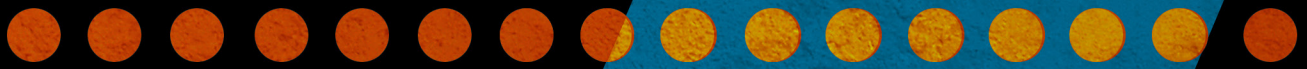


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RULE BOOK

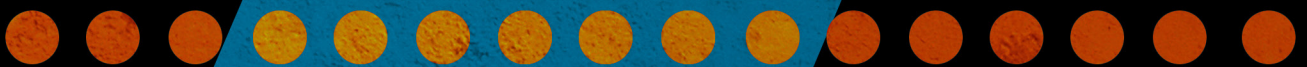


# SEVEN

ELEMENTS

OF CONTEXT

MARKETING



# CONTENTS

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# ONLINE OR OFFLINE, MARKETING IS ABOUT *PEOPLE*

The best salesman I ever met made more than \$10 million a year from Merrill Lynch. He was a genius at building rapport and explaining the nuances of financial planning. His strength, however, wasn't in closing the hard sale – his strength was in listening. Whether it was a small business owner asking about tax codes or a woman trying to protect her estate, he created a unique financial plan for each person sitting across his table. His “book” was much more than a list of clients - they were friends he met for dinner to help plan their children's weddings. One by one, he annuitized his relationships so well that he could retire at age 50.

From the days of newspaper cure-all ads to today's social media outreach, marketers have pursued an elusive goal: to re-create these personal connections at scale. By drafting the perfect headline or teasing out just the right email segment, we are really just trying to figure out how to capture the magic of those one-on-one conversations with everyone who shows interest in our company.

A decade ago, this personal connection was no more than a pipe dream. The technology simply wasn't available. Today, marketing stands on the precipice of a revolution – the day we can truly deliver the right message to the right person at exactly the right time. Today is the day of context marketing. And it will fundamentally change the way we do business...again.



# **WHAT IS CONTEXT MARKETING?**

# WHAT IS CONTEXT MARKETING?



The way I think about the next six years of inbound marketing is: if we use content to pull people in, pull people into our website, pull people into our front door, the next phase of inbound marketing is how do you use context to pull people through the funnel?

Brian Halligan  
Founder and CEO, HubSpot



First, let's be clear on what context marketing is NOT:

- Context marketing is not a channel like email or social media.
- Context marketing is not a technology like marketing automation or content management.
- Context marketing is not content marketing.

Content marketing (producing helpful content to attract visitors) in fact combines with context marketing (making your marketing more personalized and relevant to an individual using data) combine to form inbound marketing (we will discuss this distinction more later).

When we say “context marketing,” then, we mean the practice of personalizing your business to your audience based on who they are and what they want, need, or do. Rather than “one-size-fits-all,” your various touch points with an audience, from email to landing pages to lead-gen forms and more, change based on the individual interacting with you at that moment in time. People do this offline quite naturally, adapting what you say and how you say it based on the individual or group with which you’re speaking. Today, technology has enabled us to move that same, friendly, personalized interaction online.

**IN OTHER WORDS, CONTEXT MARKETING IS THE REALIZATION OF MORE ONE-TO-ONE, HUMAN MARKETING.**

Context itself is not a new idea. Generating a complete picture of who a person is (and what drives them) is the best way to really understand someone. Similarly, creating a contextual profile of your customers is also the best way to learn what messages or approaches will deliver the most help and value and thus motivate them to buy. It’s why the best salesmen primarily ask questions in their initial meetings.

The core of context marketing also centers on listening. It’s about using new technology to do fact-finding online and understanding both how and why people find your company or research your products. It synthesizes all your marketing channels and tools and uses them to create great content that connects with people, and then puts that information exactly where that person wants to read that story.

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Most importantly, context lets you learn more about your audience as your relationship progresses. Even better than taking notes as you talk over coffee, tools that leverage context about prospects, leads, and customers can sort and track all the seemingly disconnected online interactions, remembering which pages they clicked on and which messages they shared to illuminate what really matters to them. Your marketing, from your content, to your site and landing pages, to your email, should be more personalized based on this information. (Email is often highly segmented and personalized by marketers today, but we'll get to that later.)

By focusing on people instead of clicks, context pulls marketing back to its roots. Just like tailored financial plans, contextual software creates a different online experience for everyone who sees your website or clicks your emails. Context gets to the heart of why someone reached out to your company and can solve real problems for real individuals – at a scale that my salesman couldn't possibly achieve.

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**THE SEVEN FUNDAMENTALS  
OF CONTEXT MARKETING**



## THE SEVEN FUNDAMENTALS OF CONTEXT MARKETING

“

[Context is a] transformative tsunami, one which will change work and life.

Robert Scoble and Shel Israel  
Authors, *The Age of Context*

”

The collision of several new technologies is dramatically changing today's culture. Social media sharing, mobile access, big data, location tracking, and smart sensors unite a world where technology can actually predict behavior. Sort of like George Jetson's robotic maid guessing he'll want eggs for breakfast, Pandora's radio algorithms now "learn" what consumers want to hear, and "smart" home monitors anticipate when to turn air conditioning units on and off based on whether the house is occupied or vacant that day.

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This contextual technology has dramatic implications for business and leads us to ask: What, exactly, does this age of context look like for marketers, and how will it change our daily lives?

To get you started on that path, this chapter will cover seven fundamental elements of context marketing and explore how this new era of context will play out in 2013 and beyond.

- 1 CONTEXT ISN'T A FEATURE, IT'S A MINDSET**
- 2 BROAD CONTEXT BEATS NARROW CONTEXT**
- 3 NON-CONTEXTUAL MARKETING IS DEATH BY 1,000 CLICKS**
- 4 WITHOUT INTEGRATED SYSTEMS, CREATING CONTEXT IS IMPOSSIBLE**
- 5 CONTEXT TURBOCHARGES CONTENT'S VALUE**
- 6 CONTEXT DOESN'T NEED TO BE COMPLICATED**
- 7 CONTEXT RESPECTS THE TIME, BEHAVIOR AND DEVICES OF PEOPLE**

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# ONE

## **CONTEXT ISN'T A FEATURE, IT'S A MINDSET**

Just like inbound marketing, context marketing isn't a tool; it's a new way of approaching your marketing using tools that allow you to understand your customer better. This is a fine but important distinction.

Your software may be capable of providing contextual information, but unless you use this information to change your marketing strategy, it's just data piling up on a server somewhere. Marketing becomes contextual when you shift your perspective and look through the eyes of your prospect.

The technology of context moves marketing beyond a single channel and creates velocity through your funnel by accelerating your audience from initial site visit down the buying path to becoming a happy customer, and beyond.

Instead of campaigns run in a silo, your audience sees personalized web pages and messages – on every channel they are active in, and on every device that they use.

This cohesive experience eliminates a lot of confusion for the buyer by making every touch point between you and your visitor about them. It takes the lessons of email segmentation – the channel most frequently personalized to audiences by marketers – and uses technology to create an end-to-end online experience for each prospect that starts with the person, not with the business.

