



2019


The State of Content Marketing

Top class content needs
to be leveraged to meet
growing expectations.







Welcome to the third annual State of Content Marketing Survey – a take on the UK’s thoughts, feelings and opinions on this wonderful industry.



It seems incredible now to think just how far the industry has come in that short time. ‘Back then’ only 6% of marketers felt they knew what world class output really looked like, while now that’s more than a third of you!





And to summarise results from the 2019 survey I’d simply say ‘We’ve come a long way. But still have a way to go...’




If we look back to 2017 just 70% of marketers found the discipline to be effective for their brand. Much of that was driven by a distinct lack of knowledge around its use.

And with knowledge comes results! 96% of you are now saying that understanding is translating to results and that it is increasingly moving out of the silo and into a fully integrated marketing place.

We still have a long, long way to go however and that’s the bit that ensures I leap out of bed in the mornings! With technology opening up new channels and possibilities of reach and revenue as well as the opportunity for personal growth and learning.



Voice, augmented reality, the growth of account-based marketing, the changing face of search and the increasing demand for more ‘native’ advertising all offer opportunity and confusion in equal measure.



To be the best you must never stop moving and it's why the results of this survey are so important, giving us all the chance to share learnings and benchmark ourselves against the real world view.

Read on and enjoy....!



Simon Penson
Founder, Zazzle Media

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A shifting industry

In early 2019, we reached out to thousands of marketing decision makers, to gather their opinions and understand their experiences of and challenges with content marketing, for our third annual State of Content Marketing survey.

Here are those findings – they make for interesting reading...

The 2019 results are in...

Before we dive straight into the detail it's worth reminding ourselves of last year's major takeaways – one of the biggest was execution.

Many knew they should be doing content marketing but were not seeing the results they expected from it, which was understandably frustrating for everyone involved. This roadblock created a bit of a standstill for many of the marketers we surveyed.

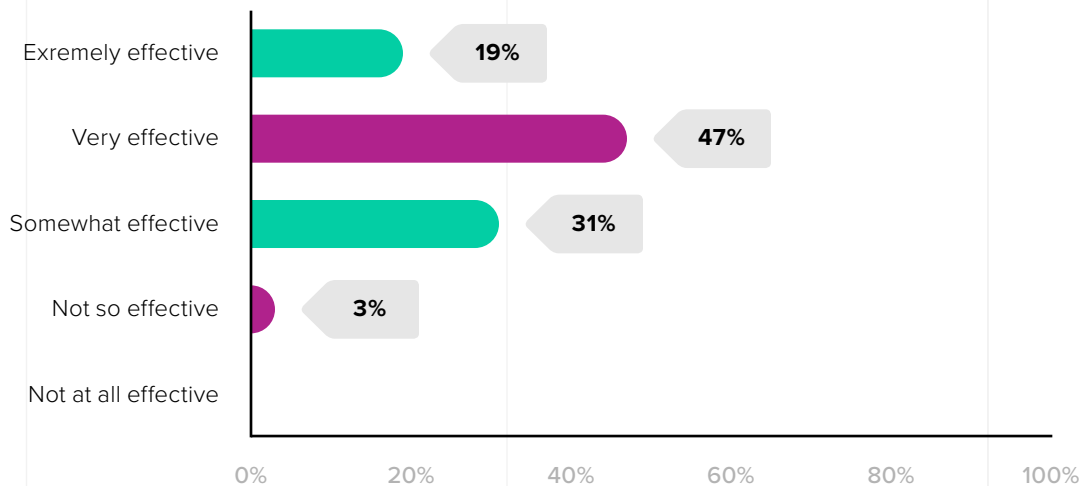
But in 2019, **96%** of our marketing decision makers say content marketing is effective for their brand.

This has **risen by a third** in the last 12 months, which is huge! There has obviously been a lot of learning in the past year to see such an increase in effective execution.

