

The truth about content

 By [Andrew MacKenzie](#)

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Content - the word is everywhere and, for something so talked about, it has a pretty fuzzy definition. At its most literal, it is anything that someone might read, see, watch or interact with. So pretty broad.



The boy raised by goat - Image via YouTube

Let's narrow it down

My view is that advertising is fundamentally 'entertainment' and does not predominantly rely on interrupting its audience to talk to them. Volvo Trucks' "the epic split" is as much of a function of this, as is Pepto Bismol's [Raised by Goats](#) or Johnnie Walker's [The Gentleman's Wager](#).

None of them have a call to action or are a hard sell, but they all do a valuable job that a traditional TV ad would struggle to achieve. And that's the point. Content does not replace commercials, it compliments them.

Content is about depth and length of engagement rather than reach and frequency. The value comes from building a relationship, giving an audience something they want and imparting messages credibly in a way that is difficult to achieve using traditional advertising such as television.

It is, by its nature, more episode-based and editorially contextual - which means that, to be credible, it is bound by the conventions of its medium. So a website film needs an entirely different approach to a broadcast series, which in turn is approached differently to a YouTube channel.

Creating killer content

To create content, you need to think like a commissioning editor. And when you change gear from making a few TV ads a year for a brand to making films weekly, you can no longer follow the same processes. You have to shift your way of thinking and your way of producing.

One good example is in the UK. Pepsi Max's costly TV ads weren't working with its target market: 16-to 24-year-old males. So it moved its focus, it adopted a digital strategy to reach its target market where they spent most of their time: YouTube. The key execution of that strategy was the launch of the Unbelievable Channel.

The Pepsi Max channel, named the Unbelievable Channel, gives its audience the content they look for and share - impressive stunts that surprise and amaze. Not only does this mean it has shareable content, it also reflects the values of the brand. Pepsi Max partnered with YouTube stars that appeal to its audience, and worked with them to decide what they wanted to do within the creative parameters of the Unbelievable Channel.

Fast forward to now, and the channel has gone from strength to strength and has a subscriber base of 108,000 and has had multi-million plays. Pepsi Max's Unbelievable Channel demonstrates that a great content strategy that gives an audience something they want, in a relevant way, is a powerful brand tool.

ABOUT ANDREW MACKENZIE

Managing Director at Boortown

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