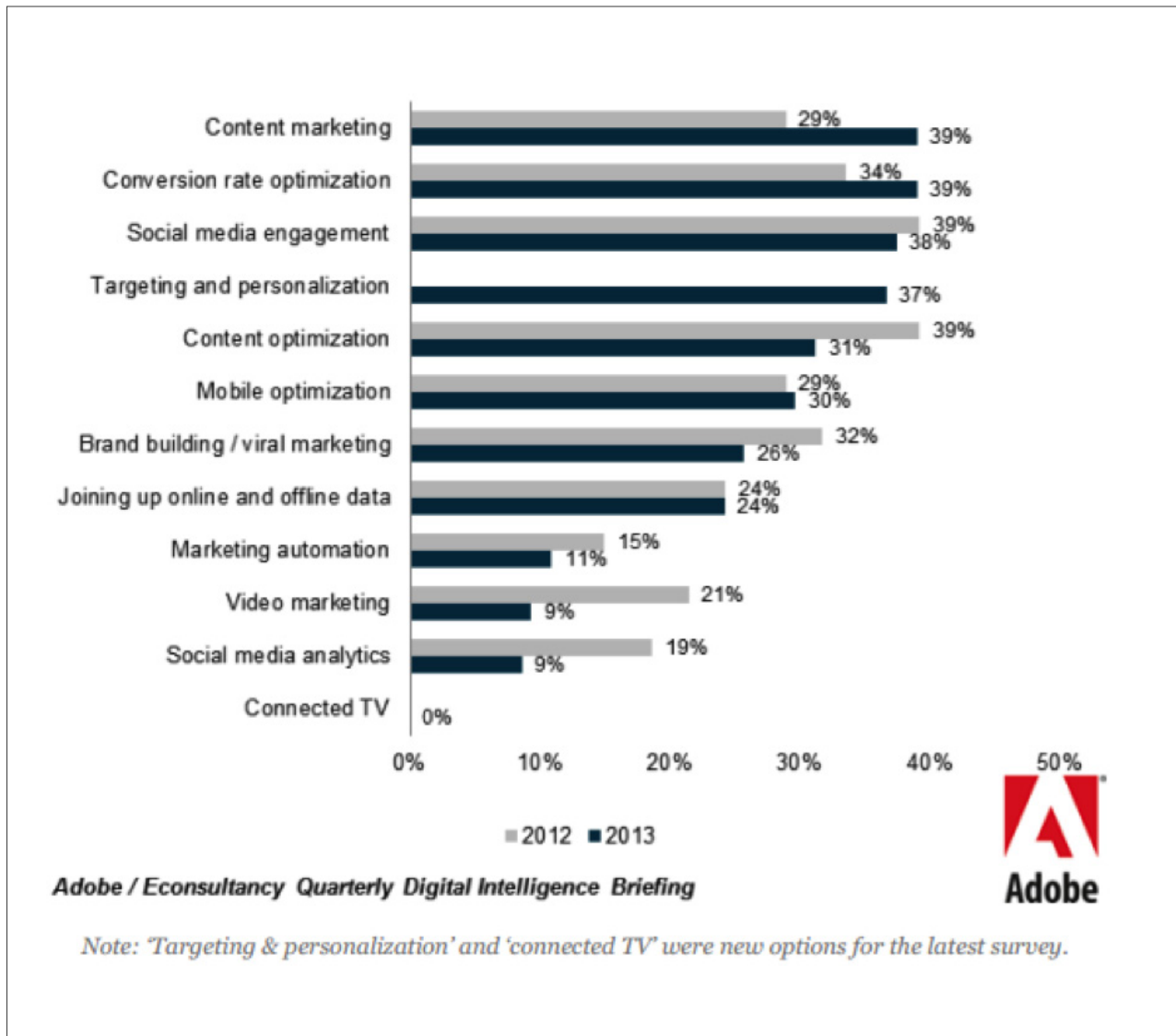
Rather than marketing to one broad audience with one non-specific message, we can now market to an audience of one, delivering a consistent, personalized message specific to each individual across every medium. And these little details matter. According to [Time Warner](#), 54% of Digital Natives prefer texting to talking to people – which should certainly inform your attempts to reach out to them.

This kind of audience targeting is building a significant groundswell of support. While a year ago very few business leaders were considering contextual targeting, according to a recent Adobe/eConsultancy study, 37% of marketers today are adopting personalization and audience targeting into their overall strategy. Adobe's Quarterly Digital Intelligence Report also found that using information such as social graph history can increase marketing ROI by 88%.

**(REFER TO CHART 1 ON THE NEXT PAGE)**

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### CHART 1 : Adobe/Econsultancy Quarterly Intelligence Briefing

What does this mean for marketing? Smart companies are focused on creating relevant, reusable content, such as Coca-Cola's 2020 "liquid and

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linked” advertising strategy. Whereas marketers used to divide their time among tools or channels, this connection to the end user helps refocus marketers on what really matters: the people they are trying to reach.



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## **BROAD CONTEXT BEATS NARROW CONTEXT**

It's easy to get excited about new tools and technology. Certainly, if we *can* create an uber-specific, customized landing page for every potential website visitor, we should, right? Not quite. Before running off to create a “choose your own adventure” website for prospects, remember to overlay some basic common sense.

The goal of context marketing is to focus on your audience and create a harmonious brand message across every channel you touch, not run ragged building a bunch of random, disconnected messages.

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To put this in perspective, let's look at the email channel: Several years ago, new technology enabled the first attempts at online personalization by adding a personal email headline or sending a custom campaign to just a portion of a marketer's list. Not surprisingly, these emails enjoyed much higher open rates. According to **Monetate**, segmented email campaigns produce 30% more opens than non-segmented messages, and boost click-through rates by over 50%.

As a result, marketers doubled down on email segmentation. To this day, marketers focus significant time and budget trying to earn a click with extremely specific email nurturing campaigns and laser-focused A/B tests.

In theory, this is the essence of context marketing. Just like my salesman friend would send a personal follow up because he'd gotten to know a client offline, why not push email segments as close as possible to that one-to-one connection?

The problem is not the intention but rather the execution: a highly personalized email often leads to a one-size-fits-all website. Historically, technology couldn't extend the initial personal experience to the rest of a marketer's channels. So, after being cultivated, called by name, and made to feel special for a six-email campaign, a prospect who finally clicks a button is typically launched onto the same website that everyone else sees. It's sort of like being ushered past a series of exclusive velvet ropes only to sit with the general admission section. It's confusing in real life, and it's just as confusing online.

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So, rather than spend a lot of time focused on highly customized introductions (i.e. emails), smart marketers should spend their time going a bit broader, using context to personalize every interaction along the buyer's journey from visitor to customer.



# THREE



## **NON-CONTEXTUAL MARKETING IS DEATH BY 1,000 CLICKS**

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Advertisers are in a cold war with the people they are trying to reach. They make TV ads noisier – we invent the mute button. They stick in more ads – we get a fast-forward button. This isn't the way to build a trusted relationship

Shel Israel

Author, *The Age of Context*

---



**According to Consumer Reports** and The **New York Times**, the average consumer is exposed to somewhere between 247 and 5,000 marketing messages every day. Amid all that online noise, people are tuning out. In fact, **Statistic Brain** reports the average attention span in 2012 was a mere eight seconds, down from 12 seconds in 2000.

**(For reference, the same study concluded that the average attention span of an online consumer today is that of a goldfish! It's clear that getting a consumer to pay any notice to you is a huge win. For them to spend enough time with your company to actually buy means the experience MUST be personalized and relevant enough to capture their increasingly short attention span.)**

Given this alarming lack of attention span, forcing your customers to bear with you through a three-or four-step shopping cart or research process may be too much. Every time you ask someone to click through to another page, you lose a majority of your audience. In fact, if average site conversion rates are roughly 5% (according to **Fireclick**) then each new page between your visitor and their ultimate goal loses approximately 95% of your total site traffic.

This is what death by 1,000 clicks means: **Every time you ask your audience to do extra work online, you risk alienating them.**

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In real life, that looks like:

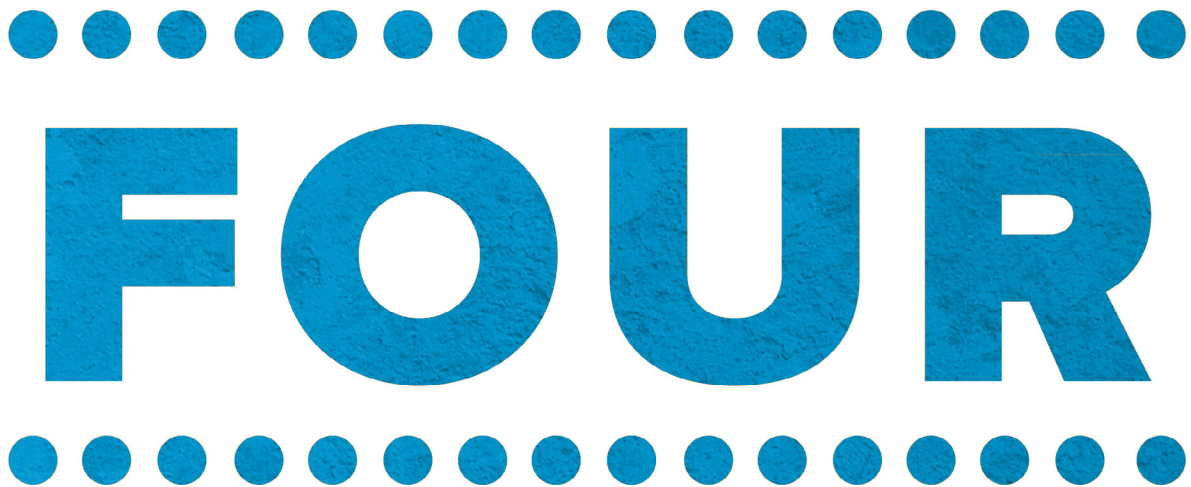
- **Marketing campaigns that treat everyone the same.**
- **Websites that force your audience to hunt for content or don't remember return visitors.**
- **Forms that ask the same question every time someone fills them out.**

The goal of every online marketer should be to get their visitor to the exact page they're looking for on the first click. If a customer does a search for red sneakers on **Zappos**, they should immediately jump to a landing page that allows them to buy red sneakers, and not the company homepage. Any additional steps, forms, or other hoops the visitor has to jump through will significantly reduce conversion rates.

