The Impact of Content Marketing on Marketing Organizational Structure

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B2B Marketing identified content marketing as the number one driver for lead generation in 2012 (Olenski, 2012). As such, 66 percent of U.S. marketing organizations anticipate "very" or "fully" engaged content marketing programs in their marketing departments by 2013 (Olenski, 2012). This represents a 100 percent increase in content marketing programs from 2012 to 2013. This increase creates a need in organizations for dedicated headcount and resources to develop and execute strategy, initiatives and assets (Pulizzi, 2012).

Despite the predicted high adoption of content marketing programs within marketing departments, a standard organizational structure that includes content marketing does not exist. Rather, Schulze (2012) suggests that content marketing responsibilities are spread across six different functional roles, including marketing, owner/CEO/president, sales, product management, consultant and engineering. The broad distribution of responsibility negatively affects the integration across marketing, as cited by 25 percent of business-to-business marketers (Content Marketing Institute, 2012).

In addition to ownership challenges, there are various other barriers for marketing departments adopting content marketing programs. For in-house marketers, lack of human resources (42 percent), lack of budget (35 percent) and company politics (30 percent) were listed most frequently as barriers. Meanwhile, agencies were more likely to cite lack of understanding or training (46 percent), content marketing skills (39 percent) and lack of return-on-investment (35 percent) (Himoff, 2012) as reasons for the need of a defined content marketing organizational structure.

Another challenge to content marketing is ownership of strategy and budget. Corporate marketing, most often, assumes the strategy and budget for content marketing in 55 percent and

51 percent of marketing departments, respectively. However, 38 percent of companies assign content strategy to product marketing; while another 37 percent assign content strategy to the president or owner (Schulze, 2012).

The lack of defined ownership challenges of content marketing programs, strategy and budget, indicate a need for a standardized organizational structure for marketing departments. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to develop an organizational structure for marketing departments that want or already have content marketing programs. Given this objective, a literature review will be conducted. The literature review examines existing research and information about marketing organizational structure, content marketing roles and examples of companies with content marketing programs.

To ascertain a streamlined organizational structure that includes content marketing, three areas will be reviewed. First, traditional marketing organizational structures will be identified. Second, content marketing programs challenges and roles will be defined. Finally, case studies of organizations with content marketing programs will be summarized.

<div align="center">**Literature Review**</div>

Traditional Marketing Organization Structure

Marketing scholars identify four types of traditional marketing organizational forms: functional, product, market and matrix (Roering et al., 1985, p. 14). First, functional structures are the simplest and most commonly used organizational form (Roering et al., 1985). The functional organization aligns areas of specialty (e.g., market research manager, advertising manager, etc.) under a vice president. The vice president then serves as the coordinator of all activities.

A criticism of functional structures is lack of scalability (Roering et al., 1985). For example, as the organization increases the number of functions, products or customers, communication between the functional managers and vice president can break down (Roering et al., 1985). This breakdown leads to inefficiencies in productivity and results (Roering et al., 1985).

The second traditional organizational form, product organization, counters problems of scale by adding another layer of managers (Roering et al., 1985). Product organizations do not replace functional organizations; rather, product organizations amend functional organizations with an added layer of coordination (Roering et al., 1985). Product organizational design is most commonly used in companies that produce a wide variety of products (Kolter, 1980).

A third form of traditional marketing organizational design is market management. This structure is most often used when a company's product serves many markets (i.e., the product has many uses) (Roering et al., 1985). In market organizational design, the market manager coordinates marketing activities for a specific set of customers.

The final form of traditional marketing organizational design is matrix. A matrix form combines the aforementioned structures: functional, product and market. In a matrix marketing organization, groups or teams work on projects related to product or markets, or both (Roering et al., 1985). This work is done by combining source managers (functional managers) and program managers (product managers and market managers) simultaneously at the same hierarchical level (Roering et al., 1985).

In other words, as a marketing department adds roles and products or services, the functional structure of that department morphs from functional to product to market and eventually to matrix. During this organizational change, several challenges occur, including

people and process integration and governance (Fountain, 2005). To understand the people and process affected within a marketing department, content marketing and roles must be defined.

Content Marketing Defined

Content marketing, or "custom media," is the "blend of both content and marketing of content that enables customer behavior" (Pulizzi, 2009, p. 14). Content marketing is often interchanged with custom publishing, custom media, corporate content, custom content, branded content, etc. (Pulizzi, 2009). Companies have been conducting content marketing campaigns for over a century. Take, for example, John Deere's educational publication "Furrow" in the late 1800s (Pulizzi, 2009).

However, content marketing as a discipline became popular in the late 2000s. For example, in 2007 Nike's corporate vice president of global brand and category management, Trevor Edwards said, "We're not in the business of keeping the media companies alive . . . we're in the business of connecting with consumers" (Pulizzi, 2009). Nike along with Procter & Gamble, Johnson & Johnson and General Motors moved away from media and sponsorship strategies to content creation marketing strategies (Pulizzi, 2009).

In addition to a strategy shift, companies currently dedicate more of their budget to content marketing than in previous years (Schulze, 2012). For example, 760 marketing professionals reportedly spent 20 percent of their entre marketing budget on content marketing programs in 2011 (Schulze, 2012). However, budget allocation to content marketing increased to 30 percent in 2012 (Schulze, 2012). This 10 percent increase year-over-year indicates the growing importance of content marketing (Schulze, 2012).

