Understanding the Content Strategy Landscape

A look at a range of content strategies and why you can’t afford not to pay attention
Content strategy: the new black

Content strategy:
Repeatable process that governs content throughout the entire lifecycle

Content lifecycle:
Iterative cycle that spans analysis, collection, management, and publishing stages

Content:
Stuff inside the tags
Extension of UX
The message

So you’ve hired a content strategist. Now what?
“Nothing can deter confidence quicker than a broken experience.”*

* Christopher Cashdollar, Creative Director, Happy Cog Studios
Today, broken experiences can damage brands faster than ever.

* Rahel Bailie, 
  Content Strategist 
  Intentional Design
Content drives the user experience.
Managing content strategically

Content is a front-line business asset and deserves good management

- Comprehension
- Trust
- Perception
- Brand
- Customer loyalty
- Profitability

Don’t stuff your content into the corporate mattress called a website and call it asset management.
**Snacktime Rules**

My dad was always the one who taught me about science, but looking back, I'm starting to realize how much my nerdiness was influenced by my mom.

Mom, can I have a snack in my room before bed?

No, dear. You know you only get that privilege when your age is one less than a multiple of three.
BRAND CONFUSION
And I if you think I’m clicking on anything on this site, you’re sadly mistaken.
oaklandcemetery Oakland Cemetery
RT @ATL Events: Theater: @coppenergypac: Tickets going fast for Oklahoma! Five shows only - opening this Thursday. http://fb.me/P6u7kJo5
3 Jan

oaklandcemetery Oakland Cemetery
ooh...I'm in! RT @ACFB: Need some details on our next Supper Club @FarmBurger? Check out our page here! http://ht.ly/3xsjE
3 Jan

oaklandcemetery Oakland Cemetery
Congratulations to the 2010 NFC South Division Champion @Atlanta_Falcons!
2 Jan
How does this Flash-front page help users? Hint: It doesn’t.
Given that Canada is the second largest country in the world, this isn’t helpful, either.
What I want from a restaurant website:

- Menu
- Specials and happy hour info
  (Including social promotions such as Foursquare, Groupon, and Twitter specials)
- Address with a link to google maps
- Online reservation system that actually works
  (instead of one where I make a reservation online, show up, and the hostess gives me a blank, confused stare when I tell her my name)
- Hours of operation, parking and contact info
Mind the gap

What I get instead:

Obnoxious flash animation showing giant pictures of couples stuffing food in each other's faces

Menu is only downloadable as a 10 megabyte PDF file

Can't copy/paste anything because it's in flash

Letter from the founder that no one has ever or will ever read

Every restaurant owner thinks that they're the first person to use the Papyrus font

Welcome,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Café MeatyYummers, founded in nineteen-oh-who-gives-a-shit. We serve only the finest, freshest ingredients straight to your mouth. Our exciting, moody atmosphere will enchant and entrance you while you bathe in dim candlelight, which can also help make your date look better if he or she is ugly as hell.

Our warm, welcoming staff will treat you as nothing short of family — because if they don't we'll report them as illegals.

Anything is possible at Café MeatyYummers. The only limit is yourself.

Love,
-Phil Meaty
Owner

http://theoatmeal.com
How does a query to a restaurant return a reply from a disease-related group? And this strengthens their brand how?
The Starbucks strategy creates unique experiences for different audiences. This is their web experience.
...and this audience ...

myStarbucks iPhone App

Starbucks at your fingertips, no matter where you are.

Not sure where your closest Starbucks is, or which beverage you want to drink?

The myStarbucks App is here to help. Our easy-to-navigate store locator lets you search by amenities and get directions. There's also a drink builder feature so you can build your drink exactly how you like it and send it to a friend. And we've even included a food menu with nutritional information, as well as stories and facts about our whole bean coffees so you can discover what makes Starbucks coffee, well, Starbucks coffee.

Download myStarbucks now - free from the App Store.

