MASTER THE FIVE PILLARS OF

POWER
PUBLISHING

By: Barry Feldman & Paul Shirer

How to Reach More People and Create More Leads with Your Content

Featuring: Joe Pulizzi ▪ Andy Crestodina ▪ Lee Odden ▪ Marcus Sheridan

POWERPOST

The New Marketing Model

"

I believe the new media model and the new marketing model are exactly the same. If you want to build an audience and then monetize it, you absolutely want to think about being a publisher.

If you don't want to commit to building an audience then you can go buy advertising or do traditional PR. It's fine, but you limit your options.
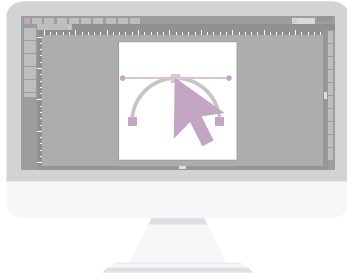
Joe Pulizzi
Author of Epic Content and
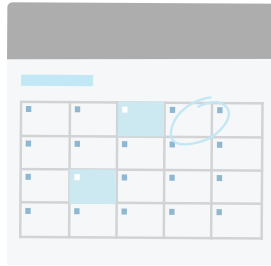*Founder of Content Marketing Institute*

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INTRODUCTION

Are you a Power Publisher?

Create.   **Plan.**   **Publish.**

You're a publisher. Your competitors are publishers, too. Most brands are publishers. Digital media obliterated the wall that once stood between those that sought to publish their ideas and those that vetted the content for public consumption (a.k.a. publishers).

A revolution began.

Brands stepped into publishing in the biggest way and step-up their efforts daily aiming to connect with potential buyers via the spectrum of digital channels, which expands at an astonishing rate.

For millions of companies and organizations, publishing content online is a critical component of their marketing. It goes by the name of content marketing and spills over into the realm of inbound marketing and social media marketing. **We like to call it brand publishing.**

Do it both effectively and efficiently and we bestow an even grander moniker on you: **POWER PUBLISHER.**

> **"The best in the business are serious. They think like publishers. And like publishers, they have tools. They have systems and workflows and teams.**
>
> *— Andy Crestodina, author of Content Chemistry and co-founder of Orbit Media Studios*

We've established you're a brand publisher. If you aim to do it at scale and didn't know what it takes going in, you're learning fast. It takes a ton of... people... ideas.... processes... technologies... and resources.

Your job description is likely to include:

- Manage past, present and future content
- Create blog posts, images, video and podcasts
- Collaborate with a team to get content created and produced
- Plan and automate social media updates to promote your content
- Create and schedule emails to alert subscribers
- Continuously gather data to evaluate your efforts
- Report your progress to your teammates and company executives

And now that we've come to the bottom line, there's that: *the bottom line.*

$ DO YOUR PUBLISHING EFFORTS **ACTUALLY PAY?**

ARE YOU ABLE TO CONVERT CONSUMERS INTO **CUSTOMERS?**

Only 30% of B2B marketers say their organizations are effective at content marketing, down from 38% last year.

Source:
B2B Content Marketing: 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America,
Content Marketing Institute

INTRODUCING THE
FIVE PILLARS OF
POWER PUBLISHING

Power Publishers must master each of the following:

1. **CONTENT**
2. **WORKFLOW**
3. **DISTRIBUTION**
4. **CONVERSION**
5. **ANALYTICS**

Let's take a close look at each.

1. CONTENT
Power Publishers consistently create high-quality content

CONTENT MARKETING

SEO

PROMOTE

OPTIMIZE

> **"One of the key things the best ones do is stay consistent. They're relentless. They produce content on a regular basis that builds an audience over time. I think too many people give up too early. You have to produce a certain level of quality content consistently every week. That's hard, but that's the key thing to building their brands."**
>
> — *Steve Rayson, Buzzsumo*

Creating a steady stream of high-quality content is a beastly job. You need to:

Understand your audience's needs

What does your audience want and need? It's a fundamental question for publishers. The answers come from numerous sources of marketing intelligence that aim to quantify potential reach, engagement and conversion.