Here's where context marketing shows its genius. Using context, marketers can target their online outreach and identify just the right SEO keyword target or email messaging to deliver the ideal experience for your audience. These tools get marketers one step closer to creating a website capable of delivering the right landing page and the right user experience to every single site visitor.

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# FOUR

## **WITHOUT INTEGRATED SYSTEMS, CREATING CONTEXT IS IMPOSSIBLE**

Before tools that send emails combined with tools that pull from your contact database, email subject lines and constructs like Hello [Your Name Here] never existed. Similarly, the idea of inserting the same headline and similar copy on both emails and landing pages would be ridiculous without either one tool to create both of those items or a system integration to connect the two channels' technologies.

You simply can't create a seamless, personalized experience if your technology is disjointed and disconnected.

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Context marketing can only exist because all-in-one software tools allow your different online channels and analytics to “talk” to one another.

**(Full disclosure: HubSpot just announced such a tool: our new [Content Optimization System](#). But, regardless of the actual technology marketers use, the point remains that separate tools lead to separate, uncomfortable experiences only personalized by manually updating everything repeatedly.)**

Even if you could create the same brand “look,” there was no way to connect all your online data tracking before integrated technology. Rather than a confusing series of reports, marketers can now see their monthly numbers as a whole and measure their overall ROI in a single glance - the No. 1 challenge for marketers, according to [HubSpot’s State of Inbound Marketing report](#).

Finally, most of the personal information pinging around the internet would be just noise without the tools to make sense of it. Housing all your information about one person in one system lets you see that person in context. You can learn what time your best customers visit your site and what device they use to see it, as well as myriad other tidbits critical to your business.

Rather than guessing what people care about, you can create a profile of each user, and then measure what resonates with them – something that would seem like mind reading to my sales guru.

Again, the goal is to create a holistic experience that tailors your message and interactions to the person on the other end of the screen. You can’t do that when your contact database only communicates with your email and not other channels.



# FIVE

## CONTEXT TURBOCHARGES CONTENT'S VALUE

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“

Great content is the best sales tool in the world.

Marcus Sheridan  
Author, The Sales Lion Blog

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”

Great content is the cornerstone of all great inbound marketing. But you can write the world's best ebook or blog post and never see any ROI if it's not surfaced to the right audience, at the exact right time in their buyer journey, and with the appropriate promotional messaging. In short, you need to market your content, and context allows you to gain insight to pinpoint why each group you're reaching would want that specific piece.

Using context to promote your content used to be about writing the right hook or creating a brilliant blog post headline because those were the only distribution channels that marketing owned. New technology, however, enables marketers to control not just their content's positioning but also its distribution, since many new platforms place the control of lead-gen forms and landing page build-outs and copywriting with marketing, not IT.

For instance, e-tailer **Fab** used to run daily flash sales to all visitors, but in an approach that improves the relevancy of their sales to every individual customer, they now allow you to follow what you love. Visitors now control their relationship with Fab and can choose their own interaction, including selecting what they want to hear about and how they want to get that information (via mobile, email, the website, etc.).

In this way, Fab and other brands who rely on context marketing, increase the likelihood that their content will be seen - and consumed by - their target markets. Rather than blasting twenty pieces of collateral in the hopes that one gets through, context marketing asks: How do I get one great thing in front of one person, once, and then build my relationship with them from there?



# SIX

## CONTEXT DOESNT NEED TO BE COMPLICATED

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“

The real skill now is learning how to pick out the useful information from all this noise.

Nate Silver,  
Author, *The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail-but Some Don't*

---

”



Just as the human brain recognizes a face based on its unique features, websites such as Amazon, Google and Facebook now deploy “online listening tools” and “predictive behavior modeling” to recognize each person who visits their site. They then create a personalized web experiences for each visitor.

Sounds exciting, right? Unfortunately, unless you actually *are* Google or Facebook, this whole new context marketing idea can also be moderately terrifying – especially if you are only just beginning to figure out your website.

Context marketing isn't about creating more complex systems, however, it's about using comprehensive technology to simplify your marketing processes. Rather than using three or four different interfaces and apps, new all-in-one software tools will streamline your marketing efforts.

Employing one tool to publish and track your marketing makes it much easier to post your content in more than one place. With some of the same tools and strategies you are already using to do email personalization, you can quickly translate your new ideas to your entire online footprint. Adding a contextual algorithm doesn't mean that you need to do math, just select the information that you want to personalize (like adding a name or an industry image to a landing page), and let the tools do the work.

Great context marketing can be as simple as sending an email with a Smart CTA that changes for different personas that then takes the visitor to a relevant mobile landing page.

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Integration also makes tracking your online analytics much easier. Your marketing technology delivers a single report with all your campaign results, instead of toggling back and forth between Google Analytics, a CRM system, an email marketing platform, and more. Just like organizing phone numbers is much easier online than using a rolodex, these new all-in-one systems simplify how you measure success. Further, rather than manually redesigning and recreating content for each different channel, new technology allows you to easily utilize the same personalized content across your entire online platform, which creates a much more cohesive VIP experience for all of your online interactions.



# SEVEN



## **CONTEXT RESPECTS THE TIME, BEHAVIOR AND DEVICES OF PEOPLE**

Information is no longer scarce. Today, as we mentioned earlier, attention is scarce. According to **Eric Schmidt**, executive chairman of Google, we now create as much information every two days as we did from the dawn of civilization until 2003.

Not all consumers embraced this data explosion. Instead, many sought and embraced (and still embrace) new types of technology to allow them to better screen out messages they didn't want, such as VCRs and later DVRs, Caller ID, and "Do Not Call" lists. And they use them. Americans filed nearly 3.8 million Do Not Call List complaints in 2012, according to the [Clarion Ledger](#).

Instead of adding to this online chorus by yelling louder, context marketing respects audiences and their limited attention spans and pinpoints what messages the audience wants or needs when they actually want or need them.

Software that uses context remembers people and treats them the way they deserve to be treated. It can change a page to eliminate online lead-gen forms for existing customers, recommend new products based on previous visits like Amazon, or recognize when someone is viewing your page from a mobile phone and change the format of your content to show best on that device.

These tools allow us to understand a person in context – their likes, their dislikes, their buying habits, when and where they interact with your company (and on what device), and then cater our marketing to specifically address those individual motivations and challenges. This is the "context marketing" shift.

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A large, stylized black letter 'E' is centered on a blue textured background. The background has a subtle, grainy texture. The letter 'E' is solid black and has a modern, rounded design. The entire composition is framed by a thick black border. The text below the letter is in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**PUTTING CONTEXT IN CONTEXT:  
HOW MARKETING HAS EVOLVED**

## **PUTTING CONTEXT IN CONTEXT: HOW MARKETING HAS EVOLVED**

Context marketing may seem like another new “thing” to overwhelm you. In reality, understanding your audience in context is the next part of the ongoing journey marketers have traveled to make sense of the new online world. After all, we’re all human and know how to have human interactions built on context. We’re now entering an age where that same level of comfort and customization can find its way into our marketing.

This chapter will walk you through the last ten years of marketing to explore where this idea of context originated and how it fits into the larger marketing universe.

