

Marketing Profs  
NEWSLETTER

ARTICLE OPTIONS:



COMMENT



PRINT



EMAIL



SAVE

## Content Management: Critical Skill of the Modern Manager

by **Gerry McGovern**

July 29, 2003

The Internet has changed how organizations manage. Historically, management was focused on “walking and talking.” Today, “reading and writing” are becoming more and more central.

This trend is reinforced by a recent META Group study, which found that 80% of business people choose email as their primary communication tool.

The evolution of the information economy is marked by an increasing formalization of how business is done. In the past, business was often based around contacts, lunches and handshakes. Less business is done that way today.

Take, for example, Amazon, which has over 30 million customers. How many of these customers have talked to, let alone met, an Amazon representative?

Very, very few. The vast majority have interacted with Amazon through content. This content is either published on the Amazon Web site or delivered by email.

The META Group study (released April 22, 2003), found that 80% of business people believe that email is a more valuable communication tool than the phone. The top three reasons people prefer email over the phone are these:

1. It allows communication with multiple parties.
2. It enables more rapid communication.
3. It allows for communication to be formally recorded.

“These findings reveal a major tipping point in the evolution of communications,” states Matt Cain of the META Group. “Clearly, email best suits a changing business climate characterized by geographically distributed workgroups, extreme mobility, the need for rapid information dissemination, and a desire for reusable business records.”

Content—whether in emails, Web sites or printed documents—has become the oil that lubricates business. It is surprising, therefore, how poor many organizations are at understanding the value and cost of content.

**MarketingProfs  
Most Read  
Articles on  
Copy & Content****How To Beat  
Writer's Block****Are Your  
Headlines  
Missing These  
Precise  
Psychological  
Triggers?****Write What  
You Know:  
Establishing  
Thought  
Leadership****Take Full  
Responsibility  
For Your Web  
Content****What's Your  
Value  
Proposition?**

## MarketingProfs Sponsors

**10 Hottest  
How-To's**

1. **Mail Order: Eight Steps to Doing It Right**
2. **How To Beat Writer's Block**
3. **How To Successfully Extend Your Brand**
4. **SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**
5. **10 Rules of Writing for the Web**
6. **Metadata: An Essential Web Writing Skill**
7. **What is Marketing?**
8. **How To Use Engagement Marketing To Shorten Your IT Sales Cycle**
9. **Services Marketing: How to Avoid the Revenue Rollercoaster Trap**
10. **Your Seven-Step, One-Day Marketing Plan**

**10 Hottest  
Articles**

1. **Let GM Teach Us How Not to Advertise**
2. **Structures of Persuasion**
3. **Content Management: Critical Skill of the Modern Manager**
4. **Your Web Metrics Can Be All Wrong (Part 1)**
5. **Marketing to Peacocks**
6. **Why Goliath Needs David**
7. **Positioning In New Markets**
8. **Invitation to Join the MarketingProfs SWOT Team**

## Article Topics

Email Marketing

Branding

Marketing  
Strategy

Copy &amp; Content

Service &amp; CRM

Usability

Customer Analysis

Marketing Metrics

Research Methods

Advertising/PR

Search Marketing

Global Marketing

Selling

Marketing 101

Commentary

"Only 6% of organizations undertake ongoing, specific measurement of the return on investment (ROI) of their intranet," according to a Prescient Digital Media study published in June 2003.

I'm not surprised by the results of this study. I give content management workshops all over the world. I have yet to find an organization that is seriously examining the ROI for its content.

This is an unsustainable situation. The modern organization is creating more and more content. But it is not measuring how much that content costs to create and what value it has established. How can managers manage content professionally if they cannot measure it effectively?

One of the Internet myths was that it no longer matters how you write, that good grammar and proper spelling are now irrelevant.

The exact opposite is true. It has never been more important to write well. It has never been more important to communicate in a clear, simple, short way.

Think about how you read. If the first couple of paragraphs are not relevant, you switch off. Improving your ability to write will improve your ability to be read. In an attention-deficit economy, those who get read, get ahead.

Organizations are very poor at organizing content. Many Web sites are closer to content dumps than well-organized libraries. If you don't organize your content well, people won't be able to quickly find it. What can't be found, can't be read.

Content is a driver of value. How well you manage your content—create, edit and publish it—will increasingly be a measure of how good a manager you are.



MARKETINGPROFS WELCOMES YOUR FEEDBACK

---

**Gerry McGovern** ([gerry@gerrymcgovern.com](mailto:gerry@gerrymcgovern.com)) is a content management consultant and author. His two latest books are "Content Critical" and "The Web Content Style Guide."

---

Get 7 new articles like this delivered each week in our FREE newsletter -

**MarketingProfs Today.**

Sign up here:

**My Email Address is:**

We Value Your Privacy!

9. **5 Key Questions (You've Been Dying To Ask About Business Blogs)**
10. **Web Team Roles and Responsibilities: Who's in Charge?**