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ENGAGING MARKETING MINDS

JULY/AUGUST 2021



## THE INVISIBLE CLIENT

MARKETING TO THE UNSEEN





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# PASSIONATELY YOURS

**P**assion may be one of the single biggest problems that marketers are facing right now. It's easy to see that people are incredibly passionate about their own ideas and beliefs. Living in the land of the selfie, however, reminds us that people are irrationally seduced by the potential of their own solutions. Therefore, we become less enthusiastic about what really matters.

Of course you need to believe in your company's products, services and solutions. But what you need more than love of your product is love for your customers. You must care about them in order to provide them something beneficial. And you need to understand them in order to care about them.

Empathy is the pandemic's new buzzword. People are throwing it around like it is some great new discovery amidst these trying times. Without question, anyone who is just now embracing the idea of understanding what another person is experiencing should be celebrated. But, marketing has long been rooted in empathy and the elite understand that it is the cornerstone of success.

It is incredibly exciting to think that empathy is getting its just due. Our entire planet will benefit from people endeavoring to understand others. And if businesses decide that their customers are why they exist, then marketing will need to passionately lead the charge.

It is a wonderful time if we all choose to see it and focus our attention on those who matter most. In our cover article, "The Invisible Client," we discuss how to engage on a deeper level even while clients are still working from home or in hybrid models. It is an important piece because empathy can only exist if we are connected.

In our second article, "In Good Company," we remind you that you cannot go at it alone in this world. There is strength in numbers and partnerships can aid in understanding the marketplace and reignite the enthusiasm that lives within us.

Enjoy the issue!

Passionately yours,



Gina M. Danner, CEO



**Breaking the Dam**

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**MARKETING HAS LONG BEEN ROOTED IN EMPATHY AND THE ELITE UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS THE CORNERSTONE OF SUCCESS.**

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# THE INV ISIBLE CLIENT

## MARKETING TO THE UNSEEN

**J**ust as the pandemic was hitting mid stride, AmyK International launched a series of short videos touting its Inner Circle Mastermind. The intimate group consisted of 11 participants who met monthly to present actionable ideas geared toward forwarding their companies sustainability and legacy.

In a time when people wanted and needed to be seen, the brainchild behind the program, AmyK Hutchens, was seeking ways to bolster human interaction. People not only wanted to engage, but also learn ways to execute ideas to get through the pain. “Nobody wants to purchase another course, class, system, methodology, etc., but they absolutely want to buy results. The program was a way for people to focus on the transformation, not the vehicle. They wanted results—results in



# “THE MARKETING PROCESS IS STILL ABOUT CONNECTION. STOP PITCHING AND START CONNECTING. WHERE CAN YOU BEST SERVE? HOW MIGHT YOU SERVE IN A WAY THAT’S SINCERELY GENEROUS?”

— AMYK HUTCHENS, FOUNDER, AMYK INTERNATIONAL

the form of relatable, short videos.”

The Inner Circle Mastermind group was a triple shot of online training courses (two personalized training sessions per month), a live group coaching session free-for-all, and access to its marquee event—“The Power of Conversations” online program.

The program was so impactful that one participant said it helped increase her company’s team sales by 25% during the pandemic. To add to her victory lap, she said she even received a promotion to regional vice president based on the insights she absorbed during the sessions. By taking a chance on not only engaging people face to face, Hutchens’ strategy to provide a virtual forum that could enhance people’s mindsets and strategies was a win-win.

“Consumers are savvy,” Hutchens says. “They’re tired of gimmicks and noise. Authenticity is one of the last real differentiators, so it’s important that sales and marketing stop hyping and start connecting. The marketing process is

still about connection. Stop pitching and start connecting. Where can you best serve? How might you serve in a way that’s sincerely generous? If you think that a million likes will grow your business, I can give you a million examples of why they won’t.”

At the crux of her strategy was a call to stop leaning on a social world that can be too impersonal. “Stop focusing on likes, followers and views, and focus on serving people who have challenges you can solve,” she warns. “They’ll be your true followers.”

