

The Content Marketing Maturity Map



INTRODUCTION

Building a robust content marketing operation doesn't happen instantaneously. It's a journey, and we have identified the five different levels of maturity that are pit stops along the way. In our Content Marketing Maturity Map, we refer to these five levels of maturity as "landmarks" – and they're all represented by familiar architectural icons:

1. Stonehenge represents the initial, beginner level of maturity – **reactive content marketing** – because the cobbled togetherness of the landmark reflects an operation that is unplanned and spontaneous.
2. The second level of maturity – a **proactive content marketing** team that strategizes based on speculation – is represented by the Leaning Tower of Pisa, showcasing progression but less-than-perfect architectural planning.
3. Landmark three is Big Ben and it represents a **correlative content marketing** team that is both established and accountable to its wider organization for the timely return of investment
4. The CN Tower is the penultimate level of maturity – **adaptive content marketing** – which represents an operation that is versatile (much like the city it calls home, Toronto) and results-driven.
5. Lastly, the highest level of maturity is represented by the Taj Mahal – an architectural marvel – to showcase a **predictive content marketing** strategy that is so robust, and built on a strategy so detailed that personalization and automation make it possible to deliver beautiful content experiences at every step of the customer journey.

Read on to learn more about each level of maturity and how to progress from one to the next, eventually building a content marketing operation as awe-inspiring as the Taj Mahal.

Content Marketing Maturity Map

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Landmark 1 Reactive

Unplanned and spontaneous

A reactive content operation is born out of an organization's recognition that content is a necessary component of marketing, but haven't wholly bought into the concept. The organization has yet to add and allocate dedicated resources to build a content strategy.

Reactive operations struggle to efficiently and effectively execute a content marketing strategy. As the name implies, these content marketers react to immediate needs, like one-off requests from the sales team or to play catch-up to a competitor's content. The ad hoc content efforts that are not tied to a content strategy often lead to disjointed messaging and objectives, and components don't fit into a wider brand story.

Within an organization where content marketing is a reactive pursuit, content creation often feels like a mad dash to the finish line. The high pressure to complete a piece of content for a sales rep – before a particular lead goes cold, for example – can result in low quality content that is poorly executed, distributed, and possibly never used again. This parlays into an inability to set goals for content assets, and reactive content marketers rarely have insight into performance.

STONEHENGE

Stonehenge is a prehistoric monument in Wiltshire, England; and archaeologists believe it was constructed somewhere in between 3000 BC to 2000 BC. It's old, and cobbled together – much like a reactive operation that uses whatever and whoever is around to create content.



Only 41% of B2B marketers say their organization clearly understands what an effective or successful content marketing program should look like – **40% of B2C** content marketers feel the same way (CMI).

72% of B2B content marketers say that less than half of their total marketing team plays a role in content creation or strategy (Forrester).

Less than half (37%) of B2B content marketers have a documented strategy, **40% of B2C** marketers do (CMI).



STRATEGY

Strategy is generally non-existent for reactive content marketers. Content is unplanned, and development is a sporadic and spontaneous initiative based on internal and external requests and pressures.

The content that is created is often more promotional than value-add focused. Reactive content marketers generally prioritize the benefits and selling points of a product/offering, as opposed to what the target audience wants and needs to consume. This is because, more times than not, reactive content marketers do not have well-defined personas. They're not creating content for a target audience because they're not sure who that is yet.

A style guide and other safeguards to ensure content is consistent in tone, format and quality does not exist.

CONTENT TEAM

Within a reactive operation, content marketing is often the responsibility of admin personnel, other non-marketing staff or freelance support that only focus on content part of the time. A specialized content marketer is often not on staff. The people responsible for content, whether it's an office manager, a sales rep or account manager that have shown interest in penning blog posts, often work in silos and do not collaborate on planning or ideation.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT & DISTRIBUTION

A reactive content team likely has a blog (or some other form of a content hub) that is updated sporadically with content that is inconsistent in substance and quality. A newsletter is likely also a part of the mix, along with a light social media presence to distribute content – but efforts lack cohesion.

BUDGET

Reactive teams do not have a formal budget for content development or distribution. If there is a cost attached to the creation of a specific piece of content (freelance copywriters, designers etc.), then funds are allocated as needed.

MEASUREMENT

Basic, high-level metrics such as page views and users are benchmarked, but do not play a part in strategic or tactical decision making. Reactive teams are unable to identify and measure tangible ROI metrics like lead or revenue generation.

GETTING TO LANDMARK 2

Make One Person on Your Team the Point Person for All Things Content Marketing-Related

In order for reactive operations to grow out of the first level of maturity of the Content Marketing Maturity Map, they need to make someone responsible for content. For organizations that are just beginning to dip their toes into content marketing, it may not make sense to hire a person that only does content all of the time. Instead, choose someone – preferably someone from the marketing team – to take the lead on content planning and development, even if it's only one part of a job with more responsibilities.

