

### CONTENT MARKETING



**REPORT FOR 2019** 

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#### INTRODUCTION

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## We input 50 key content marketing terms into Google Trends and assessed the perceived rise and fall of users' search behavior around those terms. Why?

We wanted to shed light on which content marketing tactics, practices and methodologies are increasing in interest or usage, which are falling by the wayside, which are going as strong today as they did five years ago and which seem to fall in and out of favor for various reasons. The data is unique to U.S. searchers over the past five years across all business categories, but it is not raw search data or monthly search volume.

Google Trends measures "relative popularity" of a query by dividing total U.S. searches by a specific time range and then scores these figures on a 1-100 scale. This method removes outliers such as single users querying the same term over and over.

We then pinpointed 20 of those terms based on Google Trends findings, categorizing them as:



5 that rose.



5 that fell.



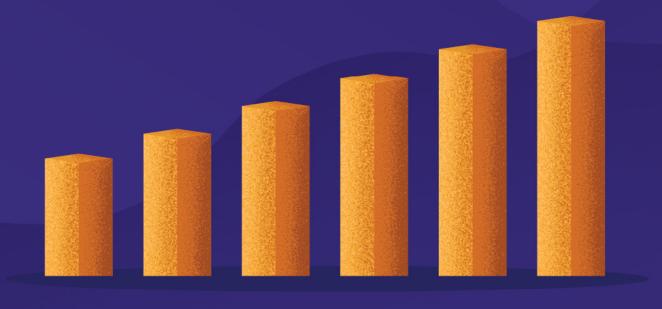
5 that held steady.



5 that fluctuated wildly.

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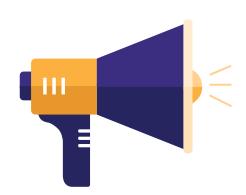
5 THAT ROSE

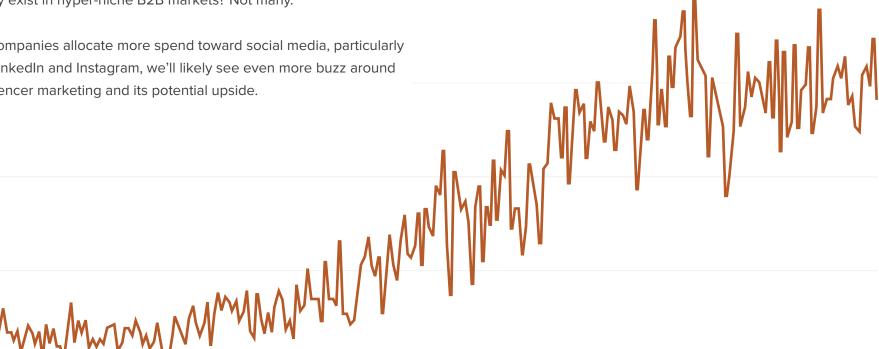


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Influencer marketing has exploded in popularity due to the allure of relevant industry influencers championing your brand for you. While interest in this strategy has risen, effective execution, especially for B2B brands, is lacking. Part of that may be to the nature of the strategy itself — how many influencers really exist in hyper-niche B2B markets? Not many.

As companies allocate more spend toward social media, particularly on LinkedIn and Instagram, we'll likely see even more buzz around influencer marketing and its potential upside.







### **ACCOUNT BASED MARKETING**

Account based marketing (ABM) has risen from relative obscurity in 2013 and didn't even become a notable blip on the map until late 2015.

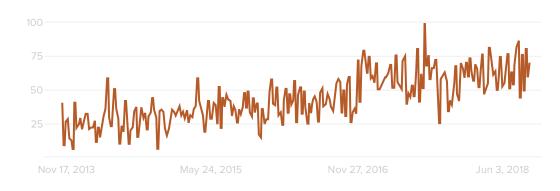
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For B2B companies with expensive services but few leads, ABM entirely makes sense. Marketing directly to a select subset of high-value leads saves money operationally and, in general, produces higher ROI — 97% of ABM practitioners report as

much — so expect to see more of it. This is evidenced by the **60% of B2B marketers** who are in the process of moving toward an ABM model.