- Know what content is trending or has worked in the past
- Follow key influencers and their most popular pieces related to your content themes
- Understand the SEO potential of what you create
- Know and test the most successful headlines and messages for your audience
- Get content suggestions from curation engines

It all starts with just an understanding what does your client's customer actually care about and need ... and really answering those questions. I'm a huge SEO fan so I always think using tools like Keyword Planner and Trends to understand exactly what the words are that your client's customers are using. It's critically important to starting the creation of that content rather than just creating some generic content with no brand voice.

— *Rich Brooks, author of The Lead Machine and Founder of Flyte New Media*

Build the right team

You need creative talent, production talent and subject matter experts. They may be internal, external or some combination. Managing freelancers is a common challenge.

"

You have to realize what kind of talent you have and what you don't. You have people that can tell a good story or you don't. You have editors that can edit the content or you don't. You have video experts and production experts or you don't. So you need to list what you're trying to do and your goals (just like any other strategic plan) and then say, 'What kind of talent do we need to fill those goals?'

"

— *Joe Pulizzi, Content Marketing Institute*

Curate interesting content

Not everything publishers create originates within. Content curation can play an enormous role in expanding your output as well as building new relationships with other content creators. Some popular tactics for content curation include:

- Setting up feeds and alerts to find share-worthy content relevant to your audience
- Sharing and/or curating your favorite articles and other media, licensing or syndicating content
- Using apps and online services to put a new spin on previously published content
- Gathering advice from experts and repurposing it in your content
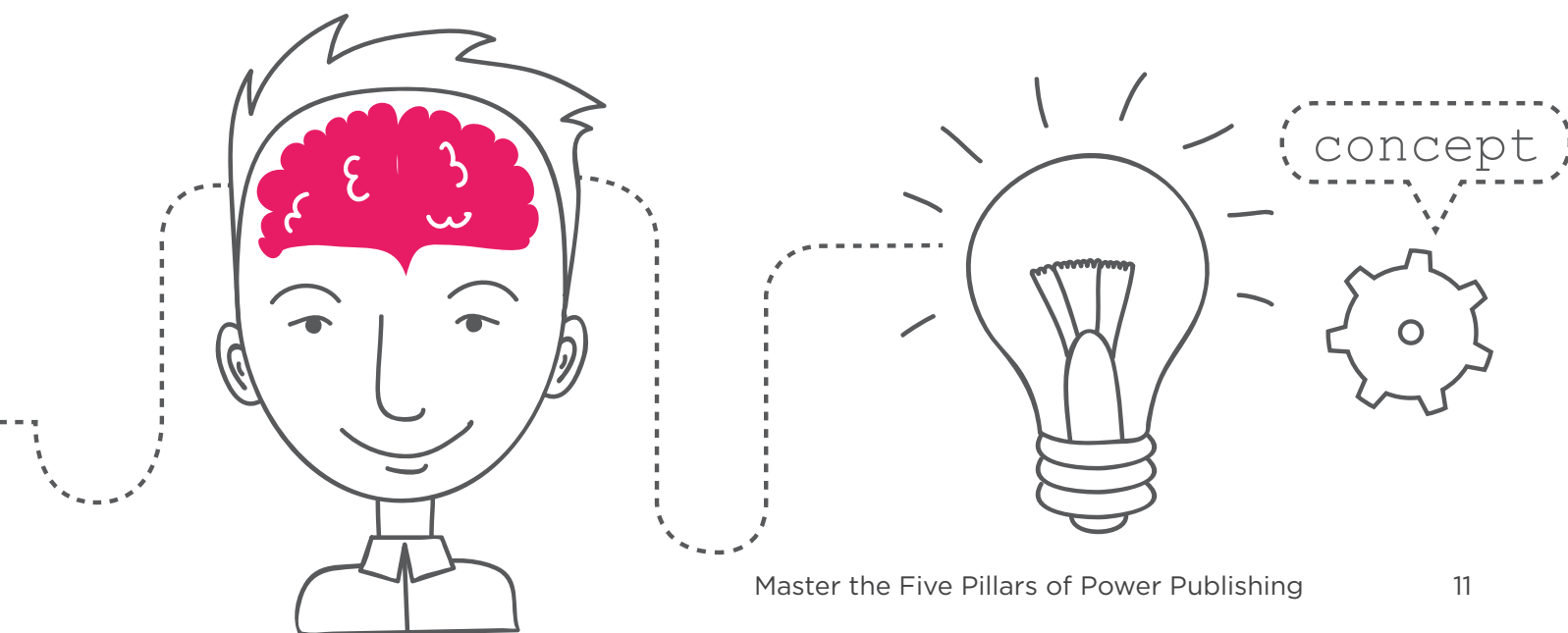
Create content in a variety of styles