Getting in front of people who were hard to reach meant reassessing the way Hutchens was doing business. For a thought leader who conducted more than 75 in-person events per year, Hutchens’ playbook went virtual practically overnight, where she spent her time strategizing virtual keynotes from an at home, professional studio. “To increase engagement in the virtual world, I had to change my delivery style. The number of visuals/slides I

used more than tripled in a 60-minute timeframe to sustain engagement. I had to incorporate audience engagement through chat boxes and other means.”

But there is a caveat, as there so often is. Throughout all the changes, AmyK International kept two very important components in its marketing strategy—drip campaigns and referrals. Every Wednesday, the AmyK team sent out content pieces like blogs, videos and memes, a move that added real, tangible value on a weekly basis. In addition, because sharing experiences that are magical in nature, referrals continued to be a staple in its deliverables.

“Anything that’s not gimmicky, but legitimately has a purpose to a point you’re making, is important,” Hutchens says.

“Phone and video are still the two primary ways to connect. In every training session, I remind our clients that no one wants to be invited to another boring meeting, but everyone wants to be invited to a robust, fun and engaging conversation.” ■

## “IN THE END, IT IS ALL ABOUT SERVING THE CUSTOMER—HOW YOU CONNECT WITH THEM AND HELP THEM WIN WITH THEIR BUSINESS.”

— ZDENEK KRATKY, CMO, SIGURA







# BREAKING THE DAM

# H

headquartered in Alpharetta, Georgia, about 28 miles north of the Atlanta city limits, Sigura is a leading provider of innovative water treatment solutions. With six production facilities throughout North and South America, Europe and Africa, the company employs more than 1,200 people across a number of key brands, including HTH®, Pulsar®, poolife®, GLB®, Applied Biochemists®, Leisure Time®, Baquacil®, BaquaSpa®, Constant Chlor®, Hypocal®, and more.

The company, which was acquired from Innovative Water and rebranded in 2019, changed its name to more aptly reflect its core mission as sure, safe and secure. For more than 90 years, the business has focused on delivering superior water quality solutions to protect and improve the security, safety, health and well-being of the communities served.

In the midst of its rebranding efforts, the pandemic hit, forcing the new Sigura team to go from a corporate setting to home offices. The evolution was something that CMO Zdenek Kratky says took some getting used to. “Imagine the emotions of collaborating with your team in-person to figure out how to set up a home office. Having to build that type of culture—that type of team spirit—without being able to engage face to face with each other or our customers was difficult.”

Kratky says the leadership acumen to help right the course was critical to Sigura’s success. Figuring out how to communicate with each other made it

easier to communicate with customers. “Our customers are B2B and B2C, so we had to figure out how to engage virtually on the businesses side, and for our retail operations, we had to implement curbside strategies.”

In a time of virtual engagements, the Sigura team that would normally be tasked with those face to face interactions had to learn how to market and engage in the new normal. “In the end, it is all about serving the customer—how do you connect with them and help them win with their business,” Kratky says. “The biggest takeaway from all of this—the one thing that will always remain constant—is that people are

flexible. If you cannot do things the way you did them in the past, you have to find ways to make them work. We made it work—we found ways to engage and reach our customers—in a time when things were different.”

The heart of marketing, whether you can physically sit with your clients or engage virtually, remains the same. There are expectations that must be established and strategies that must be implemented. Above all, putting a face with the name underlines the genuine human connection at marketing’s core.

And as Hutchens says, the game is still the same, even if the rules change. “What I did when I was addressing a room full of people is a little different today. Now I say things like, ‘Make sure your cameras are on and your microphone is muted.’ Instead of asking them to raise their hands, I ask them to raise their phones. There are no gimmicks when it comes to engagement; you still have to have a legitimate purpose and a point to make.”

So, seen or unseen, your marketing strategy remains the same: Initiate. Engage. Repeat.





# IN

“STRONG  
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COMMUNICATION, TRUST  
AND COLLABORATION.  
IT MEANS BEING ABLE  
TO NAVIGATE THINGS  
TOGETHER BY TRUSTING  
IN THOSE PRINCIPLES.”

