



Integrating media and content strategy

Troy Boehm, digital marketing manager
troyb@teamddm.com

Christine VanTimmeren, content strategist
christinev@teamddm.com

Content marketing and media placement are becoming increasingly intertwined. To increase the impact of marketing efforts, it is vital that coordination exists between all paid, earned and owned communication channels.

By understanding the entire buyer's journey, media strategies are better aligned to produce a desired awareness and action. These strategies are then supported by relevant and engaging content that articulates differentiation and value.

A focus on paid advertising

It is important that as content is developed, a focus is made on how and where it will be distributed. According to recent studies, 84% of B2B marketers are using paid distribution channels as a strategic approach, and 72% of marketers* have indicated that having a good content strategy is a primary key to their success.

While there are many reasons that businesses and organizations choose to run paid advertising campaigns, there are some very specific reasons why they should.

One obvious reason is that paid advertising allows a business to specifically target a segmented portion of its target audience. In today's digital-first age, consumers can be targeted through paid advertising channels based on geography, gender, age, interest and more.

“In today's digital-first age, consumers can be targeted through paid advertising channels based on geography, gender, age, interest and more.”

Using paid tactics within social media is becoming increasingly prominent as well. This approach relates to the evolution of many social media platform algorithms. For example, on LinkedIn, there continues to be an emphasis on genuine conversational posts appearing before self-promoted business content. Facebook also continues to prioritize posts from friends before businesses. These challenges make it even more important to align media strategies with content development.

Paying to promote content also provides an SEO value. When producing long form content, or videos, there are many advantages to distributing that content through paid social and native advertising. The key SEO value goes well beyond just generating quality backlinks. It creates longer and higher quality engagements with potential customers that will not only increase brand presence, but will also lead to an increase in branded search traffic.

Finding your story

When developing content, it is important to remember to not underestimate the power of a good story. Well-crafted and engaging stories, created with the target audience in mind, lead to long-lasting customer relationships.

Good stories have the power to capture and engage potential customers when those stories are motivating, informative, inspirational and educational.

Content marketing is essentially good storytelling. When creating content, do not lose touch of the big picture of why the content is being created in the first place. The key to great content is authenticity. By being authentic, organizations can effectively tell compelling and believable stories.

As content is developed, it is helpful to think about the following key points:

- **What are the product/business differentiators?**
 - Explain how you make someone's life easier.
 - Better yet, have satisfied customers tell the story.
- **What are key messages to communicate?**
 - At a high-level, explain what you provide or do.
- **Is there existing content that can be repurposed?**
 - It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel.
- **Does the organization have a unique culture or inspiring employees?**
 - Everyone has an interesting story to tell. Find it.
- **How does corporate responsibility align with the story?**
 - Humbly tell how you give back to the community.

“The key to great content is authenticity. By being authentic, organizations can effectively tell compelling and believable stories.”

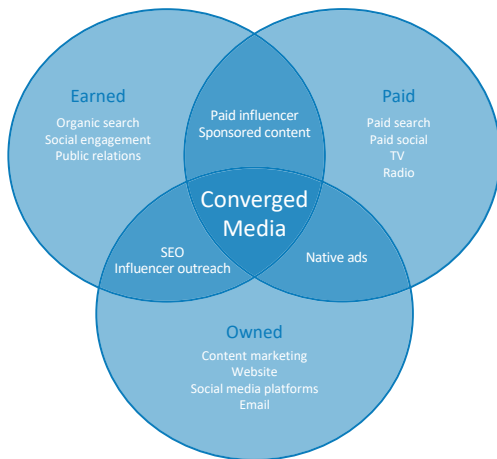
Remember, effective content marketing isn't about how good a business thinks it is. It's about how businesses can anticipate and meet an audience need and be viewed as a trusted resource when the time comes to make a purchase.

Content distribution

What good is having a great story if no one hears it?

Every year, marketers are reporting an increased spend on content marketing. However, this content is ineffective if an audience doesn't know that it exists. Your content isn't doing you any good if it's your best-kept secret.

Effective content distribution is an imperative part of an integrated media and content strategy. When paid, earned and owned efforts are working together, your message is amplified. The true value of converged media is when one message or piece of content can be repurposed across all channels. While each media type has a distinct value and purpose, using a combination of several platforms is the most effective way to ensure your audience sees and hears your message multiple times.



By definition, earned media is traditionally thought of as media coverage you get free from a news outlet or publication. Owned media is the equivalent on content platforms that a business or organization owns, such as a corporate website or social media profiles. And finally, paid media is content that businesses pay to distribute. This could be paid search, paid social, paid advertising on tv, radio or print. A combination of all media is vital to the successful distribution of any message or campaign.

Measurement of success

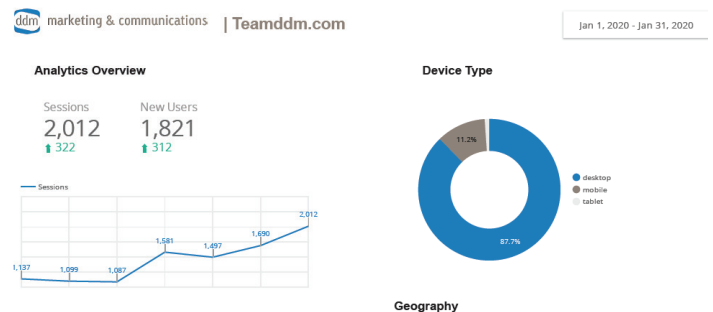
It is important to remember that in the world of media and content strategy, it is not necessarily about instant success. Businesses and organizations should focus on the long game.

Consistent investments in content and media over time will lead to exponential results and growth. By starting small, and optimizing for success, positive results will follow. However, before any content is created, or advertising is placed, there should first be an understanding of what the overall goals and objectives are.

It is common for companies to have several different teams of people and agencies working on a marketing plan. While one person may be responsible for the social media strategy, another may be handling the paid media buys. No matter how a team is structured, each person and function should be aware of the campaign's overarching goals and understand how individual efforts help to achieve overall success.

Nearly all aspects of marketing will have analytical tools to track performance and data. The various social media platforms provide analytics on user engagement and follower growth. Google analytics can track nearly every aspect of an organization's website. These tools provide great insights and allow for continual and ongoing adjustments within the various media channels.

Through consistent reporting and analysis, it is possible to determine how media channels are performing in conjunction with one another and what changes may be needed.



Content is king

When it comes to marketing, content is—and always will be—king. However, to be successful you need content that is valuable and specifically targeted to your audience. You also need to set up the proper content distribution channels. When it comes to media plans and content marketing, the two are a perfect match.

By creating interesting content and properly utilizing media distribution channels, organizations are well on the way to capturing and engaging audiences and customers.

Choosing a marketing and communications partner that has proven experience in integrating media and content strategies is vital to succeeding in today's highly complex and competitive media environment.

At ddm, we have decades of experience developing targeted local, regional and national media campaigns. Our team's comprehensive knowledge of traditional and digital advertising helps to further expand the reach and effectiveness of messaging and content. To learn more, please visit [teamddm.com](https://www.teamddm.com).

*Source: MarketingProfs, 2020