

CONTENT MARKETING *Playbook* 2017

21 Content Marketing Plays
That Are Sure to Score
With Your Fans



CONTENT
MARKETING
INSTITUTE™

A UBM COMPANY

MAKE EVERY PITCH COUNT!

If you want your content marketing to lead your business into the big leagues, it helps to have a game plan – a strategic selection of plays you can rely on to excite your fans and followers and strike out your competition.

Each year, our Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends research reveals which tactics marketers are currently using. But for 2017, we dove a little deeper by asking those who use each tactic to report on which ones they feel are most critical to their success. So we learned that, while it's clear some newer, trendy platforms are gaining a strong foothold in our industry, they aren't necessarily poised to replace reliable performers like blogs, email newsletters or e-books anytime soon.

Our 2017 Playbook aims to help all content marketers better understand the value proposition of popular content formats and use them more successfully. On the pages that follow, you'll find:

- Descriptions of 21 popular content marketing tactics
- The latest stats on their usage and contribution to success for B2B and B2C organizations
- Insights that will help you decide whether to include a given tactic in your strategic lineup
- Targeted tips to help you optimize your content's performance
- Best-in-breed examples that we hope will inspire you to pitch some new ideas to your team

Now, take the field, and find out how to score more ROI points while avoiding costly errors.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

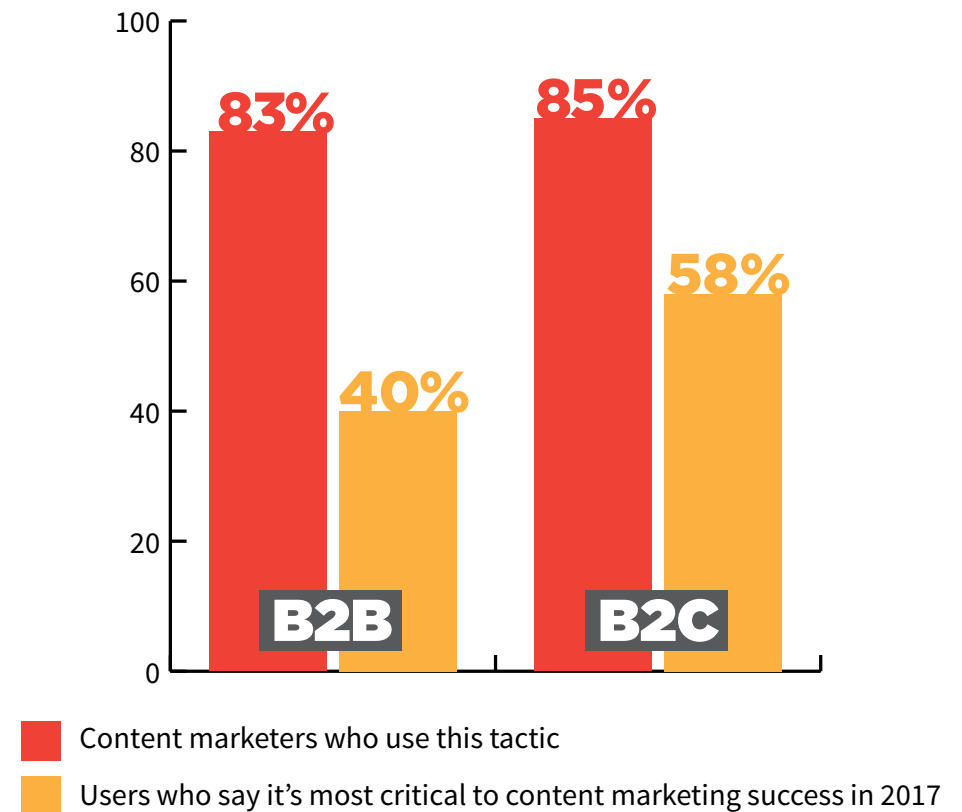


Once again, the top tactic content marketers are leveraging is social media content – no surprise,

considering how entrenched social networks have become in the lives of consumers and brands alike. No matter what the special interest is, chances are there's a devoted social community out there somewhere, just waiting for content worthy of their attention – making this channel ideal for engaging them in meaningful, relevant brand conversations.



Content Marketing Play **SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT**



Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

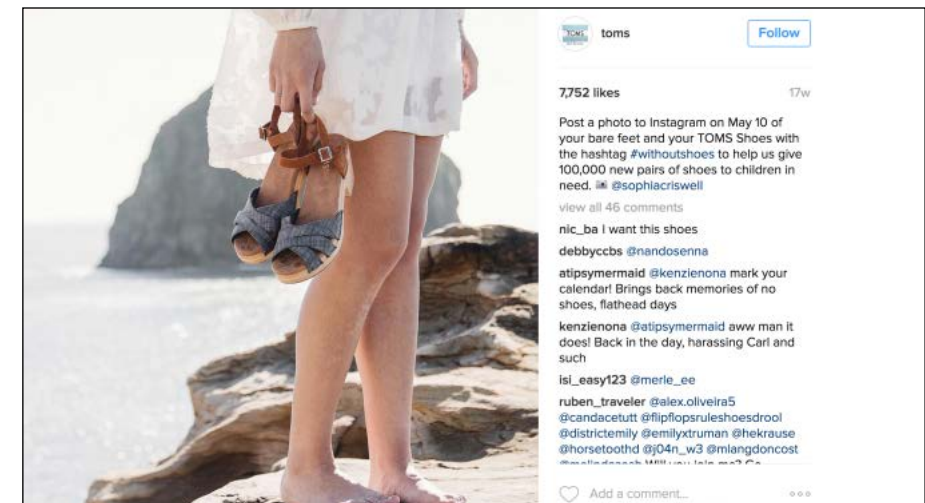
Before planting your brand flag on a particular social playing field, follow these guidelines to make sure your efforts are positioned for optimal content marketing success:

- **Carefully cultivate your social soapboxes:** Understand the unique characteristics of each social platform you consider working with, and decide on a case-by-case basis whether it's a good fit for your outreach intentions.
- **Listen and learn:** Spend time listening to conversations and building relationships before you start to share your content, and be prepared to join in the banter without sounding uninformed, self-promotional, or out of touch with other members of the social community.
- **Don't be afraid to get creative:** Instead of just pasting in pieces of your typical business content, try creating something original and less formal, such as a peek behind the scenes at one of your company's social functions, or an informal photo tour of your office.

GO DEEPER:

[How to Build a Smart Yet Simple Social Media Marketing Plan](#)

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT: [TOMS' #WithoutShoes](#)



TOMS' #WithoutShoes campaign was designed to raise awareness of how an inability to afford or access shoes can affect a child's quality of life – keeping them from attending school, for instance. Of course, TOMS is doing more than simply raising awareness: For each person who posted a unique image of bare feet with the hashtag #WithoutShoes on Instagram on the designated day, TOMS donated a pair of shoes to a child in need.

LEARN MORE:

[11 Smart Marketing Examples That Nail Visual Content](#)

BLOGS

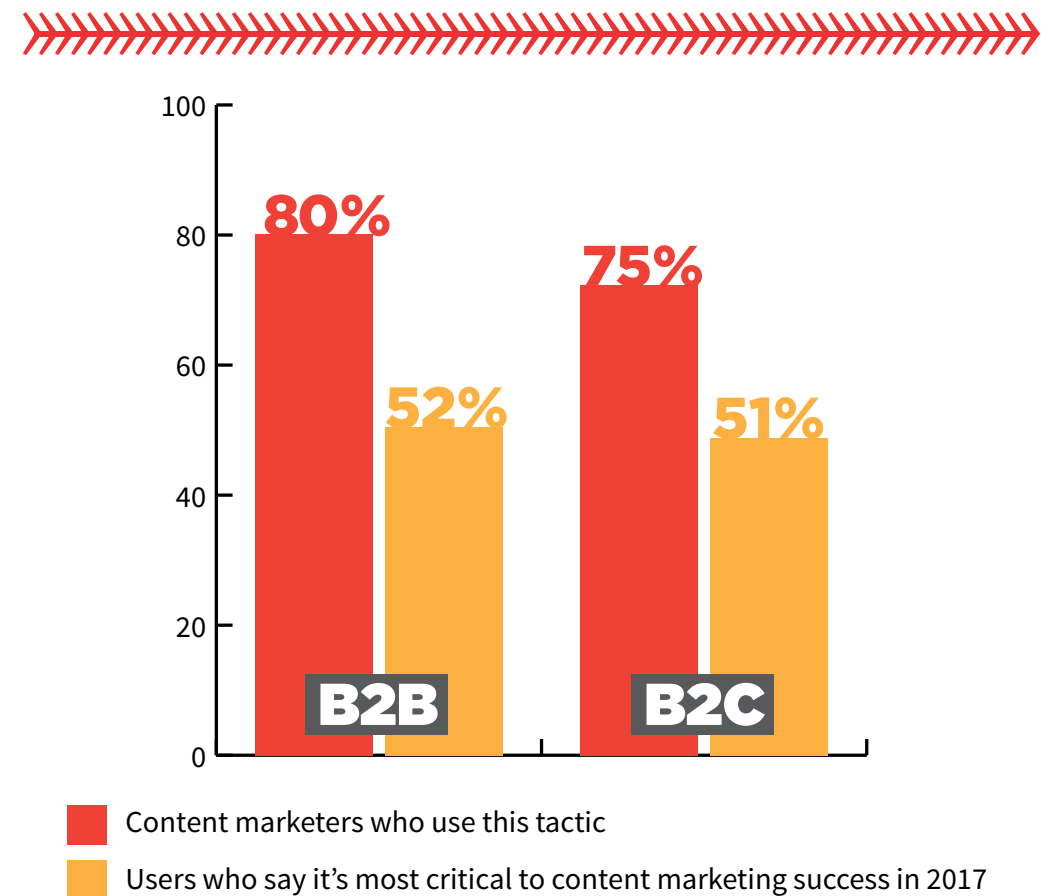


Blogging is one of the most fundamental points of entry into the content marketing game: It's a versatile technique with a lot of creative possibilities

and, although it takes hard work to produce and maintain a successful blog, it doesn't require a lot of complicated equipment or technological know-how to get started. It's also a powerful means of building a subscribed audience for your brand and sustaining their trust and interest over time – a critical benefit in a time where credible news and information isn't always easy for consumers to come by.



Content Marketing Play **BLOGS**



Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

While time-constrained visitors may not read every word of your blog posts, [studies have shown](#) that consumers are increasingly expecting that content be rigorously researched, factually accurate, and worthy of their time and attention – meaning that it helps them make better decisions, and quickly and confidently complete their intended tasks.

Consider these tips from [Neil Patel](#) on how to communicate so that your point comes across whether readers skim, scan, or savor your article:

- **Write a strong headline** to spark interest.
- **Summarize the main point in the beginning.** A lot of people skim the beginning of the article and then fizzle out.
- **Reinforce your message with images** you choose to accompany the post.
- **Restate your points in bulleted or numbered lists** to make it easier for skimmers to absorb the information.
- **Use subheadings** to emphasize the supporting points of your argument.
- **Summarize your main point again at the conclusion** for readers who jump right to the end.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

[Invision's Blog](#)



Invision creates amazing content on the realm of graphic design – from industry best practices and trends to advice from experts. Its blog is well thought-out, with categories that are easy to follow and explore. From challenging the reader to think deeper about UX, to providing mentorship on graphic design tools, Invision's posts are top-notch and always deliver on the value they've become renowned for.

