



# THE STATE OF CONTENT & PR STUDY

## OPTIMIZED OR OPPORTUNITY?



version 2.0  
communications

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Brand journalism. Curation. Inbound. Content Marketing.

Whatever you call it, exactly, and however you specifically choose to define it, there's no denying it: content has changed the way brands of all sizes and from all industries engage with their audiences.

In the past decade alone, content marketing has gone from an emerging, unproven marketing tactic that was questioned by many, to a tried-and-true best practice that's central to many organizations' marketing strategies.

And it's showing no signs of slowing down; by some estimates, content marketing will be a \$313 billion dollar industry worldwide by 2019. But despite how far it's come and all the promise for its future, content is still coming into its own and best practices are continually evolving. This is particularly true when it comes to how content aligns—and sometimes clashes with—public relations activities.

In our first annual The State of Content & PR Study, we sought to explore the relationship between the two marketing disciplines to better understand: are they optimized or is there greater opportunity for alignment?

*Read on for key findings from our survey.*

## 2. BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL FOUNDATION: CONTENT BEFORE PR





## Before assessing the relationship between content and PR, it is imperative to understand content as a standalone program.

While all respondents were conducting some level of content marketing, the majority **(65%)** of respondents only have a limited or short-sighted strategy—for example, the strategy is not documented or it's determined on an asset-by-asset basis. While those with a limited content strategy should be applauded for their efforts, it comes with the caution that such an approach can be difficult to effectively measure and scale.

The respondents to our survey created a myriad of different content assets, highlighting the diverse opportunities available with content. The majority of respondents **(94%)** are creating blogs. Video **(70%)**, case studies **(62%)** and infographics **(62%)** were also popular formats. Webinars, eBooks and market research reports were also common. We were surprised to see that **20%** of respondents have created calculators in the past 12 months—a format preferred ahead of Buyer's Guides and podcasts (both at **14%**).

Their distribution tactics, however, are far less diverse. Nearly all use an organization's website, social channels and emails for distribution—at **90%**, **88%** and **86%**, respectively. After that, just about half (**52%**) use paid media such as advertising or native content and only **42%** leverage earned media such as media coverage to distribute more broadly.

### ► Earned Media: Pales Compared to Traditional Channels



Interestingly, while the use of paid media jumped dramatically in organizations with larger marketing departments (25+ people), that trend did not hold true for earned media.

