

The Data Center Marketer's Guide to Distinguished Content Marketing

9 Ways to Stand Out in a Commoditized Market





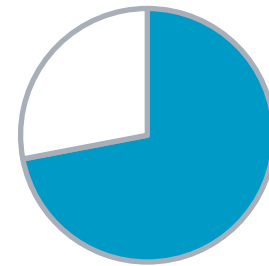
Content marketing matters. But it usually doesn't work.

If you're like most data center providers, you can point out many key differentiators that will benefit your clients once they're onboard. But most data center buyers get 60-70% through the buyer's journey before they even have a conversation with you.

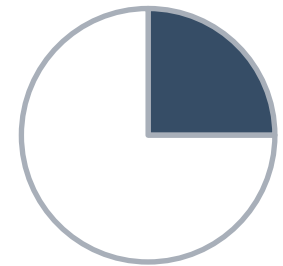
So, how do you articulate what sets you apart from the more than 509,000 data centers in the world? **Content marketing.**

You might be saying, "We've tried content marketing and it didn't work." We hear that a lot. It's not that it doesn't work, it's that you need to know *how* to do it. Especially in a commoditized market, **effective** content marketing can be what sets you apart from the crowd, making your job as a marketer much easier.

72% of marketing leaders surveyed by IDG say content is critical to their overall strategy. But only 25% say their content marketing strategy is effective.



"Content is critical to our strategy"



"Our content marketing strategy is effective"

9 Ways Your Content Marketing Can Help You Stand Out in a Commoditized Market

Click on the number to move to that section

1

ALWAYS begin with content strategy – aligned to your marketing, sales, and business goals.

2

Make it all about the buyer.

3

Strategize and develop content to be used across the organization.

4

Include assets that work together like relay racers to take the buyer through the journey, from start to finish.

5

Develop your content marketing based on buyers' personas and their journeys.

6

Include assets for different members of the buying team at the stage of the journey they're involved with.

7

Take the story to where the prospective buyer is already at.

8

Strategize, develop, and optimize based on data analytics.

9

Educate, don't sell.

#1: ALWAYS begin with a strategy

Ineffective content is designed based on ... who knows? Could be the marketing leader's latest whim, or a trend the CEO read about last weekend. But it's not specific or measurable marketing, sales, or business objectives.

Effective content marketing ALWAYS begins with content strategy – aligned to your marketing, sales, and business goals.

That's how content marketing delivers significant, tangible value.

- For the business: Content helps drive revenue.
- For marketing: Content helps more effectively generate demand and turn it into leads that convert.
- For sales: Content helps more efficiently convert leads to customers and customers to evangelists.

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#2: Make it all about the buyer

You are not the hero of your story. Your customer is.



The key is, no matter what story you tell, make your buyer the hero.

- Chris Brogan, NYT Bestselling author/business advisor

Effective content marketing is all about YOUR buyer.

Throughout the buyer's journey, they're not thinking about you or how amazing your product or service is. They're thinking about their challenge or opportunity and how to solve it. When we give them content that helps further their thinking about their challenges and opportunities and how to solve them, we win.



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#3: Strategize and develop content to be used across the organization

Just because marketing builds it, doesn't mean sales will use it.



80% of content generated by marketing is never used by sales team members."

Effective content marketing involves what Gartner calls "co-creation of commercial insight and content strategy."

When you integrate sales and other areas of the business from the very beginning, they're invested in the end product, and much more likely to actually use it.

1. Ask the sales team what they need.
2. Ask them what they're hearing.
3. Build a content library that's optimized for sales to use.
4. Include content links within email templates.
5. Start a weekly marketing update – or add content to your weekly update.
6. Before a big content release, have a joint marketing/sales kickoff.
7. Produce a quick one-page guide and a short video tutorial for sales (and SMEs!) on how to access content and share it.

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#4: Create assets that work together

Ineffective content marketing is disjointed, piecemeal, and ad hoc. Prospective buyers can tell.

In an effective content marketing program, assets work together like relay racers to take the buyer through the journey, from start to finish – pre-awareness to decision.

Even when we're designing a content campaign for a particular part of the buyer's journey, we take into consideration how the buyer is engaged with the company before and after the campaign ends. Because we want the prospective buyer's experience to be seamless – like the people they're thinking about hiring actually work together. (Imagine that!)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



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#5: Target your specific buyer personas to answer the questions they ask at each stage of their journey

