
OWNED MEDIA

— CREATING A CONTENT ECOSYSTEM —



anthony **Barnum**
PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Founded in 2007 in Austin, Texas, anthonyBarnum is a national public relations and social media firm specializing in complex industries including technology, real estate, professional services firms and health care. Our approach is distinguished by the ability to create systematic campaigns with quantifiable and measurable results that impact companies' most critical marketing objectives through advanced strategies.



DEVELOPING A BODY OF WORK TO REINFORCE CONSISTENT CORE MESSAGES TO MULTIPLE AUDIENCES USING MIXED MEDIA IS ONE OF THE MOST TRUSTED AND POWERFUL WAYS TO BUILD THE UNDERLYING VALUE OF A BRAND.



anthonyBarnum has written at length about the power of thought leadership, and the unique set of communication skills required to build, message and market it. Thought leadership drives customer interest, builds industry stature, grows revenue, and gives brands strength and value. Where brands display and exemplify their thought leadership is in owned media.

Owned media is not exactly new. It traces its history at least back to 1900, when tire maker Michelin launched a travel guide for drivers. Owned media is simply the content brands create to tell their own story in the manner they choose. It includes everything from a brand's logo, website, videos, blog, mobile apps and sales collateral to bylined opinion pieces, email newsletters, speaking presentations, product packaging, and even business cards, invoices, coupons, storefront content and more. All media – in its broadest definition – created by a company is owned media. Content marketing is the process of using owned media to fulfill marketing objectives from increased brand awareness and engagement to lead generation, customer retention, cross-selling and initial sale generation.

Owned media is distinguished from earned media (mass media, word of mouth) and paid media (paid search, display ads, sponsorships), and it's a critical part of any company's brand strategy and ecosystem. Today, complex brands in particular – that are sophisticated and multifaceted, and require depth to describe – are concentrating on creating owned media and building robust content marketing strategies more than ever. Here are three reasons why:

- **Owned media is trusted.** Forty-three percent of respondents to a 2017 global survey on trust in the media indicated that they trust 'owned media' every bit as much as they do 'media as an institution.'¹
- **Owned media is still largely unexploited.** A separate study last year found that only 30 percent of B2B marketers felt their companies have an effective content marketing strategy for owned media.²
- **Owned media provides strong ROI.** In 2014, a major European agency performed a study³ that found owned media had 30 percent higher ROI than paid media, and in 2016, an Inc. expert recommended content marketing as the single most effective marketing strategy.⁴



Owned media offers total control, infinite longevity, tremendous reach, unmatched versatility and cost-effectiveness when executed correctly.

This ePaper details the value of owned media that anthonyBarnum works with clients to create, cites examples of brands doing it well, and offers tips on how companies can build and implement their unique owned media strategy.

Media Type	Definition	Examples	The Role	Benefits	Challenges
Owned Media	Channel a brand controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web site • Mobile site • Blog • Twitter account 	Build for longer-term relationships with existing potential customers and earn media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control • Cost efficiency • Longevity • Versatility • Niche audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No guarantees • Company communication not trusted • Takes time to scale
Paid Media	Brand pays to leverage a channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display ads • Paid search • Sponsorships 	Shift from foundation to a catalyst that feeds owned and creates owned media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In demand • Immediacy • Scale • Control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clutter • Declining response rates • Poor credibility
Earned Media	When the customers become the channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WOM • Buzz • "Viral" 	Listen and respond - earned media is often the result of well-executed and well-coordinated owned and paid media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most credible • Key role in most sales • Transparent and lives on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No control • Can be negative • Scale • Hard to measure

Owned media is distinct from paid media and earned media because it is content used by brands to directly connect with buyers (Source: Forrester Research).



