How to Create and Measure Effective Mobile Content for Micro-Moments

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Topics

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Understanding customer needs across the decision making journey helps marketers create content that drives business growth. Digital marketing leader and BrightEdge CEO, Jim Yu, offers advice on how to make content count.

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L ast year, marketers spent tens of billions of dollars creating digital marketing content, but few were able to say with confidence what worked, and why. We sat down with Jim Yu, CEO and Founder of BrightEdge—a leading provider of cloud-based Enterprise SEO and Content Performance Management solutions—to talk about how he helps clients create and measure effective content for micro-moments.

Q: How do successful marketers develop valuable content?

Jim Yu: When it comes to building effective content, a big difference between successful and unsuccessful marketers is knowing what your customers are looking for. What's the purpose of the content? Do you have a data-driven way to identify customer demand for content? Are you prioritizing and justifying content investments based on this data?

Many marketers create content based on what they think is interesting rather than building content to meet a specific, quantified customer need. This can translate into a lot of unhelpful content. Our BrightEdge study shows that, for B2C companies, only about 20% of the content created drives engagement.[1] In B2B it's higher at 50% (there's less content and it's more targeted), but this still means that half of the content generated is not driving engagement.[2]

These numbers also vary by industry. In hospitality, content tends to have high engagement because it's targeted: physical locations, properties, etc. We've seen that 87% of hospitality content generates engagement.[3] But in retail there are so many products and SKUs that only about 16% of content generates any engagement.[4] So, lots of content, but it seems to be a lot less engaging.

In industries where little of the content garners audience attention, marketers should take a step back and identify who precisely they want to reach, and why. Defining the 'why this, why now' for each piece of content may help you find more success. Being as relevant as possible across the consumer journey helps drive interactions.

Q: What's different about content now vs. five years ago?

Historically, content was designed only for desktop consumption and was long and detailed. If you go back five years and look at a major home improvement retailer, for example, they focused on product-details to feature a specific brand of refrigerator or provide product specifications. This content was designed to help seal the deal in those I-want-to-buy moments.

Savvy marketers capture customers earlier in the decision-making process by creating content that speaks to those explorative I-want-to-know or even I-want-to-be-inspired moments.

Then, there was an evolution toward category-level content. For example, people searching generally for stainless steel refrigerators, not just a specific model/brand. In other words, content began to move up the customer journey to guide people earlier.

Content marketing has continued to evolve, and now effective retailers catch folks even earlier in their journey, for example, when they are thinking about a kitchen remodel. They're searching for "refrigerator comparisons", or even "kitchen remodel ideas." Savvy marketers capture customers earlier in the decision-making process by creating content that speaks to those explorative I-want-to-know or even I-want-to-be-inspired moments.

What's also different now is that people are often looking at content on mobile. Many times, the small screen is where people are influenced, whether they are just dabbling with an idea or are standing in the store aisle.

Q: How do you create content to effectively meet consumer needs across the entire customer journey?

We look at consumer demand by search topic and device type, understand intent signals for micro-moments across the journey, uncover what similar companies are doing and look at how existing content is performing.

We've also found that, increasingly, most searches aren't from computers. Mobile has reached a tipping point in the last 12-18 months where the combination of smartphone and tablet traffic exceeds desktop for many brands. Understanding how mobile is different can be hugely powerful in signaling the type of content to prioritize for different aspects of the journey.

Creating a basic mobile traffic and engagement framework is critical to understanding your customer's journey. Many clients have yet to understand mobile engagement for different content types, and this is a solid place to start.

A brand who got it right is Best Western. They launched a new mobile website, which focused on an improved guest experience. With the help of mobile ads and retargeting, mobile revenue has more than quadrupled over the previous year.

What can be powerful and lead to organizational change is adding metrics that track content performance across the customer journey.

Q: How do you evolve current measurement practices to represent the real customer journey across channels?

Marketers want and need to know what contributes to reaching their audiences and ultimately driving purchase decisions, yet for many brands

the general philosophy is still centered on last-touch attribution. That's true even for marketers with sophisticated scoring systems and analytics.

It's not realistic to think you can quickly change the focus from last touch attribution when there's so much organizational history and so many incentives in place. But what can be powerful and lead to organizational change is adding metrics that track content performance across the customer journey.

With this in mind many brands who recognize the limitations of last touch attribution are making small steps in the right direction. They capture and measure the many steps that contribute to conversion, while still reporting on last touch.

Q: Can you speak to some specific things marketers can do to raise their game when it comes to attribution and measuring content?

There are some important metrics for digital marketers to use now, like "assists", "reach", "engagement" or "share of voice." We know that many marketers don't have a way of looking at these metrics in an integrated way so I'd recommend three things to help marketers start making progress.

Step one is to ensure content programs are measuring performance in terms of traffic, conversions and revenue; does each content piece drive your customers to the next stage?

Step two is to identify which parts of the buyer's journey influence conversion, and then experiment with those steps by assigning them a value. For example, if someone signs up for a newsletter, or watches a how-to video, are marketers giving credit to these early activities in the customer journey as they nudge the customer closer to conversion. I've seen organizations obsess with conversion and they're missing a huge opportunity to be relevant to the audiences they want to reach by exploring critical customer experiences prior to conversion.

Step three is to demonstrate share of voice in competitive markets—that is, for a specific query or set of keywords, what percent of the response does that brand own? What queries are you missing? With share of voice, we identify those micro-moments when we want to reach people, and assess how we are doing relatively towards that goal.

For example, we performed a share of voice analysis for a big pharma client and showed them where they were falling behind, even by device type. They saw where they were losing share of voice for a particular micro-moment, but ahead in others. They obviously could not focus on every micro-moment for every single product. But if you pick critical categories and topics in critical markets by device type, you can prioritize opportunities to win.

Map your customer journey to identify key micro-moments that support your top products and customers.

Q: What are your top takeaways for marketers wanting to create successful content?

First, leverage a data-first approach to creating content that drives performance. Understand your audiences, use data to identify demand, and then optimize content—test and tune. Don't give in to the inside-out approach where an internal branding calendar drives your content.

Second, map your customer journey to identify key micro-moments that support your top products and customers, assist conversions and build the highest lifetime value. That kind of mapping exercise is incredibly powerful. Leaders in measurement understand and own their customer journey to bring the micro-moments together.

Finally, build internal success stories to showcase how using data can drive success in micro-moments. Then use these stories to encourage an organizational shift toward data-driven decisions around these integrated customer journeys.

Jim is the founder and CEO of BrightEdge, a trusted, enterprise content performance platform. A recognized thought-leader, speaker and author, Jim works with Fortune 100 brands and leading agencies across a community of over 20,000 digital marketers. He is based in San Mateo, California.

Sources

1-4 BrightEdge Content Engagement Report, Aug 2015. Conclusions based on BrightEdge's analysis of millions of pieces of content published by 2,100 publishers in five industry sectors.