— **JANICE DODY,**  
VP OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS,  
IDOC



# WHY PARTNERING IS GOOD COMPANY CRITICAL TO YOUR SUCCESS

In his book, "Strategic Alliances," Steve Steinhilber discusses one of the main tenets of building collaborative relationships: People want integrated solutions to their problems. As VP of Strategic Alliances and Corporate Consulting Engineering for Cisco Systems, Steinhilber has built a career on fostering equally crucial, well-managed alliances that generate value for everyone involved.

The crux of Steinhilber's strategy is based on three essential foundations for building successful alliances: the right framework (how alliances help achieve strategic goals and identify potential partners); the right organization (having the right people and continually honing their skills); and the right relationships (cultivating trust among key industry partners).

In a business landscape defined by constant change, the ability to build and maintain partnerships supersedes better strategies, better processes, better time management and better self-discipline. Steven Pearlman knows this. As co-founder of The Critical Thinking Initiative, Pearlman has had a first-hand look at how collaborative relationships work in real time,

especially in a time when the pandemic and social unrest have forced everyone to work twice as hard to keep their heads above water.

Pearlman's take is that in today's fast-paced, network-centric world, building close-knit working relationships with strategic partners offer different, yet invaluable perspectives. If done correctly, you build lasting relationships with forward-thinking organizations that can offer the resources you need, but lack the time to develop yourself.

Take the higher education space, where Pearlman and his company focus a good bit of time. The Critical Thinking Initiative offers faculty development and turnkey programs for students

around thinking critically across all disciplines. Educational institutions seeking to develop thinking outcomes can draw on resources like The Critical Thinking Initiative rather than spend years developing curricula, materials and training on their own.

Pearlman says that when organizations become attuned to the needs of each other, strategic alliances can serve deeper purposes. "Rather than cookie-cutter connections, deeper partner alliances attend to a company's needs and long-term strategic plans. When partnerships emerge in concert with strategic planning rather than in service to existing plans, it enables you to create an infrastructure for success." ■

"WHEN PARTNERSHIPS  
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— STEVEN PEARLMAN, CO-FOUNDER,  
THE CRITICAL THINKING INITIATIVE





# All for one...



**I**DOC is an optometric alliance committed to providing independent eye care professionals (ODs) across the country a competitive advantage. With more than 3,000 members, the organization offers countless services, including industry-leading vendor savings programs and invaluable guidance from some of the industry's leading consultants.

At the core of IDOC's mission statement is its ability to offer best-in-class knowledge sharing opportunities with industry peers and experts. With IDOC as an ally, independent optometric practice owners can compete in an industry that is not only packed with mega players like Wal-Mart and Costco, but also home to a growing pack of online rivals stalwarts like Warby Parker and EyeBuyDirect.

Matthew J. Woelbern believes the relationships that IDOC helps foster strengthen the outcomes for optometrists that may otherwise be forced to face alone. Through continual mutual discussion and brainstorming, ODs can learn together how to keep a healthy future amid all the industry dynamics, including areas like improved product/technology education, practice consulting, in-store branding, and profitability improvements through commitment-based pricing programs.

"There are a lot of forces at work that favor the industry's big players, and it's hardly a fair fight for independent optometry," says Woelbern, Head of Marketing – U.S. ECP, for ZEISS Vision Care U.S., an IDOC vendor partner. "Relationships with peers and suppliers are the only way to scale with the collective power of like-minded organizations and have a fighting chance to resist the industry's current headwinds. It's hard work simply to serve patients and not pay attention to the competitive, industry dynamics happening. With deeper alliances, you can make better decisions quicker, and then return to serving your patients."

Vendor partnerships are a staple in this strategy. Since joining IDOC less than two years ago, ZEISS has signed 200-plus practices to its IDOC Z-Select program. Woelbern says each practice was committed to giving the program a chance. "Take a moment to reassess everything your existing programs have to offer. Then, take one you haven't tried, and engage with it in earnest. You may be surprised how valuable it is."

