



KILLING MARKETING: WHEN BRANDS PROFIT FROM CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGIES

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In 2017 Joe Pulizzi and Robert Rose were publishing another book together, “Killing Marketing”. These were the foundations for the study and deepening of the thematic of content marketing associated with a new kind of profit, not always expected, in different companies.

Let’s analyse this step by step. We know that Content Marketing is one of the most important and vital strategies for any brand to reach an audience today. It represents an unavoidable investment within the marketing field and companies can no longer live without it.

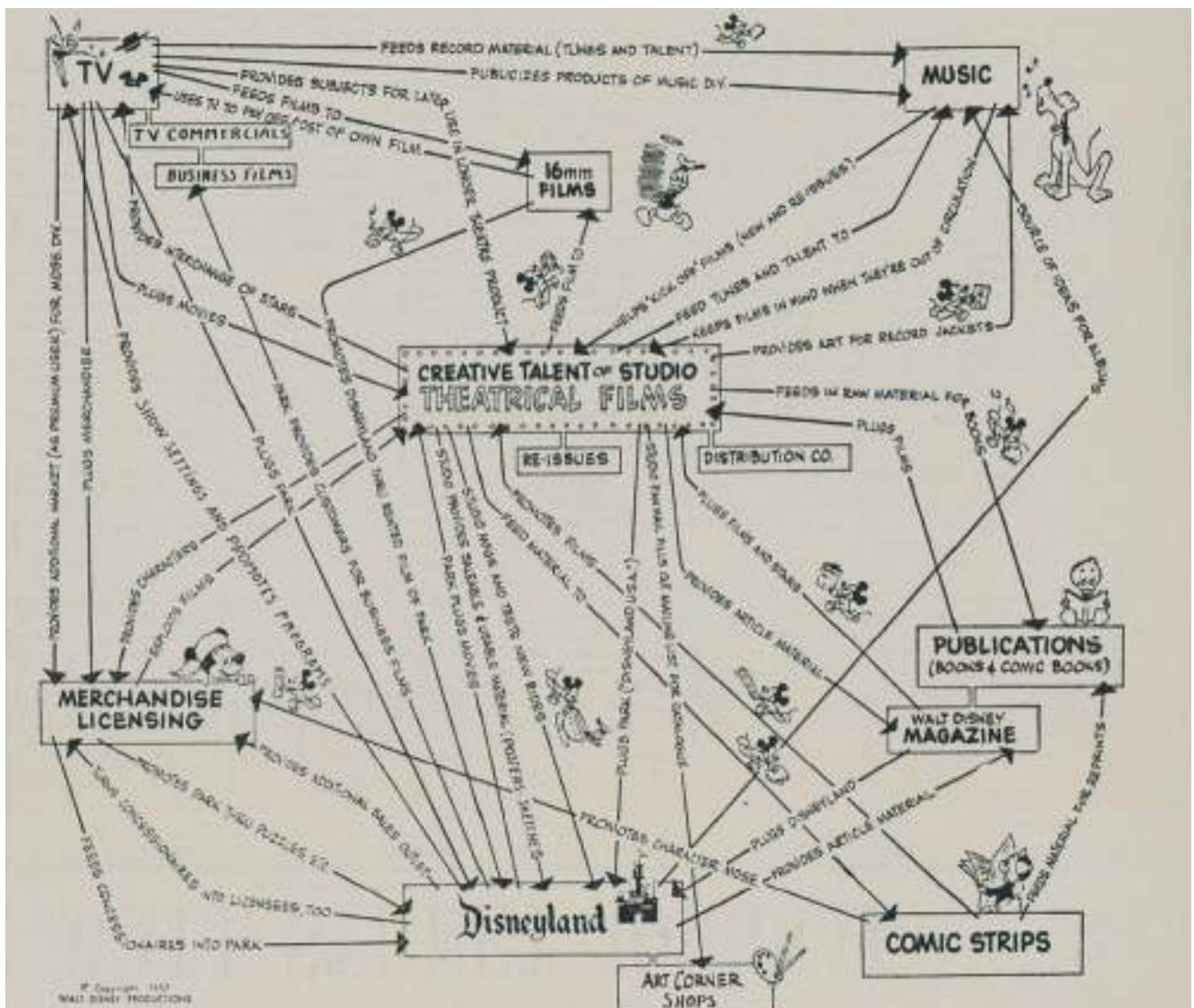
The big Digital Marketing companies are now positioning themselves in the audience creation market, much more than in supporting the digital