Whether an organization designates a full or part-time content “manager” this person needs to take ownership of all content marketing initiatives. They should be accountable for ensuring that any content assets developed align with what the organization wishes to achieve with content. This will also make it possible for all content, no matter who is creating it, to have a consistent style, tone and cadence because it will go through one person.

Audit Existing Content

The newly appointed content leader should start with an audit of all existing content. They should:

- Take stock of all content assets and identify what purpose they serve
- Mine through analytics tools for quantitative measurement, identifying and noting whether any format/theme/topic has been successful while also weeding out weak points
- Look for opportunities to repurpose or refresh existing content
- Speak to sales and customer service for qualitative feedback, and find out if any content is working for them and how they use (or want to use) content

Identify a Content Objective (or Objectives) and a Target Audience

Once a content manager has been put in place and has completed an audit, they can begin to define a basic strategy starting with an objective. It's important for a nascent content marketing strategy to have an objective in order to dispel disjointed messaging and assets that render content ineffective. All content assets should work towards achieving the organization's content marketing objective. High-level examples that may make sense for a reactive organization are:

- **Capturing the attention of a new audience**
- **Engaging an existing audience**
- **Winning back an audience that was lost**

Part of identifying the objective of content marketing is figuring out who the intended audience is and crafting personas. For reactive content marketers with limited resources, crafting personas can be done simply by interviewing an organization's sales and customer service teams. The sales team will be able to provide valuable insights into what type of customer is being targeted, why, what they care about, and their pain points. The sales team will also be able to share what a typical buying cycle looks like, making it possible for the content manager to begin thinking about the content marketing funnel and how content can be used to guide leads from awareness to purchase influenced by content. The customer success team can provide similar insights about an organization's current customer base.

Set Realistic Timelines and Prioritize High-Impact Content

Identifying the objective and target audience of content provides the essential tools for a strategy blueprint. A set objective and target audience inform the type of content that needs to be created, how it will be prioritized, and distribution methods. However, it's likely that this newly instated team of one will need help with bringing a nascent content marketing strategy to life. Once strategic objectives have been identified, they should assess internal resources that can be tapped and look for any potential opportunities for external support. Then, realistic timelines can be set for creating and publishing content.

At this stage, it's important for the designated content leader to abide by the philosophy that "less is more." The way to make the most of limited resources and to prove the value of content within an organization that is not totally sold on the idea is to:

- **Identify the most high-potential target from all personas**
- **Meticulously create the content that will first catch their attention to generate awareness and subsequently push them through the buying cycle**
- **Allocate funds to meet them where they are – whether that's paid social promotion, email marketing, etc.**

Speculative, aspiring editors

A proactive content marketing operation understands that content created in chaos inhibits its ability to enhance the customer experience on the path to purchase. A proactive content team has implemented a strategy and is working to execute against it.

Although a strategy has been put in place, a proactive operation still hasn't earned buy-in from the entire organization, and the value of content isn't obvious as it's a function that often works in its own silo. At this landmark in the Maturity Map, one of the content marketing operation's biggest challenges is proving the value and ROI of content to management and other internal stakeholders.



LEANING TOWER OF PISA

Italy's Leaning Tower of Pisa is world-famous for its unintentional tilt – which is the perfect representation of a proactive content marketing operation. Teams that fall into this category have started to create content based on a strategy but are missing key architectural plans to stop the whole thing from falling over.

73% of B2B content marketers and 76% of B2C have a plan to operationalize their strategy as an ongoing process (CMI).

Only **34-35%** of content marketers think their strategy is extremely/very effective (CMI) and **85% of B2B** admit that their content very minimally impacts revenue generation (Forrester).

On average, **26-29%** of total marketing budget is allocated to content marketing (CMI).



STRATEGY

A proactive operation has a basic understanding of the personas and customer journey that its creating content for. However, the content generated by a proactive operation is overwhelmingly top-funnel, resulting in big gaps within bottom funnel stages of a customer journey.

The known interests, needs and pain points of target personas may be the focus of some content or only integral to some campaigns – but the value-add focus (content that is more helpful to the customer than sales-pitchy) which is prevalent in late maturity levels hasn't been committed to yet. This is attributed to the fact that a proactive strategy is documented and maintained within an editorial calendar.

Within the calendar, content is generally categorized based on the format and channel in which it will be published (blog, whitepaper, etc.) and organized by go-live dates in an effort to equally distribute formats and topics – not by customer journey stage.

