

10 Habits Every Content Marketer Needs to Break in 2016



In both our professional and personal lives, the new year offers a fresh start, a time to take stock and identify opportunities for improvement.

Of course, that also means it's time for the inescapable tradition of making New Year's resolutions. It's time to promise to exercise more, put down our phones more, and focus more on our families.

Although I know that all of these are important resolutions to make, I find the urge to do *more* and *more* and *more* absolutely paralyzing.

That's why I've decided 2016 is the year I'm not making resolutions of things I need to start doing.

Instead, I'm making "un-resolutions" – promises to eliminate habits that hold me back.

If you want to join me in this, I've compiled the following list of 10 behaviors content marketers should resolve to

stop in 2016. For good measure, I've also included resources that will help you with the un-resolution of your choice.

1. STOP serving only your brand.

I know: Every piece of brand content – whether it's rooted in PR, advertising, or content marketing – is created to ultimately benefit the brand. However, the content that goes viral or – even better – has long-term success earns those triumphs because it isn't self-serving.

That means thinking about your audience first and planning content that answers their needs. That also means providing content that educates, entertains, or both.

It may be a hard truth to swallow (and even harder to sell to company leaders who are used to the old way); however, it's what today's customers value.

Read [The Buyer 2.0 Content Strategy Checklist](#) to get started with this un-resolution.

2. STOP marketing without a plan.

Although it's important to quickly make adjustments when needed, your overall marketing approach needs to be proactive, not reactive.

Today's content marketers don't have the luxury of flying by the seat of their pants. If you've been operating without a content plan, stop.

Document your content strategy and how your marketing channels fit within it. Then create an editorial calendar that will keep those channels on track throughout the year ahead.

Read [The Ultimate Guide to Planning Your 2016 Editorial Calendar](#) to get started with this un-resolution.

3. STOP guessing who your audience is.

At one time or another, we all fall into the trap of viewing our audiences in oversimplified terms. For instance, there are many different subsets of “consumers,” “B2B decision makers,” and “the media” you need to consider when honing your content creation and promotion.

Take the time to revisit your brand’s buyer personas and remove the guesswork from your marketing.

Read 9 Audience Segments to Target for Content Marketing Success to get started with this un-resolution.

4. STOP ignoring data.

Marketing reports are much more than a pretty thing to show off to the C-Suite.

Deciphering this data is essential to making smart decisions. Analytics can help you optimize individual content pieces and overall communications programs, fine-tune budgets, and increase revenue. Make sure your 2016 strategy includes regular analysis of your marketing’s output, outtakes, and outcomes.

Read Attribution Modeling’s Pivotal Role in Your Marketing Mix to get started with this un-resolution.

5. STOP boring your audience.

You can’t risk producing “so-so” content. That’s the type of content flooding your audience’s inboxes and newsfeeds each day. Rise above the din by only producing content that excites.

If you have to pick between content quantity or quality, pick quality.

Get visual and interactive, diversify the voices contributing to your content, tell stories. Offer variety not just in narrative, but also format. Turn expectations on their heads.

Read 77 Types of Content to Feed Your Audience to get started with this un-resolution.

s & Issues: Keys to Monitoring Traditional & Social Media to get started with this un-resolution.

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