AN INTRODUCTION

TO CONTENT MARKETING SOFTWARE

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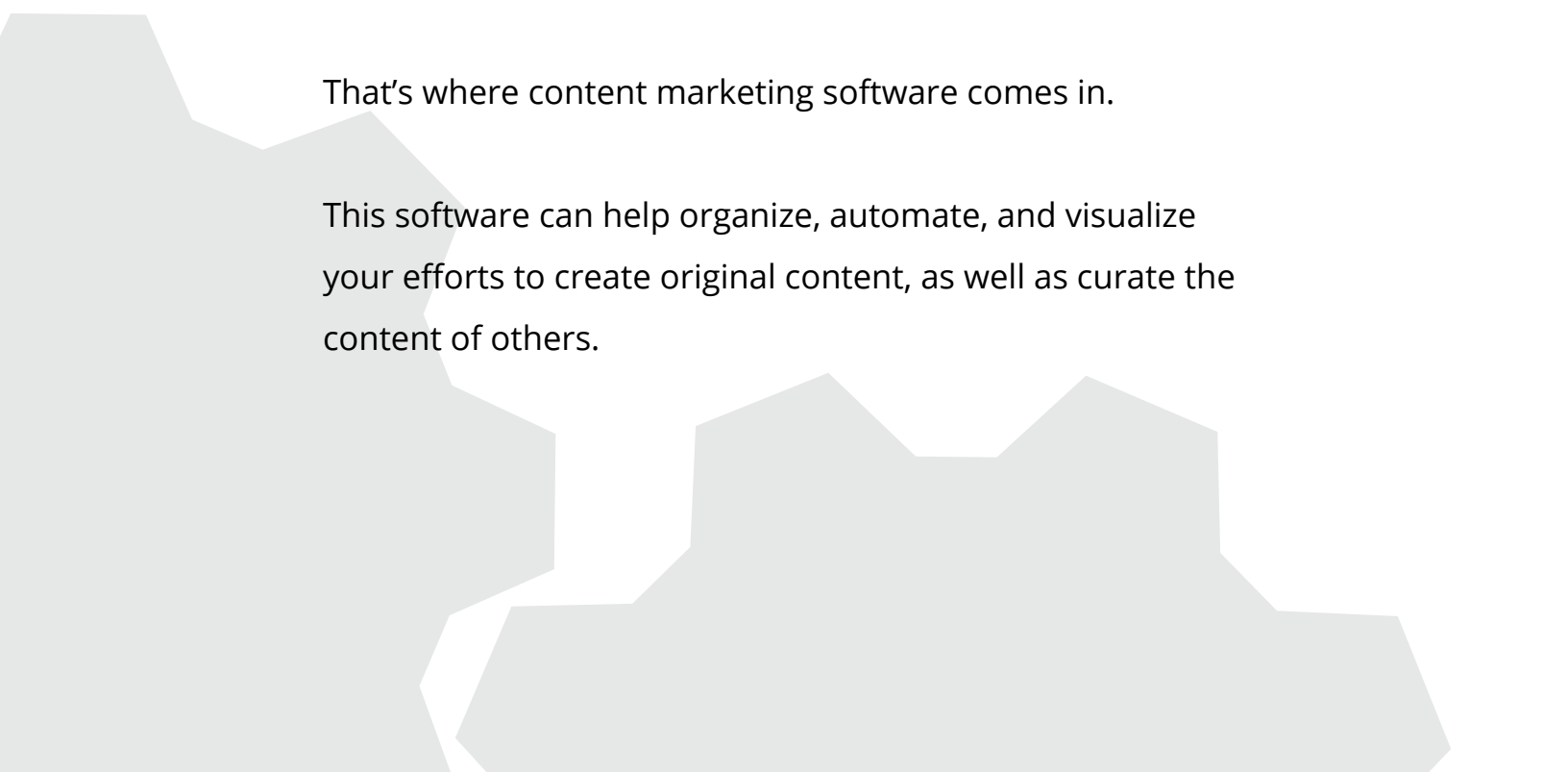Like anything new, first comes the concept, then come the tools.