PRIORITIZING AND PRODUCING OWNED MEDIA

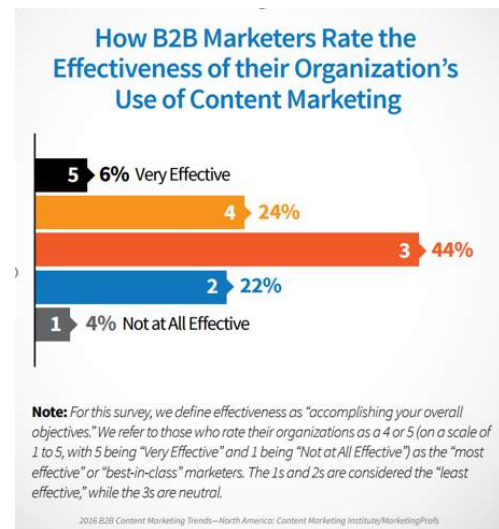
Complex companies – the sort offering advanced technology, high-end consulting, professional services and legal consultation – rely on owned media to document the depth of product and service offerings, and map out competitive differentiators in detail. It's a significant and perhaps surprisingly large portion of successful companies' marketing budgets.

The Content Marketing Institute in 2016 found that B2B marketers allocated 28 percent of their total marketing budget, on average, to content marketing – i.e., to creating owned media and distributing it to relevant audiences.⁵ Although the vast majority of B2B brands are creating owned media today – 88 percent of companies surveyed affirmed that they do have in place some form of content marketing strategies – only 30 percent of B2B marketers judged their current content marketing strategies to be effective.

Effectiveness levels were greatest among respondents with documentation, clarity around success, good communication and experience. Tellingly, the brands who say their owned media strategies are most effective allocate 42 percent of their budget to owned media creation and distribution, and the brands that characterize their owned media strategies as sophisticated and mature allocate 46 percent.⁶

Putting together a plan – and taking time to carefully document it – is key to ensuring an owned media strategy that's structured in ways that engage an audience and generate interest and interaction. A plan is also critical for determining what to track and measure, and ensuring content appears on time with proper tone and cadence.

anthonyBarnum regularly helps clients identify trends, define priorities, distill complex sector messaging, develop thought leadership platforms, and systematize marketing campaigns that integrate strategies for owned, earned and paid media.



Only 30 percent of today's B2B marketers believe they are effectively creating owned media and marketing it to relevant audiences. (Source: Content Marketing Institute).



ANTHONYBARNUM BEGINS ENGAGEMENT WITH MANY CLIENTS BY PROVIDING:

- A thorough look at the competitive landscape
- Analysis of how media are currently covering the sector
- Documentation of which vendors are getting the most attention and why
- A listing of which current brand messages attract the strongest interest
- A reiteration of current customer expectations and concerns



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Here are five tips for approaching a content strategy:

- **Build a strategy.** A brand's strategy is its long-term plan to achieve specific goals. It answers big picture questions and takes an upfront inventory of existing users, competitors, the media environment, brand differentiator, existing content assets, objectives of the marketing program, and how success will be measured. The strategy should outline the key, integrated objectives of marketing.
- **Analyze competitors.** This look at the market and competitive landscape provides the basis for a thorough Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis that identifies specific opportunities to leverage, capabilities to highlight, issues to counter and risks to build defenses against going forward. anthonyBarnum also works with clients, as necessary, to build an effective rebrand plan or visual identity update.
- **Develop messaging.** Messages resonate best and most broadly, not just because they're tactically well-executed as part of a product or service rollout, but because they're rooted in core brand values and attributes. These should be backed up with solid proof points and data. These findings provide the basis for messaging. anthonyBarnum works closely with clients to crisply articulate the most powerful descriptions of who they are, what their products or services are best defined as, and how their unique attributes offer customers compelling advantage. Messaging is the foundation for all the owned media a brand creates, and is at the core of public relations initiatives and thought leadership campaigns. It's important to take the time – and find available the powerful creative and writing craftsmanship resources – that help get it right.
- **Define tactics.** Once a brand has a firm delineation of its big picture (strategy) and puts in place how it plans to specifically define the power and competitive advantage of the brand (messaging), it's time to get down to the specifics of delivery. As part of the tactical phase, a brand focuses on two things: First, it defines the specifics of owned media creation, and second, it puts a plan in place for the content to be distributed and measured. The first piece is really an editorial plan, a document that describes the specific sort of owned media a brand plans to create, which may include elements, such as social media content, case studies, blogs, ePapers, in-person events, bylined articles for the website, videos, illustrations/photos, infographics, webinars and online presentations.

