

Industry Report

**State of Content
Creation 2022**



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1

Introduction

2

Meet the experts

3

Interactive content

4

Video content

5

Personalized content

6

Collaborative content

7

Un-gating content

8

Conclusion

1

Intro: State of Content Creation 2022

As both an organization and a collection of freelancers, colleagues, and peers, Contentoo has a vested interest in outstanding content creation. We understand how it can elevate and differentiate, and we are passionate about the craft as both an art and a skill. We believe ourselves to be content experts, with a responsibility to curate information that will drive organizations content marketing efforts forward.

With this in mind, we have used the first quarter of this year to speak with marketing experts and leaders about the challenges and trends in content creation that they expect for the remainder of 2022. Through these conversations, we have realized tremendous focus being placed on five distinct categories: interactive content, video content, personalized content, ungated content, and collaborative content.

Our experts see both opportunity and challenge in the creation of content that consistently leaves target audiences interested, impressed, and intrigued. Without it, our experts say, organizations' marketing efforts will be lacking, no matter how well-developed their strategies or wide their distribution channels. We believe these categories accurately represent this, acting as foundations for the trends that are the name of the game for 2022.

By grouping our expert's thoughts, insights, and experience on each, we hope your organization will be able to find the value you need to continue developing content that is unique, impactful, and effective as you navigate the rest of this year – and all of those that follow.



Meet the experts



Robert Rose
Chief Strategy Officer,
The Content Advisory



Regina Karnapp
Managing Director,
Content Marketing Forum e.V.



Bert van Loon
Independent Strategist,
BVL I&A



Ron Dawson
Principal Content Strategist
HubSpot for Startups, HubSpot



Christopher Hooper
Global Head of Content Marketing,
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Verena Keimer
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Sergi Garcia
CMO,
Red Points



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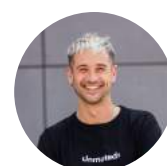
Veronica Guguian
Founder and Marketing Strategist,
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Martin Rua
EMEA Corporate Com. Manager,
OMRON Healthcare Europe



Jurjen Nouhet
Marketeer,
All Your BI



Jonas van de Poel
Head of Content Marketing,
Unmuted



Remco de Vries
VP of Marketing,
inSided



Mark Grasmayer
Head of Marketing,
Workspace 365



Elise Hofman
Marketing Manager,
Zoku



Joost de Kok
Head of Marketing,
Contentoo

3

Interactive content

Interactive content refers to content that moves beyond simply reading, watching, or listening, instead encouraging direct participation or action from target audiences – resulting in deeper, more meaningful brand experiences.

Polls, quizzes, smart widgets, digital tools such as ROI calculators – examples of interactive content are as wide-ranging as they are engaging and memorable.

“Interactive versus static content boils down to the difference between actively consuming information and passively reading it,” according to American magazine “Inc.”. “[This] is why marketers put its effectiveness at 93% and static content's effectiveness at only 70%.”

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In addition to efficacy, interactive content holds the potential to collect valuable data from target audiences,

who often provide companies with personal information as they engage with it. Content Marketing Institute reiterates this point in a recent article:

“[With interactive content, organizations can] gain direct insights on their interests, preferences, and behaviors, and learn personal identification data points, which was never possible with passive content techniques.”

“Businesses would be wise to focus on getting more deeply connected and developing a more interconnected platform of interactive content experiences.



Robert Rose
Chief Strategy Officer
The Content Advisory

Our experts agree. Of those surveyed, 30% stressed the importance of interactive content in the coming year. But its creation is not without challenge. As compared to relatively simple, straightforward content such as blogs or white papers, interactive content requires a larger investment of both money and time. It also requires specialized talent to create it.

I'm convinced interactive content will fundamentally change the content landscape. You're creating shared experiences with your target audience. A conversation is always better than a monologue.



Joost de Kok
Head of Marketing, Contentoo

Video content

“But brands with more technical solutions can no longer do without,” says Joost de Kok, Head of Marketing at Contentoo.

“It’s a necessity when it comes to differentiating yourself from your competitors. I’m convinced interactive content will fundamentally change the content landscape. You’re creating shared experience with your target audience. A conversation is always better than a monologue.”

