

TREND: Content marketing

Content marketing will dominate 2015 in the marketing environment as brands increasingly use digital platforms and data gathered from consumers to create and curate relevant content to bolster brand engagement and brand loyalty.

There isn't a marketing plan that won't have content marketing at the heart of its marketing process - whether it is paid, earned or owned content - or whether you call it content marketing, native advertising, PR, storytelling or advertorial. The chapter and verse is to touch the consumer on an emotive level so that they share your content too.

The consumer's insatiable desire for cool content to share to their networks hasn't abated and in fact recent global and national events in the massive news year that 2014 was - seemingly a disaster, a war or a global issue to 'hashtag' every week - only proves how more engaged the individual is online and how more prepared they are to share relevant content; content that adds value; and content that makes them look good.

The next evolution of content marketing for 2015 is predicted to be 'content selling' according to [Hubspot's marketing blog](#), which provides a handy graphic explaining how content marketing can transmute to content selling, as well. South African marketers need to download this infographic and pin it to their desktops as a reminder.



Infographic via blog.hubspot.com

[click to enlarge](#)

In our exclusive Biz Trends 2015 reports, there isn't a contributor who doesn't have content on their trends list for 2015, no matter which trend category they commented on. [David Blyth](#), group MD, Yellowwood Brand Architects, pegs content marketing as the industry's "hottest topic" at present. Consumer-generated content is at its peak and marketers are contributing to the content overload with stories and campaigns for consumers to share and engage with.

"In 2015 we will continue to witness the rise of curated content and infographics, but good curation is still a rare skill and

even infographics are becoming pervasive and invasive. We will see the increasing use of video. And we will also see more people unsubscribing from everything they don't find valuable," Blyth warns.

Marketers need to really understand what their consumers want, when they want it and it needs to offer solutions to problems, Blyth adds.

Brands are becoming publishers of their own content, seamlessly integrating content of value for customers and native advertising (advertorial - paid for content), says [Melissa Attree](#), director content strategy, O&M CT. Attree also urges brands to build their own communities on their own platforms. "It's not enough to just create good content - we need to pay attention to how that content is packaged, repurposed and, most importantly, distributed to ensure that it really adds value and builds an audience in the long-term."

[Heidi Brauer](#), chief marketing officer, Hollard Insurance, does not believe the game changer in the industry in 2015 is digital integration or data. She believes agencies and clients need to work harder at collaborating on the brands they are responsible for to create that "beautiful work" required. Marketing convergence/integration and a single currency for industry research are also on her wishlist for this year.

Collaboration in itself - between brands and their partners and brands and their consumers - has of course been popping up as a trend in the past year and will no doubt continue. It fits into the whole 'transparency and authenticity' movement. Basically we have to act like the human beings we are: with more humanity. We certainly can't tell those authentic stories if we don't. You can't fake authenticity for very long.

"Truth, purity and organic content are the big trends for 2015 for [Di Charton](#), managing director, Red & Yellow school of branding, Cape Town. Strong content will gain social capital and be shared by consumers. [Paul Scanlon](#), MD, Pernod Ricard SA, highlights the trend towards "brands with providence" - brands that have a compelling story to tell, in collaboration with their consumers, as part of that organic content.

[Cecile Missildine](#), EMEA regional director, Text 100, wants public relations agencies and ad agencies to work closer together to get the owned, earned and paid content model working as it should with fully integrated communications. In fact, [Bridget von Holdt](#), MD, Glasshouse Communication Management, advises PR agencies to really focus on creating compelling content as the media industry shrinks in South Africa and the rest of the world. This includes visual content. "The rise of the so-called second screen phenomenon, in which users log onto the internet on their tablet or smartphone while watching TV, is creating a new mind-set where consumers and business will grow more willing to interact with brands through social channels in the coming year."

And again, content is referenced by [Keri-Ann Stanton](#), head, Joe Public Engage: "Great content across the correct platforms that shows that brands and corporates themselves have realised and acknowledged that their consumers and influencers and stakeholders live in more than one place, and need more than one message."

****Trends curated by [Louise Marsland](#), specialist editor of Biz Trends 2015.***

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