LEARN MORE:

[38+ Examples of Brands Doing Great Content](#)

EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

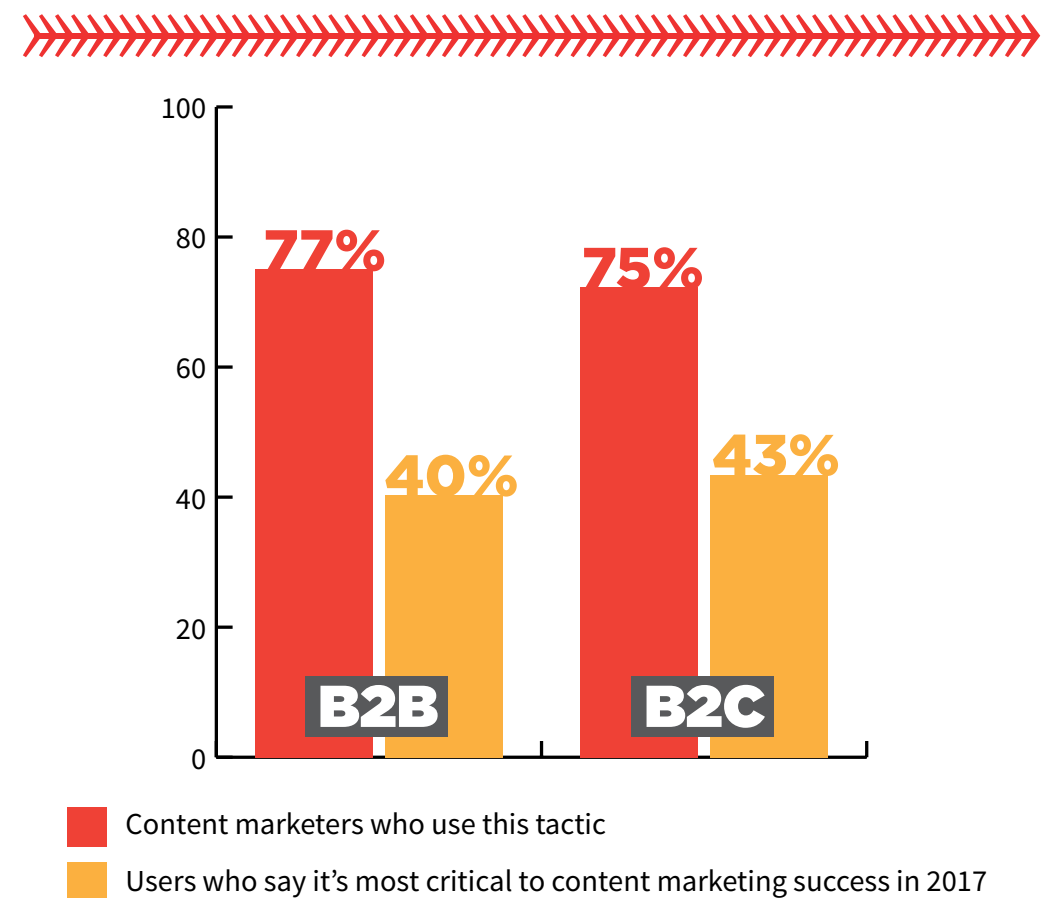


Email is an essential structure that supports and strengthens all your other content efforts. It's also one of the best techniques for building a

subscriber base – which helps foster deeper engagement and durable brand loyalty. In fact, a [GetResponse](#) report found that for every dollar invested in email marketing, an average return of \$38 was generated – which represents a 3,700% ROI. But, just like any critical system, success with email is also tied to proper maintenance and upkeep – if you fail to keep pace as consumption trends shift, even your most faithful followers may start to overlook your e-newsletters in their crowded inboxes or opt out altogether.



Content Marketing Play E-NEWSLETTERS



Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research

EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

As with blogs, you need to publish your e-newsletters consistently and customize them to each subscriber's delivery preferences. It's also a good idea to incentivize reader interest by offering them something of value in exchange for the personal information they provide.

Here are a few ideas for stellar e-newsletters:

- **Foster a sense of belonging among your readers:** Publish your favorite reader comments, give shout-outs to top customers, or highlight other ways they can get involved in your brand and the community it serves.
- **Provide exclusive content or benefits that aren't available anywhere else:** Give them access to discounts, downloads, insider-only information, or other special assets and offers.
- **Use progressive profiling:** Gradually and unobtrusively collect additional data on your subscribers, then use that information

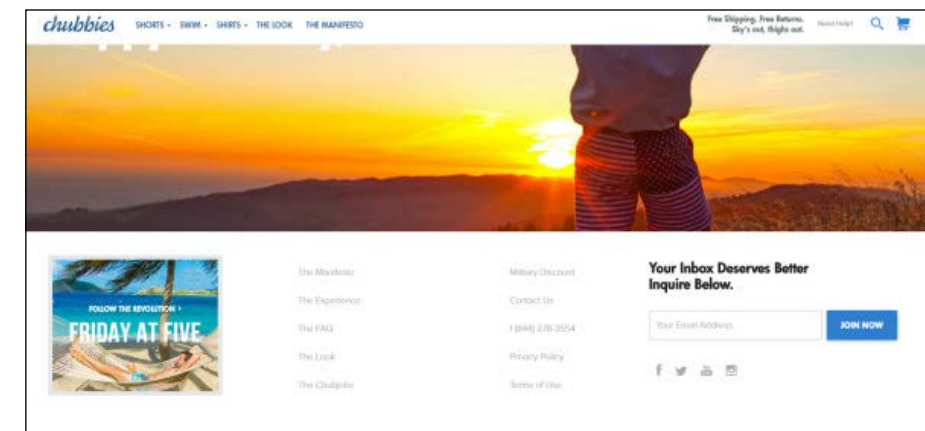
to customize your email experience to better suit their needs and interests.

GO DEEPER:

[How to Build Your Email List: The \(Better Than\) Ultimate Guide](#)

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

Chubbies



Chubbies does an awesome job of creating content that gives its target market – men – a fun and memorable brand experience. Its weekly Friday Eve newsletter gets subscribers excited about the weekend – and, of course, wearing shorts – with entertaining snippets like How to Discreetly Add a Beer-Dispensing Cooler to Your Office Chair, and new product announcements that remind readers how fun it is to wear shorts.

LEARN MORE:

[38 Examples of Brands Doing Great Content](#)

IN-PERSON EVENTS



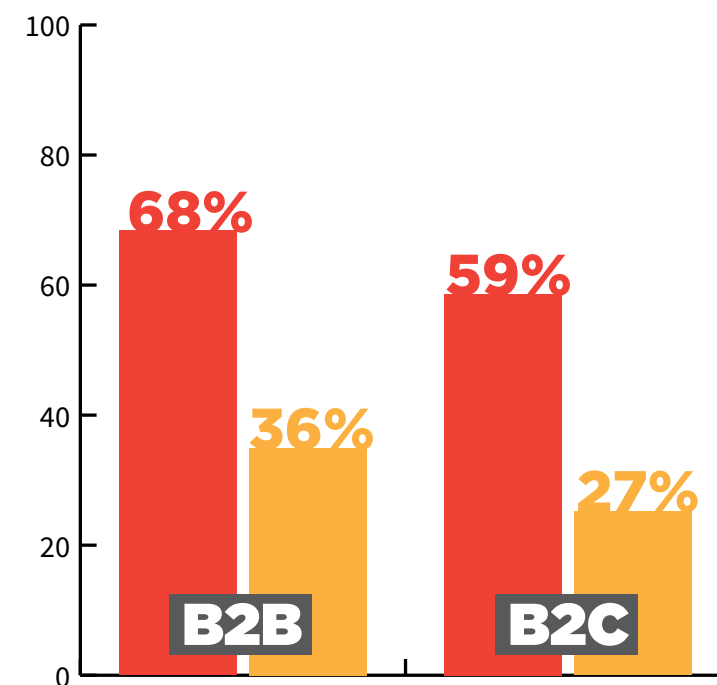
While today's marketers tend to spend much of their time in cyberspace, there's simply no substitute for providing tangible, memorable experiences IRL (in

real life) and in real time or engaging in authentic, personalized interactions with your audience.

In-person events such as conferences, master classes, networking events, exhibitions, and other live experiences help brands demonstrate their insights and extend their influence while creating a space where like-minded consumers can gather and interact, learn about, and embrace their passions.



Content Marketing Play **IN-PERSON EVENTS**



Content marketers who use this tactic
Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



IN-PERSON EVENTS

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

Not only can live events help marketers create real-world value that goes beyond a brand's products and services, they can also serve as a platform for additional online content creation – increasing the impact and relevance of each event and helping keep your business top-of-mind for longer periods of time.

Here are a few tips for transforming events into powerful content-generation engines:

- Engage prospective attendees online before they arrive. Share travel tip lists, event maps, mobile apps, or other tools that will get them excited about your event – and make them more likely to share that enthusiasm with others on social media.
- Make it easy for writers to publish coverage. Consider providing bloggers and journalists with a lounge or quiet space where they can collect their thoughts and share their impressions while they are on-site. You can also create hashtags to help them follow all the conversations taking place, and make presentation decks and/or session transcripts readily available so bloggers can spend less time furiously taking notes and more time publishing thoughtful overviews and analyses.
- Find ways to keep the conversation going after the event, such as publishing photos from your networking events or offering on-demand access to popular sessions.
- Repurpose conference presentations into videos, e-books, social media posts, and other forms of content that can help attendees remember what they've learned, or catch up on what they may have missed.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

Fidelity's Portfolio Advisory Service



Investment banking is more often associated with concepts like “security,” “responsibility,” or “functionality” than with “creativity” or “visual experience.” However, Fidelity recognized the need to distinguish itself in a crowded marketplace, so it teamed up with Imprint to transform its Portfolio Advisory Service (PAS-W) content into a visually compelling in-person experience. By giving the audience an easy and fun way to interact with financial content in a live setting, Imprint reinforced the firm’s commitment to offer innovative solutions and deliver best-in-class investing education and support.

LEARN MORE:

[8 Content Marketing Lessons to Live By \(and Win Awards\)](#)

VIDEOS (PRE-PRODUCED)

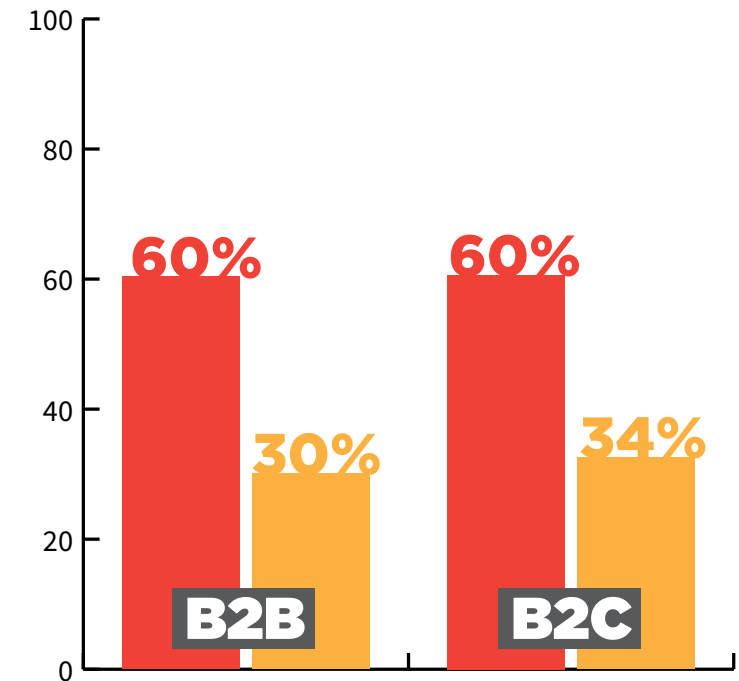


Video is a powerful storytelling medium, helping to bring your brand's mission, vision, and values to life in an attention-

grabbing way. But just because you film it, doesn't mean the customers will come flying to your door (talking heads rarely have an impact). The video competition is tough, so make your offerings relevant, memorable, strategic, and purposeful – not just amusing time-sucks – if you want to see any returns on your video investment.