In the 2018 results, we found that marketers needed 'confidence in content' – many people were unsure about how to correctly execute and measure their campaigns. The 2019

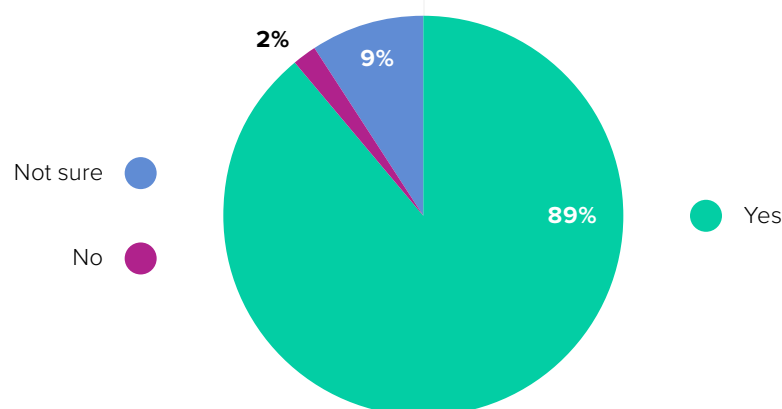
effectiveness stat, below, shows that confidence is growing.

How effective would you say content marketing is for your brand?



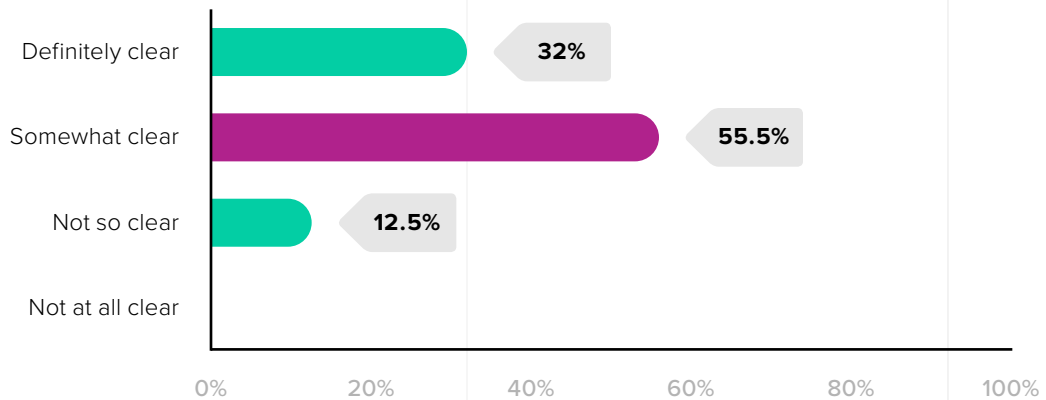
It appears that integration has improved too – 89% of our marketers agreed their marketing was linked to other parts of the business, compared to only 45% in 2018. This growing awareness that marketing activity needs to be tied to wider business goals is positive in many ways – it leads to better knowledge from decision makers, purse string holders and those executing the plans. It is clear a more integrated campaign can lead to stronger results and proven ROI.

Does your content marketing tie into wider business goals?



Just like effectiveness, and integration, marketing knowledge is consistently growing year on year – with a third of surveyed marketers telling us they are ‘definitely clear’ on the best way to run a content marketing campaign.

Would you say your organisation is clear on how to best run a successful content marketing campaign/strategy?



This has improved by 10% on 2018’s results, showing a rapid level of education within the industry, although there is clearly still some way to go to complete understanding of the practice.

Increased knowledge on execution will reap better results. And with this comes bigger investment...

We asked what percentage of the marketing budget is solely focused on content marketing – and a monumental **78% increase** on last year’s average of 23%, means now **41%** is spent on content marketing! Almost half!

