

Awareness to Action:

Developing a Cohesive Content Strategy



SECTION ONE

Developing a Cohesive Branded Content Marketing Strategy

The fluidity of the consumer experience relies on the unity between your top-of-funnel and bottom-of-funnel strategy. Developing your digital marketing strategy will inherently involve teams with differing approaches, content strategy devoted to singular aspects of the customer journey, and marketing campaigns working towards unique objectives. But the intention of each piece of content shouldn't be so isolated that it creates a disjointed experience for the consumer, as well as opposing metrics for internal success. When your branded content strategy is disconnected, you lose out on valuable insight into your customer and the potential for a successful user experience.

How Disjointed Marketing Channels Affect Your Brand

Many businesses notice a disconnect between efforts to increase brand awareness with potential customers versus those devoted to action and conversions. It's crucial that the two strategies, although separate, work together and appear seamless - in brand persona, in tone and in messaging. Each marketing goal, and the pieces of content related to them, have an effect on the bottom line metrics, brand insights and customer journey. When a disconnect exists between those goals and content, it can affect your business's success.

Disjointed Strategy Makes Metrics Compete with Each Other

The disconnection between the goals of both spears of your marketing channels - the teams devoted to awareness and engagement and those dedicated to driving action - means that your metrics are equally as fragmented. One set of goals is associated with upper-funnel metrics, and the other lower-funnel metrics, causing customers and data to be pulled in two different directions.

Every team will have varying goals - that's to be expected to reach the targets they need. But when those goals pull in such opposing directions that you miss out on insight and understanding of your



customer and negatively affect your customer experience, you lose effectiveness in the long run.

Disconnect Means Less Insight on Your Most Loyal Customers

Disconnection within your marketing team efforts prevents you from gaining the insight you need into your most loyal customers. One of the most essential elements of understanding the customer journey is your understanding of what drives a customer from awareness to action. **Missing the unity between marketing efforts means you miss out on the opportunity to fully appreciate how and why those customers made the decision towards action after their early experiences with your brand.**

Losing that clarity on your most loyal customers - the users who actively move from awareness and engagement to action - ensures that you are unable to understand what drives it. Not only does this affect your customers' experiences, as you'll read next, but it also prevents you from developing a content marketing strategy that better attends to the switch.

Lack of Cohesion Impedes a Smooth Customer Experience

Perhaps most importantly, a disjointed content marketing strategy shows up in how your customers experience your brand. Though it may not always be obvious, customers can recognize disconnection within each interaction with your brand.

For example, your loyal customers who regularly engage with your social media videos: They feel like they know your brand - and they do. But when that switch happens, and your team works to move them toward action, they may feel like they're working with an entirely different brand. Their loyalty is disregarded, they can feel neglected from the lack of authenticity, and they notice an abrupt and disorienting switch in tone that can affect how they see your brand and whether or not they want to take action.

Why Fluidity from Top to Bottom Equals Efficacy in the Long Run

Though you need awareness-driven efforts and action-driven efforts for a successful marketing strategy, the interaction between the two is an important element in developing your target audience's experience with your brand. Your users should come away from every interaction with the same high-quality view of your brand values, and not feel like they're bouncing around in interactions with a disjointed brand. Facilitating that emotional connection is integral to consolidating among your teams.

This issue also relates heavily to the quality of your content. Because your awareness team focuses on informational, organic content, whereas your action-driven team focuses more on content that drives those conversions, developing a strategy that fluently marries the two can ensure long-term success.

