

Content2024

The Rubicon CX Approach to Content & Experience:
A Comprehensive View for 2024 and Beyond

October 2023

Agenda

1. Introduction & Mission
2. What We Mean by Content
3. Where We've Been
4. Where We Are
 - How We Think
 - Content & Experience Strategy
 - Putting it to Work
5. Where We're Going
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1 / Introduction



The content problem

Too often, companies look at content as the last river to cross while creating a digital experience—lacking understanding of the content they have or where it will go—believing that it be obvious or will take care of itself in a programmatic fashion.

Unfortunately, that will just replicate any existing problems. It does not consider any new design system. This will lead to a less-than-optimal experience for the audience, and it will ultimately undermine the entire experience.

Our values & mission

CONTENT & EXPERIENCE THE RUBICON CX WAY

We'll cross that river with you. Our mission is to help you **transform** your content into engaging stories and conversations at the heart of your experience. It's never as easy as you think it may be. So, we work tirelessly with you to find the best approaches.

We ask questions. We listen. We don't rest until we've delivered an actionable content and experience design that will not only suit your audiences' needs, but also enable business users to easily maintain content to optimize it and keep it relevant.



“The **experience** is the brand.”

– Clement Mok

It's even truer today than when he said it in the 90s.

2 / What We Mean by Content

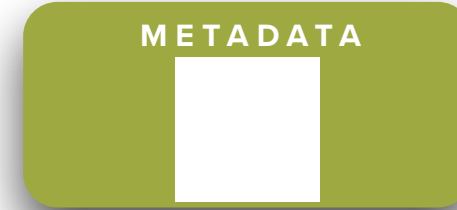
Content is...

Any recorded information that conveys meaning. And that lies at the heart of every experience.



It's all the things you see...

and a lot you don't



- Content and asset metadata (CMS & DAM)
- Taxonomy/topics
- Search metadata
- User-profile data
- Thesaurus
- Content display logic
- Data model

3 / Where We've Been

Content strategy is relatively new, right?

We're often asked how we became involved in such a new discipline.

This is anything but the case. Content strategy has been around since the infancy of the web as a mature platform.

The term “content strategy” was coined independently at various digital agencies in 1998.

Various digital agencies coin the term content strategy and start to hire Content Strategists.

1998

First content strategy conference, CS Forum, takes place in Paris.

2010

Clients begin actively seeking content strategy services and the number of agencies or consultancies that offer it grows.

2018

Generative AI emerges as a catalyst for content strategy and content marketing.

2023

2009 “Content strategy” starts trending in search terms, rising from 880 results in 2000 to 286,000 searches in 2008, then suddenly jumps to 4,210,000 in 2009.

2015 Kevin Nichols publishes *Enterprise Content Strategy: A Project Guide*, which Timothy Truxell helped edit and review.

2020 Rubicon CX is founded with a view to providing content expertise as well as personalized, shoulder-to-consulting with companies seeking content and experience strategy

2024 We always ask: “what’s next?”

How content strategy has evolved

We started with the communication basics that framed the discipline

- Copywriting
- Content inventories
- Content audits or assessments
- Content analysis
- Content briefs
- Content matrices
- Editorial guidelines
- Voice and tone

We evolved additional capabilities to meet new technologies

- CMS content modeling & metadata specification
- Taxonomies & tagging strategies
- Editorial processes & CMS workflows
- DAM metadata specifications
- Content migration plans
- Content calendars
- Globalization & localization plans
- Mobile & responsive content

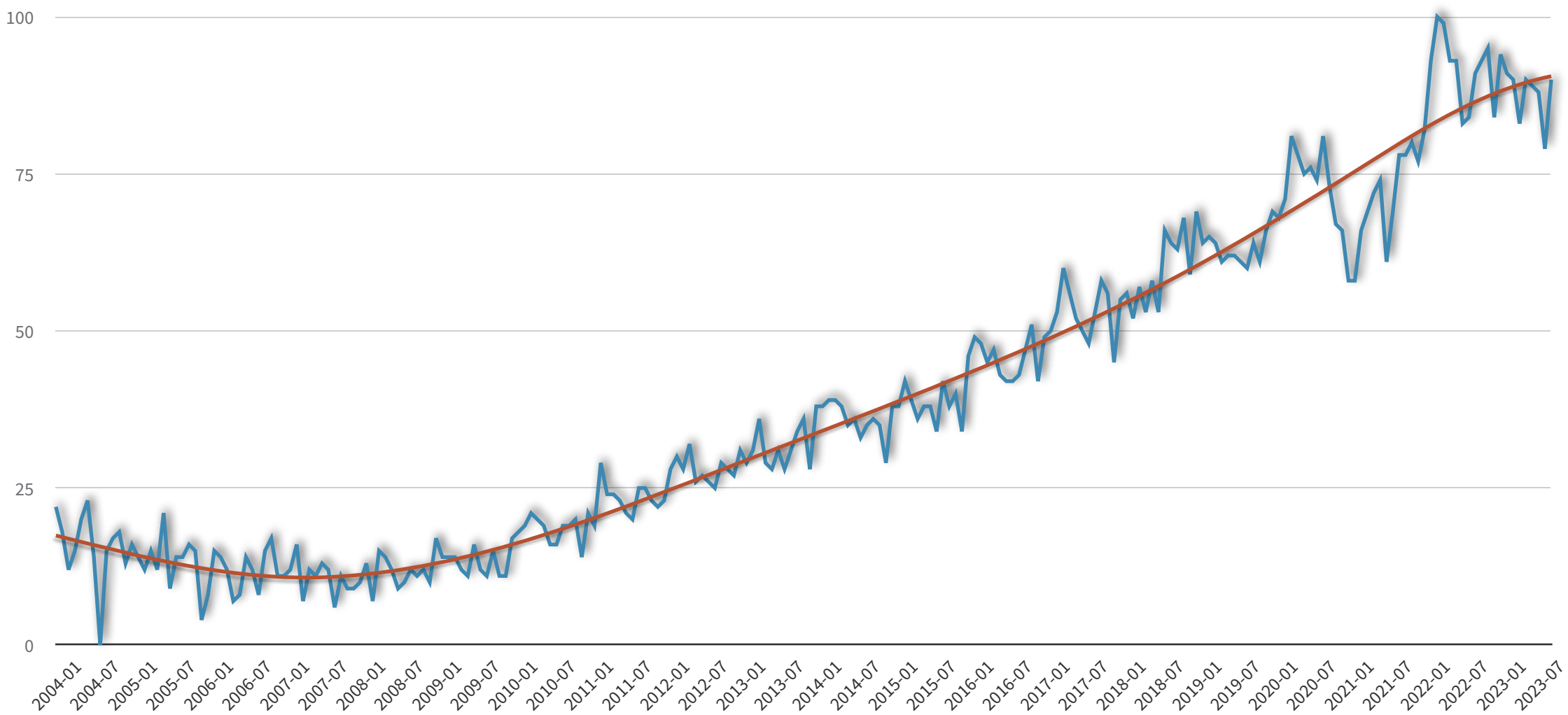
Today, we incorporate new models, channels, and tools