### ► Smaller Teams Place Bigger (Relative) Bets on Earned Media

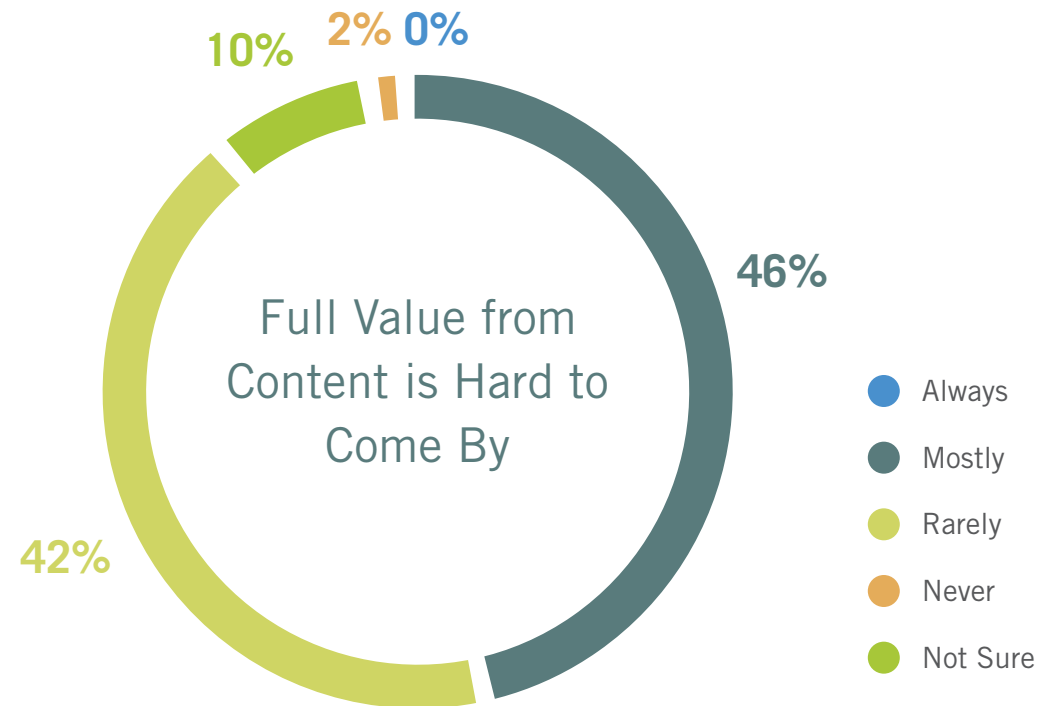


### 3. THE VALUE ISSUE





Regardless of what it is or how it is distributed, our survey respondents made one thing clear: it is hard to get the full value out of content efforts. In fact, **52%** of respondents don't believe their organization maximizes its content efforts or are unsure if it does. And, perhaps even more startling, none believe their organization always realizes the maximum value.



Larger organizations—likely due to larger budgets, established strategies, greater distribution channels and more internal resources—were more likely to see maximum value from content, with **78%** of large organizations (>25 people on the marketing team) responding that they see value most of the time, compared to just **35%** and **47%** in organizations with less than 5 or 5-14 people on the marketing team, respectively.

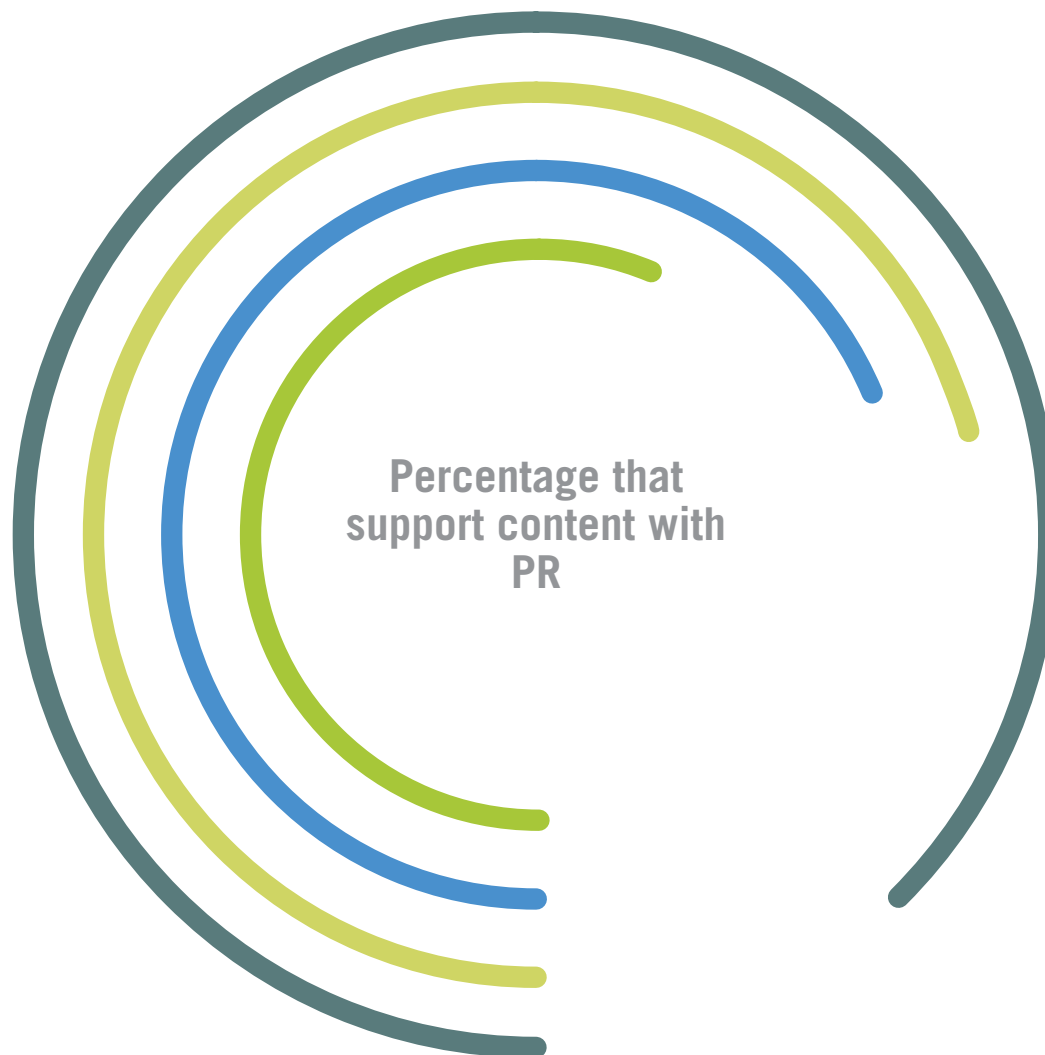
The study identified three main inhibitors to maximizing content, with internal team bandwidth being the far-and-away biggest one with **70%** of survey respondents citing it. Lack of expertise and budgetary resources followed (at **45%** and **40%**, respectively). While not a formal response options, the comments for this section of the survey also showed a propensity among some organizations to do “random acts of content” and operate “by the seat of [their] pants,” revealing a trickledown effect from the lack of a documented strategy presented earlier in the report.

