



Rethinking Content Leadership

The seven skills leaders need to maximize the content opportunity

Digital is redefining the way content is created and consumed. Content is becoming less about planning and programming under traditional paradigms and more about holistic strategies deployed across multiple channels. With lowered barriers to distribution, companies beyond traditional media are making content a key part of their business strategies. We're now seeing rising demand for strategic content leadership and, for some companies, the establishment of a new C-level role: the chief content officer (CCO).

What leadership skills do organizations need?

Based on our work in the space and recent conversations with the following senior executives, we've identified seven key skills CCOs and senior content leaders need in this new era of content strategy.

Werner Brell, managing director of Red Bull Media House North America

Sukhinder Singh Cassidy, founder and CEO of Joyus

Courtney Holt, executive vice president of Maker Studios

John Landgraf, CEO of FX Networks

Kevin Reilly, president of TBS and TNT and chief creative officer of Turner Entertainment

Vivi Zigler, president of digital, brand and audience development at Endemol Shine North America

1 Classic content development with next-generation technology

Storytelling and production remain the backbone of good content, spurring demand for senior executives with media experience and training in classic content development. At the same time, leaders need to be at the forefront of how stories are being told to create a strategic plan for audiences consuming information across multiple channels and devices.

2 Ability to harness content's relationship-building power

Companies outside of traditional media are making content a core part of efforts to build long-term relationships with customers, sometimes even giving it priority over their primary products or services. Leaders need to understand how content can drive shopping behavior, build brand awareness and engage customers.

The Changing World of Content



- » Television episodes viewed during initial broadcast
- » “Disposable”
- » Aimed at mass market
- » Limited opportunity for reruns and long tail
- » Creative constraints because of format



- » Immense amount of content channels and consumption options enabled by digital
- » Rise of on-demand “over-the-top” services and “binge-watching”
- » Content consumed across devices with symbiosis between cable and Internet
- » Ability to create targeted, niche offerings — and connect more deeply with audiences
- » Vast creative freedom as a result of new content forms/channels

3

A balance between the creative and the business

It is not enough for leaders to tell a compelling story — they must be able to extract value from content and build franchises and brands. In addition to understanding business models and budgets, leaders must also be able to work across — and influence — other functions, from heads of product to legal.

4

Use of data to inform, not stifle creativity

Data can give leaders real-time understanding of who is consuming the content and what actions the audience is then taking. However, despite the value of strong analytics, many believe that creativity is king when developing quality content. Content leaders have to juggle both worlds: finding the embedded truths in data while still creating compelling content.

5

Navigating ambiguity with courage

In a rapidly evolving world, content leadership must be adaptable and comfortable designing and executing strategy amid uncertainty. Courage has to be part of the company culture. Leaders who have demonstrated comfort operating without a safety net are often best prepared to succeed in this environment.

6

An eye for talent

With a need for bench strength in areas spanning programming, integrated marketing and branded development, content leaders must be able to attract and assess talent. As the presence of millennials on content teams grows, executives need to understand how to maximize the strengths of multi-generational teams.

7

‘Love content as much as anything else’

The ability to create strong content not only requires the right talent, but also an organization that understands and values the power of content — even as much as the core products or services.

Adapted from *Changing Channels: The Role of the Chief Content Officer*.