

Melissa Attree's top content marketing trends for right now

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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Those that fail to prepare, prepare to fail. Luckily, in the January 2019 Meltwater webinar, Ogilvy Cape Town's creative director Melissa Attree explained how to evolve your content marketing strategy for success in 2019.



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Meltwater's head of marketing Wesley Mathew began by saying the role of a content marketer is tough enough as it is – you're expected to not only create something worthy of your consumers' attention on a consistent basis but also to adapt to a media and marketing landscape that's perpetually in flux.



Social storytelling 101: Stop and sharpen your marketing axe

Leigh Andrews 24 May 2018



Mathew said no one would blame you for hitting a metaphorical wall when it comes to your online engagement, be that across your website traffic numbers or social media interactions. But with 2019 well underway, it's time to step back and plan how you're going to position your brand in the coming year.

And with that in mind, Mathew introduced Attree for a brisk online webinar, in which she explained how to evolve your content marketing strategy for 2019.

Attree spoke attendees through all aspects of content strategy, including content planning sources, the relevance of influencers in content co-creation, and community management, as well as trends to note for the year ahead, followed by a Q&A session.

Attree also explained the basics of content marketing in our video from the IAB Digital Summit 2017:

But a lot can happen in the space of a few months. So switching back to the 2019 webinar, Attree said it's evident that we're in a space where effective content opens doors for discussions and really engaging with consumers.

Back to basics with content strategy

But before you get started, there are three components of content strategy that you should use to determine your brand's approach:

1. What topics can the brand comment on with ease – what sectors does it play in, and what would it ordinarily comment on? Should it comment now or would this be a case of putting out content for the sake of it?
2. How does that translate into things people actually want to read, watch or listen to? Remember that different people consume content in different ways on different platforms. Some prefer a long read, while others prefer a podcast version.
3. Literacy may also be a barrier, so factor in various ways to consume the content you produce, like adding subtitles to videos with subtitles and also offering a long-form read - the [TED Talks](#) do this well.

Now that you know what you want to say and how to say it, you can figure out where the content should go, through internal channel mapping and ecosystems.

Self-make it or co-create it? Plan it, either way...

“ Sourcing content can be a big source of anxiety, so plan both where you *will* find it and where it *will* live. ”

Attree says that smoother production and distribution of content comes from effective planning upfront, in briefing how and

when the content you need is created.

It's best to also cost it upfront, making for efficient budgeting and easier mapping upfront of which content pieces will live on which channels, making for more robust reporting after the project is complete.

Attree shared that the content strategy at Ogilvy includes an ecosystem upfront. It may seem obvious to those in the industry, but including it helps clients understand where the resulting content will lie, both online and offline.



Content strategy for the future

Leigh Andrews 28 Jun 2016



They also map out where the assets live across the brand's consumer touchpoints, ranging from social media to radio, TV, print, live activations, and even in-house communications. Once that's done, you can also map out how the content will be distributed, from a paid, owned and earned basis.

Attree says to also keep in mind both social media posting times and frequency of posting, especially as consumers face an ever-growing deluge of content, so "less is more," and quality content is the way to go.

A handy tip: When scheduling content across social media, it makes sense to not do so on the exact hour, half-hour or quarter-past mark. We default to those times, which means so does everyone else. Schedule yours in-between so that you cut through the clutter.

The spontaneous tactics of tactical content

Unsure what counts as tactical content? Attree says it's anything you can plan – around holidays or events – while spontaneous content would be the moments, events or opportunities your brand can comment on in a credible way. You need to make sure you can create that content quickly, in order to resonate in the social space.

To illustrate this, Attree showed content created in the Ogilvy Cape Town office for Coca-Cola Schweppes when the #OhSchweppes hashtag arose, based on the recent 'consumer holiday disaster' where similar packaging of Coca-Cola's branded tonic water and soda water led to unexpected tastes...

This is an example of tactical content with quick turnaround and low production cost that went beyond the brief and had an exceptional impact, as it's still gaining unplanned or earned exposure.



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In addition to the planning and mapping of the content, another important factor is the journey the content takes.

You can often repurpose it as a podcast or image essay, a full written write-up, or even the ever-popular listicle.



Clear content marketing strategy = happy customers + happy boss

Leigh Andrews 7 Apr 2017



Remember that you can also curate existing content, and that you don't have to do it alone.

Curation, collaboration and community

Many brands are collaborating with artists and influencers at the moment, to make the content as accessible as possible. As a result, influencers are at the height of their hype cycle.