Those organizations seeking to jump into the interactive content pool should be cautious, however, ensuring that they have carried out proper research into the format, and putting out assets that have clear value and purpose. To do otherwise is to distract, adding worthless noise to an already-crowded arena.

“Interactivity can definitely help make content more engaging, and we have developed a number of applications where this is the case ...

“We are striving for simplicity and quality in our content,” Christopher Hooper, Global Head of Content Marketing at GoCardless, says. “Interactivity can definitely help make content more engaging, and we have developed a number of applications where this is the case, but interactivity has to be used wisely. If it adds nothing to or detracts from the content experience, then we have found it is not worth it.”

Perhaps obvious in its efficacy and potential for engagement – and with no need for an explanatory introduction – video content has been a mainstay in content marketing strategies since the rise of the internet, even more so from 2010 forward.

From interviews to event coverage, to animations and customer testimonials, the allure of video is undeniable, according to a HubSpot blog. There, it is revealed that “video on landing pages is capable of increasing conversion rates by over 80%, and the mere mention of the word ‘video’ in your email subject line increases open rates by 19%. [Meanwhile], 90% of customers also say videos help them make buying decisions.”

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Unsurprisingly, video content also plays a key role for our experts in 2022. They, however, are predominantly shifting

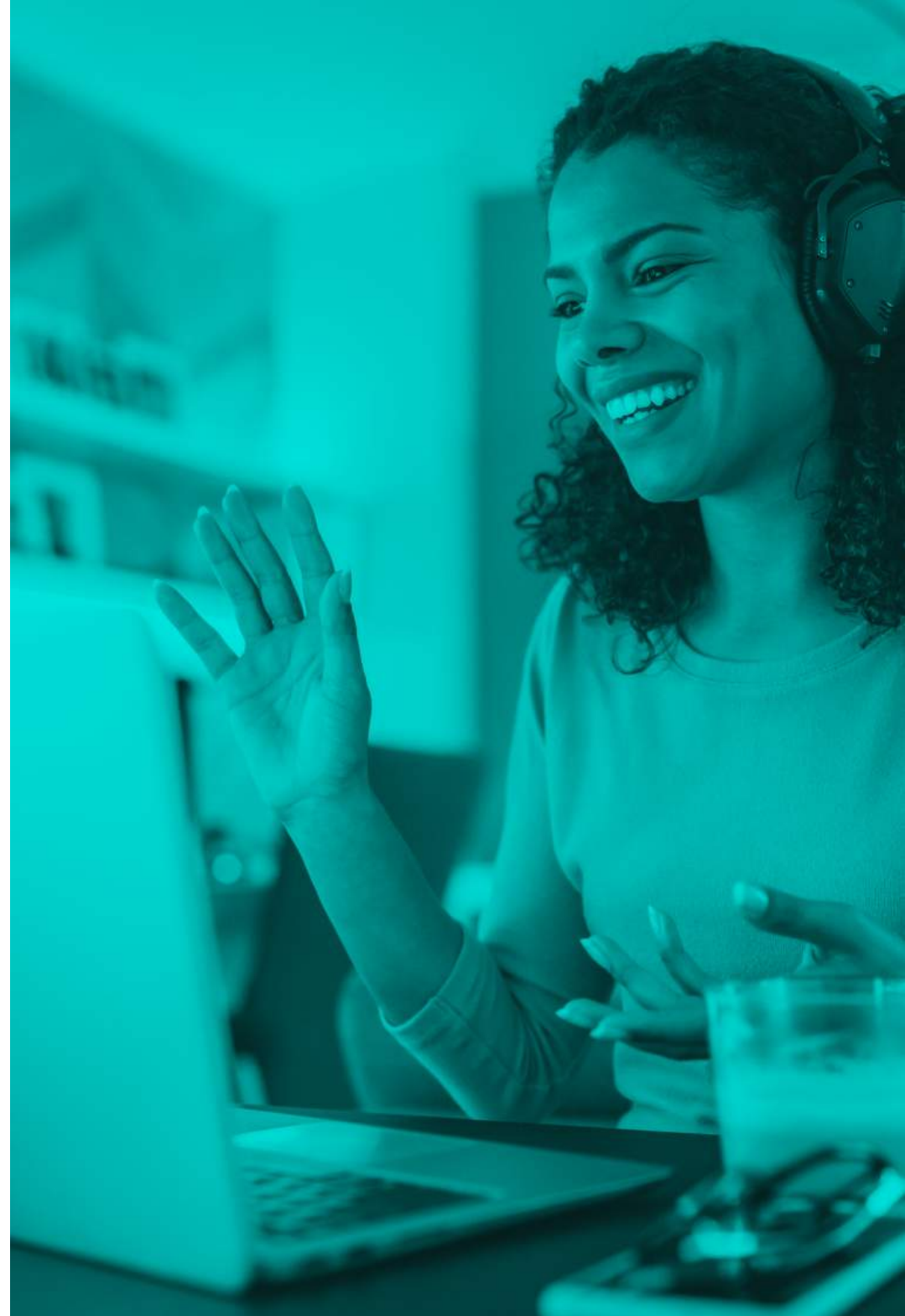
toward shorter-form video, capitalizing on the popularity and ubiquity of numerous social media apps that highlight the form. “Especially Instagram Reels and TikTok,” says Verena Keimer, Marketing Director at Zenjob. “When it comes to inbound marketing, we’ll be exploiting video more than we already do.”