- Governance models
- Staffing plans
- Content marketing
- Social content
- UX Writing
- Personalization strategies
- Voice & spaces
- True omnichannel
- Generative AI

1998

2024+

Content strategy searches over time



Source: Google Trends

4 / Where We Are

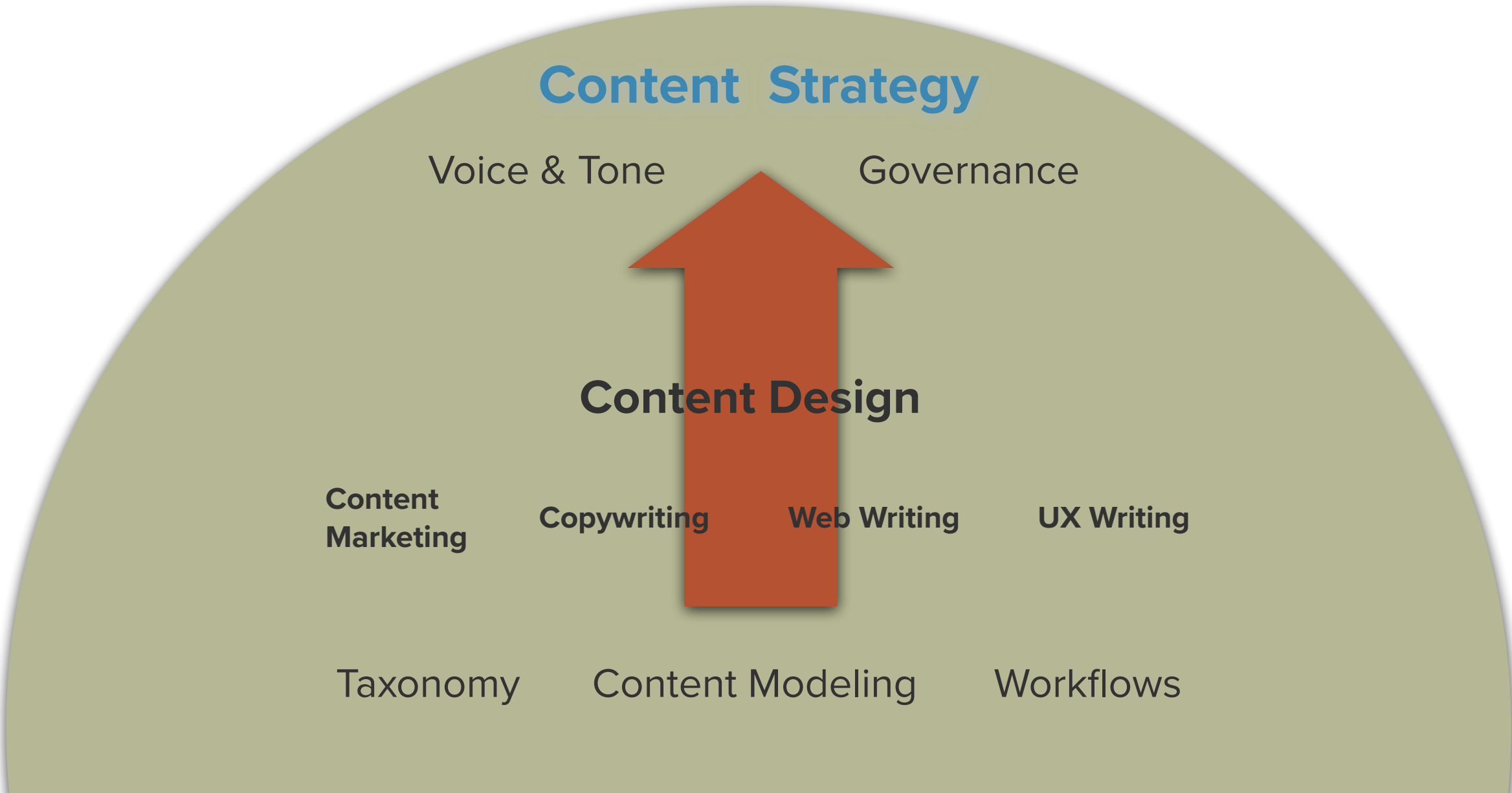
The two sides of content

Client and technology side	What the wider world see
Content Inventory	
Content Audit	
Content Strategy & Experience Brief	
Content Gap Analysis	Competitive and Audience Needs Assessment
Metadata & Tagging Strategy	Voice & Tone
Metadata Specifications	Messaging Framework & Strategy
Content Strategy & Experience Playbook	
Taxonomy	Sitemap
Content Model	Editorial Guidelines
Governance Model	Content Matrix
Editorial Workflows	Content Marketing Strategy
Content Maintenance Strategy	Editorial Calendar
CMS Authoring Guidelines	UX Writing and Copydecks

What we mean we say [insert term du jour]

- Content Strategy is the umbrella under which all other activities occur. These can all happen, but without an overarching strategy, they will will not be as effective
- Content Design concerns how content is populated within the design, including the the nuts and bolts of managing the content and presenting it within the experience
- UX Writing is the editorial approach for building transactional experiences
- Content Marketing is the approach for using content to convince your audiences of the relevance and timeliness of you offerings
- Copywriting is about storytelling and messaging. It's the actual nuts and bolts required to build a content marketing approach, including campaign, social and ad writing

How each activity plays together



Content design

Content design is concerned with the content delivery and governance mechanisms required to ensure a successful content experience.

- Content design is a subset of a larger content strategy
- It focuses on the delivery mechanisms such as a content model to ensure the easy maintenance of content required for an evolving experience
- It also focuses on the review cycles and migrations required for a successful experience
- Finally, it establishes an underlying taxonomy that can be used both by end users and business user to make the content transparent

UX Writing

UX Writing is content creation to support interaction within a design. It encompasses all the copy that isn't usually seen as copy, and if done right, fades into the background so that users rarely notice it.

- To do this, it uses many of the same tools as a larger content strategy
- It requires and maps to an overarching content strategy.
- It is a blend of different services and capabilities, such as user experience, analytics, and copy

Content marketing

Content marketing is content creation and planning in which an organization invests to develop the customer relationship; and, to acquire new customers. Content marketing is an end goal that requires a solid content strategy to attempt.

- Content marketing is not content strategy, but a tactic that requires a content strategy to support it
- Effective content marketing requires an overarching content strategy.
- It is a blend of different services and capabilities, much of what we have including: content strategists, SEO, Analytics teams, and Social teams, copywriters

Copywriting

The traditional half of art and copy. Copywriting focuses on branded, bought, owned, and earned content and uses it to meet users' needs at every part of their journey.

- Campaign copy creation using the voice and tone and messaging approach delineated by the overall content strategy
- Content marketing copy, such as blog posts and articles, to establish a user's affinity with the brand and provide needed information
- Information that isn't always based on selling for conversion, but above the line qualities such as brand lift
- Social posts and email messaging to activate site content

How We Think

Not all that long ago...

It was all about having a great ad campaign and robust media plan. Consumers watched a commercial and did what they were told. Brand story was king.