Got a great idea to make this app even better? Tell us all about it at mystarbucksidea.com.

This is one mobile experience: find my nearest...
This is another mobile experience: What’s my balance...
THE MUU MUU (ONE SIZE FITS ALL)
They claim to get mobile – but they don’t walk the talk with their content strategy.
Now, to walk the talk

I'm contacting you now to invite you to our fifth annual Web Content 2011 Conference. The

4a27cbfb-4

Not confidence-inspiring!
“This Visa interface is great. I can download each statement, by month, for the last year.”

“Vancity is great. I can enter the dates and download up to two years at a time, in a single transaction!”

“Visa’s monthly download is driving me bananas. Why doesn’t Visa get it together?”
Pushing content from a single source to many outputs is the way to keep costs down and retain a good experience.
“SHADDUP, ALREADY!”
Corporate narcissism

Pushing sales content out to new owners isn’t a smart strategy. Engage, don’t annoy.
Check your customer service scripts. Do you set callers on edge right from the start through inappropriate content?
Giving your social media strategy to junior staff is not a good idea, under any circumstances.
Love, love me do

The Washington Post

North Korea threatens South Korea with nuclear war

By YOUNG-JIN KIM
The Associated Press
Monday, December 13, 2010, 3:53 AM

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea warned Monday that it would bring a nuclear war to the region if the South conducted military drills amid lingering tension nearly three weeks after the North shelled a South Korean island.

The South's live-fire drills are scheduled to run Monday through Friday at 17 sites. The regular, scheduled exercises are getting special attention following a South Korean artillery attack on front-line Yeonpyeong Island that killed two South Korean marines and two civilians.

The Nov. 23 artillery barrage that North Korea's first assault on the southern country since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, began after the North said South Korea fires toward its territorial waters. South Korea fired back southward, not toward North Korea, as part of routine exercises.

After the attack, South Korea staged joint military drills with the United States and also pushed ahead with more artillery exercises, despite the North's warning that they would aggravate tensions.

A South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff officer tried to play down the significance of this week's drills, saying they are part of routine military exercises and would not occur near the disputed western Korean sea border where last month's attack took place. The officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of office policy, gave no further details.

North Korea, however, lashed out at Seoul, accusing South Korea of collaborating with the United States and Japan to ratchet up pressure on Pyongyang.

That cooperation is "nothing but treacherous escalating the tension between the North and the South and bringing the dark cloud of a nuclear war to hang over the Korean peninsula," Pyongyung's main Rodong Sinmun newspaper said in a commentary carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

North Korea has often issued similar threats during standoffs.

In a show of unity, top diplomats from South Korea, the United States and Japan met in Washington last week and said they would not resume negotiations aimed at normalizing North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program until the country's behavior changes. Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited South Korea last week and warned Pyongyang to stop its "belligerent, reckless behavior."

On Monday, South Korean and U.S. defense officials met in Seoul for one-day discussions on North Korea and other issues that are part of regular defense talks, according to Seoul's Defense Ministry.

At the opening of the meeting, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Schiffer said "the United States stands shoulder to shoulder with the Republic of Korea and with the Korean people in the face of recent North Korean provocations," referring to South Korea by its formal name.

Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg was also set to visit China later this week for talks on North Korea amid international pressure for Beijing to use its diplomatic clout to rein in North Korea, its ally. At a Beijing China meeting, senior U.S. officials accompanying Steinberg will travel on to Seoul and Tokyo.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, meanwhile, leaves the United States for North Korea on Tuesday. Richardson, who has often acted as a diplomatic troubleshooter, has made regular visits to North Korea and has also hosted North Korean officials in New Mexico.

http://www.theworldsbestever.com/2010/12/14/oversharing/
Incessant sales pitches are annoying. If you’re not a client, why follow? And if you are a client, why follow?
If you can’t keep content updated, don’t create an empty container.
Erin Kelly Dear Lilith,

Nobody is attacking Lilith's purpose or intent. And poor/slow ticket sales are a fact, not a judgement. The reasons for these low ticket sales are a combination of poor decisions on your behalf during the rollout of this tour. Of course, ticket prices are near the top of that list. But also up there are some huge missteps in logistics and execution which have burned more than a few bridges.