Content Marketing Play **VIDEOS (PRE-PRODUCED)**



- Content marketers who use this tactic
- Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



VIDEOS (PRE-PRODUCED)

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

A widely-viewed viral video may be held up as the holy grail of marketing success. But beyond YouTube, there are plenty of other ways to use the combination of sound, motion, and emotional resonance to drive deeper, more satisfying interactions with your brand. Here are a few ideas:

- Help customers overcome their practical challenges with a helpful demo on your product or service.
- Educate viewers on the issues relevant to your business by offering video tutorials.
- Include a video on the About Us page to give website visitors a glimpse of what makes your team special.
- Record your response to sensitive public relations issues. Video press releases can convey the appropriate emotional tone in a way that text alone just can't manage.

GO DEEPER:

[23 Things to Consider When Creating Video Content](#)

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

[#WishesDelivered](#)



UPS partnered with Northwest Battle Buddies, a nonprofit that rehabilitates shelter dogs to be used as service animals for U.S. veterans, as part of its annual #WishesDelivered initiative. Not only does the video tell the inspiring story of Art Nelson, a veteran suffering from PTSD, and the joy he found in receiving his service dog, Trigger, but it ends with a heartwarming surprise: delivery of a new, UPS-funded service dog to a veterans' support group, thanks to UPS' efforts.

LEARN MORE:

[3 Brands Driving Change With Social Video](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS/PHOTOS

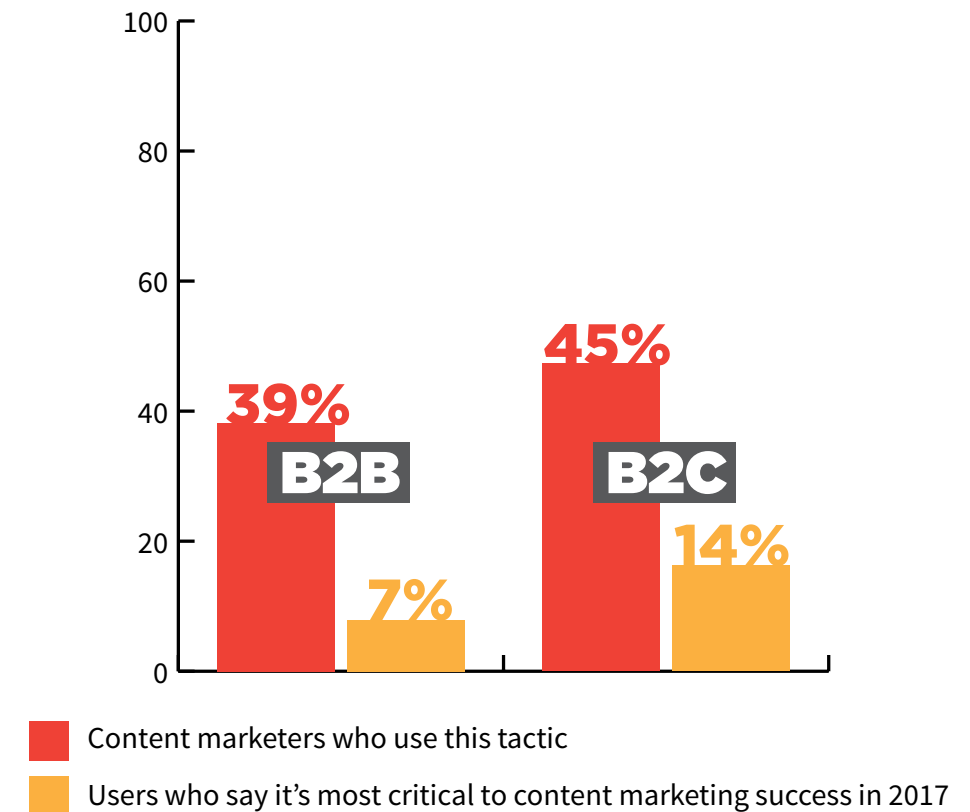


Anyone who has seen a picture of a cave drawing knows that humans have a long history of communicating with pictures and illustrations. But with

today's shorter attention spans, coupled with the need for businesses to stand out in a noisy, crowded marketplace, visual messaging vehicles are more essential than ever when it comes to connecting with consumers – especially those who embrace photo-centric social networks like Snap and Instagram.



Content Marketing Play **ILLUSTRATIONS/PHOTOS**



Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research

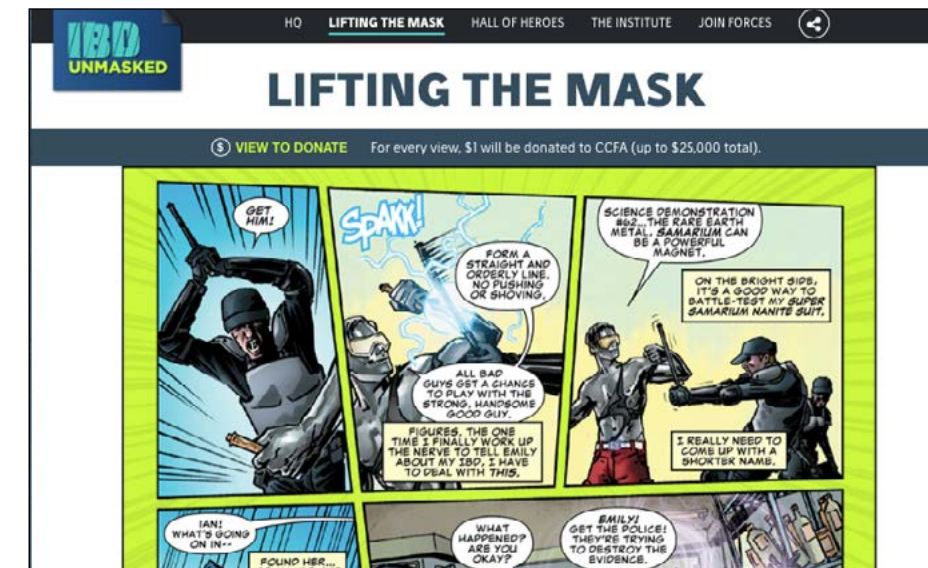
HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

Here are a few best-practice guidelines when it comes to maximizing the power and impact of your photos, illustrations, and other [visual content assets](#) – on social networks or any other channel:

- **Align your visual story with your content marketing strategy.**
Focus on the ongoing delivery of value, not just on publishing cool images that will be quickly forgotten.
- **Know the rules of good design.** Start by developing a general theme, brainstorm some ideas, then prioritize the ones that make the most sense both creatively and strategically.
- **Create a signature style for your visual content**, which becomes part of your brand's familiar look and feel.
- **Avoid generic stock images.** However, if you are low on design resources, find a way to put your own branded spin on the images you select.
- **Add your logo and/or a link to custom photos and illustrations** so viewers can trace it back to your brand, no matter where it gets shared.
- **Add the proper alt tags to every image** so your images are more likely to display in search results.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

[IBD Unmasked](#)



The fight against chronic inflammatory bowel disease has never had as colorful a champion as Samarium. Mild-mannered scientist and IBD sufferer Ian has no problem fighting off the bad guys who invade his lab, looking to destroy important forensic evidence. But when it comes to coming clean about his IBD to fellow scientist and love interest Emily, he needs a little backup. Luckily, his story is now helping others who suffer from this chronic disorder to find their own inner super-strength, thanks to this custom-created comic, developed by Takeda Pharmaceuticals and Marvel Custom Solutions.

E-BOOKS/WHITE PAPERS

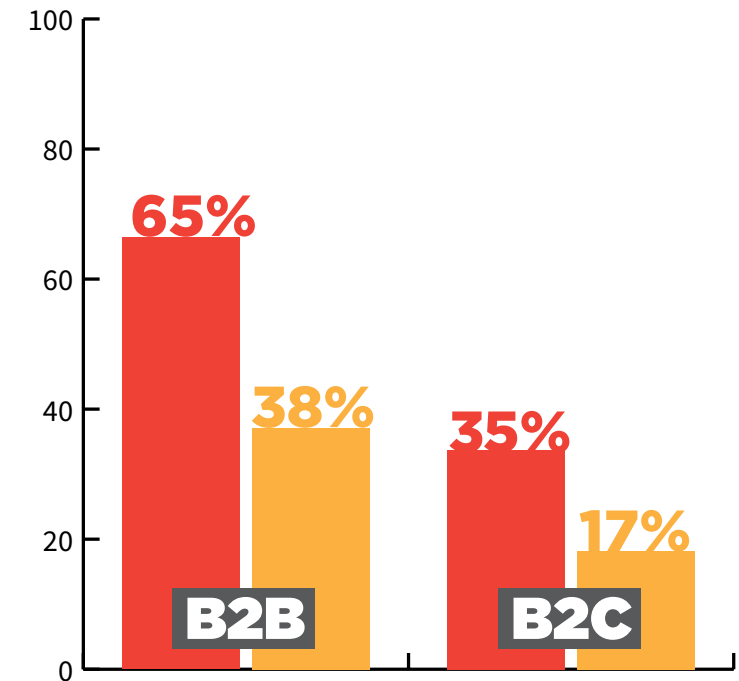


Rich, substantive content that educates, rather than sells is the cornerstone of a successful content marketing program – and both e-books and white

papers offer it in spades. What these long-form, in-depth content efforts may lack in viral virility or broad consumer appeal, they more than make up for with their ability to answer your audience's most pressing questions, provide them with actionable insights and ideas, and build their trust in your business as an authority that's worth paying attention to.



Content Marketing Play **E-BOOKS/WHITE PAPERS**



Content marketers who use this tactic
Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

Both white papers and e-books enable brands to spark highly detailed, fact-focused conversations that few other formats can accommodate. They are also ideally suited to being broken up and turned into additional content assets. The resulting micro-content can then help you cross-promote your efforts – and your overall insight on the topic – in multiple ways.

Here are a few top-of-the-funnel promotion ideas to get you started:

- Post the first chapter of your e-book on SlideShare as a teaser for the full version.
- Record someone from your team reading selected chapters or sections, and launch the recording as a podcast or audio book.
- Compile some of the e-book's useful tips and tricks, or your white paper's key statistics, into an infographic or fact sheet.
- Turn your best quotes into tweets, with a link to your landing page.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

IBM Marketing Cloud White Papers



It's hard to get excited about the standard white paper – by nature they are highly detailed and crammed with important data, but this means they often come off as stuffy and stiff instead of imaginative and engaging. Yet IBM's white papers manage to defy the stereotypes without sacrificing the deep insights and analysis that CMOs need in order to understand the complexities of today's marketing landscape and manage the tasks at hand. Using a fresh, conversational tone and vivid visuals, IBM illustrates essential information without intimidating its audience.

