

Effective Sales Content: The Key To Sales Success



PROFITABLE
CHANNELS

Learn practical ways to sell more for less by reorganizing your content, reengineering your content supply chain, and systemizing the way content is created, delivered and tracked

Effective Content is Critical to Sales Success

Business-to-business leaders are searching for ways to improve sales productivity, battle rising selling costs, accelerate skills development and transition to solution selling. What most don't realize is that the quality and effectiveness of their sales content are critical to addressing these issues.

Sales content – videos, white papers, collateral, articles, case studies, blogs, and training resources – has become a large and increasingly strategic part of the sales and marketing mix. Business-to-business (B2B) organizations need to make maximizing the return on their investment in sales content a bigger management priority because it has become a large expense, a significant driver of sales productivity, and an important component of the customer experience.

Sales content has emerged as a top business issue, as it represents one quarter of sales and marketing spend, and determines the effectiveness of the rest of the sales and marketing mix – including sales training, marketing automation, sales productivity, sales enablement, and social media.

Well-organized, actionable, and measurable content is now critical to every aspect of sales and marketing. Content is the fuel that makes solution selling, marketing automation, social media, and sales enablement and e-commerce programs run.

Customers are demanding better content as well. Potential buyers now study white papers, product

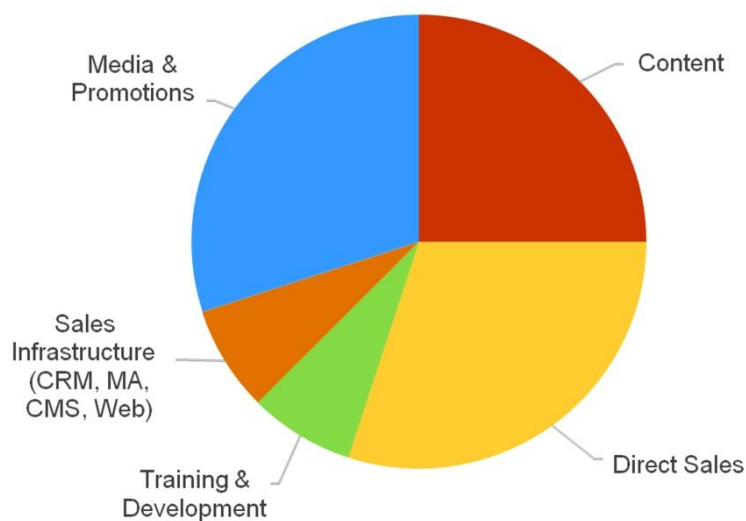
demonstrations, reviews, product collateral and case studies for most of the B2B purchasing decision-making process¹. And once they finally meet with a salesperson, these buyers expect unique ideas, relevant solutions, and compelling insights that educate them and “challenge” their thinking. As B2B organizations adopt more advanced sales systems – such as marketing automation platforms, solution selling approaches, sales enablement solutions, and multi-channel selling – they will need better sales content that is designed, packaged and structured to make them run effectively.

As a direct consequence of these trends, spending on content is growing. Research by the Content Marketing Institute shows that, on average, B2B marketers spend one quarter of their marketing budgets on content marketing. And most plan to increase their spending on content in the next six months.

The bottom line is – the quality and effectiveness of your sales content directly impacts your sales effectiveness, customer experience, and cost to sell.

That said, sales content is an expensive asset that is generally mismanaged. Most B2B organizations create selling collateral, presentations, case studies, white papers and playbooks in a highly fragmented and undisciplined fashion. As a result, the sales content they create is often inconsistent, expensive, and not aligned with the sales process.

B2B Marketing Mix Expense



Source: Content Marketing Institute

Sales Content Challenges

Between 60-70% of marketing content is not used by sales¹

Over half of sales managers do not believe that content created by marketing motivates customers to buy, drives cross sell or challenges the customer mindset²

Only 33% of training is retained by the salespeople the day after it occurs³

57% of the buying cycle involves “self directed” buyers engaging with sales and marketing content in social media, targeted web advertising, content marketing and thought leadership programs⁴

Source: 1) Sirius Decisions, 2) Richardson, 3) Research Group of America, 4) Corporate Executive Board

The business consequences of low quality and poorly organized content are unproductive selling efforts, a poor client experience, higher selling costs and, in most cases, outright waste.

For example:

- Over 60% of the content created by B2B marketing departments is not used by sales²;
- Most organizations do not tailor content by the stage of the buying cycle³;
- Most sales managers believe that content created by marketing fails to motivate customers to buy, drive cross sell or challenge the customer mindset⁴;
- 80% of training is not retained after 60 days⁵.

Despite these symptoms, most sales and marketing executives don't realize that they have a content problem. This paper is designed to help sales and marketing leaders understand how well their sales content is driving sales performance and identify steps they can take to maximize the return on their large content investment.

