

# 2011 Trends: Content Marketing Is Critical

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Next year, marketers will need to rethink their approach to advertising and marketing and intensify their focus on creating magnetic content that will naturally attract consumers, rather than relying solely on the interruption model of advertising, which consumers are responding to less and less.

Think pull vs. push.

Magnetic content can include anything created on behalf of a brand—be it an ad, YouTube video, online game, Facebook page, Twitter promo or mobile app—that consumers genuinely want to engage with and pass along to others. This content entertains, amuses, informs, serves a function or satisfies a consumer need. It's welcome instead of annoying or interruptive.

Marketers, especially those working in social media, have seen the proven value of branded content, sometimes also referred to as "earned media."

Nearly three-quarters of US companies with a social media strategy used such content in their campaigns, making it the most common type of content used, according to a June 2010 study by King Fish Media, HubSpot and Junta42.

Creating effective, breakthrough advertising has always been a challenge for marketers, as well as for the agencies charged with the task. But the classic interruption-disruption model of advertising is moribund.

Marketers should ask themselves five questions about the magnetic content they are seeking to create to determine whether it will be truly attractive to their audience:

1. Is the content unique?  
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2. Is the content useful?  
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3. Is the content well executed?  
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4. Is the content fun?  
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5. Does the content make good use of the channel in which it appears (e.g., social, mobile, video)?

Marketers should base their magnetic content ideas on well-researched customer behaviors, attitudes and lifestyles.

This entails altering your emphasis in marketing from "selling product" to identifying and solving a consumer need or want that transcends or complements the physical product or service you are selling.

Ask yourself this critical question: Besides your product, what can you do for the consumer?

For more information on marketing developments expected next year, stay tuned for the forthcoming eMarketer report "11 Trends for 2011."

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