The Red Book of Content Marketing 2018

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YORKE COMMUNICATIONS

A PAUL WRITER PUBLICATION

About Yorke Communications

Content Marketing firm Yorke Communications, in its ninth year, is making a positive impact on the business of its clients. The company has developed thousands of pieces of enterprise content across domains like Information Technology, Banking, Insurance, CPG and other sectors and has serviced over 150 customers worldwide. Using content as a key differentiator, Yorke Communications delivers marketing programs that involve social media management, marketing automation and SEO. The company supports internal communications programs for leading multinational organizations which have large and diverse workforces. The specialized team at Yorke Communications consist of content managers, digital marketing specialists, graphic designers, video producers and writers, and includes an ecosystem of consultant writers globally.

More information at www.yorkecommunications.com

About Paul Writer

We are in the business of creating Profitable Conversations. Paul Writer is a B2B marketing agency that helps firms connect with current and future customers. Through our unrivalled access to senior executives in top organizations, we can deliver insight and expertise that helps enterprises reach and build meaningful relationships with their customers. We curate platforms and opportunities for the executives in our network to benefit from peer insights, structured learning, focused product knowledge, and recognition.

More information at www.paulwriter.com

Peter Yorke,
CEO & Founder,
Yorke Communications

It is an acknowledged fact that content forms an integral part of the marketing process and plan. This year's Red Book of Content Marketing shows that almost 70% of clients put customer acquisition as the No. 1 goal of any content marketing program. Content therefore has to be focused and targeted to yield results. Content must hit the emotional chord with the reader (buyer) for any program to be successful.

Jessie Paul,
CEO,
Paul Writer

Content is yielding results in driving business and delivering leads. Strategy and technology coupled with measurability create the secret sauce of success. It is still an evolving field with practitioners experimenting with various delivery structures and form factors. The objective of this report, which has been jointly created by Paul Writer and Yorke Communications, is to capture the current state of readiness, as well as highlight best practices and industry norms. We hope it acts as an indicator for current trends and a guidepost for what will work in the future.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Virtual battlegrounds are yielding real results.

Content Marketing directly contributes to lead bucket/revenue generation coffers for 61% of survey respondents. And rakes in 6X conversion rates vis-à-vis other marketing methods.

Lead generation and customer acquisition are strong motivators.

64% of survey respondents rate lead generation as the main purpose of content initiatives.

Strategy + measurability + technology emerge as a winning template.

Improved performance over the last year is attributed to improved strategy (65% of survey respondents), better measurability (44%) and technology investments (30%).

The external agency rises.

External partners provide content for 40% of the respondents. In fact, 21% attribute improved results to better agency performance.

Content Marketing has been defined as a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience.

FOCUS ON PAIN POINTS

Buyers don't care about great marketing. All they want is to solve their specific problems. The consumer's key pain points are at the core of any Content Marketing efforts.

The findings from this year's survey acknowledge that there's no better long-term strategy than Content Marketing for businesses.

Content Marketing influences almost every aspect of an action-plan, and is the cornerstone of a brand's digital marketing success. Be it via brand authority, desire generation or multi-sensory engagement, Content Marketing is the most logical and effective way of rationalizing vision, aligning teams and building new customer-communities.

This report—the result of an exclusive dipstick straddling industries (IT/ITES, FMCG/CPG, BFSI, Services & Telecom), corporates and hierarchies—aims to uncover the realities and join the dots that define the contemporary Content Marketing terrain.

A 'handbook' that's as handy for the new age entrepreneur as it is definitive for the new age marketer, it provides a fair idea about where the Content Marketing revolution is headed.

What are companies doing to improve their content game in 2018? What are the approaches, tools and tactics that are being adopted? Do they believe in Content Marketing enough to block a bigger share of their wallets? What are the goals they hope to achieve?

TARGETS

Depending on how it is designed and leveraged, Content Marketing has the potential to deliver across a variety of business goals.

Some of them are building brand visibility, brand loyalty, engaging new markets, generating leads and optimizing marketing spends.

The New Gen Goal Diggers

When it comes to goals, a majority of businesses still seem to be looking at Content Marketing as a 'Quick Sales Scheme', and are happy to make short-term tactical gains such as lead generation.

- Customer Aquisition was the main purpose of content endeavors for 66% of the respondents. This is a significant step-up from last year, when 52% respondents had confirmed that content helped them in customer acquisition.

- Lead Generation came a close second at 61% with survey respondents ranking it as one of the top reasons for their content initiatives.