Invest a few minutes reading this report to learn practical ways to sell more for less by:

1. Reorganizing your content,
2. Reengineering your content supply chain,
3. And systemizing content creation, delivery, and measurement.

The [online assessment tool](http://www.contenteffectiveness.com) (www.contenteffectiveness.com) that accompanies this report makes it fast and easy to assess the effectiveness of your sales content and identify the top opportunities to grow sales at lower costs by reengineering your content processes.

Why effective content has become so important to modern selling systems

As businesses adopt more advanced sales and marketing systems they will need better sales content to make them run effectively.

To remain competitive, most B2B organizations are making a significant investment in modern selling systems to improve sales effectiveness and adapt to changes in customer buying behavior. For example, in

the past three years, marketing automation and tablet sales programs have emerged as staples of the B2B go-to-market mix. The level of investment in sales and marketing technology is so great that the Gartner Group forecasts that marketing departments will spend more on technology than the CIO by 2017⁶. In order to generate a return on these investments, businesses will have to do a better job of generating well organized, searchable, interactive digital content that can be deployed faster than poorly organized paper-based sales materials.



Click for
Article

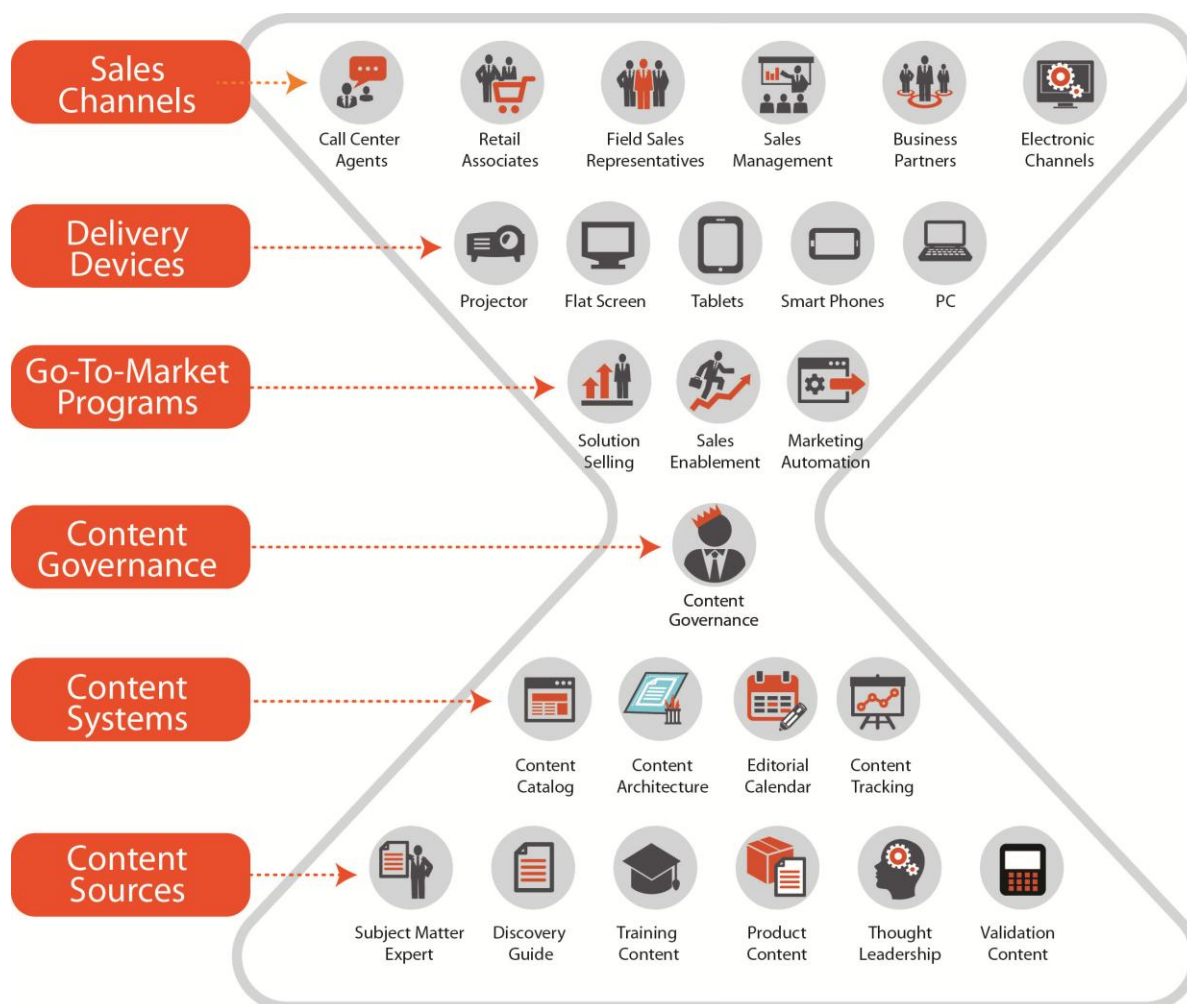
Learn how best -in-class B2B organizations are automating their sales and marketing processes to improve sales effectiveness and adapt to changing customer buying behavior.

