



**RISKS**

**CONTENT STORIES**

**REWARDS**

**FROM *the* INDUSTRY'S**

**SOLUTIONS**

**LEADING INFLUENCERS**

by **Juliet Stott**

The Content Council exists to make content marketing services providers more effective, productive and successful by providing thought leadership, research, networking and learning. Learn more at [thecontentcouncil.org](http://thecontentcouncil.org).

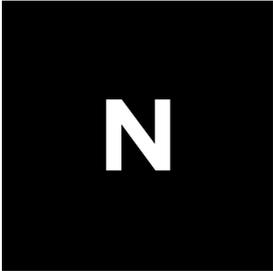
**Risks, Rewards, Solutions:**  
**Content Stories from the Industry's Leading Influencers**  
by Juliet Stott

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# THE CHALLENGES

## *Future Challenges for Content Marketers, 2018 and Beyond*



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ew technology, the smartphone-fueled evolution in consumer behavior, along with marketing's inability to disrupt itself from its 'business-as-usual-cycle,' are the biggest challenges facing content marketers in the next year, says Altimeter's futurist and principal analyst **Brian Solis**.

"Marketers tend to get stuck in the rut—using the same metrics, the same campaign mindset, and the same budget to fund programs, and they put people in front of strategies that they aren't the most qualified to manage," he said.

Solis, who contends that marketers over the last 15–20 years have not really evolved with the times, believes that technology should open up new ways of communicating with prospects. "Marketers have used new technology platforms, everything from social to AR/VR, with the same marketing playbook, without imagining how each platform opens itself up to new opportunities for messaging and engagement," he said.

**“Marketers need to get underneath the data to identify the impact technology is having on consumer behaviour.”**

— **Brian Solis**



It's the marketers who look at the trends their customers are adapting to and note how they are changing behaviors, who will weather the digital storm, he says. “Marketers need to get underneath the data to identify the impact technology is having on consumer behaviour before adopting it,” he said. “They need to understand how to use new technologies to be culturally relevant, and adapt their practices to align with them, and not be swayed by ‘shiny object syndrome,’” said Solis.

Marketers who adapt their practice to the technology, rather than force the technology to adapt to their old way of working, are the ones we should take a lead from, says the marketer and cartoonist **Tom Fishburne**. In a recent interview he said that the majority of marketers have been blindsided by the latest technology and not thought about how to apply it, or how to use the digital tools that have emerged to supplement and extend their marketing.



“It’s not about doing digital marketing, but how we market effectively in a digital world.”

— **Tom Fishburne**

Fishburne, aka The Marketoonist, said: “Marketers who get excited about the next shiny new thing, and treat it as a bolt-on or something to just plug into whatever they are already doing, can misfire and can end up doing something superficial.” He said if you think you need a ‘Snapchat strategy,’ then you’re missing the point. “It’s not about doing digital marketing, but how we market effectively in a digital world,” he said.

**Jacqueline Loch**, The Content Council’s Chair and Vice President & Group Publisher, Women’s Group, St. Joseph Communications Media Group from Canada agrees, and believes marketers need to be mindful of the real world around them when creating new campaigns and content. “My mobile device is rarely two feet away from me, and I’m constantly multitasking, researching or looking things up—and that is the reality for most people.”

Loch says that marketers who get caught up in their ‘marketing bubble,’ and think that it’s all about their brand, or a consumer is loyal to them, or that their audience is not distracted or

“My mobile device is rarely two feet away from me, and I’m constantly multitasking, researching or looking things up.”

— **Jacqueline Loch**



working on multiple platforms, are in danger; because what people are doing, what they expect, how they make decisions, and what they prefer is all changing.

It’s recognized that evolution of consumer behavior has been largely driven by the smartphone. According to Pew 77% of US citizens now have one, which they reportedly check up to 150 times a day. The latest Generation, Gen Z, are mobile-first.

**Gary Johnson**, president of MSP-C, says that content may well be in the midst of an incredible devolution, particularly at the hands of mobile. He said: “The essential nature of content may be dramatically affected by the current and future mandates of mobile users. We know that people use mobile devices for chat, social media, and email, and less so for what we think of as ‘real content,’ If they do access content they’re attracted to games, search, and destination-style, utility content on mobile. It will have a profound impact on the type of content brands produce.”



