

# The Data Center Marketer's Guide to Effective Content Marketing

9 Ways to Stand Out & Win





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

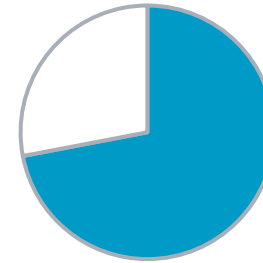
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If you're like most data center providers, you can point out many key differentiators that will benefit your clients once they're onboard. But most data center buyers get 60-70% through the buyer's journey before they even have a conversation with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

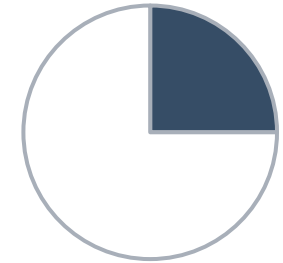
So, how do you articulate what sets you apart from the more than 509,000 data centers in the world? **Content marketing.**

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

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*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.



## 9 Ways to Stand Out & Win

# #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

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**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: 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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## 9 Ways to Stand Out & Win

# #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 at each stage

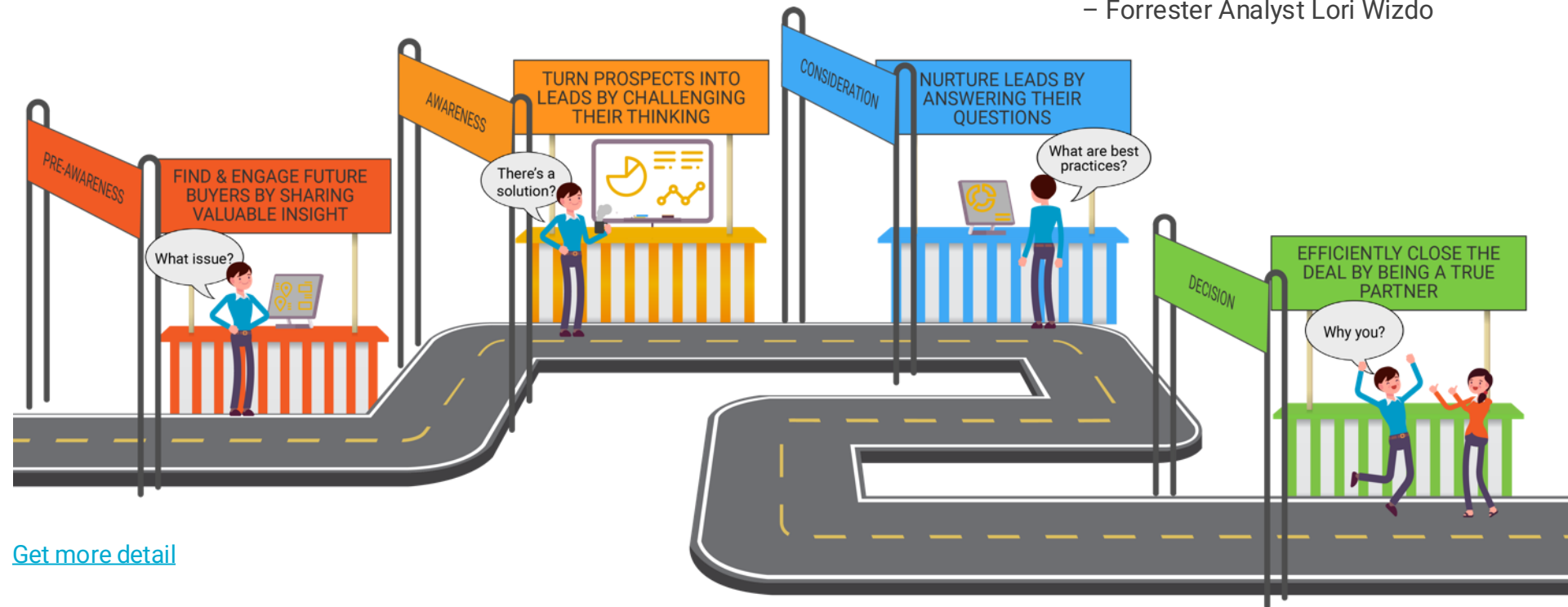
**Ineffective content is generic across buyer personas and journey stages.**