Content marketing roles

Currently, content marketing responsibilities are divided across six different functions within marketing (Schulze, 2012). In the majority of business-to-business (B2B) companies, corporate marketing owns content marketing strategy (55 percent), budget (51 percent), and creation (55 percent) (Schulze, 2012). Product marketing is the second most popular owner of strategy (38 percent) and creation (47 percent); while the CEO or president owns budget in 35 percent of companies (Schulze, 2012).

Pulizzi (2012) suggests that a content marketing program may contain one person or many people depending on the size of the organization. However, despite the size of the organization, marketing departments need the following five roles filled: director or chief content officer (CCO), managing editor(s), content creators, content producers and chief "listening" officer (CLO) (Pulizzi, 2012). Pulizzi (2012) suggests that if marketing departments adopt these five responsibilities, then a content marketing program may flourish.

The director or CCO owns the content marketing initiative. The director may be the most important role to a content marketing program, even though they may not create any content (Pulizzi, 2012). This role is also known as the "chief storyteller" to the organization and is responsible for executing the strategy and goals of the program.

Several companies have adopted director or CCO positions in their marketing organization. Kodak, for example, labels this role the vice president of content strategy. Further, social media technology company, Radian6, names this role the director of content marketing (Pulizzi, 2012). For organizations that lack funding to add a director or CCO, the vice president of marketing assumes this position. For example, United Postal Service (UPS) has a manager who oversees internal content production as well as the production of content by an outside agency (Pulizzi, 2012). Pulizzi (2012) recommends that the director or CCO position stay within

the organization to retain organizational and business connectivity and culture. In agreement, Greg Alexander, CEO of Sales Benchmark Index suggests that third party or outside agencies "simply just do not know the client's customers, markets, products, and competitors as well as the client" (Dieckmeyer, 2012, p. 1).

Following in responsibility after the director or CCO is the managing editor. This role, sometimes outsourced, and sometimes part of the CCO's responsibility, manages the editorial functions of the content marketing program (Pulizzi, 2012). Pulizzi (2012) suggests that the managing editor role is currently the most sought after within marketing organizations. The managing editor is responsible for the day-to-day execution of content. Managing editors work with internal employees and outside content creators on the following: content production, content scheduling, keyword selection, search engine optimization of posts, style corrections, tagging and images (Pulizzi, 2012).

The content creator role is directed by the editorial manager; however, content creation efforts may overlap with the editorial manager (Pulizzi, 2012). For example, typical content creators include anyone in the C-suite, product management, customer service, or a hired consultant. In general, content creators are the "face" or "voice" of the authentic organization (Pulizzi, 2012).

Content producers, on the other hand, act behind the marketing scenes (Pulizzi, 2012). They format or create the ultimate package of the content. For example, a content producer might be a web agency if the end product is a blog; or a content producer might be an internal designer that produces an infographic (Pulizzi, 2012). Danu (2012) suggests that "the bigger the company, the more it will likely outsource content production" (p. 1). For example, 42 percent of small companies outsource content creation; while 65 percent of large companies outsource

content creation (Content Marketing Institute, 2012). In terms of business type, business-to-consumer (B2C) and B2B companies are outsourcing content creation at relatively consistent rates, 46 percent and 44 percent, respectively (Danu, 2012; Content Marketing Institute, 2012).

The final essential content marketing role is the chief "listening" officer (CLO) (Pulizzi, 2012). Pulizzi (2012) calls this role "air-traffic control" for social media and other content channels. CLOs listen to consumers online, maintain appropriate conversations, and route issues to the appropriate team members who can engage in conversation (customer service, sales, marketing, etc.). Further, this role informs the editorial manager on relevant or timely topics for content development (Pulizzi, 2012).

In conclusion, content marketing is broken into five distinct roles. These roles may be filled by one person or many (Pulizzi, 2012). Marketing organizations must include these responsibilities in order to have a properly functioning content marketing program (Pulizzi, 2012). However, how do these roles fit within existing marketing departments with content marketing programs?

Examples of Organizational Structure with Content Marketing

Sixty-six percent of marketing departments have content marketing programs (Schulze, 2012); however, 91 percent of B2B marketers use content marketing (Content Marketing Institute, 2012). Two of these B2B companies, Hoover's and Eloqua use differing organizational models. For example, Hoover's employs a functional organization model while Eloqua uses a market structure (Washkuck, 2011).

Hoover's, a B2B information provider, uses a data-driven matrix design for their marketing organizational structure (Washkuck, 2011). James Rogers, VP of marketing, said, "We've largely aligned the marketing structure with the sales channel . . . we use metrics to trace

our goals" (Washkuck, 2011, p. 9). Rogers suggests that each functional area of Hoover's marketing organization can track Return-On-Investment (ROI) (Washkuck, 2011).

On the other hand, Eloqua, a marketing software company, operates with a market organizational structure. This structure is credited with generating 60 percent of Eloqua's new business in 2010 (Washkuck, 2011). Brian Kardon, Eloqua's Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) says "Eloqua's marketing organization is largely designed around buyer stages in the funnel" (Washkuck, 2011, p. 9).

As noted by this literature review, a consistent organizational structure for marketing departments with a content marketing program does not exist. Based on varying traditional structures, content marketing roles, and current organization structures in market, a query arises: What are the organizational best practices of marketing departments with effective content marketing programs?

Methodology

Mixed Method Research Design

In order to find organizational best practices of marketing departments with effective content marketing programs a mixed methods research was applied. Mixed methods research combines both quantitative and qualitative studies and produces a comprehensive understanding of the research issue through the collection and analysis of multiple data sources (Creswell, 2009). Mixed method research helps to eliminate potential biases inherent in using one method. By introducing an additional research method, the bias in the data and analysis is neutralized or canceled (Creswell, 2009).