**“The essential nature of content may be dramatically affected by the current and future mandates of mobile users.”**

**— Gary Johnson**

Many of the mediums we use to communicate with our audiences will become obsolete in the not-too-distant future. Websites are on course to be replaced by artificial intelligence: voice-activated devices such as Siri, Google Home, Amazon Echo, and Cortana. Written content is fast being usurped by video. And everyone is demanding relevant information, right time, right place, right device, right now.

It’s these mobile-fueled trends that will have the greatest impact on how marketers will create and deliver content. “It’s thinking about how people make decisions; one of the very last things they want is a tedious website—consumers are looking for quick answers,” says Solis, who conducted research with Google into how people make decisions in ‘micro moments’.

“People just want to get to the next step, in the minutes they have available, while they are looking at their smartphones. So, in some cases voice is going to be the next platform, so is video, or traditional mobile UIs, but not one of them is going to displace the other. What they will all do collectively is make legacy platforms obsolete,” said Solis.

In order to meet new consumer expectations, Solis suggests that marketers reverse-engineer the customer journey and design it with new touch points in mind, borrowing from the 5 W's of Journalism (*who, what, when, where, and why*). “Marketers need to think about being there at the right place, at the right time, delivering the right message, in the right context. Technology should act as an enabler and have a purpose.”

What the future holds can only be speculation. Yet, what we can be sure of is that digital disruption is upon us and will change the marketing playbook as we know it. Data and geolocation technologies, combined with user behaviour patterns, will be required to deliver highly relevant content. If the content is not contextual or delivered in an accessible, multi-device way, it will be ignored.



# THE RISKS

## *12 Reasons Why Your Content Fails*



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Content fails for a myriad of reasons, from poor planning, to poor execution, to lack of buy-in from the C-suite. To get a greater insight into why content fails we spoke to nine content influencers. Here's what they had to say:

01

### CONTENT FAILS BECAUSE... IT ISN'T CREDIBLE

“The producers stop following content best practices—the focus on quality goes away. It’s not iterative. It’s not changing or evolving. It doesn’t test and learn and follow what is working. It’s not transparent, the voice isn’t coming from a credible source.”

**Jacqueline Loch**

Vice President & Group Publisher, Women’s Group,  
St. Joseph Communications Media Group

## 02

### IT DOESN'T FOLLOW A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

“A major problem in the industry continues to be placing tactics—e.g. Facebooking, Twitter-ing, blogging—ahead of strategy. Alternately, confusing a channel or campaign strategy with a content strategy. Without a strategic framework, there’s no way to measure the real success of content initiatives. Instead, marketers are substituting volume metrics (e.g. likes) for business results. Marketing doesn’t exist without content, so content strategy matters.”

**Rebecca Lieb**

Analyst & Founding Partner  
Kaleido Insights

## 03

### IT LACKS FUNCTION

“Content fails when it lacks two things: function and measurable results. And you need both these things. Content is there to provide quantifiable engagement with a brand, empower the consumer, while providing return on investment for the brand. I’ve seen brands pour hard-earned dollars into beautiful, creative work that unfortunately lacks any quantifiable return on investment. And, I’ve seen the inverse as well: work that fails to surprise but delivers loads of data. If that data isn’t used, though, it’s useless.”

**Keith Kawasaki**

VP  
iostudio LLC

# 04

## IT DOESN'T HAVE SUPPORT FROM THE SENIOR TEAM

“Everyone will say content fails because it’s bad. But rarely do you see really good writers and good videographers producing really bad content. It happens because of lack of buy-in from leadership. If the leadership get the full vision they say things like, ‘we need to make sure we have a Twitter measure,’ ‘we need someone in place that’s good with content,’ ‘we need the right tools to measure our progress.’ If the leadership aren’t onboard, you’re setting yourself up to fail.”

**Marcus Sheridan**

Founder & President

The Sales Lion

# 05

## IT DOESN'T AIM TO BUILD AN AUDIENCE

“A mediocre habit is when businesses are not actually thinking about building an audience, they’re thinking: ‘we want engagement,’ or ‘we want leads.’ What they’re not thinking about is: ‘What we really want is an audience who trusts us, who values our communication and we’ll move that customer along at a later point toward our product or service and profit from that.’ Instead, they are focused on short-term indicators, like an increase in website traffic.”

**Joe Pulizzi**

Founder

The Content Marketing Institute

# 06

## IT AIMS TOO LOW

“Brands are failing in content marketing by aiming low: by creating ‘me too’ content instead of ‘wow’ content; by committing random, isolated acts of content, instead of executing well-considered strategies; and by failing to measure what they do. The biggest mistake of all: giving in to stakeholders who don’t know much about marketing in general and content marketing in particular. Today, marketers need to be change agents. That means getting stakeholders on board instead of just caving in to every request.”