At this maturity level, content ideation is highly speculative and based on what the content team believes their personas would find useful. Speculation is the byproduct of not having data and insights into:

- How content is being discovered (search queries, social referrals, etc.)
- The specific content elements that correlate to conversions and how content is interacted with
- How to effectively deliver the right content to the right person at every stage of the customer journey

CONTENT TEAM

A proactive operation is small – one to two people that are solely dedicated to content marketing. They generally work as part of a larger marketing team within an organization that is made up of demand generation, product marketing and other functions.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT & DISTRIBUTION

A proactive operation has a library of content that is consistently updated – likely in the form of an active blog and a resource hub that is reserved for big rock pieces like whitepapers and on-demand webinars. A handful of pieces fit within the customer journey, but there are major gaps in late-stage funnels.

All content planning is documented within a central editorial calendar that is either at no-cost or very low-cost to the organization. The content team is likely using more than one tool when it comes to planning, publishing and distributing content in addition to their editorial calendar, but they are commonly disjointed and do not speak to each other. It is likely that the tools being used are not tailored to a content marketing team, but are more generalized task/project managers.

Content is consistently shared across all social channels, as proactive operations are generally closely aligned with their counterparts in social media marketing. Alternately, a proactive operation is less aligned with the people responsible for search engine optimization, paid media, email and other channels. As a result, promotional plans across channels, other than social media, are stunted and results are lackluster.

BUDGET

Proactive content teams have a budget, but it is likely a small part of a bigger budget from a general marketing team. The available budget covers the team's small staff, creative outsourcing for copy/design, and low-cost subscription fees for tools used to augment or automate planning and distribution.

MEASUREMENT

When it comes to measuring the success of content, they generally only use lightweight, top-of-funnel analytics to benchmark success. This usually includes page views and social engagement metrics like retweets – similar to how media companies report on results.

For B2C content teams, these top-funnel metrics aren't tied to any concrete business impact like conversions or revenue. B2B content teams, however, start to benchmark top-funnel contacts and marketing qualified leads at this level, but are not able to measure relationships between parameters of content and conversion.

Lightweight top-of-funnel metrics (such as impressions, clicks, page views and retweets) may provide data about specific content, but aren't tied to any particular outcome, such as revenue generation.

GETTING TO LANDMARK 3

Prove that Content is an Essential Function within an Organization

Maturing past the Leaning Tower within the Content Marketing Maturity Map requires the internal buy-in across an organization and agreement that content is a valuable initiative to invest time and resources in.

To do this, the content team needs to get a quick win. Curtail the long-tail approach to content marketing for one campaign to showcase the impact that content can have. To do this, create a big rock piece of content that showcases the ROI of content within a short timeframe. A lower-funnel gated asset that pulls in qualified leads for the sales team is one way to achieve this.

Secondly, the content team must make their own function essential to the success of other marketing functions and other organizational departments. In turn, other functions will help improve the quality, discoverability, amplification and effectiveness of content by making sure it gets to the right people at the right time. By collaborating with different functions and departments, a content marketing team will:

- Gain valuable insights regarding target audience needs and wants
- Learn how different departments use content and/or how they would like to use content
- Be able to build a better content strategy that works for everyone interacting with and using content
- Create content that will have a bigger business impact

Break Down Cross Functional Silos

1. Plan & Collaborate with the Demand Generation Team

Content marketing and demand generation generally have the same goals – make things that build awareness, demand, and pipeline. In fact, 85% of B2B content marketers say that their most important goal is lead generation. But, more often than not, content marketing and demand generation teams operate in silos. The culprits are generally the same across marketing teams:

- One-off, ad-hoc projects with custom KPIs that are limited to either just content marketing or just demand generation
- Lack of visibility into content ideation, planning, and scheduling
- Emphasis on the creation of top-funnel, awareness-building content and a huge gap in lower-funnel content that is critically valuable to demand generation
- Misalignment on which themes and topics to focus on

The two teams need a plan, a marketing roadmap, that unifies content creation with demand generation programs. A plan will help the two teams work together, identify what works and what falls flat, scale, and iterate. Below, are tips to help you establish a shared plan between the two teams.

Establish One Mission; Plan Initiatives Under It: This is the step that comes before metric-oriented goals like “generate x amount of revenue in Q1.” A mission describes what the teams will accomplish together. Growing sales pipeline and optimizing customer/purchasing experiences are examples of overarching missions.

Create Content with Purpose: Content teams want to create content for every stage of the customer journey, and demand generation wants high-quality content to fill every stage, too. The disconnect between the two happens when content marketing doesn't have a clear understanding of the funnel that demand gen is working with, or when demand gen can't decipher where a piece of content fits within a lead nurture track. So, an easy way to combat this is to assign purpose and intent to each piece of content. Together, the two teams can identify which topics and formats work for top, mid and lower funnel content. They can also identify gaps and where content is needed the most.

Build Cross-functional Workflows: Building and defining workflows that cross team lines, from content marketing to demand generation, will keep projects and people on track. It's likely that content marketing and demand generation have both waited on each other for things like landing pages and copy. A set of workflows that map out step-by-step ownership and deadlines – from creating a piece of content to building a campaign around it – and deadlines will help avoid bottlenecks.