A mixed methods research design was appropriate for this study because it provided a comprehensive understanding of organizational design and eliminates the biases of using only

one method (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative survey analysis examined the relationship between marketing organizational structure and content marketing programs. Qualitative interviews offered insight into the interpersonal communication barriers of organizational design that survey data did not fully uncover.

Participants

Participants for the mixed methods research design varied by quantitative and qualitative studies. However, all participants had a content marketing program in their marketing department or agency. For the quantitative survey, participants included the following content marketing job functions: director or CCO, managing editor(s), content creators, content producers and chief "listening" officer (CLO) (Pulizzi, 2012). Survey participants did not have to be in a particular industry; however, they were segmented by company type, including B2B, B2C, etc.

In contrast, participants for the two qualitative interviews included four high-level content marketing professionals. These content marketing roles included director or CCO or managing editor. Company and marketing department type of participants varied by B2B, B2C, etc.

Materials and Procedure

The quantitative data collection and analysis was administered through an online survey over the course of four weeks in the spring of 2013 (see Appendix A). Survey research, according to Creswell (2009), identifies trends, attitudes or opinions of a population by studying a sample. This survey gathered data on current content marketing programs and organizational trends and attitudes from members of the Citrix marketing database and other content marketing online groups via LinkedIn.

As such, this survey was divided into three sections: content marketing, organizational design and demographics. The content marketing section qualified participants by asking, "Does your marketing department practice content marketing?" The content marketing section also had participants rate their proficiency and success in content marketing.

The second section, organizational design, revealed marketing department structure. An example question included, "In which function does your content marketing program reside: corporate marketing, product marketing, demand generation, executive or other?" The final section gathered participant demographic information, including company size and type. The majority of questions in each section were answered via multiple select. The remaining questions used Likert scale, yes or no and open-ended.

The qualitative data collection and analysis was conducted by interviews with four high-level content marketing professionals (see Appendix B for interview questions). An interview was the appropriate qualitative data collection method because open ended questions triggered meaningful participant responses (Mack et al., 2005). Open ended questioning provided the ability to non-prescriptively probe into the interpersonal dynamics of content marketing and organizational design.

Interviews were comprised of two sections: content marketing and organizational design. The first section focused on content marketing as a discipline, including roles, parameters of successful programs, and examples and antidotes of successful content marketing programs. An example question was "What company has the best content marketing program, and why?"

The second section of the interview concentrated on marketing organizational dynamics. Participants discussed the current state of marketing organizations with content marketing programs, as well as the barriers and challenges. Further, participants determined the ideal

marketing department structure that includes a content marketing program. A sample question

was "Should marketing departments re-structure to fit this group's ideal content marketing

organizational structure?"

Results

Quantitative Data

The quantitative data gathered from the online survey examined the relationship between

marketing organizational structure and content marketing programs of 152 North American

marketing professionals. The majority of marketing participants were in small companies (36%)

followed by enterprise (28%), micro (19%), and large (10%). Company type ranged from B2B

(28%), B2C (26%), to other (13%) and B2G (2%). Most participants were part of a functional

marketing organizational structure (47%), followed by matrix (30%), other (12%) and divisional

(11%). Content roles of participants varied from campaign, marketing or program manager

(20%), executive (CMO, VP, president) (16%), other (15%), director or CCO (14%), managing

editor or content manager (12%), content creator or producer (11%), social media manager (7%),

contractor or consultant (5%).

The majority of participants had content marketing programs less than two years.

Specifically, 30 percent of participants had programs between one and two years old. The most

frequent response was followed by programs that were three to six years old (29%), less than one

year (18%), no dedicated role (12%), 10 or more years (8%) and seven to nine years (3%). When

looking at company size and program maturity, enterprise (1000+ employees) had the most

mature programs on average (see Appendix C).

Notably, 40 percent of mature content marketing programs (seven plus years old) were

found in enterprise companies, followed by large (23%), small (15%), micro (15%), and medium

(7%). The majority of mature content marketing programs were in matrix (39%, n=26)

organization structures. This was followed by functional (34%), division (15%) and other (12%).

The majority of new content marketing programs (less than two years) were in functional (50%,

n=56), followed by matrix (27%), divisional (13%) and other (10%). Companies with mid-level

maturity (three to six years) were most often functional (50%), followed by matrix (34%),

divisional (8%) and other (8%) (see Appendix D).

Overall, the most common marketing organization structure for participants was

functional (48%, n=137). Functional was followed by matrix (31%), other (12%) and divisional

(11%). For B2B companies, functional (49%) was the most common, followed by matrix (33%),

division (11%) and other (7%). B2C companies were most often functional (44%), followed by

matrix (34%), divisional (12%) and other (12%) (see Appendix E).

The majority of participants ranked content creation the most effective aspect of their

content marketing program, giving an average rating of 3.1 out of five, with five representing the

highest and one the lowest. Content creation was followed by content strategy (2.9), content

planning (2.7), and content syndication and budget the same (2.4). Reporting and measurement

were reported the weakest content marketing area for participants (2.2).

Organizations with high effectiveness across content programs (a rating of four or five

out of five) most often had a functional structure (55%), followed by matrix (28%), divisional

(10%) and other (8%) (see Appendix F). Participants with high effectiveness in content creation

and budget were more likely matrix (32%), as compared to those with highly effective reporting

(29%), strategy (26%), planning (23%), and syndication (22%). Divisional structure was the

lowest reported organizational structure by participants with highly effective content programs

(10%), followed by other (8%).