SECTION TWO

Engage Your Customers Through End-to-End Customer Experience

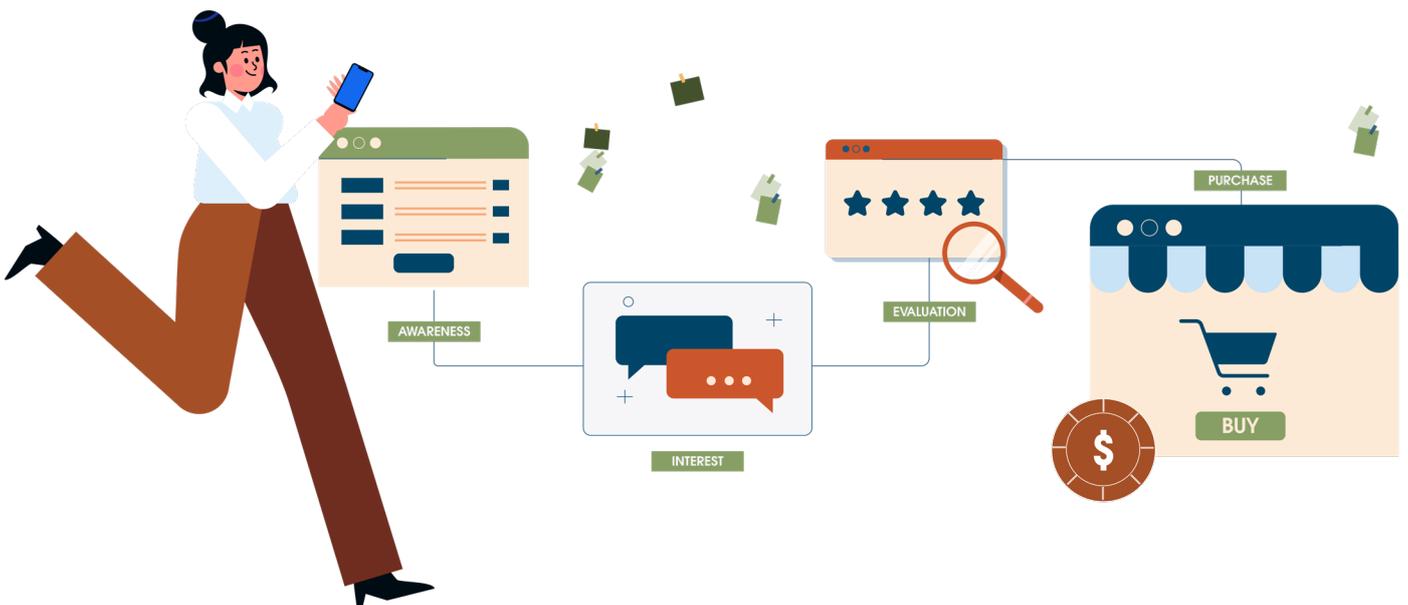
In the same vein, evolutions of the customer experience cannot be ignored when it comes to content marketing and strategy for brands. **We're no longer dealing with a linear funnel offering a clear, concise customer journey.** Now, that funnel has adapted to include the moving and regularly changing interactions between customers and brands. Customers jump into the funnel at any given point, leave and pick up where they left off, and change channels at the drop of a hat, making cohesion within your branded efforts essential.

The end-to-end customer experience refers to that new, sweeping customer journey and how it relates to cohesion within your strategy. Though your marketing strategy needs to attend to differing goals for awareness, engagement, and conversion,

your content should still look at the entire customer experience.

Rethink the Customer Journey

Don't forget everything you know about the customer journey - just rethink it. These changes are modifications to the values the traditional customer journey already addressed. Your customer journey map will still include the same elements, as you'll see below. However, it implements a customer-centric approach that follows the consumer throughout the journey, so that at any given point throughout the funnel you can foster the singular relationship.



Awareness



Your top-of-funnel, the place where your audience becomes aware of your brand, is your first outreach. For many brands, content aimed at this level attacks

awareness exclusively, missing how high-quality organic content can potentially reach past it and down the funnel to later customer needs.

Consideration



When customers learn more about your brand, products, or services and interest is piqued, you've moved to the second stage. Like awareness, consideration is

also driven by organic content, giving you the opportunity to generate a great customer experience via creative content production and branded marketing without limiting its impact.

Intent



Powered by action-driven content, the Intent stage is where your customer connection is cemented. Based on their brand-customer relationship so far, every positive experience - or pain point

- colors their decision. Often, when the shift between organic and action-driven content drives a wedge between user and brand, that only becomes more apparent in the action stage.

Action



As the force behind conversions, that same action-driven content empowers customers to make real-time action. When done well, action-driven content

fits seamlessly into your customer's experience, increasing conversions and customer loyalty.

The Full Customer Journey

Each stage of the customer journey is intricately wound around the stages before and after it, leaving no room for a lack of cohesion. Any inconsistency leaves gaps in your content, its ability, and your marketing strategy in general. Customer experience management extends past understanding each touchpoint and the individual stages of the journey. It's an awareness of how those parts work independently and together to form the full experience - and how your content should enable that.

Create a Cohesive and Engaging Customer Experience

Insufficient harmony in your digital marketing strategy means you lose insight and data on your customers, and your customers don't feel a smooth experience. In many cases, that disorganization or disconnection happens as a result of a content strategy that appeals to only one facet of the customer experience at a time.