With so many moving parts, project management is key to keeping content marketing and demand generation on the same page. Designate one person as a project manager to create standard workflow templates for the programs that both content marketing and demand generation will be involved in – like the launch, promotion, and post-nurture of a big rock whitepaper.

2. Work with Search Specialists to Ensure Optimization

The dynamic between content marketing and SEO is interesting. There has been overlap in responsibility and function between the two roles within the last few years as a result of Google's growing emphasis on content quality for ranking rewards. The two functions need to work very closely together to ensure that all content is discoverable via search and can benefit from the many bonuses that come with a first-page ranking.

Add Evergreen Content to Your Strategy: "Evergreen content" is always relevant. It's content that doesn't have an expiry date. It's just as interesting and helpful to a reader who found it in January as it will be to a reader who stumbles upon it in November. Creating this type of content is great for both content marketing and SEO. For content marketers, an evergreen asset will constantly bring in traffic and make website metrics look healthy.

In terms of SEO, the steady and prolonged popularity of a piece will catch Google's (and other search engine's) interest. Content that is original, contains helpful information and attracts links from third-party sources are valued by search engines. All of these elements are much easier to achieve with content that has a longer lifespan than a topical news items that is here today but gone tomorrow.

Execute Keyword Research & Monitor Goals Together: It's of paramount importance that content and SEO counterparts are on the same page when it comes to keyword research, execution and success benchmarking. Identify the search queries that target audiences already use in relation to a company's offerings and the type of content that is being produced. SEOs can and should also instruct content marketers on proper best practices for keyword placement to help ensure that content achieves the visibility and accessibility that it deserves.

Once you have a list of priority keywords and execution is agreed upon, monitoring progress and success can be done together. Monitor changes in rankings and referral traffic from search engines. Together, you can identify which content and keyword combinations work for search engines and what shouldn't be duplicated because of less-than-stellar rankings and page views. Benchmarking performance together will ultimately result in better, more effective content and stronger search engine optimization.

3. Team Up with Product Development and/or Product Marketing

A well-executed joint product/content marketing plan can build more awareness and interest in a product than both counterparts could accomplish without the help of the other. Product and content can help target buyers understand their product within the context of what problem it solves.

Identify the Problems Your Product Solves and Iterate Content for Every Stage of the Customer Journey: In order for content to be effective at every stage of the customer journey, it needs to be directly relevant to the needs and pain points of your buyers. One of the biggest challenges in creating effective content is figuring out who you're creating it for – and this is where product marketing shines. A product marketing team will be able to provide all of the information needed about who the product is for (and why), which will make creating content that resonates a whole lot easier. They'll be able to provide hyper-targeted personas and information on the journey each persona takes to making a purchase.

Early stage content should not focus on the features of your new product (actually, it shouldn't even mention your product). Instead, work backward with your product marketing team to understand the exact problem(s) that your product addresses to create content that – not only generates awareness and interest – but positions your company as a trusting resource/expert about the topic and problem at hand. Identifying these problems will help you build the foundation of your product/content marketing strategy, and content can then be created to tackle these topics to first initiate a buyer to the sales cycle and move them through each stage.

Get Product-Specific Only in Later Stage Content: Early stage content (blogs, whitepapers, etc.) should be optimized for and distributed on channels of discovery – meaning it should be interesting and helpful to the reader and free of any sales pitch. Content marketers should lean heavily on product marketing, or just hand the baton off, when it comes to creating content for the bottom stages of a buying cycle because this content will directly call out how the product solves the buyer's problem. This can include product one-pagers, videos and other types of content that can easily convey a product's features, benefits and use cases.

4. Work with Sales and Customer Service Teams

Lastly, the sales and customer service teams within an organization are extremely valuable resources to a content marketing team – they often are also the biggest customer of content within an organization. They deal with prospective and current customers on a daily basis and know exactly what content they need to push people all the way through the sales cycle. Instead of handing the sales team the content that you think they need, actually ask them what they need – then fold that into your content strategy. Ask them about any recurring questions they get from prospects and what types of content can be used to help them close deals. This isn't a one-time conversation – regularly check-in to find out which content pieces have stopped working and what they need to be replaced with. Provide access to an editorial calendar so that they're aware of what's coming up and can plan for how it can be used.