**A push-driven brand ecosystem...
or “story yelling”**

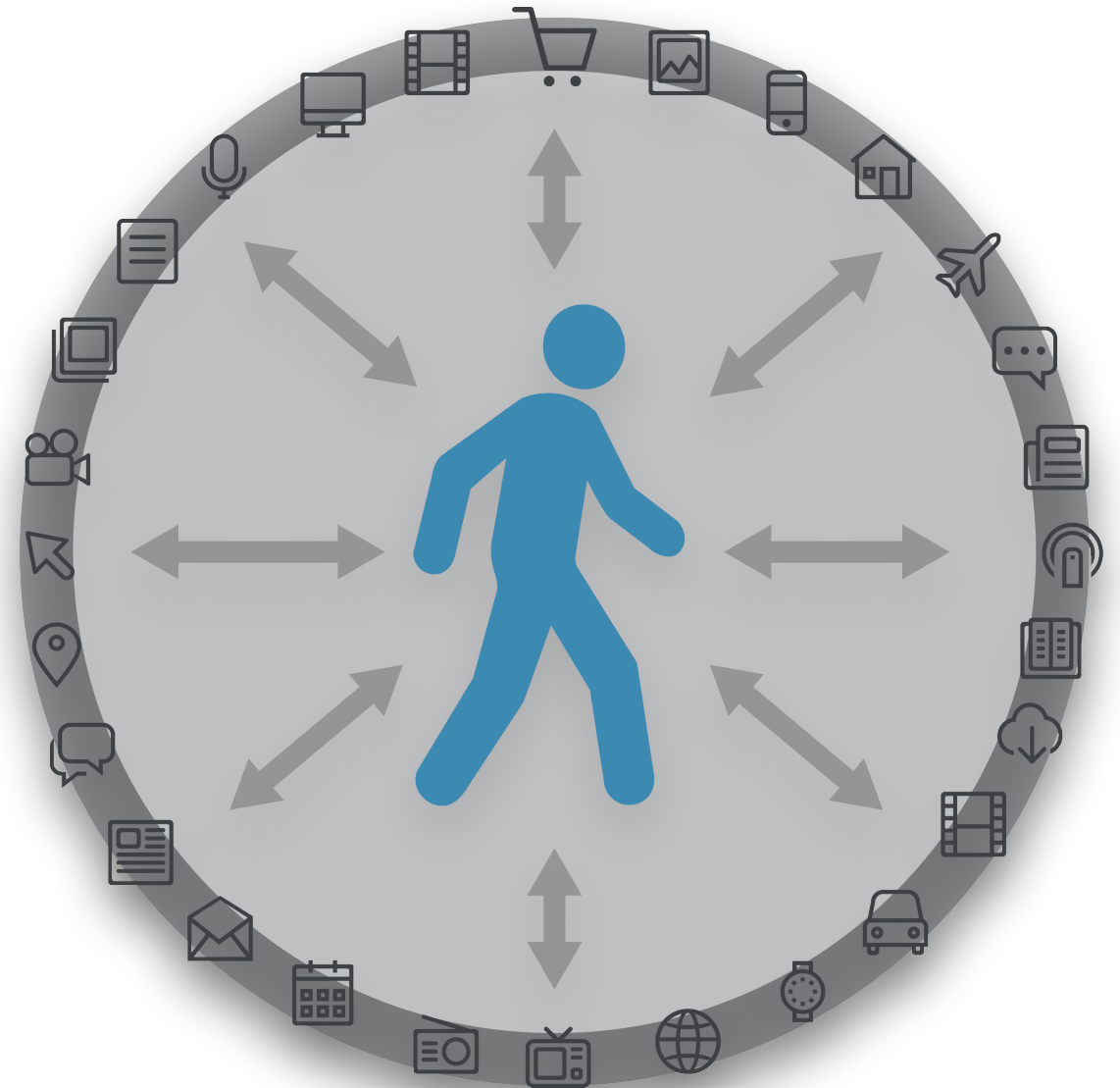


Now

Connected consumers have changed everything. They're a fast-moving target with:

- always-on technology
- multiple devices
- channel blur
- changed shopping behavior
- collapsed transaction times

It's a user-driven experience with storytelling and conversations, which can connect today's brands with tomorrow's consumers



Content strategy

Enables people-centric content for **meaningful** and **engaging** stories and experiences

Stories are remembered up to **22x** more than facts alone

- Stanford University Research

What's more meaningful than a conversation?

So, let's start one.

- Content is about creating conversations
- It's not brand-driven. It's not user-driven. It's **engagement driven** and **people centric**.

People looking to engage with...

- Every tap
- Every scroll
- Every interaction



Good content...

It's an ongoing **conversation** that comes in many forms.



So, how do you create good content?

Like in any conversation you:

- Gain an understanding of the user
- Communicate appropriately
- Then, they respond
- And you respond appropriately



Good content engages
people and resonates
with them

Bad Content is easily
forgotten (or worse,
is off-putting)

Conversion rates are nearly **6x higher** for
content marketing adopters than non-adopters

– Aberdeen Group

Enter Content & Experience Strategy

Cliche alert!

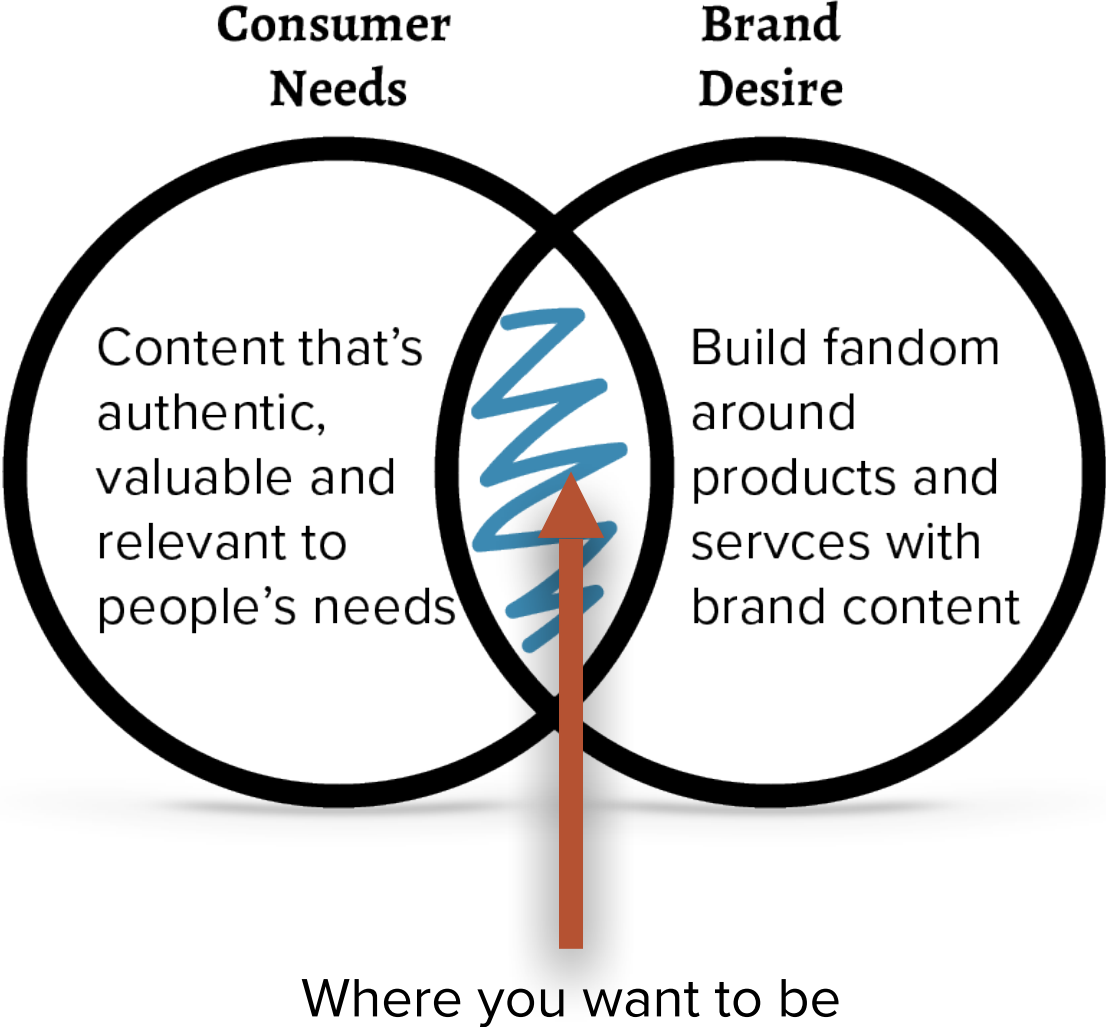
Content strategy focuses on getting...