#### MARKETING FUNNEL



The idea of a marketing funnel is not unique, but it appears companies are putting more emphasis on learning more about it and potentially implementing one into their inbound strategies. This could be a case of being late to the game, as marketing without a funnel is quite aimless, at least in terms of having a common understanding of tactics across the company.



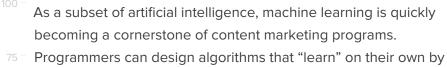
#### **MARKETING PODCAST**

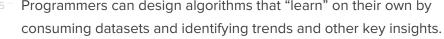
Regular podcast listeners **upped their listening time 40%** in 2018, and the fact that podcasts
appeal to auditory consumers puts them on the fast
track toward dominating an even larger share of
the total market for content. People listen at work,
at home, in their car, at the gym and everywhere in
between, which can't be said for written, visual or
graphical assets.

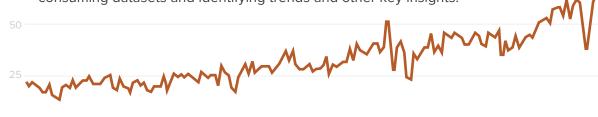


Podcast marketing is still rather nascent but should rise considerably in the months and years ahead.

#### **MACHINE LEARNING**







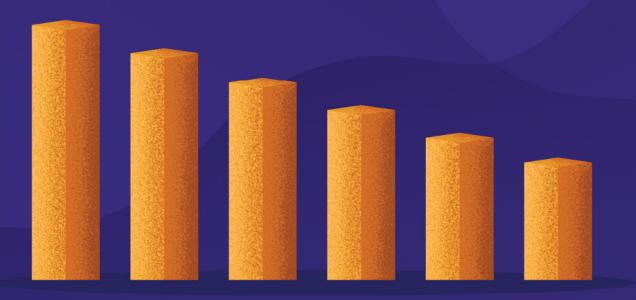
This process makes content more **targeted**,

personalized and efficient, as the manual tasks of
data sorting are handled by algorithms. Search interest
around this term will almost certainly climb higher.

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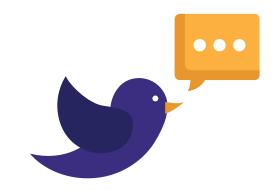
5 THAT FELL



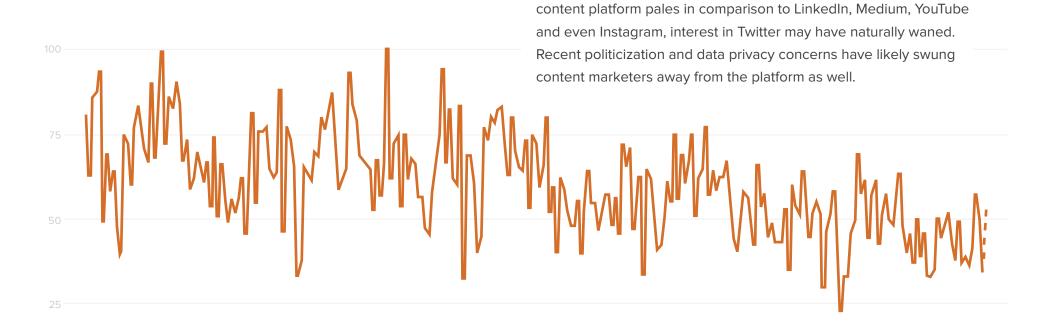


#### TWITTER MARKETING

A slow but not insignificant decline in "Twitter marketing" may be due to an influx of B2B brands finally entering the content marketing game in the last five years, predominantly placing their bets on LinkedIn.



Because Twitter is primarily a **B2C tool**, and its effectiveness as a



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#### **GOOGLE ANALYTICS**

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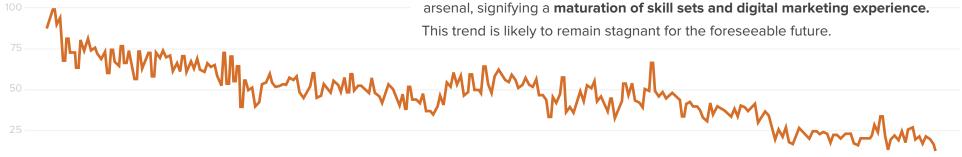
Google Analytics is likely so **deeply embedded into marketing operations** that search interest
in the term has fallen over time, tracking with the
maturity of the content marketing industry at large.
Whereas five years ago, SMB marketers may have
been new to GA, today, it's common practice to the
extent that additional querying isn't as necessary.



