2017 Digital & Content Marketing Predictions for Southeast Asia
The digital landscape in Asia Pacific is constantly shifting. Finding creative ways to skirt ad blocking and engage online buyers can keep any CMO awake at night. So it’s no surprise that content marketing is picking up the pace in globally as a solution given its audience-focused merits.

Unfortunately, companies in Southeast Asia have been slow to adopt content marketing. This is partly due to the conflict between instant gratification over ROI and the “slow burn” associated with a content marketing approach. Another hurdle is a lack of homogeneity across audiences in Asia. There’s no one-size-fits-all when you’re reaching people from Indonesia to Hong Kong. These challenges are tough, but they are not isolated to content marketing – they are part of everything digital marketers do.

As we move into 2017, it’s time to reflect on trends impacting digital marketing in the region. For your brand to succeed, it’s no longer a matter of staying ahead of your competition. Your focus should be on anticipating audience needs instead – which content marketing is well suited to meet.

At LinkedIn, we believe marketers across Southeast Asia (and beyond) will push themselves in 2017 to meet audience expectations in new ways. Content marketing, combined with savvy digital distribution tactics, will be a big part of winning strategies in the coming year.

Whether you’re a seasoned content marketer, or you’re starting to feel left behind, we analysed the trends and created this guide as a highlights reel to help inform your plans for 2017.

Please have a read, discuss with your teams and peers, and build an unbeatable 2017 strategy.

Kind Regards,

Jennifer Bunting
Head of APAC Content & Product Marketing
LinkedIn Marketing Solutions

Christy Tran
Head of APAC Demand Generation
LinkedIn Marketing Solutions

We want to know what you think content marketing will look like in 2017. Share your thoughts on LinkedIn with the hashtag #2017ContentTrends
PREDICTION ONE:

Businesses will hire people with content marketing skill sets.

Businesses in APAC increased their production of content in 2016 - whether it was for personalisation, ABM, demand generation, or brand awareness. These demands were placed on employees who believed their use of content marketing was limited-to-basic.

Western businesses are succeeding with content marketing because it has become a staple part of their strategy over the past few years. By contrast, content marketing in Southeast Asia is still nascent. Companies will look for talent who have “content marketing” experience in 2017.

63% OF BUSINESS
planned to increase content production in 2016

70% OF MARKETERS
felt their content marketing efforts were limited or basic

Source: “The Asia Pacific Content Marketing Report 2016,” Hubspot
PREDICTION TWO:

Marketers will include upper-funnel metrics to measure content marketing effectiveness.

While marketers around the world are incorporating content to address audience needs throughout the buyer’s journey, measuring its effectiveness continues to elude many. This is due to misalignment between objectives and measurement.

As an example, The Content Marketing Institute cited that 72% of marketers are solving for engagement with branded content in markets like Australia, where content marketing has become a staple. At the same time, when marketers are asked what is used to measure success of efforts in other studies, we see only 33% of them are looking at social metrics. This pales in comparison to using sales conversions as a barometer for success.

A misalignment on measurement could make the difference in telling your board that you’re exceeding goals or missing them. Set up for success by pairing the right metrics with your primary objectives at the start of your planning cycle.

Content Marketing in Australia 2017: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends, The Content Marketing Institute, November 2016

Content Marketing Performance Metrics Used by B2B Marketing Professionals Worldwide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Marketers Including</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales Conversions</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Leads</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Leads</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Savings / Marketing ROI</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Traffic</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness / Social Shares / Media Mentions</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEO Ranking</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PREDICTION THREE:
B2B marketers will invest in multi-touch attribution models.

Marketers already know that they need sophisticated attribution instead of relying on site traffic and search rankings. Frighteningly, many brands do not have any attribution tracking.

56% of SEA marketers do not use any attribution models

For marketers using attribution today, first-click is by far the most popular (47%). First-click attribution poses challenges that are unique for B2B brands, who often have a long and complicated buyer’s journey. For B2B, investment in custom or multi-touch attribution models would more accurately weight marketing effectiveness and inform campaign optimisation.

Top Three Reasons Preventing Adoption of Attribution Tracking by Asia Pacific Companies

- 55% Lack of knowledge
- 45% Lack of time
- 39% Technology limitations

Source: “State of Marketing Attribution in Asia Pacific,” Econsultancy in association with datalicious, Sept 2015
PREDICTION **FOUR:**

Video content will be tailored to fit the buyer’s journey.

The production cost of video content is one of the most expensive formats for brands. While video is widely popular with audiences, consumption. This makes it difficult when deciding how much to invest in video.

Marketers across Southeast Asia report varying levels of success with video ads on a country level. As a whole, objectives like Brand Engagement and Finding Deals were not effective. The best results were found in Triggering Product Interest, Purchase Intent and Search/Discovery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Search &amp; Discover</th>
<th>Trigger Product Interest</th>
<th>Trigger Purchase Intent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hong Kong</strong></td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singapore</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indonesia</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Malaysia</strong></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Across Asia, the media landscape is fragmenting as audiences have more options for information. Marketers are struggling with the increased touchpoints in the buyer’s journey. In fact, only one in three believe they have control of customer engagement.