- the right **content**
- to the right **people**
- in the right **place**
- at the right **time**
- in the right **context**

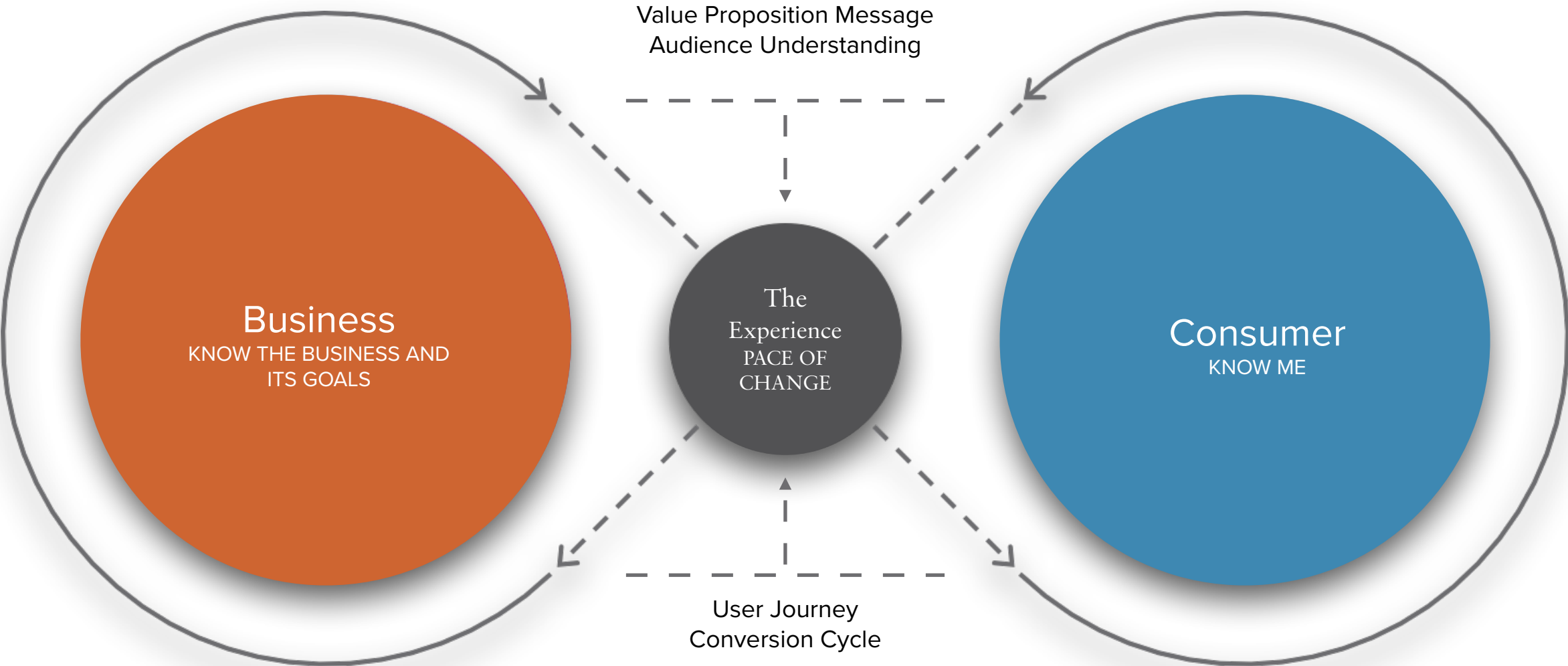
This is often said, but that doesn't make it any less true.

How does content drive meaningful conversations?