**Doug Kessler**

Creative Director & Co-Founder

Velocity Partners Ltd

# 07

## IT'S TOO GENERIC

“One of the ‘anti-best practices’ out there is producing very generic content. There are a lot of marketing companies creating content for service companies that fall into this—a lot of it doesn’t sound any different from anybody else. For many, if you covered up the logo and read through the content you wouldn’t get a sense of who the company is.”

**Ann Handley**

Chief Content Officer

MarketingProfs

# 08

## IT'S OF MEDIUM QUALITY

“The most common failure is people who just publish one medium-quality blog post after another, thinking that they will eventually succeed. They never really figure out search. They never look at analytics. They never think deeply about their audience. The internet is not waiting for another medium-quality blog post. The most common mistake is just wasting time and never going to the next level.”

**Andy Crestodina**

Co-Founder & Strategic  
Director, Orbit Media Studios

# 09

## IT DOESN'T MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE AUDIENCE

“I think the great failing of content marketing, a common pitfall, is that people don't make an appointment with the audience. They don't set a time where they are going to consistently deliver quality content that adds value to the audience's life, nor do they invite people to subscribe to that content.”

**Andrew Davis**

Keynote Speaker  
& Bestselling Author

# 10

## IT DOESN'T REFLECT CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

“There’s a funny thing that happens with marketers and content producers when they are working on projects, is that they forget how they act at home, when they are in their regular consumer lives. Marketers tend to get into their ‘marketing bubble,’ where they think that it’s all about their brand, and a consumer is loyal to them and they are not distracted, that they’re not working on multiple platforms; that’s where the real danger is.”

**Jacqueline Loch**

Vice President & Group Publisher, Women’s Group  
St. Joseph Communications Media Group

# 11

## IT’S CREATED FOR THE SAKE OF IT

“I see time and time again where companies will launch a blog or do a YouTube series without any idea about how they are going to demonstrate ROI. Companies should not just do content for content’s sake. They need to figure out what their goals are and wrap their content around those.”

**Ann Handley**

Chief Content Officer  
MarketingProfs

# 12 IT DOESN'T SUPPORT THE SALES TEAM

“You’ll see a lot of content out there that might look good, or get shares on Facebook, but never generates a lead. The likes of Coca-Cola can afford to do that. But 99 per cent of businesses can’t do that. The majority of the real SMEs, like the RiverPools of the world, have got to show results. So you can’t spend time creating fluff content; you’ve got to produce content that will help your sales team tomorrow. That other stuff might sound really nice, and it might be talked about on stage, but it doesn’t help most businesses.”

**Marcus Sheridan**

Founder & President

The Sales Lion

# THE RISKS

## *My Biggest Content Marketing Mistake*

6 INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS SHARE THEIR STORIES

**“Anyone who doesn’t** have example of a failure in content marketing is lying, or isn’t actually doing the work, they’re just talking about it,” says The Sales Lion, Marcus Sheridan. He admits that in the early days of turning his pool company around, and subsequently as a marketing and sales consultant, he has made many mistakes. Here he and five other content marketing experts share their stories of content marketing risks they took that didn’t pay off.

#MISTAKE:

### **Didn’t tailor the content to the audience**

**Andy Crestodina, Co-founder & Strategic Director, Orbit Media Studios**

“My biggest personal mistake was earlier this year, and it is very specific. One content format for me is giving presentations. I gave a presentation at a conference and it bombed. It was horrible. It was the worst presentation of my life. My problem was, I gave the highest rated presentation the year before,

and I went in with a lot of confidence. But in my planning I had an idea to change my presentation, so the presentation I gave did not match the program. This is a sin in events. It's a terrible mistake. The topic I gave the presentation on was at the very edge of my knowledge. The audience was much more advanced on it than me, and there were members who found it irrelevant.

“The feedback was painful. The comments on the speaker feedback forms said things like: ‘complete disaster,’ ‘the biggest disappointment of the conference,’ ‘this was total garbage.’ It was not unkind of them to give me that feedback. They were absolutely correct. I gave a horrible presentation. It was very humbling, and it's not a mistake I will make again.”

