

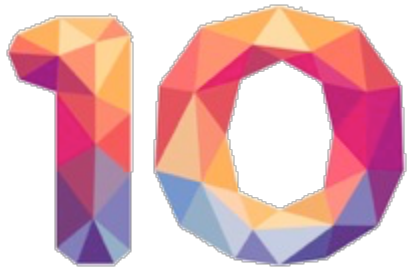
**CONTENT STRATEGY
QUESTIONS EVERY
ORGANIZATION
MUST ANSWER**

VERDINO & CO
A CONTENT CONSULTANCY



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CONTENT STRATEGY QUESTIONS

Every Organization Must Answer

Sound strategy — whether for business, marketing or **content** — starts with asking the right questions. And effective execution of your strategy requires that you ask (and answer) the right questions, too. After all, a strategy is only as good as your organization's ability to execute it well.

This is why, when we're helping our clients address their content challenges, we like to begin by asking them 10 specific questions related to the state of their content strategy and the execution of that strategy.

Now we're posing these 10 questions to you. The way you answer these questions can help you determine where you are on the content strategy spectrum of crawl-walk-run-leap.

Ready? Answer each of our 10 content strategy questions, and give yourself one point every time your answer is **YES** (*come on, be honest*). Once you determine your score and reach the results, we'll share some thoughts on the strength of content strategy in your organization.

LET'S BEGIN | 



Does your organization have documented content strategy?



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

According to research by the Content Marketing Institute, most organizations *don't* have a documented content strategy. The flip side? Those that *do* find their content to be much more effective. A content strategy can rally all content constituents – marketing, sales, communications, HR, etc. – around a shared vision for content as a strategic asset of the business and provide a common framework for high-quality execution.



Is your content strategy clear and simple enough to be understood by every member of your team and all your outside partners?

(e.g., agencies, distribution partners, even key tech vendors)



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A strategy nobody knows about or understands is hardly a strategy at all. The most effective content organizations do a great job of educating people across the entire organization about what their content strategy is and how to apply it, making everyone who touches content more effective and efficient in their own day-to-day work. How to make content strategy stick? Provide context and speak the language of the business. Make your strategy clear, simple to remember, and easy to use.



Is your content strategy being executed consistently by every team member and outside partner that has a hand in content planning, creation, maintenance, and distribution?



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The true measure of content strategy is in the practice, not the plan. You should feel confident that everyone creating content for your company is working within the framework established by your strategy. This helps ensure that every asset supports your content mission, conveys your key messages, fits within your editorial calendar, and meets your standards. We're firm believers that a content strategy is only as good as its execution.



Have you researched and documented your customers' decision journey as a way to decide how to provide the right content for the right people, in the right places and for the right reasons?



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A well-mapped customer (or consumer) decision journey (CDJ) provides insight into the way your audience chooses to do business with you, how they engage with your company throughout that process, and what information, utilities, experiences and touch points they rely at each step along the way. When you understand your audience's CDJ, you can make better decisions about how your content can take them from the lead pool to the "loyalty loop."



Can you gauge how well your current content assets and activities meet the most important needs of your customers and prospects?



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

When your audience can access a nearly unlimited number of sources, you need to know that your content answers an audience 'ask' or helps them complete a task better than anyone else's content can. Knowing exactly how well your content meets audience needs puts you on the path to becoming their go-to source for information and helps you optimize your content experiences to better serve your key audiences.



Have you done an inventory and audit of your content assets lately, to document and score them for alignment with your strategy, usefulness, usability, findability, and quality?



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Lots of companies have lots (and lots) of content, and it's vital that you know exactly what you have, where it lives, who is responsible for it, how accurate it is, and whether or not it's up to date. A comprehensive review and clear-eyed assessment of your current content allows you to make sound choices about which assets get retained, reused, repurposed, rewritten, reduced, or retired – and where you need to develop new content to fill any gaps for your audiences.



Can you articulate the specific role each content asset plays in your overall communications mix, and do you know how effective each asset is in achieving its purpose?



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

When you understand the role each content asset plays, you can make more informed decisions about the nature of that asset *and* you can articulate how that asset relates to other assets and to your overall program. This prevents and eliminates “content waste,” ensuring that you’re producing, distributing and maintaining content that serves real business purposes and meets key communication goals.



Are you measuring success consistently and optimizing your content programs to deliver both near- and long-term results for your business or brand?



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

According to the Content Marketing Institute, the vast majority of companies aren’t too clear about how to measure content success. Setting and measuring relevant and realistic content KPIs is a key to proving the value of content – to yourself and to other decision-makers in your organization. Once you know what success looks like, you can take the steps necessary to become even more effective over time.

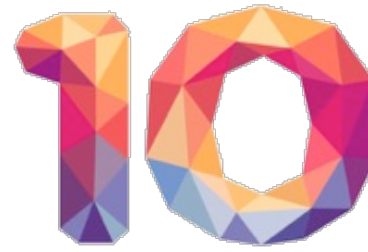


Does your organization, as it stands today, have all necessary skills to implement your content strategy, without significant resource or competency gaps?