presence of brands. Because they know that content is king, they know that content is the great market power at the moment. It generates credibility, relationship and empathy with brands.

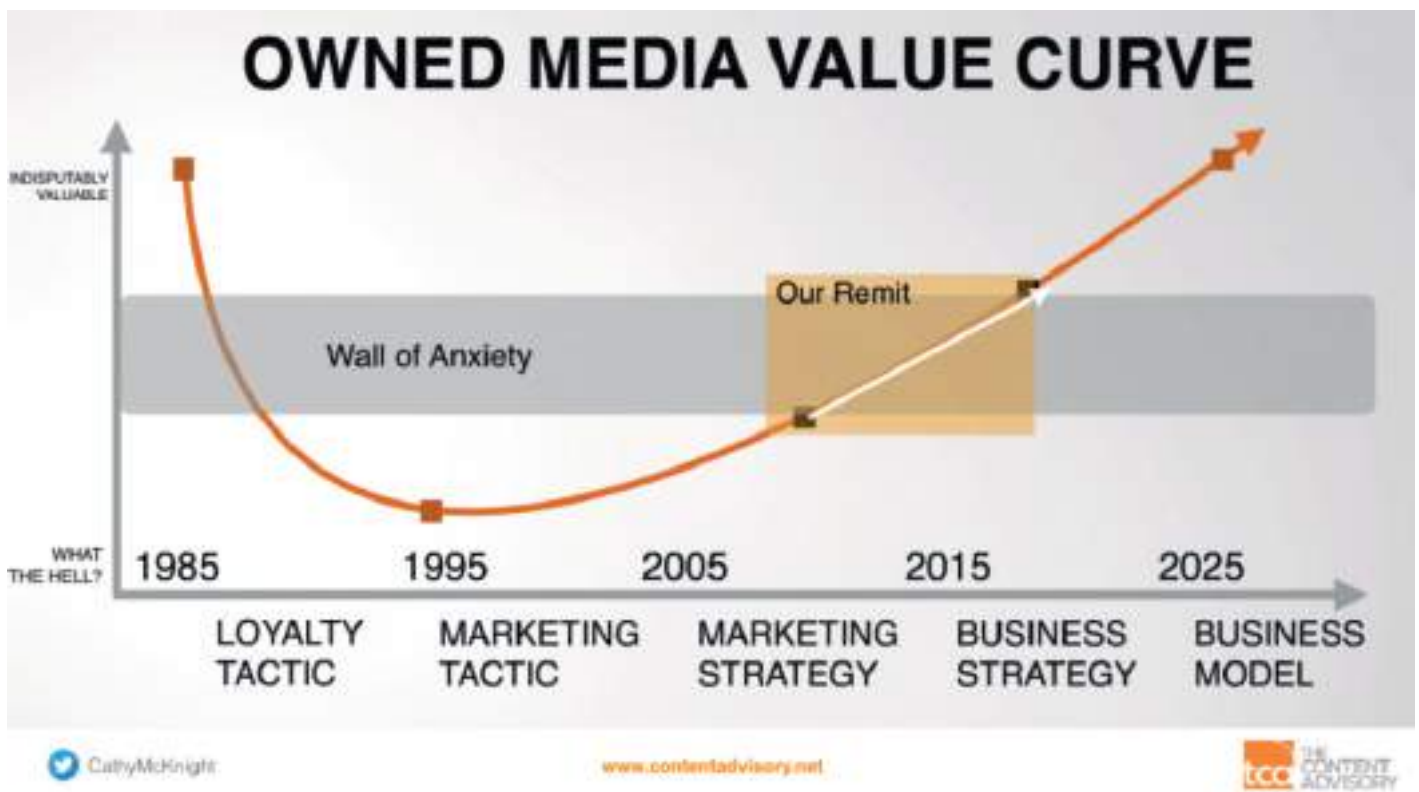
But what the authors point out is that often this strategy is so well done and so innovative that it can even lead to different business models for the company that produces it.

