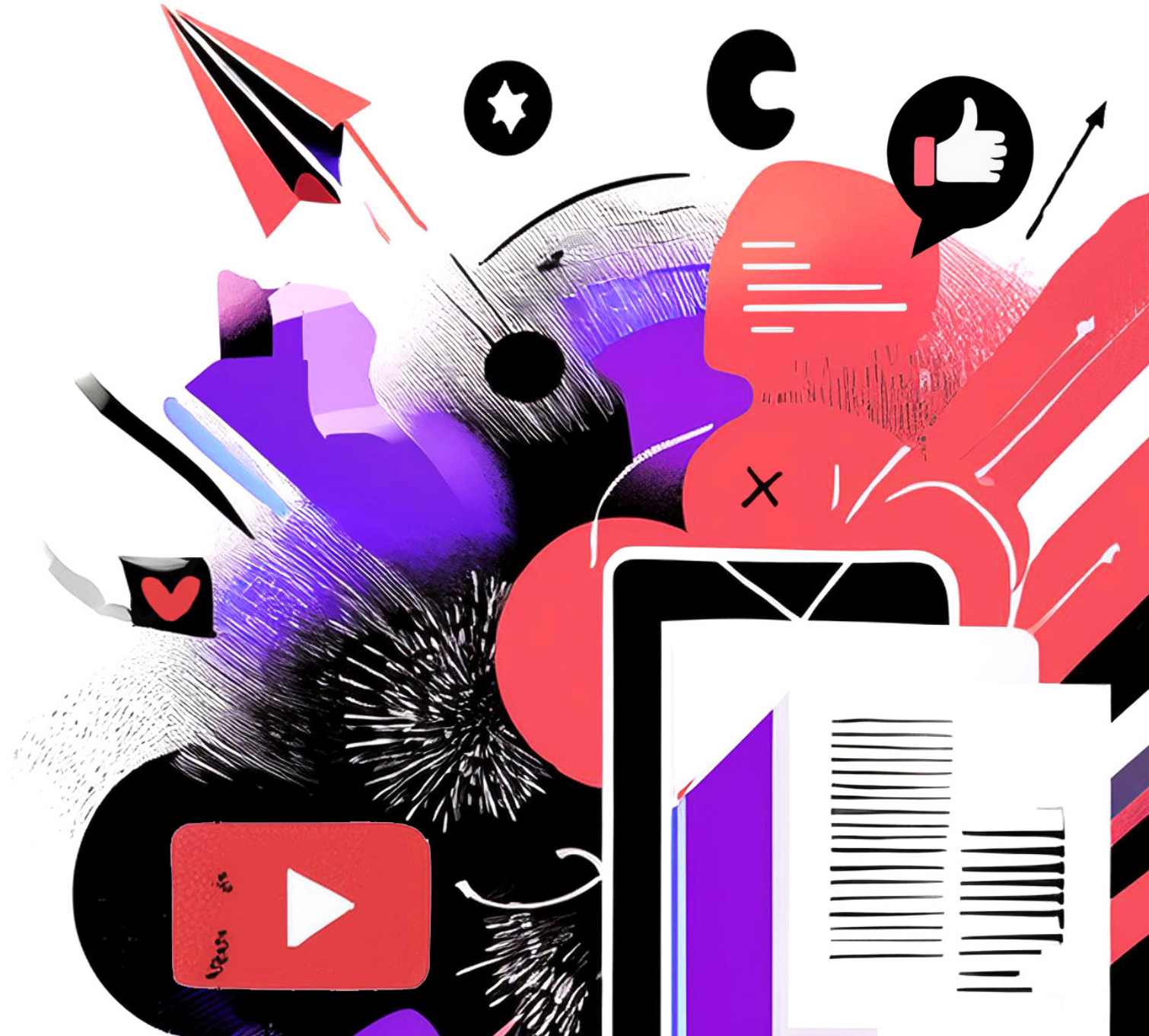


THE
RUBICON
AGENCY

More
mojo.