“Static photo content will always be relevant, but video footage still proves to be more engaging time and time again.”



Elise Hofman
Marketing Manager
Zoku

In addition to tapping into new channels for video content, our experts understand that longer videos – webinars and extended interviews being prime examples – remain more-than-viable forms of established communication. The challenge there, according to Ron Dawson, Principal Content Strategist, HubSpot for Startups at HubSpot, is “being the signal in all the noise.” It’s all about “strong visual experiences,” adds Marcel Nanning, Owner of Nanning Marketing & b2bmarketeers.nl. “Including video, hybrid events, and metaverse-like experiences.”



When producing video content, Content Marketing Institute writes in another blog, strategy is key. It “requires purpose and should be created, managed, and activated with the structure and optimization for all the channels where it may be experienced.” This means thinking about ways to incorporate video into other forms of content to strengthen and empower it. Doing so also benefits SEO – enabling organizations to squeeze more out of the content they create.

“We’re making sure we tie podcasts back to an article and transcript, and a video. Then we’re linking those things to pillars,” says Remco de Vries, VP of Marketing at inSided.

5

Personalized content

Personalized content places focus on smaller, sometimes niche, groups rather than categorized buyer personas or larger sections of target audiences.

By making use of retargeted ads, for example, or personalized greetings on web pages, organizations are able to develop human-centric approaches to content creation, allowing them to better attend to the emotional needs of their customers.

“Marketers mainly see people as data and algorithms, not as people. And that has not really made the world more beautiful and better.



Cor Hospes
Founder & Strategist
Merkjournalisten

“It’s also a proven marketing technique,” according to an article by Marketing Insider Group. “90% of US adults say that they find personalized marketing content appealing, and personalized CTAs are over 200% more effective than generic CTAs.”

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Although at first glance it may seem that personalized content would be more effective in a B2C context, this isn’t necessarily the case. Customers, be they consumers, SMEs, or corporates – more specifically the buyers behind them – are all people. Our experts –whom 25% directly referenced personalized content – understand this. Through this understanding, they are able to take strides toward leveraging it in B2B marketing strategies.

“[There], we noticed an increased focus on showing more empathy rather than being functional in the way you communicate,” says Verena. “You want to be more emotional and engaging. This means you understand your target audience, you provide them with something that’s helpful – as in relevant – and that you also bear your company values in mind and stay true to them.”

It's relatively straightforward to create a distinct, unique experience between an individual and your brand. What's more difficult is to create an experience that truly resonates with the customer in that moment.



Robert Rose

Chief Strategy Officer, The Content Advisory

They also notice a distinction between “personalized” and “personal” content. Personalized content is certainly of import, according to Robert, but delivering personal value may be even more so. “It’s relatively straightforward to create a distinct, unique experience between an individual and your brand,” he says. “What’s more difficult is to create an experience that truly resonates with the customer in that moment.”