<http://bit.ly/bsk-sales-marketing>

These modern selling systems involve automating their sales and marketing processes, adopting solution selling approaches, and engaging clients through a mix of sales channels and devices. They include:

- Go-to-market programs driven by marketing automation and sales enablement technologies;
- Solution selling and challenger sales programs that aim to improve margins and win rates by actively trying to change the mindset of prospects and customers about their business problems with compelling and disruptive ideas, insights and solutions;
- Multi-channel selling approaches – selling through phone, web, reseller and field sales rep channels – to effectively cover the market and manage selling costs while maintaining consistency of sales messages;
- A wide variety of digital delivery devices including tablets, smart phones, PCs, and projectors.

How Sales Content Fuels Modern Selling Systems



All of these programs, systems, channels and devices will need better sales content that is designed, packaged and structured to make them run effectively. Specifically:

- Multi-channel selling approaches need to deliver content through phone, web, reseller and rep channels with different capabilities, technical requirements, and levels of control;
- Sales enablement tools - including sales playbooks, solution selling tools, tablet computers and dynamic report generators - all demand fast access to content tailored for specific selling situations;
- Marketing automation programs - including demand generation, content marketing, social selling, and inbound marketing programs - require infographics, simulations, online assessment tools, video case studies, and thought leadership white papers as fuel;
- Solution selling programs demand better quality content that opens doors, delivers insights, disrupts buyer thinking, delivers new ideas, and conveys subject matter expertise.

What is effective sales content?

If the quality and effectiveness of your sales content is critical to improving sales effectiveness, enabling your selling systems and meeting customer expectations, it begs an important question – what is effective sales content?

The definition of effective content is highly subjective. But salespeople and customers know effective content when they see it. This is a big reason why B2B executives complain about spending too much on content, but not having enough good content. For example, despite increased spending on content, over half of B2B executives view their content as ineffective and regard their inability to create enough engaging content as their biggest content challenge⁷.

The short answer is that in order for your collateral, presentations, case studies and training to support selling at lower cost, they need to be:

- Designed to drive meaningful sales actions,
- Leveraged across a wide range of programs, channels and devices,
- Targeted to specific process steps, buyer needs and pain points,
- Easy for salespeople to find, understand and put to use,
- Easy to track and measure.

In summary, effective sales content needs to be actionable, targetable, useful, trackable, and reusable.

These five core characteristics are explained in greater detail below.

Sales content must be actionable

Actionable content gives customers a compelling reason to act and salespeople a means of advancing a sale. This means marketing needs to source sales content that assists beyond the first stage of the selling process. Actionable sales content creates a reason to act and generates measurable sales outcomes. For sales reps, this means providing a compelling reason to call, a relevant reason to cross sell a solution, and an original reason to call again to unstick the sales process. From a customer perspective it means a reason to meet, refer, consider, or change their mind about their pre-conceived notions of the fit and value of a solution.

These are the actions that help move customers through the buying process, improve share of wallet, and shrink the sales cycle.

In addition, actionable content is by definition compelling content. It effectively captures customer attention by delivering new ideas and insights, challenging the customer mindset, telling stories, and demonstrating subject matter expertise or thought leadership. This is important because increasingly sophisticated and time-starved buyers view those who do not offer insights, ideas or a distinctive buying experience as simply order takers and perceive their content as a waste of time.

Reengineering content to make it actionable is important because over half of sales managers do not believe that content created by marketing does a good job of motivating customers to buy, driving cross sell, or disrupting the customer mindset⁸.

Five Characteristics of Effective Sales Content

- **Actionable** - content that gives customers a compelling reason to act and salespeople a means of advancing a sale.
- **Reusable** - content that can be leveraged across a wide range of channels, programs and delivery devices.
- **Targetable** - content that supports specific steps of the sales cycle, buyer types and needs.
- **Findable** - content that is easy for customers to find, view, understand and put to work
- **Trackable** - content that can be measured in terms of use, value, and effectiveness.

Sales content needs to be reusable

Reusable content is structured and organized so it can be repurposed and leveraged across a wide range of channels, devices and programs – independent of source and format.

This means marketing needs to design and source content so it can be customized to individual clients and distributed through a variety of sales channels and devices. To be customizable, content needs to be organized so it can be configured or reassembled in many different ways based on the context, sales

situation and client preference.

For example, Protective Life Insurance (bit.ly/bsk-insurance) created video sales presentations in the form of templates that allowed their wholesalers to record personalized introductions to the financial advisors they serve.

Multi-channel content should be packaged so it can be delivered through a variety of selling channels including: face-to-face sales, partner sales, web sites, email, and phone. For example, Franklin Templeton (bit.ly/bsk-financial-services) was able to use the same multi-media video assets to reach 15,000 customers and 13,000 financial advisors through a variety of interactions, including: live PowerPoint presentations, tablets, e-mail campaigns and on flat screen televisions.