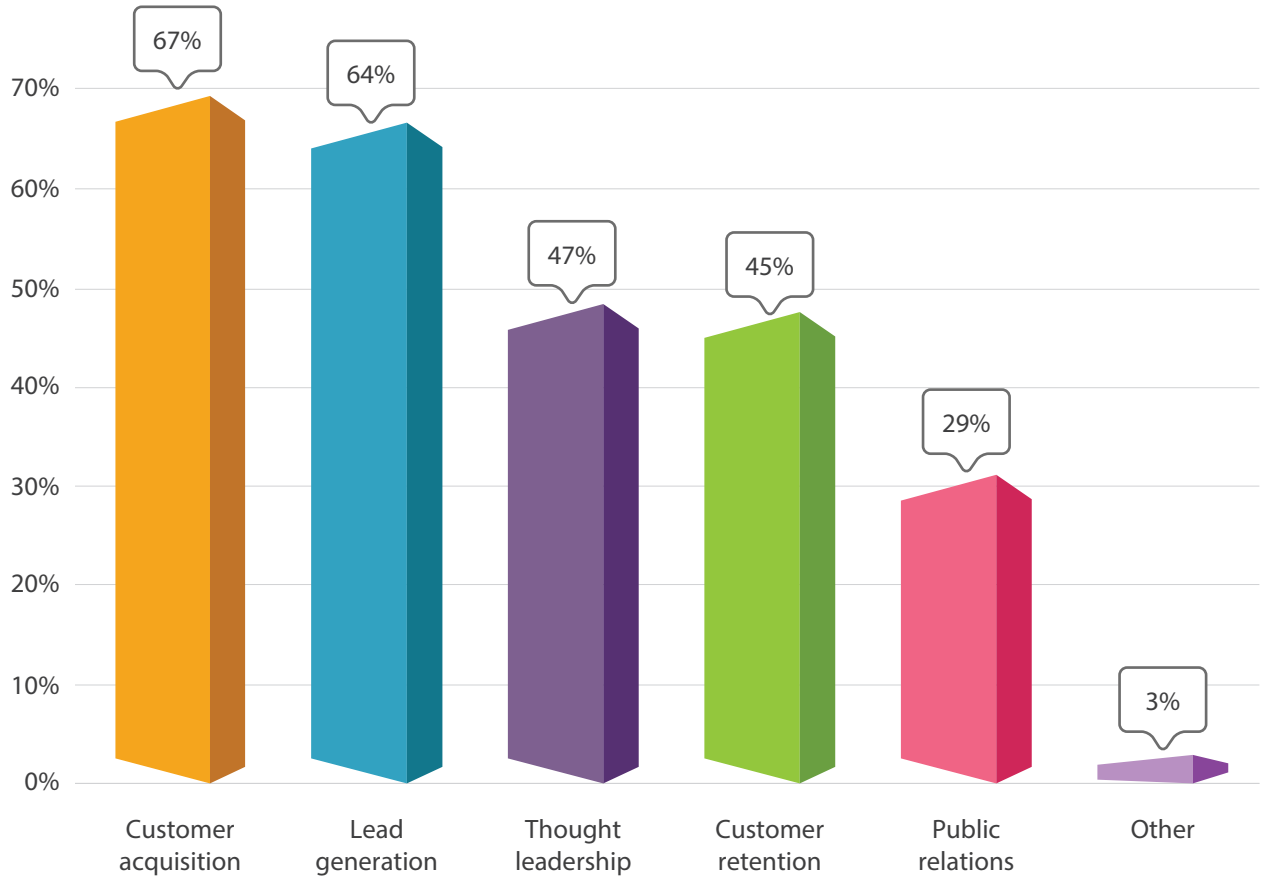
- Content Marketing is contributing directly and tangibly to their lead bucket/revenue generation coffers according to 60% of respondents.

Indeed, Content Marketing rakes in six times higher conversion rates as compared to other marketing methods.

More strategic—and typically long-term goals like thought leadership, online reputation management, popularly called PR, and customer retention—areas where some of the juiciest benefits of inbound (Content) Marketing lie, remain reasonably strong motivators for brands and organizations.

SOURCE: http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2017/10/stats-invest-content-marketing/

What is the main purpose of generating content in your organization this year?



18
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2011
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2013

IMPACT

THE NEW EDGE FOR THE NEW AGE

Getting company information in a series of articles versus an advertisement was preferred by 80% of business decision-makers. That's the power of Content Marketing done right.

SOURCE: https://www.snapapp.com/blog/54-content-marketing-stats-guide-your-2018-strategy (#41)

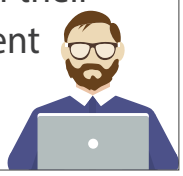
When asked which marketing trend will be most important to them and their businesses in 2018, people overwhelmingly voted for Content Marketing—ahead of powerful upcoming areas like Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Marketing Automation and Mobile Marketing.

This confidence is based on tangible returns earned: 63% respondents of our dipstick confirmed that the efficacy of Content Marketing programs has improved in the past 12 months. Over 50% respondents of this survey were fairly satisfied with their company's content outreach, with more than 35% labelling it as 'good'.

Not surprisingly, more and more businesses have accepted Content Marketing as an integral business edge and are bracing for bigger investments in 2018.

The trend checks out in investment figures too:

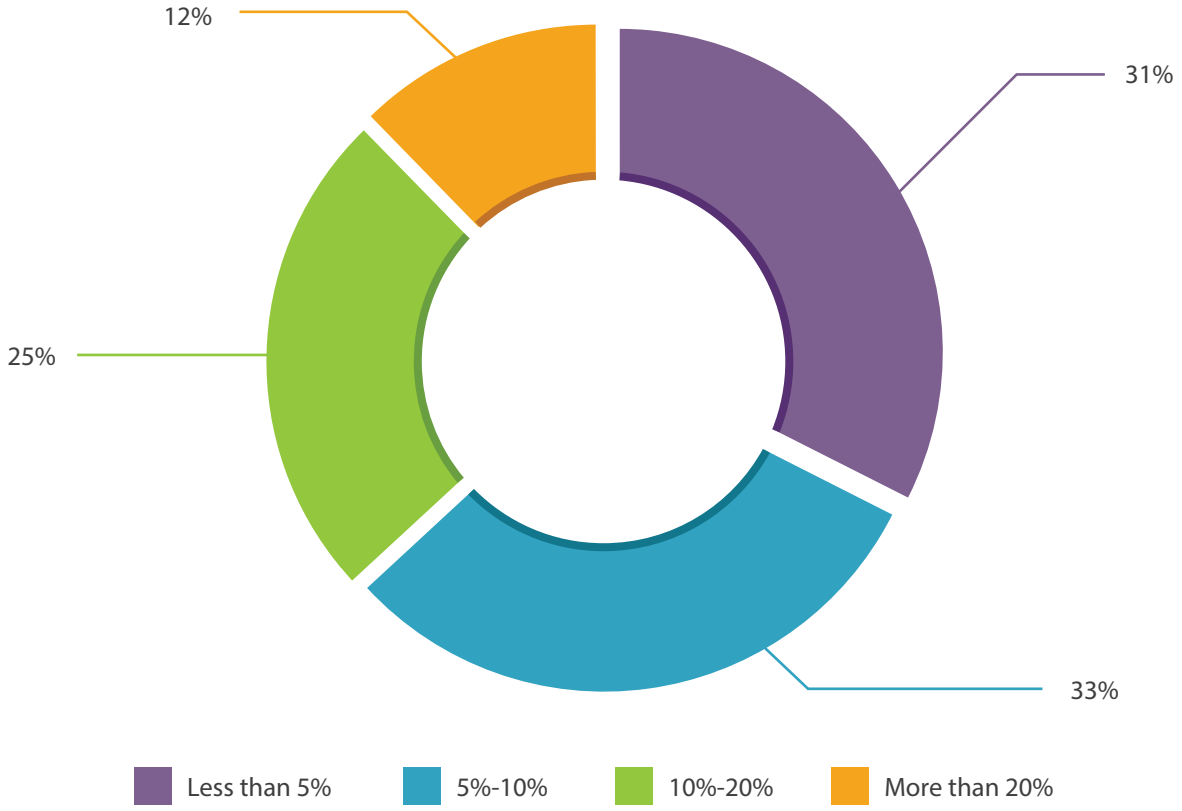
Over 20% respondents are allocating more than 10% of their marketing budget for Content Marketing.



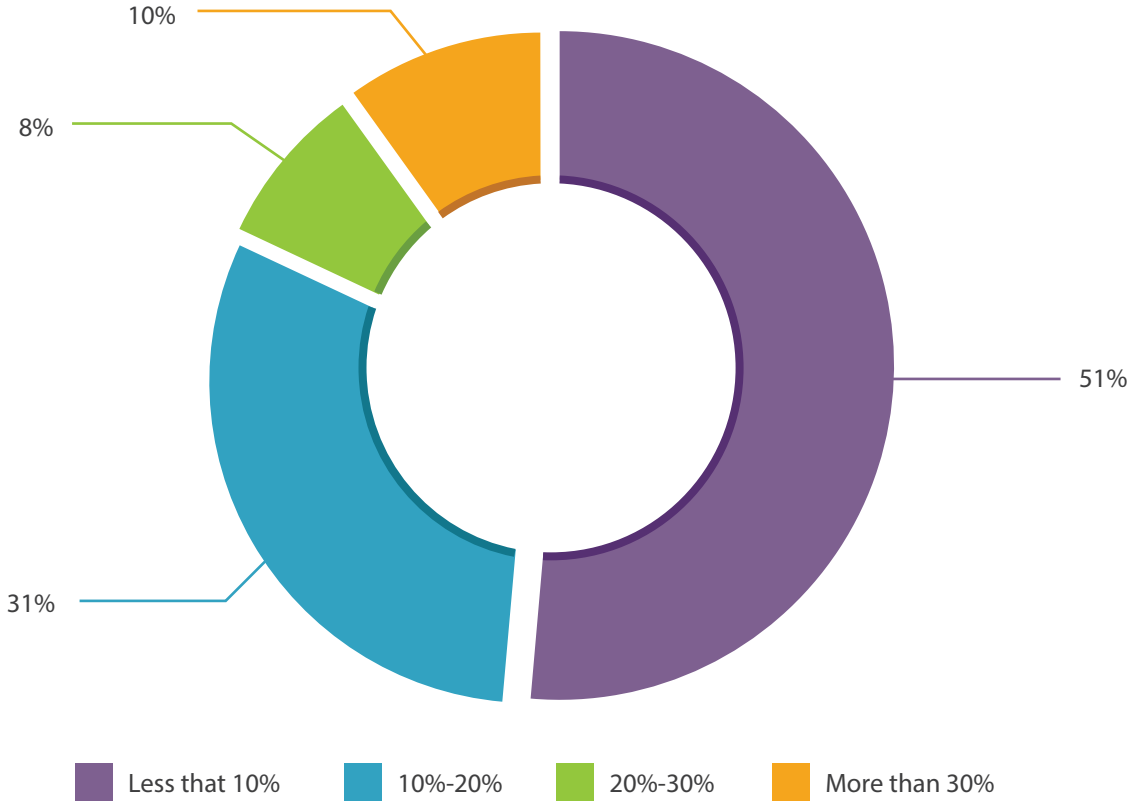
Over 30% are increasing their budget by as much as 20% over the preceding year.