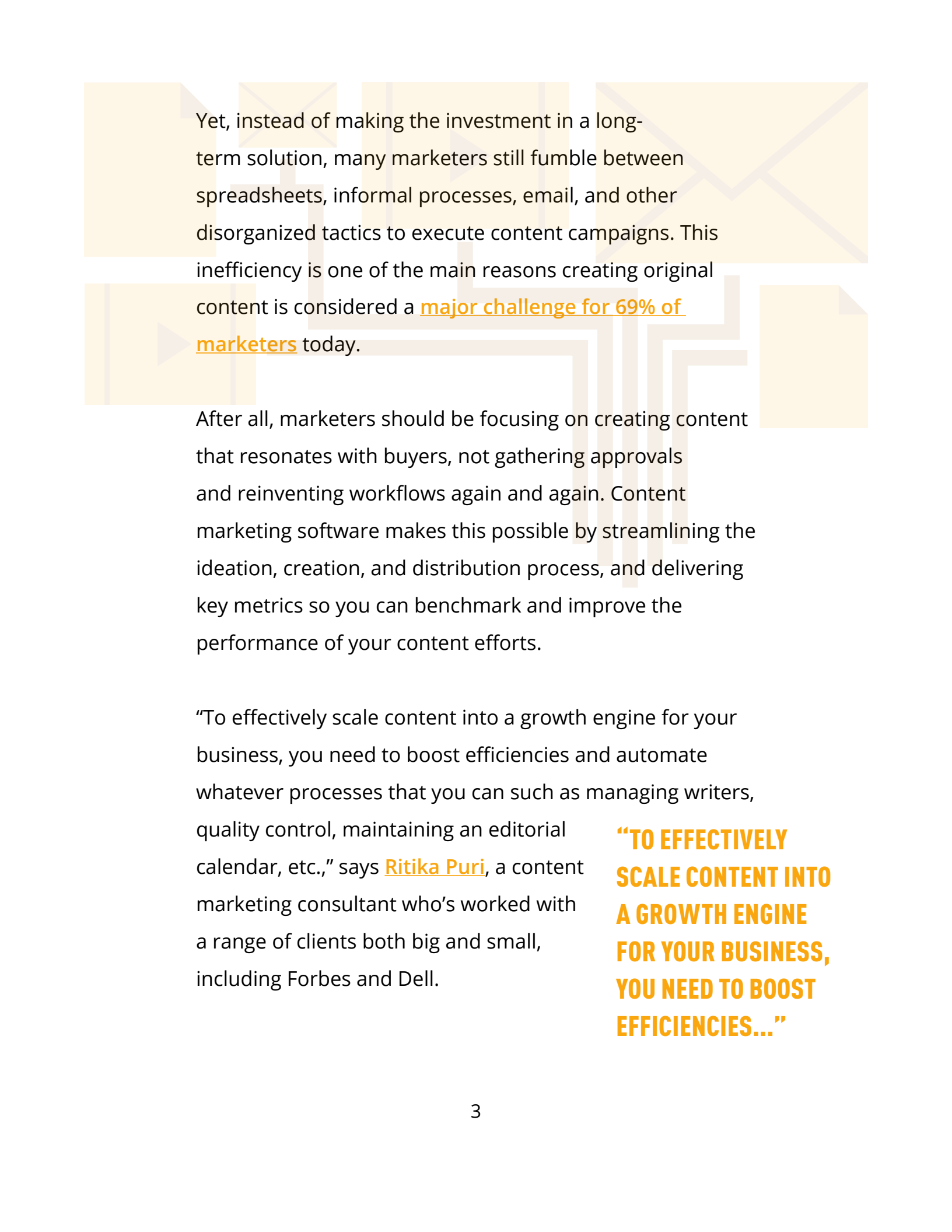Just about everyone claims to be doing content marketing, but far fewer organizations have a thought-out plan. According to Content Marketing Institute, only 44% of B2B marketers and 39% of B2C marketers have a documented content strategy.

But as organizations scale content operations, workflows, distribution, and promotion, many are seeking tools to centralize, manage, and improve the process.

That's where content marketing software comes in.

This software can help organize, automate, and visualize your efforts to create original content, as well as curate the content of others.

Yet, instead of making the investment in a long-term solution, many marketers still fumble between spreadsheets, informal processes, email, and other disorganized tactics to execute content campaigns. This inefficiency is one of the main reasons creating original content is considered a [major challenge for 69% of marketers](#) today.

After all, marketers should be focusing on creating content that resonates with buyers, not gathering approvals and reinventing workflows again and again. Content marketing software makes this possible by streamlining the ideation, creation, and distribution process, and delivering key metrics so you can benchmark and improve the performance of your content efforts.

"To effectively scale content into a growth engine for your business, you need to boost efficiencies and automate whatever processes that you can such as managing writers, quality control, maintaining an editorial calendar, etc.," says [Ritika Puri](#), a content marketing consultant who's worked with a range of clients both big and small, including Forbes and Dell.

"TO EFFECTIVELY SCALE CONTENT INTO A GROWTH ENGINE FOR YOUR BUSINESS, YOU NEED TO BOOST EFFICIENCIES..."

WHO SHOULD USE CONTENT MARKETING SOFTWARE?

Companies of all sizes—small to mid-size to large—benefit from using content marketing software to optimize their efforts. In fact, Aberdeen Group reports that best-in-class content marketers plan to increase content marketing platform budgets by 31% by August 2014.
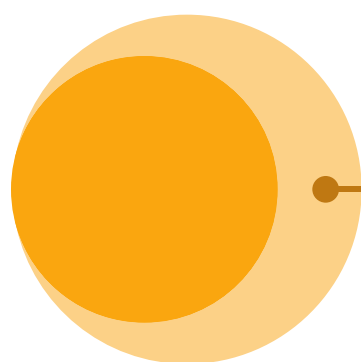
CONTENT MARKETERS PLAN TO INCREASE CONTENT MARKETING PLATFORM BUDGETS BY 31%

"There may be a lot of great content creators out there, but some of the greatest are process-challenged. Anything that can make your processes standardized and repeatable is a great thing," says Jeff Nowak, Founder and Chief Content Officer at Rocket Man Digital and former Editorial Director and Editor-in-Chief at General Mills. "In fact, it may be the most important conversation you'll ever have with a content team."

The more content you need to produce, people involved in the process, and channels to publish to, the greater the need for technology to handle workflows, distribution, and measurement.

"THERE MAY BE A LOT OF GREAT CONTENT CREATORS OUT THERE, BUT SOME OF THE GREATEST ARE PROCESS-CHALLENGED..."

