**Top 15 content marketing trends for 2015**

You have done away with the calendars of 2014, made fresh New Year resolutions and are all set to make the most of 2015. As a content marketer, you want to make sure that 2015 turns out to be your year -- a year full of new ideas, new strategies and new campaigns. With a generous dollop of help from social media, content marketing and native advertising are only set to get bigger.

In order to give you a clearer view of what one can expect in the New Year, we outline some popular trends that will most likely dominate 2015:

**Ads will continue to become less in-your-face**: While banner ads will continue to offer brands visibility, marketers will prefer content-driven marketing given its reach, impact and ability to engage audiences. The lines between native content and sponsored content are only set to blur.

**The role of social media will only get stronger:** Advertisers have already realized that social media is a potent way of amplifying content and reaching out to target audiences. No wonder then, social is getting inextricably linked with content marketing. Apart from organic usage, marketers are likely to allot budgets for paid social media advertising as well. In the coming days, social will not only be used to reach audiences, but also generate leads. You better not underestimate the power of that hashtag.

**The New Year will see big budgets:** As advertisers are increasingly realizing the value of content marketing, budgets are expected to rise this year. Apart from content generation and distribution, a substantial amount of money will also be invested in social media marketing and SEO.

**Diversity is the buzzword:** As content marketing spends go up, advertisers will strive to come up with newer forms of content to engage audiences and sustain their interest.While articles, videos, slideshows, infographics and other conventional forms will exist, newer content types will be tried and tested. It could be related to social media or may have something to do with 6-second videos, also called Vines. We need to wait and watch!

**The rise of third party content:** In a bid to make their content marketing campaigns more robust, advertisers are likely to incorporate relevant third party content. Simply put, any content not created by you, but has been taken from another source, is third party content. The type of content is immaterial. While this will no doubt fortify your campaign, you must be extra careful about permissions and copyrights when it comes to hosting third party content**.** Any slip up on the copyright front and you could land yourself in a legal tangle.

**Marketers will realize that content distribution is most crucial:** While content marketing no doubt hinges on content creation and publication, timely distribution is just as important.For you to be relevant and competitive, strategic distribution of content is what will give you that edge over others. Search engine optimization (SEO) and creation of mobile-friendly content are some of the ways of ensuring effective distribution.

**Engaging with influencers:** Content marketers will continue to actively engage with influencers relevant to their brand and campaign.In turn, these influencers, with their reach and social media clout, will help content marketers target the right audiences. It remains to be seen how content marketers leverage the power of influencers in newer ways.

**App, app and away:** That tiny little icon that rests on mobile screens can work wonders for content marketing. Advertisers can no longer sidestep the app. From helping you reach a larger audience to letting consumers interact with your content, apps can greatly benefit your marketing campaign.

**E-mail marketing will always be there:** Though traditional, e-mail marketing is an effective way of distributing content to your audience. However, marketers will have to come up with new ways to entice consumers into opening such mails and getting them to interact with the content, rather than just dismiss them as spam.

**Mobile-friendly content:** Smartphones have completely changed the way we consume and interact with content. As a result, marketers cannot afford to not create mobile-friendly content. From short-form articles to images and infographics, marketers will have to customize content in such a way that it can be consumed on the go.

**Leveraging the power of curated content:** Wikipedia defines content curation as the process of collecting, organizing and displaying information relevant to a particular topic or area of interest. While marketers are already using curated content as part of their campaigns, this trend is only likely to catch up going ahead. However, just as in the case of third party content, you must be wary of copyright issues with curated content too. Always give credit where it’s due.

**Visually-appealing content is consumed more:** As more and more people consume content through social media and on their mobile phones, creating visually attractive (infographics, slideshows, videos) content is essential. Such content is lapped up quickly and is extensively shared across social media platforms.Marketers should specially focus on creation of visual content.

**Repurposed content will be in demand:** As marketers create a bank of content pieces for their campaigns, repurposed content will play a key role. ‘Repurposed content’ means you could have a podcast based on an article or an article based on infographic. There will be different forms of the same content. This is an effective way of getting the same message across to your audience but in different ways.

**Good content ~~marketing~~ means better SEO rankings:** This was, is and will be true for as long as there is content. Nothing trumps good content. Keep your customers at the center of your content strategy and solve each one of their problems for them. However, stay strong in basics such as keyword research, indexing and meta tags.

**Content is, was and will be KING:** More than just a trend, this is some sort of a universal truth and will be a part of such listicles for years to come. When it is called ‘content marketing’, you just cannot compromise on the quality of content.Content forms the backbone of your marketing efforts and the success of your campaign depends on it!