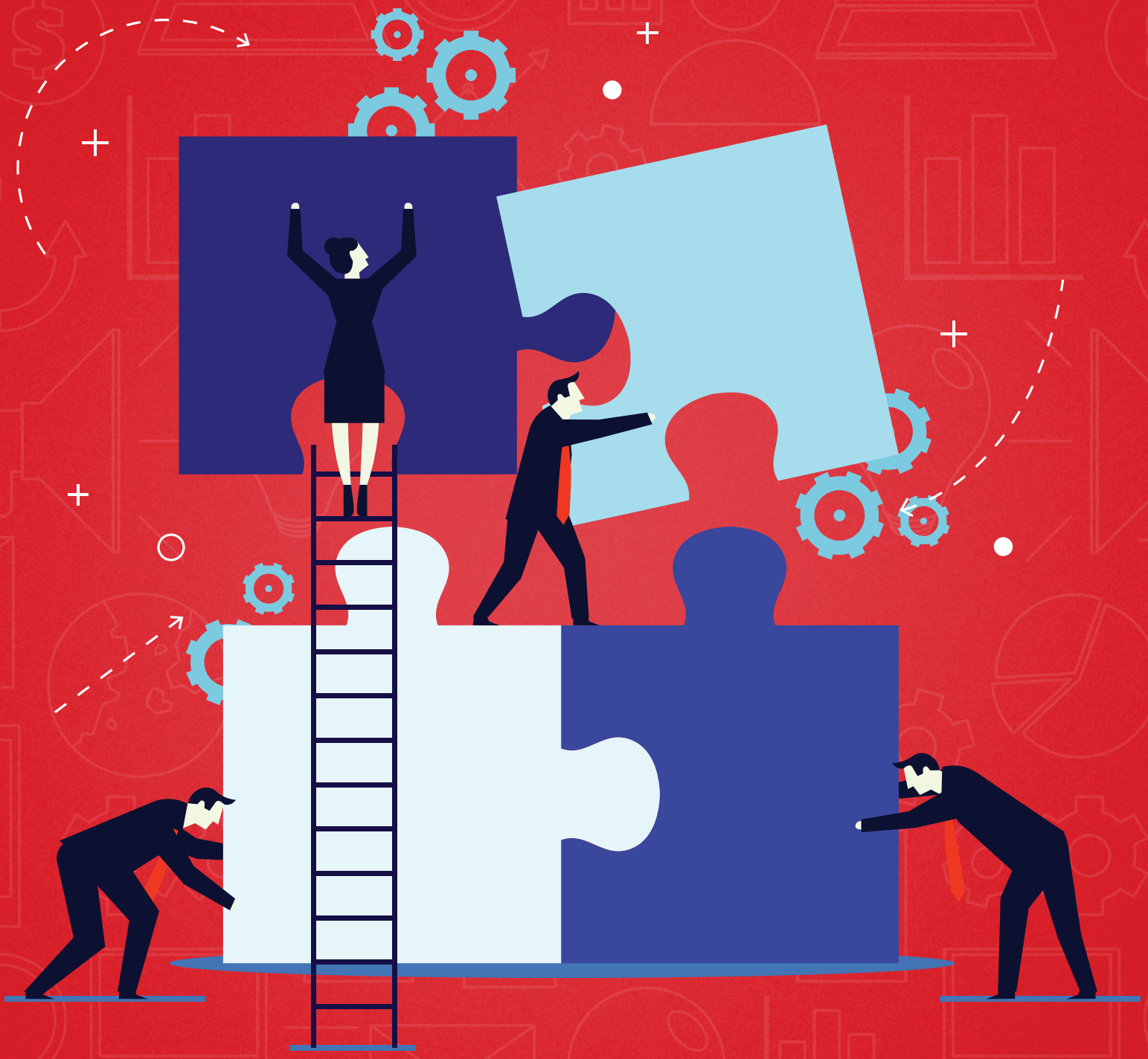
75% of marketers are committed to increasing their investments in Content Marketing.

What percentage of the marketing budget is allocated for content creation?



How much has your Content Marketing budget gone up since 2017?





RAINMAKERS

THE OUTSIDER IS 'IN'!

Orchestrating a year-round, high-performance Content Marketing program is just like painting a masterpiece, composing a timeless musical score or hitting a home-run: not easy.

To impact its intended targets and deliver on KPIs, the content generated by brands needs to measure up to a high standard. This means creating content that is

- Searchable
- Shareable
- Supportive (aiding consumers in taking informed decisions)
- Specialized (underlying the brand's expertise)
- Sustainable

However, not many companies can afford to spare their expert resources since the lion's share of their bandwidth is taken up to increase customer satisfaction, optimize costs and maintain market-edge.

This explains why—despite over 60% of survey respondents having in-house Content Marketing teams (a mix of centralized groups and brand-specific teams)—brands seem to be happiest letting experts handle the Content Marketing show.