Content marketing software is most beneficial for businesses with the following attributes:

- Resources focused on creating content on an ongoing basis

- A planned content strategy

- Management buy-in for content marketing

- Established goals for the organization and its content that are both ambitious and flexible

- Focus on serving buyers' interests and needs with educational content over product-driven copy

WHY SHOULD YOUR BUSINESS USE CONTENT MARKETING SOFTWARE?

Content marketing software is beneficial for any business when properly matched with goals, budget, and existing workflows. It doesn't have to disrupt your existing processes, but can improve them by automating task assignment and notifications, centralizing distribution, and delivering critical analysis on performance.

And that's crucial since [78% of consumers believe that companies providing custom content are interested in building good relationships](#).
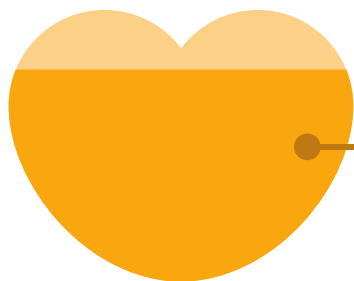
78% OF CONSUMERS BELIEVE THAT COMPANIES PROVIDING CUSTOM CONTENT ARE INTERESTED IN BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

As you investigate options that best meet the needs of your business, consider the following benefits.

Increased Quality of Content

Software makes it easier to consistently produce quality content since teams can review every proposed asset from one uniform system. This is an obvious plus for organizations that want to avoid sending conflicting messages, especially when production and publication responsibilities are spread across multiple departments and regions.

Each piece of content should stand on its own, but also tie back to previously produced materials, establishing one cohesive impression. "Variety is the spice of life, but your high premium should be quality," Nowak says.

With content marketing software, teams can review, edit, and collaborate in real-time on nearly any type of content and confirm it adheres to your brand's expectations, guidelines, and voice. This dramatically cuts time spent editing by streamlining the quality control process.

Actionable Production and Performance Analytics

No marketing team wants to measure by anecdote. Getting a hold on how content performs is a must.

Analytics allow marketers to measure various aspects of the content management process, both in the creation and post-publication stages.

GETTING A HOLD ON HOW CONTENT PERFORMS IS A MUST.

These insights are invaluable since they track productivity, as well as highlight the content that resonates with your audience.

Production analytics keep track of how much content you create in a given period, breaking it down by asset type, category, topic, target buyer, and author or project owner. This helps identify roadblocks in the creation process and gaps in your content stockpile.

Performance analytics provide a deeper look into how content performs post-production. These analytics include metrics such as traffic, social shares, subscribers, downloads, conversions, leads, and marketing-generated opportunities.

This is vital data for your content efforts, providing feedback on what works so you can optimize for the future. But linking ROI to your content efforts isn't a one-step process. Generating and nurturing leads toward a sale can be complex depending on your business, and the time and resources spent must be calculated.

THIS IS VITAL DATA FOR YOUR CONTENT EFFORTS.

"Content marketing is not a direct response tool—audiences will typically engage with your content for a period of time before converting into a lead," Puri says. "Companies struggle to build that attribution framework and are still evaluating content in terms of direct response."

Content software makes analyzing the impact of your content marketing not only possible, but truly valuable. A study by Forbes Media and IPG Media Lab found that 41% of participants were more likely to express intent to buy from a brand when looking at pages with branded content, as compared to looking at a regular web page with no branded content. To decipher which types of content drive this kind of interest, it's important to challenge yourself and your organization to take a data-driven approach.

Improved Workflows

Organization is key to the successful creation, management, and distribution of your content marketing efforts. That much is obvious.

But even though most marketers and businesses understand this, many rely on a hodgepodge of tools and methods for bringing various collaborators, tasks, and project owners together. Jumping between spreadsheets, a CMS, email, documents, and the other disjointed systems slow your company's progress.

AVERAGE WEBSITE CONVERSION RATE IS 2X AS HIGH FOR PROCESS-FOCUSED COMPANIES, AND THE AVERAGE EMAIL CLICK-THROUGH RATE IS 30% HIGHER.
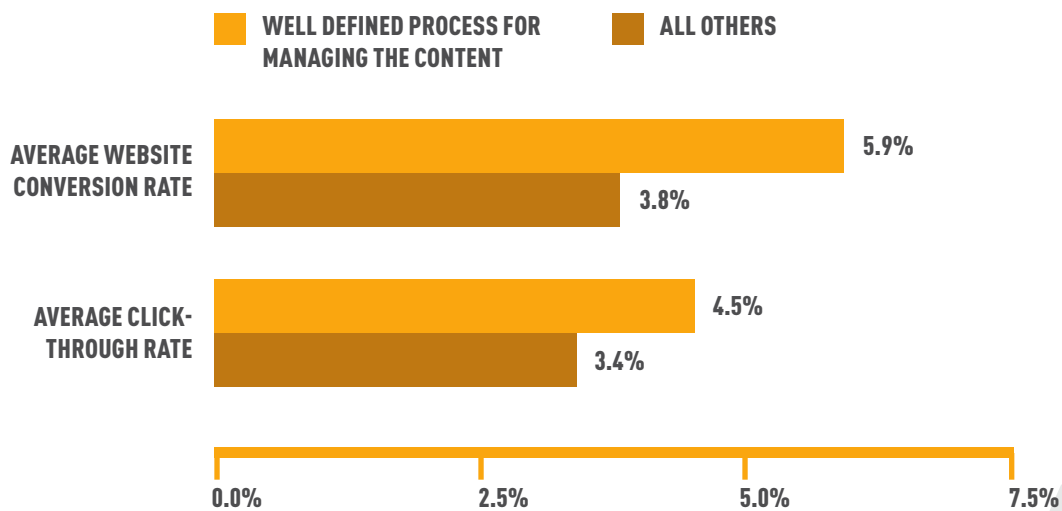
A consistent, standardized workflow ensures your entire team is on the same page. It saves time, money, and resources. Content marketing software standardizes the process at each stage, consolidating each member's tasks, deadlines, and responsibilities in a single location. Contributors can easily see and track their role in the process.