The amount of budget spent on content marketing has almost doubled



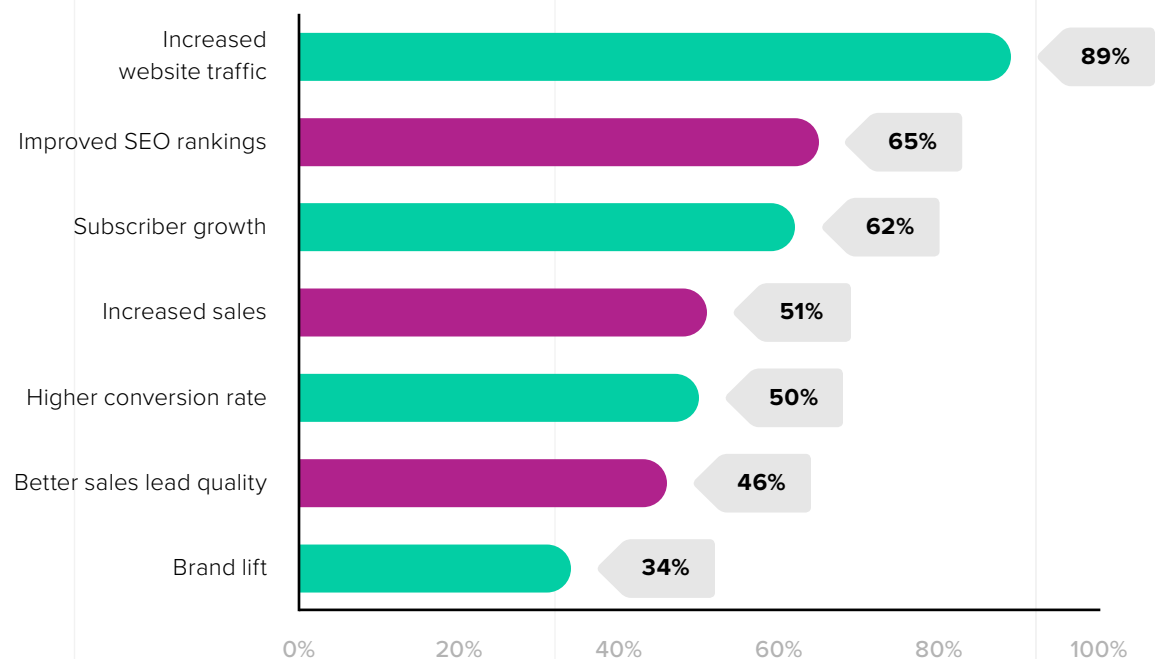
And almost two thirds (61%) of our marketers expect this to rise next year too. This higher awareness of content marketing is causing more money to be spent, therefore more reason to learn and execute in the 'best way' with those all important purse-holders needing justification on spend.


Changing regulations

Something that impacted all marketers in the past year is GDPR – it would be difficult to examine the marketing landscape and not discuss the huge changes this caused.

Introduced last May, this huge shift in data processing and holding shook up the way marketers were able to contact their audience. And it's true impact really shows when we look at the aims of marketers across the content marketing landscape.

How do you measure the success of content marketing?





While 'brand lift' stayed the same at 34% compared to last year, it was pushed out of the top three by Subscriber Growth with 62%.

It appears as though marketing professionals are looking to provide more and more value to those contacts already engaged with their brand. They value this over general brand engagement, and this is likely due to the widespread awareness of GDPR. Since many brands lost the ability to contact droves of people in their database, it appears the focus has shifted to growing that smaller pot of engaged individuals.

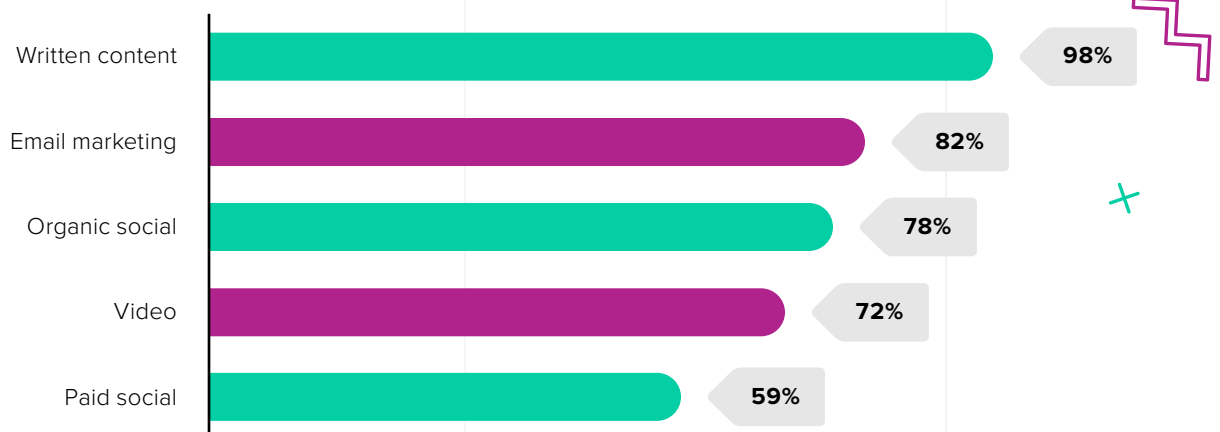
This result highlights the importance of channels such as ABM, [Conversation Mapping](#), and general content marketing, where delivering valuable content to an engaged audience is an important step in order to grow subscribers. By building brand trust and supplying your consumers with content to answer their micro-moments, they start to create a personal affinity with your business.