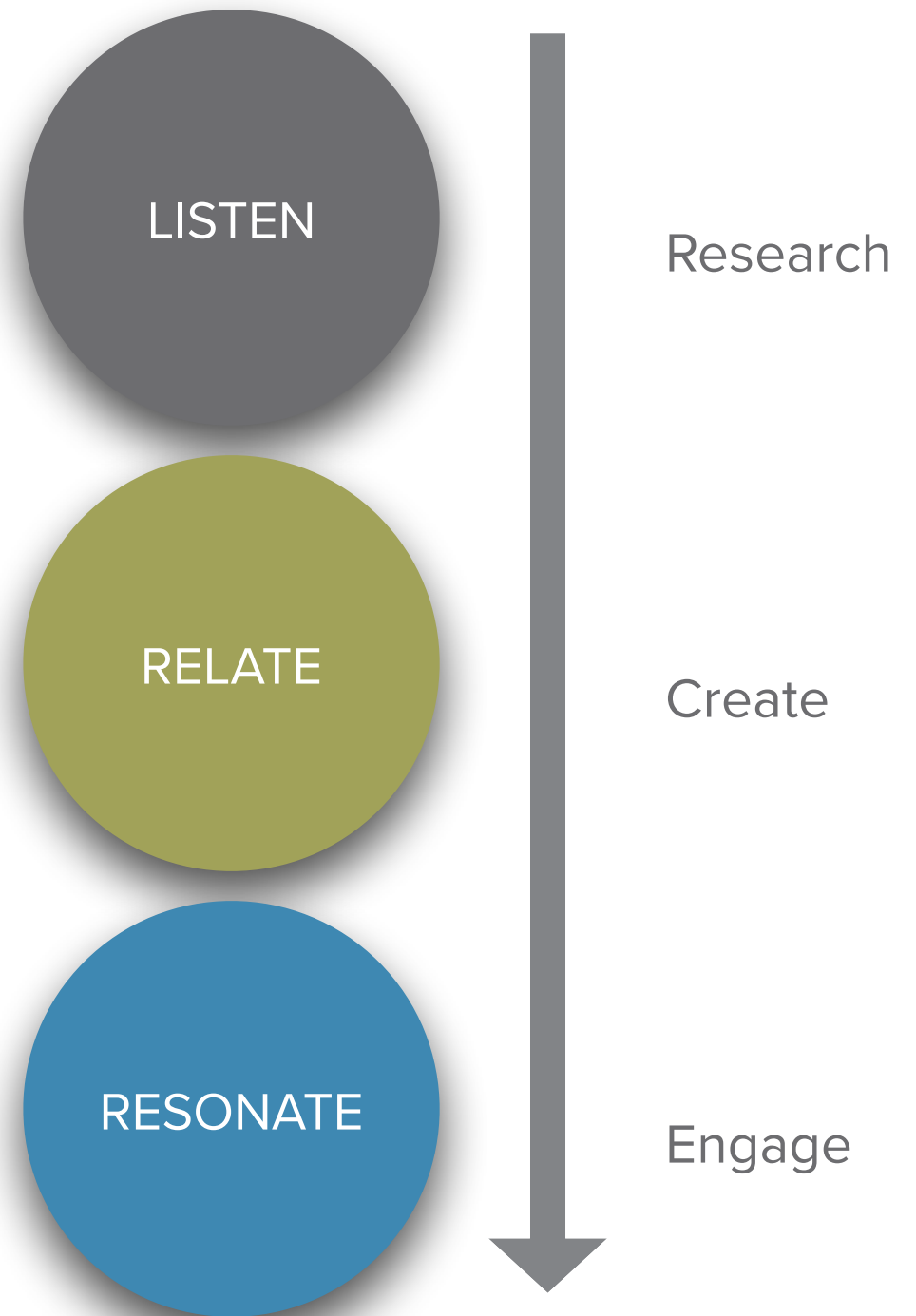
When brand goals meet user interests, a meaningful conversation then ensues...



We keep all sides of the conversation in mind



When we listen and understand, we can cater content to an experience so that it truly resonates.



To determine the right piece of content for the experience, we need to understand the **users'** interests and **brand** goals.

First, we ask

Who is the user?

Where are they coming from?

What are they seeking?

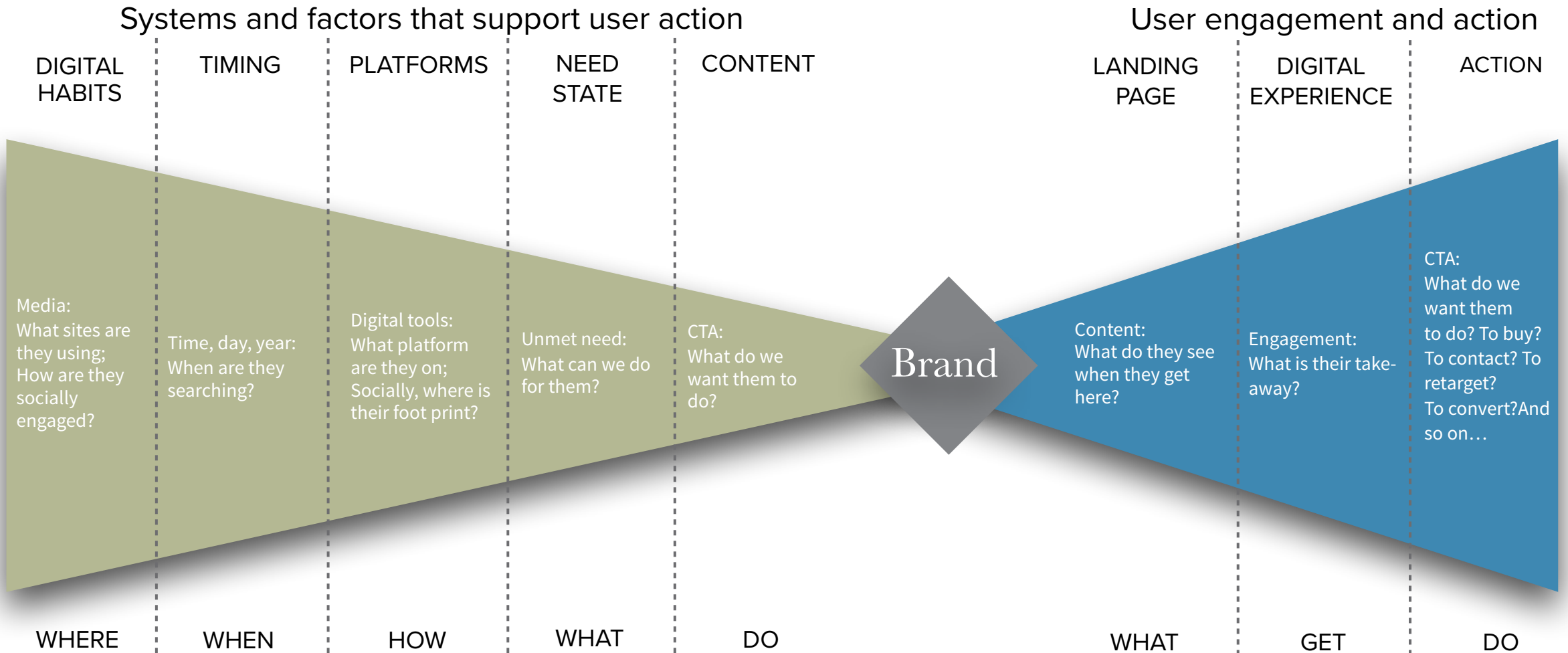
Then, we need to **listen**.

What are they **feeling** at this stage of their journey?

What do they **want** to accomplish?

And now, what do we want them to **do**?