Your pieces may be varied and the content you publish might include a wide range of media, formats and styles:

- Articles
- Videos
- Podcasts
- Images
- Presentations
- Webinars
- Quizzes / Surveys
- Infographics

- Lists
- How-to's
- Courses
- Case studies
- Testimonials
- Interviews
- eBooks
- White papers

"The best publishers focus on the customer and they focus on educating first. It's really hard for brands to do because they're so into their products and services. They find it difficult to get outside that paradigm."

— *Jon Wuebben, author of The Future of Marketing and founder of Content Launch*

Repurpose your content

One of the greatest time-savers is to repurpose existing content.

- Create significant pieces that can be segmented into smaller pieces

- Or, vice versa: assemble a set of related pieces to create a more substantial publication

- Convert across formats—videos to audio to blogs to infographics, and so forth

- Create a content series that re-uses themes and designs

- Maintain a repository of re-usable, branded pieces

. . . .

Differentiate your content

> " The majority, like **over 99% of marketers**, do not have differentiated content. They are not telling stories that are different. "
>
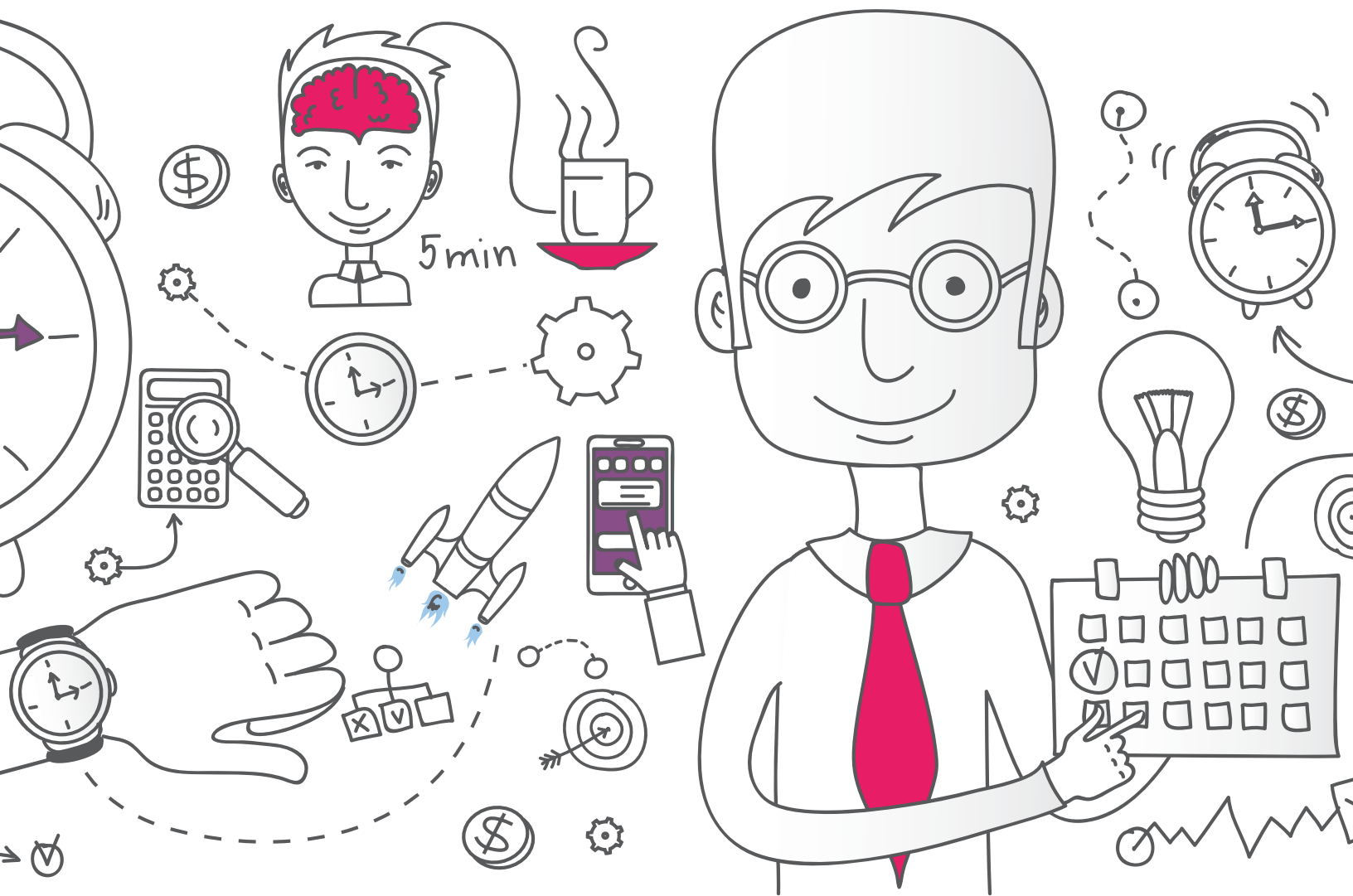> — *Joe Pulizzi, Content Marketing Institute*