Killer or Filler

Assessing content success for
technology marketers



Introduction

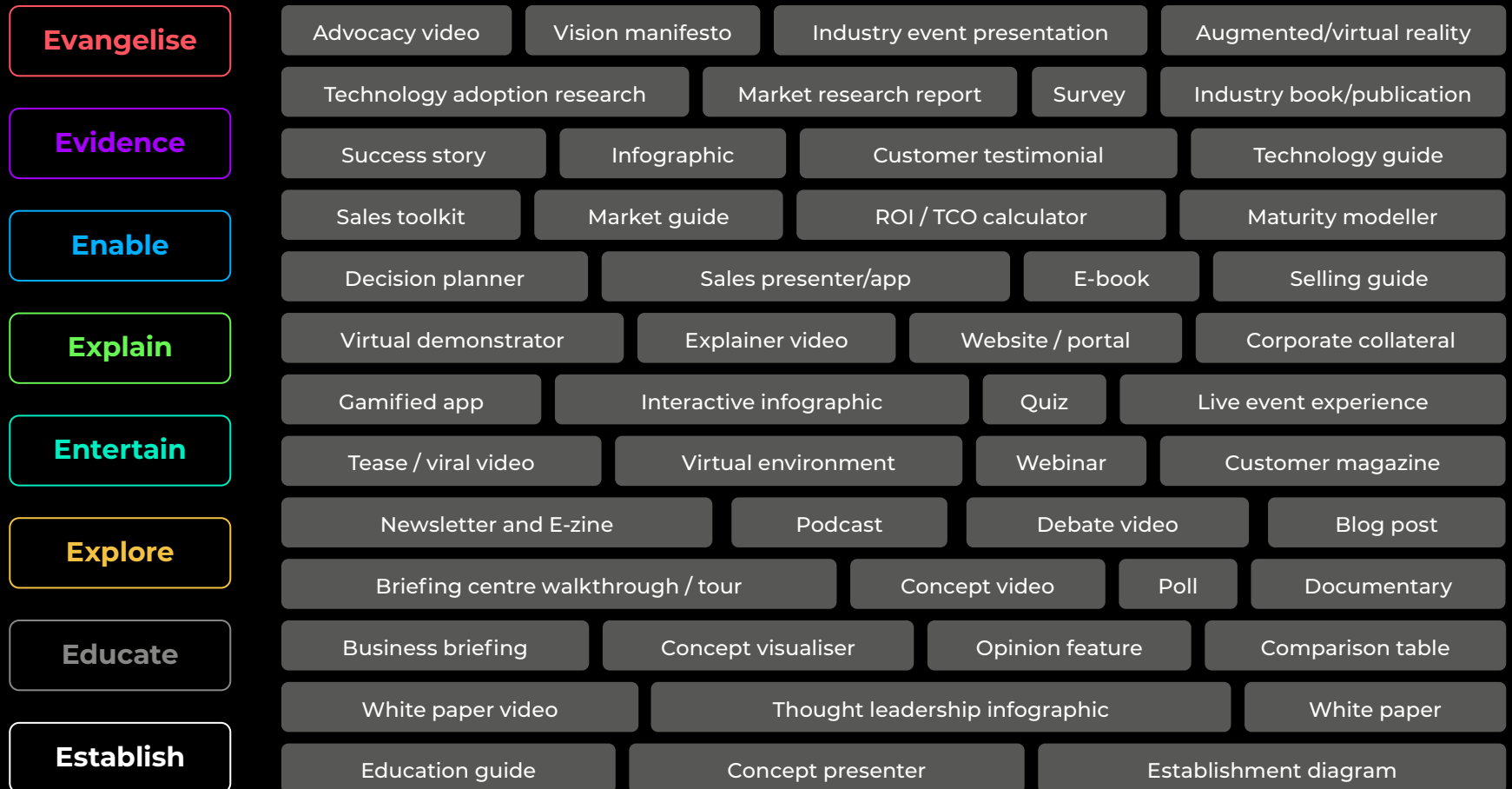
In the realm of technology marketing, content is king. With proper planning and execution it has the power to command a following, inspire loyalty and win battles for new business. However, without proper assessment it can suffer a short and unsuccessful reign over influencers and decision-makers in a multi-media world saturated by multiple messages and AI-generated content.

Before planning your assessment, take a look at our quick guide to discover how content can be **more 'killer' and less 'filler'**.

