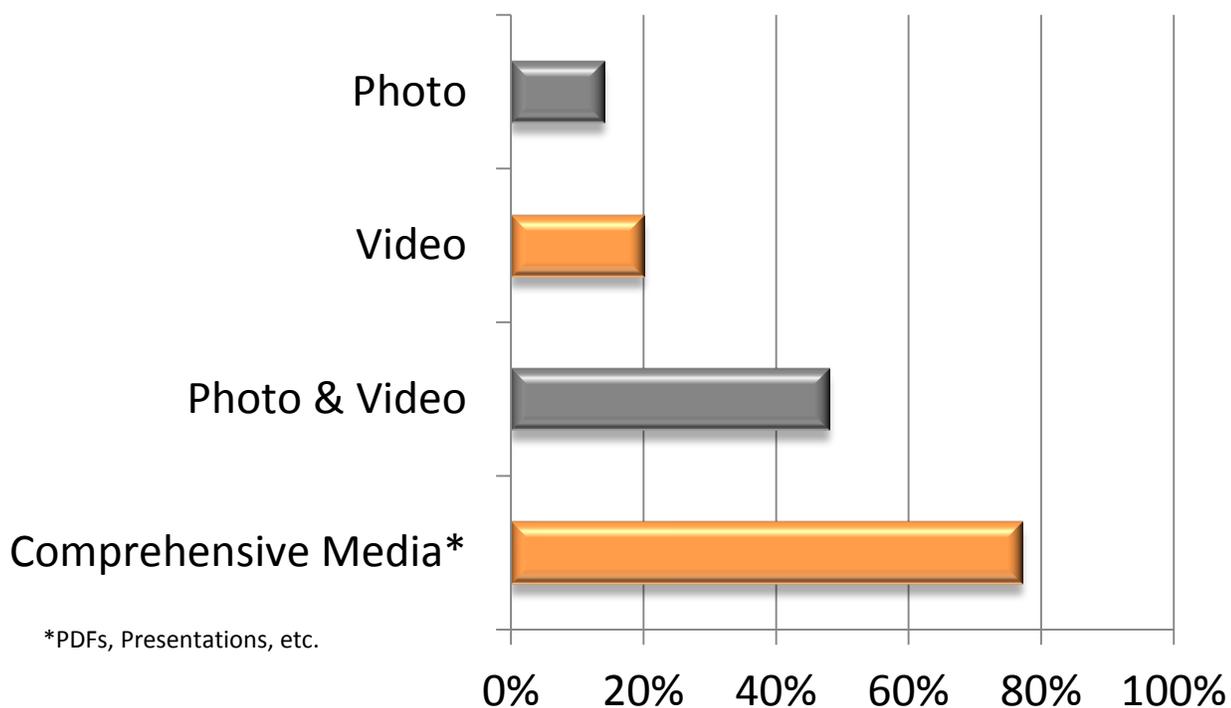
A study by PR Newswire found that the key to improving press release engagement may be to use content marketing.

Additional files in press releases like PDFs, word documents or videos were found to increase press release views by 48 to 77 percent.

The study concludes that more companies are depending on press releases to act as lead generation tools and using more multimedia content within a release is the best way to do it.

Adding multimedia to press releases isn't free, but if the content produces leads, then it's worth it.

## Different Media & Press Release Views



PR  
+  
MULTIMEDIA  
=

VIDEO  
SURVEY  
EBOOK  
WEBINAR  
PODCAST  
INFOGRAPHIC  
PRESENTATION  
GOOGLE HANGOUT



# BUT WHEN IS ENOUGH ENOUGH?

Shouldn't we reach some kind of content saturation point? Won't customers get overwhelmed with all of the stuff they find online?

Content creates a demand for more content. People are used to finding the exact, personalized media they want. Since search engines look for websites with libraries of dynamic content being shared and viewed, companies are always going to need more content to stay positioned as thought leaders.

B2B tech companies need content educate prospects about products. Case studies, whitepapers, surveys, guides and presentations are being released by veritable armies of content marketers... but it's still not enough.

Content marketing is popular and effective because it follows the way that consumers are used to receiving information on the Internet. People are much more likely to directly search for solutions to their problems than click display ads.

The more you produce, the more your appeal with different audiences grows. People won't balk at a blog with lots of helpful articles. They'll only balk if they can't find what they're looking for.

**BLOGGING**

1-2 times a month can  
increase leads by 70%.

“We first went to one article per day... comments, links and views went up. Then we kept pushing to five articles per day... comments, links and views went up... You can't generate enough content.

Remember both quality and quantity.”

- Mark Roberge, SVP, HubSpot



# 4. THE WAY FORWARD

When relationships and communities and buzz are what make your company stand out, PR is more important than ever.

It will no longer be an option to have no one managing social media networks or your media outreach program, because this will be what makes or breaks digital publicity, the scope of your content and, consequently, the reach of your online lead generation efforts.

PR needs to be armed with the things that make your products and services worthy of buzz. By creating unique and compelling content, PR can effectively become a buzz and lead generation machine.

This is where it all comes together - pairing the connections and communication savvy of PR with the appeal and engagement of content marketing allows businesses to turn marketing campaigns into thought leadership initiatives and influencer programs into lead generation tools.

All you need is the right connection and the right content.

As content marketing becomes a norm among companies, getting the word out about the content you're making will become harder than before — the space is crowded and there's no sign that things are slowing down.

That's why, in addition to unique and compelling content, you have to find a way to promote the content that goes beyond automatic tweets and Facebook posts.

This is where PR and content marketing perfectly intersect: content marketing is nothing without outreach and promotion, while PR is nothing without material to pitch and relationships to build.

And neither means anything without unique stories to tell.

*Want to learn more? Contact us at [info@marchpr.com](mailto:info@marchpr.com)*

**March** is an award-winning technology PR agency located in Boston. Our people and our approach set us apart. We use real-time intelligence to underpin our strategic approach to communications and take the guesswork out of PR.

For further information and to check out our work visit [www.marchpr.com](http://www.marchpr.com) or get in touch.

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