

The power of content

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

20 Sep 2019

Twenty years ago, there was no Wi-Fi, Google, social media, podcasts, Kindle and Netflix. A decade ago, there were no iPhones, smartphones, tablets, Chrome, GPS, Airbnb, Uber, Bitcoin or Blockchain. While all of these demonstrate the fast pace of change, all of them have been massively disruptive to how we produce and consume content.



Lisa MacLeod, head of digital, Tiso Blackstar Group.

Paying the price

One of the industries most affected is the publishing industry. “Publications have always been about stories and now the industry is paying the price for this,” says Lisa MacLeod, head of digital, Tiso Blackstar Group.

She points to the confluence of three forces - the iPhone invention, wireless interface and Google and Facebook - that turned publishing on its head, leaving a trail of causalities in its wake.

“Today everyone has a smartphone giving them instant access to the news, while Wi-Fi has changed the 24-hour traditional news deadline to every few minutes, while Google and Facebook have vast implications for publishers on a number of fronts.”



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—The two platforms alone command 61% of global spend. “The fact is the ROI these platforms offer is hard to resist,” she says.



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Where does this leave “traditional” publishers? “While many publications are well-respected brands, they never got to know their readers. Now they must and digital is giving them this opportunity. They have had to make content more attractive to readers and to learn the rules of search and algorithms as they work to compete with Google and Facebook,” she says.



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Leveraging content marketing

While content marketing is nothing new, it is the only marketing we have left, says Timothy Spira, Investec. Talking about how Investec has used content marketing, Spira gave some rules of content marketing.



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“Speak with authority, that is with know-how. Create a focused content hub with curated content to cater for a niche audience, using content as a qualifying factor for customers,” he says.

He recommends using data points about your audience to ensure that the content is right for them. “Approach it in a human-centric way. The genuine enquiry will allow you to produce content that is genuinely valuable to their lives.”

It must reflect your core competency and bring about trust.

“ Even when talking about your core business do not use the content to talk up your products. That’s how you undermine the credibility of your content. ”

However, you can leverage the content in your organisation. “Get the business units to buy into it - you are your biggest advertiser. The community approach is important for success.”

Lastly, he says always keep in mind the nearing gap between people and technology. “Use data and technology without forgetting that behind every screen there is a live human and having their attention is a privilege and marketers should never lose sight with that.”



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Podcast power

Podcasts are a great way to get the consumers' attention says Gareth Cliff, Cliff Central. "Advertising changed to something we are much more comfortable with. If offends or shouts we shut it out anyway. Brands need to make their own content and podcasts are one way to do this."



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However, he says, podcasts about entertaining content. "Podcasts must be inspiring, empowering, entertaining. Podcasts are available for a much bigger audience and valuable to an audience not there on the day."

This is the eighth year of Jellyfish's Digital Journeys. Each year a relevant and topical theme is chosen. The event is held in Johannesburg, New York and London.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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