Content and innovation

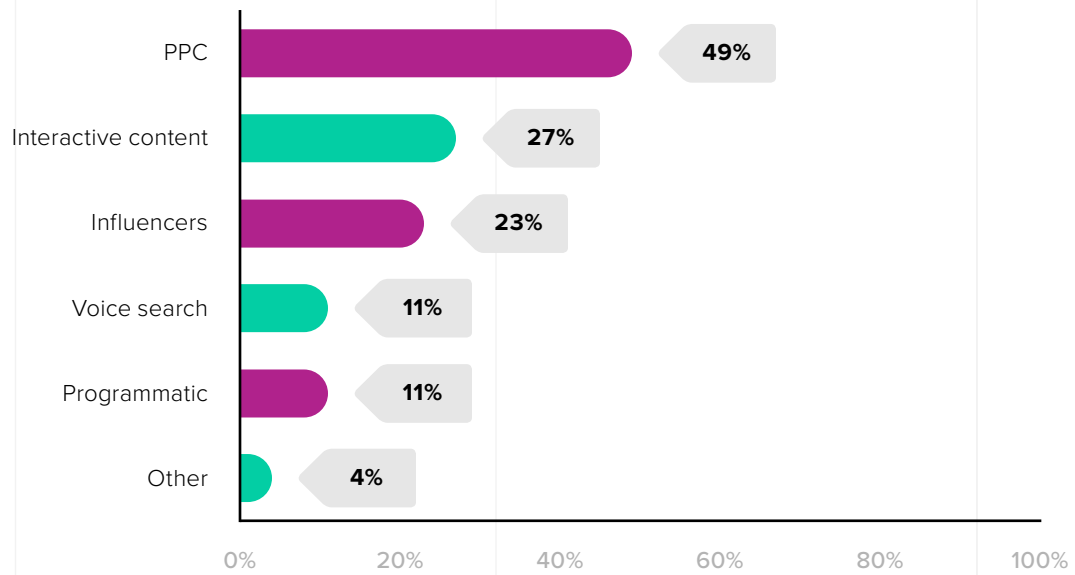
We champion emerging tech here at Zazzle Media. And last year we saw a great increase in the uptake of voice search. This continues through into 2019, where 11% of marketers are currently optimising for a voice search strategy – compared to just 3% last year!

Below are the top types of content used throughout the marketing industry. Unsurprisingly, written content still reigns supreme with 97%. With such a large percentage of marketers using this channel, the next step for those is ensuring every step of their content journey is optimised – we've written extensively on this subject, so whatever your content needs are you can find the answer [in this guide](#).

Video continues to grow in popularity. This has risen for three years consistently, peaking at 72%. Visual types of content are growing, with interactive content going from 20% to 26%. But they still have some way to go before overtaking the written word!

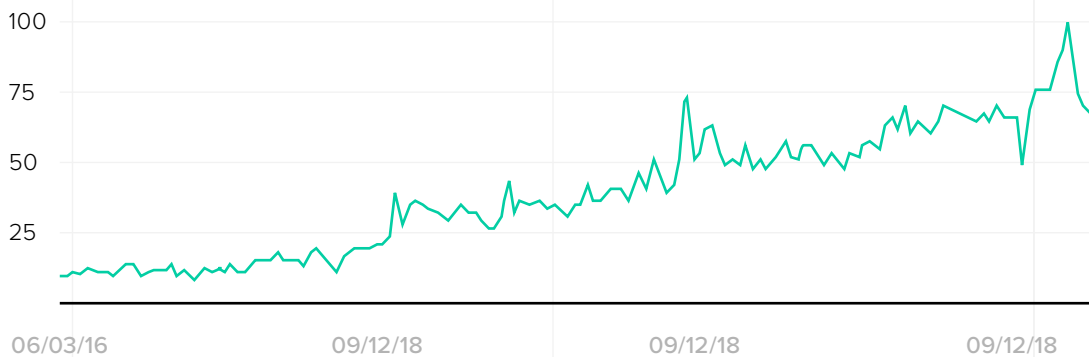


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Influencers

The curiosity around influencers has rocketed in recent years, rising 614% for searches since 2016. In the 2018 survey results, it appeared as though influencers could be losing their influence and now, contradictory to rising interest, marketers using influencers has dropped to 23% in 2019.