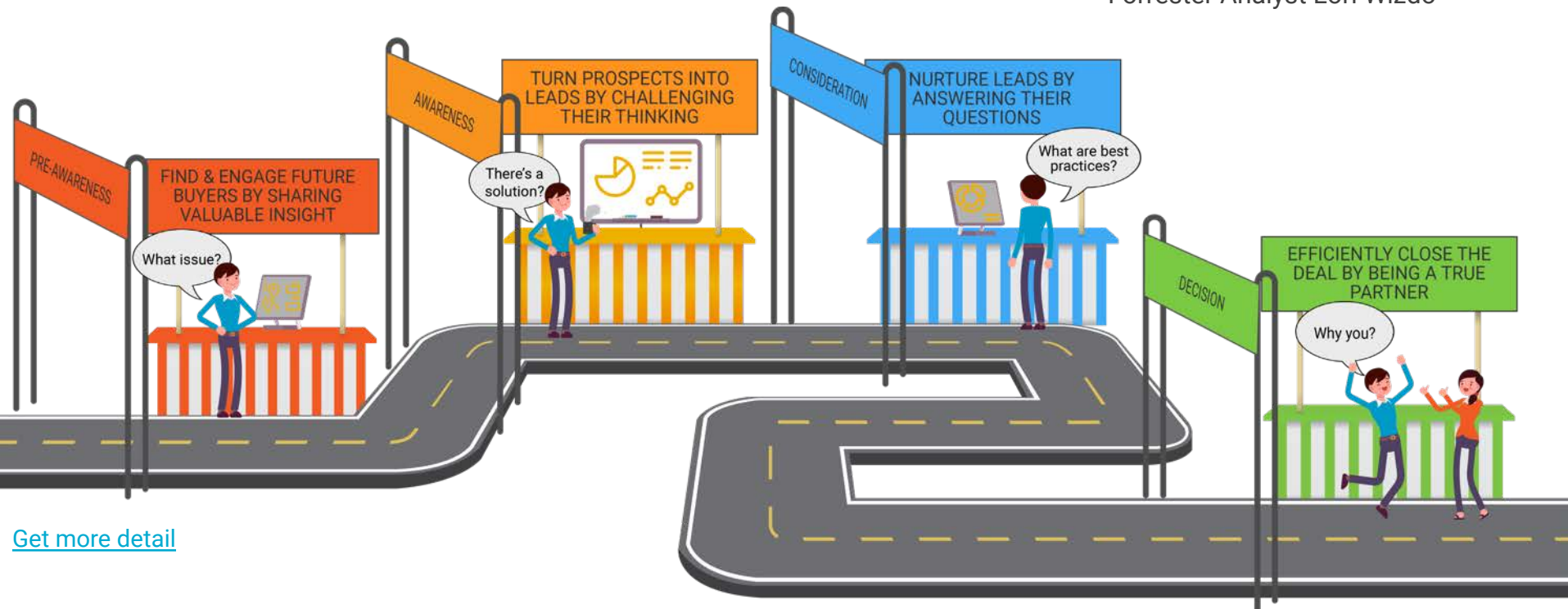
Ineffective content is generic across buyer personas and journey stages.

Effective content is developed based on buyers' personas and their journeys.

“

Marketing now owns a much bigger piece of the lead-to-revenue cycle. And B2B marketers must take responsibility for engaging with the customer through more of the buying journey.”

– Forrester Analyst Lori Wizzo



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#6: Create content to reach multiple influencers and decision makers

Ineffective content ignores the fact that B2B buyers purchase in teams.

61%

of all buying teams are made up of 5+ members



30%

of teams have 8+ members



20%

of teams have 10+ members



- Tech Target research

Effective content marketing programs include assets for different members of the buying team at the stage of the journey they're involved with.

The collage features three main content assets:

- HOW PUE IMPACTS YOU**: An infographic showing three data center types with their Annualized PUE values: **ALIGNED DATA CENTERS** (1.15), **HYPERSCALERS** (1.2), and **HIGH END DATA CENTERS** (1.7).
- News Article Snippet**: A headline "A new efficiency standard challenges data center status quo" by Earl Keisling, dated Friday, January 27, 2017 - 2:33am. It includes social share icons and a "243,205" view count.
- White Paper**: Titled "COMPARING PUE BETWEEN COLOCATION DATA CENTERS - AND WHY IT MATTERS" by ALIGNED DATA CENTERS. The cover image shows a server room aisle.

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#7: Take your content *to* the buyer

Publish it and they will come? It just doesn't work that way.

“

It's not enough to just produce that content. Being part of the buyer's journey means getting that content to those prospects. If you want the buyer's decision to be you, you have to go to where they are.”

Effective content marketing takes the story to where the prospective buyer is *already* at.

Effective content marketing is as much about getting the content to the right place – to where the prospective buyer is already at – as it is about producing the right content. Succeeding in this requires getting to know the buyers and the resources they trust.



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#8: Strategize, develop, and optimize based on data analytics

Effective content isn't whatever happens to be trending. Just say **no to random acts of content.**

Effective content is what has *proven* to engage prospective buyers.

We leverage data to learn:

- What **topics** are engaging buyers best at each stage of the journey
- What **types of assets** are best for converting buyers from one stage to the next
- What **distribution channels** are the best places to get the content to the prospective buyers

So we can do more of what works best and less of what doesn't.

Leading indicators of what works for the prospective buyer:

- Search traffic
- Pageviews
- Time on page
- Email opens and click-thrus
- Social engagement (shares, likes, comments)
- Referrals
- Syndication
- Media coverage
- Event attendance

Translate to higher ROI for you:

- MQLs
- SQLs
- SQLs converted to opportunities
- Ultimately: Deals closed

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#9: Educate rather than sell

Ineffective content tries too hard. No one wants to be sold.



B2B buyers conduct 60-70% of their research themselves before they talk to a salesperson. You must produce content that enables prospects to educate themselves about their challenge and the solution.”

Effective content educates.

Effective content delivers value to the buyer. It educates, informs, sometimes even entertains. It sells without selling.



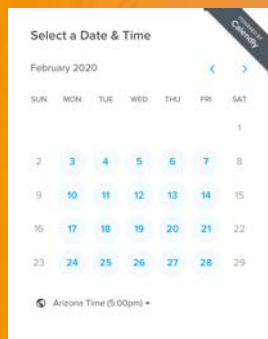
[Get more detail](#)



See what we've helped some of our data center clients achieve

- 177 MQLs in four weeks
- 147 MQLs and cover story in a leading trade pub
- 506% ROI for lead generation and 1300% ROI for lead-to-opportunity conversion

Check out the [case studies](#)!



Ready to chat?

You can quickly and easily schedule a meeting with our CEO, Molly Castelazo, to learn:

- How well your content is working to achieve your goals
- What can be done to optimize it

[Schedule a meeting now!](#)