Don't latch onto the first big name, though – a good influencer collaboration depends on the brand setting its ROI needs, which means micro- or nano-influencers, with a smaller following but more credibility in a specific niche, often lead to better engagement than collaborating with overextended macro-influencers who don't necessarily live the brand.



The 4Cs of effective content creation

Melissa Attree 16 Apr 2015



Either way, Attree says to be clear in briefing process upfront on what is contracted and what will be delivered. Often the influencer knows their market better than the brand does, so tap into that and explore it together.

In addition, great tactical work relies on a switched-on community manager, using social listening tools.

Many companies have access to extensive databases that they just don't use effectively. Don't fall into that trap. Think of creative ways to share your brand information with consumers. There's a plethora of fancy tech out there, but email is still one of the most powerful digital tools in the marketer's arsenal, to share information both ways.



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Attree says another big trend is to "do less, better," as so many brands are fighting for consumer attention.

As a result, she predicts we will see brands producing less content at better quality, as they strive for better understanding of the market.

How to do better, while creating less content

That entails reaching the right consumers at the right time on your social platforms, while understanding that there's more opportunity for personalisation than ever before, greater pressure on brands to demonstrate a clear understanding of those different audience segments.



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Doing so means you can also simplify your content creation as you'll be producing iterative, sequential content that speaks to those niches.

Shifting focus to distribution, Attree said Facebook remains one of the most popular channels for distributing content, despite now being seen as a 100% paid-media network - organic reach on Facebook is becoming more and more elusive.

So you need to put money behind your post to cut through to the right audience. That said, closed or secret groups on Facebook also seem to be gaining personal reach, so Attree mentions this as a potential 'hack'.

Wash, rinse, repeat? Not quite...

Once it's all said and done, it's time to assess the campaign's success. Attree said this may seem obvious again, but you'll need to specify how you'll measure success upfront with the client, being honest and objective upfront about what you want to achieve and detailing the metrics you'll report on so there are no surprises.

As with any planning, make sure the end result offers a seamless experience. Ask questions before you put any content out there, in terms of what you want consumers to do with it.

Attree ended with the quote by Kristina Halvorson that as much as it's about automation today, humans are critically important:

“ Quality, relevant content can't be spotted by an algorithm. You can't subscribe to it. You need people – actual human beings – to create or curate it. ”

This was followed by a quickfire Q&A recap session with the webinar attendees...

Q: Can brands succeed on social without paying for reach?

A: At the moment, it's about doing less but also doing better. If you're looking for high aspects of engagement, that's no longer something Facebook actively measures. Maximise your spend by making sure you're reaching the right people at right times of day by releasing tactical and simple content, based on your KPIs.

Q: Will voice search impact on content visibility?

A: Yes, brands need to optimise for voice search. Things have been samey for a while, but voice means results will start indexing differently.



46% of travellers in SA are using voice search to research trips

22 Nov 2018



Brands would do well to understand how it's used to search for relevant utility content in particular.

Q: Explain GDPR in terms of local markets dealing with the EU.

A: The more the man on the street educates himself, the more it forces brands to align with those regulations, as we ultimately work in a global village.



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GDPR will definitely impact on email marketing, and influencers do need to declare when posts are sponsored. Any global trend will definitely trickle down to Africa, so get ahead of GDPR and aim to be transparent right now.

Q: Community management is often seen as a junior or outsourced role – discuss.

A: That's one of the saddest things, says Attree, as her own career started in social. Teams should be led by a senior in touch with how to speak to customers, as there is an aspect of PR, writing content and identifying opportunities for the brand. If much of that is outsourced to those who don't have experience with the brand strategy, that's a mistake.



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Leigh Andrews 3 Aug 2017



There's also a customer-service focus, often involving large volumes. The brands winning on social tend to be those with 'switched on' community managers who can spot an opportunity and quickly turn it around.

Q: Are influencers worth the spend for brands?

A: Brands need to select influencers carefully, as the days of pure celebrities promoting any brand are over. It's now about picking specialists with real clout and engaged followers. Attree still believes the power is in the niche.

Q: Is brand storytelling the new content marketing?

A: Storytelling has been around since the dawn of time. We like to use jargon and labels, but brands have been telling stories for years and it's great to see a return to basics. Content marketing is a bucket for all the forms of brand storytelling.

Q: How can brands use AI to better engage?

A: Bigger brands are already doing so, in basic format you can start with chatbots. As with voice, remember that people can tell brands what they think, feel and need, making it easier and more intuitive.

Just don't completely take the humans out of the equation, or the robots will take over, joked Attree. At least, I hope she was joking...



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Leigh Andrews 13 Oct 2017



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