

Contently

A Crisis of Confidence

The State of Content Marketing Measurement



If you're a business, the takeaway is that sharing without analytics is essentially useless, that engagement is not as valuable as insight, and that seeing things in context is more important than being popular.

— Brian Solis, Altimeter

Editor's Note

Let's be honest: Everyone knows that content marketers feel incredibly uncertain about how they're measuring the success of their content. You see it in how many sessions are devoted to the topic at darn near every conference, and in hand-wringing editorials in the pages of trade magazines. And yet, for all the anecdotal evidence of content's measurement shortcomings, the specifics have rarely been quantified. At Contently, we decided to change that, tapping into our audience of over 100,000 monthly readers to find out how exactly they approach content measurement.

In this report, you'll find those results, with a bit of analysis of what they mean. We hope you enjoy it.

— Joe Lazauskas
Contently Editor in Chief

Table of Contents

I.	Overview	5
II.	Goals	6
III.	Measurement	7
IV.	Confidence	9
V.	Hopes	10
VI.	Conclusion	11

Overview: The State of Content Marketing Measurement

Over 90 percent of marketers are not fully confident in the way that they're measuring their content.

That's the most striking takeaway of our new Contently research report, "A Crisis of Confidence: The State of Content Marketing Measurement."

In April and early May 2014, Contently surveyed 302 marketers split evenly across B2B and B2C businesses about their content goals and measurement practices and unearthed some key findings:

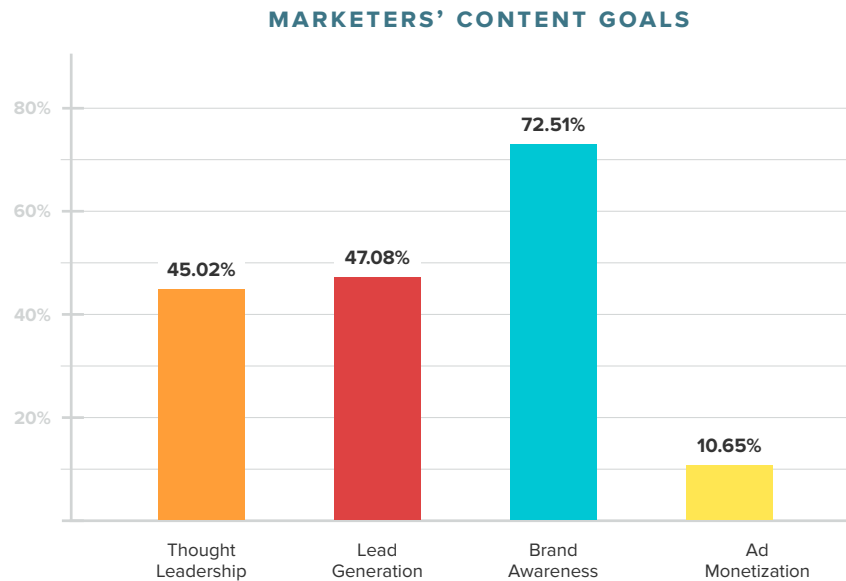
90% of marketers expressed uncertainty that their key content metrics are effective in measuring business results.

73% of marketers identified Brand Awareness as a goal of their content.

69% of marketers said that they were using pageviews/unique visitors to measure the success of their content, while less than half are examining time on site. Yet, 50 percent of respondents expressed a desire to be able to measure how much real attention people are paying to their content.

7% of respondents are not measuring the success of their content in any way.

Goals: 73 percent of marketers identify brand awareness.