You might differentiate according to:

- The audience you serve
- The platform or format you use, such as a blog, podcast or video series
- The subject matter you tackle

2. WORKFLOW
Power Publishers employ scalable processes

> "If your goal is to deliver an experience better than one size fits all—or worse, all sizes fit none—you need to treat your content strategy as more than a hand wave. You need an architectural approach to your content supply chain."
>
> — *Jake Sorofman, Gartner*

Traditional publishers would not thrive, or even survive, without perfecting the processes it takes to deliver consistently. The same rings true in new media. Those that are consistently successful rely on a commitment to publishing regularly with effective processes.

Make publishing your mission

Take on a publishing mindset and adopt a company-wide mission to fulfill it. Consider announcing the following to key stakeholders:

- We are a brand that publishes
- We have an organization that aligns with this publishing mission
- We publish through multi-channel content programming
- We promote our publishing to grow our audience
- We advance and measure KPIs that impact our program
- We grow our revenues through publishing

> "The biggest problem when it comes to publishing content is 'buy in.' You have a lot of situations where you have a lot of smart marketers that could do something amazing, but when they go to management they get a thumbs down. Or when they try to leverage their team to help produce the content they get to responses like, 'We don't have time' or 'That's not my job.' That's a big problem."
>
> — *Marcus Sheridan, The Sales Lion*

Plan your content

Before bursting into hyper-tactical mode, plot a a publishing course. Documenting your plan can make all of the difference as you execute.

- Set goals and establish key performance indicators

- Identify personas and match content to their profiles

- Launch content campaigns around product lines, holidays and more

- Plan a mix of topics and themes: informational, awe-inspiring, entertaining and more

- Match content to the stage of the buyer's journey

- Plan for consistent channel scheduling and release of content

Collaborate with your team

Optimize the talents of your team through an ongoing collaborative effort.