INFOGRAPHICS

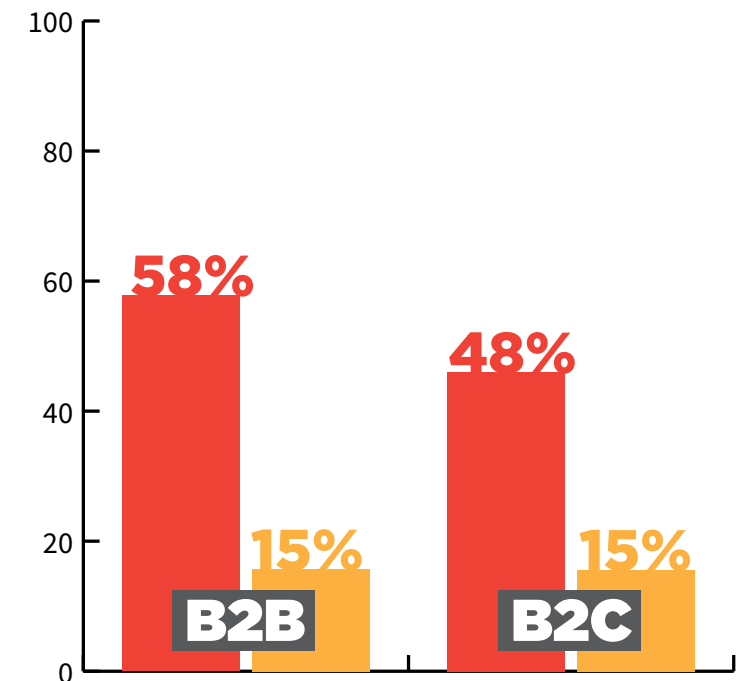


Part picture, part data, and all-powerful, infographics are ideal for demystifying even the most complex concepts, as well

as for distilling large volumes of information into stimulating, memorable, and highly shareable conversations. Furthermore, when well designed and executed, these versatile content pieces can fuel your social media and demand-generation programs, or attract relevant back-links – a great way to build your brand influence.



Content Marketing Play **INFOGRAPHICS**



Content marketers who use this tactic
Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



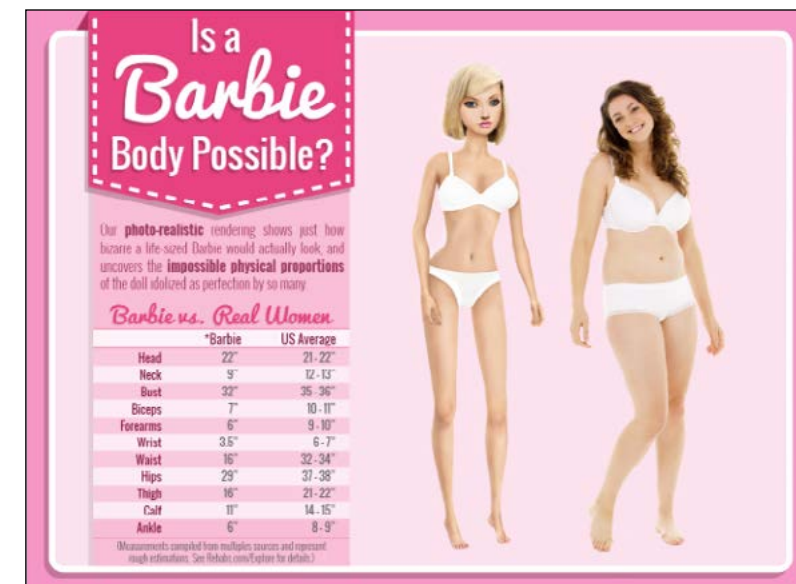
HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

What has the potential to be even more impactful than an infographic? A series of related infographics that provide your audience with a more detailed view of your story –and the data that shapes it. Follow the process outlined by [Richard Silvester](#) to create an infographic series that will be viewed, shared, and remembered:

- **Choose your theme:** Do plenty of research to uncover story ideas to pursue, then ask yourself two questions to narrow your pool of ideas: “Why would anyone care about this?” and “Does this work with our overall content marketing strategy?”
- **Crunch the data:** Gather your facts, build a data map to outline the key stats and messages you want to include, then divide it in a logical way, with each section of the data representing one infographic in the series.
- **Consider your creative:** Think about how to blend your brand’s creative identity with an original visual approach that will grab your audience’s attention and make the story flow logically through the series.
- **Wireframe your design** to show the elements and structure of each individual infographic, as well as how it will connect to the other assets in the series.
- **Move your ideas into production:** Remember, [best-practice](#) content rules still apply, such as including clear headers and strong calls to action.
- **Give your published series a promotional push:** Consider partnering with relevant brands, using distribution tools, or leveraging paid social campaigns to give your series additional exposure.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

Is a Barbie Body Possible?



The “Is a Barbie Body Possible?” infographic is a piece of visual content that shows how Barbie’s vital stats measure up to those of the average American woman. Created to accompany a lengthy post on Rehabs.com that explores the media’s role in the prevalence of eating disorders in young girls, it’s packed with sobering statistics. More than 200 sites have linked to it and it has been shared more than 55,000 times.

LEARN MORE:

[11 Smart Marketing Examples That Nail Visual Content](#)

ONLINE PRESENTATIONS

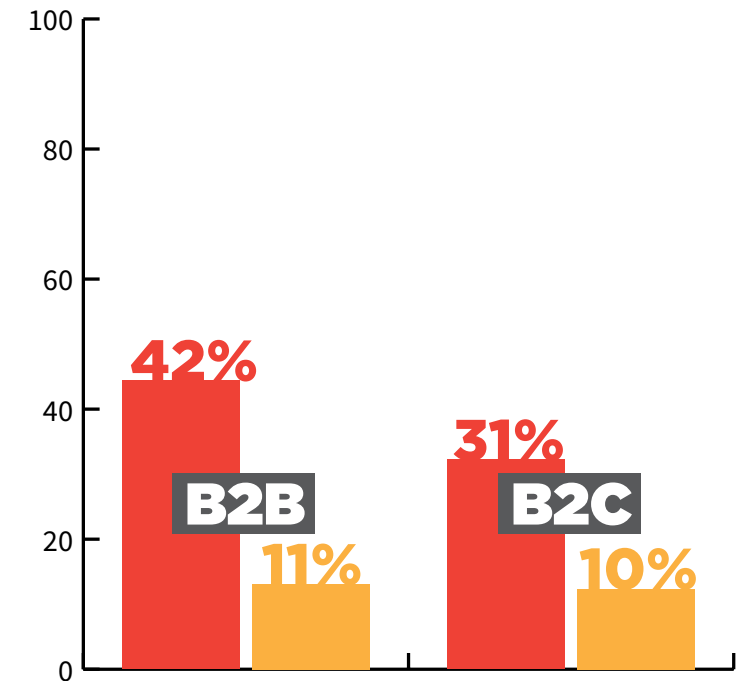


You can build online presentations from practically any content assets you have on hand – including blog posts,

video clips, sound clips, animations, photos, live-event transcripts, and more. They also help make every story more easily scannable, enabling your business to dig deeply into the details of complex topics without requiring readers to pore over long blocks of text before they reach your key messages and takeaways.



Content Marketing Play **ONLINE PRESENTATIONS**



■ Content marketers who use this tactic
■ Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



ONLINE PRESENTATIONS

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

The online presentation site with the world's highest traffic is SlideShare. Its over 70 million users consume a lot of business content, yet, with over 18 million uploads, there's also a lot of competition for attention. Try a few of these [SlideShare](#) secrets to help stack the decks in your favor:

- **Grab attention right off the bat** with a powerful headline.
- **Keep your story simple and concise** so readers don't lose interest before they reach the last page.
- **Emphasize imagery over text** by incorporating video, infographics, photos, and other static images.
- **Insert a clickable call-to-action link** in your slides to make it easy for the user to take the next desired step.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

[The Evolution of a Salesperson](#)



Salesforce takes full advantage of the storytelling potential of SlideShare with this imaginative presentation on how its connected selling solutions can help teams overcome the complex challenges of selling in the digital age. Designed using 8-bit-style animation, viewers rapidly click through the slides to simulate a story being told in the style of a flipbook. It's an artful example of how to deliver useful, practical information that the audience can quickly scan through without missing a single detail.

LEARN MORE:

[SlideShare Secrets to Stack the Decks in Your Favor](#)

WEBINARS/WEBCASTS

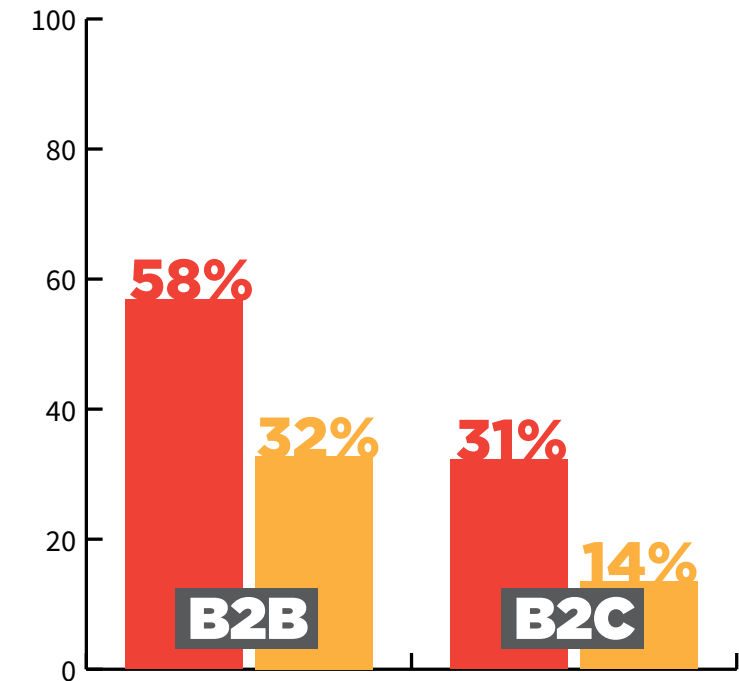


Like online presentations, webinars let viewers do a deep dive into a topic without the expense of travelling to

a conference. They are also among the more responsive content marketing vehicles, since these targeted, topical conversations truly start to come alive once they are launched in real time – when participants can put their own questions and concerns up for discussion.



Content Marketing Play **WEBINARS/WEBCASTS**



■ Content marketers who use this tactic
■ Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



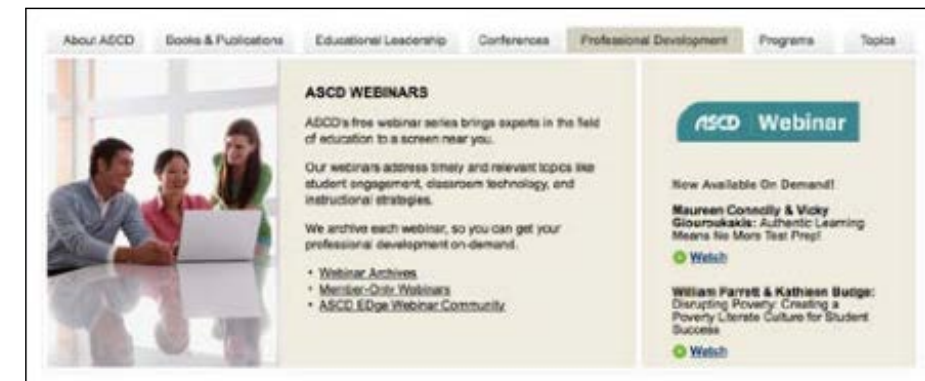
HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

Because interactions take place at a designated place and time, a webinar is one of the few content formats that has an innate urgency. But that doesn't mean you can't extend value by repurposing the various components into more evergreen formats and discussions:

- Turn questions posed by participants into topics for additional content creation.
- Repurpose the main talking points of the presentation into a SlideShare deck.
- Edit video webinars into multiple clips and post them to your YouTube channel, or add them to relevant blog posts.
- Turn the audio track into a podcast.
- Archive past webinars on your site, and offer on-demand access.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

ASCD



The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) is a global community dedicated to excellence in learning, teaching, and leading. Given its education focus, it's no surprise that webinars feature prominently among its content meant to help members stay at the head of the class (so to speak).