We ask questions at every stage



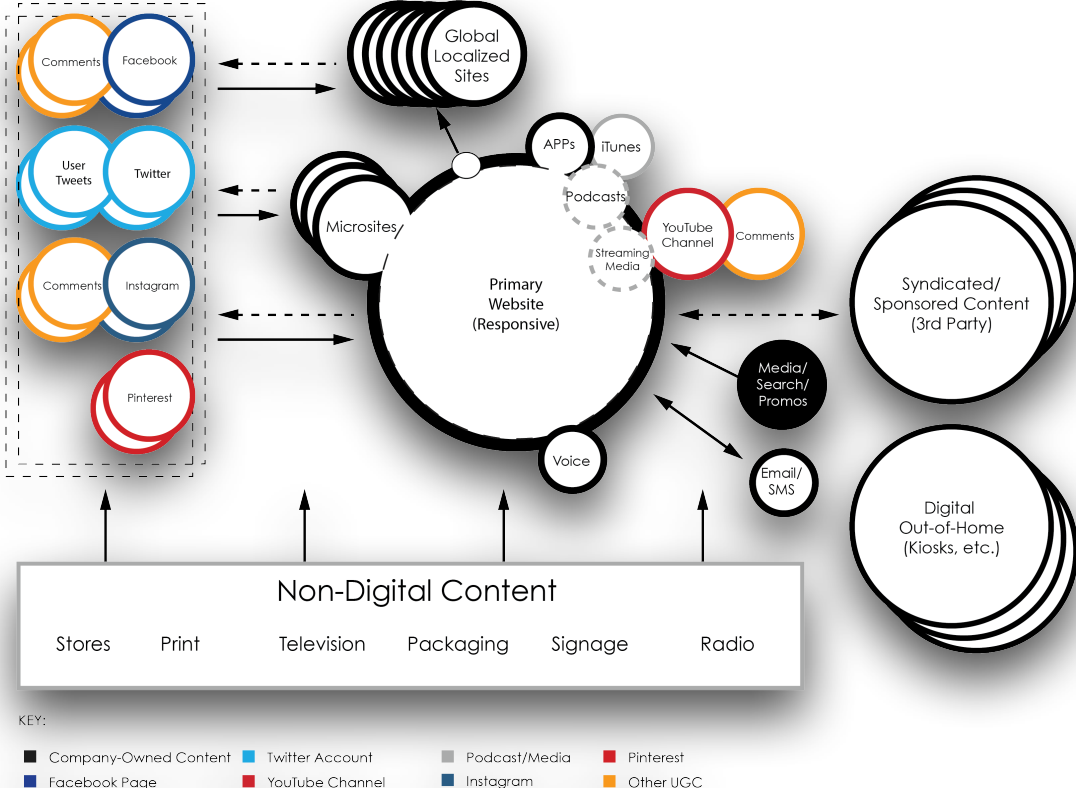
Because the user is ready to engage...

At any point in their journey...

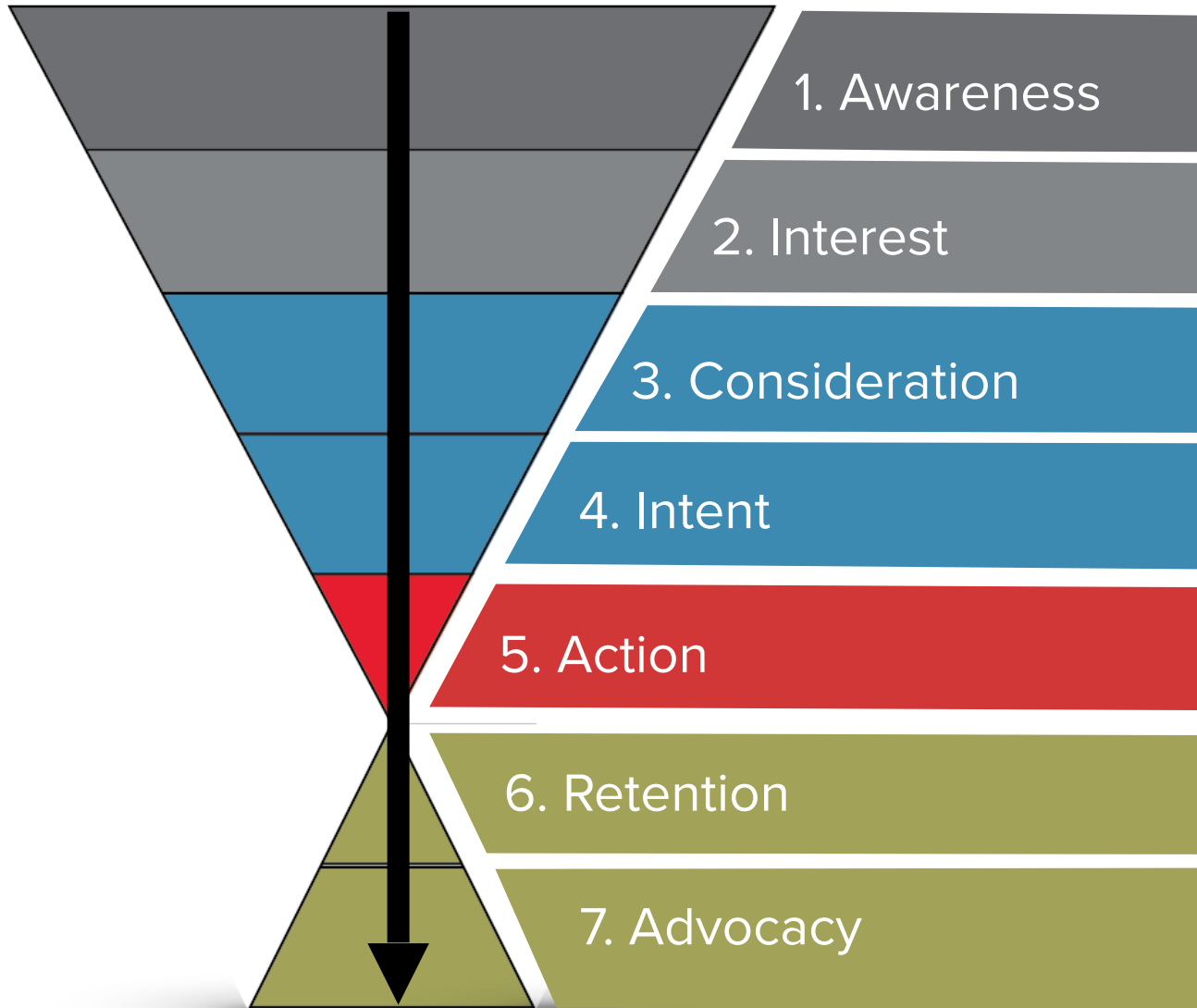
We think of ecosystems,
not destinations

It's important to not only recognize where your audience is within the content ecosystem and at what point of their journey.

Then, guide them through it.



Wherever consumers are in their journey



Generate awareness

Ads, fresh content, a compelling experience, and content marketing efforts

Nurture leads

Email, social content, newsletters, etc.

Provide information

Case studies and testimonials

Focus on key differentiating factors

Demonstrations and ratings or reviews

Enable conversion

Provide clear and actionable calls to action

Follow up

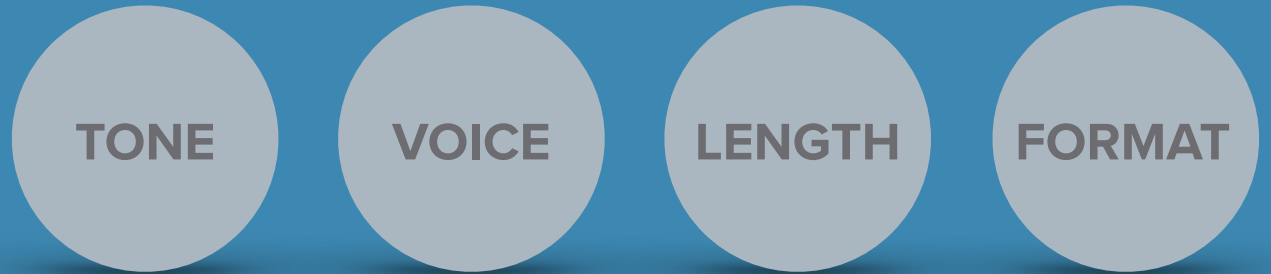
Enabling seamless customer service, follow-up, cross-sell, up-sell, and support

Enable sharing

Social sharing and ongoing conversation

A user will have different needs at different points in their journey

And their emotional state may change at those points.