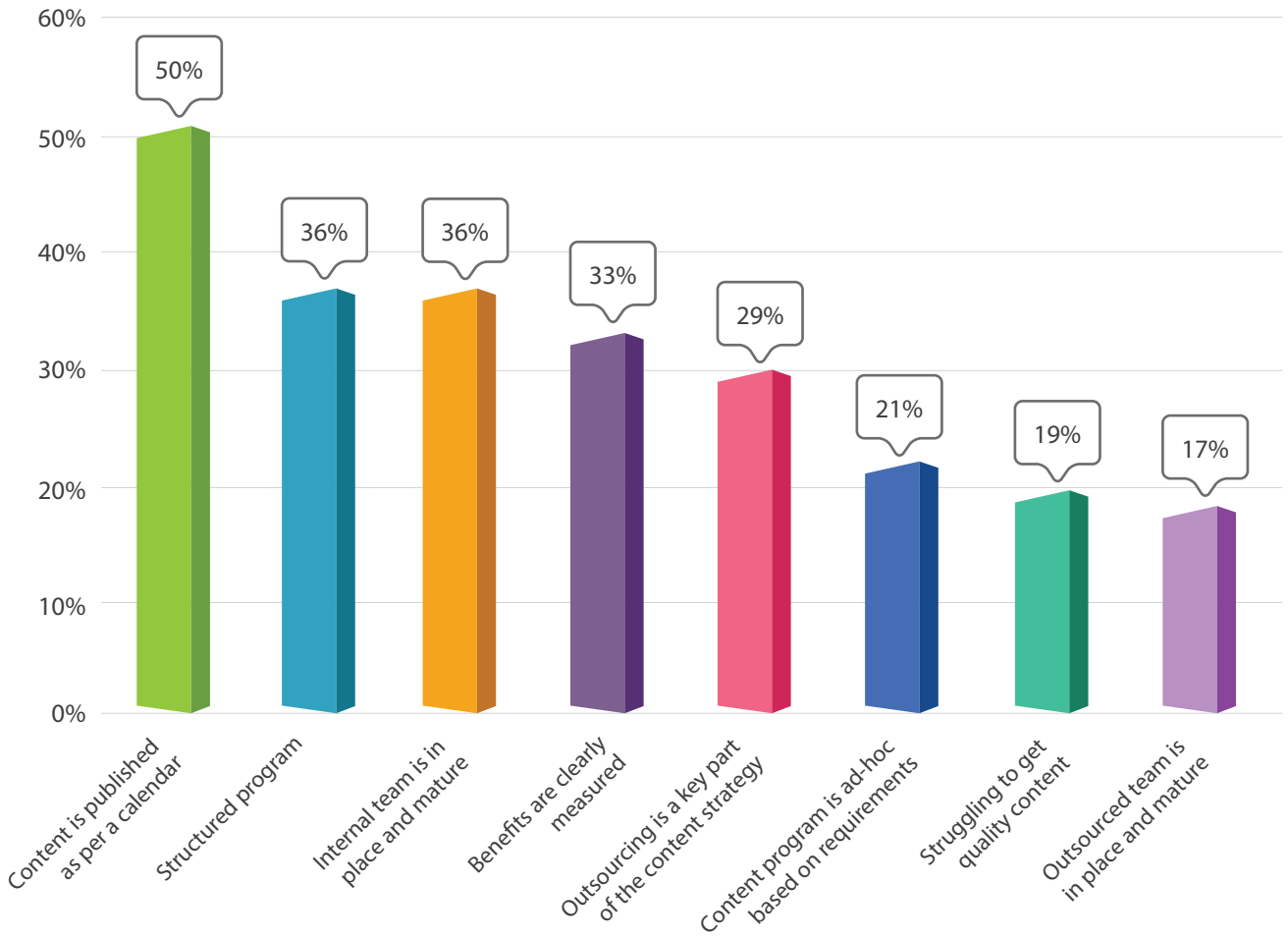
When compared with freelancers and in-house content teams, the external Content Marketing agency scored the highest in terms of content quality and value-for-money.

Outsourcing Content Marketing efforts brings with it tangible benefits like:

- Freeing up resources for core tasks
- Access to cutting-edge tools
- Quick, on-demand scalability

According to 30% of respondents, they were outsourcing their company's Content Marketing exercises. 40% of survey respondents procure content from external sources–partners, vendors and agencies. 21% attribute improved results to sharper performance of their Content Marketing agency.

Which of the following describes your content program?



A peek into the most efficient sources.

	Value for Money	Professionalism	Quality of content
Content Agency	★★★★½	★★★★☆	★★★★½
In-house team	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
Freelancers	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	★★★½☆

*Rated from 1 to 5 stars, the highest being 5.

INSTRUMENTS

MAGIC TOOLS AND SILVER BULLETS

So what are the tools and trends that brands are leveraging to boost their Content Marketing efforts?

They are reserving their key focus around strategy, technology and measurability to take their Content Marketing to the next level.

Video is increasing its share of eyeballs and brands are embracing video marketing and visual storytelling (such as infographics or graphic novels) to cater to consumers whose appetite for artistic and visual storytelling shows no signs of slowing down. Social media and blogs rank equally high on the engagement factor, followed by case studies and white papers.

When it comes to the relevancy of social media channels, Facebook continues to be the king at 84%. LinkedIn comes in second with 71% and Twitter at third with 62%. YouTube is a surprise fourth at 53%, given its status as the world's second largest search engine after Google.