For those that are putting efforts behind maximizing content, two approaches stood out among our respondents.

1. The first is having dedicated writing and/or design resources (**83%**), which also happened to be the top area where respondents would invest if given additional budget (**28%**).
2. The second approach for driving maximum value from content was supporting efforts with PR amplification (**70%**), with the focus on PR amplification largely geared toward the smallest and largest organizations.

## How the Use of PR Is Deployed in Different Sized Organizations

- **71.43%**  
Large Organization  
(>25 person marketing team)
- **57.14%**  
Medium/Large  
Organization  
(15-25 person marketing team)
- **66.67%**  
Small/Medium  
Organization  
(5-14 person marketing team)
- **83.33%**  
Small Organization  
(<5 person marketing team)





## 4. WHERE CONTENT AND PR ALIGN —AND COULD IMPROVE



According to our respondents, content tends to be most effective in the goal areas best aligned with traditional PR strategies. In fact, when asked how the content created by their organization performs:

- ▶ **75%** said it builds brand awareness
- ▶ **59%** said it established thought leadership well or very well

These are two cornerstones of a traditional core PR program, underscoring the overlap across the two disciplines.

Nearly one-fifth (**19%**) of respondents would invest in amplification of content if given additional budget for their content program, a surprise when compared to the mere **7%** that would invest in technology solutions with that extra budget.