According to a study conducted by Aberdeen Group, companies with well-defined processes for managing

content development perform significantly better in several key areas compared to organizations without defined processes. In fact, the average website conversion rate is twice as high for process-focused companies, and the average email click-through rate is 30% higher.

When time is allotted to identify and define process, and each part of your system is running effectively, your content won't be derailed by missed dates or workflow problems.

WELL DEFINED PROCESS FOR MANAGING THE CONTENT **ALL OTHERS**

AVERAGE WEBSITE CONVERSION RATE
5.9%
3.8%

AVERAGE CLICK-THROUGH RATE
4.5%
3.4%

0.0%   2.5%   5.0%   7.5%

SOURCE: ABERDEEN GROUP, MAY 2013

Streamlined Distribution

Distributing your content across multiple marketing channels can be time-consuming. But it's important to get your videos, articles, blog posts, whitepapers, and other content to the right channels.

Content marketing software streamlines this process by integrating with various channels and social sites, making publishing and promoting content easier. Instead of pushing to different channels individually, users of the software can distribute to many different end points at once including your blog, website, marketing automation software, SlideShare, Twitter, LinkedIn, among others.

You can also host guidelines within the platform so colleagues and other contributors can easily access best practices for creating and sharing content. Guidelines typically lay out the steps a person should follow or requirements to keep in mind when distributing different types of content. These could include tweeting the article, adding a post to an email newsletter, or using a specific hashtag, for example.

"The more you can automate routine tasks like workflows and content calendar management, the more energy you'll have to focus on quality," Puri says. The guidelines set clear procedures so your team can focus on strategy and execution.

Ability to Target Buyer Personas

Just about every business constructs buyer personas, which are written descriptions of the key customer types in their target markets. You'll want your content to address the needs and concerns of these personas specifically.

"Understanding the pain points, goals, and topical preferences of your customers' personas provides invaluable insight into planning content to guide that customer through the buying cycle," added Lee Odden, the CEO of TopRank Online Marketing.

But it's not always easy to keep these personas top of mind when drafting a blog post, building a deck, shooting a video, or outlining a new eBook. Content marketing

software lets marketers host their buyer personas within the platform, so every new idea, asset, and campaign is aligned with the right persona. This is how content remains relevant, no matter who is assigning or creating it.
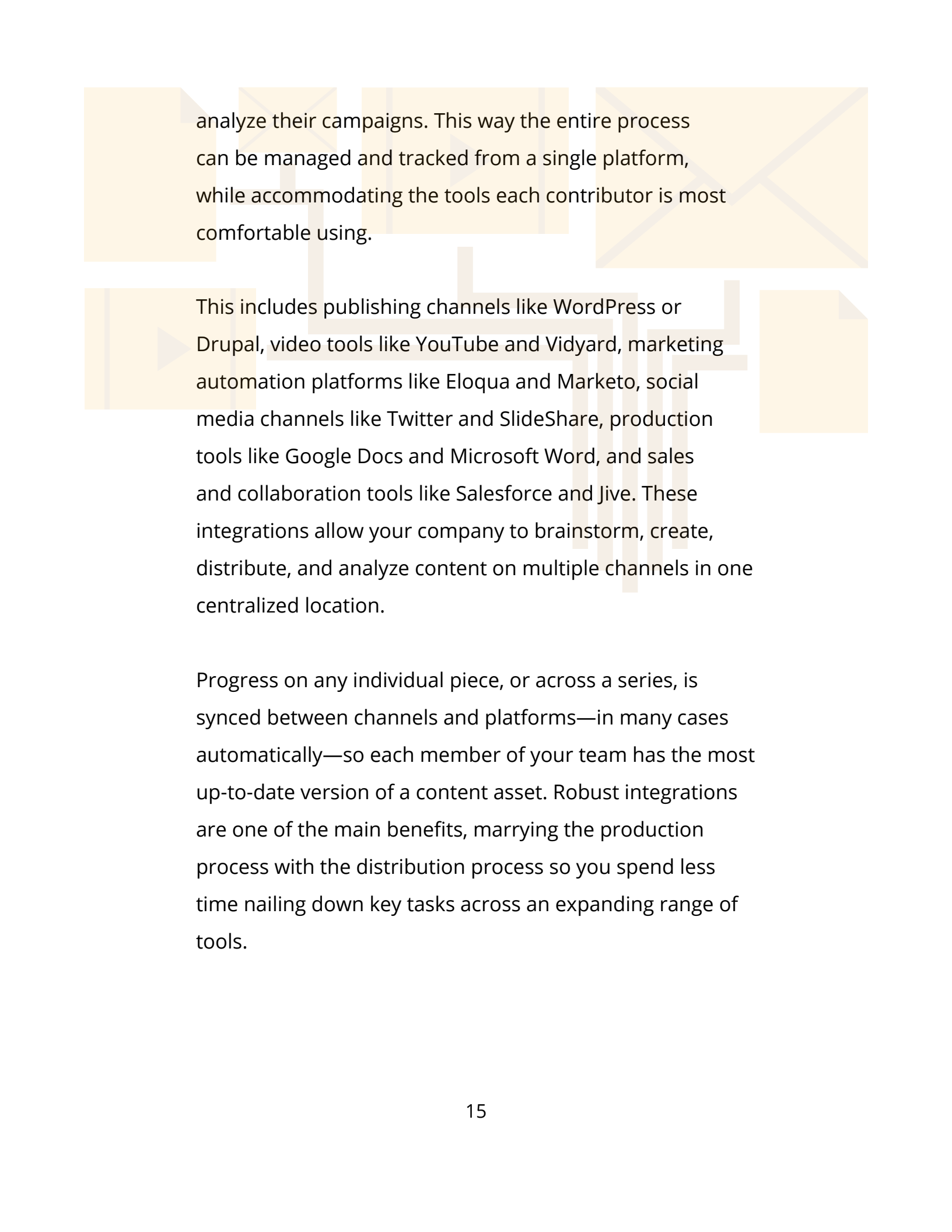
And by organizing your content by persona, you can quickly track how much, and what types of, content you have for specific buyers, as well as monitor performance. Aligning content strategy to agreed-upon buyer personas will help you pivot quickly, producing additional pieces for industries, regions, and markets that move the needle.

