

# The New Marketing Department

How to Structure Your Organization  
to Manage More Content Creation



# The Story

Content is king. This statement has been thrown around so often and for so long there's no doubt that everyone has heard it. It's sunk in too. According to [Content Marketing Institute](#), 88% of organizations use content marketing. Unfortunately, despite the change in tactics, the organization remains the same. Personnel-wise, marketing departments are relatively unchanged from where they were 15 years ago.

At a small scale, content marketing can survive just fine as a small function of the overall marketing team. Those who can write produce content when they can, someone else finds a few minutes to give it a quick proofread and it's published. This process works very similarly when creating an email campaign, writing a brochure or creating a retargeted ad.

Once the process starts to scale up, things begin to unravel for the traditional marketing department. Content is no longer coming in from 1-2 sources. [HubSpot's 2015 report](#) showed an increase in the number of companies using freelancers and agency partners for content creation. Now content is coming from 3-4 internal employees, a marketing agency and a dozen freelance writers. This content needs to be outlined ahead of time, edited even more carefully, supported with images and social media content and scheduled to go out on a consistent basis.

Suddenly, the [76% of CMOs](#) and Marketing Managers tasked with creating more content in 2016 are finding themselves without the tools, expertise or infrastructure needed to meet demand.

This whitepaper is for that 76%. CMOs and Marketing Managers looking to structure their organization to manage more content creation will learn:

- **The Future of Outsourced Content:** With the evolution of the gig economy, your content will be coming from many different sources. Understanding how those sources will evolve is key to managing them effectively.
- **Structuring Your Internal Marketing Team:** Marketing departments can no longer afford to think solely like marketers. The new marketing department must draw on organizations that have been handling content creation for years: publishers.
- **Leveraging Your Content Community:** Wherever they come from, your content community is your marketing's greatest asset. We'll discuss how to manage and leverage your team so the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

## The Future of Outsourced Content

Not only is the sheer amount of content being created increasing, the sources of that content are also beginning to shift.

While in-house employees are still the largest content contributors, HubSpot has found their use decreased last year by 11%. Meanwhile, the use of freelance writers increased 8% and agency partners increased 25%.

For organizations looking to scale content creation, outsourcing content is the future.

Luckily, the potential pool of freelance writers is more promising than ever before:

- 53 million people engaged in some kind of freelance work in the U.S. last year
- 33% of all U.S. workers qualify as freelancers
- 65% of freelancers believe the career path is more respected than it was three years ago.
- 77% believe the best days of the freelance job market are still ahead.

Source: (<https://blog.freelancersunion.org/2014/09/04/53million/>)

What this means for your business is that not only is there a larger pool of freelance writers to pull from, but high-quality writers and subject matter experts are beginning to make the move to freelancing. Outsourcing is no longer seen as a way to get cheap but low-quality writing assistance. It is becoming the best way to get talented people to contribute to your brand's messaging.

As it stands, nearly [50% of organizations](#) have lost independent contractor talent due to poor engagement strategies or processes. Effectively engaging and cultivating outsourced writers should be one of the top priorities of your content marketing strategy.

## Structuring Your Internal Team and Processes

Freelance writers and other members of your content community will be one of your most important assets. But the content they create won't be valuable to your business if your internal team isn't equipped to properly manage it.

The traditional marketing department structure is no longer effective in handling the scope of your new content marketing. Luckily, there is another industry we can model after. Publications are required to manage multiple contributors, organize large content calendars and consistently hit deadlines. These are the new demands of your content marketing team.

### Chief Content Officer/Managing Editor

"I usually use the term managing editor to describe what I do, and the reason for that is that it encompasses kind of two aspects of the whole, one being a traditional project manager, and one being somebody who looks at the project management from an editorial perspective." -Janna Maron, Managing Content Editor, Smart Passive Income

Whatever you call it, your organization needs one person to own content marketing in order for it to be successful. Depending on the size and demands of your organization this may be a Managing Editor who reports to the CMO or you may create the new C-level role of CCO to report directly to the CEO.

Making this role an executive position allows your content team to collaborate with other departments other than marketing. Content has much more value to your organization than simply generating leads. Distinguishing your content team as a separate department or function encourages collaboration with sales, human resources, customer service and other areas of your business that can all see huge benefits from content creation.

No matter the level of the person in charge of your content marketing, they should assume responsibility for:

- Mapping out a content strategy
- Developing a content calendar
- Measuring content marketing success
- Developing content guidelines to inform all contributors
- Managing, engaging and growing your content community

For more information, Content Marketing Institute has a [sample Chief Content Officer Job Description](#) with a full description of the role.

For some organizations, this role will be the only internal employee you will need. However, depending on the scope of your content needs, you may require a larger internal team. Here are a few potential ways you may want to structure your content marketing team, depending on its size:

#### Startup/Small Business

- Managing Editor
- 5-10 Freelance Writers

For companies with a limited content budget, supply your Managing Editor with a team of freelance writers and the tools necessary to easily manage them. In this structure, the Managing Editor's responsibilities involve everything listed above in addition to finding writers, coordinating assignments, editing freelance submissions and posting content to your website and social networks.

The Managing Editor should be a Jack-of-All-Trades, capable of creating both written and visual content, but should avoid making this a regular occurrence. Using freelancers for the bulk of the actual content creation frees the Managing Editor up to manage your overall content strategy.

#### Midsize Company

- Chief Content Officer
- 2 In-house Editors/Writers
- 1 In-house Designer
- 10-20 Freelance Writers
- 1 Marketing Agency Partner

As your content volume increases, the team you use to manage it should as well. With this structure, your Chief Content Officer is free to think more strategically and explore new content opportunities.