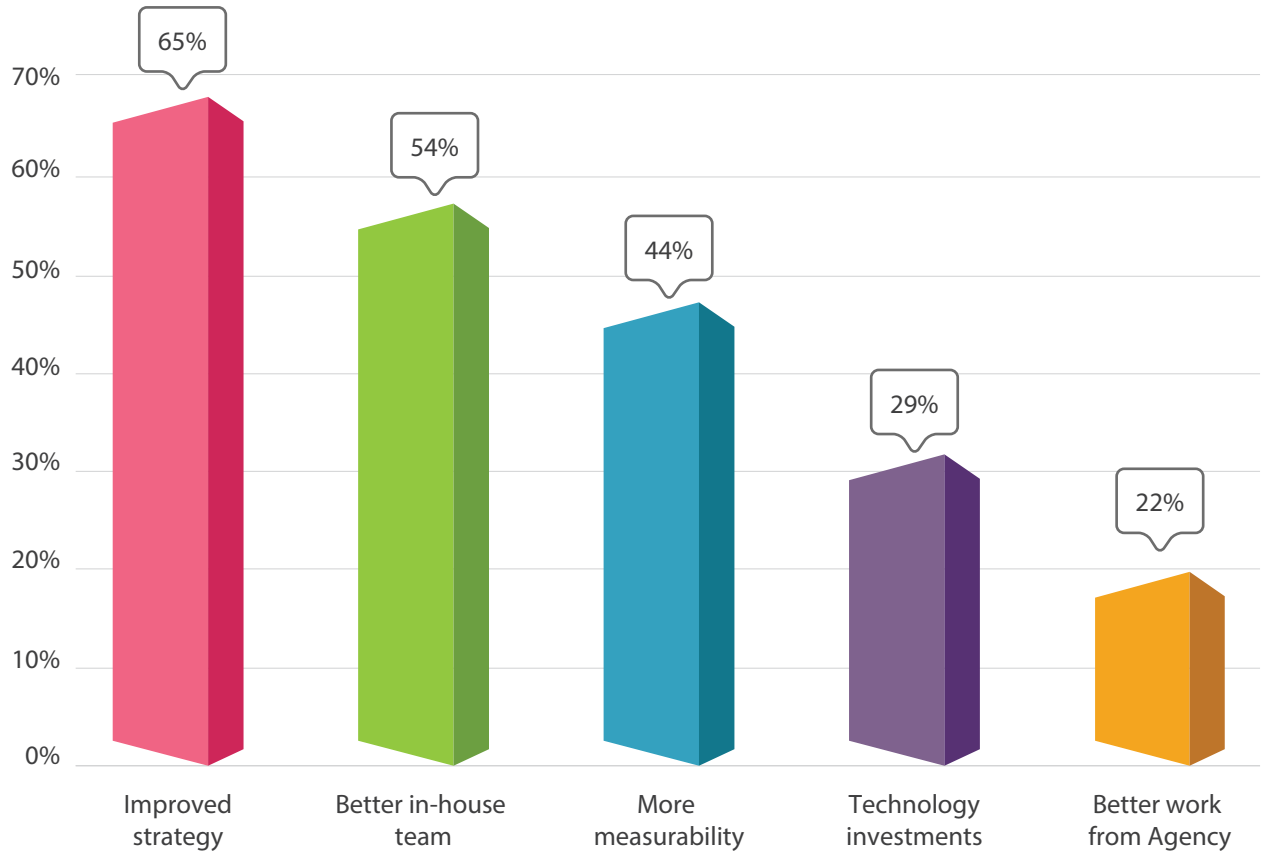
While SEO is critical to a company's online visibility, quality content plays a key role. The two are inextricably linked. SEO demands a consistent, versatile and relevant content pipeline to generate results. Marketing teams realize this, with over 50% survey respondents claiming that their SEO efforts are well integrated with their Content Marketing strategy.

With no two marketing objectives exactly the same, businesses may differ in the choice of metrics to assess their level in Content Marketing–but there's no disagreement on their importance. View and hits, leads, conversion and cost–in that order–are metrics that are getting top attention from marketers when it comes to appraising and measuring Content Marketing efforts.

Clearly defined outcomes and a content calendar are some other approaches that are yielding results for firms.

Brands are making significant investments in content distribution to effectively develop multi-channel distribution plans.

Factors contributing to improvements in the past 12 months.

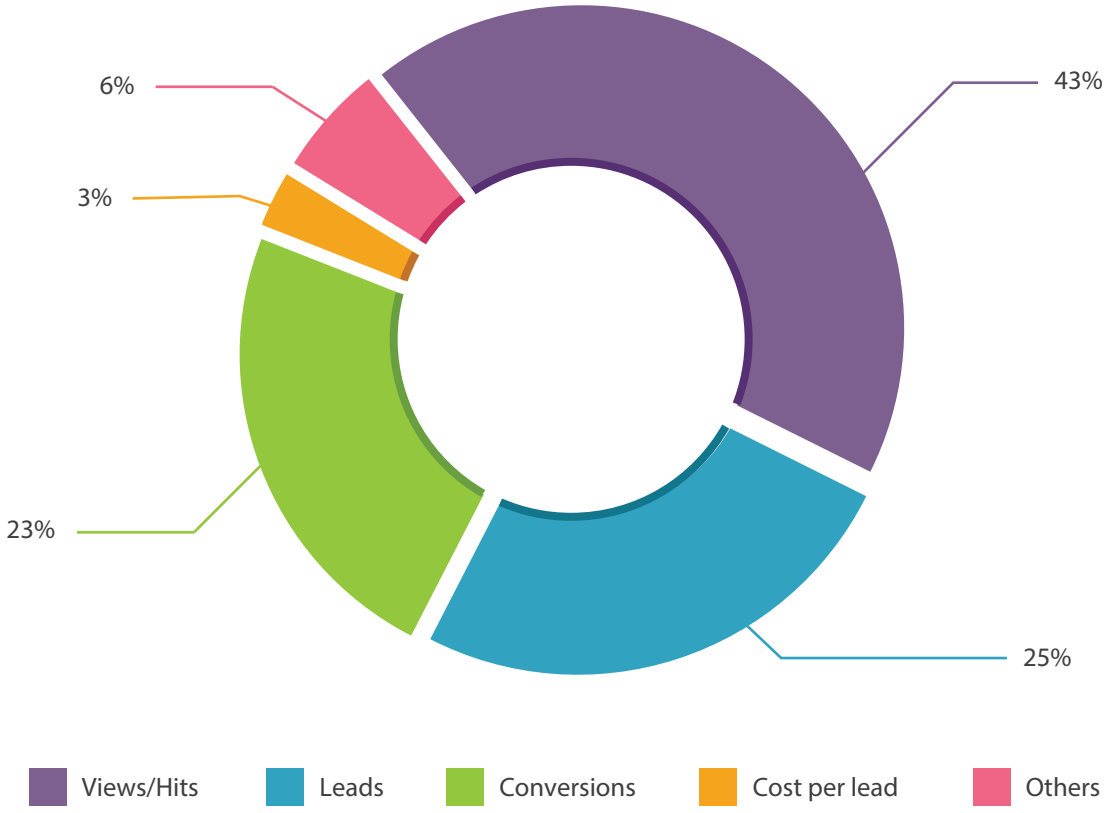


How effective is each form factor in your Content Marketing strategy?