- **Build an Objectives Map.** Once both messaging and an editorial plan is in place, anthonyBarnum helps develop an Objectives Map that sets relevant metrics, defines available resources, and names a timeframe for goals to be completed and assessed. The Objectives Map is the agreed-upon plan in advance for public relations, social media and other high value content: It's used to track and monitor results, and measure the quality and quantity of owned media output.

Goals anthonyBarnum helps define in an Objectives Map vary, not only per the agency's different clients, but per clients' varying needs. The owned content a brand creates for a product rollout campaign, for instance, will have different goals and metrics than owned media designed to engage current customers and foster retention – which is still different from content created to connect with stakeholders in response to a crisis.

Planning, documenting and measuring are all critical to an effective owned media strategy. At its best, owned media provides brands with ways

to articulate their values and message in such compelling and intriguing ways that their audiences will share it. Owned media begets earned media, and it makes paid media work harder.

Owned media may require a bigger upfront investment than earned or paid media, but the payoff is huge. Ultimately, overall costs are likely to be lower for owned media than paid media, and eventually, owned media generates and feeds sales. To promote owned media, and measure the results, brands need an Objectives Map, anthonyBarnum's methodology for distilling integrated campaigns.

anthonyBarnum captures and analyzes client business goals, marketing objectives, content assets, audiences and media environments in a succinct Objectives Map dashboard that sets relevant metrics.

Sample Objectives Map					
PR Objective	Content Platforms	Tactics	Frequency	Media Categories	Distribution of Time
1 - Attract attention of competitor's customers, i.e. target audience					
Publicize assets that demonstrate how valuable and insightful data is to decision-making	Infographics	Distribute infographic with press release	2x per year	C-suite	50%
Create high-impact media opportunities	Use Cases	Pitch to tier 1 media	2x per year	Tier 1 business	
Outpace by 100% competitors national visibility	Publicize white papers on business/patent trends	Pitch exclusives and bylines to tier 1 media	2x per year	Large industry, national coverage	
				Tier 1 tech trade	
2 - Showcase our role as market disruptor through thought-leadership					
Position company as go-to experts on XYZ subject matter	Breaking news opps	One-to-one media pitching	Drives by news environment, flexible	Tier 1 business	25%
Create high-impact media opportunities for commentary	Product updates and showcases	Create press releases and product positioning	2x per year	Tier 1 tech trade, analysts	
Outpace by 100% competitors national visibility	Demonstration product / market innovations	Establish and connect to analysts	1 per quarter	Legal tech, large industry, internal counsel	
3 - Position ourselves as innovators in business					
Position company as a high-growth, high-disruptor technology innovator	Success stories about the company	Announce corporate benchmarks & success	2x per year	C-suite	10%
	Award submissions	Garner high-profile awards: innovation and growth	Submit to X awards	Innovation press, regional	
	Press releases total		Approx. 6 - 7		
4 - Reporting & Admin					
PR Objective	Content Platforms	Tactics	Frequency	Media Categories	Distribution of Time
Showcase PR activity impact		Report business activities	Monthly	NA	less than 3%



Some argue that social media isn't truly owned content – since LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and the rest are in effect landlords that brands rent from, and if it was truly owned, brands would have control over the entire experience, complete access to the audience and full use of data. That's a fair point. This paper, however, treats social media as owned content for two reasons. First, brands have tremendous control over the content they post to social media – thus it is largely owned, if not fully owned. Second, despite the controversy, most studies today do treat social media as owned media.