Eliminate Ad Hoc and Inconsistent Efforts

At this level of maturity, the content team still receives ad hoc requests from across the organization that can distract and deter from staying on track to timelines, topics and campaigns planned within a strategy. Additionally, more integration with marketing counterparts means the marketing team will likely also rely on the content team to produce copy for their own initiatives. Not planning ahead for rogue requests from the bigger marketing team can be problematic when a content marketing strategy suffers as a result. Content teams should make a concerted effort to either:

- **Ensure that all rogue requests fit within their content strategy in terms of objective, tone and topic and persona**
- **Make sure that any requests that the content team should be responsible for gets added to the editorial calendar well in advance so that they can be planned for**
- **Not be afraid to turn down requests that will disrupt and distract, or offer an alternative**

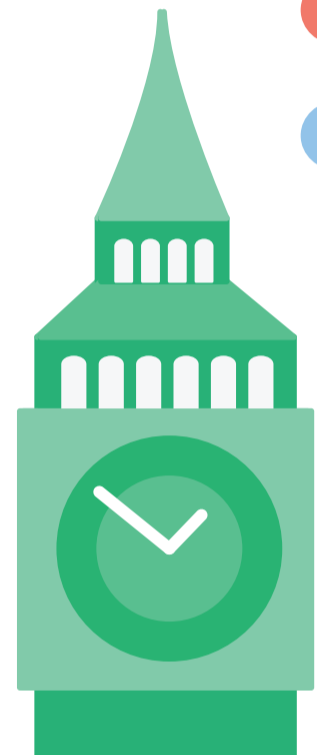
Established and accountable

In the middle of the Content Marketing Maturity Map is the correlative team. This is a content operation that has found stability after having proved its value and purpose within an organization, while also spearheading cross-functional integration. Content marketing operations at this level receive fewer and fewer internal ad hoc requests that distract from executing a strategy because they're creating content that stakeholders can use to engage prospects and existing customers.

Teams at this stage have created comprehensive customer journeys in collaboration with non-marketing teams, including sales, support and product management. Content is planned and created against stages of the customer journey, helping customers easily get from point A to point B.

Content is published in multiple formats and across various channels to meet personas where they are at every step of the journey, as opposed to waiting for a target audience to find the content on their own. Each piece of content is tied to a clear measure of business value, and the metrics important to a content team extend beyond reach and engagement. Correlative operations prioritize conversion above all.

A correlative operations's biggest challenge in advancing in maturity is visibility. Once an organization has access to high quality, relevant content, they're going to use it whenever they can. All internal stakeholders that want to use content need to have access to a robust content library so that they can find what they need when they need it. When content is hidden and cannot be surfaced by sales reps, demand generation managers or social media specialists, the long-term performance of a piece of content suffers. Additionally, a lack of visibility into a content library leads to duplicate efforts when teams recreate existing assets.



Only **14% of B2B** content marketers think their content delivers impactful business value (Forrester)... but **51%** consider their operation “mature”.

However, **35% of B2C** content marketers think their strategy is effective at helping their organization achieve its content-related goals and objectives (CMI).

BIG BEN

The construction of Big Ben was completed in 1859 and its maker Ian Westworth claimed it to be the “the most accurate four-faced striking and chiming clock in the world.” It’s fitting for a correlative content marketing team because it’s an operation accountable to its wider organization for the timely return on content’s investment.

STRATEGY

A correlative operation's strategy is based on goals, personas and buyer journeys that are shared across a marketing team, and not exclusively to the function of content marketing. The content marketing strategy supports a larger brand story, that all marketing functions and organizational departments agree on – like claiming that the organization is an expert on all things related to a specific topic.

All content produced within this strategy is customer-centric. Ideation and planning is less speculative, and content creation is catered to the needs of the personas and stages in the organization's customer journey. Quantitative metrics and qualitative feedback inform internal stakeholders, determine whether content assets are bringing in new leads and guiding them through the buying cycle.

An integral part of a correlative strategy is the content team's ability to share content assets with the entire organization so that sales and customer service reps can use them to nurture and create new opportunities. Additionally, performance metrics are shared across the organization as increased content marketing integration requires increased accountability.

CONTENT TEAM

A correlative operation has a formally named leader – Director of Content is common. The Director of Content oversees a team of internal and external content staff. Generally, the in-house staff focus on copy while external staff provide support to fill production gaps like graphic design and video editing.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT & DISTRIBUTION

Content created by correlative operations generally follow a narrative arc – whether it's an overarching brand story that informs all content or stories told on a campaign-basis. This is done to foster correlation between content pieces.

Correlative content teams rely on market trends, signals and internal analysis to ideate topics. And this is a team that has broken out of the basic content formats such as blog posts and whitepapers. Correlative teams experiment with interactive formats and gamified tactics as budget and personnel make it possible to reach beyond the traditional. Content is distributed and amplified across a variety of channels – both organic and paid.

At this level, content teams have outgrown the ability to juggle disconnected tools for research, sourcing, creation and distribution. A team of this size that is creating a high volume of content needs tools that make workflows possible for review and approvals, while also automating as much setup and admin work as possible. Big Ben is where content marketing platforms become prevalent to increase efficiency and cut down on production time. Content marketing teams begin testing the integration of content marketing tools to bring production, distribution and measurement tools together – including customer relationship management and marketing automation platforms.