#### **KEYWORD TOOL**

Popularity of "keyword tool" may tell the same story as Google Analytics.

Searchers in this day and age already have their go-to keyword tools in their arsenal, signifying a **maturation of skill sets and digital marketing experience.**This trend is likely to remain stagnant for the foreseeable future.



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#### **INFOGRAPHICS**

This one is a bit surprising, as we've personally seen a surge of interest in — and sales of — graphics content. What this trendline



could be declaring is a relative drop in "infographics" queries that might be offset by an uptick in other types of formatted content. And with a flood of free infographics design templates on the web, users may be resorting to free infographics options rather than continuing to search for vendors to do the work for them.

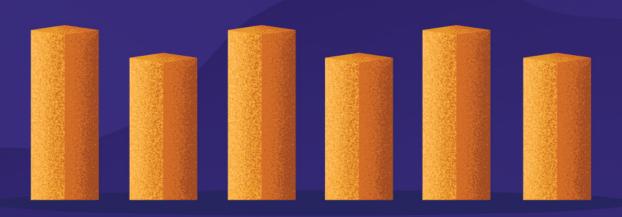
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#### **VOICE SEARCH**

Marketing experts have dubbed each of the past three years "The Year of Voice Search," but Google Trends indicates otherwise. Voice search hasn't matured into a practical content channel just yet. Consumers use their voice assistants but not nearly at the scale that would necessitate dramatic shifts in marketing budgets. Voice search's heyday may come soon, just not now.







5 THAT HELD STEADY



#### **EMAIL MARKETING**

Email as a communication channel is as **important as ever.** What marketers tend to have a tough time with is utilizing email as effectively as possible in a way that doesn't feel spammy or that will at least produce measurable return. With the advent and ubiquity of marketing automation platforms, sophisticated email marketing at scale is incredibly easy, including newsletters and various forms of lead-nurture, drip and custom campaigns. That's why it will likely remain solid as





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#### **LINK BUILDING**

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At this point in the history of content marketing, we're finally past the days of explaining white-hat vs. black-hat SEO and why buying links is rife with penalty. Link building in an organic way — email outreach, guest posting, proprietary data publication and promotion, etc. — has come into its own, as evidenced by the proliferation of link building

and brand monitoring tools like **SEMrush**, **Raven Tools**, **Google Alerts and Ahrefs**.

Links continue to be a top-3 ranking factor, so it's no surprise link building will continue to show steady search interest.



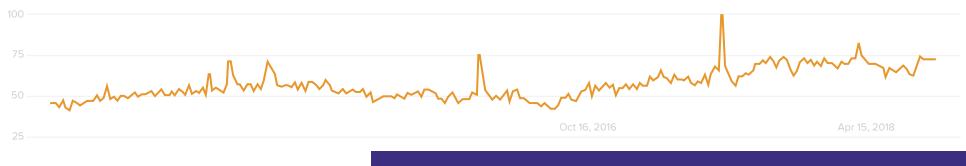
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#### WEBINARS

Webinars are a distinctive combination of visual marketing and expert audio commentary. Plus they facilitate lead capturing and social shares. While they run the gamut of subject matter and presentation style, webinars are **customizable to the**needs of organizations and aren't soon to go out of style.





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#### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence, one would think, is likely to remain a mainstay of search interest because it's still a rather new concept to most brands. Much of the early search behavior around AI may have been geared more toward other applications in science and manufacturing as opposed to marketing; however, marketers are experimenting with AI at scale, and will continue to.

#### REMARKETING

Remarketing empowers brands to stay in consistent contact with users after an initial touchpoint, traditionally via email. By segmenting email lists by persona and running educational or lead-nurture campaigns targeting those personas, you can market and remarket content continually.



Remarketing campaigns are becoming more refined, on the whole, but there are still **hurdles toward mass adoption**, including brands' dearth of email expertise and poor data-analysis methods. Popularity should remain stable and, likely, tick upward in the years ahead.