The management of your freelance network will be handled by your in-house editors, who will also have more free time to contribute additional content and promote that content on social media. At this level your content should be professionally designed and you should also begin branching out into other visual content forms such as infographics, Slideshares and graphics.

While this team of in-house employees and freelancers will be well equipped to handle your daily content calendar, it is a good idea to form a relationship with a marketing agency for larger projects such as website redesigns, research reports and other deliverables that may be too time-consuming or outside the expertise of your internal team.

### Enterprise

- Chief Content Officer
- Managing Editor
- 2-3 In-house Editors
- 2-3 In-house Writers
- 20-30 Freelance Writers
- Marketing Design Manager
- 1-2 Freelance or In-house Designers
- Social Media Manager
- 1 Marketing Agency Partner

At this stage your content marketing team should function as smoothly as the New York Times, Huffington Post or other publication. The Chief Content Officer should leave all logistical work to the Managing Editor.

Depending on how your content is segmented, you may want to put each of your in-house editors, with the support of an in-house writer and small team of freelancers, in charge of a different segment of your audience or content. Or, depending on volume, you may want a Managing Editor with an entire content team underneath her for each segment.

## **Leveraging Your Content Community**

While your internal team is necessary to manage your publishing schedule and develop your content strategy, they may not necessarily be the primary source of your content. Publications have teams of journalists and guest contributors supplying content to their site.

Most companies understand the need to outsource content creation. [85% of companies](#) are outsourcing to contingent workers. However, even if you understand the need, you may not realize the full value.

Publications do not merely have a list of freelance writers who they send article assignments to. They have a community of contributing writers developing new content ideas that support the site's audience and goals. Likewise, you shouldn't simply use freelance writers as words-for-hire, you should incorporate them into your content community of writers that all serve your brand's best interests.

**Content Community:** The freelance writers, marketing agencies and internal team members who come together to pitch ideas, manage content creation and achieve marketing goals.

Leveraging your content community properly requires the right internal team (which you now have), the right outsourced talent, and the tools necessary to manage them:

Evaluating Freelance Writers

Finding freelance and agency talent to join your community isn't a task you should take lightly. However, that doesn't mean you should be afraid to try out a lot of potential writers. According to [Aberdeen](#), Best-in-Class organizations are 45% more likely than All Others to use pre-hire assessments.

The writing test is one of the best ways to truly determine if a freelancer will be a good fit for your brand. While resumes, past work and experience are all important determinants, at the end of the day the only way you can know if a writer is capable of writing your content is to have them prove it.

Many writers aren't willing to provide content for free. In order to attract the best talent to your company we recommend offering a paid writing test. It can be a lower rate than you plan to offer for future projects, and most freelancers will accept this rate if it means winning future business.

The key to a valuable writing test is to give the same assignment description to every freelancer you'd like to test out and to evaluate them all on very clear parameters as to what success looks like. Best-in-Class companies are 2.1 times more likely to create success profiles of top performers. If you seek the opinion of your internal team, give them all of the candidate's submissions in a blind test and seek each of their opinions separately.

### Managing Freelance Writers

Once you have a content community, improving the efficiency and productivity of your freelance writers (a top priority of [42% of organizations](#)) requires a clear line of communication between your outsourced writing team and your in-house editors.

- **Project Management Tools:** According to Aberdeen research, [40% of all organizations](#) said they have low visibility of the use of non-employee workers. Using tools like Basecamp, Slack and nDash.co increases your visibility into how freelancers are being used while allowing an increased level of communication and engagement.
- **Content Marketing Strategy:** Despite three-quarters of marketers increasing the amount of content they plan on creating, the number that have a documented content strategy is actually decreasing (32% this year vs 35% in 2015). In order for your content community to work together towards your marketing goals, you need to know what those goals are and have a plan for how to achieve them.
- **Content Calendar:** While it may seem difficult to keep an editorial calendar when you are accepting content pitches from 10+ sources, this strategy makes it even more important. Determine what themes and stories you want your content marketing to cover every month, quarter and even year. Plan out as far in advance as possible – especially when you are planning ahead for large events like webinars, conferences or product launches. Communicate these plans to your content community so they will know what content supports this month's theme and can better aid you in filling out your content calendar.
- **Content Guide:** According to Content Marketing Institute's [2016 Report](#), a top priority for 65% of B2B content creators this year is a better understanding of what content is effective and what isn't. Once you know your desired writing standard, create a single document that clearly outlines every aspect your content should include. Be as specific as possible and include things like company value prop, audience, sample content, style guide, tone, competitors, keywords and any other dos and don'ts.

Once you have opened up a line of communication with your freelance writers, determine what else you can provide them to help them best serve you. Even though they are outsourced workers, they can and should feel compelled to invest in the growth of your business. Your content community can be an extremely valuable asset to your business, but only if you have the tools and strategy in place to properly manage them.

## Scaling for Content Success

Content marketing is offering new and exciting opportunities to tell your brand's story every day. The critical word here is new. If your organization is still approaching content marketing the same way it used to approach traditional marketing channels, you may not be seeing the kind of success you could.

Allow your content marketing to scale up for success by creating a content community. This starts with ensuring your internal team is ready to handle the new challenges that come with managing this community and that your external team has all the information and resources needed to succeed.

### **About nDash**

nDash.co is a web-based platform that allows brands to create “content communities” – groups of writers selected on the basis of background, expertise, creativity and price. With the ability to recruit, on-board, manage and pay writers in one central hub, nDash.co helps brands scale content creation (without sacrificing quality).

nDash allows brands to find quality freelance writers because unlike other content marketplaces we encourage transparent communication between writers and brands and allow you each to set your own prices. This attracts the highest quality writing talent and gives companies everything they need to vet writers and pay them a rate that fits their budget.

To start finding writers and building your content community, join nDash.co today!