The organization's robust professional development online resource center features a rich collection of webinars addressing timely and relevant topics like student engagement, classroom technology, and instructional strategies. By offering these learning opportunities for free – including its open-access events, as well as members-only lessons – ASCD is promoting the value of life-long learning, and is teaching that lesson by example.

CONTENT HUBS

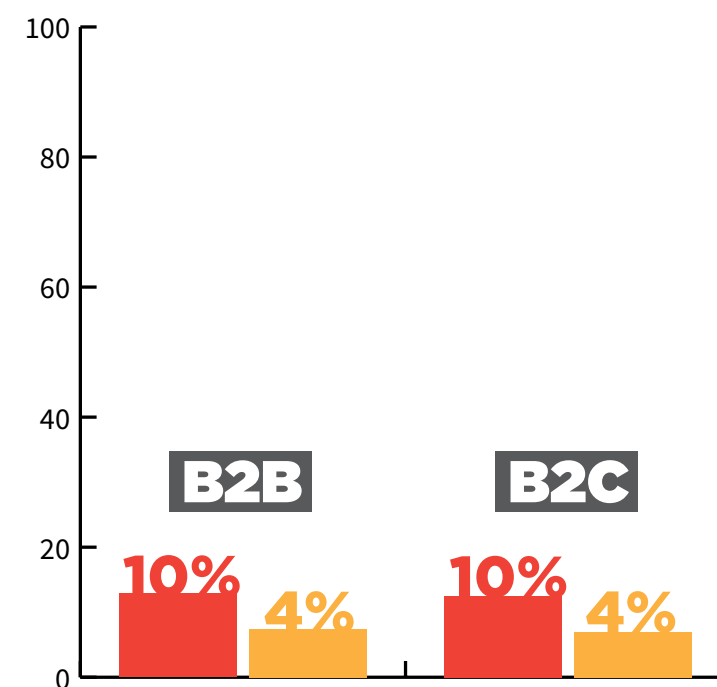


Part brand extension and part independent online experience, content hubs (like microsites and centers of excellence) are ideal for exploring a topic that's highly

relevant to a specific component of your audience but isn't explicitly connected to your brand. With looser ties to your business – and a greater emphasis on serving the informational needs and personal interests of your audience – content hubs can freshen things up creatively while helping your business pivot in an exciting new direction.



Content Marketing Play **CONTENT HUBS**



■ Content marketers who use this tactic
■ Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



CONTENT HUBS

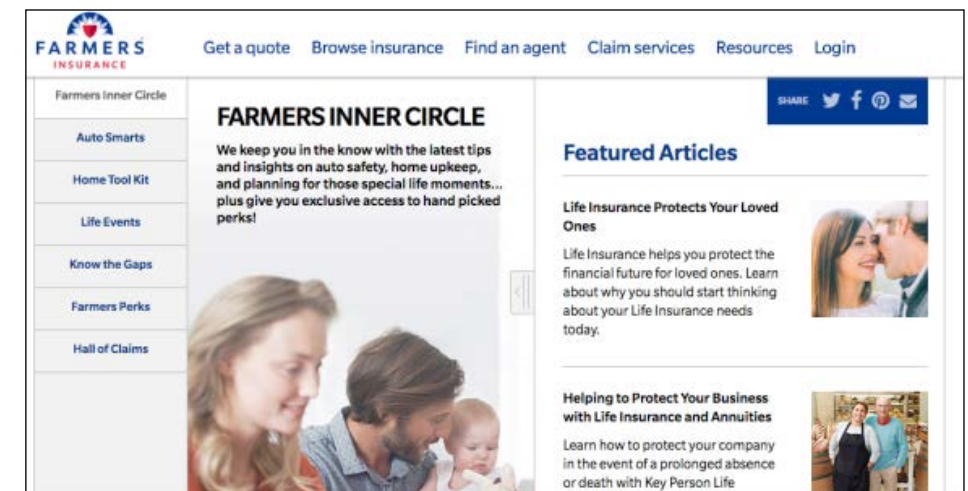
HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

While content hubs have a little extra freedom to branch out from your typical branded offerings, they still need to stand on their own as useful, valuable resources that reflect your brand value and help further your business goals. So remember to stay focused on providing the information your audience is looking for, and make it easy for them to continue the conversation on your other owned media channels.

Here are some important considerations to keep in mind when creating a content hub:

- **Focus on your key buyer personas.** Each hub should have a clear idea who it's targeting, and why, and should keep the content focused on feeding consumers' unmet needs and interests.
- **Include features to drive participation:** Microsite-based content hubs work best when they are aligned with your audience's passions. Enabling consumers to share their own ideas, images, and inspirations makes the experience more personally rewarding, which will make them more willing to take their engagement with your business to the next level.
- **Don't abandon the audience you attract.** Like any content, content hubs are a promise to your customers. So don't build one if you aren't dedicated to seeing it through and keeping it fresh and updated. Create a strategic plan for publishing consistently, and on an ongoing basis!

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT: Farmers Inner Circle



The Farmers Insurance Inner Circle is a super customer-friendly resource that helps its audience become better educated about insurance by providing useful, practical information. It offers a huge variety of articles about things like taking care of your house and your car, how to prevent identity theft, what you need to know if you're going through a divorce – basically how to deal with anything life throws at you.

RESEARCH REPORTS

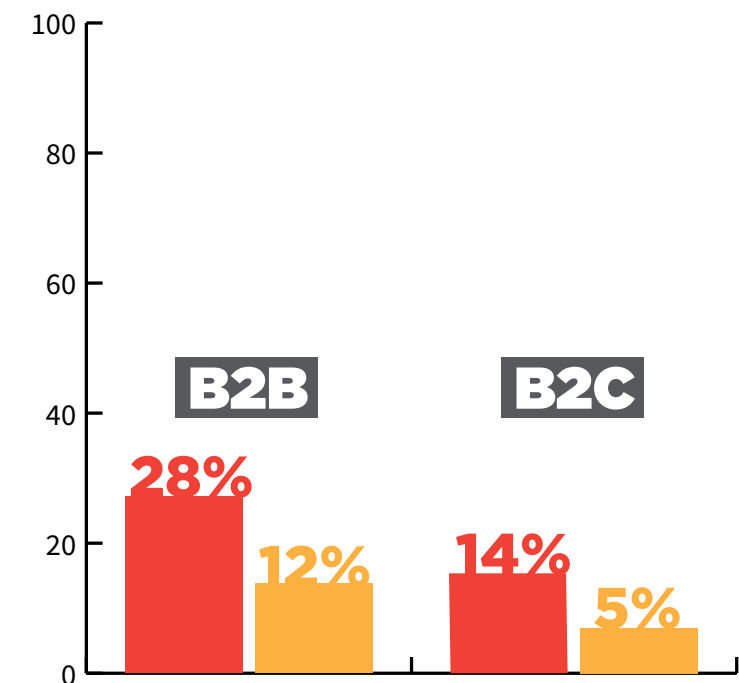


Few tactics showcase a brand's authority, insight, and influence as powerfully as original research reports. Their benefits don't come cheap, and they

must be rigorously designed and scientifically sound. But in return for the time and effort you put in, you'll be rewarded with increased credibility, trustworthiness, and plenty of data-driven proof that your brand can deliver on the informational and educational needs of your industry.



Content Marketing Play **RESEARCH REPORTS**



■ Content marketers who use this tactic
■ Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



RESEARCH REPORTS

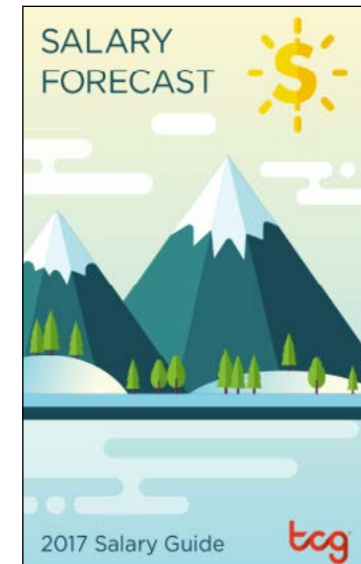
HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

Research reports are high-value content assets in and of themselves. But the data you generate by conducting surveys, polls, interviews, and other statistically significant methods can also be repurposed into myriad other content formats and used for multiple marketing purposes. For example:

- Use visualization techniques like charts, graphs, heat maps, and infographics to place your data into a relevant and easy-to-understand context.
- Write a blog that teases out the top-line results of your research, and link to the full study for readers who want to explore the data more deeply.
- Publish your research findings as a gated e-book to help with lead generation.
- Combine your statistics on a particular topic with relevant data and create a guidebook of relevant facts on a given topic.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

[Robert Half's Annual Salary Guides](#)



Founded in 1948, Robert Half is now the world's largest professional placement firm, with more than 400 locations worldwide and over \$4 billion in sales. Robert Half has had a core focus on content for decades. Its highly regarded salary guides (released for multiple industries each year) are so authoritative

that the U.S. Department of Labor uses them as a source for its own research on hiring trends. The company has also published books on getting hired and managing people. Robert Half is an outstanding example of thought leadership through the consistent production of content.

LEARN MORE:

[Like It or Not, Advertising Is Booming](#)

PRINT MAGAZINES



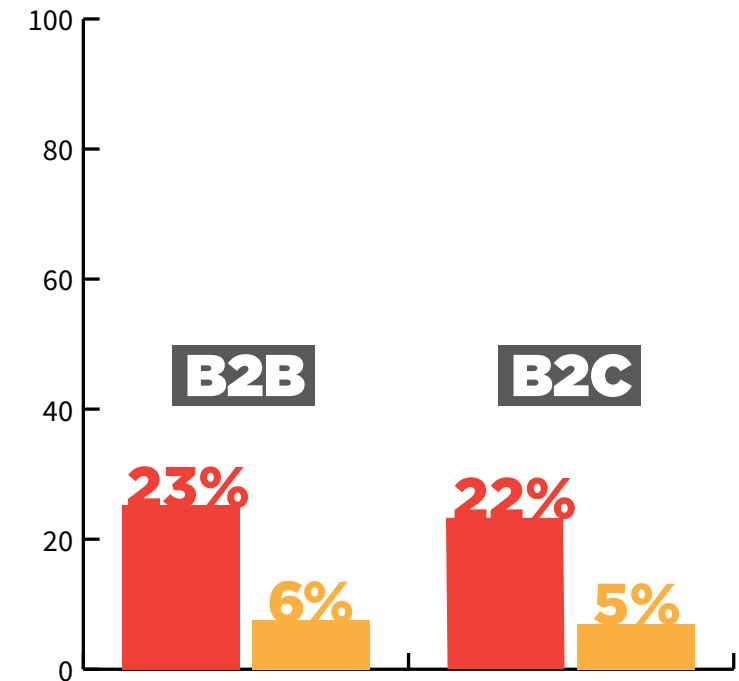
With businesses increasingly shifting their focus, and funding, to delivering content online and on mobile devices, print

magazines have become a wide-

open playing field. Given the opportunity to capture attention with vivid visuals and high-quality writing, and the ability to accommodate a wide range of creative storytelling techniques, it may come as a bit of a surprise to see that less than 25% of marketers are taking advantage of this powerful and proven content marketing tactic.