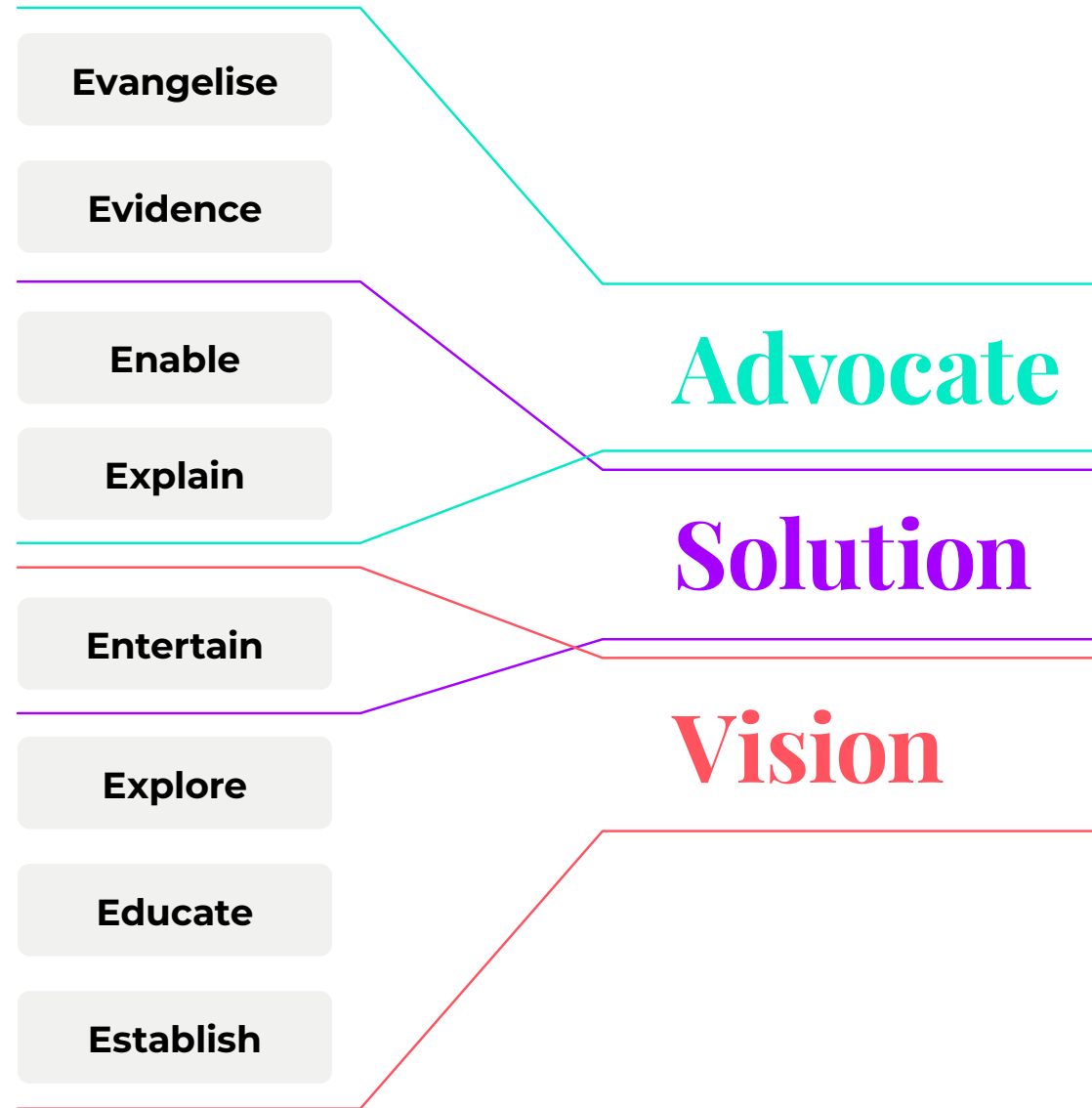


What do we mean by ‘content’?

The content spectrum



The content spectrum



When content goes bad

The business case for auditing your collateral

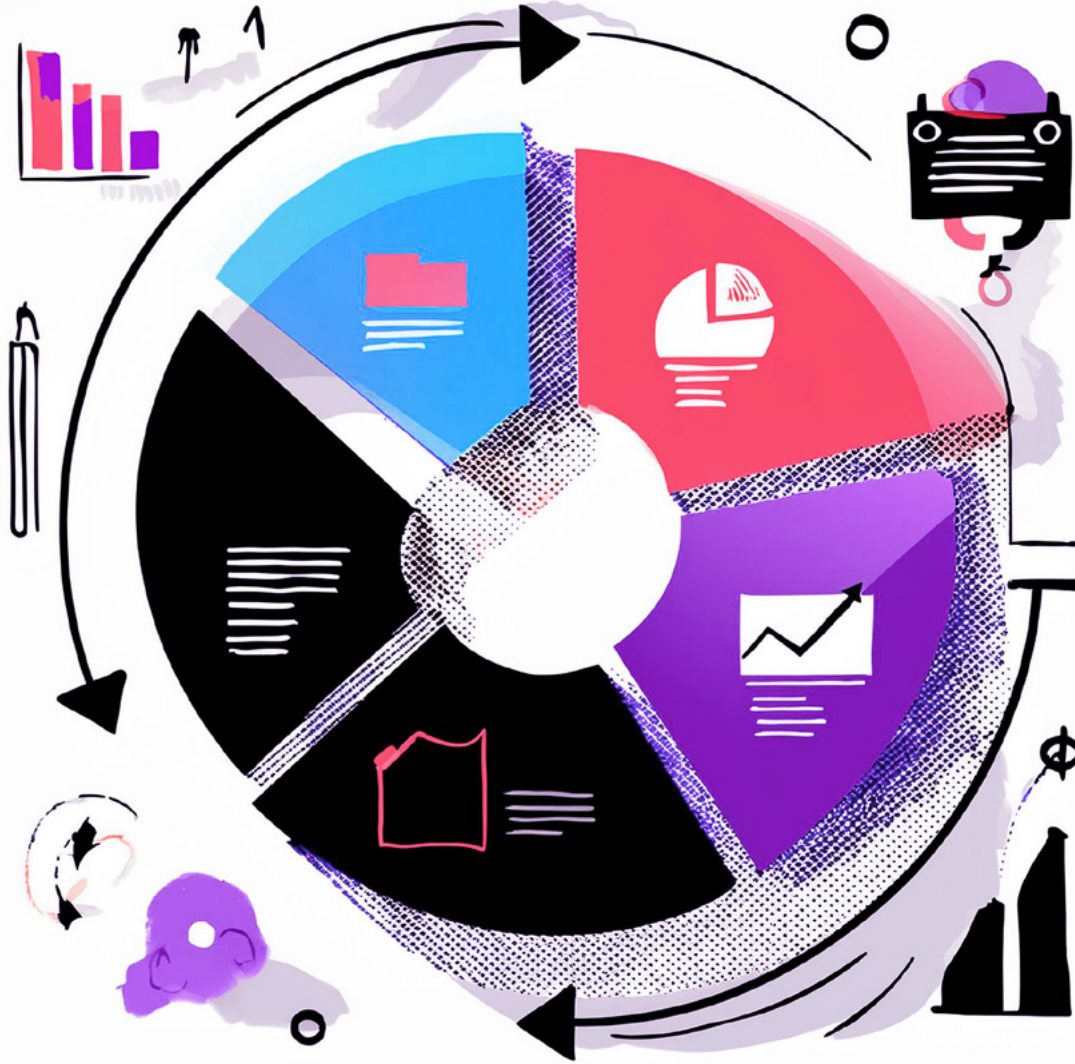
Producing content is an expensive exercise – in terms of time, resource and ultimately marketing budget. So, how can you be sure your investment is delivering long term benefits? Not just initial enquiries, but much further and deeper than contact acquisition. An effective content strategy extends and strengthens customer relationships.

