

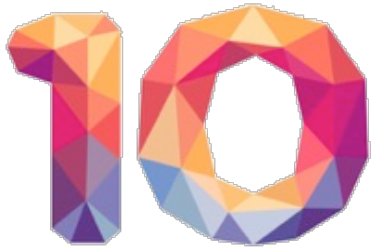
**TIMES WISE
CONTENT
STRATEGISTS
ASK WHO?**

VERDINO & CO
A CONTENT CONSULTANCY



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TIMES WISE CONTENT STRATEGISTS

Ask **WHO?** in Every Content Project

CONTENT IS A TEAM SPORT.

One that requires commitment, cooperation and collaboration – not only within your core content team but across your organizational functions and departments. You can't do it alone (and you wouldn't want to!), so it's important to know who will own and support each key element of your program.

If you're a wise content leader with your eyes focused on content program success, you'll need to ask **"WHO?"** to define 10 important content roles on each content initiative.

Ultimately, this exercise is all about people and process, workflow and governance. As you read through our 10 **WHO**s, think about how having a clear answer to each question improves your organization's ability to sustain high-quality, results-oriented content production across all areas of your business.

Ready?

LET'S BEGIN 



WHO *are we creating content for?*

To create content that will be useful and used, you must start with your audience in mind. Of course, you know this already so it almost goes without saying that answering this who is not only vital; it's also just the first in a series of questions you need to answer to ensure your content connects. What do they need? Where will they find it? How will they use it? Why should they care?



WHO *are we as a business?*

Yes, your content must serve your customers. But it must also serve your company. For content to be authentic, meaningful, credible and effective, it must also be true to the essence of your business, consistent with your purpose, and relevant to your brand. It must speak to your strategy and be pursued with your priorities and objectives in mind.

Failure to ask – and answer – this *who* often lies at the heart of content misfires that not only don't benefit the business, but often don't benefit anybody at all.





WHO *will create it?*

Whether you choose to create content in-house, through an agency (hi there), in collaboration with influencers or by tapping subject matter experts, you can't move beyond planning without working out the details of production. Success requires that you line up the talent, get your content creation requirements on their calendar, and manage them through to completion.



WHO *will inform it?*

In most larger organizations or when an organization of any size works with a content agency or consultancy, the person creating the content won't necessarily be the person with the most subject matter expertise.

If you've been involved in a web build, blog series or white paper production and found yourself staring at big blocks of lorem ipsum or other placeholders, odds are you forgot to ask this question, or didn't ask it early enough in the process.

Great content requires great source material – source material that is complete, accurate and up to date. And great source material comes when you pinpoint the answer to the question, “Who are the experts in my organization or my industry?”



WHO *must approve it?*

You've been there: you thought that if you created it and your marketing director gave it a thumbs up, you were ready to go. And then hours before your new content asset was meant to go live, you discovered that a host of decision makers across your organization – from legal to corporate communications to investor relations to the head of sales – needed to bless every last word on your page and pixel in your photo. Who's cringing?

Failure to know and account for what can often be a complex, lengthy path from “draft it” to “do it” can result in lengthy delays or outright obstacles in any content project. If you've got a deadline for distribution, plot the points of approvers from that date back to you so you can ensure your content gets on the desk (or the screen) of every approver on your list.



WHO *could derail it?*

The same people who must approve your content may also be the people who can derail your content process – but others may be lurking around every corner...

Every org chart hides hidden influencers who may have decision makers' ears and often have not-so-subtle sway over when, where and how certain things get done. A sales manager at odds with your in-house content marketers? A comptroller who sees content as a waste of money? An overworked IT guy on a crusade to whittle down his own workload? A content approver who “didn't receive” the content drafts you sent to her... three times?

To avoid setbacks as deadlines loom near, identify, engage, involve and befriend (or in worst case scenarios, defuse) these people early in the process.



WHO *will publish it?*

Maybe you've got a lean, mean content operation, and the person (you) creating the asset is the same person (also you) publishing it to your site. Odds are, though, someone else holds the keys to your content kingdom. A webmaster, someone in the IT department, a digital marketing manager, a producer at an outside agency.

We've seen more than a few pieces of content get caught in a queue (sometimes well past their due date) when the project sponsor has forgotten to plan for publication, and failed to engage the publisher early enough to get into their workflow.

Know who takes the hand-off, how much notice they need, and what's likely to hold them up – long before your zero moment of truth.



WHO *will promote it?*

This one is the cousin to the previous *who* and should be obvious to anyone who knows that content can't market itself.

Identify your social media managers, your email marketers, your public relations professionals, and even the right folks inside your marketing agencies – anyone who can help make sure the right content gets to the right people through the right channels.





WHO *must maintain it?*

Ah, the big gotcha in so many content projects – the assumption that once your content is live, you’re done. Yet, this is far from true.

Without ongoing maintenance, today’s engaging content becomes stale, increasingly inaccurate, obviously outdated, and otherwise unhelpful to consumers and the company. Rushed or haphazard efforts to make up for this could cause well meaning people to compensate by adding more, more, different, different, more – until you’re the proud owner of an unmanageable mess of redundant content, dormant destinations, broken links and confused constituents.

At the start of a project, it might seem like you have plenty of time to think about who will maintain what you create. At that moment, early on, do yourself a favor: put a plan in place before you need one.



WHO *should see the results?*

Let’s face it. Planning, creating, finalizing, publishing, promoting, managing, and measuring content is hard work, and you probably wouldn’t do it if you didn’t believe it would benefit your business. So it’s only natural that, when it works, you’ll want to make sure the right people know about your content successes.

There’s no hidden meaning here – this is your chance to shine, an opportunity to show off performance, to celebrate successes, and to make sure that anyone who needs to know your content is doing its job as a strategic asset of the business – from your content project sponsors to your budget approver to your internal content users to your CEO – knows it.

Needless to say, even a small win helps make the case for your next content project (and the ones after that).

THANKS FOR READING

10 Times Wise Content Strategists Ask **WHO?**

WHO knew three little letters could bring your audience into focus, bring clarity to your company's true essence, and help turn individuals across your organization into involved and engaged content collaborators? Well, we did – and now you do, too. From here, you should be able to create a list of everyone you should bring into your content process, **WHO** by **WHO**.

Of course, if you're in the midst of a content project and realize you haven't answered some of these questions, or if you're about to start a new content initiative and you're feeling overwhelmed or under-resourced, you know **WHO** you can turn to for help getting to the right answers about content strategy, workflow and governance.



  Amanda

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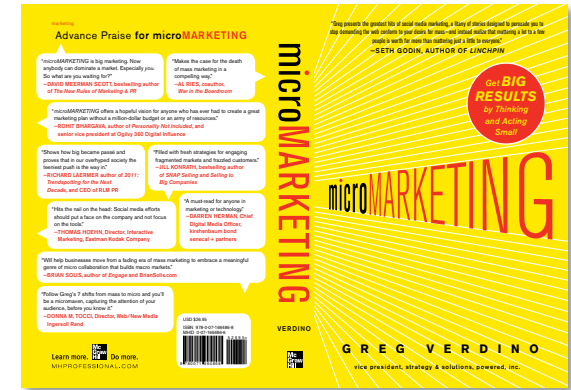
10 Content Strategy Questions Every Organization Must Ask

Check out our simple content strategy self-assessment to discover where you stand with content in your organization.



The Ampersand

& then there's our weekly email digest. Every week we round up the best things we're writing and reading about content strategy, marketing and creation.



microMARKETING

We literally wrote the book on microcontent. Greg's 2010 book lays out a framework for rethinking marketing, content and customer experience for the digital and social era.

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