All of these should all be top considerations to maintain engagement. And push users toward their goals.

We continue the conversation through different outlets

LOCALIZED CONTENT

SOCIAL CONTENT

CURATED CONTENT

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

FILES

CONTENT MARKETING

SYNDICATED CONTENT

PERSONALIZED CONTENT

CREATED CONTENT

VISUAL ASSETS

AUDIO ASSETS

...so the conversation becomes an experience.

Putting It to Work

Bad things can happen without content strategy

- Insufficient and poor quality content
- Poor user satisfaction or attrition
- Broken or misunderstood brand promises and inconsistent brand experiences
- Content that doesn't meet user needs
- Frustrating internal content production processes
- Legal risks through circumvented processes
- Inefficient use of expensive and powerful technology
- No understanding of content's scope, reach or depth
- Lack of clarity around content's location
- Off-brand, outdated, inconsistent, and redundant content
- Poor or unrealized SEO value
- Broken or no personalization
- Missing cross-sell and up-sell opportunities or related content
- Lack of content ownership or responsibility
- Ineffective content localization
- Lack of governance to control quality and set focus
- Inability to understand or respond to user needs

Content strategy can help address these challenges

Coping with the fast-changing and increasingly fragmented content landscape

Creating content that personally resonates with a target audience

Consistently creating high-quality and optimized content

Developing relevant content partnerships

Overcoming “content chaos” inside an organization

Proving the business value of content

So we look at the big picture

The Experience

Always consumer-centric. This is the journey that defines the content experience for the end-user. Design a targeted content solution to support an enterprise content and experience strategy. Then, create compelling content to move users through the funnel. It's the conversation.

Content Delivery

Connected Digital & Print Platforms

Determines the model necessary to acquire, create, maintain, and optimize content and assets—wherever they are delivered. **Drives toward branded engagement.**

Content Governance

Ecosystem Evolution

Designs the operational processes and mechanisms that are required to ensure the continued success of content and assets. **Maintains and evolves the ecosystem.**

Data, Brand & User Knowledge

The foundation of everything. We leverage brand knowledge and user insights to inform what our goals are and how we will reach them.

And think about the details in it

Content marketing strategy & execution

Content design and gap analysis

Robust governance models and workflows

Editorial calendars

UX Writing

Site map review and experience assessment

Standards compliance and communication

Content modeling

Content accessibility

Taxonomy design
Metadata specification
Tagging strategy

Omni-channel content strategy



SEO/SEM research

Social, syndicated, and user generated content

Analytics evaluation

Content creation guidelines and author training

Messaging strategies

Brand and editorial guidelines

Content design

Performance-driven content framework

Enterprise content strategy

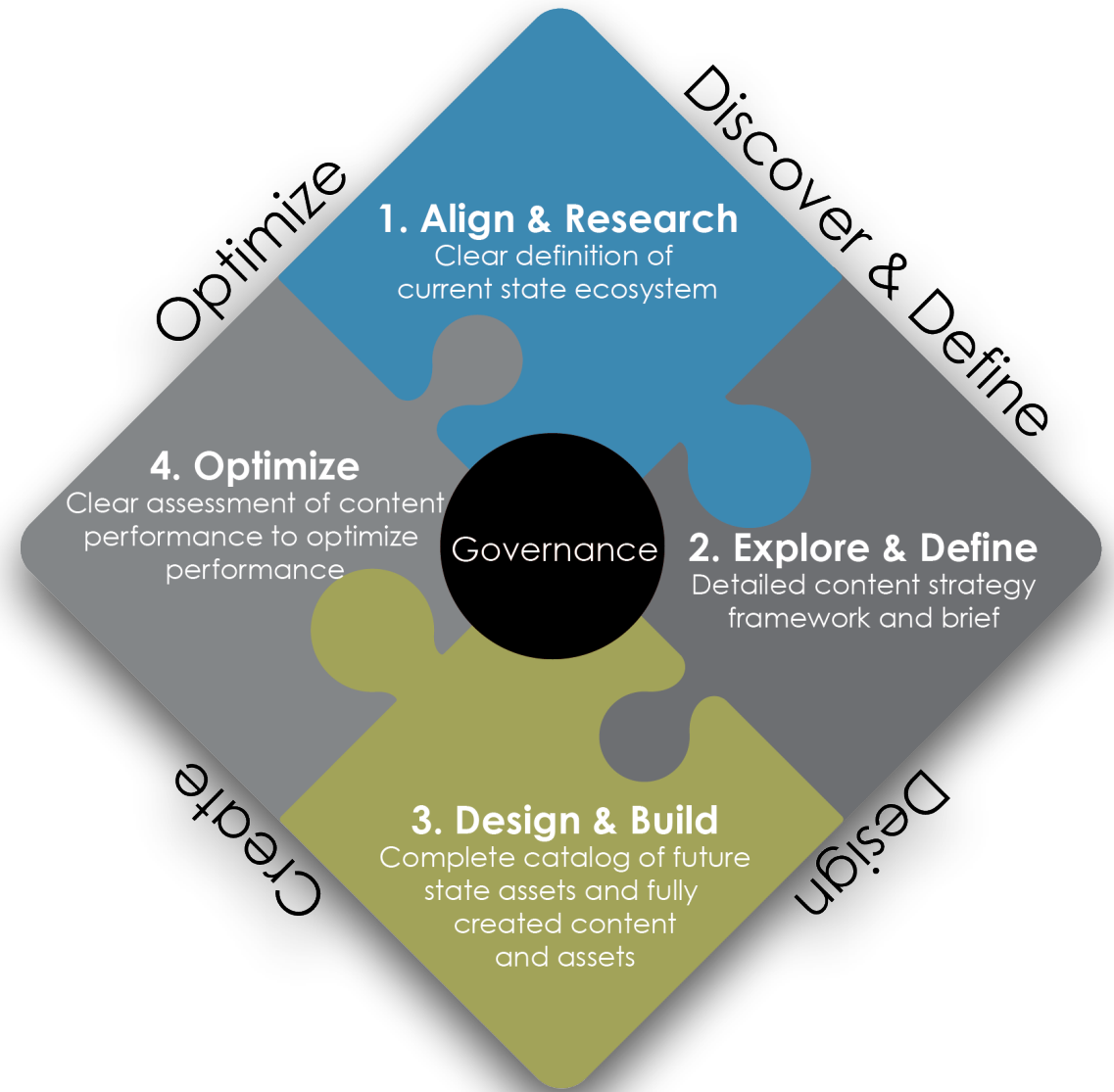
Personalization

Content inventories and audits

User-focused, branded copy

How it fits together

- Consider content ecosystem holistically
- Use data as a guide
- Continually think about context
- Be stewards of the brand while serving the audience
- Be timely & relevant
- Always measure & optimize
- Always evolve & build scale