This is important because making your content reusable is the key to reducing content costs and increasing its impact. Designing content to be reused improves your return on sales content by:

- Expanding distribution of content to more sales channels, customers, prospects and influencers;
- Significantly reducing costs and making the most of management time by leveraging, repurposing, reusing and refreshing assets across the organization;
- Ensuring message consistency across sales content since the core message remains the same;
- Improving the customer experience by allowing salespeople to make more customizable and dynamic sales presentations with greater relevance, value and context. For example, configurable and interactive content allows you to leverage the unique ability of tablets to foster face to face collaboration in sales meetings.

Content needs to be targetable

Targeted content directly supports specific steps of the sales cycle, buyer types and needs. This means your content is designed, organized and indexed by specific steps of the selling process, buyer types, needs or “pain points”, industry, or location. This is important because sales enablement solutions – such as playbooks, portals, solution selling tools and dynamic reporting engines – all assume they can call on the right content, for the right person, at the right time in the selling cycle to advance the sale.

To make your content more targeted:

- Map and align the content you have to the sales process and buyer experience to ensure it drives sales activities and compels prospects to act. Today less than half of B2B organizations are able to target their content by stage of the buying process⁹. In order to deliver the right content at the right time you should index and tag all of your sales content assets to major buyer decision points and critical sales outcomes. This will allow you to search for the right content in sales portals or mobile content management systems or automatically pull up the right content in sales playbooks and mobile content management. It will also help your content generate measurable sales outcomes.
- Target your content by persona. A persona can be a buyer type such as a decision maker, influencer or technical buyer. It should also reflect industry specific regulations and business issues, and proof points to the extent you have content specific to those factors. Personas should include local language, regional and behavioral considerations.
- Target your content by the context of the selling situation. This will allow you to enhance the customer experience by delivering solution selling, thought leadership and validation content that address their specific need and introduce relevant solutions for cross selling. Context is the most difficult but valuable level of targeting because it answers the buyer question, “What’s in it for me?”

Content needs to be findable and useful

Useful content is easy for salespeople and customers to access, view, digest, understand, refer and put to work – independent of device, location and selling situation. This is important because salespeople can spend a significant amount of their precious selling time searching for and creating their own selling materials.

In addition, content must be easy to find, be up to date, and accessible using a variety of devices. This means your sales content needs to be:

- Organized to make it fast and easy for sales people and customers to find the right information to advance the sale when they need

it regardless of time, location, or device. To be findable, content should be:

- ✓ Accessible online, offline on any device
 - ✓ Ideally in once place
 - ✓ Catalogued, indexed, searchable
 - ✓ Embedded in links and QR codes in point of sales materials, interactive presentations, e-mails, videos or collateral
- Controlled and versioned to ensure it is up to date and in compliance. This matters because out of date pricing, features, branding, messaging and regulatory language diminish the brand experience, waste time, reduce sales effectiveness and increase legal risk. In fact, half of sales executives feel that the failure to keep product knowledge up to date is a major barrier to the success of their sales enablement efforts¹⁰.
 - Compatible with the growing mix of devices that salespeople and customers use, including smartphones, tablets, PCs, televisions, and projectors. Ensuring your content is mobile-ready is particularly important because 98% of sales organizations believe tablets will become essential to sales in the next 18 months¹¹.

Content should be trackable

Trackable content measures the use, value, and effectiveness of the sales content assets.

Today, smart marketers are building tracking into their content using tools like on-demand videos, sales enablement portals and marketing automation platforms. These tools give average companies unprecedented abilities to evaluate the effectiveness of sales content assets for salespeople, channel partners, customers, prospects and influencers. As a consequence, marketing departments and advertising agencies can no longer hide behind the age old maxim “only half of marketing works, but I don’t know which half.”

To make your sales content assets trackable, they need to be properly packaged, structured, and delivered to get greater visibility into sales performance by identifying:

- What content is the most popular and most valuable to customers and salespeople;

- Which new stakeholders were referred by which content;
- How exactly do customers and salespeople engage with and consume the content
- When does a prospect or client engage with content;
- Which content generates measurable sales outcomes such as meetings and proposals;
- Who participated in training and do they understand the materials.

For example, to ensure consistent execution of the sales process, Nerium, a skin care products manufacturer, tracks how over 200,000 independent reps use sales presentations on their iPads. This allows their marketing team to understand what is used the most, when, and by which rep, for which client, and what is passed around. See a video - bit.ly/bsk-nerium-testimonial - on how Nerium tracks PowerPoint usage.

Three ways to maximize your return on sales content

There are a number of practical things organizations can do to create more effective content that sells more for less and delivers a better customer experience. To improve the return on investment in sales content companies can:

1. Reengineer their content production process;
2. Reorganize their sales content, and;
3. Systemize the way their sales content is targeted, delivered and measured.