In terms of current content marketing ownership, participants reported the following breakdown of responsibility by functional role in their respective companies (see Appendix G). Content strategy was most often owned by corporate marketing (49%, n=152), followed by executives (15%), creative services (11%) and other (11%), product marketing (10%) and demand generation (4%). Content budget was most often owned by corporate marketing (37%, n=150), executives (35%), other (10%), product marketing (8%), demand generation (6%) and creative services (4%). Planning and editorial calendars were most often owned by corporate marketing (52%, n=147), followed by other (13%), creative services (12%), product marketing (8%), executives (8%) and demand generation (5%). Content creation ownership was most assigned to corporate marketing (45%, n=149), followed by creative services (24%), product marketing (11%), other (11%), demand generation (4%), and executives (5%). Content syndication and distribution was owned by corporate marketing (45%, n=150) for the majority of participants. Corporate marketing was followed by other (16%), demand generation (14%), product marketing (10%), creative services (9%), and executives (6%). Reporting and measurement ownership was most often owned by corporate marketing (52%, n=150), followed by other (13%), product marketing (11%), with demand generation and executives tied (9%). Creative services were least responsible for reporting and metrics (5%).

On the other hand, in terms of ideal content marketing ownership, participants reported the following breakdown of responsibility by functional role in their ideal program. Participants most often assigned content strategy to corporate marketing (53%, n=146), followed by executives (15%), product marketing (12%), demand generation (8%), creative services (6%) and other (6%). Similarly, budget ownership was assigned to corporate marketing most often (49%, n=146), followed by executives (25%), product marketing (10%), other (6%), demand

generation (5%) and creative services (5%). Planning and editorial calendars were most assigned to corporate marketing ownership (60%, n=148), followed by product marketing (12%), demand generation (9%), executives (6%) and other (5%). Content creation ownership was most assigned to corporate marketing (39%, n=148), followed by creative services (32%), product marketing (16%), demand generation (6%), other (5%) and executives (2%). Ownership of syndication and distribution was given mostly to corporate marketing (47%, n=146), demand generation (20%), product marketing (16%), other (8%), creative services (6%) and executives (3%). Lastly, reporting was assigned to corporate marketing (54%, n=147) most often, followed by demand generation (14%), product marketing (12%), other (10%) executives (7%) and creative services (3%).

Further, in terms of outsourced or contracted content marketing work, participants cited 19 percent of their overall program and work outsourced on average. Of the outsourced work, the majority was content creation and execution (24%), followed by syndication and distribution (17%), content strategy (11%), reporting (10%) and planning (9%). Participants most often outsourced the role of content creator or producer (41%, n=58), followed by social media (21%), campaign manager (21%), managing editor (12%) and finally director or CCO (5%).

Participants identified Hubspot, an inbound marketing software provider, most often as having the most exemplary content marketing program (20%, n=100). Other frequently mentioned companies included Marketo, (7%), Citrix (6%), IBM (6%), American Express (5%), Coca Cola (5%), Apple (4%), Mashable (4%) and Red Bull (4%). Six out of the top eight most cited best content marketing programs were in the technology industry. The top three programs were in B2B software technology.

Finally, when asked if marketing departments should restructure to best include content marketing, the majority responded yes (83%, n=125). Those that did not respond yes were most often followed by maybe or depends (10%). The remaining participants did not think restructuring was necessary (5%) or were unsure (2%).

To illustrate, one participant qualified their yes response to reorganization by writing, "Content marketing is proven to drive greater awareness and marketing leads." Another added, "[Content marketing] is the best way to keep growing an engaged audience." A minority of participants responded maybe (10%), justifying their stance by saying it "depends on the type of business." Another stated, "I don't know that it always requires a restructure; however it does require that specific accountabilities be assigned." One participant that responded no said, "I don't think restructuring is needed. Most small to medium-sized businesses have the right structure but only so many people who can handle content marketing—which in many cases is none. There is a cost and time savings with outsourcing this to the right partner."

Qualitative Data

Alternative to the quantitative data, qualitative interviews and content analysis offered insight into the interpersonal communication barriers of organizational design that the above survey data did not fully capture. Interviews—a field-based, qualitative approach—were useful for understanding perceptions and beliefs (Sargeant, Ford, & Hudson, 2008). A total of four high-level content marketing professionals were identified and interviewed via email, as well as researched online through blog posts on Content Marketing Institute (2013). A summary of key results are identified below.

Common organizational traits of high performing content marketing programs most often include publication-style organization and operation. Welch (2013), content director for Citrix

suggests "Content marketing organizations need to think and run their organizations like publishers to be successful." Pulizzi (2012) concurred by saying, "Most brands have been doing things the same way for so long that thinking like a publisher is, well, quite taxing. Worse yet, we aren't set up for publishing; we're set up for traditional marketing practices set up in the usual organizational silos."

Albee (2013), author of *eMarketing Strategies for the Complex Sale*, elaborated on the importance of quality organization and operation with two statements. First, organizational excellence is achieved through "executive support and leadership, commitment to long-term outlook and approach that parallels average length of buying cycle at a minimum, established goals both short and longer term, cross-enterprise visibility, collaboration and alignment, and allowance for experimentation and even failure." Second, operational effectiveness is achieved when programs "start with personas, customers, audience definition, develop a strategy that includes all channels and front-facing departments, use of editorial calendar that includes all channels and team responsibilities, and a focus across the customer lifecycle."