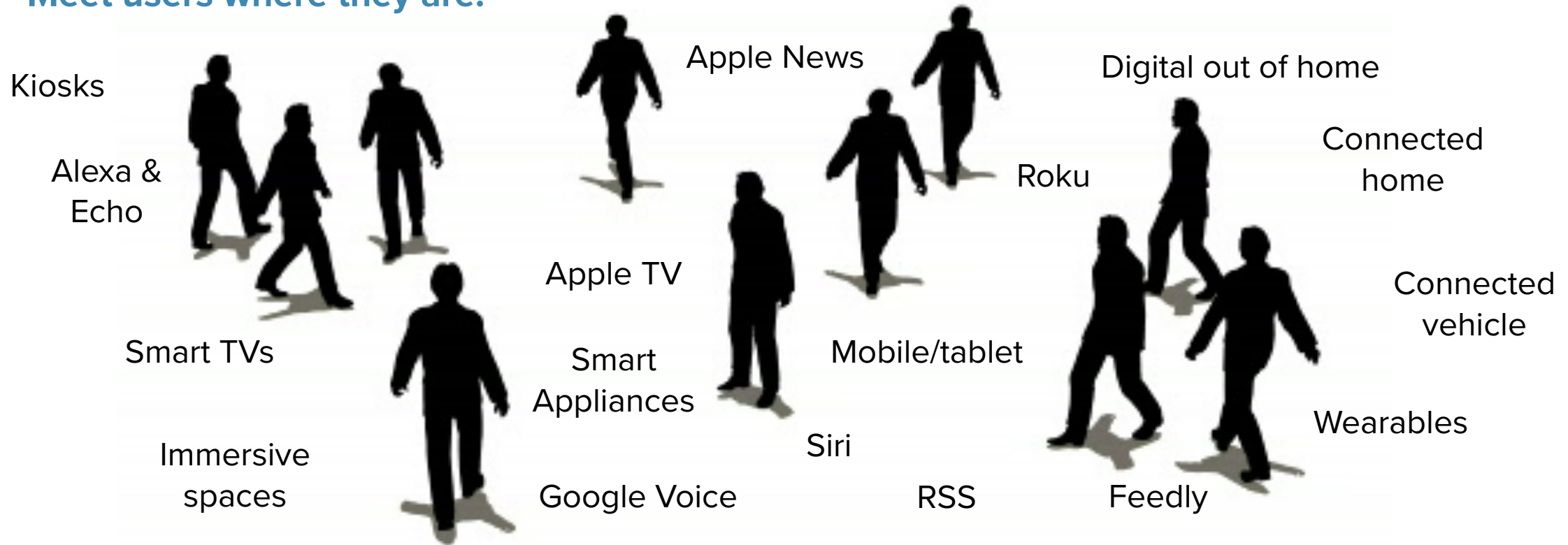
Using this process, we can help

- ✓ Any project that will require the creation of new content or any modification/migration of existing content
- ✓ Any project that will make content design decisions for a future-state experience
- ✓ Content marketing and social content strategies and execution
- ✓ Designing new digital experiences that include content, including omni-channel experiences
- ✓ Metadata & tagging strategies for content and assets, including taxonomies
- ✓ CMS re-platforms / CMS implementations / DAM implementations
- ✓ Analytics implementation
- ✓ SEO and Keyword Strategy
- ✓ Bought, owned, earned content strategy

5 / Where We Are Going

What the content landscape entails now, or what we think about

Meet users where they are:



Tailoring information to their needs:

Customization | Personalization | Globalization & Translation | Localization | In-Vehicle Experiences
In-Home Experiences | Chat Bots | Voice & Other Interfaces | Accessibility | Physical Spaces
Wearables (Watch / Glasses) | Smart Appliances | Generative AI

Embodying a larger content strategy with content marketing efforts

Content marketing is a tool in the larger content strategy toolbox, not a separate activity altogether—it's a tactic that requires an overarching content strategy to support it.

Effective content marketing requires:



**CONTENT
DIRECTION**



SEO



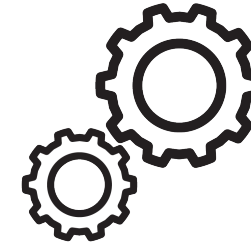
ANALYTICS



**SOCIAL
ACTIVATION**



**COPYWRITING &
UX WRITING**



**METADATA &
TAXONOMY**



**DIGITAL
ASSETS**

Generative AI can help streamline some, but not all, of these activities

Planning for an entire ecosystem, not a single destination

Recurring content updates



Brand Content

Partner / Third-Party Content

Influencer Content

User-Generated Content

Owned Content



.com



Apps



PR



Retail



Email/CRM

Owned / Earned Content



Social

Bought Content



Media



SEM

Bought → Owned → Earned

Content marketing allows us to create tailored user journeys through tagged content. The more **content** we have, the more **confidence** they gain.


in the brand

 relevant,
educational,
inspirational,
etc.

And they're more likely to engage. It's a mutually beneficial relationship.

Generative AI has altered the old equation

2023 has become the year of generative AI, from Dall-E to ChatGPT and more. It offers great opportunities to enhance content strategy thinking in many ways.

- Moving quickly from data overload to insight for content audits
- Initially grouping site pages into a hierarchy based on user actions for site mapping
- Researching additional content marketing topic areas to explore and providing research for a particular topic and generating outlines for a particular article
- Discovering online search intent and automating keyword research for SEO
- Crafting SEO meta descriptions and titles
- Auditing content performance
- Initially grouping taxonomy categories and tags
- Providing draft personalized content recommendations, product recommendations, etc.

But certain things still must be considered

Ethical and legal considerations

- How do you determine provenance and ownership of A.I.-enhanced work?
- How do you ensure copyright is not compromised?
- To what extent can you be certain of the accuracy and precision of AI generated copy?
- What biases and gaps in the datasets do you need to worry about?
- How might reality versus artificial enhancement of artifacts affect media, politics, and product or medical claims?

Establishing strong governance around AI enhancements is a must. It cannot be a substitute for establishing connections or ensuring that everything embodies your brand values

Where AI is not ready

- Creating a voice and tone that matches a brand's personality or values
- Generating blog posts and digital content exclusively without human oversight
- Infusing content with a particular brand voice
- Determining governance structures or models
- Creating content models for the management and delivery of content



6 / About Rubicon CX

Leadership – seasoned experience you can rely on



**Executive Director,
Content & Experience**

Timothy Truxell is the principal of Rubicon CX, a full service content and experience strategy consultancy. He was previously a Senior Group Content Strategy Director and national content practice lead for Rightpoint, based in Atlanta.

Tim has also worked as a content strategist for over 20 years, including twelve and a half years at Sapient, where he helped build its content strategy practice. He focuses on determining how content will best contribute to the overall user and brand experience for both customers and business users.

He is equally comfortable on both sides of the content and experience “line”: the traditional "creative" brand and copy side and the technical, system side of content design.

Selected clients



And tech slide too...

Key technological enablers & tools



All the usual as well as other dinosaurs that still roam the earth...

Thank you,

Never end with a full stop