There can be no argument about the role content has within the technology sector, and how it makes up a critical part of the marketing mix. As early adopters of content marketing, the technology industry now faces new

challenges as the late majority realise the value of content and joining the increasingly noisy party.

Content creation, if left unchecked, is in danger of losing its lustre. Coined back in 1997, CNet's notion that 'Everyone's a publisher' has definitely rung true. Content is no longer produced by niche teams, instead publishing sprawl has bled into other functions within the organisation. Now social departments, comms teams, product experts and business leaders all contribute to corporate content. This has resulted in variable levels of quality – in addition to moving us closer to saturation point where killer material is lost in the sheer noise of advertised 'premium' content.





So what are the essential qualities for successful content?

What are the magic ingredients that make up killer content? Is it the promise of industry insight, best practice techniques, cutting edge research or inspiring thought leadership material that entice our target audience? Well, yes and no. These are all tried and tested methods, but how many times have you felt 'suckered in' after you've handed over your contact details?

Dangling the proverbial carrot of premium content often fails to deliver once we digest it; Regurgitated opinions, stale

executions or uninspiring content leave the consumer feeling short changed and disenfranchised with your brand.

Too often, content is utilised as a contact acquisition tool, however if planned and executed from a 360° perspective the value can be increased exponentially. Applying more rigour outside the initial purchasing phase helps enable other functions within the organisation, including channel teams, field marketers, sales and account management. Providing progressively influential arguments accelerates the purchase cycle and even exploits customer relationships post acquisition.

Exploiting the power of AI.

As previously referenced, content creation isn't a quick fix, it requires a large amount of time to research, plan and stress test initial wireframes of content. Questions including, does this align with our company vision? Does this line of argument stand up against our competitors? Does this narrative have longevity? Have all questions been asked before pen is put to paper?

Then comes the part about having to create the content arc, which can often lead to hours wasted through misdirection, writers block or some other creative brain fog. Well, help is at hand with the emergence of gen-AI into the mainstream.

Tools such as Jasper, Claude and ChatGPT can all assist marketing teams with content ideas, reference material and even tone of voice. Utilising AI can massively speed up the content creation process although certain guardrails need to be put in place to ensure quality assurance.

Check your facts

AI can unearth a whole plethora of facts and statistics but it would be foolhardy to take these as gospel. Spurious sources and dusty data points can discredit your content quicker than you can say Artificial Intelligence.

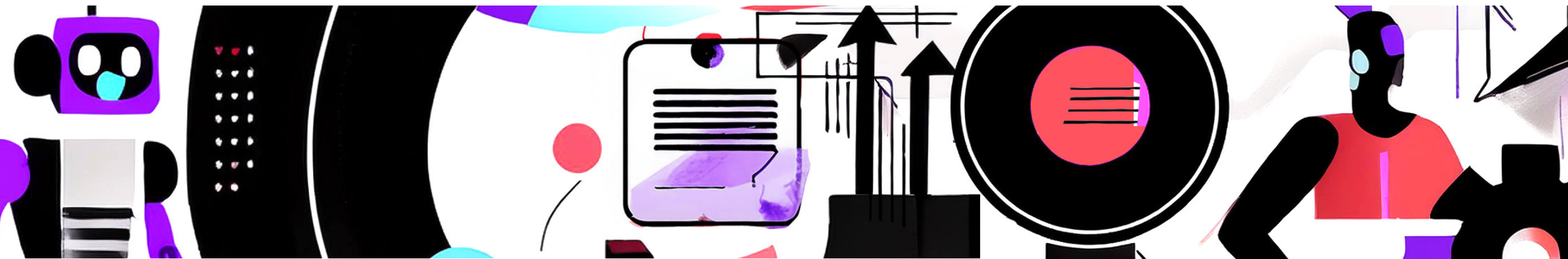
Keep it human

Ok, so AI has helped create your content but does it read like it's been written by an individual and not an algorithm? Infusing your content with personality helps create a degree of authenticity that AI can't provide.

Avoid word salad

Copy and pasting automated content could leave your readers confused and turned off by your brand. Jumbled words and phrases, incorrect spellings and lack of defined structure can deliver more harm than good.

Used correctly though, AI is a great assistant to help short-cut content creation and provide inspiration for future narratives.





How can those qualities be measured?

Making sure your message inspires interest and then maintains it is critical to how we measure the value of each asset. Ultimately, engagement, not just social metrics including likes, comments and shares, but more tangible measures (as stated in the introduction) are the benchmark here. Yes, Marketing Qualified Leads (MQL's) are important but they shouldn't be considered the only yardstick to measure success (or failure).

Content should be part of the marketing mix for the long-haul and should go much deeper than

a data acquisition tactic. In reality, it's not just a numbers game.

Prospects may have felt duped after the first wave of activity could, on the face of it, be considered a warm lead when in reality they aren't. The key, is to ensure that you have a campaign structure that contains equally engaging, entertaining and useful content that builds brand trust, engagement and ultimately advocacy.

Producing ‘deceitful’ content may yield an initial response, but value to the business may be minimal. Being too populist could result in droves of unqualified leads, too niche and the number of relevant leads could be reduced to a trickle.