But for those who did use influencers, **zero** said it did not produce tangible results for them. Some believed it was too soon to tell, but the majority (61%) said influencers

definitely delivered results for their brand. And of those who previously used influencers, **every single** one of them said they would use influencers again.



100%

of respondents said that they would use influencers in their next content marketing strategy

So influencers work, but less are using them? It looks like during the rise of influencers, brands felt that they should work this channel. But as influencers have become more mainstream and widely used, it has become apparent that influencers don't work for everyone.

But these stats make it obvious, that when they work, they really do work for the right brands. And those who just jumped on the influencer bandwagon are recognising this channel is not for them.

The slight dip in popularity is perhaps due to the constant press on the prevalence of influencers and transparency about #ads. The pool of brands using influencers has thinned, but they are definitely producing results for those who are forging these new partnerships.

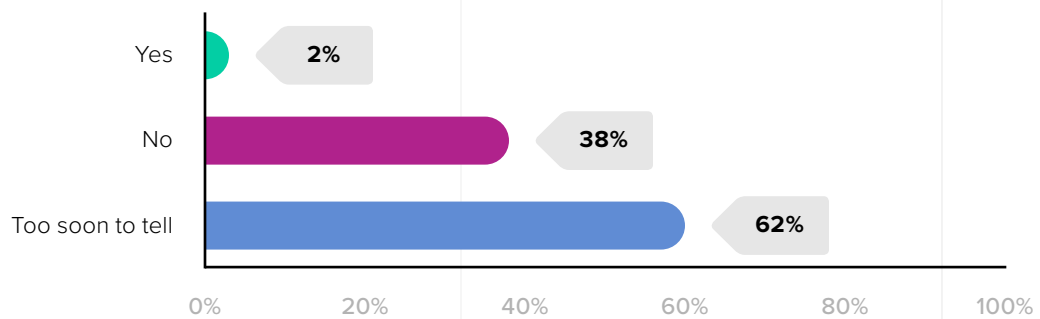
Voice search

It seems voice search, though enjoying slight growth this year, is not fully understood by the wider industry. For voice to get to tipping point, the technology needs to reach its 'conversational moment'.

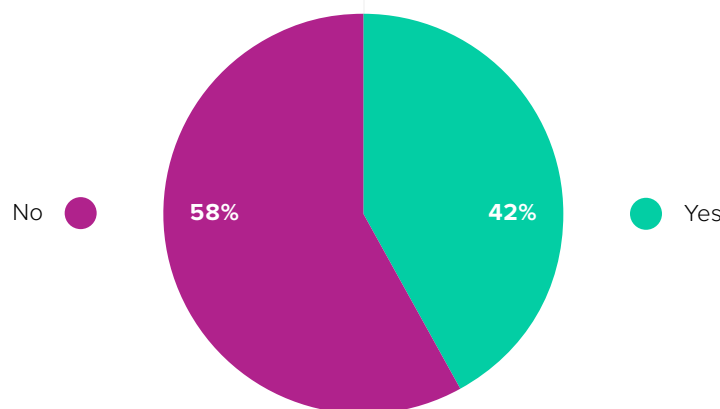
Therefore, the importance of preparing now should not be underestimated.

Though growing slightly, still only 1 in 10 marketers are using voice as part of their plans, and even then, turning the opportunity into reality has not been fully realised across the industry, with only 2% finding that it returned tangible results for them.

Has voice search has delivered tangible results for your organisation?



Are you planning on optimising for voice search again in 2019?



There are also obviously still some issues with measurement and attribution of voice search value. Marketers need to be aware of the ways in which they can measure their voice strategy results, or risk less investment in this growing area. Without proven ROI, it will be hard to get those big investments of money and time, so this must be a focus for those working on voice search strategies.