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5 THAT FLUCTUATED WILDLY

#### **BUYER JOURNEY**





Marketers are certainly becoming more sophisticated at delivering content at each stage of the funnel (to serve targeted buyers), but the explosion of **e-commerce growth** may be leading to rapid spikes. Brands like Amazon and Wayfair have virtually perfected journey-specific marketing.



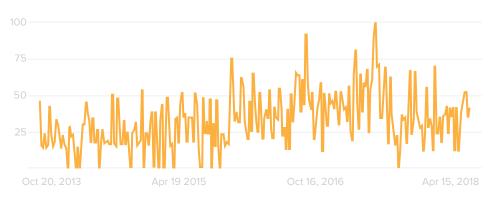
#### **CUSTOMER LIFECYCLE**

The lifecycle of a customer hints at past, present and future behaviors as measured by a customer relationship management (CRM) platform. Indicators like retention, loyalty and conversions are gleaned through understanding customer lifecycles, but why so much variability in the term's relative popularity?

This could be due to companies being dissatisfied with their **CRM** platforms and opting for new vendors, thus leading to quick rises in search interest, then rapid falls once one is secured. Conversely, as new CRM tools, plugins and integrations hit the market, additional interest may be generated.



#### **CONTENT MARKETING AGENCY**



At this point in content marketing's history, most brands have had direct exposure to one or more agencies. Unstable movement in "content marketing agency" popularity, in a way, makes sense. The pace of change — of assets, of algorithms, of platforms, etc. — necessitates quick pivots of investments and, perhaps, vendors. It's not uncommon for a brand to contract with five agencies at once and then scale down to just one in a matter of years. Expect similar variation in the future.



#### VISUAL MARKETING

The future of content marketing is **visual and auditory.** The issue, potentially, is that video and graphical assets are more expensive and resource-intensive than more pedestrian content types. And if deployed and distributed incorrectly, they could be perceived as wastes of investment.

On the other hand, consumer-attention and social-media usage trends all point toward the preference of visuals online. As brands better understand how to leverage videos and graphics, expect the above trendlines to tick up and even stabilize.



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#### VIRAL MARKETING

It seems like so long ago that everyone was chasing virality. Platforms like Vine, Facebook and YouTube provided enticing incentives for brands to swing for the fences with their content and advertising ideas. Mass shares, comments and free media was the end goal, but consumers soon grew tired of intentionally gimmicky and contrived "viral" videos. Viral marketing will likely remain an **old** hack with diminishing popularity.





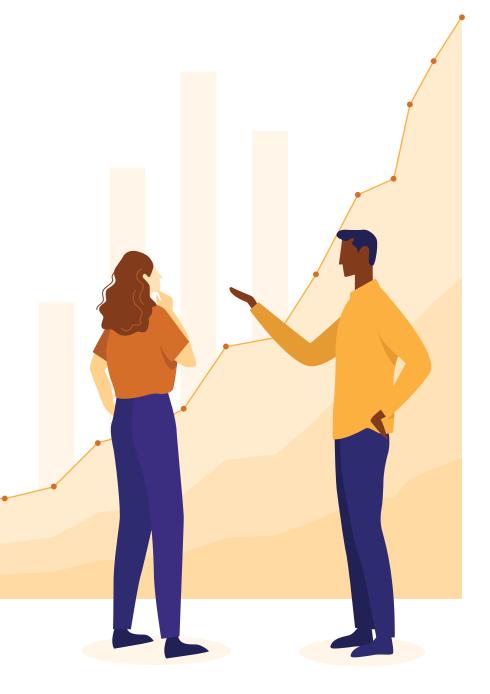
#### CONCLUSION

#### So what does all this data mean?

That depends on your interpretation of the above trends. But as we've seen, these trends do have common reasonings behind them, including the maturation of technology, the integration of core content-adjacent automation platforms and shifts in media appetites.

And we're here to practice what we preach — and what the data dictates — which is why we've ramped up our own ABM, influencer marketing and podcasting efforts while experimenting further with webinars, marketing funnels and remarketing campaigns.

We'll see you again in five years.



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