Janice Dody, IDOC's VP of Strategic Partnerships, believes that working relationships with forward-thinking peers offer a wealth

of valuable perspectives, especially in the throes of the past year's challenges. "In the wake of COVID, we really realized the power of our partnerships, specifically our vendor partners' ability to make sure we meet our member's needs. Strong relationships mean having open lines of communication, trust and collaboration. It means being able to navigate things together by trusting in those principles. In a vulnerable time, we saw some people really rise to the occasion."

When it comes to peer/partner relationships, Gregory Pas believes that the concept of trust is one that every participant must embrace wholeheartedly. As Marketing Director for FUJIFILM North America Corporation, Graphic Systems Division (North America), Pas continues to see increased dependence on networking and community building.

"Once individuals settle in with each other, the trust factor increases and these groups become the go-to communities for brainstorming and/or answers for solutions addressing problems," Pas says. "Everyone has their own unique ideas on various topics, and to be part of a trusted networking group, ideation begins to explode in a positive manner because you'll always hear, 'Oh, I never thought of that' or validation; 'Yes, I was thinking about that but now that I know that it works, I'll give it a try myself.'"

When the pandemic hit, the majority of businesses were focused on developing relationships with the people and organizations that were known commodities. Having deep, solid relationships mattered. "Taking risks today are not what most people or organizations are doing," Pas says. "They want to make genuine and validated decisions to comfortably and successfully keep things going. You must trust your business partners to successfully execute what you partner with them to do, which eliminates a lot of stress. It allows you to focus on what you are supposed to focus on and not be bifurcated, which then gives you the right mindset for other execution and decision-making tactics you're responsible for. When you freak out, you make the wrong decisions."

Woelbern says that learning "what works" in your industry is not always easy to do. While there are ways to self-educate yourself, sometimes that only gets you so far. "Only through real relationships can you ask specific questions that may not be answered through a search engine. These relationships are the only way to build consensus on topics that matter to specific parts of our industry. And these relationships help in brainstorming how to keep a healthy future with all of the current dynamics and threats."

By keeping good company, you give yourself and your business a chance to survive and thrive.

# TACTICS



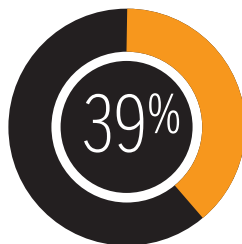
## READY, SET, GROW

### PRIMARY STRATEGIES MARKETERS ARE USING TO FUEL GROWTH

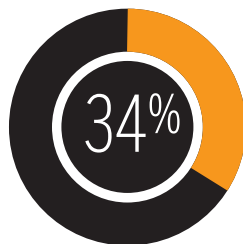
It's time to get down to business. Expanding your offerings and products is a great way to start. Gartner, Inc.'s

"CMO Strategic Priorities Survey" found that 73% of marketers will focus on existing markets to fuel growth.

The following are strategies that they plan to implement into their marketing playbook.



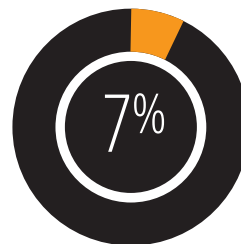
Increasing sales of existing products to existing customers



Introducing new products to existing customers



Entering a new market using existing products



Entering a new market with the introduction of new products





## 5 WAYS TO ALIGN SALES & MARKETING AROUND CUSTOMERS

Sales and marketing should present a united front, and what better way to do so than focusing on what matters the most: customers. Check out these five tips from Skyword on how to bring the two together.

### **NO. 1** Gather input from sales to create audience-centric thought leadership

The sales department interacts directly with customers, so they often have an insider's take on what resonates with them.

### **NO. 2** Discuss and strategize with a broader group of internal stakeholders

Get feedback from all of the different areas of your company to understand the full customer lifecycle.

### **NO. 3** Forge a relationship of trust between sales and marketing

Earn trust from your sales team by delivering relevant and consistent content.

### **NO. 4** Identify where customers need the most support

To be more audience-centric, find and fill the gaps in your customer experience.

### **NO. 5** Wield content to grab customers' attention

Be unique. Provide value. Speak directly to your customers' needs to cut through the noise.



## 6 LESSONS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN 2021

ALL BUSINESSES TOOK A HIT IN 2020, AND THIS YEAR IS A WAY TO REALIGN FOR SUCCESS. TAKE A LOOK AT THESE LESSONS FROM THE CONSTANT CONTACT BLOG TO GET BACK UP AND RUNNING.