Content Marketing Play **PRINT MAGAZINES**



- Content marketers who use this tactic
- Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



PRINT MAGAZINES

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

Given the comparatively less-crowded playing field, print magazines represent a tremendous opportunity for marketers to stand out from the competition and create a delightful content experience for an engaged audience of eager recipients. But remember: Creating “hard-copy” content is hard work, so prepare to deliver on these expectations:

- **Design and visuals:** The look and feel of your magazine doesn't just need to be compelling and eye-catching; it must align with all the qualities readers would expect from your brand.
- **Relevance:** Make sure you are covering topics that are timely and in step with the topics readers are likely to be thinking about when they receive your magazine in the mail.
- **Size and scope:** Aim for issues large enough to tackle a few subjects that are important to your audience, without expecting them to absorb too much information in case they decide to read it while on their morning commute or afternoon lunch break.
- **Easy access to digital assets:** Tie your print content to what you are publishing on your other channels, and use techniques like short-links and PDF versions to make it as easy as possible for readers to go back and forth between your content worlds.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT: Tohoku Taberu Magazine



Tôhoku Kaikon is a nonprofit organization that supports local food producers in the Tôhoku region of Japan, where businesses were hit hard by the devastating earthquake and tsunami in 2011. Tohoku Taberu Magazine shares the personal life stories of the hard-working harvesters, while also delivering the actual products of their labor directly to subscribers – along with recipes for cooking with the delivered food and sumptuous foodie images to motivate culinary efforts.

LEARN MORE:

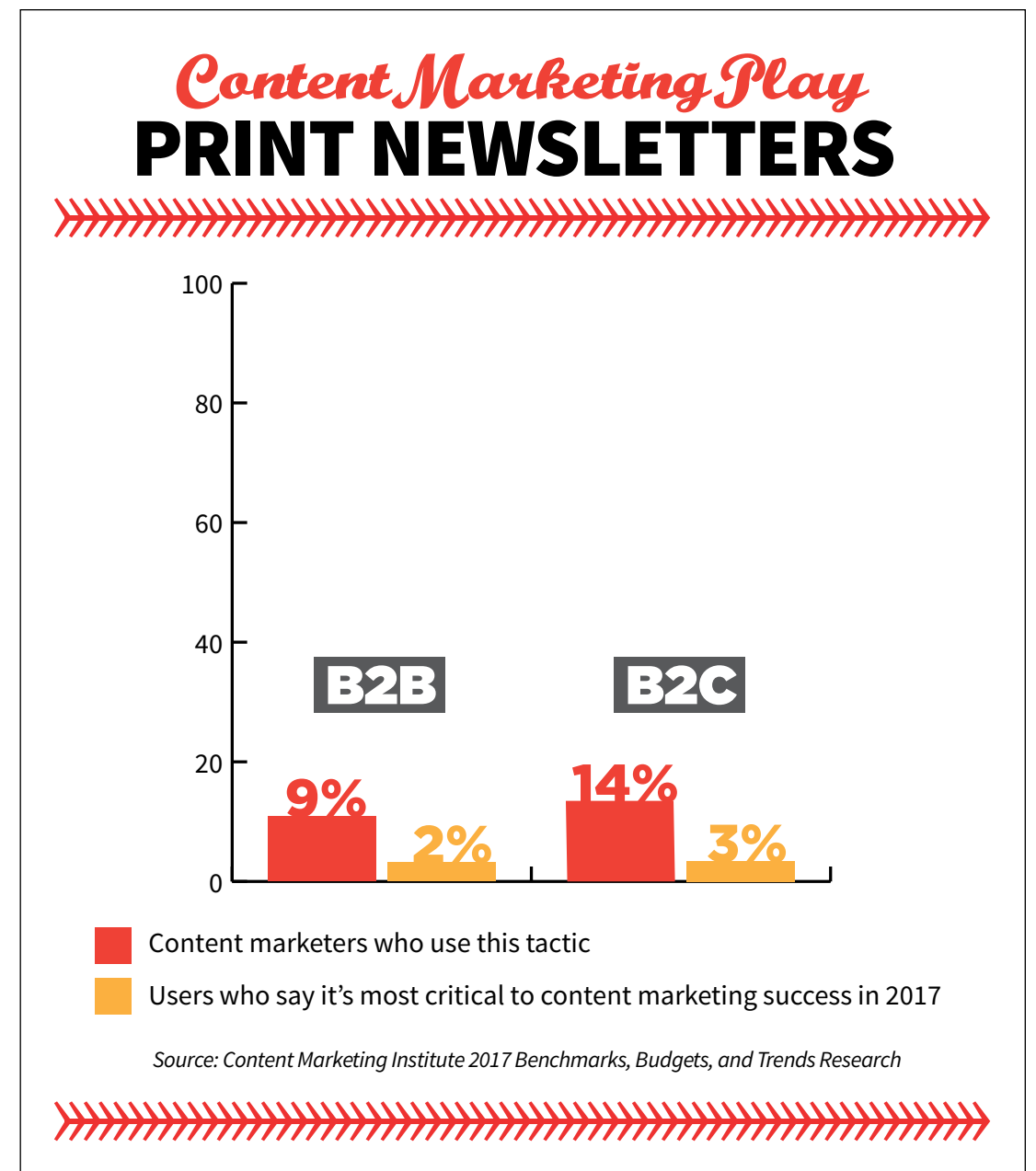
[See What Content Marketing Success Truly Looks Like](#)

PRINT NEWSLETTERS



Print newsletters enable marketers to achieve many of the same competitive advantages and marketing benefits as print magazines

offer, but with fewer production resource requirements and greater ease of delivery. However, despite being versatile and cost-effective, they are among the least-used tactics by B2B marketers (though B2C marketers leverage them at a slightly higher rate).



PRINT NEWSLETTERS

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

While print magazines can explore a wide variety of topics in each issue, print newsletters are more appropriate for serving a single, narrowly focused point of interest to your audience.

Consider creating a print newsletter when you need a way to:

- Discuss your brand's unique perspective on common industry issues
- Offer advice on specific customer challenges your audience might typically encounter
- Introduce a new product line or service offering to your current subscriber base
- Test out new creative ideas to see if they are worth developing further
- Explore relevant topics that may lie a bit outside of your brand's usual purview.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

A print newsletter that earns extra points:
[The Bathroom Minutes](#)



What better way for Dollar Shave Club to extend its influence over men's grooming habits than to give its razor service subscribers an entertaining read that's perfectly suited for use during their daily "me" time? Full of grooming tips, puzzles, and hygiene-related factoids, the monthly print newsletters also give special recognition to customers' personal interests, as well as their notable achievements (i.e., those that take place outside the confines of the water closet).

DIGITAL MAGAZINES

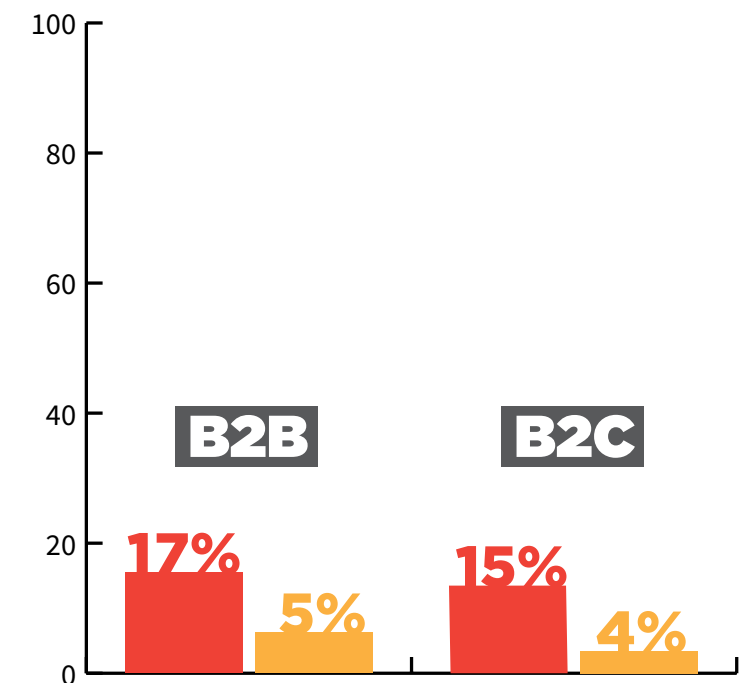


Whether they're meant to be consumed online or on phones and tablets, digital magazines can be customized to suit

nearly every marketing purpose, niche interest, and reader personality. More than just words on a page, their articles can incorporate multiple media formats – audio, video, gifs, and graphics – and are easily shareable on social media.



Content Marketing Play **DIGITAL MAGAZINES**



■ Content marketers who use this tactic
■ Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



DIGITAL MAGAZINES

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

Though many digital magazines have evolved from print-based counterparts, their greater versatility allows brands to branch off in new creative directions, as well. Here are some possibilities to explore:

- **Digital magazines don't always have to mean original content.** Curate content on a particular topic or theme from around the web and compile it into a one-stop collection of need-to-know info your audience will truly appreciate.
- **Go off on a relevant topical tangent.** Magazine content doesn't have to directly relate to the products and services your brand offers. Consider building your editorial around things like current events and issues that impact your industry or social causes that might interest your audience.
- **Help your stories leap off the page:** Just because you call it a magazine doesn't mean it has to look or feel like those things you flip through at the dentist's office. Liven up your text and images by adding gifs, sound, video, or other interactive components.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

The Chalkboard



After a lifestyle change that included a healthy, juice-based diet, junk-food junkie Hayden Slater shed 60 pounds, then poured his new-found passion for healthy living into a new business: Pressed Juicery. For the first three years, the company's main marketing platform was a media property called The Chalkboard – a lifestyle-focused digital magazine that shared expert insights, healthy recipes, nutrition, beauty, and wellness tips, and plenty of inspiration for toxin-free living. With a content mission of serving as a modern guide to living well, The Chalkboard helped Pressed Juicery create 1.3 billion media impressions – at a cost of less than \$20K.

LEARN MORE:

[Thought Leadership Requires Actual Leading Thoughts](#)

MOBILE APPS

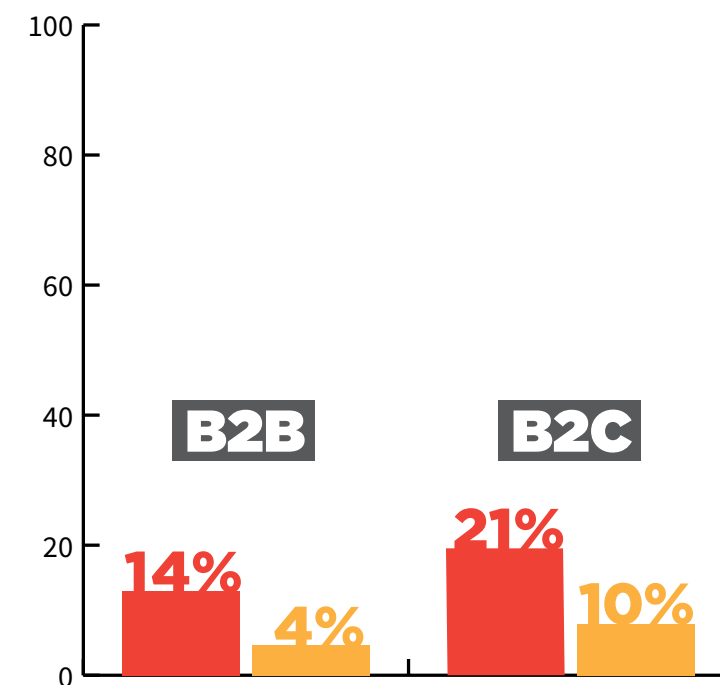


Think of mobile apps as ever-present content companions – tiny, branded tools that enable on-the-go consumers to find helpful information,

interact with friends, accomplish necessary tasks, and engage in whatever interests them, on their terms. By providing a fast track to achieving their goals, apps give brands the chance to play the hero in the customer's journey of discovery. And since every download is an opt-in invitation to engage, the impact of your content marketing is more measurable.