- Build a team that may consist of a marketing manager, managing editor, content creators, designers and more

- Assign roles and responsibilities

- Have an idea repository, a place for your team to share content ideas

- Leverage usable team workflow tools with a content calendar, a digital library and a history of posted content

- Implement an editorial review process

- Implement a tracking system

- Ensure brand standards

3. DISTRIBUTION

Power Publishers
master distribution
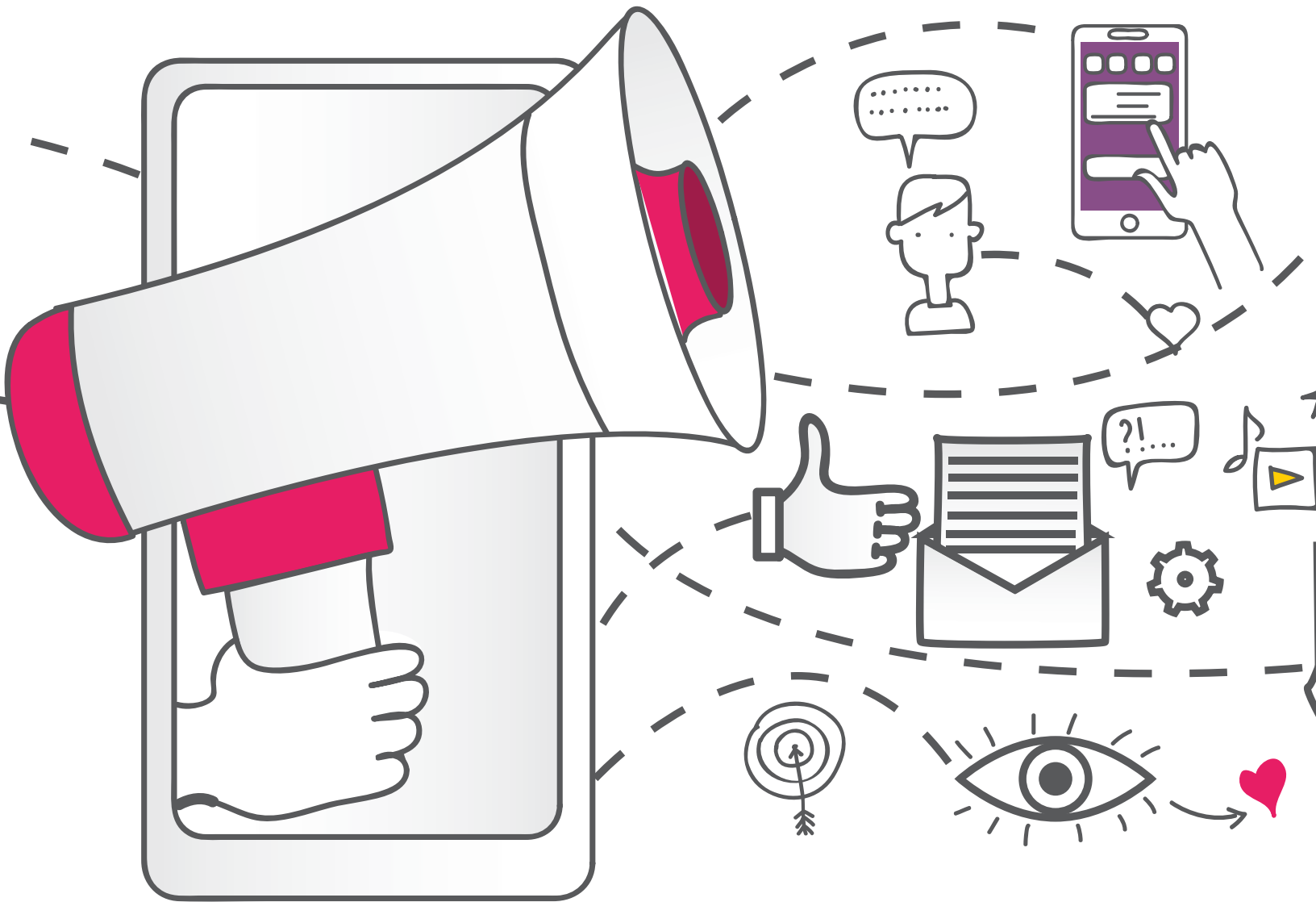
"The creation process still takes a long time and that hasn't changed for a long time. What has changed is we've democratized distribution. When you're just getting into this you have to realize that seven out of your ten dollars should be spent on promotional activities. Until you have your audience built, you should be paying to get your content in front of an audience so you can convert them into YOUR audience."