Brenner (2013), vice president of global marketing for SAP, built on Albee's suggestions. He offered advice for content marketing programs to achieve best-in-class organization and performance. He suggests "It's the brands that get content marketing platforms in place today that will have a huge advantage over those who continue to push marketing promotional messages that no one wants."

Roles and core competencies within content marketing programs include a range of functions. Welch (2013) specified CCO or vice president, editor-in-chief, managing editor(s), listening managers, content creators and content production as essential for high performing

content programs. Pulizzi (2012) recommended these same roles; however, he did not explicitly cite a separate editor-in-chief.

A consequence of poor structural design is productivity loss and poor execution. Welch (2013) qualified this with a case study from a large technology company. This content marketing program lacked managing editors and often had to sell the idea of content marketing. The justification of content marketing increased cycles and lessened the overall effectiveness of the program. Albee (2013) elaborating on productivity loss and poor execution. She said, "If the departments participating in content marketing (demand generation, social media, PR, corporate marketing, communications, etc.) are not in alignment or working together and the executive support is shaky, execution reflects that. Additionally, if the technology that supports content marketing is based on yet another queue, then the ability for real-time impact is compromised."

To demonstrate, Albee (2013) emphasized the need for strong content marketing organizational alignment with a marketing anecdote about rebranding. "Corporate marketing does a rebranding exercise that changes the go-to-market approach without communicating that to the individual departments that are creating their own content strategies. Everything must be redone to align with the new approach, regardless of the persona research that could have informed the rebranding exercise."

The most common mistake in content marketing team design varied from ownership to allocation of resources. Welch, for example, cited lack of ownership as the biggest mistake in team design. Welch (2013) suggests "that there needs to be an authoritative body in charge and the various marketing teams need to align on goals and objectives." Brenner (2013) suggests that the "biggest secret to content marketing success is that it does not cost as much money as you might think." At SAP, his organization leveraged internal bloggers and external unpaid bloggers

who wanted a platform to write. That was the start to his content engine of Business Innovation, a content marketing website for early-stage SAP buyers. Pulizzi suggests that "a major mistake involves too much 'me, me, me.' Marketers like to talk about themselves first. But if we think like publishers and focus on the reader's needs, we have a better opportunity to deliver quality information" (Fieldman, 2012).

In addition, Albee (20103) identified the number one mistake of content marketers as focus priorities. For example, she states, content marketers spend "too much focus on tactical execution and not enough talent and skills development around strategy." Her advice is directed at the entire content marketing team, especially management. "Everyone on the team has responsibility for their piece of the puzzle but no one is looking at the big picture of how it should all work together. This comes mainly from a campaign orientation that hasn't given way to new approaches."

Experts agreed that a content program should own management of content strategy, budget, themes, editorial calendar, content execution, content delivery, and reporting and metrics. For example, Welch (2013) and Pulizzi (2012) assigned strategy and budget ownership to the CCO, and editorial calendars to the managing editor. However, Welch (2013) and Pulizzi (2012) disagreed on reporting ownership. Welch (2013) assigned this to the managing editor, while Pulizzi (2012) recommends this responsibility for the CCO. Albee (2013), however, assigned the following hierarchy, clarifying that actual titles may vary: strategy and budget belong to the CMO; themes, editorial calendar and reporting belong to the CCO; and execution and delivery belong to the content director.

Consequences of not having a content marketing program were consistent across experts. For example, Brenner (2013) said "The real danger in lagging behind in content marketing is that

more and more brands are becoming publishers." Albee (2013) agreed by stating, "Companies without a content marketing program will become irrelevant." Her rationale was that "B2B buyers are hungry for insights and information. If one company doesn't provide it, another will. This is now table stakes."

Alternatively, Pulizzi (2013) warns that not all content marketing is good content marketing. He suggests "with a flood of practitioners from all sides (many of them lacking a clear understanding of content marketing), there will be a deluge of really, really bad content." Welch (2013), however, remedies this concern with the following suggestion for companies: "If companies don't take content marketing and content strategy seriously their success will be impacted greatly and not in a good way."

Furthermore, Albee (2013), Welch (2013) and Brenner (2013) offered additional advice for brands and companies in regard to creating quality content marketing programs. Albee (2013) suggests companies "forget about search rankings unless a buyer searched for the name of the company. Without publishing new content, a company's presence online will fade away." Brenner (2013) recommends companies start content programs immediately. He said, "Brands that get content marketing platforms in place today will have a huge advantage over those who continue to push marketing promotional messages that no one wants." Welch (2013) recommends content marketers re-focus media efforts on content quality. She said, "Marketers are buying less media each year; therefore, marketers have to become the media and that means they have to plan, create and deliver high quality content that solves a customer or potential customer's problem or addresses their needs."

Discussion

The objective of this research was to identify organizational best practices of marketing departments with effective content marketing programs. Through the literature review several forms of marketing organizational structures were identified, and content marketing roles were defined. This informed the development of mixed method research to further identify content marketing organizational best practices. As a result, seven best practices for organizational design of content marketing programs were identified.

Marketing organizations should restructure

As noted in the qualitative section, both Albee (2013) and Brenner (2013) recommend companies reorganize to best incorporate content marketing alignment. Brenner (2013) advises companies start content programs immediately. He said, "Brands that get content marketing platforms in place today will have a huge advantage over those who continue to push marketing promotional messages that no one wants." The quantitative research study of 152 marketing professional confirmed this stance.