Goals & Distribution

Content is nothing if no one sees it.

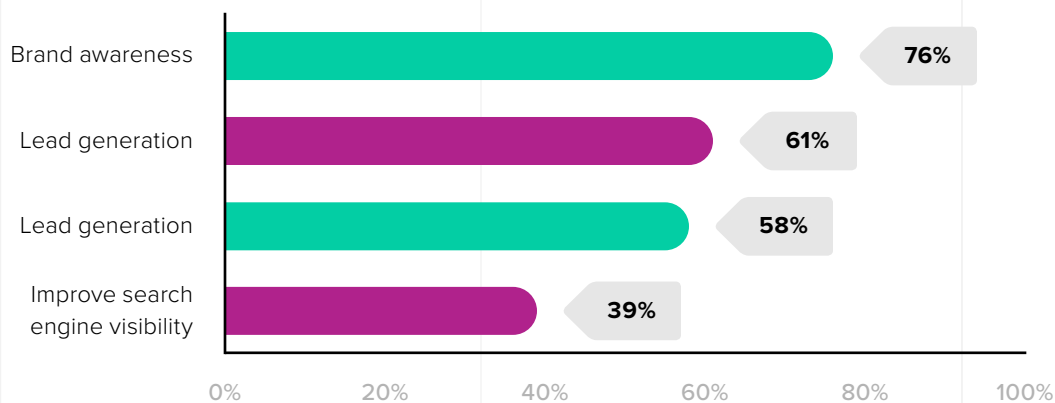
Distribution is paramount for any complete campaign plan, as content has to reach that audience of value to be appreciated.

But how are brands currently handling their content distribution?

Marketing objectives

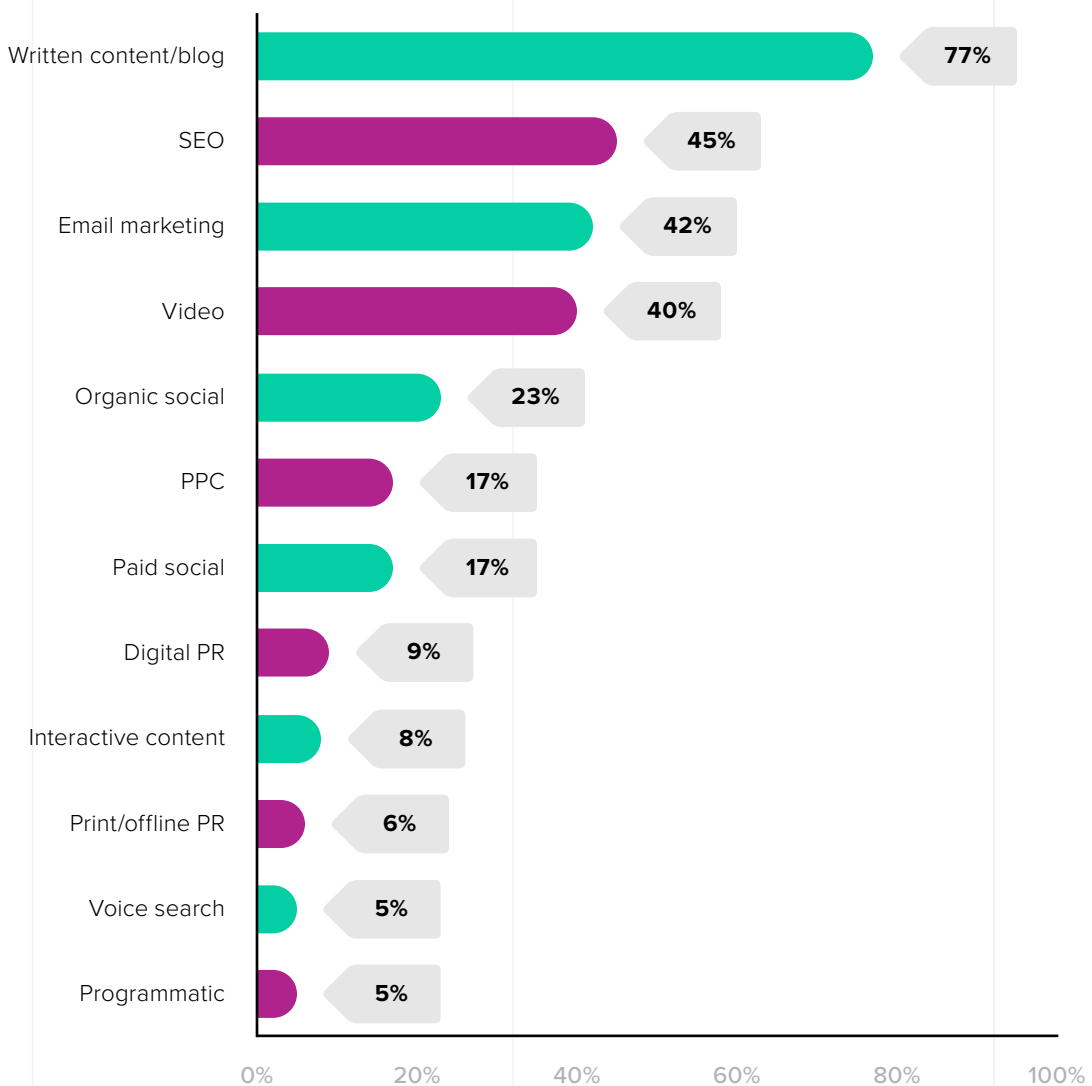
All marketing comes back to people. Creating content for a valuable target audience is only one step of the process. Below, we can see over $\frac{3}{4}$, of marketers want brand awareness from their marketing efforts.