How can they be improved?

The answer is to look at the bigger picture not just individual assets. Just as you would with an outreach campaign, each stage should be evaluated. Who am I talking to? What is the message we want to get across? Is it pitched correctly? Is it engaging? Does it align with the business strategy? What do we want them to do next? Looking at your content holistically may add an extra stage to the process but in the long run it makes good business sense.

Failure to properly audit your content inventory could prove costlier in the long-run with outreach budgets and potential customers being lost.



The need for assessment

Too often, tech businesses can fail to classify historic content assets - or create a charter to support a new campaign or change of regime. Structured content scrutiny plays a crucial role in maintaining the quality and focus of a company's message, voice and budget. Unchecked, content can create a number of conundrums.

UN-ENABLED SALES DELIVERY

IMPERFECT PITCH

MESSAGE MAYHEM

LACKLUSTRE PRESENTATIONS

WEBINAR WASTELAND

CUSTOMER CUL-DE-SAC

WRECKED DECKS

SOCIAL FEAST OR FAMINE



CASE STUDY COMPROMISE

THE VISION VACUUM

SPEEDS NOT NEEDS

INFORMATION IMBALANCE

VANILLA VIDEOS

WHITE PAPERS: WHITE NOISE

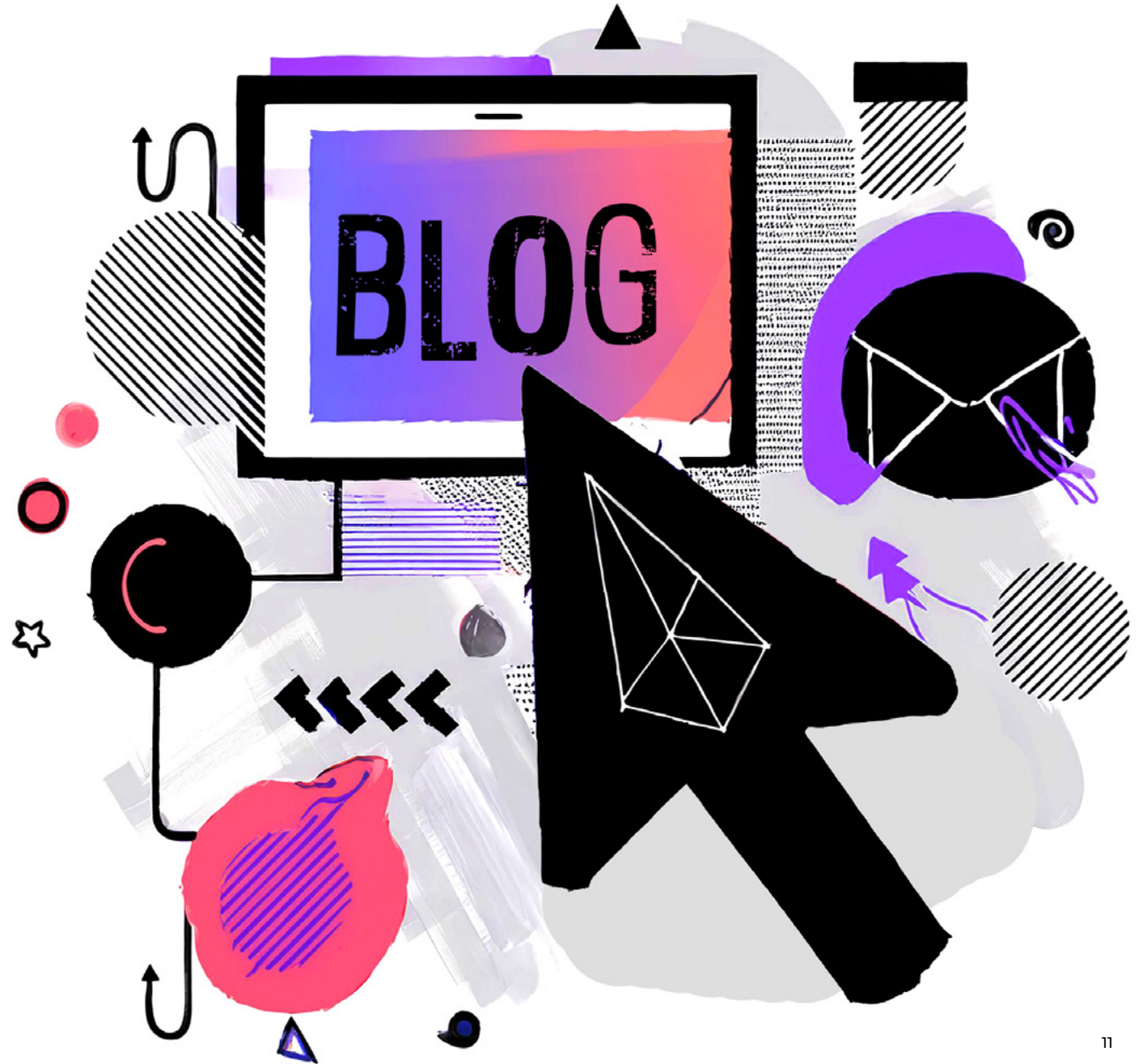
FAILING TO ENGAGE

EMOTIONLESS AUTOMATION

**Content
conundrums**

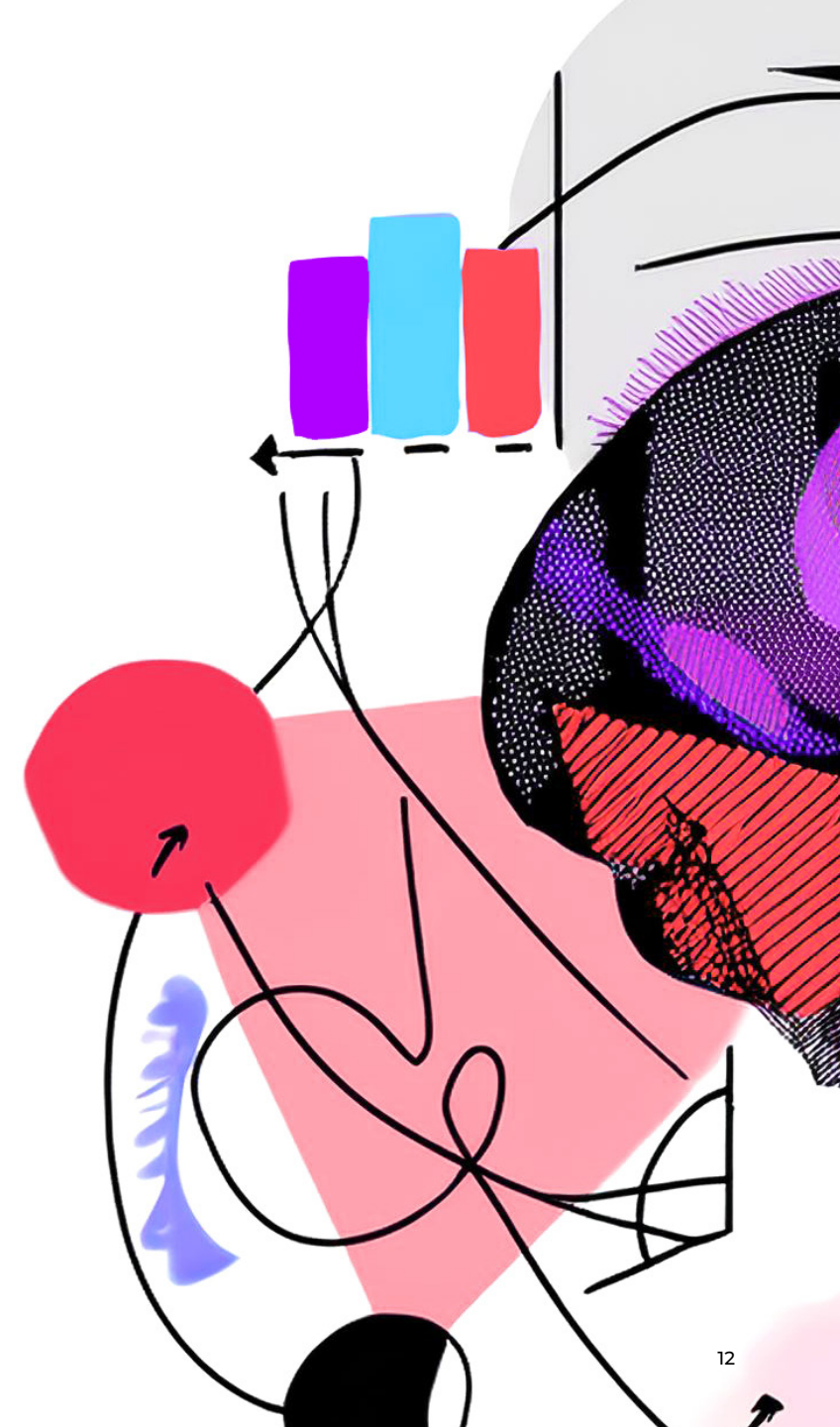
Visit The Techmarketer Blog to explore the conundrums in detail:

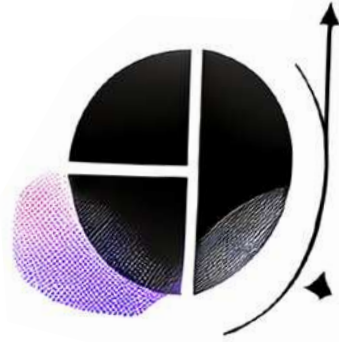
- Avoiding the technology vision vacuum
- White paper: white noise?
- When the corporate deck is a wreck
- Tips to avoid becoming a social pariah
- Webinar wasteland
- The medium isn't the message
- Speeds and feeds don't work on a first date
- Unenabled sales delivery



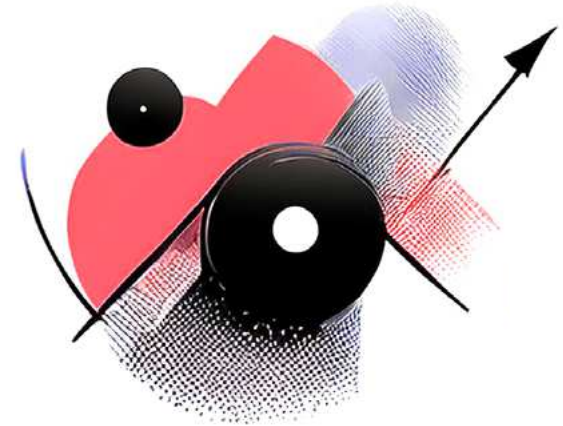
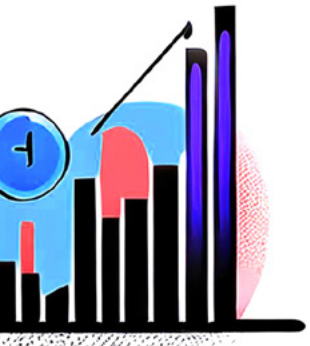
10 triggers for a content assessment