When asked if marketing departments should restructure to best include content marketing, 83 percent survey participants responded "yes" or favorably. Participants qualified their yes responses with various explanations. For example, one participant cited the need for online content integration. "Marketing and communications departments need to align their structure with ability to manage all online content in a strategic and integrated manner." Another offered a structural recommendation: "The content marketing function is like the newsroom of a business. Sometimes the content development focus is completely out-of-line with other marketing objectives.

Corporate marketing or communications owns content marketing

Quantitative data revealed a common theme of corporate marketing or communications ownership of content marketing responsibilities (see Appendix F). Content marketing responsibility was broken down into strategy, budget, planning and editorial calendar, content creation or execution, content syndication, and reporting and metrics. The majority of participants ranked corporate marketing as owner of all six responsibilities in their current organization. Further, the majority of participants also ranked corporate marketing as the ideal owner of all six responsibilities.

Interesting to note is content creation ownership. This responsibility was distantly ranked between corporate marketing (45%) and creative services (24%) in current organizations. However, in participants' ideal organization, content creation ownership was divided more evenly among corporate marketing (39%) and creative services (32%). This shows a resource discrepancy in current marketing organizations for content creation.

Another discrepancy between actual responsibility and ideal responsibility is syndication and reporting. Participants ranked demand generation as the second most responsible in an ideal organizational structure for syndication (20%) and reporting (14%). However, this contrasts with reality. In actual organizations, demand generation was third in responsibility for syndication (14%) was fourth for reporting (9%).

Content strategy should not be outsourced

Qualitative and quantitative research confirmed that content strategy should not be outsourced. Pulizzi (2013) stressed this saying, "Although brands can outsource a wide variety of content production through outsourced vendors, it's important to keep the CCO inside the organization." Participants in the marketing survey quantified this with reporting the least outsourced content role as CCO or director. Participants further identified 10 percent of content

strategy outsourced. Contrast this to more often outsourced responsibilities such as content creation (24%) and syndication (17%).

Content creation is the most outsourced and effective programmatically

Converse to content strategy, content creation was the most often outsourced responsibility and the most effective tactic according to quantitative data. Content creation received the highest participant rating of all program areas (3.1). Qualitatively, both Pulizzi (2012) and Brenner (2013) confirm contract or outsourced contributors, such as bloggers, are an efficient resource to maintain a strong content engine. Participants in the survey demonstrated this in their responses. Twenty-four percent outsourced creation, and most often outsourced creation roles over all other content roles, including social media, campaign manager, managing editor and finally director or CCO. Interestingly, organizations with high performing content creation were more likely to be in a matrix organization (32%) than other high performing areas, such as planning (23%) and syndication (22%).

Mature content marketing programs have a matrix organization structure

Although the most common marketing organization structure for participants was functional (48%), the majority of mature content marketing programs were in matrix (39%) organization structures. This was followed by functional (34%), divisional (15%) and other (12%). Conversely, new content marketing programs were most often a functional organization structure (50%), followed by matrix (27%), divisional (13%) and other (10%). Companies with three to six years of program maturity were most often functional (50%), followed by matrix (34%), divisional (8%) and other (8%). Therefore an organizational trend of functional to matrix is evident as maturity of program increases.

Highly effective content programs have a functional structure

Despite mature programs matrix structures, high performing or effective content programs most often had a functional structure. For example, participants with high effectiveness across content programs most often selected functional structure (55%). This was followed by matrix (28%), divisional (10%) and other (8%). However, interesting to note, participants with high effectiveness in content creation and budget were more likely to be matrix (32%), as compared to those with highly effective reporting (29%), strategy (26%), planning (23%), and syndication (22%). A limitation of this study is that effectiveness ratings were self-selected by participants; therefore, this may have introduced a bias.

Enterprise B2B software brands best exemplify content marketing

Participants were asked to share a brand that best exemplifies content marketing. Hubspot, an inbound marketing software provider, was mentioned the most, earning 20 percent of mentions (n=100). Other frequently mentioned companies included Marketo, (7%), Citrix (6%), IBM (6%), American Express (5%), Coca Cola (5%), Apple (4%), Mashable (4%) and Red Bull (4%). Interesting to note, six out of the top eight most cited best content marketing programs were in the technology industry. The top three programs were in B2B software technology: Hubspot, Marketo and Citrix tied with IBM.

Implications

The start of this content marketing research uncovered a basic understanding of organizational structure and content marketing. Specifically, traditional marketing organizational models and the definition of content marketing and operational roles were defined. Further, several content marketing companies were examined for organizational design. This review led to creation of mixed method research that answered the research question: What are best practices of organizational design in content marketing programs?

Through the qualitative and quantitative research analysis, seven organizational best practices for content marketing programs have been identified. First, marketing organizations should restructure to best incorporate content marketing. Second, corporate marketing or communications should own the management of content marketing. Third, content strategy should not be outsourced. Fourth, content creation is the most outsourced role, as well as the most effective programmatically. Fifth, mature content marketing programs have a matrix organization structure. Sixth, highly effective content programs have a functional structure. And lastly, B2B software brands best exemplify content marketing.

Additional research is needed to objectively identify high performing content marketing programs. As cited in the discussion section, a limitation of the study was that participants self-selected their program effectiveness rating. Therefore a low performing or less effective program could have been rated as highly effective given the participant's personal opinion of his or her own work. In the future, a controlled focus group of non-marketing professionals, for example, would prevent such personal biases from the results.