Robust Integrations

There are a vast number of marketing technologies used every day. And that will only increase as tools and needs get more precise. Obviously, content fits right in the center of all these tools and tactics since buyers actively seek education, information, even entertainment more often than product specs.

Content marketing software helps solve this challenge by connecting with all the various technologies marketers use to create, publish, optimize, and

CONTENT FITS RIGHT IN THE CENTER OF ALL THESE TOOLS AND TACTICS...

analyze their campaigns. This way the entire process can be managed and tracked from a single platform, while accommodating the tools each contributor is most comfortable using.
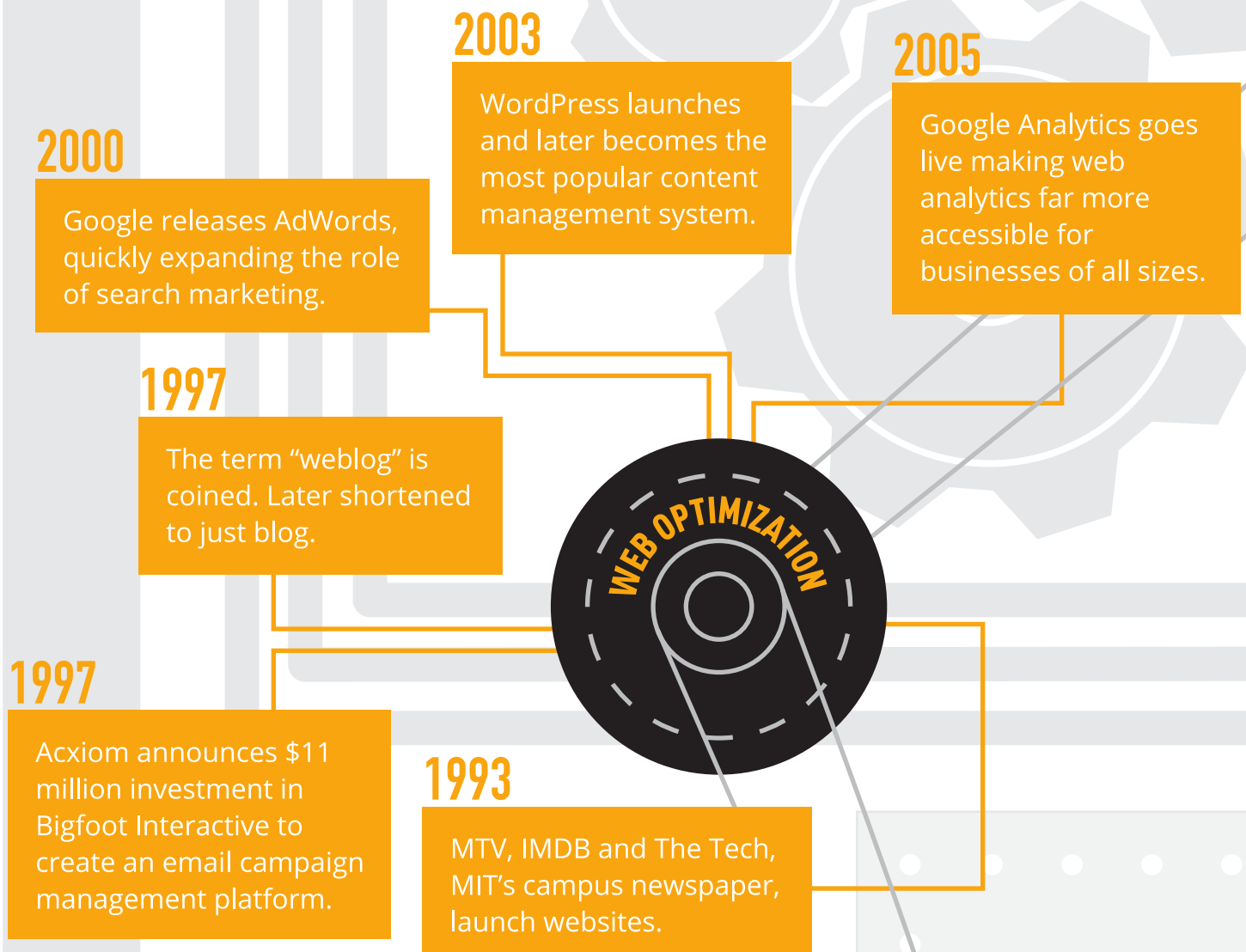
This includes publishing channels like WordPress or Drupal, video tools like YouTube and Vidyard, marketing automation platforms like Eloqua and Marketo, social media channels like Twitter and SlideShare, production tools like Google Docs and Microsoft Word, and sales and collaboration tools like Salesforce and Jive. These integrations allow your company to brainstorm, create, distribute, and analyze content on multiple channels in one centralized location.