### **THE ONLINE GOLD RUSH**

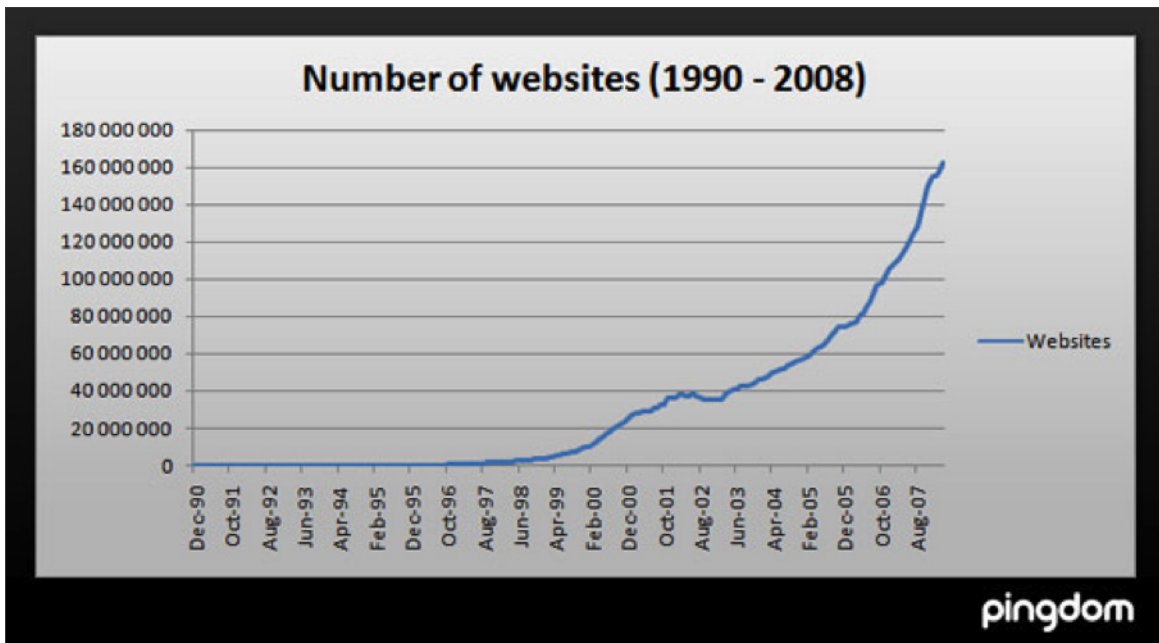
Marketers have a history of chasing the next shiny object. In the mid-1990s, that exciting new toy was the World Wide Web. Though this new technology was exciting, it also created many challenges, some of which persist today. Just as not everyone is a natural born salesman, not everyone jumps at the chance to practice digital marketing even now – online marketing thus requires a major shift that has proven difficult for many marketers.

The first step in going digital was staking an online claim. This meant creating a first corporate website and migrating sales and marketing

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collateral into the online space. Just like settlers running towards the Colorado gold mines, companies did this with fervor. The late 1990s – early 2000s saw a massive land grab for online real estate. The chart below shows the exponential growth of new websites in the decade between 1998 and 2008.



## CHART 2 : Pingdom

While the functionality of websites progressed since the early 1990s, the way most marketers think about websites didn't always keep pace, nor did it incorporate much human context or customization. Some advanced technology, such as the Amazon algorithm, began to create personalized site experiences by using cookies to track online behavior and recommend products based on past browsing experiences, but for the most part, websites were one-size-fits-all.

While some advances such as search and navigation bars improved the user experience, others like pop-up ads and slow-loading flash video actually undermined the usability of the company website.

Sound like ancient history? Maybe not – despite the nearly **633 million** websites in the world today, many marketers still do not understand how people actually use their sites. The website is the hub of your marketing, and it should work *for* you, conveying the heart and messaging of your company in a user-friendly way. As technology becomes more complicated, adding personal tokens and mobile layouts, websites that succeed must still stay true to the basics by reaching out to, and connecting with, their audience. As we discussed earlier, the technology of context marketing is a way to do just that.

## **EMAIL MARKETING BOMBARDS ITS AUDIENCE**

The initial digital gold rush wasn't limited to web pages. Much of it was directed towards email inboxes. A new wave of email tools accelerated the pace and scale of marketing outreach. In what might be considered the first stage of marketing automation, many companies tried to use automated, batch-and-blast email campaigns to “out-spam the spammers” in a strategy that aimed to fire 20 things in front of people in the hope that one of those things would somehow be relevant.

Though some companies continue to embrace this approach, there are several inherent drawbacks. First, it's hard to do: According to statistics by **Radicati Group**, people send about 294 billion emails per day, and

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about 90% of those are either spam or viruses. Second, as inbox spam filters and other screening tools improve, reaching out to an audience using a purchased list or other interruption-based technique has become increasingly ineffective.

These early, spam-happy approaches to email practiced the same philosophy behind driving millions of impressions towards a one-size-fits-all banner ad just to get a small handful of clicks. Fill the top of your marketing funnel enough, the philosophy runs, and you can eventually see at least a few customers give up and convert at the very bottom. But what are you doing to your reputation? What about ROI? Are there more efficient ways to do this? What about the people behind the screen? Again, these are questions context marketing aims to address head-on.

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## SOCIAL MEDIA CORRESPONDINGLY EXPLODES

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A blue circle containing a white double quote symbol, centered between two horizontal blue lines.

Those who insert themselves into as many channels as possible look set to capture the most value. They'll be the richest, the most successful, the most connected, capable and influential among us. We're all publishers now, and the more we publish, the more valuable connections we'll make."

Pete Cashmore  
Founder, Mashable

---

A blue circle containing a white double quote symbol, centered between two horizontal blue lines.

Social media is so ingrained in our everyday lives that it's hard to imagine it has only existed for roughly the past decade. Checking your Facebook account or Twitter feed has become as much a part of most morning routines as pouring a cup of coffee.

The social media follower race burst into the marketing world and is still part of the zeitgeist of the industry, changing online conversations with the

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same force as Google changed researching products, and finding information. Suddenly, through online communities and social sharing, people everywhere were generating word-of-mouth recommendations and discussions, all of them online, and all of them at a scale that only celebrities could have dreamed of a few short years ago.

Initially, as Mashable founder Pete Cashmore's quote illustrates, social media was far from a proven revenue stream. Companies remained somewhat unsure on the best way to participate in this new medium.

But from its early disorganized roots, social media grew up, and revenue followed. Today, **more than one in seven people worldwide access their Facebook account monthly**, and social networking accounts for nearly 27% percent of all time spent online according to an **Experian study**.

And according to **Forrester**, most companies consider their social presence a standard aspect of their marketing strategy to drive customers. **HubSpot's 2013 State of Inbound Marketing Report**, which surveyed over 3,000 marketers globally, found that 54% found a new customer via Facebook alone in 2013.

With word-of-mouth, people-centric marketing not only booming, but linked to business objectives, the need to treat people like people has become more important than ever. The best interactions always come with context, relevancy, personalization. When we talk to people in real life, we use their names, reference past conversations and talk about topics that matter to them. Rather than using social media as a megaphone for company announcements, using contextual tools marketers can to bring these same core communications skills to their online interactions.

## INBOUND MARKETING IS BORN

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A blue circular icon containing a white opening quotation mark, centered between two horizontal blue lines.

If you have more money than brains, you should focus on outbound marketing. If you have more brains than money, you should focus on inbound marketing.

Guy Kawasaki

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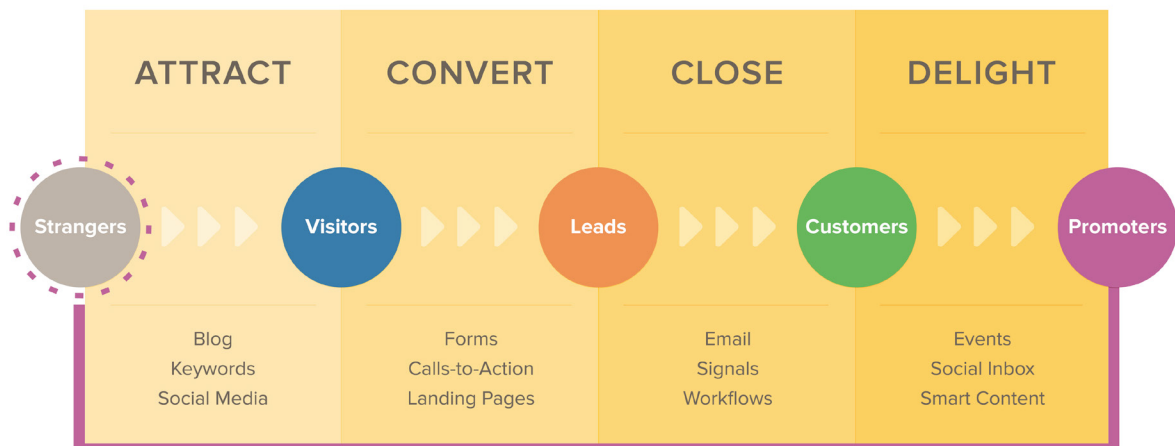
A blue circular icon containing a white closing quotation mark, centered between two horizontal blue lines.