**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 Wizdo



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## 9 Ways to Stand Out & Win

# #6: 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.

**HOW PUE IMPACTS YOU**

Annualized PUE	Annualized PUE	Annualized PUE
1.15	1.2	1.7
ALIGNED DATA CENTERS	HYPERSCALERS	HIGH END DATA CENTERS

**A new efficiency standard challenges data center status quo**

243,205  
\$ more than ALIGNED DATA CENTERS

**White Paper** | ALIGNED DATA CENTERS

**COMPARING PUE BETWEEN COLOCATION DATA CENTERS - AND WHY IT MATTERS**

ge. Today, it is

Data center energy efficiency matters, but understanding the energy efficiency of one data center compared to another is made difficult by a lack of transparency into what metric is used. This brief is designed to help you understand the different data center efficiency metrics - and give you the questions to ask prospective colocation providers in order to compare energy efficiency apples to apples. Why does it matter? Because the energy efficiency of a data center has a significant impact on the cost you'll pay for the data center, and your ability to scale within it.

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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.

**CAPACITY PLANNING IN THE AGE OF THE CLOUD**

Options abound for a high performing, intelligent infrastructure.

**U**rging patience, Civil War era historian Thomas Fuller said, "All things are difficult before they are easy." In IT, you might suppose that to say all things are complex before they are simple.

Being pressure to innovate and the need for speed drives by customer demand push IT to find ways to ensure server, storage, and networking are ready to be allocated when required. On-premises, Colocation, Cloud. Whether you're an enterprise enduser or a cloud service provider there are many options for high-performing infrastructure.

More and more, organizations are taking a hybrid approach, allowing the risk tolerance of each application to drive the what/where/when decisions. This hybrid approach doesn't have to mean putting IT in unknown corners of the world with multiple providers. In many cases, the whole hybrid environment can exist under one roof.

But with these new options comes the need for a new approach to capacity planning. Effectively managing IT infrastructure in this new age requires having the right lineup — people keenly aware of the business goals who have a firm grasp on the strengths and weaknesses of every tool in the belt and facilities with the capability to be adaptive.

Cloud service providers (CSPs) and enterprise endusers have adopted similar approaches to capacity planning in the age of the cloud, yet the way they execute on those approaches is quite different. In a nutshell: The cloud service provider model and enterprise model are inverse examples of each other. CSPs turn to colocation to handle overflow. Enterprises turn to the cloud.

Cloud service providers' capacity strategy begins with a build, own, and operate model. Yet CSPs have to anticipate new capacity demand driven by business changes — mergers and acquisitions, major purchases, or digital business developments, for example. When their cup spills over, CSPs meet their need for extra capacity by subcontracting to a wholesale colocation provider.

**ENTERPRISE CAPACITY PLANNING 1.0**

Most enterprise CSPs, according to G2 Research still operate the majority of their data centers on-premises. Yet as enterprise endusers outgrow their on-premises facilities, they most often turn to colocation. If they're in an unfamiliar market, they'll use a bro-

**By Kirk Offel**

**Kirk Offel** is executive vice president of Platform Delivery at Aligned Energy where he is responsible for continuing to expand the company's services offering to large cloud players and enterprise endusers.

**EB |** **Wired** Critical **MARCH/APRIL 2017**

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## #8: Strategize 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

## 9 Ways to Stand Out & Win

# #9: Educate rather than sell

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**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.



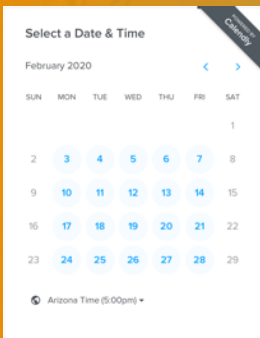
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## See what we've helped some of our data center clients achieve

- 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!](#)