For example, organic content produced to capture a new audience may be one element of a brand awareness strategy. Users interact with the media, getting an authentic experience of your brand via captivating content. However, as they move down the pipeline, they are offered action-driven content made with specific call-to-action messaging to address lower-funnel needs. When these two staples are not generated with recognition of how they sit in the scope of the full funnel, the difference

can be stark. Whether it's a difference in content format, location, style, or quality, users will notice a disconnect the first time they try to move from awareness to action.

Implementing a strategy that bridges the differences in goals of awareness versus action-driven content for full-scale cohesion is a necessary step in developing cohesion along the end-to-end customer experience. Action-driven content initiatives work best when the foundation in organic content gives you vital metrics on audience engagement and preps your users so you can deliver on customer expectations. Creating an ecosystem of mutually-beneficial branded content types, you can see continuous improvement in your brand's digital presence.



SECTION THREE

How to Create the Best Branded Content with First Media

The best branded content is cohesive and converts across the end-to-end customer journey experience. Because there is so much room for disconnect when attending to the different areas of the customer journey - specifically awareness versus action - branded content formats that integrate decision points throughout the customer journey can offer those conversion opportunities everywhere.

Focusing on high-quality, connective content that demonstrates your brand's values and voice while having those conversion points built in means you can execute cohesive strategies. Instead of pitting organic and action-driven content against each other, where their unique goals and strategies can conflict with one another, **cohesive branded content means there is a next step for your users, wherever they are in the funnel.**

First Media's Approach to Branded Content

Branded content is important - if it's done well. The best examples of branded content pieces aren't commercials. They're pieces of content that use a fluid and informed marketing strategy addressed to every point in the customer journey with specific messaging, calls-to-action, and a high-quality, emotional connection to your audiences.

As a comprehensive digital publisher, all of

First Media's capabilities, content, distribution platforms, and solutions for clients fit under one roof - all owned and operated by us. That means we can solve for awareness, intent, and action simultaneously rather than focusing exclusively on one element at a time for our partners.

Organic and Action-Driven Content Working Together

Allowing organic and action-driven content to work seamlessly together doesn't mean each element doesn't get its own prioritization.

We first focus on an organic approach, creating custom content and distributing it on our brand channels [So Yummy](#), [Blossom](#), and [Blusher](#). This content is intended to attract and excite audiences through visual storytelling - making the content as viral as possible for the maximum amount of reach. Because it's highly viewed and highly engaged with, it gets brand awareness out there on a massive scale that can then start the conversation and generate interest.

That interest is then analyzed by our proprietary Comment Analysis Tool: CAT. Combing through comments made on organic posts and pulling out core takeaways (sentiments, product mentions, action intent, purchase intent, etc.), CAT brings us insight into the specific interest of our partners' brands and products.

We Know Our Audience

We take that insight and knowledge to then create action-driven content that addresses lower funnel metrics in decision and action. Because we have a thorough understanding of the sentiment behind the original content, we can overlay specific messaging and calls-to-action within a paid approach.

Every action we ask viewers to take is informed by CAT analysis. We already have extensive experience with and understanding of our audience, so when we integrate new brands or begin branded content campaigns, we're a step ahead with vital information we can immediately apply. By retargeting users who viewed and engaged with the organic content, we're able to reach a target audience we already know is aware and interested - and ask them to take action.

Shoppable Content & Performance Marketing Techniques

Depending on the "action" goal, we execute this final step in two ways: Performance Marketing and Shoppable Content.

Our Performance Marketing solutions craft custom content that creates action and supports it with



the strength of our brands. With that, we're able to combine custom content and CTAs to drive action and bring new customers to our partners. This strategy is unique to us because of our digital publishing capabilities. The seamlessness and widespread cohesion of our distribution platforms mean that we can cover all of the essential KPIs of effective marketing in one place.

Similarly, our Custom Shoppable Content provides a direct purchasing opportunity to users, allowing them to add products directly to a retailer cart and check out with just a few clicks, eliminating roadblocks and enhancing simplicity. Users can go

straight from learning more and expanding their awareness to making a purchase, all in one visit.