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. New marketing leadership | 1. Disengaged sales and channels |
| 2. Fresh marketing agenda | 2. Company repositioning |
| 3. Ad-hoc content creation | 3. Website overhaul |
| 4. Under-performing assets | 4. New sales channels |
| 5. Unknown collateral estate | 5. Portfolio refresh |





9 mindsets for killer content



Measure to manage

Analysing and scoring content effectiveness is as vital as creation and publication. By using a dashboard, relativity index or gauge to measure impact against defined objectives, you can manage what works - and what doesn't.

▲ Killer

Content can win hearts, minds and market share when it's measured and managed.

▼ Filler

Content can lose relevance, interest and opportunities when it's not measured and managed.





Recourse to resource

Expertise and objectivity are essential for a content assessment team. Don't confine your access to these resources as an in-house exercise if they are more likely to be found 'out-house'.

▲ Killer

High quality, effective content assessment maximises the impact and value of a key marketing asset.

▼ Filler

Content assessment without objectivity can compound weaknesses and compromise marketing effectiveness.

Vision with precision

Think of your message architecture as a pyramid with a value proposition at the apex. If all content is consistently built and shaped to support and taper towards that highest point then you have a structure that can work at every level.

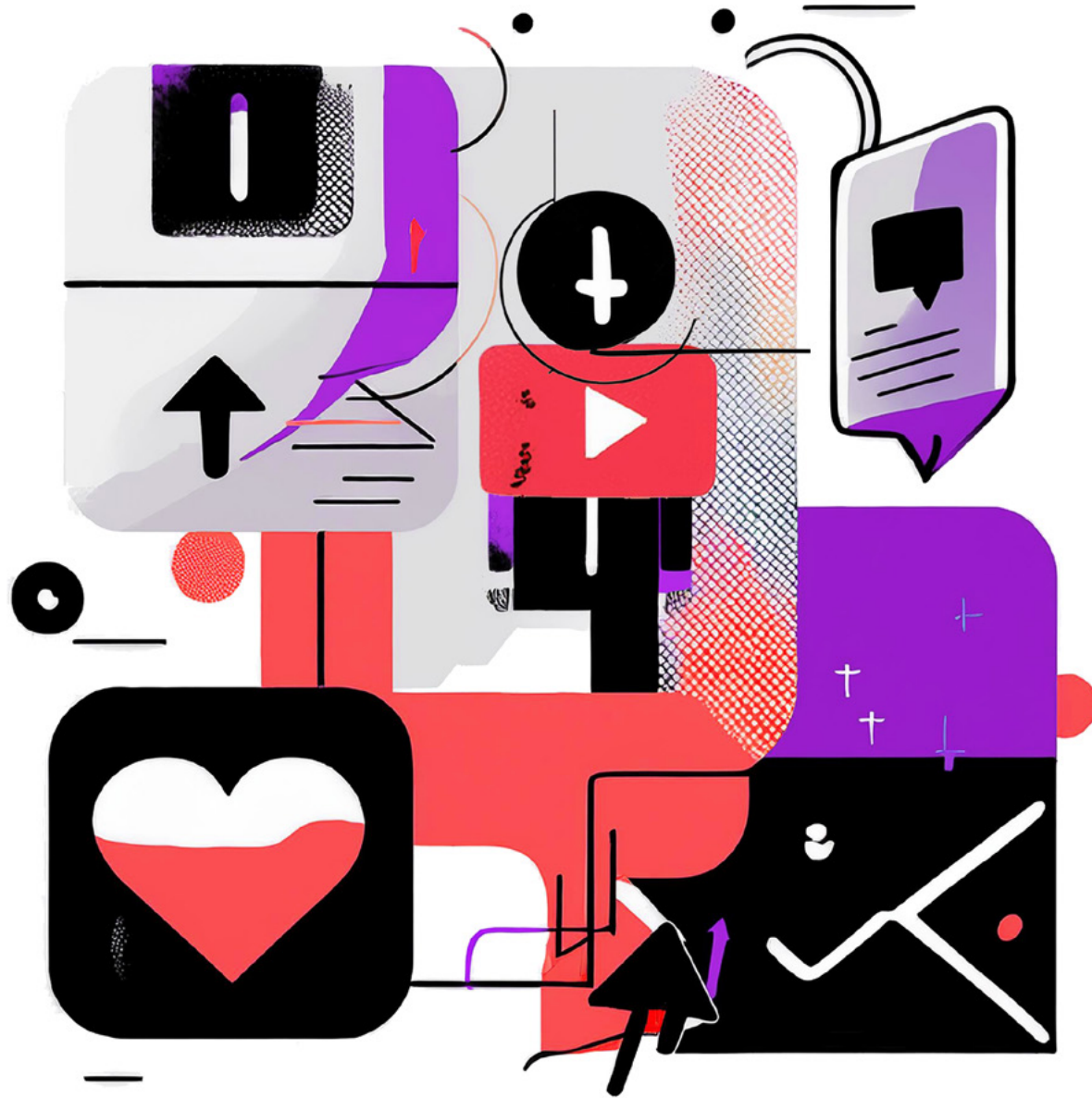
▲ Killer

Content that supports your value proposition will also support sales and marketing objectives.