Taking these steps can significantly reduce spending, improve speed to market, and ensure content directly supports the sales process.

Three Ways to Maximize Your Return on Sales Content

Reengineer your content production process



Content Governance

Govern your content by assigning an owner to manage, measure and optimize the effectiveness, value, use and return on your investment in sales content.



Content Reengineering

Reengineer the content sourcing and assembly with a focus on creating actionable content that can be assembled, repackaged, reused and configured in many ways.

Reorganize your sales content



Content targeting

Target your content so it directly supports specific steps of the selling process, buyer type and measurable sales outcomes.



Content architecture

Architect your content so it can be reused across many programs, sales channels and devices.



Editorial calendar

Create an editorial agenda to direct the timing, theme, use, and business objective of new content you create

Systemize content targeting, delivery and measurement



Management system

Put in place management systems that allow you to consolidate, catalog, target, update, approve, and manage your content assets.



Sales enablement

Select delivery systems that distribute content efficiently through a wide variety of sales channels, programs and devices

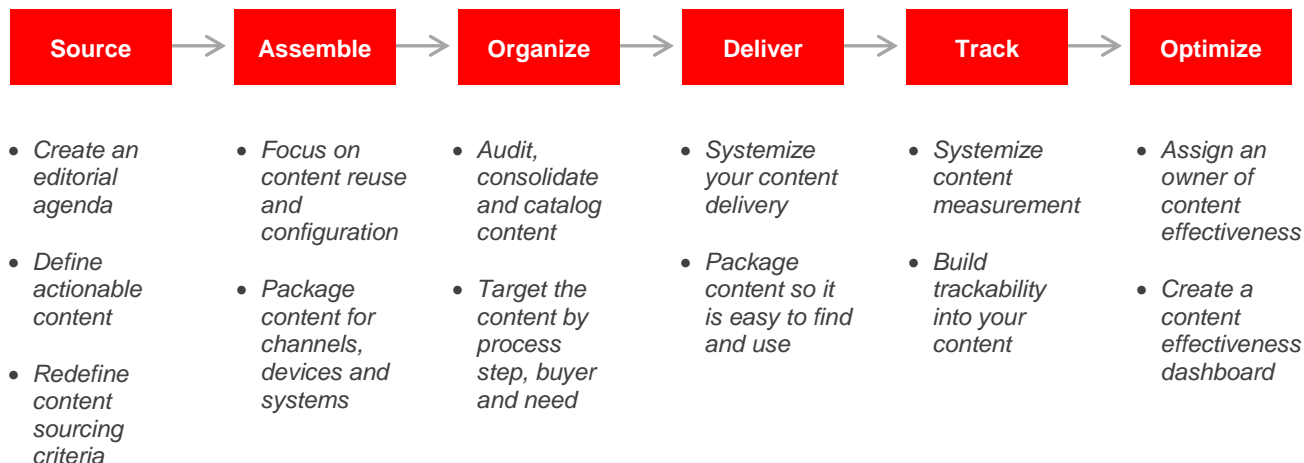


Content tracking

Implement tracking systems that allow you to measure and track the usage, value, effectiveness, client behavior, sales compliance, and training certification.

Reengineer your content production process

You can improve the return you get on investment in sales content by reengineering your content production process. This involves putting in place disciplined processes for sourcing, assembling, organizing, distributing and tracking your sales content. The keys to reengineering your content production process are to centralize the management of content across the enterprise and redefine sourcing and creation of sales content with a focus towards making it easy to assemble, organize deliver, track and optimize.



Content Governance

Someone should always be in charge of improving content effectiveness and leveraging sales content across sales programs, channels and devices. This will allow you to establish more centralized control over your sales content and better manage, measure and optimize the effectiveness of your investment in sales content. The content owner might ideally be a marketing or sales operations analyst with knowledge of the sales process and analytical skills to measure and report the usage, value, and effectiveness of all sales content.

The responsibilities of the content owner should include:

- Tracking, measuring and optimizing the effectiveness of sales content and maximizing return on investment;
- Managing the editorial agenda to direct the timing, theme, use, and business objective of new content;
- Ensuring the content is up-to-date and in compliance;
- Directing the repurposing, leveraging and distribution of existing sales content assets;
- Coordinating a team of content producers including communications, product marketing, agencies and sales training;
- Consolidating, cataloging, organizing, and targeting sales content in a sales/content management system.

Content Reengineering

It is important to reengineer the sourcing and creation of sales content with a focus on creating actionable content that can be assembled, repackaged, reused and configured in many ways. This will help reduce cost and waste and increase relevance, reuse, distribution and impact.