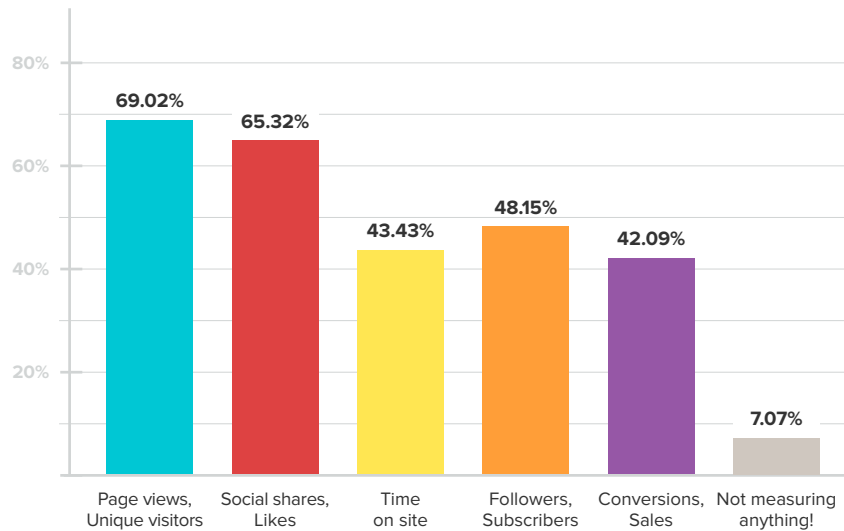


The majority of marketers—seventy-three percent—identified brand awareness as a goal of their content. Lead generation was identified as a goal by just 47 percent of respondents, even though two-thirds of respondents work in B2B marketing in some capacity. Thought leadership—one of the biggest content marketing buzzwords of the past two years—was a goal of two-thirds of respondents.

Just 11 percent of respondents identified ad monetization as a goal of their content, indicating that brands are still a long ways off from making their content independently profitable.

Measurement: 65 percent of marketers are using social shares to measure success.

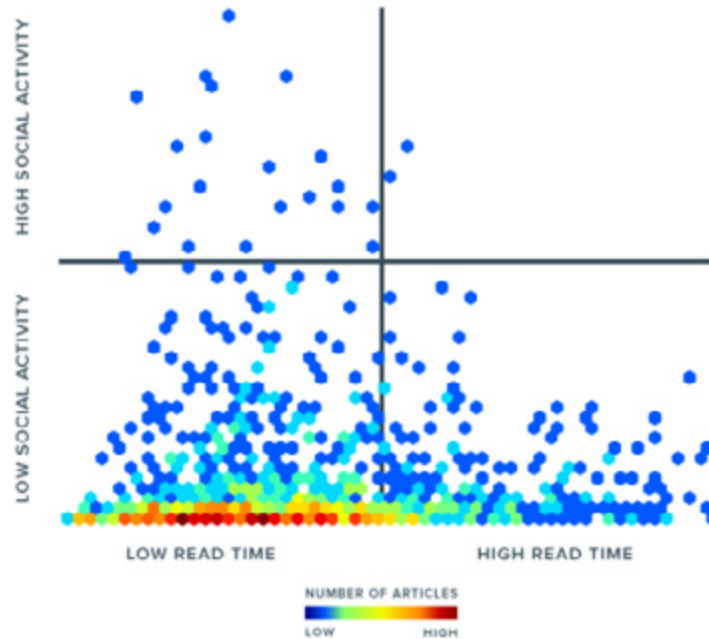
METRICS USED TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF CONTENT



Though just 11 percent of marketers identified ad monetization as a goal of their content, 69 percent are using pageviews—a metric primarily used in the buying and selling of ads—to measure the success of their content.

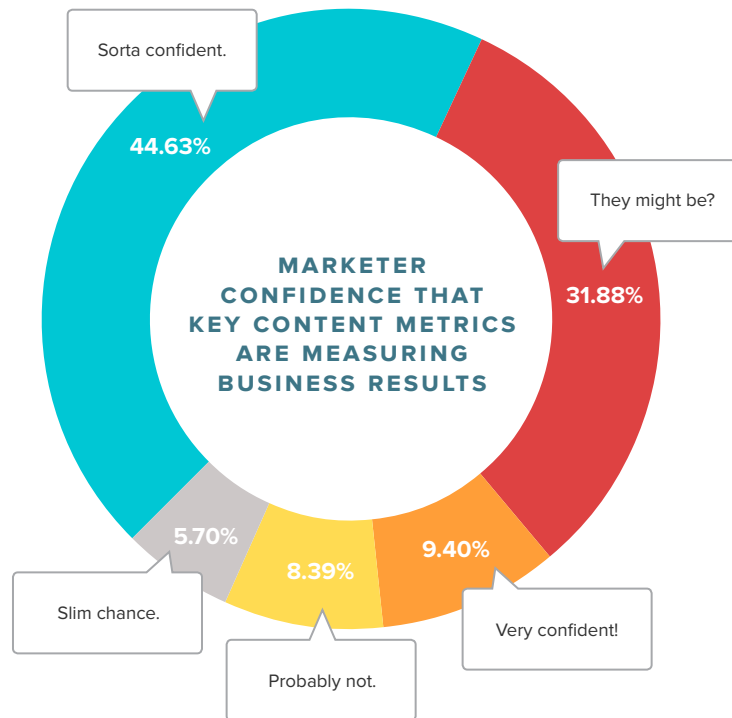
Measurement: 65 percent of marketers are using social shares to measure success.