In sum, the seven best practices for organizational design of content marketing programs have been clearly defined. However, further qualitative and quantitative research is needed to ensure companies implement these best practices to achieve more effective content marketing programs. Based on the research and best practices, marketing departments are advised to implement well-organized content marketing programs that follow the seven best practices in order to avoid irrelevancy as a brand.

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Appendix A

Sample Online Survey

Q1   Does your marketing department or agency practice content marketing?

Content marketing is defined as "creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action" (Content Marketing Institute, 2012).

❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ Unsure

Q2   How long has your department or agency been actively practicing content marketing? In other words, how long has your organization dedicated roles for content marketing efforts?

❍ Less than 1 year
❍ 1 to 2 years
❍ 3 to 6 years
❍ 7 to 9 years
❍ 10+ years
❍ Don't have a dedicated role

Q3   On a 5-star scale (5 being the best), how would you rate your content marketing effectiveness in the following areas?

_____ Content Strategy
_____ Budget
_____ Content Planning
_____ Content Creation
_____ Syndication and Distribution
_____ Reporting and Measurement

Q4   Which role best describes your current marketing position?

❍ Executive (CMO, VP, President)
❍ Director or Chief Content Officer (COO)
❍ Managing Editor or Content Manager
❍ Content Creator or Producer (writer, designer, etc.)
❍ Social Media or Social Business
❍ Campaign, Marketing or Program Manager
❍ Contractor/Consultant
❍ Other _____

Q   5 Please select all of the roles that exist within your organization and the respective number of people who fill that role. If the role is outsourced, please select that as well (multiple selects allowed).

	10+ people	Contract/Outsource	1 person	2-3 people	4-10 people	None
Director or Chief Content Officer (COO)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Managing Editor or Content Manager	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Content Creator or Producer (writer, designer, etc.)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Social Media or Social Business	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Campaign, Program or Media Manager	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q6   What percentage of your company's content marketing work is contracted or outsourced?

_____ Content Strategy
_____ Planning and Editorial Calendar
_____ Content Creation or Execution
_____ Syndication and Distribution
_____ Reporting and Metrics
_____ Overall

Q7   In the matrix below, please select which functional group PRIMARILY OWNS the content marketing responsibility within your organization.

	Corporate Marketing or Communications	Creative Services	Product Marketing	Demand Generation or Media	Executive (CMO, CEO)	Other
Content Strategy	○	○	○	○	○	○
Budget	○	○	○	○	○	○
Planning and Editorial Calendar	○	○	○	○	○	○
Content Creation or Execution	○	○	○	○	○	○
Syndication and Distribution	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reporting and Metrics	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q8   In the matrix below, please select which functional group in your opinion SHOULD IDEALLY OWN the content marketing responsibility within your organization.

	Corporate Marketing or Communications	Creative Services	Product Marketing	Demand Generation or Media	Executive (CMO, CEO)	Other
Content Strategy	○	○	○	○	○	○
Budget	○	○	○	○	○	○
Planning and Editorial Calendar	○	○	○	○	○	○
Content Creation or Execution	○	○	○	○	○	○
Syndication and Distribution	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reporting and Metrics	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q9   If you could change one thing about your organizational structure in relation to content marketing, what would it be?

Q10   Do you think marketing departments should restructure their organization to incorporate content marketing, and why?

Q11   Do you think content marketing and inbound marketing are the same or different, and why?

Inbound marketing is defined as "advertising a company through blogs, podcasts, video, eBooks, social media marketing, and other forms of content marketing" (Wikipedia, 2013).

Q12 In your opinion, what companies or brands best exemplify content marketing?

Q13 How would you classify your company size?

○ Micro (less than 9 employees)
○ Small (10 to 249 employees)
○ Medium (250 to 499 employees)
○ Large (500 to 999 employees)
○ Enterprise (1000+ employees)

Q14 Which organizational structure best defines your marketing department or agency?
Detailed definitions

○ Functional Functional: simple, hierarchical model where areas of expertise or functions
  report to a CMO, vice president or executive.
○ Divisional Divisional (product or market): functional groups report to a particular product,
  service, market or geography. For example, a marketing department may have several
  product marketing managers or campaign managers.
○ Matrix Matrix: a combination of functional and divisional. For example, there is usually a
  product or market manager that coordinates across all functional groups.
○ Other _____

Q15 How would you classify your business type?

○ Business-to-Business (B2B)
○ Business-to-Consumer (B2C)
○ Business-to-Government (B2G)
○ Other _____

Appendix B

Interview Guide

The purpose of this interview is to discover the relationship between successful content marketing programs and the organizational structure of marketing departments. The problem this interview will solve is determining the ideal marketing organizational structure for a well-functioning, successful content marketing program. The goal of the interview is three-fold: pinpoint companies with stellar content marketing programs, determine the best organizational structure for content marketing programs, and cite future organizational problem areas within content marketing.

This interview and content analysis was conducted with four individuals in high-level content marketing positions ranging from director or chief content officer (COO) to managing editor or content manager. Screening is based on job title and responsibilities, such as practicing content marketing manager or director level or higher. Screening is also based on experience in certain company sizes. For example, participants must have experience working with small to large-size marketing departments. Age, gender and location are not a factor in screening. The incentives for this focus group include the results of the survey and focus group and a featured mention on two blogs: Content Marketing Institute and ContentCr8.

Question list for interviewees

Opening Question

What is your name, company role, and marketing department or agency size?

Introductory Questions

What are common traits of good content marketing programs within companies?

In your professional opinion, what company has the best content marketing program, and why?

Transition Question

What organizational or functional structure does this best company have?

Key Questions

Does a marketing department's organizational structure affect the effectiveness of a content marketing program?