— *Joe Pulizzi, Content Marketing Institute*

The age of Power Publishing is also marked by another mesmerizing trend: the proliferation of media channels. **The good news is:** brand publishers have so many channels in which to build an audience. And the bad news is the exact same thing.

Mastering distribution is a serious challenge. Those who take it seriously arm themselves with a variety of strategies and tools to:

Schedule distribution
A proven tactic for managing the time involved in posting to social sites calls for using tools for scheduling social updates in advance.

Leverage channel intelligence
The most successful publishers experiment and gather insights on the best times to post to various channels. Additionally, Power Publishers consider how to optimize their content across the gamut of devices used to access the web and mobile apps.
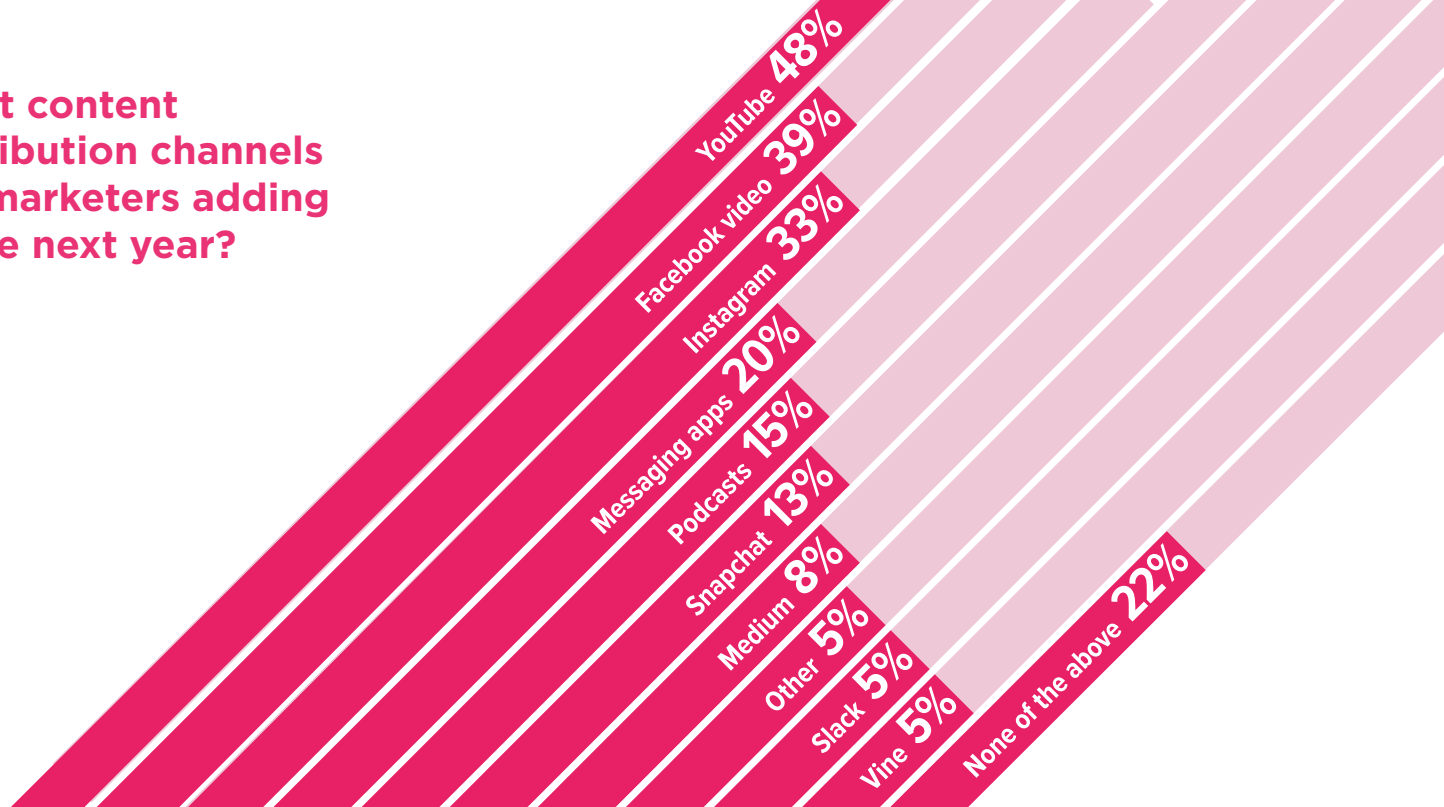
Expand your channel mix
Beyond Facebook and Twitter, there are a growing number of channels where you can expand your publishing efforts to:

- Social channels such as Instagram, Snapchat and others
- Content sites such as YouTube, SlideShare and more
- Your website with CMS systems such as Wordpress, Medium, Wix and more
- Email lists

What content distribution channels are marketers adding in the next year?

YouTube **48%**
Facebook video **39%**
Instagram **33%**
Messaging apps **20%**
Podcasts **15%**
Snapchat **13%**
Medium **8%**
Other **5%**
Slack **5%**
Vine **5%**
None of the above **22%**

According to Hubspot's 2017 State of Inbound report, brand publishers will look to expand considerably across numerous channels.

21ST CENTURY MEDIA CHANNELS

WEBSITES

Powered by content management systems such as Wordpress, Wix, Weebly, Squarespace, Drupal, Joomla and many more

SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest and many more

CONTENT COMMUNITIES

YouTube, Vimeo, SlideShare, Medium and many more

ADVERTISING

Social media channel ads, Google AdWords and other PPC networks, native advertising and content suggestion engines such as Outbrain and Taboola

4. CONVERSION
Power Publishers generate leads

> **"Taking a publisher approach, as a brand, creates a lot of equity as a repository of content and thought leadership, but usually content has to also serve demand generation objectives."**
>
> *— Lee Odden, author of Optimize and founder of TopRank Marketing*

Brand publishing is content marketing. Like traditional publishing, its goal is to build an audience. However, given that the content comes from a brand, in most cases, its goal is also to generate leads.

From a sales point of view, you might call this "feeding the funnel."
Every company with a product or service to sell depends on building a list of prospects, which is the funnel's entry point. And then, through a combination of sales and marketing processes—which will differ greatly by company—the subsequent goal is to move prospects down the funnel, transforming prospects to customers.

59% of marketers rely on total lead volume as a top metric.

Hubspot

In the power publishing realm, you'll feed the funnel by:

Offering lead magnets

Content marketers aim to build an email list, with various degrees of qualification, using free offers such as:

- eBooks
- Assessments and surveys
- Case studies
- Coupons
- Contests
- Games
- Apps

- Tools
- Templates
- Mini-courses
- Webinars
- Contests
- Any form of content that is "gated" (a form must be filled out)

Generating and managing leads effectively

- Create landing pages with forms to collect email addresses and qualify prospects or integrate with third-party landing page tools

- Pass leads through to your CRM system

- Build an email subscriber database

- Calibrate conversion tracking in your content hub, such as link codes, goal conversions, etc

- Generate and share the reports your team needs

5. ANALYTICS
Power Publishers depend
on marketing metrics

> **I think it all comes back to the data. That you can't make decisions without the data, without measurement. It's all about data-driven decisions.**
>
> *— Stephanie Nissen, Director of Digital at Atomic Revenue*

How is content helping you meet your business objectives? Where should you invest publishing resources? How can you increase your effectiveness to empower growth? What assets are creating the most meaningful effects?

