

MARKETING

Personalized content can increase revenue by nearly 50pc: report

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Investing in personalized, consistent content can increase a brand's return. Image credit: Unsplash

By NORA HOWE

As expectations for personalized, entertaining and consistent brand content increases and production expands, it is crucial that brands thoroughly evaluate their content strategies.

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Authenticity, creativity and consistency are key factors in producing engaging messaging that will ultimately convert audiences to buyers. In its inaugural Content Effectiveness Report, brand templating platform **Lucidpress** surveyed 452 professionals in various industries to better understand how content impacts their businesses.

"The pandemic has accelerated the shift to digital that's been happening for the past 20 years," said Dave Bascom, vice president of marketing at Lucidpress. "With the increased reliance on digital, in everything from ordering groceries from a smartphone or virtually attending work meetings several times per day, there's an increased demand for content.

"Eighty percent of the companies we talked to said content demand has increased in the past year; consumers are expecting more digital content more quickly, but businesses are struggling to keep up."

Buzzing for content

There has been a substantial increase in demand for content, as 85 percent of professionals have seen an increase in content requests.

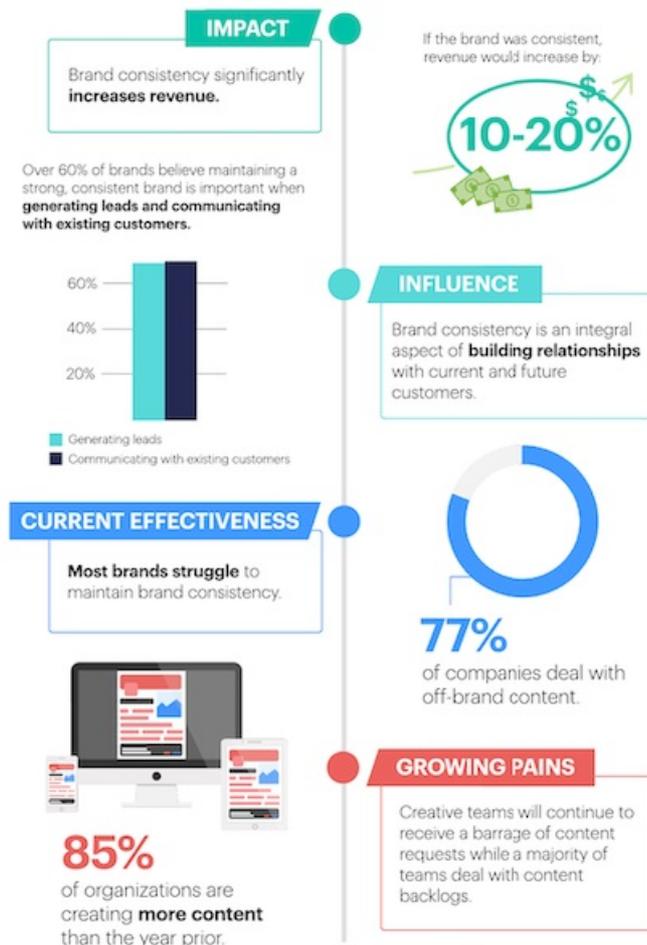
Consumers are beginning to expect more personalized content, and 43 percent of professionals said the majority of their customers expect personalized content, while 87 percent said some customers expect it.

Despite the significant need for personalized content, only 32 percent of respondents reported that the majority of their content is personalized. Most brands are making the effort, though, with 81 percent saying that at least 10 percent of the content they produce is personalized.

With increased demand comes an increase in production, but brands are not overly confident with the quality of the content they are putting out.

Only 13 percent say that more than 75 percent of customer decisions are influenced by content they produce, and only 23 percent say 50-75 percent of customer decisions are influenced by their content.

However there seems to be a disconnect between the lack of confidence in purchasing impact and the belief that content is relevant to their audience, considering 68 percent believe their content is relevant to customers, but only 35 percent think a majority of customer decisions are influenced by their content.



The current state of brand consistency. Image courtesy of Lucidpress

According to Lucidpress, relevant content provides valuable information customers have been searching for, and is interesting or entertaining.