Additionally, according to Mark Grasmayer, Head of Marketing at Workspace 365, personal or personalized content is especially effective when targeting specialized roles. “We have a solution with a high impact and target the entire decision-making unit, consisting of communication, information, and IT managers,” he says. “It is important that each role gets the right information, because they will not understand or feel the message that you want to bring across if you deliver the wrong content. Each person has their own goals to achieve, and your content should help them to do so.”

6

Collaborative content

Collaborative content, which sees two or more organizations working together on content that will serve both companies’ target audiences.

Done effectively, the result is symbiotic – and a “networking win-win,” says Elise Hofman, Marketing Manager, Zoku. “[You] find other people or brands to partner with, so you can leverage one another’s skills, expertise, and trusted customer base. And as a bonus, it also splits the content creation efficiency in half.”

However collaborative the content, organizations should ensure that the focus remains on target audiences – readers, viewers, listeners – rather than the collaborative parties themselves. Says Tom Hitch, Head of Content at Oktra:

“Sometimes you see collaborative content that has been created because of how it makes the creators feel. It feels like an egotistical project. A good piece of collaborative content gives you the chance to reach new markets, attract a new audience, and turn them into your own.”

“Collaboration partners help us cope with the rising expectations and complexities of content marketing projects.



Regina Karnapp
Managing Director
Content Marketing Forum e.V.

An impressive 40% of our experts agree on the power of the form, as it enables them to build stronger relationships with prospects and broadens impact potential, with two organizations leveraging one another's target audiences to increase conversions. This can be achieved through guest blog posts, testimonials, or interviews. The "wisdom, expertise and insights [external parties can bring to your organization are gold," reads an Orbit Media blog. "And a few of their nuggets can add serious value to your piece."

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In approaching such content, our experts are also expanding the scope of what collaboration means, with some looking to high-profile individuals or organizations to help sell their products or services. Like short-form video, influencer marketing capitalizes on the popularity of social media – and our experts are making use of such partnerships to create brand awareness and excitement, as well as to generate leads.

"If your audience belongs to an industry that has clear thought leaders – people who influence decision-making – then why wouldn't you want to use them?" asks Sergi Garcia, CMO of Red Points.

"That's something we did this year, and it was a very interesting experience. During the pandemic, many people have created an audience on social media. There are more influencers than ever before. It's another new channel that you can leverage."

Jonas van de Poel, Head of Content Marketing at Unmuted, meanwhile, is using this year to make use of collaborative marketing from a slightly different angle. "My focus for 2022 is to make sure content creation for our clients can easily take place without this dependency on in-house writers," he says. "This means focusing on collaborative content creation where we embody the role of editor more than that of content creator."

7

Content un-gating

A blog from content curation company Scoop.it reveals that "80% of B2B content marketing assets are gated." This number is large, but given gated content's potential for lead generation, is unsurprising.

The debate is whether someone signing up for gated content is really a measure of buying intent. Someone downloads some content because they want to read, watch or listen to that content, not necessarily because they are a buyer looking to buy. The key thing, in my opinion, is what happens to a lead once the content has been downloaded.



Christopher Hooper
Global Head of Content Marketing, GoCardless

By requiring target audiences to provide personal details before downloading a typically long-form asset such as a white paper or trend report, organizations are able to quickly and easily gather information about – and means of direct contact with – potential customers. It also acts as a solid foundation on which to build a content strategy. Assets that are most commonly downloaded are seen as more valuable, providing marketing decision-makers with direction and focus for future content.

On the other hand, gated content doesn't play well with SEO and brand awareness. Which is why, in 2022, we are noticing organizations – and 35% of our experts –

lean away from it, opting instead to release their content for free, with no strings attached. While this tactic may not be ideal from a lead generation standpoint, it drastically increases content reach.

“We believe in offering the public as many relevant brand touchpoints as possible as they move through the funnel until they're ready to buy, so that then you're at the top of their minds,” Sergi says. “It's not about the leads you can generate, it's about the marketing-sourced revenue you can provide. Also, when un-gated, all of your content becomes indexable for search engines, which brings more traffic you can convert.”

“The real magic is in understanding why we are gating a piece of content? If the answer is, ‘So we can get more names for sales people to call, that's a bad reason.

