

IAB SA Digital Content Marketing Committee - call for nominations

By [Emma Odendaal and Sarah Browning-de Villiers](#), issued by [IAB South Africa](#)

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The IAB SA is proud to call for nominations for seats on its Digital Content Marketing Committee.



As we all sit in isolation, waiting for the world to return to a semblance of normal, there's never been a more important time for people to feel connected. Nothing makes humans feel more connected than a story. But in an era of cynicism, fake news and content clutter, consumers are looking for trusted, curated and relevant content, says Sarah Browning-de Villiers, Chief Content Officer at Machine_. "While social media usage generally continues to grow, [Edelman's 2018 Trust Barometer Special Report](#) shows that 60% of people no longer trust the content they're seeing on social networks and 71% agree that social media should do more to support high-quality journalism. High-quality journalism can be translated into trusted, expert content that typically educates and empowers against consumer needs. When a brand is generating this kind of content, we call it content marketing."

Truly effective content marketing is audience-centric storytelling that provides a moment of connection between a brand and its customer, with a power to change affinities and shift perceptions. Put simply, content marketing treats content as the product, rather than your brand or product as the content. Why? Because by strategically developing and distributing value-adding content that is not about the products or services a company sells, but rather about relevant information that the audience wants or needs, you build an audience who become loyal to the brand simply because it has added – and continues to add – meaningful value to their lives.

Emma Odendaal from John Brown Media comments: "Content marketing is about taking all the data science, the audience insights and what you know to be true about your brand and combining that with the forces of human truth and journalistic expertise to produce something that the audience actually wants to engage with. Ultimately, what you're building as a brand is deep, meaningful trust."

According to [Edelman's 2020 report](#), trust has never been more critical for brands: 80% of respondents believe it's a brand's responsibility to help them solve their problems and 64% expect brands to be a reliable source of information. Perhaps more impactful are the stats that show real brand trust cannot be bought: 59% agree that brands build trust through industry experts and "people like themselves", for example via content marketing. Nearly seven in 10 put strategies

in place to avoid paid media strategies by using things like ad blockers – a sure sign that brands need to be more native with their marketing approach.

“I believe that it is down to the quality and relevancy of the content. True digital content marketing is a brilliant representation of one’s brand and continues to be one of Pick n Pay’s most fundamentally important marketing tools. Our content marketing team at John Brown understands the South African consumer; this is what makes their work so powerful,” says Michelle van Schalkwyk, Head of Brand at Pick n Pay.

“The customer of today is far more informed and demanding,” says Francois Uys, Sanlam Reality’s Head of Digital, Marketing and Communications, who’s been working with Machine_’s content marketing specialisation for over seven years. “This requires a smarter approach. Storytelling, when relevant and targeted, creates trust, personal motivation and the ability to learn and feel empowered. This is the essence of how the team at Machine_ convert someone from a one-time customer to a loyal customer with brand affinity, giving marketers like me the opportunity to maximise the customer lifetime value with our brand. It’s not about saying, ‘What do I want to sell?’ It’s about asking, ‘What does my customer need?’ and taking it from there.”

Sanlam Reality’s Marketing Partner Manager Bongiwe Mashalaba-Joe agrees: “Because you’re not leading with a sell, you give your customers the opportunity to think, reflect and proactively engage with you. It puts your brand top of mind without [them] feeling that you’re ‘selling’ to them.”

So why has content marketing historically been underrepresented in the South African advertising industry, and so frequently misunderstood by agencies and brands alike? Perhaps one reason is because it’s got the ubiquitous word “content” in its name. But not all content is created equal; and not all content constitutes content marketing.

This is why, under the auspices of the IAB SA, a Content Marketing Committee is to be developed around the discipline to develop best practices and solutions to improve the content marketing ecosystem in South Africa and drive the industry forward.

The opportunity for brands that embrace content marketing is ripe. Good content marketing is not only about a brand or a product, it’s also about adding meaningful value to customers’ lives.

Similar to the existing IAB SA Committees, the IAB SA Digital Content Committee will stand as its own entity, with representation on the IAB SA MANCO.

If you are an IAB member and would like to apply or nominate your colleague, please do so here by Friday, 14 August at 4pm.

Join in!

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