**Conversely and quite surprisingly:**

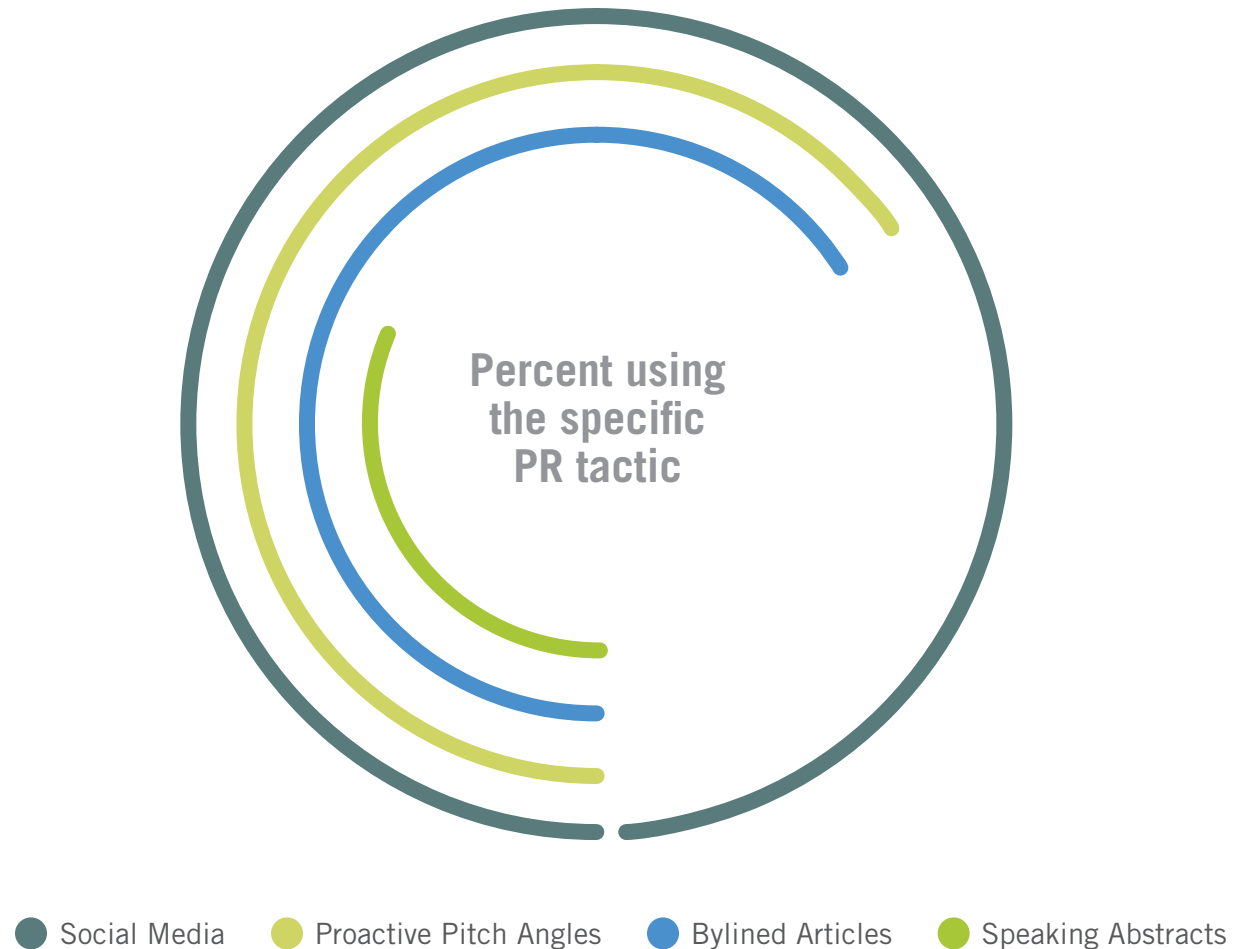
- ▶ less than **40%** said their content nurtures leads well or very well
- ▶ **20%** felt it was poor or very poor at motivating buyers to take action

These are two qualities that are often among the most important benchmarks of a content marketing program.



From the perspective of our respondents whose main responsibility is PR, all felt they “sometimes” had insight into what content is being created by their organization. This varies from those whose main responsibility is content—**50%** of which said they “always” provide the PR team with insight into what content is being created in their organization (**50%** said they “sometimes” do). Regardless of which group’s portrayal is a more accurate representation of reality, one thing is true: the insight pays off, with **100%** of PR respondents citing they use content assets for traditional PR efforts—including pitching, bylined articles, speaking abstracts and social.

## Putting Content to Good, Diverse Work in PR



One immediate area for improvement jumped out from the responses from those responsible for creating content. They only consult the PR team half of the time when identifying the theme or angle of a piece of content.

Moreover, and more startling, they also only consult PR on the amplification and promotion of content only half of the time—suggesting that the PR team has little say in how a piece gets pushed to media and other public channels (Note: for the purposes of this study, amplification is different than distribution –e.g., email, web, etc.). On a slightly more positive note, PR teams are consulted **62%** of the time on messaging related to content.

**50%** of the time content is created, PR is not consulted on its amplification or promotion



## 5. CONCLUSION



Content and PR are, in many organizations, working toward similar goals and often operating in tandem. But they remain far from fully aligned or optimized.

It is no surprise that nearly half (**42%**) of respondents said that their organization would benefit from a single entity handling both its creation and amplification—a number that grew to **47%** among small organizations and **50%** among those with 15-25 person marketing teams.

As the content industry continues to evolve and the public relations industry continues to transform with the changing media and influencer landscape, these two disciplines can only benefit from greater integration and collaboration.



# LET V2 HELP YOU ALIGN YOUR PR & CONTENT EFFORTS

With an innate ability to articulate a set of compelling messages and support narratives for multiple audiences and across multiple channels, Version 2.0 is uniquely qualified to both develop and execute integrated campaigns that maximize PR and content efforts.

We've trained a team of content experts that will work in tandem with account teams, established partnerships with technology and service providers in the space, and develop a proprietary methodology that ensures an integrated, strategic approach.