Robert Rose, Chief Strategy Office at The Content Advisory, adds to this, urging organizations to think strategically about the types of content that are gated, and those that are not. “The trouble is that it's usually a binary argument: do or don't. The real magic is in understanding why we are gating a piece of content? If the answer is, ‘So we can get more names for sales people to call, that's a bad reason.



There are many nuanced ways to look at gating and un-gating content. For example, perhaps you gate a piece of exclusive research for two weeks in order to build an audience for an upcoming webinar on the topic. And then, after the webinar, you un-gate everything,” he says. “Or perhaps you gate the targeted segmented results, but un-gate the overall executive summary.

“The real question isn’t whether you should gate or un-gate your content, but rather what is it we are trying to achieve – and how will we use the information we receive in return?”



Robert Rose
Chief Strategy Officer
The Content Advisory

And one of the best rules I’ve seen people use to make that last decision is to ask ourselves if we would be willing to tell the consumer what’s going to happen to their data after they sign up for this white paper or E-book. If we’d be embarrassed to tell them, then it’s probably a safe bet that we should rethink gating it.”

8

Conclusion – All about differentiation

During our conversations with our marketing experts, we discussed a great deal of content types, strategies, and ideas. They ran the gamut, from those categories examined above, to those on the horizon of the not-so-distant future, including AI and Web 3.0.

In the near-term for content marketing, we see a rise in empathetic, human approaches to content, regardless of type. An emotional connection is the most effective way of creating both impactful first impressions and long-term customer relationships. Forbes, for example, calls it “the super weapon of marketing and advertising,” with “campaigns with purely emotional content performing about twice as well as those with only rational content.”

It’s also the best way for organizations to differentiate themselves – a statement with which our experts nearly unanimously agree.

Trends are trends – and popularity, popularity, our experts say. And there is

undeniably something to that. But organizations should steer away from creating content for the sole reason of joining the party. Whatever its form, your content must simultaneously bring value to your target audience and your organization. Everything else is secondary.

“The challenge is not so much the format, but standing out within the formats.”



Sergi Garcia
CMO
Red Points

“A lot of content is produced and everybody fights for the attention of their audience,” Marcel says. “You have to deserve that attention and deliver the best content in your field in order to stand out.”

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This can only be done by diving deep into the target audience and translating insights into creative and valuable content. The same creativity is needed for the distribution of that content.”

“Channel trends are always overrated. Social media and other publishing channels will come and go. Content is the key, not the channel you use to post it,” Regina adds.

“We understand, however, that we live in an increasingly digital world – and with it, an increasing amount of industry noise – for better or for worse.”

We understand, however, that we live in an increasingly digital world – and with it, an increasing amount of industry noise – for better or for worse. To stand out, companies must take strides to create content that differentiates themselves from the competition, as well as cultivate interest and loyalty from internet-savvy consumers and target audiences, who demand increasingly high-quality content.

With differentiation being key, we have learned that best-performing content formats – as well as other variables such as publishing frequency, volume, and channels – often take a “listen first” approach, opening lanes of dialogue with your prospects and customers, and involving them in the content marketing process, from strategy to execution and measurement. This is the best proxy for deciding what formats are likely to resonate with your audience, thus making your content program a success.

Thank you

We'd like to thank all of our marketing experts for their time, effort, and insights. Without you, this guide would not have been possible. We can't wait to see what the future holds for the industry. And as we plan and forge the path forward, we will continue to do our part in communicating, collaborating, cultivating, and elevating those who are doing amazing things in content marketing.

About Contentoo

Founded in 2017, Contentoo is Europe's leading platform for marketing talent. Contentoo matches marketing teams with its pre-screened freelance community of more than 500 content marketing talents, including copywriters, translators, localization experts, UX writers, designers, content strategists and SEO specialists.

With a net promoter score (NPS) of 86 and more than 20,000 projects successfully executed, Contentoo's proprietary method for matching freelance talent to client needs means companies can always find the perfect professional for the job—no matter the industry, writing style, or content type.

Contentoo's managed service model means an experienced content advisor works closely with each client.

Companies can upscale and downscale content production as needed, without compromising quality. Contentoo clients include Mollie, Swapfiets, Rituals, Booking.com, and Meatless Farm. For more information, visit contentoo.com.

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