Content Marketing Play **MOBILE APPS**



■ Content marketers who use this tactic
■ Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

It can be time-consuming, expensive, and technologically challenging to develop a killer mobile content app, let alone get it into the hands of the right audience. So before you jump in, make sure your effort will be aligned with your brand's strategic goals – and well worth the sacrifice of precious phone memory and bandwidth for users.

- **Play to the platform's strengths:** Build your experience around easy-to-accomplish actions – like tapping, swiping, viewing photos, or voting – rather than requiring users to do a lot of typing or tasks that are tedious on the small screen.
- **Enable your app to play on all devices:** Though availability on iOS is de rigueur, remember that Apple (and its app store) isn't the only player in the app economy.
- **Remember, it's not all about play:** While a branded parody of the latest trendy game may give you some temporary streetcred, providing real-world utility – things like maps, to-do lists, on-demand advice, product comparison tools, or helpful hacks – is a surer path to long-term engagement.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

Qantas' Virtual Reality App



Qantas VR features iconic destinations, captured in stunning 360-degree video. The airline even offers its own cardboard VR viewer to help bring the view into focus. With 13 different experiences to choose from – including the world's first fly-over of sacred sites at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park – travelers can immerse themselves in an authentic Australian experience without ever setting foot on a plane. Of course, if they like what they see, they can book that flight right through the app itself.

BOOKS

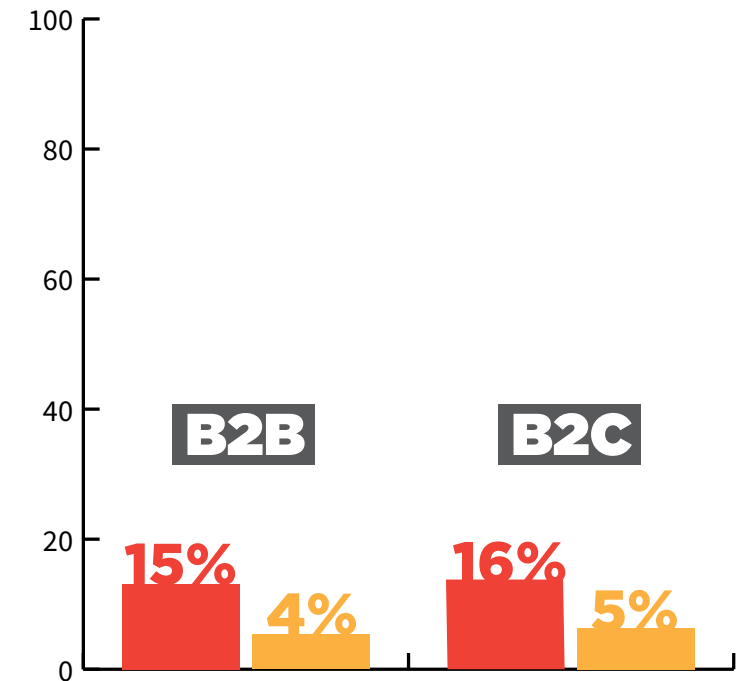


Writing a book takes a tremendous amount of time, effort, dedication, and know-how. But if you are looking

to become THE authority and market leader on a particular topic of interest to your audience, there's no substitute for being the brand that "wrote the book" on it. Not only will a published tome make a strong impression on your audience, books also create a deep well of content assets you can draw from and repurpose for years to come.



Content Marketing Play **BOOKS**



Content marketers who use this tactic
Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

Want to give your book a boost when it comes to securing shelf space? Here are some suggestions we've gathered from Jim Kukral, founder of the [Author Marketing Institute](#):

- **Consider self-publishing:** Unless you are looking to take your book on tour, you'll have the same shot at getting sales whether you have a publisher or go the DIY route.
- **Invest in a good editor** who specializes in your genre.
- **Create a killer cover design:** When readers can browse dozens of book choices on Amazon in a matter of seconds, an eye-catching cover will give you an edge.
- **Go for a series:** Certain topics work better when they are broken down into micro-content instead of presented in one long book. Alternately, if your advice applies across multiple areas of expertise (think the ...For Dummies series), consider writing multiple books, each targeted to a different industry.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

The Holidays Across America Cookie Book



For the better part of the last century, We Energies – a utilities provider that services Wisconsin – has produced an annual collection of cookie recipes. The Holidays Across America cookie book comprises 51 recipes – each one contributed by a resident of a different state (plus the District of Columbia) who has personal ties to Wisconsin. What started out as a simple way to teach families to use the new electric appliances that were being introduced into their homes (which cleverly encouraged them to increase their electricity use, in the process) has grown to serve as the centerpiece of the company's multichannel community outreach platform. The cookie book has become such a beloved tradition among families in the community that the annual release of its distribution schedule alone is worthy of local media coverage.

INTERACTIVE TOOLS

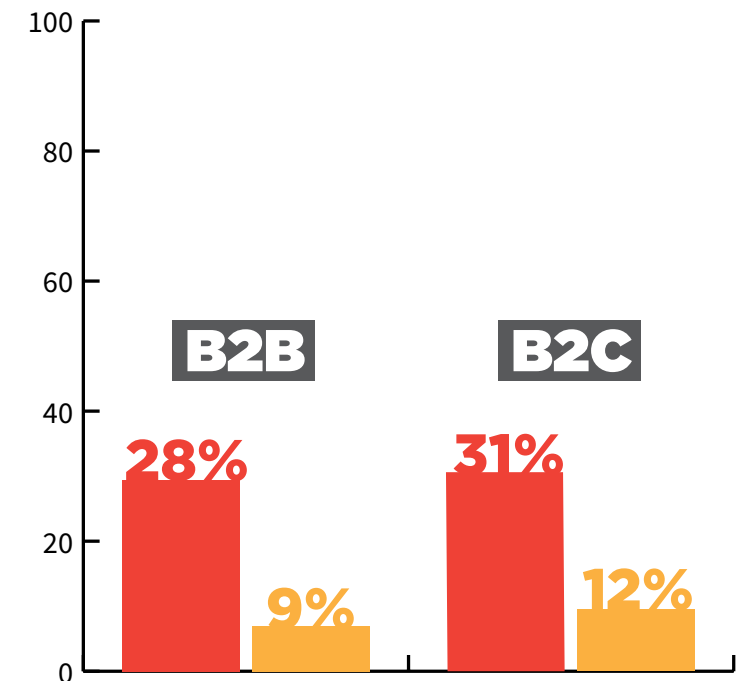


Putting your brand name on a clever, useful convenience tool – like a map that’s pre-loaded with points of interest, an

auto-response generator, a product configurator, or even a quiz that matches consumers to the product or service that best fits their needs – invites consumers to think of you in a favorable light every time they use it.



Content Marketing Play **INTERACTIVE TOOLS**



■ Content marketers who use this tactic
■ Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



INTERACTIVE TOOLS

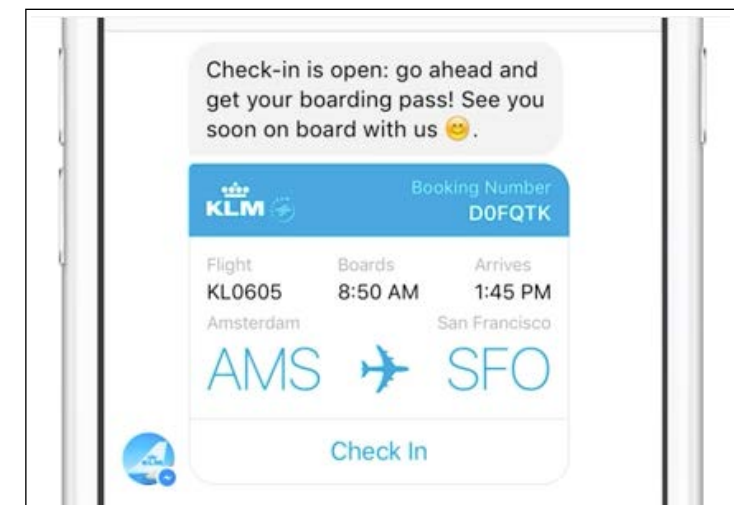
HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

This form of content works best when businesses emphasize the “tool” part of the equation, rather than the “brand”:

- **Add value, not vanity:** Focus on creating something people will want to use or share with others again and again, regardless of where it came from.
- **Make it a hype-free zone:** If it’s more self-serving than customer-serving, you’re doing it wrong.
- **Enable personalization:** Let users take your original idea and add their own flair to make it something they’ll truly want to share with others.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

KLM’s Chatbot on Facebook Messenger



The best way to understand what chatbots are is to see one in action. Consider the chatbot that KLM Royal Dutch Airlines recently introduced for Facebook Messenger. With the customer’s permission, the KLM chatbot automatically “texts” the itinerary, boarding passes, check-in confirmation, and delay notifications. It even connects the traveler with a human staff member if questions arise that the chatbot can’t answer. And since the chatbot lives on Facebook Messenger, customers don’t even need to download and get familiar with a separate app (as long as they have already installed the Facebook app).

PODCASTS



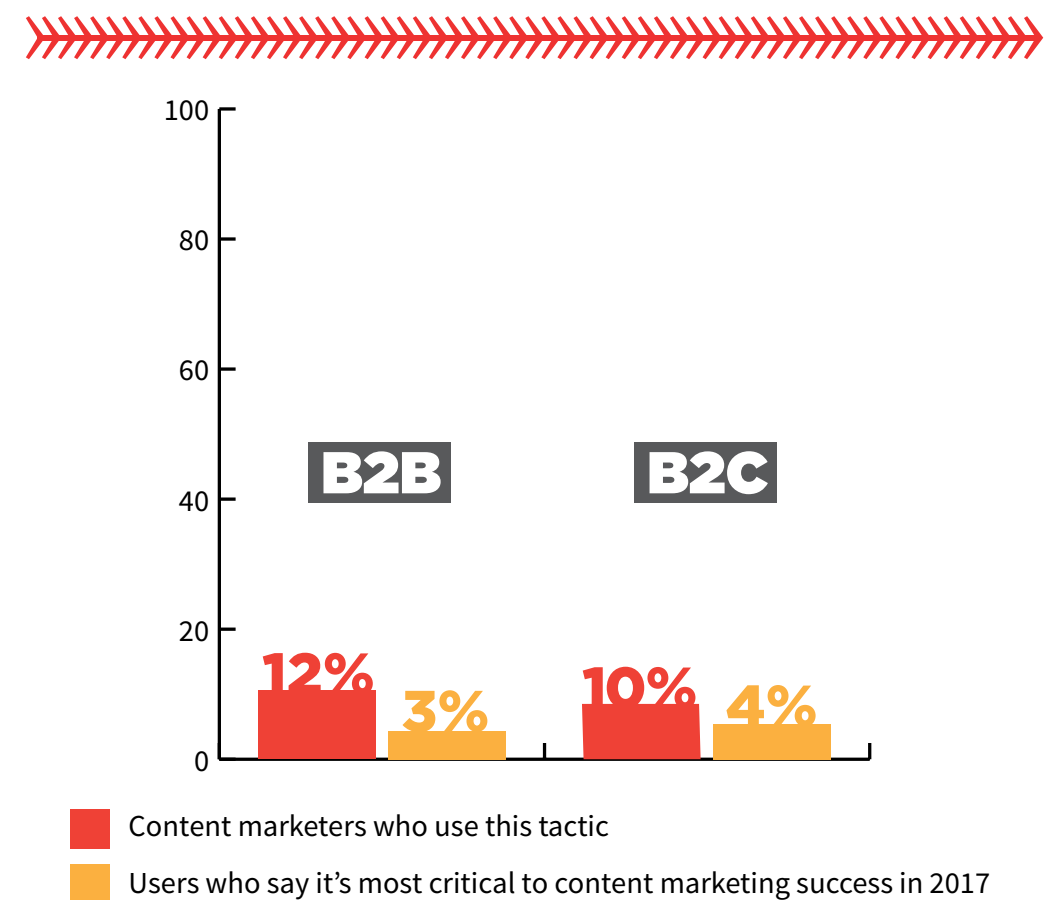
What do you get when you combine sound, expert insights, a little food for thought, and a distinct brand voice

(literally)? You get the podcast, a

stimulating, strategic content format that listeners can take with them wherever they go – online or off. Focus your podcasts on a niche topic that your brand is uniquely passionate about, and you'll create a one-to-one conversation that your audience will truly look forward to immersing themselves in, again and again.



