

6 ideas of content that anyone doing marketing should 'steal' from IBM

In this article, Andrea from IBM will share valuable ideas from this interview - ideas that can help you or any marketer to expand the content making process and deliver a rewarding experience. price for customers.

The following article is translated from Marcia Riefer Johnston's article to publish the Content Marketing Institute in early 2016. These ideas can be summarized briefly in the list below.

1. Creating content helps build relationships with customers
2. Building content towards the right audience
3. Prepare to scale up personalization
4. Coordinate with other content groups
5. Find out what causes managers to work all night
6. Go to conferences

Last year, I had an interview with Andrea Ames who worked at IBM, but her job title alone made me tired: content strategist, architect and designer. In this article, I will share valuable ideas from this interview - ideas that can help you or any marketer expand the content making process and bring valuable experiences to the guest. line.

Creating content helps build relationships with customers - The main content is a new salesperson

In this age and more than ever, we are **building relationships with customers through content** , not by face-to-face meetings. Andrea pointed out that in 2011, **technology buyers through content accounted for 56% of the turnover cycle while only 21% talked directly to the seller** . She said: " *When we realize that content has the potential to build a much bigger relationship than talking directly, that is very important. Your content is a selling opportunity .*"



Readers of your content are not just reading for themselves. As Andrea explains: " *They create content and share it with the boss, and then the boss will share it with the team. The reader is the influence .*" Each customer's itinerary includes the process before and after the purchase. Usually, the final stage is called the **advocacy** phase, IBM's own term. This is what Andrea shared about this dream phase:

You won't get customer approval without making them feel like they have a relationship with you, your company, your software, your hardware, your cookbook or not. Anything else. No one will go on his blog and say "It's the best cook book I've ever read" or "IBM software is really a bomb" if they don't have a relationship with you.



It is impossible to get that relationship by saying: " *Hello IBM customers. Do you like our products? Take this online survey .*" IBM knows who its customers are and knows what they bought. But to build relationships with customers, marketers " **need to target content so customers feel that we know who they are** " .

Building content towards the right audience - This will need detailed plans but very worthy

The "holy grail" of Marketing is to bring " **the right content** " to the right people at the right time. In theory, simple but achievable is not easy. To do that, there is a need for planning and coordination.

Andrea said that when you first started, you should build a consistent content structure. You must identify elements such as headlines, paragraphs, bullet points . - in a way that not only people but machines - like computers - can recognize. In other words, you have to **tag your content with metadata** - information about content such as what it writes about, towards whom, when people need it, which department, which department, Who created, who accessed . **When creating reasonable metadata data, you can help the apparatus to send the right content to the right people at the right time.**



Andrea gives an example. " *Give me content about cooking and put them in a cookbook* ". A machine can do that right away if it has been pre-installed. Extend this example to all the customer characteristics that your business wants to serve - IBM has 60 or 70 - and you'll see why it is necessary to plan carefully for metadata information. If you want to include relevant content, and to a certain extent, remain personal. Andrea said: " *We don't want to give the information that managers need for programmers. We don't want people to search for 50 million things to find 5 things they care about* ."

Prepare to scale up personalization - The manual method will not expand

To bring content on a large scale and even a small company with only one content maker but towards a large scale, when he has to worry about 10,000 content types - use the fish method. Manual humanization is not practical. Manual methods cannot scale. The built-in style to make personalized content for each customer has a lot to say, but " **a marketer always faces customer expectations** ". To emphasize this point, Andrea tells a story.

My nephew is 23 years old. It is natural to assume that the fact that Amazon knows what it likes and provides a great user experience is natural. Just like many people at that age - age 35 or younger - it looks forward to such personal experiences. In exchange, it is willing to share a lot of information about you.

All companies face expectations of personalized content from customers. If you are one of those who are aiming for smart content, you will have the opportunity to meet that expectation and receive the reward: customers trust to share information that money cannot afford . From a marketing perspective, Andrea says " *it's*

pure gold".



Collaborate with other content groups - This effort is complex but necessary

I can't say how to coordinate content groups in your company, but looking at IBM's approach can bring many ideas. Like other companies, IBM has a number of customer-related systems: a document provider, a support portal, DeveloperWorks (a center for providing information on the web for software developers, IT professionals), students) and many other systems. " *Requiring to create these channels also creates many other back-end systems for content management .*"



Internally, IBM also acquires many other companies each year, so the content management system and management tools are much more. Andrea is a member of the team on strategy and implementation for all of these systems. When IBM's content groups have problems, or when another group solves the technology strategy and vision for the whole system, they go to Andrea's team to talk.

"We look at the system under the" hybrid "lens. We do not impose that" we have to complete everything in a single place. "We need to be flexible with back-end content management. end "

IBM also has problems like most other companies. For example, marketing information in one place while technical documents are in another place. The system needs to synchronize and give an overall view from many parts as if they are only in one place. Coordination between content groups is complicated. Andrea said: "*In any company, it makes you think a lot. In a big company like IBM, the problem is even more exponential. Although it looks overwhelming, it is very attractive*".

Find out what causes managers to work all night - Then you get the idea of ??content

Marketers need to understand dreams - as well as nightmares - of managers. Knowing what interests them, what keeps them awake at night, the biggest problem and what their biggest goal is . Often these goals will be to develop relationships with customers, causing customers to accept products and eventually increase sales. Whether the manager wants to build a direct relationship with the customer. If so, see how to get there. Present ideas and results in a way that managers want to hear.



To get support, you need a content idea that is closely tied to your boss's goals and worries.

Go to conferences - Other people's stories can tell you what should be done to avoid

All that Andrea mentioned requires content makers to constantly learn. She suggests "learning about places that have been successful", especially at conferences when you can learn from the stories they share. Consider specific cases, when someone says "we do this and everything happens like that". You will have an idea of ?? how it works for you - and the idea will not work.



You can find webinar sessions and many other free sources of information, but according to Andrea, of course it's nothing like live conferences - where people from different types of businesses share their stories. .

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