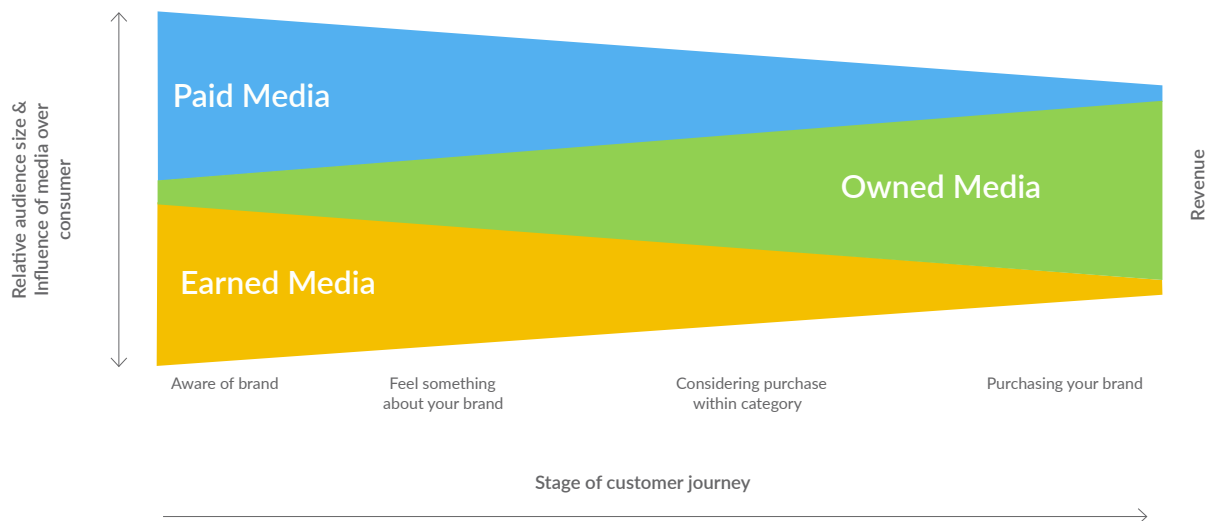
The editorial plan also defines critical components of owned content in various formats, such as tone of voice, format, cadence of delivery, visuals and opportunities for customer interaction. Critically, this document also indicates who will produce owned media, maintain it and be responsible for results.

anthonyBarnum best practices recommend producing a baseline of at least two blogs per month, one major content piece every other month, one or two alerts or newly relevant content to stakeholders each month – in addition to news, social media and thought leader public relations strategies. Thought leadership campaigns reach out, not only to prospective buyers, but to industry influencers and key media – figures who transform and amplify owned media messaging by recreating it as earned media.

	2012	2017	Change, 2012-2017	
Search engines*	61	64	+3	Traditional media down 5 points
Traditional media	62	57	-5	
Online-only media**	46	51	+5	Owned media now as trusted as media as an institution
Owned media	41	43	+2	
Social media	44	41	-3	
Media as an institution	46	43	-3	

Owned media isn't quite as trusted in 2017 as 'traditional media,' but it's every bit as trusted as 'media as an institution'
 (Source: 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer)

INVEST TO SHOWCASE CAPABILITIES AND BUILD THE BRAND



Paid and earned media are most effective and influential at the start of a customer journey, but as that journey progresses, the importance of the owned channels increases dramatically. (Source: Zenith Optimedia)

The truth about owned media is that it is expensive to create great content, but a key part of the payoff is that, once established, the value is enormous and it creates a scalable platform. Spending on owned media is best thought of as investing – creating a valuable asset with a more or less unlimited useful life.

The two main challenges to creating great owned content are finding the right people who can craft the messages that really embody a brand and engage its intended audience, and gathering an audience to consume the owned media once it's ready. This requires a commitment of resources.

But, the investment in creating and distributing branded content is worth it: Owned media has unique advantages. First, it offers brands total control: They get to craft the story they want to showcase their brand, expertise, services and/or products themselves in exactly the way they prefer. Second, owned media offers longevity, since content never disappears on the web. Third, it offers tremendous reach, since search engines offer tremendous organic exposure to media built with relevant keywords and strong content. Fourth, it offers versatility: Owned content can be recreated and repurposed in multiple media forms on a variety of relevant brand pages. Finally, owned media is uniquely cost-effective, since once a brand creates it, it can repurpose without new fees or licenses.



Owned media creates brand portability,” says Melissa Anthony Sinn, CEO and founder of anthonyBarnum, who adds, “It’s a way for brands to create a solar system of interrelated content that articulates company vision, engages partners and prospects, and even drives industry direction.



Sources:

¹ “2017 Edelman Trust Barometer - Global Results

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² “B2B Content Marketing. 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends - North America.” Content Marketing Institute, pg. 4.

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³ Campaign@Cannes, “ZenithOptimedia: Why Cannes shows we should put “owned” media first”

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⁴ “B2B Content Marketing. 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends - North America.” Content Marketing Institute, pg. 5.

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⁵ Ibid., 5

⁶ Ibid.



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