In addition, you have also exhibited a total lack of communication with your fans. For a tour which is social-media-savvy enough to have fan correspondents covering each show, it should be a no-brainer to have a staff member on this wall answering questions and replying to upset fans. I can't imagine it is great press to have a public message board where every positive comment is hidden by a dozen angry/hurt/disappointed posts.

Blame the industry bloggers and critics all you want, but you should be worrying more about the many disappointed ticketholders you have created.

Yesterday at 3:06pm · Comment · Like · Flag
Social support

What these orgs have in common? User support content to point to.
P IS FOR PRODUCT
Who signs up for iTunes based on the home page marketing blurb? Marketing content is the thin layer of icing ..
over top of the product (or technical) content – the cake. For iTunes, this is the cake.
On YouTube’s home page is a little bit of icing...and a lot of cake.
Buyers don’t make buying decisions based on the slick blah-blah.
They go to the source: editorials, reviews, forums, and Google.
Training material

Support articles

Technical manuals

Single-sourced, technically sound. User experience: C-.
Customer-centric ...

Support for HP Designjet T1100 Printer series

- Training material
- Support
- Social network
- Technical manuals
- Marketing

Everything the buyer needs – before and after the sale – in a single place. User experience: A.
You can fight each month with a site to be able to view the contents of your bill.
Or you could just get your bill, and not have to log in to see the content. Thanks, Shaw!
A content strategy includes the content for search engine results.
A content strategy thinks of user experience and first impressions.
Ironically, for this company, the marketing message fell victim to the pages that came before it.
A content strategy includes content curation. Here’s the first step in a search for video content.
Here’s the second step – no video, but a comments page.
Here’s the third, and final, step.
And no content.
Another good reason for content curation.
A lot of profit margins count on customers using a self-serve model.
Stay connected and entertained with the sleek and versatile BlackBerry® Bold™ smartphone, featuring an easy-to-use trackpad for navigation.

Features
- BlackBerry® Messenger, email, IM and text
- Preloaded Facebook® and MySpace® apps for BlackBerry
- Full HTML browser and trackpad for navigation
- Access to thousands of apps from the BlackBerry® App World™
- 3.2 MP camera with flash and video capture
- TELUS SIM card included ( = international roaming)

Available services*
- BlackBerry® App World™
- Ringtones & images
- Email
- Video messaging
- Instant messaging
- Web browsing

Features
- High-speed access to the TELUS 3G network
- TELUS International Roaming ( = SIM card)
- Bluetooth® 2.0
- BlackBerry® App World™
- Expandable microSD slot (up to 16GB)
- 3.2MP camera with flash and video capture

Available services*
- BlackBerry® App World™
- Ringtones & images
- TELUS mobile radio®
- Text messaging
- Email
- Web browsing

Why make it hard?
This strategy – not interrupting the task by providing info on-page – is a welcome improvement.
Plan for the entire content lifecycle

- Requirement analysis
- User research
- Governance planning
- Budget

- Acquire
- Author/Edit
- Version/Localize
- Metadata

- Aggregate/Transform
- Publish/Syndicate
- Syndicate
- Evaluate
- Iterate or sunset

- Modeling/typing
- Configure/components
- Structure/standards
- Repository

The strategy is the top left quadrant; the rest is implementation. But plan for the whole cycle up front.
Know how content works, under the hood
Content must be able to:

Integrate
Embed data into content

Converge
Show content from multiple sources in a single display

Syndicate
Send content out on demand
Content strategy: walk the talk
Thank you!

www.intentionaldesign.ca
@rahelab (Twitter)
http://www.google.com/profiles/rahel.bailie (other)