The early Internet explosion gave way to a more mature industry, as companies harnessed their initial online chaos and strategically focused their efforts. This world moved from “dumb” sites that were based around presenting and packaging information from one to many, to a world centered on people and contextual interactions. It moved from a way to consume to a way to connect.

Following the trend, inbound marketing began by focusing on the person behind the screen (the consumer). It was grounded in the notion that to get people’s attention in this multi-channel world you had to create something that people wanted to read. You needed to attract them on their own terms, not try to push harder or add more noise and spam to the web.

A heavy component of inbound marketing was the publishing of content that's either useful (to help your prospects and customers accomplish something in their day), or thoughtful (to help them think differently about the world in ways that improve their lives). It came in the form of blogs, ebooks, et al that educated an audience and helped them in some way *before* asking for a sale. By doing this at every step in their buyer journey, marketers could now attract visitors, turn them into leads and customers, and create more word-of-mouth advocacy by creating a great experience.

## Inbound Methodology



by **HubSpot**

Today, inbound marketing is a central practice for a majority of marketers. According to the **2013 State of Inbound Marketing survey**, nearly 60% of marketers have adopted inbound strategies, and more than 80% of those executing inbound marketing have integrated it into broader company goals.

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## NEW INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY USHERS IN A NEW ERA

From using mapping tools to find the best route to work, buying lunch with a phone, texting your family about dinner plans, and reaching out to a high school friend via Facebook, there is very little of our daily lives that technology doesn't touch. Beyond that, technology is now integrated so that all of these individual data points combine to provide a pretty thorough online profile of each individual.

If inbound marketing centered on creating relevant content for your target audience, context marketing is the next stage of this transformation because it paints a fuller picture of that person. Using a new equation of content plus context, marketers can better understand what pulls people to interact with their companies, and deliver exactly that to their audience.

As **Accenture** explains in their Global Consumer Pulse survey, this new technology brings companies “beyond the ‘where’ and ‘who’ of consumption”, and adds two additional layers to help companies understand their audience: “how” and “why.”

For some, all this data can feel a lot like big brother is watching. But for marketers, this insight is a gold mine. As competition for audience attention escalates, marketers need smarter, more strategic ways to reach their target markets. Inbound marketing in 2013 will utilize new scalable technology to glean insight on the person behind your persona, and deliver customized messages in a way that most appeals to that individual.

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For example, if I begin talking to my friends on Facebook about taking a vacation to Nantucket and emailing others about Nantucket hotels, a savvy company can target paid ads to recommend top spas, and a local restaurant could send me dinner coupons good for the next month. They know why I am looking: Because I am planning a trip. They can also identify how I view these ads. If they notice I research using Google via my iPhone, they can pinpoint their messages there.

In this way, technology has just made marketing far more personal and capable of predicting what I want even before I ask.

**Now that we've explored what context marketing is and how it evolved, it's time to examine what it looks like in practice.**

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The background is a textured blue color. It features several solid black geometric shapes: a large triangle in the top-left corner, a smaller triangle in the center, a vertical bar on the right side, a horizontal bar at the bottom-left, and another vertical bar at the bottom-right.

**PUTTING CONTEXT INTO PRACTICE:  
HOW TO IMPLEMENT CONTEXT  
MARKETING IN YOUR COMPANY**

# **PUTTING CONTEXT INTO PRACTICE: HOW TO IMPLEMENT CONTEXT MARKETING IN YOUR COMPANY**

With all the potential moving parts required to inject more context to better personalize your inbound marketing, it can be hard to picture the promise of how this will work for your company. This chapter goes beyond the theory of context marketing to show you how it works. With the help of integrated marketing software, here are some examples of how you can use the principle of “context” in your daily efforts.

Recall from the seven fundamentals of context marketing that it’s better to broadly personalize many touch points to make the entire experience with your company feel relevant and human (instead of a highly personalized initial email that leads to one-size-fits-all pages, buttons, forms, etc.).

Inserting context in all you do is not as difficult as it appears. In fact, it doesn’t require wrestling with tons of technology, but rather deploying the right technology platform to serve the right version of a page or button or headline to the right person at the right time. Much like smart, customized email marketing requires the right app or platform, new technology allows you to insert that level of context across all your online touch points.

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In light of that strategy, here are the aspects of modern marketing that we feel deserve more personalization for better results:

## **CONTEXT IMPROVES CONTENT AND CALLS-TO-ACTION (CTAS) ON YOUR WEBSITE AND BLOG**

Your website is the central hub for all your inbound marketing efforts. Nearly all of your online marketing, from social to email to PPC should eventually funnel towards your website. As a result, creating a contextual website and landing page experiences can dramatically boost marketing ROI. Using behavioral data to inform marketing can improve ROI by as much as 68% according to **Adobe**.

Because of the diverse traffic (translated: diverse people) landing on your site, including new visitors, existing leads, established customers, and even potential employees, websites are often the hardest to personalize – especially without cookies to identify your traffic. As a result, many marketers default to generic “catch all” CTAs or product recommendations in a standard column that shows on every page of their site.

Unfortunately, this practice creates a confusing site for visitors. Returning customers are unlikely to find what they need if your page is primarily a sales tool, while new visitors may want to learn more about your company before clicking on a “Buy Now” button. As we watch brands such as e-tailer Fab, branding whiz Coke, and the dominant Amazon incorporate contextual targeting in their website design, here are ways to follow their lead with any amount of resources:

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## 1 | OFFER TARGETED CALLS-TO-ACTION (CTAS)

Calls-to-action are text commands, buttons, images, or other clickable links that encourage a website visitor to move to a landing page and become of lead. In order to convert your audience, your company website should include prominent CTAs on every page to encourage visitors to convert into leads or motivate leads to take the next step. Some examples of CTAs are **“DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE EBOOK NOW”** or **“Get More Information Here.”**

The best inbound marketers offer valuable free content on these landing pages, in exchange for the visitor becoming a lead. Others will strategically place demo sign-ups and various “bottom of funnel” CTAs, to be used on pages more specific to the product or service you offer (since those visitors are more ready to hear from sales, for instance, than someone reading your blog to learn and be entertained).

The image displays four examples of targeted CTAs (Calls to Action) in a HubSpot interface, arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each example shows a dropdown menu for selecting a lifecycle stage and a corresponding content card with a CTA button.

- Top Left:** Lifecycle stage: "Evangelist". Content card: "inbound Boston, MA, August 19-22, 2013. Learn from industry thought leaders, chat 1-on-1 with the experts, and experience HubSpot's newest features. WHAT WILL YOU LEARN AT INBOUND? FIND OUT NOW >".
- Top Right:** Lifecycle stage: "Lead". Content card: "How to Optimize Your Social Media Marketing Strategy. We'll evaluate your current strategy & offer tips to get the most out of your social media marketing efforts. Get a Free Assessment".
- Bottom Left:** Lifecycle stage: "Default CTA". Content card: "Free Ebook: Crash Course on LinkedIn Sponsored Updates. Learn how to use LinkedIn Sponsored Updates to get more exposure and clicks on your content. Download Ebook Now".
- Bottom Right:** Lifecycle stage: "Customer". Content card: "Social Inbox is now live in your HubSpot! HubSpot Customers: Click to go to your Social Inbox to create helpful Twitter streams based on your keywords and contact lists. Go to Your Social Inbox".

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Static websites fail to match that call-to-action with an action the visitor is likely to take, minimizing its effectiveness. In contrast, context-enabling software allows marketers to create dynamic, Smart CTAs that can help pinpoint that action.