Please select the key goals that your company has when it pursues content marketing?



And so to get content in front of the right people, the next step is to distribute. But yet less than 1 in 10 marketers are focusing on Digital PR in 2019.

What channels will be your top focuses for content marketing in 2019?



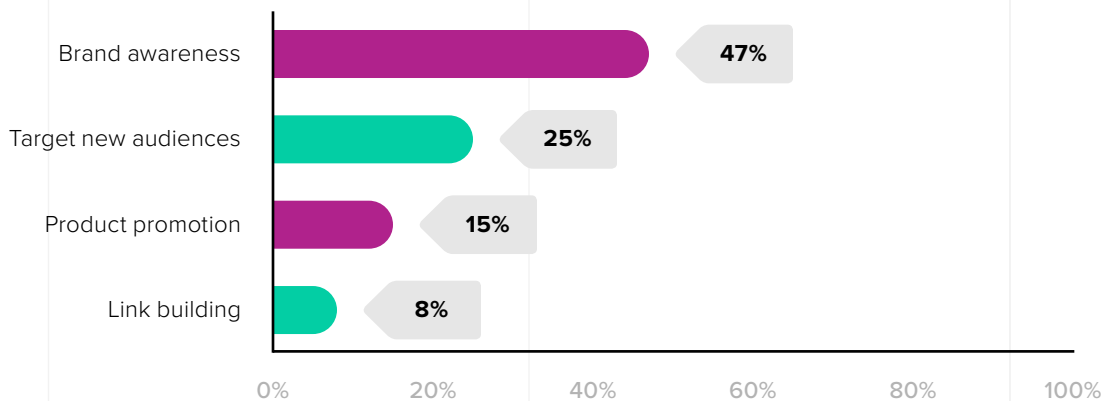
As expected, with the growth of value in 'subscriber growth' that we saw earlier, email marketing is up there with 42%. It is definitely growing in the front of marketers minds as they have to be hyper-aware of what they are sending and distributing via email channels, because of GDPR.

But if brands are not utilising Digital PR how can they expect to get brand awareness in return? Making the most of the audience you currently hold is great, but those people are already aware of your brand – that's why they subscribe.

Content distribution

Our surveyed marketers want brand awareness from their content marketing efforts. Below we can see that the main objectives for content distribution are also brand awareness and targeting new audiences.

What is your main objective for your content distribution efforts?