Progress on any individual piece, or across a series, is synced between channels and platforms—in many cases automatically—so each member of your team has the most up-to-date version of a content asset. Robust integrations are one of the main benefits, marrying the production process with the distribution process so you spend less time nailing down key tasks across an expanding range of tools.

MECHANISMS OF THE MODERN MARKETING MACHINE

Marketers rely on array of varied but integrated technologies to plan, execute, and measure campaigns. But these mechanisms of today's marketing machine didn't get built overnight. They're the result of many different needs being served by inventive and interconnected solutions.

This overlapping timeline covers five key categories: Web Optimization, Sales Force Automation, Social Marketing, Marketing Automation, and Content Marketing Software.

2003
WordPress launches and later becomes the most popular content management system.

2005
Google Analytics goes live making web analytics far more accessible for businesses of all sizes.

2000
Google releases AdWords, quickly expanding the role of search marketing.

1997
The term "weblog" is coined. Later shortened to just blog.

1997
Acxiom announces $11 million investment in Bigfoot Interactive to create an email campaign management platform.

1993
MTV, IMDB and The Tech, MIT's campus newspaper, launch websites.

WEB OPTIMIZATION

1987
ACT!, widely considered the first contact management application, is released.

1993
Tom Siebel leaves Oracle to launch Siebel Systems, which goes on to dominate salesforce automation for years.

1995
The term "CRM" is coined.

1999
Salesforce.com unveils the first CRM solution based in the cloud.

2013
Gartner pegs the CRM market at $18 billion.

SALES FORCE AUTOMATION

2014
Facebook launches Paper, a content-focused app for creating and sharing stories, articles, and news with friends.

2013
Twitter files for an IPO. Shares soar 73% on day one.

2011–2012
Social marketing acquisitions galore. Salesforce buys Radian6 and Buddy Media. Google picks up Wildfire. Oracle purchases Involver and Vitrue. The combined purchases are estimated to be over $1.6 billion.

2005–2006
YouTube launches, hits 65,000 new videos uploaded per day, and sells to Google for $1.65 billion.

2004
Mark Zuckerberg launches Facebook from his dorm room at Harvard University.

2003
LinkedIn starts a social network for professionals. 4,500 members sign up the first month.

SOCIAL MARKETING

MARKETING AUTOMATION

2012–2013

Eloqua launches the industry's first public offering and is bought by Oracle for $871 million the same year.

2013

Marketo files IPO. Shares jump 50% in the first day of trading.

2012

Research firm says marketing automation penetration reaches 20% of a potentially $3 billion market.

2010

Steve Woods coins the term "Digital Body Language".

1999–2007

Many marketing automation providers, including Eloqua, ExactTarget, Neolane, Pardot and Silverpop, are launched. All of the above are acquired by huge software providers like Oracle, Salesforce.com and Adobe.

2012

Kapost becomes the first content marketing software to integrate with both Eloqua and Marketo.

2013

Compendium is purchased by Oracle.

2014

NewsCred, a content licensing and planning platform, raises $25M in funding.

2011

Content Marketing World, the first annual summit dedicated to the marketing discipline, is held.

2005

Brian Halligan coins the term "inbound marketing." He co-founds HubSpot in 2006.

CONTENT MARKETING SOFTWARE

# WHEN SHOULD YOU INVEST IN CONTENT MARKETING SOFTWARE?

If you're looking to increase the quantity and quality of your content, and track the performance of that content, you'll want to consider long-term technology solutions.

"The pieces of content that stand out are the ones produced with quality and distribution in mind. When you've successfully achieved that level of quality, the more you can produce, the better, which is often when you know it's time to invest in the right tools for the job," Puri says.

A Complex Workflow

B2B enterprise marketers use an average of 16 different tactics, and even marketers at small B2Bs use an average of 12, according to Content Marketing Institute. Considering the sheer quantity and variety of content being produced, it's no wonder many business want to fit their extensive workflows into one software platform.
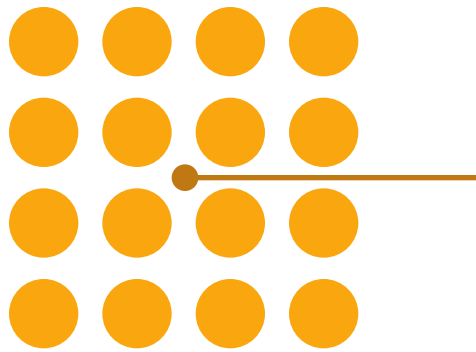
B2B ENTERPRISE MARKETERS USE AN AVERAGE OF 16 DIFFERENT TACTICS

"I cannot underestimate the importance of keeping everything in one place," Puri says. "You don't want to have multiple logins for different CMS platforms. You also don't want to have a bunch of doc files and revision requests floating around."