In other words, what starts as a content strategy to reach a particular brand’s audience, often turns into highly successful parallel businesses.

Let’s take a look at the case of Michelin stars, for example, which emerged after a successful content strategy from the tyre brand, a strategy



Source: Harvard Business Review



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that branched into the restaurant recommendation business until the present day.

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It all started in the year 1900, when the company decided to deliver value to its audience, drivers and chauffeurs. Without asking for anything in return, Michelin began to offer complete and informative maps of the city of Paris, which were then used by everybody as a reference. The goal would be to place the brand as a reference within its audience,

which we know today to be the foundation of a successful content marketing strategy. To deliver relevant, useful and unique content to the audience is the basis of a trusting relationship between brand and consumers.

The initial goal was surpassed and the creation of maps and the referencing of restaurants became a very interesting business for the brand, which never stopped being a companion for drivers throughout the last few decades, with free maps and guides, but realized that this represented another very interesting business model. And the evolution has been continuous until the present day, making them a world reference in the evaluation and recommendation of restaurants, and everyone wants to have a star from the original tyre brand. And, yes, it also remains one of the reference brands when it comes to changing tyres.

This is the best known and oldest example, but it is not the only one. Red Bull is another success story whose content is recognised

worldwide. It now has several very successful businesses, with clients from different areas, taking advantage of the know how gained from its own content strategies.

Pepsi and Mondelez also created their media divisions. In both cases they talk about self-sustaining marketing and, often, profitable marketing. On the same path are IBM, General Motors, Cisco Systems, and many others.

Let's look at Disney example. In the first image we can see the content model of the brand in 1957.

At the center we have animated and live-action films, the content that Disney have always used to create a loyal audience. And it is this same audience that will then be interested in the other content properties, such as publications, comic strips, merchandise, Disneyland and so on. But it is interesting to see how in this model we can perceive the central positioning of (profitable) films as the basis of a strategy to reach an audience of fans and followers of the Disney brand. (Pulizzi & Rose, 2017) The goal of creating a content marketing strategy should always be the original one, the one of creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, conquer and engage a certain target audience, clearly defined and understood, with the aim of driving consumers to profitable actions (Pulizzi, 2013).

But the power of content is so strong that it is often inevitable that the work outlives the creator. And that it is possible, as stated by the authors who created the concept, for marketing to be transformed into direct profit, that is, that investment in marketing becomes revenue.

In the curve above, created by Content Advisory (Petrova, 2019) we see the evolution of the content value. And we realise, essentially, that in the coming years it will become more of a business

model than a marketing strategy. But above all, it remains essential to keep the audience connected and relevant, with content that is pertinent, interesting and unique.

Authors Pulizzi and Rose (2017) take this even further, and are convinced that one of the biggest trends in 5 to 10 years is going to be brands buying media companies, as well as blogs or publishers. If we look closely at this phenomenon and then take a look around, we realize that there is still a long way to go. Most of the businesses we know are just now taking their first steps into content marketing, and many aren't even doing it from top to bottom. They are still a long way from this revolution in content.

Many brands still look at marketing the same way they did many years ago, missing the opportunity to build relationships with their audience, gain and build customer loyalty and, as this analysis shows, even be able to profit from their marketing actions. Owned media still have a structuring role, but this can also shift to a performance role and direct financial return for brands. Successful companies in this area start to benefit from the relationship with their audiences by finding different business horizons. Either way, the revolution in marketing is here, and content is at the heart of this revolution.

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