BUDGET

Correlative operations have a budget that covers internal and external staff to ensure that content is created at high volume and high quality. Spend on distribution is significantly higher at this level, as content is used across marketing functions for multi-channel paid campaigns.

Determine Whether Advancing to Level 4 is Right For Your Business

Landmark three is an ideal stage of content marketing maturity for many organizations. As a result, it's important for a content marketing team to determine whether advancing to landmark four is the right choice to make.

For some organizations that work within industries or target markets that are highly competitive and crowded, advancing in maturity can help stand out from the rest. Similarly, if an organization's product/offering cannot be differentiated from a competitor with a unique selling point, strong digital content experiences can engage a target audience and generate interest.

For correlative content marketers that are managing to keep the operating costs of content marketing at a reasonable level while generating a healthy number of qualified sales leads, advancing to level four does not need to happen immediately. Instead, focus on how to enhance your current content marketing strategy by increasing amplification and identifying tools and metrics that can directly tie content to revenue. Also, work toward increasing visibility and accessibility of content within the organization.

Create an Internal Content Hub

One of the biggest challenges that level three content marketers face is internal visibility and accessibility of content. An organization that has bought into the value of content marketing will want to use content all of the time. Sales, customer service, support and other marketing functions will need it to engage leads and customers – and they will all want to be able to easily identify the best content to use on a case-by-case basis. It should be easy for anyone within an organization to access all content that has been created. To provide access, store all content together in one place – but uploading files and pasting links will not be enough. A level three content team should create a digital asset library structure that employs tagging so content can be searched for by:

- Topic
- Format
- Buyer journey stage
- Persona
- Date published
- And any other parameter that is important to an organization

Invest in Technology

For content marketing operations that want to advance to level four, they need to invest in content marketing tools that will streamline how a content team operates. Content marketing-specific tools can:

- Provide more in-depth insights into persona behavior throughout every stage of the customer journey – where they drop out of a sales cycle and why
- Mine and analyze the social conversations that personas are engaging in about pain points, concerns, trends, competition, etc. to ideate based on data
- Generate production analytics so that smart decisions about content can be made in regards to resources, available spend, average development time, etc.
- Refine metrics to clearly tie content and business outcomes – accurately measure how content impacts customer interaction, sales pipeline, retention and account growth
- Streamline the production of a content team's output by templating and automating workflows based on content-type
- Minimize the tech stack necessary to operate by consolidating the processes of ideating, planning, creating, publishing and distributing into one platform

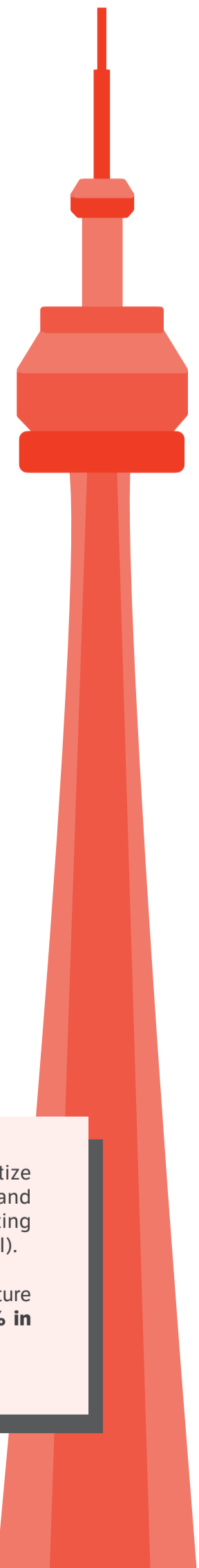
Landmark 4 Adaptive

Versatile and results-driven

Content operations that land at landmark four within the Content Maturity Map have successfully crafted a content team that is generating assets tightly tied to tangible results like revenue generation. New to landmark four is the ability to not only engage leads through the entire customer journey of new business, but to help retain existing business with customer-focused content.

The content team focuses on many different formats, and has found ways to expand promotion and reach of content. They are able to optimize and adjust content based on robust performance metrics that can attribute parameters like headlines, images and promo copy to engagement.

The content that is developed at this stage contributes to and powers an organization's overall brand identity. Landmark four content marketing teams are well-oiled machines that have ingratiated itself within an organization by creating cross-functional alignment, shared objectives and transparency of metrics. The work done to integrate content into the organization has resulted in consistent messaging and streamlined customer experiences influenced by helpful and engaging content.



CN TOWER

The CN Tower is a 533.3 metre-high concrete communications and observation tower. An adaptive content marketing team – much like the CN Tower – observes user-behavior trends and data before ideating content. They also experiment with multiple formats, reflecting the diversity of the CN Tower's city.