Building brand trust is also an essential factor in producing relevant, effective content, as 56 percent of professionals believe other brands' content is only somewhat or not at all trustworthy, and an essential part of building trust is brand consistency.

Customers expect to have a reliable experience across all interactions with a brand, and can be put off by a brand that is inconsistent in its messaging and strategies.

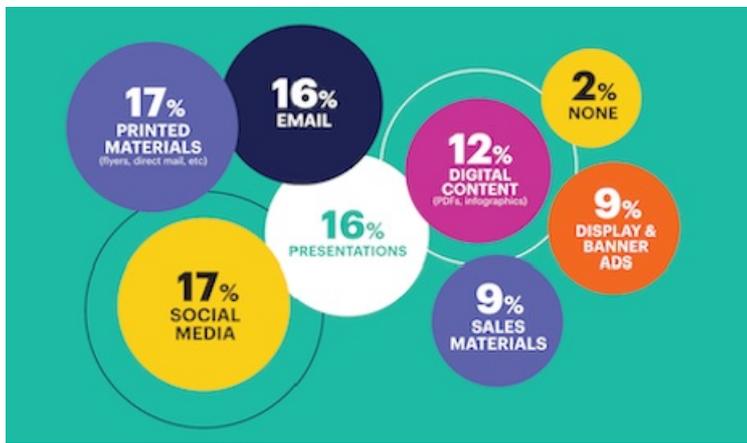
Brand guidelines play a big part in achieving brand consistency, as nearly 3 in 4 professionals, 68 percent, attribute brand consistency to 20 percent of their revenue growth. In turn, 15 percent have no guidelines.

Lucidpress recommends utilizing templates to get relevant content out quickly to multiple audiences.

According to its survey, 82 percent of organizations use templates, with 76 percent reporting that only the creative team or a few teams within the organization use templates.

The most popular templates are for printed material, social media, email, presentations and digital content, and less so for display/banner ads.

Business-to-business industries, such as consulting, tech and real estate, average a higher use of templates for sales collateral at 49 percent.



The type of templates frequently created by businesses. Image courtesy of Lucidpress

Brands also believe personalized, consistent content could increase their profits by nearly 50 percent on average.

However, Lucidpress noted that few brands are actively measuring the return-on-investment (ROI) of their content. Only 27 percent confidently report that they measure content's ROI, and 31 percent are unsure if it is being measured at all.

Further, only 14 percent of business professionals said 75 percent or more of content is regularly used. Almost half of respondents, 48 percent, reported that 50 percent or less of content is regularly used.

Engaging the audience

Exacerbated by the past year, demand for entertaining and engaging material has skyrocketed. Successful brands are branching out to new platforms, testing new creative methods and adapting to meet their consumers where they are.

Beauty group Este Lauder Companies has embraced a variety of omnichannel tactics, from virtual consultations to Postmates deliveries, to bring the cosmetics counter to shoppers' homes.

During the height of the pandemic, the group pivoted to virtual selling by enlisting the help of store staff members who were staying at home. This took several forms, including Zoom parties, live chats, FaceTime consultations and other virtual events.

Recognizing not all clients were interested in long waits to speak with an advisor on the phone, Este Lauder launched new digital channels for customer care. The introduction of its WhatsApp live chat encourages asynchronous conversations as questions arise, rather than focusing solely on complaints further building relationships between shopper and brand ([see story](#)).

Younger consumers, especially those in the Gen Z cohort, are increasingly requiring augmented and virtual reality technology in their retail experiences, according to real-time engagement platform as a service (RTE PaaS) company [Agora](#).

Over the last year, 87 percent of Gen Z used mobile apps with built-in interactive live video streaming or video calling features. To expand their audiences and grow revenue, brands and retailers should consider meeting these young shoppers where they are, using real-time engagement such as livestreaming and extended reality within their apps and platforms ([see story](#)).

"There are a lot of important factors to consider when creating effective content, but I think it boils down to this: effective content has to be relevant, trustworthy and consistent," Lucidpress' Mr. Bascom said. "Relevant content is timely, personalized and hits the right audience; trustworthy content is accurate and builds on the trust a brand has already built; and consistent content makes sure these and other key messages stay the same, no matter how they are delivered."