The solution will be social and content. As user adoption of social platforms increases in emerging Southeast Asian markets, this will create more homogeneity for marketers. The result will be process efficiencies in customer engagement.

**PREDICTION FIVE:**

Marketers will gain control of customer engagement with social channels.

“Only 1 in 3 marketers feel in control of customer touchpoints.”

“The Asia Pacific Marketing Monitor 2016,” Kantar TNS
PREDICTION SIX:

Snapchat will change the way B2B marketers create content.

Adoption rates of Snapchat in Southeast Asia are still low but they have doubled in the past two years. With geo-specific features, amusing selfie filters, and disappearing content, it’s predominately popular with Millennials and Gen Z age groups – meaning it’s a prime playground for B2C marketers.

For B2B brands, inserting messaging into Snapchat is probably the wrong context (#awkward). However, this is a critical space to watch because other social platforms have begun to mimic Snapchats features - like Instagram Stories. So the way B2B marketers think about creating content and distributing it via social will likely be impacted over time.

Source: “Connected Life 2016,” Kantar TNS, October 2016

Snapchat Trends Shaping Content Production in the Future

- Exclusive, visible in-the-moment, temporary content
- Micro-storytelling
- Hybrid user-generated content and brand messaging
- Encouraging audience self-expression
PREDICTION SEVEN:

53% of marketers are optimistic about the future of augmented reality.

With the success of popular augmented reality games, like Pokémon Go, marketers are keenly watching this space to see how it can be applied to content marketing. There is a general consensus that consumers are quickly embracing augmented reality. However, the high cost of production is a major barrier for 40% of product developers.

Product Developers who are more optimistic about the long-term future of augmented vs. virtual reality

- 53.7% Augmented Reality
- 33.7% Virtual Reality
- 12.6% Not Sure

B2B brands will increase visual storytelling, specifically via infographics.

B2B marketers often rely on data to gain the trust of prospects. Marketers will continue to leverage data within messaging, but will experiment with the format used to make statistics meaningful. This will lead to an increase in visual storytelling.

Linkedin Member Likelihood To Engage With Infographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>of Singapore members</th>
<th>of Philippines members</th>
<th>of Malaysia members</th>
<th>of Hong Kong members</th>
<th>of Thailand members</th>
<th>of Indonesia members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: “Audience 360 Content Research,” LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, September 2016
PREDICTION NINE:

B2B brand messaging will feel more authentic and less intrusive.

Sophisticated marketers realise that no one starts their day wondering what a brand will share in their newsfeed. B2B marketers will focus on user behaviour to identify what will resonate with their target audience. Appealing to professionals requires speaking to them in the ways they want to be spoken to – and that can vary across Southeast Asia. Avoid being intrusive by testing a tone that feels natural by region.

Top Types of Content Shared on Social Channels by Country

- **Hong Kong**
  - Personal status updates 22%
  - Funny / entertaining 20%

- **Philippines**
  - Inspirational 22%
  - Educational / Instructional 21%

- **Malaysia**
  - Funny / entertaining 24%
  - Inspirational 18%

- **Indonesia**
  - Funny / Entertaining 23%
  - News 22%

- **Singapore**
  - Funny / Entertaining 27%
  - Inspirational 16%

Today, audiences primarily notice personalisation on email, social media, SMS, social chat and mobile apps. As we move into 2017, brands will increase their use of personalisation on owned websites and e-commerce. Publish or Perish has predicted the increased personalisation will have a downstream impact on marketing teams to create more content to feed these audiences.

PREDICTION TEN:

Personalised distribution tactics will increase the need for content.

Internet users who receive personalised marketing content by channel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Social Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:  
"Digital Consumer View 2015 (Asia)," Experian Marketing Services and WBR Digital, November 2015  
"A CMO Roadmap for Managing, Systemizing and Optimizing the Marketing Content Supply Chain," Forbes CMO Practice and Publish or Perish webinar
Checklist for Developing 2017 Marketing Strategies

We asked our team to share lessons they learned over years of creating marketing strategy that delivers ROI. Here are their top tips planning:

**LESSON 1**
Start the process early so you have time to circulate your plan with cross-functional teams, especially with sales leadership, and to iterate based on business needs. On average, give yourself at least three months.

**LESSON 2**
Involve business operations and map marketing objectives back to the sales and product goals. Make sure you are aligned with revenue projections and the product roadmap.

**LESSON 3**
Review previous campaign performance. Look for opportunities to improve and for trend lines to predict future performance or messaging fatigue.

**LESSON 4**
Don’t make assumptions. Become an expert on the competitive landscape and conduct customer research.

**LESSON 5**
All objectives must have a measurable way to determine success.

**LESSON 6**
Plan for pivots and be ready to change.

**LESSON 7**
Line up vendors or experts to help create content.

**LESSON 8**
Have a “venture bet” to insure your team is not doing the same thing each year – this could be something as simple as testing video content or bigger like launching your business in a new market.
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