76% of B2B content marketers prioritize delivering content quality over quantity and **75%** can demonstrate how content marketing has increased audience engagement (CMI).

30% in B2B are in the sophisticated/mature phase of content marketing maturity, **40% in B2C** (CMI).

STRATEGY

At this landmark, all assets planned and developed are strongly tied to qualitative goals – like a minimum number of leads and projected revenue generation.

Content is also tied to more qualitative goals like thought leadership and brand awareness, as content is now used to establish an organization as the authority within their industry. Content is used across the organization. Collaboration and shared concepts of content campaigns is common for adaptive operations, working with teams like sales and customer service to create more personalized content for the later stages of the customer journey.

The content team has strict guidelines when it come to quality, tone, voice and language to protect and enhance the brand. Safeguards are put in place (levels of review and approval) to ensure guidelines are implemented before content is distributed.

CONTENT TEAM

At this level of maturity the content team is beginning to evolve into an organization's editorial arm, similar to a media company. A large team is made up of both internal and external content creators – with a focus on employing freelance journalists to create content (further mimicking the operations of a media company). It's common to employ more specialist creators than in-house staff at this level so that different content formats (video, interactives, gamification) and specialities can be executed simultaneously.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT & DISTRIBUTION

Content is of the highest quality because it needs to be tightly tied to results and accountability. At this level, content teams are tapped into influencer marketing, using industry influencers outside of the organization to both create and distribute content. Additionally, adaptive operations are not wasteful, and have cracked the code on creating content that has long shelf lives for the purposes of recycling through nurture campaigns, repurposing into different formats and prolonged sales enablement.

Performance and visibility metrics (page views, shares) are generally healthy because of multi-function collaboration across marketing functions for amplification campaigns on social, email, etc.

This team relies on data, performance metrics and engagement metrics from CRM platforms to determine how to deliver content at what stage to contacts. They have begun to experiment with personalization to automatically deliver unique experiences based off of user behavior and previously viewed content.

BUDGET

An adaptive operation has their own budget that is segmented based on creation and promotion. At this landmark, the content marketing budget is a large part of the overall marketing budget since the work created by an adaptive team enables other functions to enhance their own output.

Invest in Data

Analysing customer data and predicting trends before they happen requires an expert that can mine through data and derive accurate insights. If budget allows, consider hiring a data specialist to join the content team that will help inform ideation and planning. It is also possible to rely on software solutions to monitor social conversations and other sources to analyze data automatically.

Data can also be used to segment audience and get hyper-specific with targeting. This will empower a content team to innovate with the way they deliver content to customers based off of different triggers, actions and behaviors.

Outsource More Content Creation

To increase content creation, experiment with new formats and specialization, work with outside vendors to create this content.

Review Technology Stack

Adaptive content marketers are likely using a robust content marketing technology stack to manage contributors, planning, creation and distribution. Optimization at this stage is key in order to streamline operations as more content is created and freelancers join the team.

As the content marketing platform sector emerges and evolves as the role of content marketing does within an organization, continually review the options that exist to see if any of the options can further consolidate and streamline your content operations.

Landmark 5 Predictive

Personalized and automated

Level five content marketing teams are the content masters, and a very small amount of organization's currently fit within this level of maturity. At this landmark, content marketing has a streamlined editorial process for all creation, strong reporting and proof of business impact. Content is not just a brand identifier at this level, it's a competitive differentiator.