As mentioned above, smart marketers often make educated guesses about what pages represent a visitor's readiness to buy (or lack thereof), and place their CTAs based on that intuition. However, this is still largely assumption. Each page in this approach is optimized for the largest or most likely type of visitor, not for each specific visitor as they arrive. For instance, everyone who views a case study page on your website is not necessarily ready to talk to a salesperson. You don't want to turn them away by offering a CTA that's too bottom-of-the-funnel (e.g. "Talk to Sales").

To solve this, various software tools use cookie tracking to identify each visitor that comes to your site and generate dynamic CTAs for both your homepage and your landing pages that adjust depending on who is visiting the page (like the ones shown on the previous page). This means that your website "remembers" your audience and shows each visitor a CTA that aligns with their stage in the sales cycle ... or any other criteria that you deem important, such as their industry, business type, location, past activity/ behaviors, etc.

In turn, these specialized calls-to-action produce a much higher likelihood that your audience will convert because they feel comfortable and receive more relevant information.

## 2 | CUSTOMIZE IMAGES AND MESSAGING AROUND YOUR CTAS

In addition to targeted calls-to-action, contextual marketing software can also serve up specific images based on individual demographics, such as industry, business type, location, and more. In this way, for example, a sports apparel shop could show Yankees gear to New York visitors and Red Sox apparel to customers in Boston.

<h3>What Non-Customers See:</h3> <p>10 Quick Tips for Getting More Business Value Out of Twitter</p> <p>by <a href="#">Rebecca Corliss</a></p> <p>July 1, 2013 at 12:30 PM</p> <p>Social media, especially Twitter, requires a lot of effort in order to extract business value. But with over 200 million active users, the probability that your prospects, leads, and customers are using the Twitter is high. This means conversations that could drive business value are happening, they're just surrounded by irrelevant clutter.</p>  <p>So how can marketers navigate this social network and prioritize their time so they're only reviewing the tweets that are most important to them? The key is dissecting the Twitterverse into specific segments that are most relevant to your business and using your marketing data to create those groups. And we're going to tell you how.</p>	<h3>What Customers See:</h3> <p>10 Quick Tips for Getting More Business Value Out of Twitter</p> <p>by <a href="#">Rebecca Corliss</a></p> <p>July 1, 2013 at 12:30 PM</p> <p>Social media, especially Twitter, requires a lot of effort in order to extract business value. But with over 200 million active users, the probability that your prospects, leads, and customers are using the Twitter is high. This means conversations that could drive business value are happening, they're just surrounded by irrelevant clutter. <a href="#">HubSpot Customers: You can do all of the following in your new Social Inbox, live to all users today. Click here to access your Social Inbox in HubSpot.</a> <b>Magic!</b></p> <p>So how can marketers navigate this social network and prioritize their time so they're only reviewing the tweets that are most important to them? The key is dissecting the Twitterverse into specific segments that are most relevant to your business and using your marketing data to create those groups. And we're going to tell you how.</p>
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### **3 | OPTIMIZE FOR THE VISITOR'S DEVICE USING RESPONSIVE DESIGN**

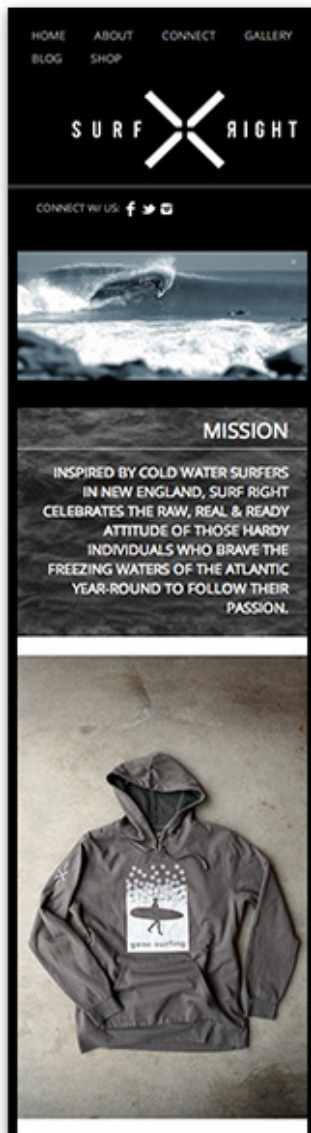
Considering the device on which your visitor will view your content is also critical to creating a great user experience.

Today's audience has a range of options for how they view your website, from a laptop to an iPad to a smart phone. The latest survey from [Pew Research](#) shows that nearly 60% of adults connect to the web through a smartphone, tablet computer, or a laptop while on-the-go. The fast evolution and wide range of these devices has made many marketers' original approach to mobile optimization obsolete: not only do you need a mobile version of your site, it can't simply be a second site that's optimized for mobile. People jump between devices too much and need a consistent experience.

Social and search, too, have ruined the "separate sites for separate devices" approach. A mobile URL shared to social media, for example, could be clicked by someone on a desktop and not render correctly, while your search optimization efforts for your desktop URL don't benefit a second mobile URL whatsoever. **(Google has also made changes to detect duplicate sites and prefers one site optimized for both desktop and mobile in its algorithm.)**

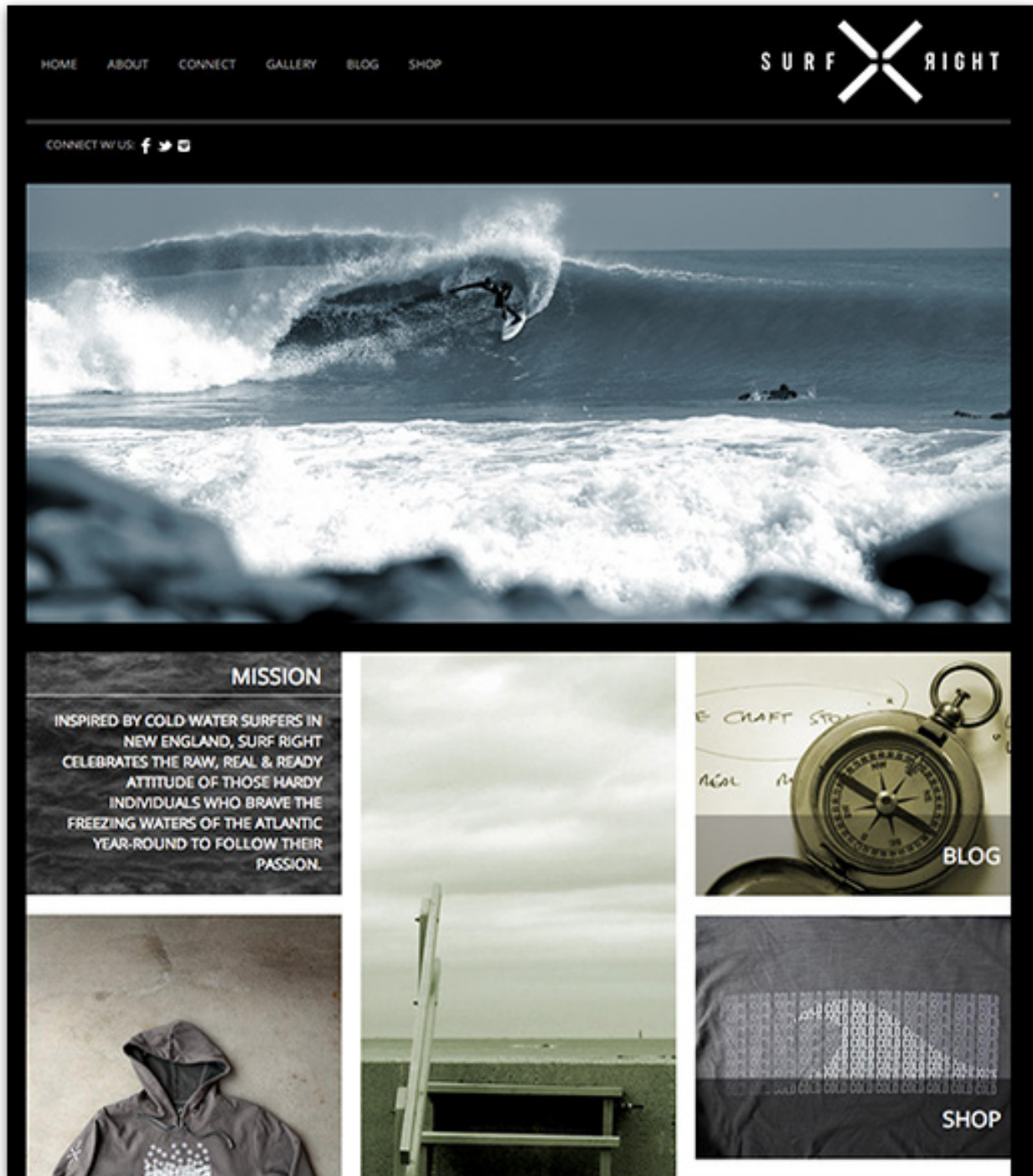
So rather than dividing your channels and creating a separate mobile page, sites built using responsive design ensure an experience that uses the context of the device from which your visitors arrive. Responsive design recognizes the device a person is using to view the page and rearranges or "responds" automatically, making itself look great on wide screens, laptops, tablets, or mobile phones.