Content Marketing Play PODCASTS



Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

High quality podcasts are easier than ever to produce and distribute, thanks to the availability of inexpensive recording software and sound equipment. But you can help your show make it to the top of this increasingly popular trend, with these tips from [Unthinkable](#) creator and host [Jay Acunzo](#) :

- **Format trumps talent – at first:** The audience needs to fall in love with your format – and the value it offers them – before they will fall in love with your brand’s show.
- **Time constraints are your strength:** Limiting yourself to a certain amount of time forces you to tighten the conversation and stick to your most powerful ideas and insights.
- **Create recurring segments or content brands within each show:** The listener gets something familiar to look forward to in each episode, while the creative process is easier when you structure your show with distinct segments.



AN ALL-STAR EFFORT: The Brewing Network



Not only does Concord, California’s Hop Grenade Taproom and Bottle Shop create a ton of beer-centric content for its website, it also built a broadcast studio on the premises, where it records live-streaming radio, podcasts, and videos featuring professional and home brewers from around the globe. Operating under the name The Brewing Network, this multimedia resource produces several different shows on various beer-related topics. Beyond its role as a means of driving traffic to the Hop Grenade site – and to the Taproom itself – The Brewing Network also functions as a fully operational media company in its own right.

LIVESTREAMING VIDEO

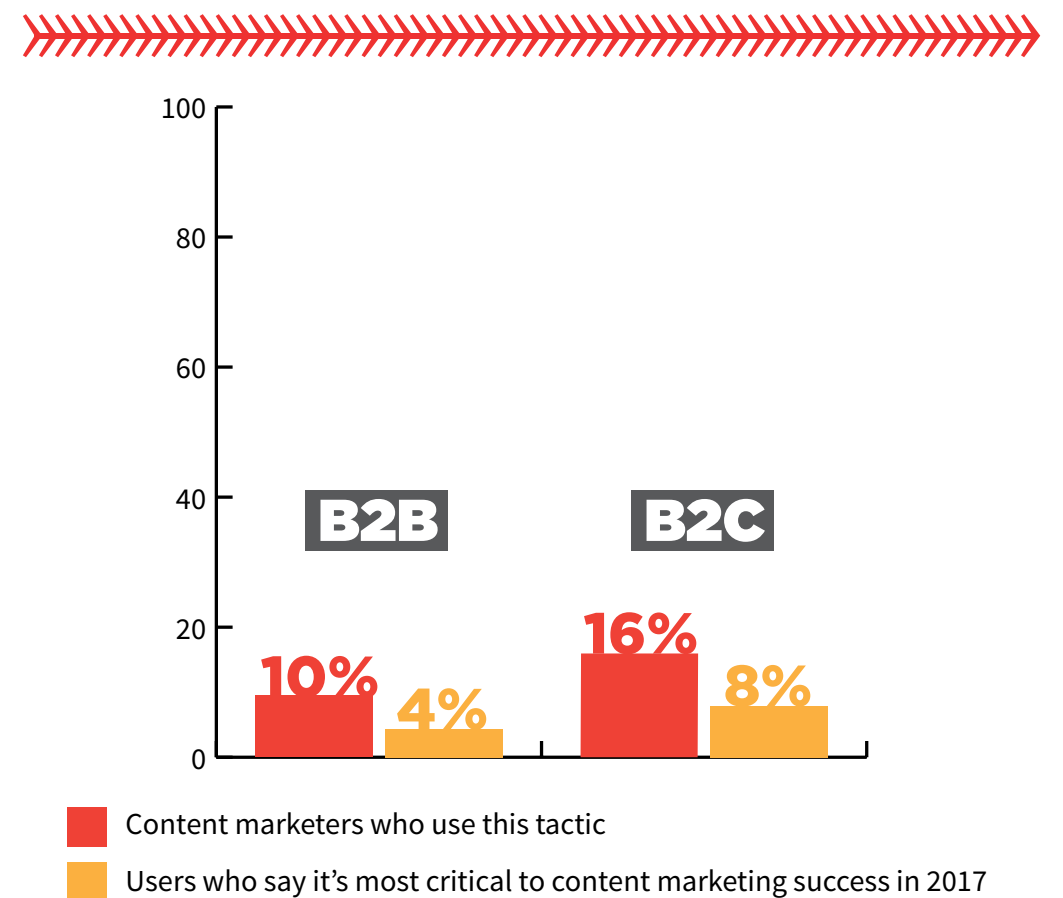


The newest content format to hit the social scene might just have everything a content marketer could ask for – timely relevance, great potential for creating memorable moments, and plenty of visual

appeal. And don't forget that the biggest players in social media – including Facebook, Instagram, Periscope, and Snap – are fiercely competing to bring your brand's livestreaming message to the widest-possible mass audience. But not every business has what it takes to go live without a safety net, so it's essential to do some advanced prep to ensure that everything you broadcast will be more brand-building opportunity than brand-breaking risk.



Content Marketing Play **LIVESTREAMING VIDEO**



Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research

LIVESTREAMING VIDEO

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

There are many considerations to address – both before and after you hit “record” – to ensure that live video makes sense and works for your brand. Here are some tips Fieldboom’s [Josh Brown](#) shares for successfully livestreaming video content:

- **Set your strategy for going live in advance:** If you don’t know what you are looking to achieve from the start, your broadcast may feel clunky and disjointed, and even if it goes well, you won’t have a clear understanding of why it succeeded – so you won’t be able to replicate the results.
- **Find a format and stick with it:** There are many different ways to make livestreaming work, like Q&A interviews, how-to tutorials, on-the-scene reports, and product or service reveals. Set your goals first, then let your purpose dictate the type of live session that will help your message stand out.
- **Craft a clear call to action:** Again, this should ultimately tie back to your purpose. For example, if your aim is to widen reach, ask your viewers to share the video; if you want to drive subscribers, include a link to your landing page in the broadcast’s caption, etc.
- **Alert your fans to tune in at the right time:** Sure, viewers can always watch the replay, but this lessens the appeal because they can’t interact with you in real time. Make sure you give them a heads-up so as many of your fans as possible know when you’re going live, on what platform, and what to expect.
- **Embrace and encourage audience participation:** Take questions, ask for feedback, or provide other ways for audience members to share their enthusiasm for your content while they are in the moment.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT:

Martha Stewart on Facebook Live



On Mother’s Day 2016, Martha filmed the action in her kitchen as she whipped up a brunch while chatting with Sarah Carey, one of the hosts of Martha’s Everyday Food show on PBS.

During her cooking broadcast, she walked viewers through ingredients of the recipe and provided cooking tips — something she already does in her traditionally broadcast shows. But livestreaming the cooking segment also enabled her to answer viewers’ questions in real time. You can see all of the emoticons generated by Martha’s fans who tapped on their screen to share their enthusiasm.

VIRTUAL CONFERENCES



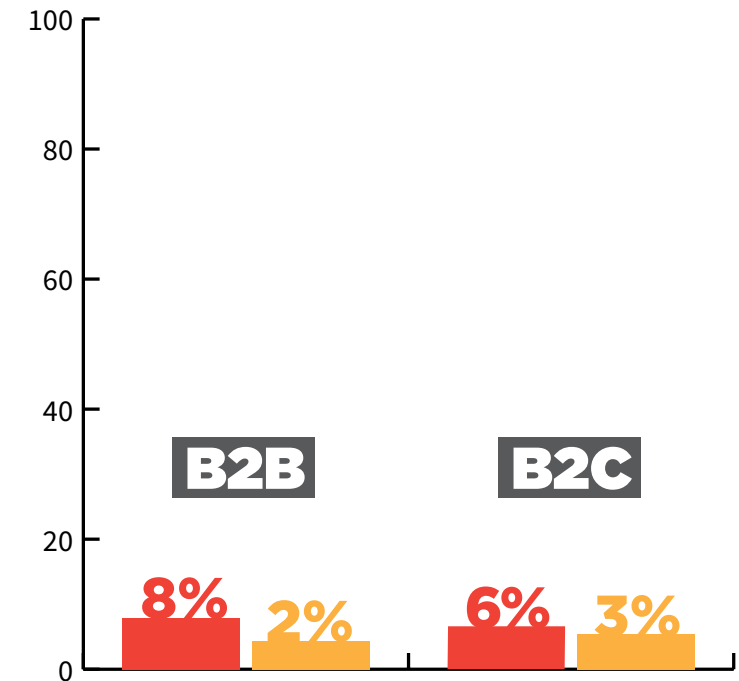
There are some complex subjects that require a more immersive educational experience than the typical live conference allows for.

That's where virtual conferences

come in handy. They allow eager participants from all over the world to come together, focus their time and attention on the topic at hand, gather helpful insights from renowned experts... and then get right back to business without skipping a beat.



Content Marketing Play **VIRTUAL CONFERENCES**



- Content marketers who use this tactic
- Users who say it's most critical to content marketing success in 2017

Source: Content Marketing Institute 2017 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends Research



VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

HOW TO SCORE WITH IT:

Though running a virtual conference means you don't have to worry about buying blocks of hotel rooms, securing a large enough venue, or providing evening entertainment, there are still plenty of logistical details to pay attention to. Make sure attendees have a memorable experience – for all the right reasons:

- **Book, and confirm, your speakers as early as possible** to avoid potential scheduling conflicts.
- **Double- and triple-check your technology.** Nothing frustrates attendees more than poor sound quality, weak video feeds, or other technical difficulties that keep them from getting the content they signed up for.
- **Take multiple time zones into account.** If you want attendees from both East and West coasts, make sure your event doesn't start too early, or end too late in the day
- **Extend the experience** by offering on-demand access to those who were unable to participate at the time of the live event.

AN ALL-STAR EFFORT: Virtual Launch Party



When the ABC Family channel, home to shows like *Pretty Little Liars*, rebranded as Freeform, viewers were invited to celebrate with an all-day virtual party. Fans could tune in on Periscope to follow the festivities – which included music, a muralist, custom pancakes, and appearances by Freeform actors. But the most interesting aspect of launch day was the opportunity for Freeform fans to have tweets interpreted by a 3D artist. Fans could tweet up to five times using #FreeformLaunch to see their tweets interpreted by five artists.

*For more expert advice from leading B2B and B2C brands on how to increase your content marketing success, join us for **Content Marketing World 2017**. Register using the code **PLAY100** for \$100 off main event and all-access passes.*



CONTENT
MARKETING
INSTITUTE™

A UBM COMPANY

Content Marketing Institute is the leading global content marketing education and training organization, teaching enterprise brands how to attract and retain customers through compelling, multichannel storytelling. CMI's **Content Marketing World** event, the largest content marketing-focused event, is held every September in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, and the **Intelligent Content Conference** event is held every spring. CMI publishes the bi-monthly magazine **Chief Content Officer**, and provides strategic consulting and content marketing research for some of the best-known brands in the world. Watch this **video** to learn more about CMI, a UBM company. To view all research and to subscribe to our emails, visit

www.contentmarketinginstitute.com.