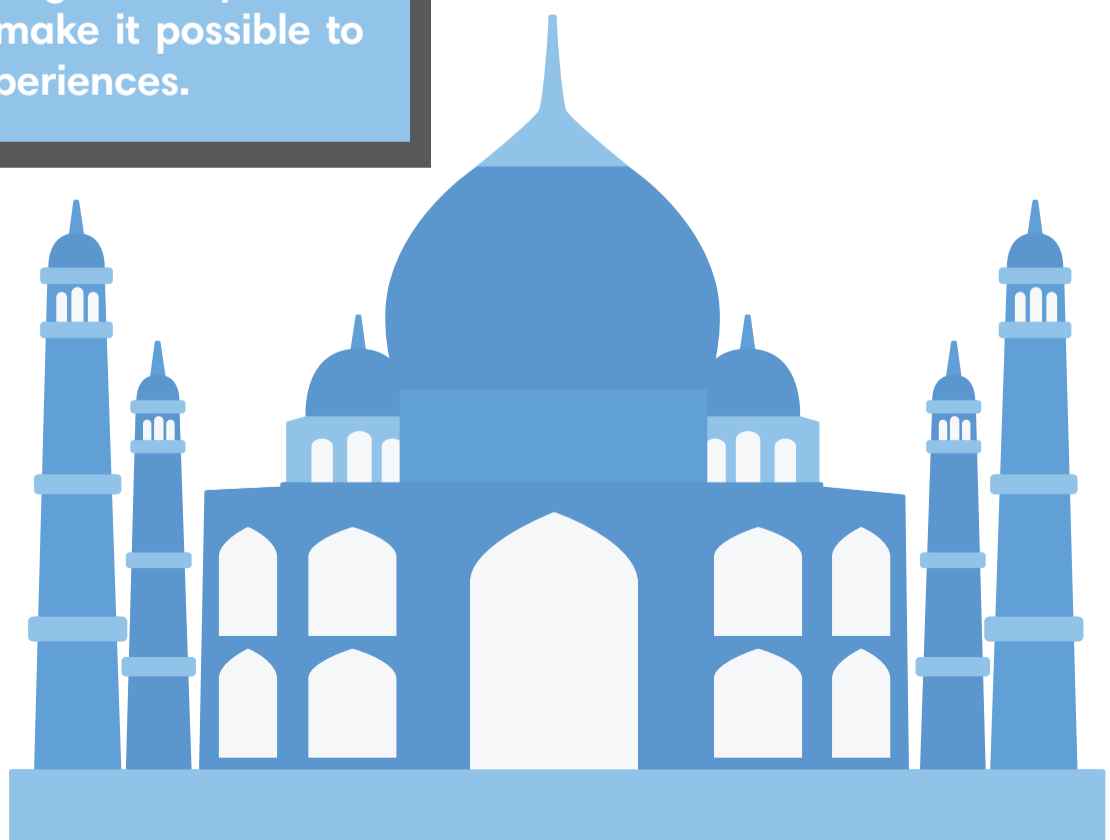
Everyone involved in the creation and distribution of content collaborates on one centralized platform, but decisions are only made based on data. Topics, formats and distribution methods need to perform well in order for the team to continue to utilize them as part of their strategy. Ideating is also dependent on data sources, based on what personas have proven to engage with. Content marketers pull extensive data on performance across the content experience/customer journey, and also gain insight into performance across teams and channels. Operations become truly data-driven, focusing resources on the most effective marketing content and initiatives.

TAJ MAHAL

The Taj Mahal, an ivory-white marble mausoleum, is an architectural marvel commissioned in 1632 by Emperor Shah Jahan for his wife Mumtaz Mahal's tomb. Its intricate details, size and beauty represent the highest level of content marketing maturity where personalization and automation make it possible to deliver the very best in content experiences.

Only **4% of B2B** organizations fall into the "content master" maturity (Forrester).

Only **1% of B2B** organizations use up 100% of an organization's total marketing spend, **2% of B2C** organizations (CMI).



STRATEGY

A predictive content marketing strategy is central to multi-channel marketing.

The strong performance results underpin product and/or service offerings in such a way that content is perceived to provide the same level of value as what the customer has or will purchase from the organization.

Content marketing efforts are core to brand identity and competitive differentiation. Content engagements weave seamlessly throughout the customer journey, dynamically tailoring personalized experiences based on context and performance.

With content created in high volume over an extended amount of time, robust personalization is possible – and content teams can automate how a known contact discovers specific content.

CONTENT TEAM

Similar to level four, the content operation is an organization's editorial arm made up of both internal and external content creators – with leadership roles in-house (Director, VP of content).

But all managing content team personnel are accountable to making data-driven decisions and ensuring that all content created – by both internal and external staff – is based on a projected performance goal determined by data analysis.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT & DISTRIBUTION

Content is interactive, immersive and highly creative. Predictive operations have found a way to balance data and creativity to produce content that provides a benefit to the reader and also entertains. This content team is not restricted by format, and is comfortable playing with emerging digital formats to bring their message to fruition.

Distribution is highly targeted and personalized based on parameters such as location, referral source, stage in customer journey, etc. Predictive operations use technology, powered by data, to ensure that a specific customer sees the content that they should see in order to guide them through the customer journey. A customer in the advocate stage will likely never stumble upon a top-funnel awareness piece of content.

Customer support, sales and product development teams can take advantage of the performance and engagement insights from content campaigns to tweak and improve product/service offerings. Content marketing analytics track different asset delivery against online audience growth and qualitative business goals.

The delivery of content happens in real-time to precise audience targets, based on sophisticated data.

BUDGET

Similar to landmark four, this content team has a large budget that comprises much of the bigger marketing allocation.

New to landmark five are dedicated funds allocated to innovation and experimentation to enable new ways to mine customer insights and play with new content formats.

About Us

ScribbleLive is a leading global content platform that brings data, strategy and creativity together, helping businesses achieve incredible results. ScribbleLive powers content marketing and content experiences for brands, media and sports organizations, transforming the way they build and connect with audiences.

Visit [ScribbleLive.com](https://scribblelive.com) to learn more about how ScribbleLive can help your team reach the next content marketing maturity landmark.