Sourcing and assembling effective content doesn't happen by accident. It is a direct sign of process discipline and high levels of sales and marketing integration. The problem is that in most organizations the creators of content – marketing,

product marketing, subject matter experts and external agencies – operate in different organizational silos in an uncoordinated fashion. This lack of process discipline and coordination is a primary reason that the content supply chain is so resource hungry, difficult to manage, and hard to scale.

To overcome this challenge, marketing executives need to manage like publishers and create like advertisers. This means you have to separate the art of content creation and storytelling from the discipline of content assembly, organization and delivery. This involves:

- Establishing sourcing criteria for new content for agencies and content producers based on the five characteristics of effective content. Sourcing criteria should define sales content that:
 - ✓ Gives prospects or customers a reason to take an action that advances the sales process to ensure it drives sales activities and compels prospects to act;
 - ✓ Maps and aligns to the sales process and buyer experience to ensure it directly supports the day to day selling;
 - ✓ Creates measurable sales outcomes that can be tracked and measured such as meetings, referrals and cross sell proposals;
 - ✓ Improves the customer experience by allowing salespeople to assemble, configure, and customize more personalized sales presentations with greater relevance, value and context;
 - ✓ Is structured, formatted and organized so it can be reused and leveraged across a wide range of channels, devices and programs – independent of source and format.
- Commissioning and assembling content assets from content creation sources from inside and outside the sales organization, including: product marketing, communications, external agencies, sales training and subject matter experts.
- Establishing business goals and key performance indicators to measure the

success of reengineering the content production process. Primary measures of success should include:

- ✓ Improving sales process alignment and support, ensuring content generates measurable sales outcomes and justifies its expense;
- ✓ Reducing spending on wasted content that does not directly support the client engagement process or generate measurable sales outcomes;
- ✓ Expanding distribution of content to more sales channels, customers, prospects and influencers;
- ✓ Helping control content in a resource efficient manner ensuring the quality, execution, consistency, control, scalability and reuse of marketing content across the organization;
- ✓ Accelerating speed to market.

Reorganize your content

Solution selling programs, sales enablement tools, and marketing automation platforms all demand fast access to content tailored for specific selling situations. You should organize your sales collateral, white papers, case studies, videos and other sales content by buying stage, buyer, industry, need, and region so salespeople can find the right content for the right person at the right time. This will improve sales effectiveness and maximize the results generated by these advanced sales and marketing systems.

The key to reorganizing your content is to target your content so it better supports sales, architecting it so that it can be reused and leveraged, and creating an editorial agenda to plan future content investments.

Content Targeting

It is essential to target your content so it directly supports specific steps of the selling process, buyer type and measurable sales outcomes. To make your content more targeted create a targeting scheme that serves as a blueprint for tagging content and then coding it into advanced content delivery systems

such as sales playbooks, portals, mobile content management, CRM and marketing automation systems. An effective targeting scheme should:

- Map and align the content you have to the sales process and buyer experience to ensure it drives sales activities and compels prospects to act;
- Target content by buyer type – reflecting industry specific content and solution, local language and behavioral considerations;
- Target your content by the context of the selling situation to ensure it addresses their specific needs, introduces relevant solutions, and answers the buyer question, “What’s in it for me?”

Content Architecture

Your content should be architected so that it can be reused across many programs, sales channels and devices. For example, there is no reason that content generated by a subject matter expert in a white paper should not be converted to a video, training program or blog post in social media. Likewise speeches or client presentations made during events and webinars can be recorded, repackaged and reused on mobile devices or email campaigns or in social media.

To make it easier to reuse, repurpose and expand the distribution of the content assets you already have you should create a content architecture. This is a blueprint for repurposing, leveraging and distributing existing sales content assets. It ensures that new assets will support segment, messaging and sales process objectives. This can significantly reduce costs and make the most of management time by leveraging, repurposing, reusing and refreshing assets. It will also reduce marketing management and field management workload in execution and delivery.

A blueprint for repurposing, leveraging and distributing sales content assets



Editorial Calendar

If marketing organizations are required to become content publishers, they need to manage like one. Take a page from the publishing industry and create an editorial calendar to plan ahead and define what you need. Share it and coordinate with the agencies and marketing resources that create your content. An editorial calendar makes sure any new sales content you create or source will be highly targeted and directly support your sales and marketing objectives. This management tool helps your organization improve the return on content by:

- Directing the timing, theme, use, and business objective of new content you create;
- Ensuring that new assets will support segment, messaging and sales process objectives;
- Provides a centralized control point to ensure any assets created are differentiating the sales experience from the competition with education, relevant advice and ideas;
- Filling gaps in the sales process that are not supported by content;
- Addressing unmet owner needs.

Systemize content targeting, delivery and measurement

You can improve the return you get on your investment in sales content by systemizing the way you target, deliver and measure the effectiveness of sales content. This involves:

- Putting in place management systems that allow you to consolidate, catalog, target, update, approve, and manage your content assets;
- Enabling delivery systems that move content efficiently through a wide variety of sales channels, programs and devices;
- Establishing dashboards and tracking systems that allow you to measure and track content usage, value, effectiveness, client behavior, sales compliance, and training certification.