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Best intentions and best guesses are no substitute for best practices and best processes. Knowing where your team is strong and where your team is not allows you to make better decisions about what types of partners you need, how training can help, and where you may need to make key hires. It can also give you added clarity about what types of content programs you're built to execute best.



Do your outside partners – especially your agencies – have the necessary skills to provide you with strategic guidance and to implement your content strategy properly?

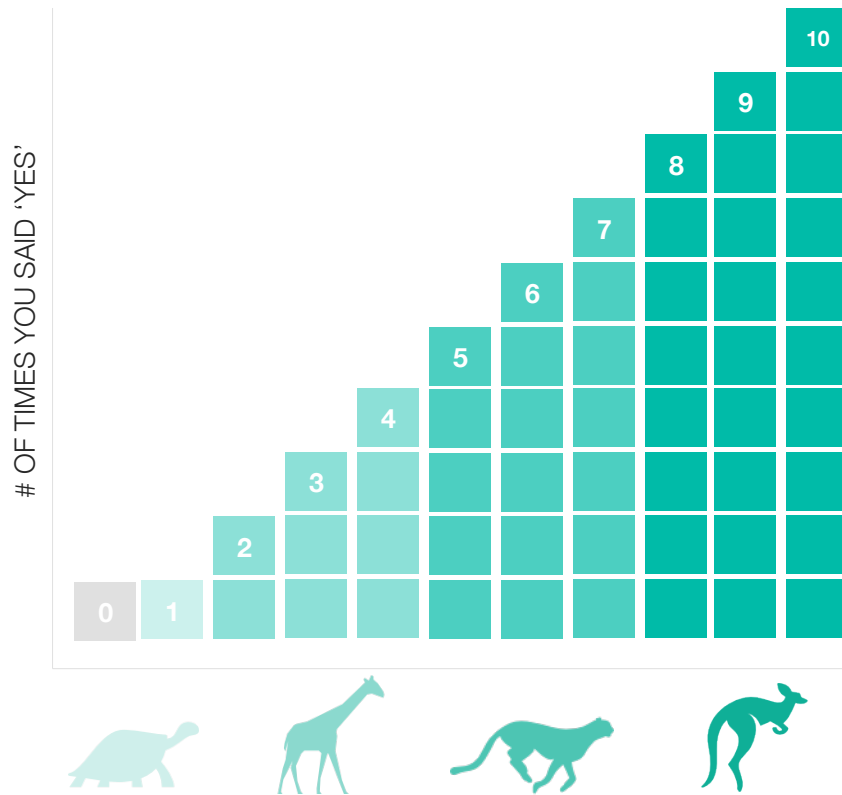


WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Simply put, your content is too important to be handled by agencies or partners that “do content, too.” When you rely on outside partners to help you with content strategy and content creation, you need to be confident that content is their core competency. Make sure your content partners bring strategic smarts (thinkers *and* doers), real expertise, practical experience, and the right executional capabilities to meet your needs and exceed your expectations.

SO... *How Did You Do?*

What's your content strategy spirit animal? Tally your **YES** answers and find out below.



Now that you know where you stand, you know what stands between your desire to deliver great content and your ability to make it happen.

WHERE YOU ARE

HOW YOU'LL GET TO THE NEXT LEVEL



START with strategy



EXECUTE with consistency



OPTIMIZE for excellence



INNOVATE to maintain your lead

THANKS FOR READING

10 Content Strategy Questions Every Organization Must Answer

We hope that thinking your way through this simple self-assessment helped you better understand the state of content strategy and content execution inside your own organization. Now that you know where you stand, you should feel empowered to make smarter decisions about how to improve the strength of your strategy, the quality of your execution, and the effectiveness of your outcomes.

Now, for the eleventh question: **When it comes to content strategy, what's your next move?**

  Amanda

LOOKING FOR MORE?

VERDINO & CO Content You Might Like



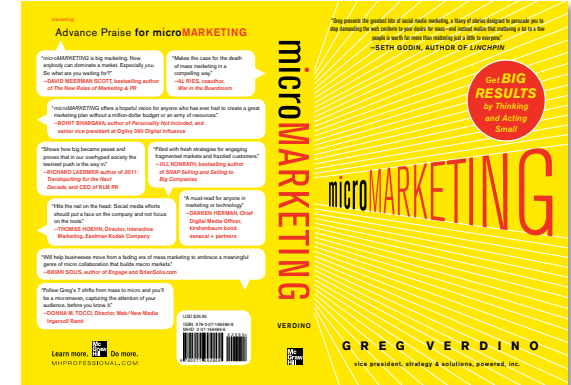
10 Times Wise Content Strategists Ask 'Who'

Content is a team sport. Find out the 10 times you want to ask “who” during any content project.



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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VERDINO & CO is a boutique content consultancy. We help large and mid-sized companies get the outcomes they want by developing the content their prospects and customers need. Our clients hire us for:

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