### **01** DON'T BE AFRAID TO TRY SOMETHING NEW

The pandemic forced people out of their comfort zones. Don't stop stretching those innovative muscles.

### **02** STAY IN TOUCH AND TOP OF MIND

Business is all about relationships. Keep your customers close with consistent communication.

### **03** DO MORE BUSINESS ONLINE

Online offerings are more than a social distancing measure and will continue to be an important aspect going forward.

### **04** COLLECT AND TAKE ACTION ON CUSTOMER DATA

Who are your customers? Understanding them will help you communicate the most efficient way.

### **05** BUILD YOUR BRAND WITH STORYTELLING

Everybody loves a good story, and customers are increasingly looking to support small businesses rather than big corporations.

### **06** PREPARE FOR UNCERTAINTY

Whatever comes next, anticipate that change is inevitable.

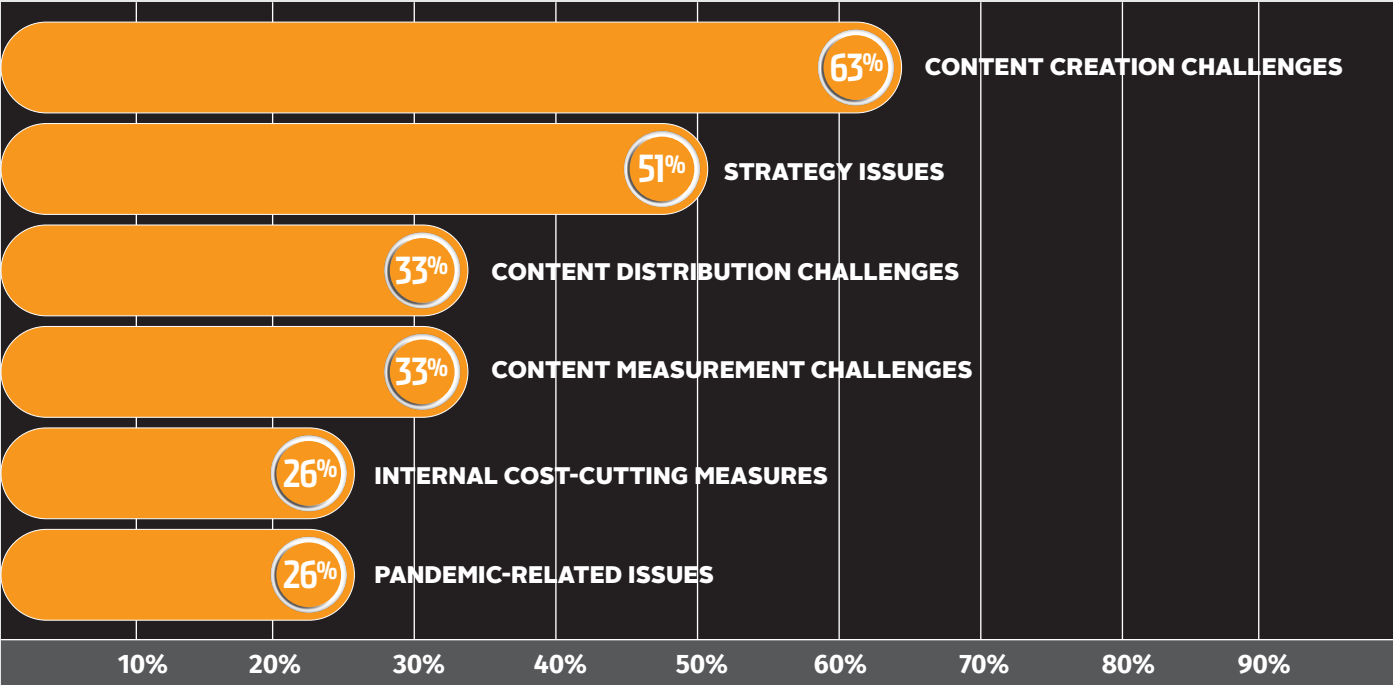


# The Content Challenge

**Struggles B2B marketers are facing with their content marketing**

What content will resonate with the customer? How long will it take to create? And how does the pandemic play into all of it? Marketers everywhere are mulling over their content strategies. However, only one in four marketers cite pandemic-related issues

as their biggest challenge, according to the “11th Annual B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends” report by the Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs. See what else they attribute to their content marketing struggles.