▼ Filler

Content that's not supporting your value proposition is not supporting differentiation or audience preference.





Quality or quantity

Clicks, downloads and followers will give you a quantitative measure of the impact of content. Assessing pitch, clarity, meaning, originality, frequency and even proposition adjacencies will give you the true measure of message impact.

▲ Killer

By measuring what matters you create content that matters to your audience.

▼ Filler

By only measuring quantity you can distort the true picture of messaging success.

Making mojo

Technology may be a considered purchase for organisations but mojo has the power to create that spark of interest amongst business and technical decision makers. In a multi-media, multi-message world, that spark is essential for engaging content.

▲ Killer

Mojo makes words, ideas, images and media compel an audience to lean forward and want to know more.

▼ Filler

Without mojo your audience could be more attracted to the sparkle of someone else's content.





Agenda bender

Content also exists to support strategic agendas. That means assessing the quality and effectiveness of your opinion-forming or even disruptive thought leadership and setting a direction for messaging and assets that leads your audience to meet their agenda - whilst also meeting yours.

▲ Killer

Get the strategic content layer right and the impact creates a trickle-down effect.

▼ Filler

When content isn't supporting your strategic agenda, both are compromised.

Medium or message

Content and channel should be inextricably linked in any assessment. Measure and test combinations that make use of outlets such as social communities, salesforce toolkits, partner networks, owned-media or independent publishers.

▲ Killer

Success is the right content in the right place at the right time.

▼ Filler

Failure is the right content in the wrong channel or the right channel with the wrong content.



Pressing buttons

Map your content to the buyer journey and you'll go far. Empathise with their care abouts and motivations along the way and you have content that can move them from awareness to purchase preference.

▲ Killer

Content with context creates quicker, more frequent influencer/buyer connections.

▼ Filler

Content without context can fail to connect with time-pressed influencers and buyers.



What should you consider in an assessment?

We've all heard the expression that content is king, and that it plays a major role in influencing and even accelerating purchase decisions – especially in technology. A strategic thought leadership piece, a well-timed blog article or a disruptive webcast can all open doors to decision makers outside of IT. But how can you be sure that the content you are syndicating really has the cut-through you require?

The starting point for any marketer should be to conduct a content audit of their existing collateral to make sure that it **ticks the boxes of the following 4 areas**. Failure to do so leaves you open to scrutiny, missing the mark or publishing vanilla content that doesn't cut-through at all, leaving both your Marketing Qualified Leads database and budget pot looking decidedly empty.

1. Messaging and pitch

The first question, which is usually governed by budget, time and resource, is whether to create or curate. Curation is the easier option, but the real question is does this satisfy your marketing objectives? Is the pitch of the content right? Does it talk to the audience in the language they are accustomed to? Yes, the subject matter may be relevant, but if the message and pitch are 'off base' then there is absolutely no point in dusting off content from the marketing cupboards and sending it out more in hope than expectation.

2. Meaning and audience relevance

The next consideration should really be relevance to the audience. Distributing a deep-dive white paper on network architectures is absolutely fine if that's what the audience usually consumes, but if the desired outcome is to stimulate conversation with a more business-oriented individual then you've missed the mark by a country mile.





3. Creating marketing mojo

Making sure that the pitch and relevance is on-point is a must. Ensuring your audience digs deeper than just the executive summary is imperative. However it's not time to rest on your laurels just yet. Getting their attention is one thing, keeping it is another. Yes, the content may be right on the money but if it's not engaging, entertaining or is just plain bland then the consumer is likely to hit the snooze button.

4. Manifestation & application flex

Being able to flex your message really depends upon the foundations you've built your content on. Having a robust message platform from the start really dictates how the content can be evolved over time. Dissecting the core proposition

ready for social syndication, providing a linear customer journey dependent upon buyer maturity and being able to take on chameleon-like properties (i.e. adapting to different audiences and formats), ultimately determines if your approach has marketing stretch. Without proper planning you could inadvertently limit the scope of your conversation and result in your content being driven down a creative cul-de-sac.

Above are 4 'watch-outs' that content marketers should be mindful of before any content syndication takes place. Taking a 'suck it and see' approach to content could result in low balling your proposition or turning off potential suitors altogether. Implementing a robust content strategy at the start of the campaign certainly alleviates uncomfortable wash-up meetings where the objectives have been missed.



About The Rubicon Agency

When Julius Caesar crossed a small river in northern Italy in 49BC he gave rise to an idiom for passing a point of no return. 'Crossing the Rubicon' is something we chose to do when we realised our specialist skills and experience were helping to deliver more success for technology clients.

We're 100% dedicated to technology marketing because we believe clients deserve an agency that's fully immersed in a sector that has its own dynamics, its own challenges and even its own jargon.

Large and small technology clients choose us because we get things right first time and run ahead when necessary. They also like our creativity because we don't accept that technology should be a Cinderella at the marketing ball. And with our focus on disruptive propositions, we're able to help clients cross their own rubicon to reach business and technical decision makers – with measurable and often significant results.

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