How can organizational structure negatively affect content marketing programs? Have you seen this in action?

Transition Question

What is the ideal structure for a content marketing program within a marketing department?

Key Questions

In an ideal marketing department, who owns strategy?

In an ideal marketing department, who owns budget?

In an ideal marketing department, who owns themes/messages/stories?

In an ideal marketing department, who owns the editorial calendar?

In an ideal marketing department, who owns content execution?

In an ideal marketing department, who owns content delivery?

In an ideal marketing department, who owns reporting and metrics on content marketing programs?

Ending Questions

B2B Marketing identified content marketing as the number one driver for lead generation in 2012 (Olenski, 2012). With this in mind, should marketing departments re-structure to fit this group's ideal content marketing organizational structure?

What do you foresee as consequences if companies do not re-structure to this ideal?

Appendix C

Program Maturity and Company Size

		How long has your department or agency been actively practicing content marketing? In other words, h...						Total
		Less than 1 year	1 to 2 years	3 to 6 years	7 to 9 years	10+ years	Don't have a dedicated role	
How would you classify your company size?	Micro (less than 9 employees)	2	8	10	1	1	3	25
	Small (10 to 249 employees)	13	10	11	1	1	5	41
	Medium (250 to 499 employees)	0	3	3	0	1	1	8
	Large (500 to 999 employees)	2	3	4	1	2	1	13
	Enterprise (1000+ employees)	7	8	12	1	4	4	36
Total		24	32	40	4	9	14	123

Appendix D

Marketing Organizational Structure and Program Maturity

		How long has your department or agency been actively practicing content marketing? In other words, h...						
		Less than 1 year	1 to 2 years	3 to 6 years	7 to 9 years	10+ years	Don't have a dedicated role	Total
Which organizational structure best defines your marketing department or agency? Detailed definitio...	Functional Functional: simple, hierarchical model where areas of expertise or functions report to a CMO, vice president or executive.	14	14	20	0	6	3	57
	Divisional Divisional (product or market): functional groups report to a particular product, service, market or geography. For example, a marketing department may have several product marketing managers or campaign managers.	2	5	3	2	1	1	14
	Matrix Matrix: a combination of functional and divisional. For example, there is usually a product or market manager that coordinates across all functional groups.	7	8	14	1	2	7	39
	Other	2	4	3	0	0	3	12
Total		25	31	40	3	9	14	122

Appendix E

Marketing Organizational Structure and Business Type

		Which organizational structure best defines your marketing department or agency? Detailed definitio...				
		Functional Functional: simple, hierarchical model where areas of expertise or functions report to a CMO, vice president or executive.	Divisional Divisional (product or market): functional groups report to a particular product, service, market or geography. For example, a marketing department may have several product marketing managers or campaign managers.	Matrix Matrix: a combination of functional and divisional. For example, there is usually a product or market manager that coordinates across all functional groups.	Other	Total
How would you classify your business type?	Business-to-Business (B2B)	42	9	28	6	85
	Business-to-Consumer (B2C)	15	4	11	4	34
	Business-to-Government (B2G)	0	1	0	1	2
	Other	8	0	3	5	16
	Total	65	14	42	16	137

Appendix F

High Program Effectiveness and Organization Structure

		Organizational Structure				
		Functional	Matrix	Divisional	Other	Total
High Program Effectiveness (participants rating 4-5, out of 5)	Strategy	22	10	3	3	38
	Budget	14	8	2	1	25
	Planning	17	7	4	3	31
	Creation	23	15	5	4	47
	Syndication	13	5	2	2	22
	Reporting	11	6	2	2	21
	Total	100	51	18	15	183

Appendix G

Quantitative Survey Results Questions 9 and 10: Ownership

Current Content Ownership	Ideal Content Ownership
Strategy	
Corporate marketing (49%, n=152), followed by executives (15%), creative services (11%) and other (11%), product marketing (10%) and demand generation (4%).	Corporate marketing (53%, n=146), followed by executives (15%), product marketing (12%), demand generation (8%), creative services (6%) and other (6%).
Budget	
Corporate marketing (37%, n=150), executives (35%), other (10%), product marketing (8%), demand generation (6%) and creative services (4%).	Corporate marketing most often (49%, n=146), followed by executives (25%), product marketing (10%), other (6%), demand generation (5%) and creative services (5%).
Planning and Editorial Calendar	
Corporate marketing (52%, n=147), followed by other (13%), creative services (12%), product marketing (8%), executives (8%) and demand generation (5%).	Corporate marketing ownership (60%, n=148), followed by product marketing (12%), demand generation (9%), executives (6%) and other (5%).
Creation	
Corporate marketing (45%, n=149), followed by creative services (24%), product marketing (11%), other (11%), demand generation (4%), and executives (5%).	Corporate marketing (39%, n=148), followed by creative services (32%), product marketing (16%), demand generation (6%), other (5%) and executives (2%).

Syndication and Distribution	
Corporate marketing (45%, n=150), followed by other (16%), demand generation (14%), product marketing (10%), creative services (9%), and executives (6%).	Corporate marketing (47%, n=146), demand generation (20%), product marketing (16%), other (8%), creative services (6%) and executives (3%).
Reporting	
Corporate marketing (52%, n=150), followed by other (13%), product marketing (11%), with demand generation and executives tied (9%). Creative services were least responsible for reporting and metrics (5%).	Corporate marketing (54%, n=147), followed by demand generation (14%), product marketing (12%), other (10%) executives (7%) and creative services (3%).