

Important content marketing trends to look out for in 2016

Issued by [Content Central](#)

26 Jan 2016

The scope and overall value of content marketing has been growing exponentially year upon year, and 2015 was no exception. With a focus on the optimisation of user experience for those browsing the web using their mobile phones, as well as on the creation and distribution of useful, high quality content - and let's not forget about the roll-out of a plethora of stringent Google updates - for many marketers out there, 2015 was a year jam-packed with highs and lows.



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Luckily, 2016 brings with it numerous exciting prospects and plenty of room for growth. Below, we take a look at the top three most important content marketing trends to look out for (and to prepare for, of course!) this year.

Mobile is set to continue its climb

As already mentioned, 2015 is considered by many to have been the year of 'The Mobile Revolution'. The focus on mobile is set to continue throughout 2016 and beyond. However, the emphasis will not only be on website mobile optimisation in terms of user experience, but also on embracing the many opportunities that the world of mobile has to offer - especially when it comes to app development.

Apps are all the rage at the moment, thus providing businesses with the perfect opportunity to take action and try something new. By developing an app that ties into your brand and product or service offering, you will be increasing both your reach and your chances of achieving more substantial and more frequent conversions.

A need to embrace newer social media channels

For many years, content marketing gurus have been encouraging business to utilise social media in an effort to build their brand and increase their following. However, up until now, the focus has been solely on the most popular platforms, namely Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. In 2016, marketers are advised to take advantage of the newer social media channels that have, until recently, been deemed 'unsuitable' for marketing purposes.

Channels like Instagram, SnapChat and Facebook Instant Articles (which, in the event that the right to publish is made available to all, is likely to become a massive game-changer in 2016) provide a number of opportunities to marketers who are creative enough to discover and develop them further. Knowing this, when incorporating these platforms into a content

marketing strategy, it is important for marketers to utilise the social media channels strategically in terms of the content which they produce, keeping in mind the overall 'tone' and demographics of each channel and ensuring that the content produced fits in with these norms and expectations.

A demand for interactive content

While still an integral part of any content marketing strategy, basic blogs and articles are no longer the be-all and end-all, nor will they be enough to fully satisfy your audience. Instead, a demand for interactive content is sure to become evident as the year moves forward, with people looking for more excitement and a bigger role to play in terms of the content which they 'consume'. Think along the lines of interactive infographics (how about an infographic with embedded YouTube videos or audio recordings?) and interactive e-books (perhaps with a few pop-up animations that appear each time the reader turns a page or hovers over a paragraph?); and consider innovative ways in which to grab - and **hold** - your audience's attention.

Looking at these trend predictions, it would seem that 2016 is set to become a year of innovation, of over-stepping boundaries and of re-assessing and escaping self-made limitations. It would also seem that 2016 is set to become the year of fearless execution - where businesses stop following trends and start setting them instead. After all, as Jamie Notter once said, "*Innovation is change that unlocks new value...*"

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