If you're haphazardly managing multiple workflows, then process will spiral out of control as you scale your content efforts. Once your team is creating many pieces of content every quarter, it's time to adopt a standardized, but adaptable, workflow.

Extensive Brand Guidelines

The larger your organization or the more regulations in your industry, the more guidelines and approvals your company needs to secure. Each piece of content can move through many departments like legal, creative, editorial,

and more. That extensive approval process slows down the content creation process. But this is often a necessary condition of staying within brand guidelines and industry best practices or regulations.
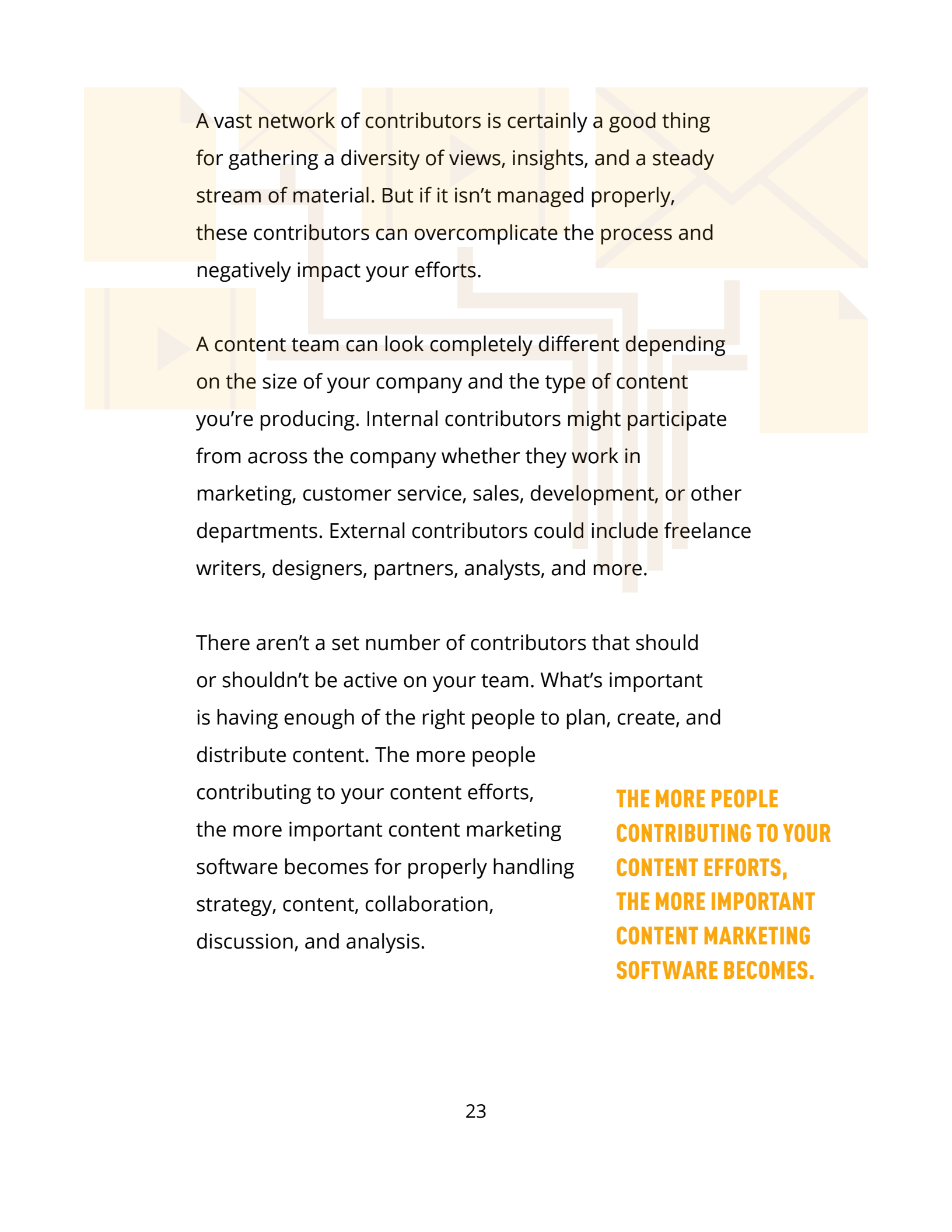
"I CANNOT UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING EVERYTHING IN ONE PLACE."

"If your processes are not repeatable and standardized, you will struggle," Nowak says. "One-offs don't work well in the digital world, so standardize the processes."

Content marketing software consolidates all the various forms of content, brand assets, guidelines, legal language, internal and external contributors, and more to ensure the process is efficient and accessible. This allows your team to scale your content operation without straying outside existing approvals and procedures.

Vast Network of Contributors

"Too many 'cooks in the kitchen' can ultimately destroy a great piece of content and increase the time it takes to go to market with a short blog post or whitepaper," says Puri. She's right.