DO WE READ THE ARTICLES WE SHARE?



Nearly as many marketers—65 percent—are using social shares and likes to measure the success of their content, though recent research by Chartbeat has found that there is no correlation between sharing a piece of content and actually reading it.

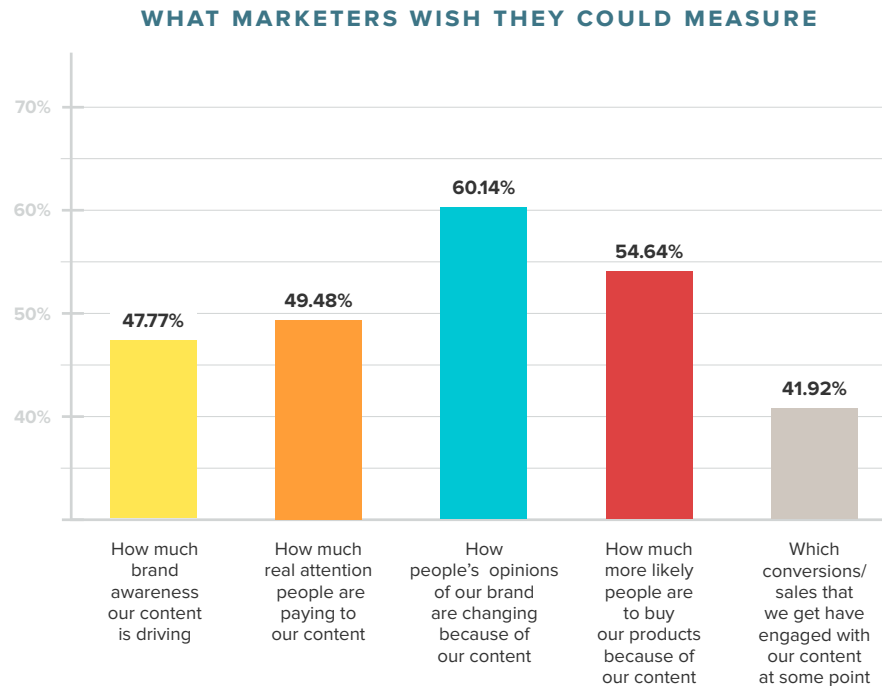
Confidence: Only 9 percent of marketers said they are very confident their key metrics are effective in measuring business results.



Although content marketing is being adopted in droves, just 9 percent of marketers said that they are very confident that their key content metrics are effectively measuring business results. However, 45 percent said that they are “kind of confident” in the effectiveness of their metrics.

Nearly an identical number, 46 percent, reported a low level of confidence.

Hopes: What Marketers Wish they Could Measure But Currently Cannot



Marketers identified a slew of brand awareness metrics as the things that they wish they could measure:

- **60 percent** said that they wish they could measure how people's opinions of their brand are changing because of their content.
- **54 percent** said that they wish they knew how much more likely people are to buy their products because of their content.
- And **47 percent** said that they wish they knew how much overall brand awareness their content is driving.

In addition, 50 percent of respondents said that they wish they knew how much real attention people are paying to their content, though just 43 percent are measuring success based on the amount of time people spend on site.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the majority of marketers intend to increase their content spend this year, [according to the Content Marketing Institute](#), many are still struggling to tie their content to business results.

This phenomenon is evident in a few ways: the fact that the majority of marketers are focusing on metrics designed for ad sales (pageviews/unique visitors); their reliance on proxy metrics, (such as social shares and likes), that cannot be directly tied to business results; and, of course, that 91 percent expressed a lack of confidence that their content metrics are delivering business results.

As brands dedicate more budget towards content marketing, the confidence gap between metrics and business results is a problem in search of a solution. To learn more about how Contently and other companies are trying to address it, check out the Contently ebook, "[The New World of Content Measurement: why existing metrics are flawed \(and how to fix them\)](#)."



Want more insights into the state of content marketing?

For daily insights, subscribe to our online magazine,
[The Content Strategist](#).

And if you'd like to talk to someone about Contently's services,
please reach out to us at sales@contently.com
or visit contently.com/brands.

Contently

contently.com