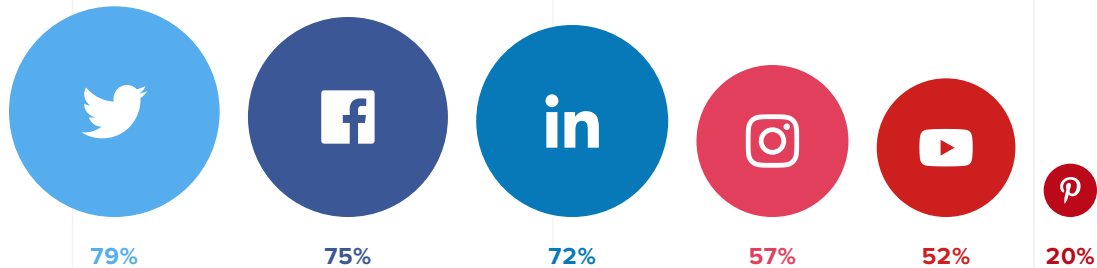
To achieve brand awareness you need to get your content in front of a new audience. As we can see above, a quarter of marketers want to target new audiences through content distribution, but without Digital PR this will prove to be a difficult task.

Getting content in front of new users through a multichannel distribution campaign is so important. These new people then find an attachment to your brand and messaging and then in turn, subscribe later after they've been nurtured into the funnel by your, no doubt, excellent content.

Social Media

When it comes to **where** brands distribute content, there were some interesting results on social media.

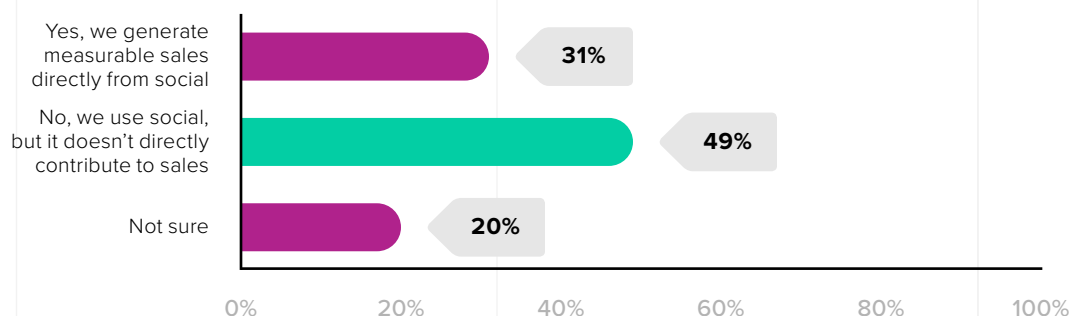
What social media channels does your organisation use to distribute content?



Instagram has pushed out Youtube for 4th place in the social media rankings. Again, dependent on your industry, Instagram could be an amazing tool to visually appeal to your audience. This isn't the right approach for everyone but certainly for highly visual industries, such as retail and travel brands, this is key.

This is proven further by the fact that half of our marketers admitted that though they use social media, they do not generate tangible results from it.

Do you find you actually generate tangible sales/business results through social media?



For the right brands and verticals it is a crucial part of their strategy and it works – but not for everyone. Marketing has never been a one size fits all type of strategy, but it should always come back to people.

If your target audience is on Instagram, then you should be too, it's as easy as that.

The round up...

Now that brands are more confident than ever with their content marketing prowess, they need to learn how to leverage it. Utilising content as the building blocks for a complete campaign is the first step, then to get results, it is necessary to distribute effectively. We can see that social and influencers work for the **RIGHT** brands, and that digital PR is needed to get in front of new eyeballs. All the while making the most of the audience you already have.

Content marketing (and any digital strategy for that matter) has a lot of moving parts. Learning and iterating your process is important to getting those results – and it's great to see the industry moving this way by expanding their knowledge and execution of content creation. Now to maximise those results, and prove that all important ROI, marketers must have sharing plans to match the effort they put into the content.

Now that content is tied up in wider business plans, using strategies such as voice search and more 'innovative' channels, can be more accessible to brands. But learning around attribution of results is the most important roadblock in this area. Marketing always comes back to proving results for those who hold the purse-strings, and though we've seen that they are willing to dish out a bit more on marketing this year, it will be interesting to see if 2020 (!) brings the same level of intellectual, time and monetary investment.

Thank you for reading!

We hope that you find the results of our annual survey as interesting as we did, with the results giving you an insight into the minds and strategies of some of the UK's finest marketing teams. You can check out the previous years results [here](#), and [here](#), to see how far the content marketing industry has come!

We pride ourselves in producing thought leading surveys, tools, blogs and eBooks in the content marketing space and 2019 is no different.

If you have any questions about the survey results or would like more information about the results please contact us.

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