Our proprietary Align methodology ensures that your content and PR programs are integrated to generate the most value.

## V2's Content Services

Our content capabilities include:

- **Strategic and cross-functional alignment**
- **Content audits**
- **Customer and market research**
- **Editorial calendar and storyline development**
- **Distribution and amplification – paid, earned and owned**
- **Asset creation – storyboarding, interviews, copywriting, editing**
- **Design, layout and production**
- **Repurposing to maximize output and consistency**
- **Influencer co-creation and cross-promotion**

## To learn more:

- ▶ Download our content tip sheet  
<https://v2comms.wishpond.com/content-tip-sheet/>
- ▶ Check out our complete capabilities at  
<https://www.v2comms.com/services/content/>
- ▶ Contact Katelyn Holbrook, our content practice lead, at  
[KHolbrook@v2comms.com](mailto:KHolbrook@v2comms.com)



# NEED HELP OPTIMIZING YOUR CONTENT AND PR EFFORTS?

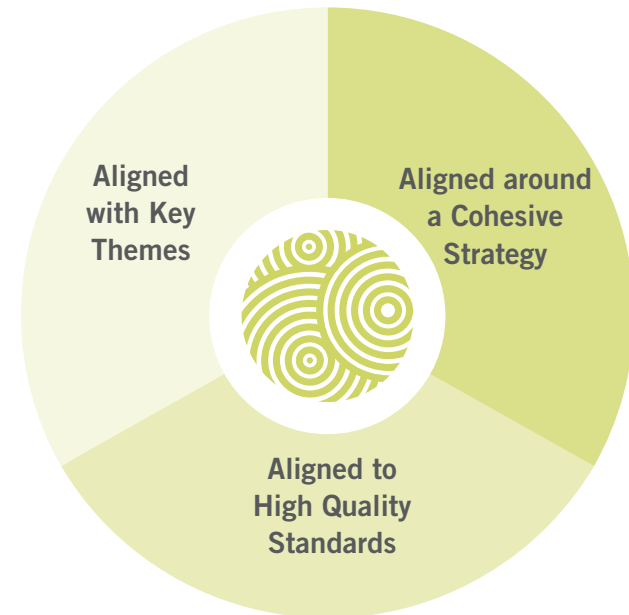
Let us help. V2's approach to content bridges the gap that too commonly exists between content and marketing. We call our methodology "Align":

- ▶ Aligned with key themes
- ▶ Aligned around a cohesive communications strategy
- ▶ Aligned to high-quality standards

Our proven hub-and-spoke approach ensures that the resources that go into content creation are maximized across the buyer cycle and throughout a number of distinct asset outputs – from eBooks, infographics and research studies, to bylined articles and social posts, to video, interactive digital and beyond.

Our clients turn to V2 for content guidance and expertise to:

- ▶ Leverage V2's messaging knowledge to extend PR campaign themes into lead generation campaigns for highly measurable impact on top-line growth
- ▶ Alleviate strain on internal team bandwidth and limited budgets to produce a variety of high-quality, consistent and repurposeable content assets
- ▶ Attract new leads using content as a magnet, while moving existing leads through the buying process

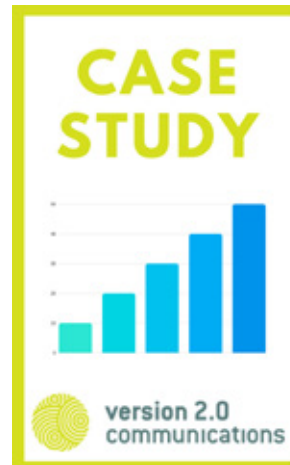


## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM VERSION 2.0 COMMUNICATIONS:

V2 content tip sheet



Curata Case Study



# METHODOLOGY

Version 2.0 conducted an online survey in the summer of 2017. The majority (**76%**) of respondents are senior professionals—manager up to C-level executive—with **18%** of respondents holding junior positions and **6%** representing an external agency partner or consultant. Almost all (**90%**) of respondents work in a marketing role, though the exact functions varied across PR, content marketing, demand generation, operations and marketing leadership. Half of the respondents were from B2B organizations, with **34%** being from B2B+B2C organizations and **16%** being from strictly B2C.



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