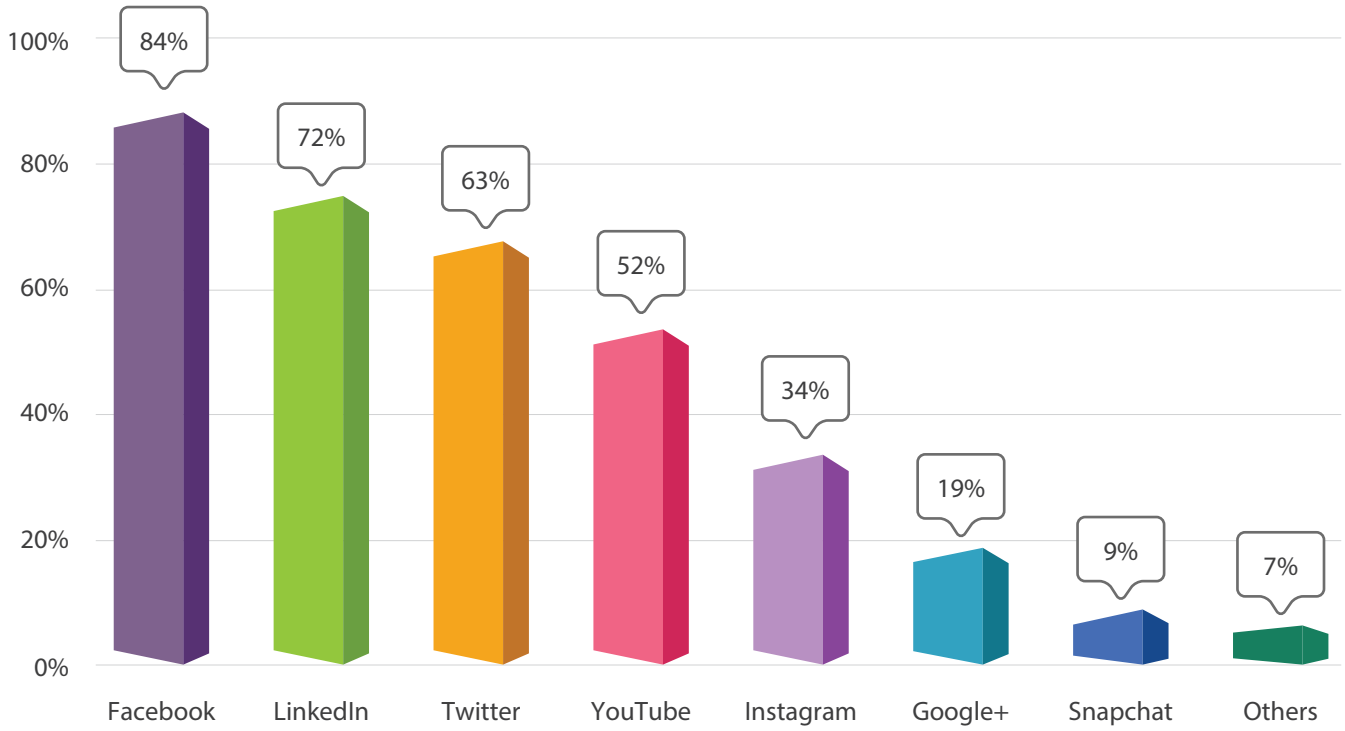
	Views	Demand Generation
Blogs	★★★½☆	★★★★☆
White Papers	★★★½☆	★★★½☆
White Papers	★★★½☆	★★★½☆
Social Media Posts	★★★★☆	★★★½☆
Video	★★★★☆	★★★½☆
Infographics	★★★★☆	★★★½☆

*Rated from 1 to 5 stars, the highest being 5.

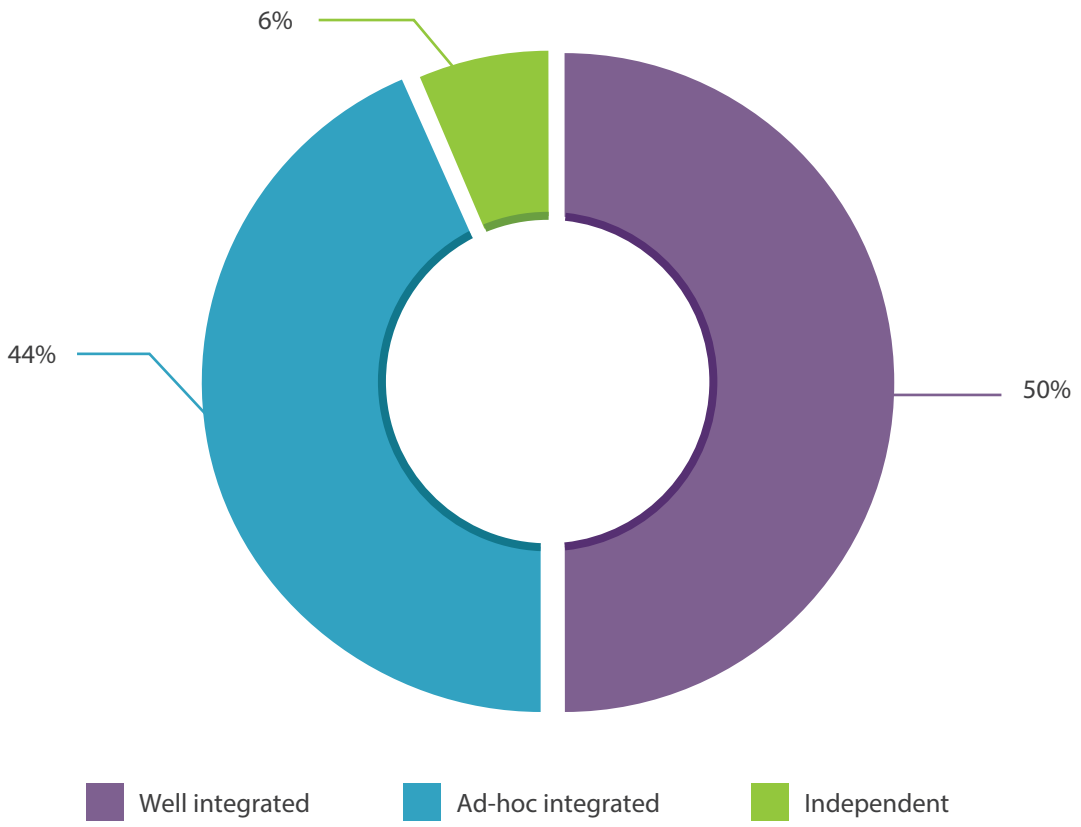
What metrics do you use to measure the success of content?