Insights are the fuel of your content marketing strategy

Effective brand publishers now know they must perpetually review their efforts and act on their metrics to optimize performance. Though a plethora of tools are available, even the most experienced marketers find it difficult to extract insights from their data and strategically apply them.

Gathering qualitative and quantitative data enables you to to understand what's working and where to invest your efforts going forward. So what do you need to know?

. . . .

Engagement metrics

There's no shortage of social media metrics or ways to synthesize them. Generally speaking, most publishers, at a minimum, want to measure, views, likes, shares, comments, clicks and follower growth.

Website metrics

Google Analytics and other third-party tools enable you to track the journeys visitors take to your website and within it. Informative insights can be extracted with the use of:

- Ad pixel tracking
- Google UTM codes
- Goal conversion snippets
- URL-shortener stats
- Heat mapping
- General website analytics

Conversion metrics

Marketing and sales teams should be able to check the status of all lead generation efforts, including the capture of new email subscribers, chat instances and data collected from forms. It's also important to attribute leads to the offers and pages that generated them.

. . . .

ROI data

How much does it cost to convert a lead? Which content performed best? How efficient is your workflow process? Are there costly bottlenecks? These are important questions your analytics should answer.

Useful reports

Simple dashboard reports reveal your KPIs and make it easy to share results with key stakeholders. The most useful reporting systems can be customized to examine data by channel, content performance, formats, campaigns and more.

> We look at several things. Now, it's not just how many people see it. That's great and that's an ego trip to say you have 100,000 followers or you got 10,000 people to watch your video this week, but I think the real engagement is the true thing. Where are people commenting? I look at shares. Shares are a good indicator. But the biggest indicator is when my phone rings and they tell me they saw something and we start talking about it. And that's what primes for a conversation that leads to business.
>
> *— Shep Hyken, Customer Service and Experience Expert, Keynote Speaker and Bestselling Author*

POWER PUBLISHERS
USE **POWERFUL PLATFORMS**

It's time for a reality check. Mastering this stuff is far from easy. As you gathered while reading about the five pillars of power publishing detailed in this eBook, there's a lot to it. And really, we just scratched the surface.

Employing powerful platforms will be critical to your success. You can power your efforts by using best-of-breed platforms, but you're bound to run into hurdles.

The PowerPost platform is bound to reduce your pain. It's expressly developed to enable you to conquer all five of the pillars this eBook has introduced with an unprecedented degree of integration.

Here's how PowerPost enables your brand, or the brands you represent, to become a power publisher:

Content creation—Upload any digital content, import it form popular cloud drives, or easily curate content by searching the web and connecting to RSS feeds. Publish blogs to Wordpress and social in one step.

Workflow—Collaborate with your team throughout the lifecycle of a post. Features offer seamless cross-department approval to create and schedule posts, share drafts and analyze performance.

Distribution—You can quickly post targeted content across popular channels, customize your messages per channel and post instantly or schedule in advance.

Conversion—Drive your audience to gated content and other lead-generation pages that tie directly to popular marketing automation platforms, such as Salesforce, HubSpot and Mailchimp.

Analytics—Make intelligent publishing decisions with real-time access to a comprehensive analytics dashboard.

Learn how to publish more powerfully with
PowerPost

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Barry Feldman is the author of *The Road to Recognition* and *SEO Simplified for Short Attention Spans*. He operates Feldman Creative and provides content marketing consulting, copywriting, and creative direction services. He contributes to many of the web's top marketing sites and was named one of 25 Social Media Marketing Experts You Need to Know by LinkedIn. If you would like a piece of his mind, visit his blog, *The Point*, at feldmancreative.com.

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Paul Shirer, PowerPost

Paul Shirer is co-founder and CTO of PowerPost, an all-in-one platform that helps brands organize, plan, schedule, collaborate, analyze results and optimize conversion. He consults regularly with brands to help advance both the technology and practice of effective brand publishing.

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