Guaranteeing a Cohesive Customer Journey

Pairing mass awareness and interest in the form of views, engagements, and insights with specific CTA-driven, AI-informed creative allows us to create consistency within the customer journey that is unique to First Media. The unity in that experience enables you, as a brand partner, to feel the benefits of branded content in a cohesive content strategy, rather than sitting alone as a separate and ineffective tool. **With our custom content, you get access to effective marketing - and your customers get a seamless experience.**

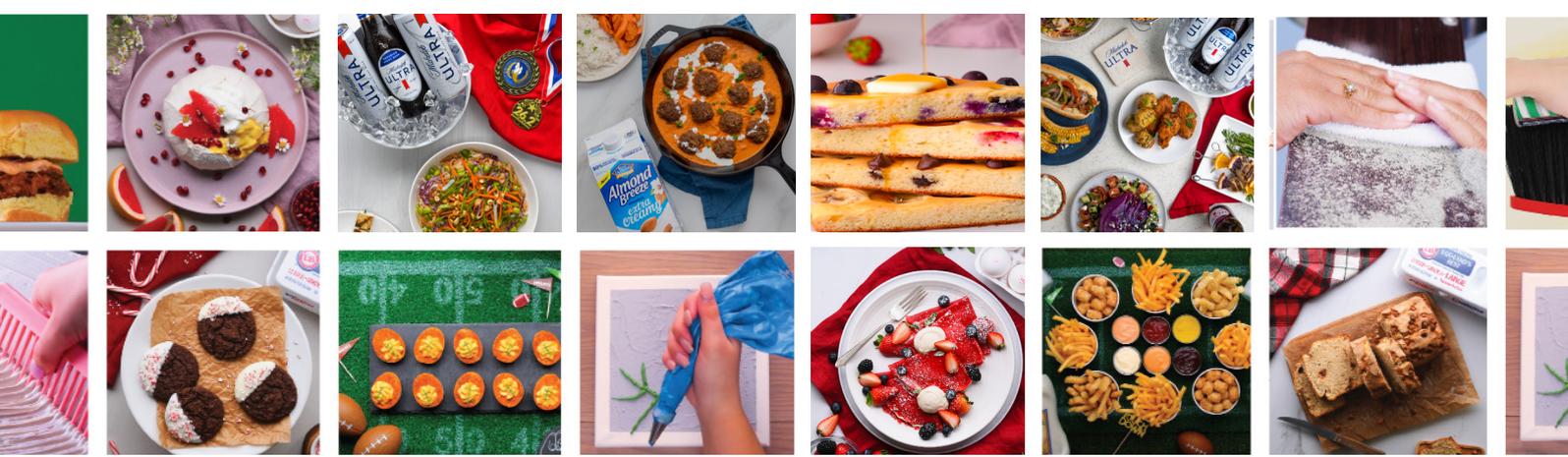
Using real-time analytics and insights, we're able to feed information back into each solution for the most fluid and results-driven strategy for you

as a partner. These digital marketing strategies not only boost your direct understanding of your audience and work towards your objectives on all fronts, but also give you valuable insight to carry into future marketing strategies.

Succeeding in Branded Content Marketing

Partnering with First Media gives you access to a toolkit of digital marketing capabilities and experience. From our influencer marketing takeovers to our emphasis on visual storytelling within video content, our presence on and off social media gives you a wealth of knowledge, proprietary tools, and experience. Develop your brand story, offer users content that keeps getting better, and gain valuable insight into your customers as you walk them through a cohesive, end-to-end customer experience with First Media.





Blossom So yUMMy! .Blusher babyfirst

We create content that performs and we deliver for our partners

About Us... First Media is an industry-leading digital media publishing and marketing company, at the intersection of content and commerce, driving the shoppable content revolution with more than 180 million fans, and over 2 billion monthly impressions across social media. Our proprietary blend of human ingenuity, experience, and constantly evolving AI delivers high-performing digital experiences that resonate deeply and drive real-world action.

Our brands [Blossom](#), [So Yummy](#), [Blusher](#) and [Babyfirst](#) inspire our global audience with organic and action-driven content to make every day extraordinary. Through these platforms, First Media is able to offer brand partners highly customized campaigns with unparalleled ROI at speed and scale. With an average annual growth rate of 50% over the past five years, along with multiple Fortune 500 partners, we are leading the next generation in shoppable content.

How to Work With Us

We build, deploy, and optimize high-value 360° digital programs that deliver unparalleled ROI for our partners.

<https://first.media>



Organic Custom Content



Performance Marketing



Social Commerce



Omni-Channel Distribution