#MISTAKE:

## **Set unachievable goals**

**Andrew Davis, Marketing Speaker & Bestselling Author**

“I started a podcast called ‘Claim Your Fame’ a few years ago, and while I was really excited about the podcast it did not pay off. I had very high expectations for myself and for what the podcast should be, and I got too over-involved in creating the best possible podcast from the very beginning instead of growing into it. As a result, I got 13–14 episodes in and I couldn't handle the work, or the process, because it was too overwhelming.”

#MISTAKE:

## **Tried to make the content funny**

**Doug Kessler, Partner & Co-founder, Velocity Partners**

“We did what we thought would be a funny video and it flopped. The piece was called Stepping Into The Future!, a video that we thought would be entertaining, based on black and white archive footage, with funny voices replacing the characters’ real voices. Turns out it wasn’t.

It was supposed to be a light piece of entertainment for fellow content marketers, with some inside jokes and a reference to the operations side of things. The point was just to get our name associated with the science of content marketing, not just the art. At the time of pressing ‘publish’ I thought we had hit that target. We hadn’t. It landed with a dull thud. Very few views. Even fewer shares. In fact, even the people featured in the film didn’t share it. In short: tumbleweeds.

“It’s always a big risk to try to be funny in content marketing, so we usually avoid it. Charm and wit are fine, but overt comedy is a high-wire act best left to the pros.”

#MISTAKE:

## Didn't oversee all the elements of a project

Jacqueline Loch, Vice President & Group Publisher, Women's Group, St. Joseph Communications Media Group

"I had blind-faith trust in a team. This is an example of a large content marketing project that we did for a large packaged goods company. We had a really amazing team working on print, digital, and social media, the full 360. We flawlessly created the content, flawlessly executed the print component, we created a portfolio of assets, and then, for some reason, because the website build was a website build, we let the digital team take over by themselves and build out the digital without the oversight from the core team who understood the objectives and the client.

"What happened was the relationship with the client eroded. We ended up in a position where the client had a very poor experience which could have been avoided. The result? Although we ended up delivering the program with unbelievable results, we weren't able to renew the contract. It was a real mistake. You cannot just 'set it and let it', you have to stay involved and make sure you're with the client the whole way."

#MISTAKE:

## **Expected too much of staff**

**Marcus Sheridan, Founder, The Sales Lion**

“I used to think that everyone could be a good writer. That was not a smart strategy. Trying to take someone who is not a writer, and then make them into a writer is a dumb move. It’s much easier to train a writer to be a marketer, than it is to train a marketer to be a good writer. It took me two years to realize this.

“Another mistake I’ve made is just throwing people on video without training them. They get on video, and everyone’s excited about it until you see the final product, and realize they suck on camera. I used to tell people to just shoot videos. Now I’m more cautious and recommend they have a bit of training on camera performance, in terms of how to carry themselves, before going in front of the lens. I used to think you could tell someone to go, and they would go, that’s not the case at all.”

#MISTAKE:

## **Hadn’t anticipated the impact the content would have on the wider company**

**Tim Washer, Creative Director, Cisco’s SP Marketing Group**

“Back in 2010 we thought it would be funny to do a parody of an Old Spice ad. It was a very silly no-budget tech version of it. We had a video team but we didn’t hire an agency. There was nothing sexy about it. It only cost us a few thousand dollars to

make. Our aim was to get responses from five of our top analysts and we hit that goal. One of the analysts said he laughed so hard he wet his pants (I'm pretty sure he was exaggerating, but I've never gotten that confirmed). The problem was that a lot of other people saw the skit who weren't in our industry, and criticized us for copying the idea and doing a lame job of it. Although our target market got the joke and my executives in our group loved it, people outside our industry wrote a lot of negative reviews and our company's sentiment rating dropped dramatically. So that was a painful lesson to learn."



*Content Marketers Risking It All*

## **SEVEN STORIES**

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Content marketing is all about playing the long game, combined with taking a risk and going all-out for something new. Marketers know that. It's often the C-Suite, holding the purse strings and wanting quarterly results, who find it hard to buy into this philosophy. Yet here, in the following case studies, you'll see seven examples of marketers who have fought in their corners, stuck to their guns and been resolute in their commitment to the content marketing discipline. Each have achieved amazing results.



#RISK 1:

## Ditching the advertising budget and going all-in with content

The Small Business Revolution—the brainchild of Deluxe’s chief brand and communications officer Amanda Brinkman—originally launched in 2015 to mark Deluxe’s 100th anniversary and sought to tell the stories of 100 small businesses around the nation. After the initiative launched, it gained momentum and from it spawned a 30-minute documentary and an eight-part series fronted by Brinkman and “Shark Tank” investor Robert Herjavec. Such was its popularity, it is currently airing its second season on YouTube and on [deluxe.com/small-business-revolution](https://deluxe.com/small-business-revolution).