# QA

## ***As a CMO, what challenges are right in front of you in 2021?***

One of the big challenges facing many companies is how working from home has changed the way we market to individuals. In 2020, in-person events were completely shut down. Events are typically allocated a fairly large portion of most marketing budgets. Many organizations pivoted to running virtual events with mixed success. Virtual events and webinars start to be less effective as people experience “Zoom fatigue,” especially now that we are more than a year into the pandemic. Staffing is another challenge. For the past year and half, people have stayed put—more or less—with all of the changes going on in the world.

## ***Marketers seem to carry more of the burden today than pre-pandemic. Why is this the case?***

It is more difficult for sales to reach individuals working from home. As the pandemic created the economic craziness that we experienced early on, many companies locked down spending to preserve liquidity faced with an unsure future. Many of them are just now starting to loosen up spending as economic conditions begin to stabilize. But things have changed, and many of us are still working from home—some for good. As a result, many companies are turning to the marketing department as a strategic partner and good data is the key. Sales and marketing may partner on sophisticated account-based marketing programs, or marketing will develop multi-channel integrated campaigns, etc. Marketing drives the engagement and helps

## **CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, INSIGHTSOFTWARE**

# **STACY WEST**

EXPERT MARKETING LEADER ON  
MARKETING'S ROLE GOING FORWARD

**S**tacy West is Chief Marketing Officer at insightsoftware, a leading global provider of financial reporting and enterprise performance management software with more than 30,000 customers. At insightsoftware, West oversees Brand Strategy, Product Marketing, Demand Generation, Communications, Channel Marketing and Digital Strategy. Previously, West served as CMO at Relias, an education and training platform to more than 11,000 healthcare organizations and 4.5 million caregivers around the world. We sat down with West to get her take on the current marketing climate along with her advice.



sales prioritize the prospects that are most likely to convert to a sale.

## ***How are brands supposed to develop relationships at a distance?***

A company has to start with a consistent brand promise. As marketers, we have to know what our brand represents and internalize that before we can message it externally. Having consistency in the brand visual identity and the brand voice is the start of building a relationship with your market. Driving consistency in messaging your value and providing an excellent customer journey helps solidify the relationship. Once you have a customer, you must try to make them a customer for life. Customers should be treated like gold.

## ***Due to the pandemic, how has the skill set of a marketing department changed?***

The ability to tell your story and showcase your value to customers is critical. The tools only work as well as the content you provide. Understanding the analytics helps segment your prospective customers, sell more to your existing customers, and allows you to tailor the message to your audience. Plan in advance and prepare to change on the fly depending on the data. Having a plan as a framework, and then testing and tweaking to drive the best results is the way we work today.

## ***What is marketing's role in nurturing your internal culture these days?***

Recruiting the best cultural fits is a way to support creating a great culture. Having a point of view, a brand voice and creating things that your employees will share in their networks helps drive a sense of “we’re all in this together.” Additionally, we use social channels to showcase more of our employees, the work environment and the corporate culture. Things like #WorkWithUsWednesdays where we post open roles in social, and showcasing fun things our employees do in their spare time help give other people a sense of who we are.

## ***Any advice for marketers?***

Network with other marketers. Work in as many different roles within marketing as you progress your career. That kind of well-rounded experience will serve you well. Ask for help. We’re all just trying to do the best we can and people generally want to help each other. Don’t be afraid to try new things and be ok with mistakes—it’s how we learn. And if you’re an experienced marketer that has had some success, pay it forward by mentoring someone who is just starting out!

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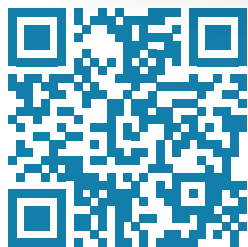
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