

## OK, SO WHAT EXACTLY IS CONTENT MODELING?

Essentially, content modeling is a philosophy that lets your content guide your digital strategy.

A little background may be helpful: For the past ten years or so, marketers have championed this ‘content as king’ concept to improve customer experience. Brands transformed into publishers and began producing significant amounts of content – from blog posts and articles to infographics and videos. While this changed how marketing was done, nobody was thinking ahead to exactly how this content would be employed beyond a single use or a single channel.

A great example is a case study. Brands would produce rich case studies for their website and then copy or re-create that exact same content in their brochures, sales material, their intranets...the list goes on.

This lack of bigger-picture planning has created two big problems: firstly, the process is fraught with inefficiency - a lot of duplicate effort gets put into distributing content across multiple channels.



BlueModus CTO & co-founder Dave Conder answers frequently asked

questions about content modeling, as it relates to your company's digital strategy.

## WHY IS THIS IDEA IMPORTANT? WHY NOW?

Customer experience no longer starts at the store or on a sales call. Customers demand research-focused experiences, and that demand starts with a multitude of channels. As a result, managing content – efficiently and with an ROI-centric mindset – has become a central business focus.

Think about the number of ways customers ingest content...it's not just websites on their desktop or phone anymore. People are demanding content in their cars, from their smartwatches and from personal home assistants. Even in the B2B space, users engage with your content via dozens of offline and online methods.

Organizations that develop a streamlined plan to manage and distribute that content – a single source to multiple channels – inherently find efficiencies but also build consistent and more memorable experiences for their end-users.

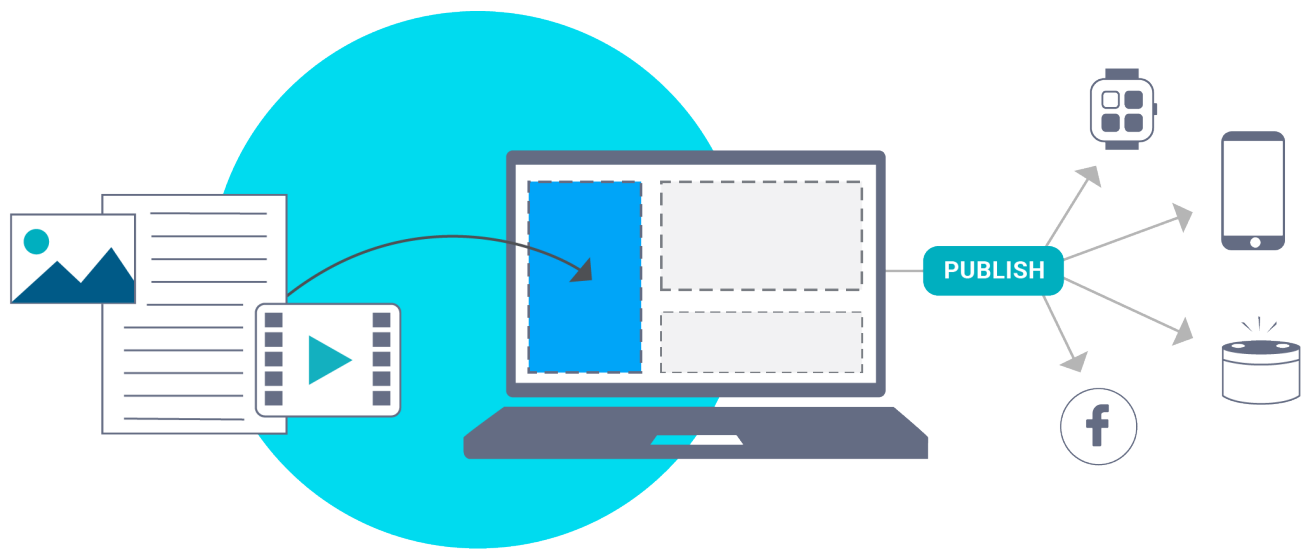


Additionally, this great content is often not utilized to its full potential...particularly if there's no plan to re-distribute it beyond its original use.

Employing the philosophy of content modeling solves both these issues, plus it greatly increases the *value*, or ROI, of the content creation process.

## HOW DOES CONTENT MODELING WORK?

Well first, content modeling requires you to re-think how you are using your content management system. Your CMS is no longer just a “website builder.” It becomes a tool to manage your content everywhere. Think of it like an API trigger that will deliver content – in the right format and context - to all your channels. This requires a thoughtful structure - where you think about the various ways your content is used and develop a model to support that.



Let's continue with the case study example. Let's say you start with a case study on your website – complete with a video from the customer, a few quotes and some content that talks through the before and after statistics.

One small step might be to display those customer quotes throughout other sections of your site – based on related taxonomy.

A bigger step might be to feed that content through to your sales brochures and collateral.

Or, take an even bigger leap – for example, the creation of an FAQ related to the results of the case study could help generate answers for a ‘What could you do for me?’ chatbot.

And thus begins a content model. Where you take a single piece of content – ‘Case Study’ – and incorporate all the potential elements used across all channels. You identify the categorization and taxonomy; You set up any relevant metadata and schema.org components; You incorporate content for

multiple uses from short-form to long-form; And you house the core data in a single, easily managed model. This one piece of content has now become a powerhouse to support your website, your email marketing, your brochures, your sales presentations, your service chatbots, and more.

When you go beyond a case study and apply this model to your products, services, and employees – the reusability of content across multiple channels becomes even more significant.

## WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF EMPLOYING CONTENT MODELING?

It's definitely challenging to configure a content model for the first time. It requires a lot of thought and preparation – though ideally, well-structured models can grow and change with your business over time. Many organizations try to jump in full force and can get stuck over-analyzing and thinking. A flexible model should be able to change with you – as long as the fundamentals are in place.

Ultimately, it takes a mind shift on how you approach your content management. If our customers are inputting the same content more than once, it means the model is off. Content editors should never have to upload assets more than once; they should never have to copy and paste content from one place to another; they should never have to tell a story in multiple systems. The whole idea can be summed up with the idea of DRY vs WET content: You should only ever create content that is DRY (**D**on't **R**epeat **Y**ourself) vs. WET (**W**rite **E**verything **T**wice or **W**e **E**njoy **T**yping).

There are some technical challenges as well – for example, if content is channel-agnostic, then things like advanced HTML markup structures may not work. We've learned that our front-end HTML builds need to be more abstracted, so they can be supported across channels. While this was initially an adjustment for our technical teams, we learned quickly that it pays off when content is re-used.

This discipline can be initially hard, but it provides significant value down the line.

## WHO SHOULD BE USING THIS MODEL?

Ideally, any organization can benefit from this type of approach.

For example, our current BlueModus CMS employs a content model focused on re-using and re-purposing, and we're a relatively small B2B organization. We have a single system that feeds our website, our proposal generation tools, our email marketing, and our collateral.

When I reflect on the efficiencies a small organization like ours has felt – imagine how beneficial it could be to larger organizations with massive amounts of content.



## WHERE IS ALL THIS HEADED? WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

People like to think they can predict the future of technology, but it's rare that we're accurate in those predictions. With a content-first model, you're already prepared for whatever the "next big thing" is, as you can just incorporate whatever new channels that come along into your existing architecture.

It's also wise to be forward-thinking as customers and search engines are increasingly becoming frustrated with content that is not 'smart'...If you haven't engineered your content to be found by anyone (...or 'any-bot'), it will get lost in the dust.



If you'd like to get started with content modeling or learn more about how it could benefit your organization, we'd be happy to help. [Contact our strategists](#) to get the conversation started.