Which social media channels are most relevant to you?



How integrated is your Content Marketing strategy with your SEO efforts?



FUTURE

WHAT'S NEXT?

Brands are viewing themselves as publishers by shifting their focus from creating individual pieces of marketable content to embedding a more fundamental content mindset across the organization.

For that, though, they will need to:

- Adopt a more structured approach
- Align teams and set clear expectations

Activate an agile delivery mechanism.

Companies need a clear documented approach around the 3Ms–Monitor, Measure, Market. This needs to be dynamic in order to garner better ROI on their Content Marketing efforts. This is clearly the need of the hour as only half of the survey respondents confirmed that they have a well-documented Content Marketing strategy.

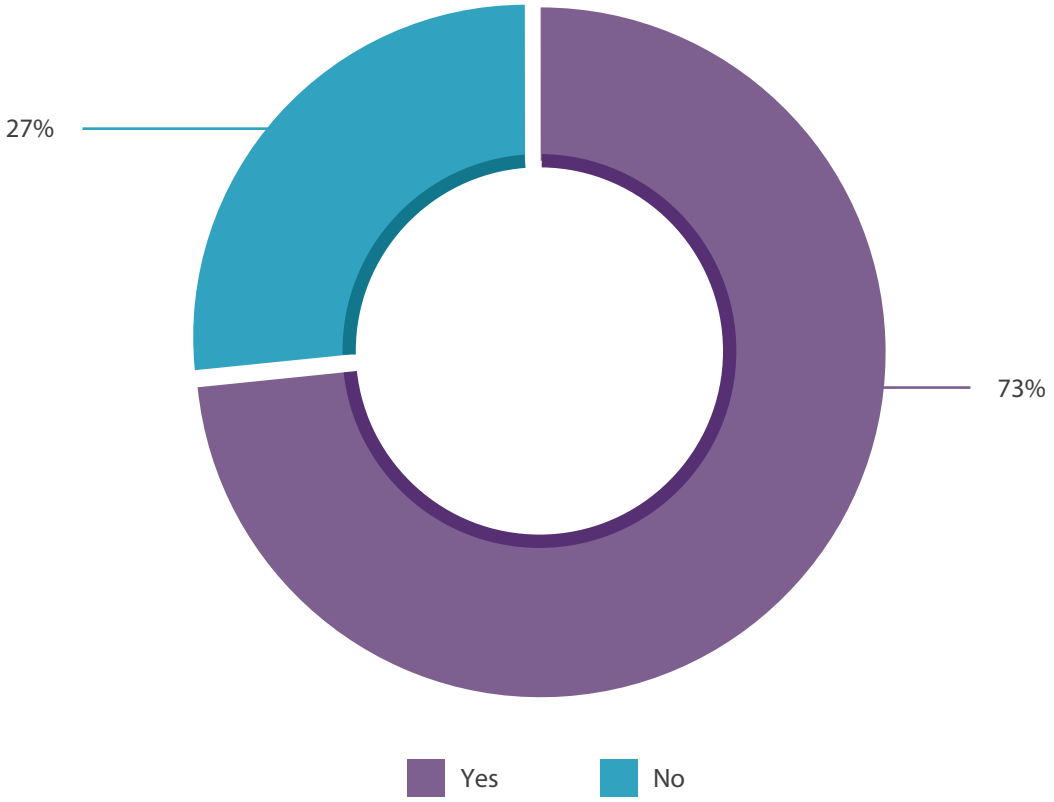
Only 32% are measuring benefits from their efforts.

That should soon change for the better. In 2018, the terrain is slated to get even more competitive with new trends like Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Marketing Automation and Mobile Marketing. This will usher in new opportunities for brands, and make organizations bolder with their wish lists. What they will look to master is how to do it right.

An agile delivery mechanism will be the only way to generate 'AHA' moments, disrupt brand goodwill positively and get ready for the next phase of growth.

Globally, fatigue for intrusive (traditional/outbound) advertising has reached an all-time high, and more companies have long realized that Content Marketing is the only way forward to attract and retain customers.

Should organizations shift their content strategy from building branded content to establishing themselves as a content brand?



Recap of key findings from 2016

- 70% of respondents are of the opinion that content plays a key role in converting leads into business
- 59% said their organizations create content for thought leadership
- 57% said they generate content for lead generation purposes
- 54% plan the frequency of content to enable them to achieve their objectives
- 95% of respondents access content on their laptops; 58% said they access content on their mobile phones
- 88% of organizations prefer fresh content over re-purposed content
- 44% of respondents do not have a separate team for content
- 55% of respondents have increased by 20% their Content Marketing budgets

The survey jointly created by Paul Writer and Yorke Communications had 163 respondents.

The majority of respondents were CEOs, CMOs, and other senior marketing professionals from industries such as Media, BFSI, IT, and Services.

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