Brinkman’s Small Business Revolution success is down to what she calls her “mission first, branding second approach” that means spending her relatively small budget on content rather than traditional advertising. With more than 2 billion impressions and almost 800 stories penned about the program, Brinkman says her organic approach to marketing has earned Deluxe 12 times the reach and impressions of a traditional media buy with the same spend.

## ***Brinkman's story in her own words:***

“Historically Deluxe didn’t spend a lot on brand awareness, and when it did it was being outspent by about 14-to-1 by its competitors. At that lower spend level Deluxe wasn’t able to use ad campaigns to really change perceptions at a large enough scale. I wanted to raise Deluxe’s brand awareness with small businesses while doing something good for them. Instead of just talking at them with an ad campaign, I wanted to start a movement that would support small businesses. From that the Small Business Revolution was born.

“I wanted to do something different from what Deluxe had done before. It took some selling to explain that it wasn’t going to be measurement oriented like we had done before; instead we would be making beautiful films. That was definitely a mind shift [for the company]. Instead of investing the little budget we did have on advertising, I suggested we invest it in content and making films. We’d rely on the public to help spread the content in a way that we couldn’t afford to do from a paid perspective. The shift was relying on earned media, organic shares in social and articles being written about the program. Our CEO has been remarkably supportive of this and is giving the idea the time it needs to build momentum.”

“You can earn more impressions by doing something that people want to spend some time with, than you can just paying for those impressions, or paying for your content to be out there. We took our small budget and carved out a significant proportion of it and dedicated it to film. We took it out of TV and online advertising and used it to pay the documentary company. I believed that the return we would get on that same investment would earn Deluxe more impressions, because people would organically want to spend time with the content, helping justify the cost.”

#RISK:

## Backing only 10% of content produced

Under the guidance of its global media and content strategist Luke Kintigh, Intel has grown the company's digital iQ by Intel magazine's audience from zero to 3-plus million in three years, as well as changing the perception of the brand from being a PC-only company to one that is driving innovation across the entire spectrum of technology from Internet of Things, to drones, to the maker movement. How? Kintigh says it has all been down to recognizing that only a small proportion of content is effective, and using all the budget to support that.

### ***Luke Kintigh:***

"We know that only 10 percent of our content drives 90 percent of our engagement and traffic. We see that when we put out different versions of a particular post—only 10 percent will perform. Out of the 25-30 posts we publish each month, usually only three or four posts will do most of the work when it comes to driving traffic. What this has taught us, and how it informs our strategy when we promote content, is that we have to figure out what that 10 percent content is at any given time. We then double down on that top 10 percent by shifting our time, energy and investments away from the other 90 percent. It's really like playing money ball with our paid investments."

#RISK:

## Creating content with no call to action

The best-selling author and marketer Andrew Davis, who advises Fortune 500 CEOs, believes that the best kind of content has no call to action.

***Andrew Davis:***

“One of my favorite examples of content with no call to action comes from Tractor Supply. It has partnered with the Chicken Whisperer, who creates content for Tractor Supply every day. He has a daily online radio program aimed at passionate backyard poultry enthusiasts. This show has inspired a whole new generation of people eager to get into backyard poultry. The Chicken Whisperer never tells listeners to go to Tractor Supply and buy a baby chick; there is no CTA on his show. All he does is talk about how fun raising chickens is, and the problems and educational opportunities that come out of this hobby. Yet what has happened is people have been inspired by his shows. They’ve wanted to come and meet him at a Tractor Supply store, and when they’ve gotten there, they’ve bought a \$4 chick. They’ve then realized they need to spend \$600 on equipment that will keep that chick alive (which Tractor Supply happens to stock). It’s a great business model. It’s very simple.”

#RISK:

## Injecting humor

The comedian, comedy writer and marketer Tim Washer first used comedy in B2B marketing for IBM back in 2006. He said creating the comedic video was a huge risk, and thought he might even be fired for posting it. Yet the video, the first ever B2B comedy series on YouTube, went on to win Washer a Comedy Central award and earn him a promotion.