Here is an example of the Surf Right Projects' responsive site, where you can see subtle differences between the desktop, iPad, and mobile phone views.



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## 4 | GENERATE SMART FORMS

For lead generation websites, the form is one of the most important elements on your page. You can't just create one long form to ask all the questions you might ever use to inform your context marketing efforts. As most marketers have seen, the more fields you include on a page, the fewer conversions your page will receive. According to [Eloqua](#), the average landing page includes somewhere between three and five fields, which limits the amount of information you can collect.

Further, with contextual software, marketers can use smart forms to flesh out these details. Instead of housing one form on each landing page and asking site visitors to fill out the same form over and over again, smart forms use cookie tracking to recognize each visitor to your site and dynamically populate the form fields for each visit, using progressive profiling to gradually add more details about your site visitor. Progressive profiling analyzes what marketers already know about a lead and creates new forms that pull from a queue of questions – asking for details based on data the prospect hasn't already provided in previous visits. (In other words, these forms don't present the same fields over and over until a visitor feels uncomfortable.)

Over time, as a marketer, this means you accumulate deeper, more valuable information about leads so you can add more relevant value, either through helpful content or potential solutions for their life or business. Great salespeople use needs analysis calls to tailor their approach; now, great marketers can use context, specifically lead-gen forms served using context.

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## **CONTEXT IMPROVES EMAIL & MARKETING AUTOMATION**

Email is often the workhorse of your digital marketing efforts. **Magill research** reports that marketers earned an estimated \$39 for every \$1 spent on email marketing in 2012. With that kind of reach, it's easy to see why 59% of marketers are focused on email testing and optimization practices according to **MarketingSherpa's 2012 Email Marketing Benchmark report**.

Using context in your email efforts can significantly increase conversions and click-through rates. As we explored earlier, email was one of the first channels to segment its database and implement automated rules and workflows to nurture your audience in more relevant, contextual ways. Here are additional context marketing methods that can take your emails beyond simple segmentation and incorporate everything your marketing team knows about your customer:

### **1 | ENABLE DYNAMIC PERSONALIZATION**

True email personalization shouldn't stop at adding someone's first name after the word "Hi." Emails can be personalized to include a variety of details such as business vertical, geography, or the name of the specific sales rep who is personally working with that lead.

### **2 | ADD WORKFLOWS AND SMART LISTS**

Workflows are sets of rules outlined by a marketer in their inbound marketing software that dictates what content will be sent to whom. While this is automated marketing, you shouldn't consider it "set and forget" marketing – workflows are based on data and optimized to ensure people are actually opening and clicking what they find most valuable.

Data segmentation is a major lever that aids email marketers. It allows

marketers to sort their email databases into specific lists, such as CEOs, non-converting prospects, or VIP customers, and create a specific series of emails to nurture and engage this audience based on their shared characteristics.

Context marketing takes these segmentation efforts to the next level by integrating Smart lists to an email marketing workflow. Smart lists are not static lists of email addresses – as you can guess, they use more context than that. They take into account specific actions of individuals, moving them between lists based on what they've done. For example, if one person buys your product, then common sense dictates you should stop sending “Buy Now” buttons for that product. Contextual marketing allows you to automatically overlay that human intuition. Perhaps you have great add-ons or a great webinar to learn new ways to use your product – those make excellent email sends, and thus the purchaser should be automatically moved to a list such as “Helpful product videos and add-ons for customers.”

To include broad but consistent context in your marketing, look for an email software tool that offers granular segmentation to filter the large volume of data gathered on your site through analytics and lead forms. Your email segmentation might leverage implicit details like lead score, page views, key actions, or responses to specific types of content; it might also leverage explicit details like company size, job title, geography, or other data volunteered to you by your audience. This kind of information allows marketers to send targeted messages to each segment that better match their interests.

**(As we alluded to earlier, some email segmentation efforts have become too granular, making the rest of the experience feel utterly irrelevant due to a lack of personalization. However, this kind of personalization can be invaluable to a marketer's success – as long as you remember to contextualize the remainder of the visitor's online journey on your site.)**

## CONTEXT IMPROVES ANALYTICS AND SALES HANDOFFS

Tracking and analyzing your inbound marketing is vital to improving its overall success. Traditionally, marketers looked at a variety of general performance details, such as traffic, overall downloads, and average time on site, all without knowing if these visitors were customers, leads, new arrivals...or even your overexcited family frequenting your shiny new business page. New contextual analytics allow marketers to track much richer details through custom reports, enabling you to see all your marketing as a whole or pinpoint specific segments of your audience.

Using better context, marketers are able to track and respond to better information, thus better personalizing their marketing touches for a segment of an audience. For instance, marketers can:

### 1 | COLLECT BEHAVIORAL DATA

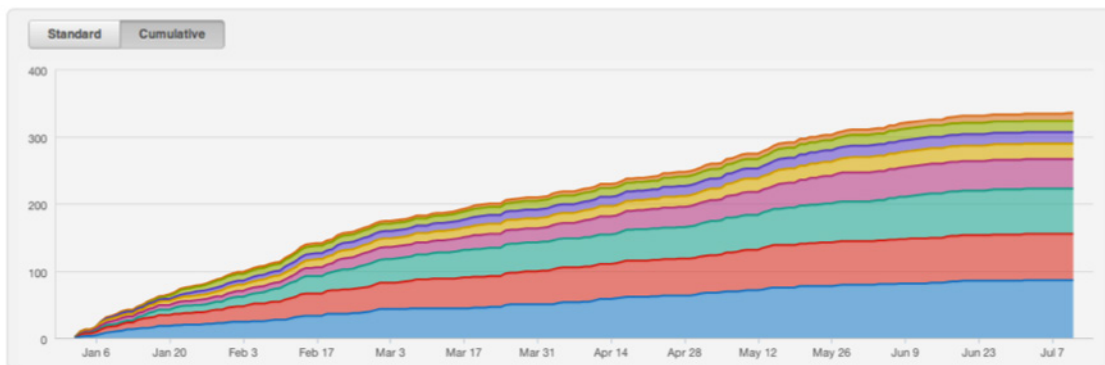
As prospects move through your website, new tracking software collects data on their interactions with your site. By approaching your marketing to customize it with data, you can take this behavioral information to the next level by updating site pages, blog content, calls-to-action, lead-gen forms, and emails based on what the data shows. If you know that new visitors and current customers tend to hit a landing page offering a free ebook at the same frequency, you can react accordingly by requiring a lead form be filled out by new visitors, while customers receive a free download without needing to “re-convert” for no reason.

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## 2 | BOOST LEAD INTELLIGENCE FOR MARKETING

Context marketing can also help companies compare results of different marketing tactics and determine which channels produce the most ROI. For example, the first time a lead comes to your website, it's important to consider how they got there by tracking the channel or campaign that first brought them to your website. Contextual marketing analytics can follow the keyword used to find your brand from a search engine and/or the first page each new visitor viewed. Further, the tools can identify what time of day, what location, and what device your visitors open your content, all of which give you important context about their initial interest and what their intentions might be.



## 3 | PROVIDE LEAD INTELLIGENCE FOR SALES

Over the course of a lead's journey – from their first encounter with your brand until the point at which they're ready for sales help – context marketing collects a wealth of data that could be valuable to your sales team. The team can then infer details about a lead's interests, their level of urgency around a potential purchase, their level of fit for your product, and much more.