Management Systems

Taking a centralized and systematic approach to managing and updating content is important. Updating content already deployed to the field is time consuming and expensive. Content freelancing by salespeople wastes time and hurts process and messaging consistency. And half of sales executives feel that the failure to keep product knowledge up to date is a major barrier to the success of their sales enablement efforts¹².

To put in place a more centralized management systems that allow you to consolidate, catalog, target, update, approve, and manage your content asset consider taking these steps.

- Inventory all of your sales content assets – including sales materials, scripts, playbooks, training and selling tools – to identify opportunities to cut, repackage, refresh and repurpose the content you already have.

Audit how well it currently supports the sales process, systems, channels, devices and programs. Assess which content is useful, what is wasted, what can be repackaged by scoring your content using the 12 effectiveness criteria at bit.ly/bsk-content-effectiveness.

- These criteria will help you determine how well your existing content supports:
 - ✓ The sales process and the customer buying journey;
 - ✓ Your sales methodology – including challenger selling, solution selling, content marketing, thought leadership selling approaches;
 - ✓ Your sales and marketing automation systems – including marketing automation platforms, tablet sales programs, sales enablement solutions;
 - ✓ The channels you use to engage customers – such as mobile selling, social selling, face-to-face selling, targeted online advertising, and phone conversations.
- Establish a “single source of truth” for customer facing content using a management system or repository – including sales administration portals and content management systems – that allow you to consolidate, catalog, target, update, approve, and manage your content assets.



Click for
Check List

Learn how to use 12 content effectiveness criteria to assess how actionable, targetable, useful, “trackable”, and reusable your sales content is.

<http://bit.ly/bsk-content-effectiveness>

Delivery Systems

Most content is stuck at the top of the sales funnel in digital, social and email channels. Except in e-businesses, relatively little of this content is being delivered through primary or human sales channels which drive deeper into the sales funnel and generate the lion’s share of actual sales. By packaging, parsing and distributing content through more channels, it impacts more customer interactions, and significantly improves return on investment.

Take steps to systemize your content delivery process to help you move content efficiently through a wide variety of sales channels, programs and

devices. This involves separating your content delivery systems from your content authoring systems.

There are a wide range of sales enablement platforms that efficiently distribute sales content to your sales force, channel partners and customers efficiently. They include:

- Sales playbooks,
- Mobile content management systems,
- Private app stores, and
- Solution selling tools.

Enabling better content distribution through these delivery systems can help grow more for less by increasing market reach with the same level of resources in terms of number of quality interactions and audiences reached.

Tracking Systems

The ability of modern selling systems to track, measure, and optimize sales performance represents the biggest opportunity to maximize the return on sales content and improve overall sales effectiveness.

Historically sales organizations have had a hard time tracking the use and effectiveness of sales content and marketers struggled to figure out which campaigns had been effective at driving sales. Today, marketing automation platforms, sales enablement and trackable content assets provide behavioral and usage information that can help your organization to more accurately measure and track the usage, value, effectiveness and return on your content investment.

To put in place tracking systems that allow you to comprehensibly measure your content, consider taking these steps:

1. Assign an owner responsible for managing, measuring and optimizing the effectiveness, quality and usefulness of your sales content.
2. Configure your selling content assets and sales enablement system to make sure you are tracking and measuring content usage, effectiveness, utility, and compliance by your sales team and content partners.

3. Configure your sales enablement system and marketing automation platforms to make sure you are tracking and measuring what content your clients consume, value, and pass along to their peers.
4. Get feedback from customers and salespeople to understand what types of content they are looking for and how to best format and deliver it to make it easy for clients to scan, understand, share and use in their buying journey.
5. Create a sales reporting dashboard that allows you to measure and track the usage, value, effectiveness and return on your content investment. Consider these metrics:
 - Sales behavior – including content usage, sales activity, client presentations and productivity tracking
 - Content utilization – including the usage, value, and effectiveness of content
 - Process consistency – including steps taken, sales plays executed, and content delivered
 - Training certification – including training completion, knowledge retention, and certification
 - Customer response – including content viewed, open rates, levels of engagement, audience retention rates, referrals and sales outcomes
6. Try to cross reference the content usage and sales behavior data from sales enablement platforms with information on customer response and sales outcomes from CRM and marketing automation platforms. Use this information to try to understand actions you can take to improve sales performance.