### ***Tim Washer:***

“When you work for a large corporation trying to manage offices across 30-40 countries all with different cultures, there are often bureaucratic policies in place to protect the brand. Unfortunately, that creates a risk-averse culture and people regress to the mean and say: ‘Here’s what we did in the last video that was approved and nobody got fired for it, so let’s just do that again.’ The way I got around that was by starting small. My first proposal for comedy was for an internal sales meeting for IBM’s mainframe division. It was just a small group of people. It wasn’t going to be online. It was to be shown at a sales event, so I was mitigating some of the risk. I persuaded IBM to give me a small budget so I could create something funny for that meeting, which turned out to be a huge success.”

#RISK:

## Breaking with convention

Will Travis, the executive chairman of Sid Lee USA, was fed up with going to conferences in dark and dingy venues with only a sad sandwich on offer at lunchtime. After he and a team of Sid Lee's leaders attended The Burning Man festival in the Nevada desert and TED in Vancouver, they conceived C2Montreal, an innovation conference intended to bridge the worlds of commerce and creativity.

Now each May C2Montreal hosts 6,500 thought leaders from 60 countries for a three-day extravaganza of education, innovation, and entertainment. An example of one of the thought-provoking environments on offer there is the Sky Lab, where groups of five discuss business challenges while sitting in chairs suspended 20 feet off the ground.

### ***Will Travis:***

“Traditional conferences aren't built for a holistic, human experience. Even though it's live, it's presented as a one-way experience, which makes no sense—you've got all these people who have travelled for a human two-way experience, and yet the majority of the program is like you are watching a screen. At C2 we connect like-minded people and give them places to meet, like a three-minute blind date Ferris wheel session, so that they don't have to log into an hour-long session with someone with halitosis, or engage with someone they've no interest in.

“C2 doesn’t house you in one big smelly, sweaty room. We’ve got lots of different microcosms of influence from food, art, or technology. There are workshops where you pick up, hold and build something. We facilitate conversations that you can be part of, where your thoughts contribute to the discussion, rather than let the person who puts their hand up in front of a 300-strong audience and has the loudest mouth and highest confidence, dominate. The silos of engagement are broken down into smaller plots to make it constructive. So, the three days become extremely rich melting pots of discussions with people from all over the world you would never normally meet.”

#RISK:

## Ditching the brand-focused content

Since Amanda Todorovich joined the Cleveland Clinic in 2013 and launched its Health Essentials blog, she has grown it from zero visits per month to 5 million, without mentioning the Cleveland Clinic brand at all. Todorovich’s work has been such a success she was named The Content Marketing Institute’s Content Marketer of the Year in 2016.

### ***Amanda Todorovich:***

“When we first started the blog there was a little bit more about Cleveland Clinic in there, but now it is not there at all. We had to demonstrate that the unbranded content was resonating with our audience, and had to use data to show how the content was working. By doing that, we were able to weed out the brand-related content and stick to our strategy.

“Part of what has enabled us to stay true to creating unbranded content, and being really strict about it, is that we have developed partnerships with other organizations and we’ve been accepted into the Google News Network. If we write content that’s promotional, those kinds of opportunities go away.”

#RISK:

## Answering questions honestly, even the tricky ones

The Sales Lion, and the former CEO of River Pools and Spas, Marcus Sheridan shot to fame by turning his almost-bankrupt swimming pool company around by using content marketing. He pivoted his communication strategy and focused on putting his audience first. Instead of going out and communicating to all the people he wanted to target, he focused on becoming the leading teacher around fiberglass pools. What he did was help his audience first, and sell to them second.

### ***Marcus Sheridan:***

“The questions I used to get asked the most when I was a pool guy selling fiberglass pools was: ‘What’s the difference between fiberglass pools and concrete pools, and why should I choose fiberglass?’ Now the traditional answer, and the old-school method, would be to give a bunch of reasons why fiberglass pools are best. But the problem is that those answers are immediately biased, and the reader, viewer, or listener recognizes that. So, in-

stead of doing that, the smarter approach is to come right out and say we recognize that fiberglass pools are not necessarily the best solution for everyone who is looking for a swimming pool (even though fiberglass pools are the only things we sell). There are times where concrete pools might be the better option.

“What an article or video like this is going to do is explain the pros and cons of both types of pools to the audience so that they can decide which is the best choice for them. Ultimately, all buyers want to feel like they are in charge of the buying process. They don’t like being forced into anything. If sales professionals can learn to back off and say here’s who we are, and we’re not a good fit for you, all of a sudden the buyer says ‘my goodness this company is shooting straight with me, they’re different from everyone else.’ They tend to believe you much faster and want to be a part of that thing you offer, that’s the beauty behind it.” ■



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