Unfortunately, most CRM systems aren't designed to handle the volume and kinds of data generated by marketing campaigns to then execute on marketing

and sales day to day – because they were initially built as reporting tools, the typical CRM is much better for the CEO managing a sales team than the actual sales force. Context marketing tools, some of which link to CRM systems, can help facilitate the sales process by surfacing relevant, interesting details for your sales team.

**(To help your sales teams do just that, HubSpot recently announced our Signals product, a notification tool that shows Sales real-time notifications based on “signals” coming from emails they’ve sent, in addition to tracking the contextual interactions the prospect has had with your company via visits to the company website, notations in your CRM system, and even social media messages. Click [HERE](#) for more)**

## **CONTEXT IMPROVES SOCIAL MEDIA**

Many marketers still view social media as a bit of a Wild West show. Both the variety and volume of conversation on social channels makes it difficult to know how to approach or contextualize the social media experience. However, it is the overwhelming nature of social conversation that makes context marketing so vital. Though the functionality of social media sites (which still show the same post to everyone), makes social media harder to personalize than your email messages or your website, there are still ways in which you can apply the context you have about your leads and customers to improve interactions:

### **1 | LISTEN TO COLLECT CONTEXT ON THE INDIVIDUAL**

Contextual listening tools help identify who you are talking to and what they mean to your company, which can dramatically improve your social results. Knowing whether the person asking for more details on your company

is the CEO of a Fortune 500 that your sales team has been working for two months or the CEO of a chain of coffee shops that don't need your product or service can help triage your online responses and respond faster, better, and with more relevant information **(read: in a more human way)**.

Similar to email, using contextual tools in social media presents an opportunity for you to collect implicit behavioral details about your leads.

## **2 | COLLECT CONTEXT FROM PAST LEADS AS A WHOLE**

Context marketing requires you to look at your leads database, which can be supplemented by what you learn on social. If you examine leads from past social media conversions and track engagement with your shared content in places like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, you can infer where the best leads originated based on social channel, as well as which kinds of content work best for social media marketing. For example, many B2B companies find that LinkedIn produces the best results, likely because 58% of B2B marketers are using the network according to Frank Isca at the **Weidert Group**. While this is good general information, B2B companies would do well to make sure that's the case on their own sites. If a contact database that focuses on context can show a B2B company exactly what social network the best leads came from and at what rate, they could prioritize responses and posting speed and volume accordingly.



**USING CONTEXT TO TAKE YOUR  
MARKETING TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

## USING CONTEXT TO TAKE YOUR MARKETING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

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Today I will do what others won't, so tomorrow I can accomplish what others can't.

Jerry Rice,  
NFL Hall of Famer

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Society is sitting on a technological tipping point. The convergence of big data, social listening, and integrated tracking tools help us see our world, and each other, in ways we could scarcely imagine a decade ago: we can now see each other in context.

Just as this new contextual universe has major implications on everything from heating systems that switch off based on your schedule to radio players that know what song you love to Smart cars on autopilot, HubSpot believes that context will fundamentally change marketing strategy sooner rather than later. We also believe that context will combine with great content to complete the inbound marketing philosophy, and that this is the evolution of successful marketing in the modern era.

This change doesn't need to be hard or scary. Just like my financial analyst



friend needs to keep on top of new tax laws and product pricing to keep his customers coming back, marketers need to understand new online technology to help keep coworkers – who may not yet see or understand the need for these tools – up to date (or ahead of) the competition.

We have already witnessed the seeds of this change: traditional, interruption marketing techniques are getting more expensive and less effective every day. Once the gold standards of customer acquisition, according to the **State of Inbound Marketing Report**, trade shows and direct mail each provided just 8% of all leads in 2013.

And, because our society is changing so rapidly, companies who fail to capitalize on new tools risk losing their market share to those who are paying attention to the changing tide. According to the **IDC**, more Americans will access the Internet through mobile devices than through desktop computers by 2015. As customers flock online and on mobile, can businesses afford to ignore new online advances?

We hope this paper helped demystify some of these changes. Remember, even though technology keeps creating these tectonic industry shifts, marketers are evolving along with their tools. Every day, we learn new ways to harness this tech, hone our outreach and connect with the people we are marketing to – the whole point of marketing in the first place. Understanding these seven fundamentals of context marketing and adding a few of these new context strategies into your marketing mix puts you on the next stage of that path.

As you move through this new contextual marketing universe and implement these solutions in your own campaigns, you will draw the same conclusion facing smart marketers, futurists, and technology observers alike: **Context changes everything.**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meghan Lockwood is a senior content manager at HubSpot. She is responsible for developing longer-term research reports, including the just-released 2013 State of Inbound Marketing Report. She is also a frequent contributor to the HubSpot blog and a speaker at industry conferences. Prior to HubSpot, Meghan managed the website optimization research cycle at MarketingSherpa, and authored several books on Website Optimization, including the 2012 MarketingSherpa Website Optimization Report.

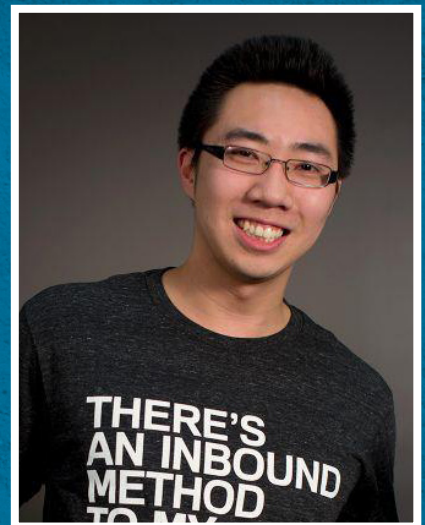


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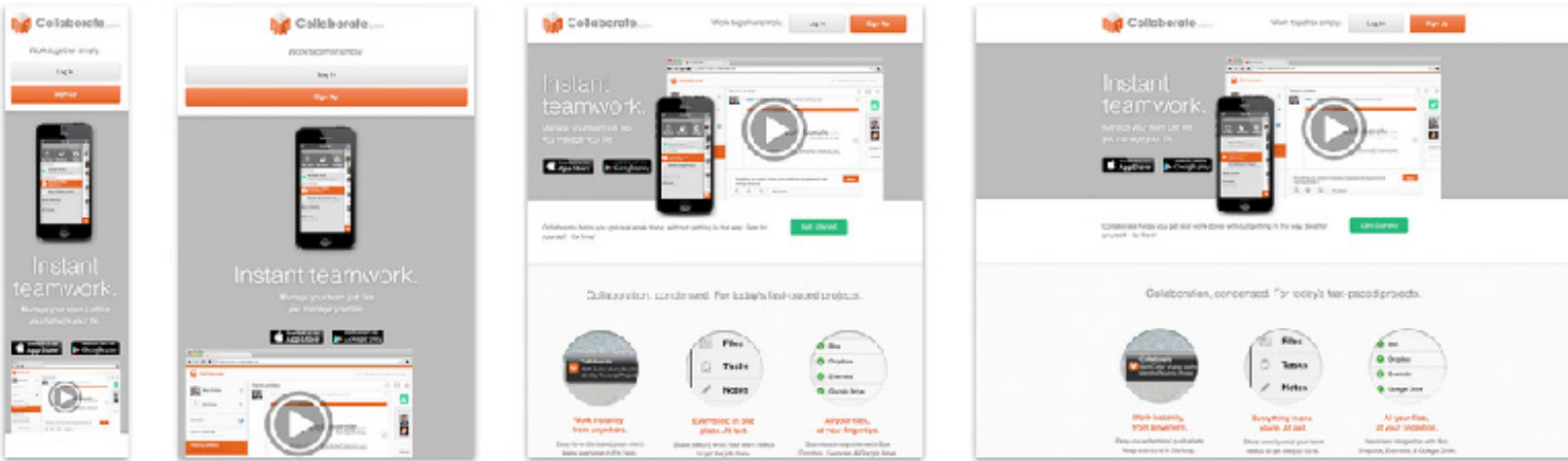
## ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Desmond Wong is a design and marketing specialist on the Creative and Design Team at HubSpot. He is responsible for designing a variety of content including ebooks, infographics, and visual assets for social networks. Desmond also manages HubSpot's network of freelance creatives and produces the weekly Marketing Update with CMO, Mike Volpe. Before HubSpot, Desmond launched a number of startups that helped develop his passion for design and branding.



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