Click for
Article

Learn how the latest generation of sales enablement solutions are arming sales leadership with the information to improve sales effectiveness and optimize SG&A spending

<http://bit.ly/bsk-sales-optimization>

Four Steps to Improving Your Return on Content

1

Assess Content

Take the sales content effectiveness assessment to benchmark your content effectiveness & size the opportunity to improve

2

Audit Your Content

Inventory and consolidate your existing sales content assets to understand what you have and identify gaps you need to fill

3

Align Your Content

Align your sales content assets with your go-to-market process to identify ways to better target, repackage, & reuse content

4

Enable Your Content

Systemize your process for targeting delivering and measuring your sales content

Assess your content – Take the online [content effectiveness assessment](#) to benchmark your content effectiveness and size the opportunity to improve. Invest a few minutes answering a few simple questions about your sales content – including training, collateral, case studies, videos and white papers. You will immediately receive a content effectiveness assessment that shows you how well your content is currently supporting your sales process and practical ways you can generate higher returns by directly supporting the sales process.

Audit your content – Inventory and consolidate your existing sales content assets to understand what you have and identify gaps you need to fill. Consolidate your sales content and tools into a single source of truth for customer facing content so it can be managed, organized and tracked. Audit how well it currently supports the sales process, systems, channels, devices and programs. Conduct a gap analysis to help you identify which content is

useful, what is wasted, as well as gaps in the sales process not supported by content.

Align your content – Assign an owner to align sales assets with your go-to-market process so it directly supports specific steps of the selling process, buyer type and measurable sales outcomes. Architect your content so it can be reused across many programs, sales channels and devices. Repackage or redesign your sales content to ensure it can support your selling systems, channels (mobile, social, face-to-face, email) and programs (challenger selling, solution selling).

Enable your content – Systemize your process for targeting, delivering and measuring your sales content. Consider these best-of-breed solutions and services:

- Management systems – including sales administration portals and content management systems – that allow you to consolidate, catalog, target, update, approve, and manage your content assets.
- Delivery systems – including sales playbooks, mobile content management systems, customized dynamic reporting tools, and app stores that deliver efficiently through a wide variety of sales channels, programs and devices
- Tracking systems – that draw behavioral and usage data information from marketing automation platforms, sales enablement and trackable content assets – that allow you to measure and track the usage, value, effectiveness and return on your content investment.



Click for
Assessment

Take the content effectiveness assessment to learn how well your selling content is currently supporting your sales process and practical ways you can generate higher returns by directly supporting the sales process.

www.contenteffectiveness.com

About The Author

Stephen Diorio is the founder of Profitable Channels and an established authority in sales enablement and channel strategy. He has twenty five years of experience executing innovative go-to-market strategies for over one hundred leading sales organizations including Merrill Lynch, Intuit, American Express, Ameriprise, Wells Fargo, CBS, SunTrust Bank, DuPont, Staples, UPS, US Bank, and IBM. Mr. Diorio is an expert on how technology can improve sales effectiveness, and author of *Beyond e: 12 Ways Technology Will Transform Sales & Marketing Strategy* (McGraw-Hill). Prior to forming Profitable Channels, Mr. Diorio founded IMT Strategies, a sales and marketing technology analyst firm, built MarketBridge into a leading go-to-market strategy consultancy, and was a Venture Partner at Trident Capital – a private equity firm that specializes in advanced marketing services and solutions. Mr. Diorio holds an MBA in marketing from the University of Chicago and a B.S. in engineering from Bucknell University.

About Profitable Channels

Profitable Channels designs and delivers sales enablement solutions and programs that help engage your customers, energize your salespeople, and enable your sales process. We help executives who own, manage and support selling channels measurably grow sales, improve productivity and differentiate the client experience. We serve leading organizations that sell complex offerings or large catalogs of solutions to high value clients through human sales channels. Some of our clients include: CBS, DuPont, PNC, SunTrust, U.S. Bank, UPS, and Wells Fargo. Profitable Channels and its partners have designed and delivered over 100 mobile sales enablement solutions to their clients. Our unique methodology and solutions ensure your mobile sales enablement investment will directly support the sales process - from calling to close - and generate more measurable sales results and higher ROI than traditional sales and marketing investments.

www.profitablechannels.com

To learn more about the practical ways you can enable your sales force and maximize your return on your sales content investment, contact Stephen Diorio at sdiorio@profitablechannels.com.

Citations

1. Corporate Executive Board. (2011) The Most Important Number in B2B Marketing
2. Sirius Decisions Content Model, 2013
3. Content Marketing Institute, B2B Enterprise Content Marketing 2013: Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends – North America, survey of 1,416 B2B marketers
4. Richardson, Content Marketing and Sales Effectiveness Survey, 2013, survey of 400 sales managers and representatives
5. Accenture Sales Performance Optimization Study, 2010
6. The Gartner Worldwide IT Spending Forecast, 2012
7. Content Marketing Institute, B2B Enterprise Content Marketing 2013: Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends – North America, survey of 1,416 B2B marketers
8. Richardson
9. Content Marketing Institute
10. Micro Strategy Mobile Sales Effectiveness Survey of 500 executives, 2013
11. Profitable Channels: Mobile Sale Enablement, analysis of 100 mobile sales initiatives, 2013
12. Micro Strategy Mobile Sales Effectiveness Survey