

# Lessons from Coca-Cola's content excellence strategy

By [Joseph Neusu](#)

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Content is the connective thread of all marketing. This might sound like a bold declaration I know but in actual fact, this status quo shouldn't be surprising.

Content has been elevated to play a prominent role by the dynamics of the Age of the Consumer. This is a hard earned position as empirical data shows that businesses that engage in content marketing are bound to enjoy greater yields from their efforts than the ones that do not.

A lot of literature that helps marketers to develop a good understanding of the content marketing ecosystem has been published. Unfortunately, this has been skewed against discussions on the need to produce quality social media friendly content that wins.

Important questions like what is creative and compelling content, what formats work well for desktop and on mobile devices, how can one create engaging and shareable content, what is the relationship between content and business goals need to be addressed? Giving them scant consideration ultimately leads to failure.

Success is not by accident. The application of winning best practices in content creation and distribution creates the right environment for great return on investment.



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I am inspired by Coca-Cola's content strategy. I handpicked the beverage manufacturer because the company has demonstrated an unusual habit of constantly hitting the bull's eye with their marketing. Raise your hand if you disagree!

Coca-Cola moved from creative excellence to content excellence a few years ago. This shift was necessitated by the changes brought about by social media tools. These days customers are empowered, control the purchase journey and they can create, publish, as well as share their content.

The landscape has changes and with it, the mind-set of most customers. So what are the lessons that brands can learn from Coke's content excellence strategy?

## **Liquid content**

The goal of content excellence is to create contagious ideas that diffuse with ease. Fundamentally, the content must have viral triggers as digital marketing benefits from the sharing economy. I like the fact that it is driven by content that delights, educates and informs.

The basic ingredients of liquid content comprise of the traditional elements of storytelling: compelling characters, plot, suspense and surprises, among many other things. According to one content marketing expert, "create content that begs to be shared".

## **Linked content**

Content can produce a positive return on investment if it is relevant to the company's goals (brand awareness, traffic, educating the customers etc) and customers' interests. It must also be congruent to the company's mission and values.

Producing content that is not configured to match the interests of both the brands and their customers is counter-productive in the long term. I always find it hard to leave out this quote in my conversations, "A marketing message that excludes knowledge of the audience is dead on arrival". Get the idea?

## **Trigger conversations**

Coca-Cola quickly realised that, in reality, customers create and share more stories than what a brand can ever do. The volume and velocity of social conversations is astronomical. Social media users also detest being interrupted by brands when they are conversing with their friends.

To avoid being side-lined online, brands should create content that causes people to talk. Great content triggers conversations. This way, marketing messages become imbued in the normal conversations between friends, resulting in peer-to-peer recommendations on the best and worst brands.

Businesses are also best advised to not only publish content but to also interact with their audience and tribe. Participation adds a human touch in online conversations and forms the backbone of social currency.

## **Dynamic storytelling**

Static content is definitely out, but what is the meaning of dynamic storytelling? Essentially it is interactive content that evolves as brands converse with their customers. This longevity is an attractive offer indeed.

Scalable storytelling leads to virality, increased market reach and more brand visibility. Marketers should never forget that their customers use multiple devices to access online content. They seamlessly hop from a tablet, to a smartphone and laptop at different times of the day.

Content therefore should be created in different formats for different social platforms. In short, it should be multifaceted, engaging and spreadable.

Content marketing is indisputably a great technique for growing a business by satisfying the needs of the customer.

However, the right content strategies should be developed if this is to happen.

## ABOUT JOSEPH NEUSU

Joseph Neusu is the founder and CEO of Sales Qualified Leads Inc, Africa's leading digital agency specialising in WhatsApp Business API marketing and conversational marketing in the Programmatic and DOOH spaces. Joseph is a top conference speaker, thought leader and trainer.

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