A vast network of contributors is certainly a good thing for gathering a diversity of views, insights, and a steady stream of material. But if it isn't managed properly, these contributors can overcomplicate the process and negatively impact your efforts.

A content team can look completely different depending on the size of your company and the type of content you're producing. Internal contributors might participate from across the company whether they work in marketing, customer service, sales, development, or other departments. External contributors could include freelance writers, designers, partners, analysts, and more.

There aren't a set number of contributors that should or shouldn't be active on your team. What's important is having enough of the right people to plan, create, and distribute content. The more people contributing to your content efforts, the more important content marketing software becomes for properly handling strategy, content, collaboration, discussion, and analysis.

THE MORE PEOPLE CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR CONTENT EFFORTS, THE MORE IMPORTANT CONTENT MARKETING SOFTWARE BECOMES.

Content Driving Critical Objectives

More than ever, marketers are responsible for meeting trackable, measurable goals for their organizations, specifically delivering qualified leads to sales and generating revenue. Content marketing software aligns content efforts directly to these goals.

If your team is responsible for driving critical business objectives such as lead and revenue generation, you need to provide proof your efforts are working. Software can help identify successes and areas of improvement by tracking key metrics such as traffic, number of content downloads, new leads in the database, and first or last touches on closed-won deals.

Also, understanding which content types or topics are the most valuable for meeting objectives will help you improve your content marketing strategy and focus resources on assets that deliver results.

IF YOUR TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DRIVING CRITICAL BUSINESS OBJECTIVES SUCH AS LEAD AND REVENUE GENERATION, YOU NEED TO PROVIDE PROOF YOUR EFFORTS ARE WORKING.

Content Variety and Scale

A final indicator that it's time to investigate content marketing software is when the variety and the quantity of the content you're producing outpaces your team's management processes.

The amount of quality content your business needs to produce varies depending on your industry, especially since some verticals are far more competitive than others. 27,000,000 pieces of content are shared every day. Obviously, it's difficult to stand out.

27,000,000 PIECES OF CONTENT ARE SHARED EVERY DAY
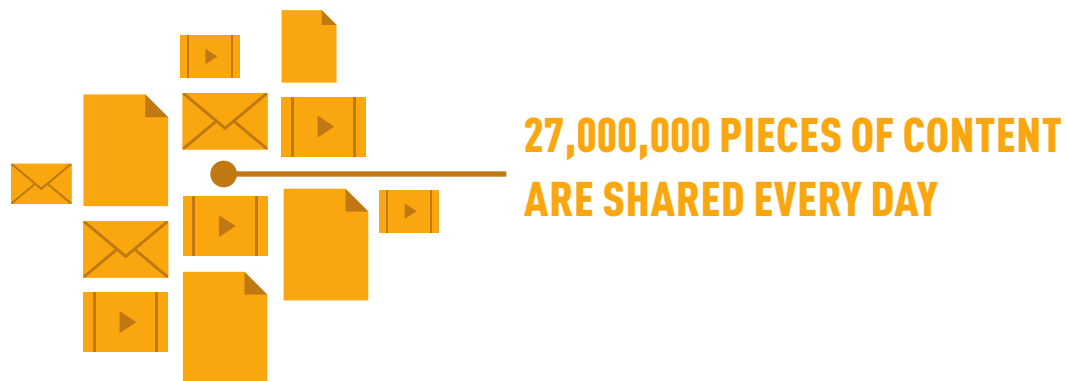
As your business continues to grow, it's important to produce more quality content to reach your audience across channels. This also increases the different types of content you're likely creating, whether it's micro-videos, blog posts, presentations, eBooks...the list goes on.

As the demand to produce greater quantities of content rises, quality becomes even more important. Content marketing software can streamline your processes, enable your team to focus less on procedure and more on publishing, and support the analysis of your efforts.

Conclusions

Content marketing is critical to the long-term success of any company that wants to increase awareness, drive demand, and ultimately turn leads into actual sales. Software can help improve this process by increasing the quality of your content, providing actionable analytics, improving workflow, and simplifying distribution.

If you're focused on making content that buyers consistently find valuable, coordination and collaboration is key. Content marketing software can help clear the common logistical and tactical hurdles that slow companies down, allowing you and your team to focus on developing one-of-a-kind content.

About the author:

[Brian Honigman](#) is a [freelance writer](#) and [marketing consultant](#). He's an active contributor to Mashable, the Huffington Post, Entrepreneur, Forbes, the Next Web and others. Follow his tweets [@BrianHonigman](#).

LOOKING FOR MORE RESOURCES?

Find out what content marketing software can do for your organization. Sign up for a quick, 30-minute call with a Kapost expert, and learn how technology can help you effectively plan, execute, and analyze your marketing campaigns.

CONTACT US NOW

Resources for Further Reading

- [Content at the Center of Marketing](#)
- [Why and When to Invest in Technology for Content Marketing](#)
- [Crossing the Chaos: Managing Content Marketing Transformation](#)

ABOUT KAPOST:

Kapost™ helps enterprise brands grow revenue with content. Their content marketing software simplifies and centralizes the creation, distribution, and analysis of content across a range of channels. Marketing teams of all sizes can collaborate on content, manage assets in one platform, organize extensive campaigns, and establish an efficient, process-driven operation.

Hundreds of the world's top brands - including Lenovo, AT&T, and VMware - use Kapost to create, publish and scale their content operation, so they can focus on serving their customers and growing their business.

kapost™