



GUIDE

# How Retail can master content velocity

Creating a customer experience like no other



Customer expectations have changed drastically in recent years, and this is largely due to the surge in e-commerce businesses and increasing competition within the retail industry. Not to mention that big-name brands like Amazon are able to deliver goods within 24 hours, setting the standards pretty high for businesses within the sector. This means that brands now have to make the shift from retailer to all-round experience maker in order to meet demands and stay competitive.

Content is at the heart of great customer experience (CX), and content at scale is the key to truly engaging with your audience. But the art of content velocity can be a tricky process, and mastering it requires an incisive combination of skills and technology.

There are more channels, platforms and formats than ever before, with rising trends in personalisation and seamless omnichannel delivery. In fact, more than one in four (28%)<sup>1</sup> consumers said that personalised content would encourage them to buy from a retailer again.

But with so much out there already, it's becoming a content overload. Retail brands that don't have the right strategy and processes in place to recycle content are simply creating a larger volume of content just to attract their target audience. This can place additional stress on retailers and their content teams (if they have one, that is).

Furthermore, the explosive nature of just-in-time content is happening so fast that over 70% of companies<sup>2</sup> are now creating 10x more assets than before just to keep up with customer demand.

## Content in the retail industry in 2021

It's estimated that in 2021, businesses across the retail industry will spend as much as £3.3 billion<sup>3</sup> on advertising and digital content. Yet, despite these staggering figures, currently only half (56.9%) of retailers<sup>4</sup> use content marketing as one of the key ways to target customers. Businesses that aren't leveraging the power of content need to have a serious rethink about their strategy.

Why?

Because content can work wonders for retail brands and can be a great way to drive sales and save money. We know this because content marketing costs around 62% less than other out-bound marketing and yet it generates three times as many leads.<sup>5</sup>

Not only this, but it's clear that consumers appreciate content as part of the overall customer experience. In fact, 61% of consumers prefer brands with a content presence<sup>6</sup> and a further 60% of consumers<sup>7</sup> say blog posts are valuable to them in the early stages of the buying process.

This is perhaps why 94% believe that digital marketing has come to the fore and is now more valued than ever within retail businesses.<sup>8</sup>

Either way, it's clear that content is having a huge impact on retail businesses and consumers alike, and should be something that companies are prioritising this year.

## How to create the perfect customer experience through content

Every retail business, no matter how big or small, will face challenges around content velocity - especially in a time when their competitors are also ramping up production. So how can you cut through the noise and create the perfect experience for your customers?



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.marketingweek.com/smart-content-management-key-retailer-brand-marketing/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://docplayer.net/17143593-Proving-the-value-of-digital-asset-management-fordigital-marketers-and-creative-teams-an-idc-infobrief-sponsored-by-adobe-june-2015.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.emarketer.com/content/retail-will-account-20-of-all-digital-ad-spending-uk-this-year>

<sup>4</sup> <https://mapp.com/blog/digital-marketing-trends-in-retail-that-drive-sales-and-engage-shoppers/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.shopify.co.uk/retail/content-marketing-for-retailers-how-to-build-an-audience-online>

<sup>6</sup> <https://contently.com/2017/10/06/infographic-science-brand-voice/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.oberlo.co.uk/blog/blogging-statistics>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.sitecore.com/resources/index/analyst-reports/holiday-trends-2021-uk>



CHAPTER 1:

# Understanding your content velocity (and why it matters)

In the simplest of terms, content velocity is the measure of how much content a brand creates over a certain period of time. This includes the speed at which it's created and produced, the speed of the publishing process itself and the speed of change in content requirements. It's something that all businesses are keen to improve - but why does it matter so much?

## Three reasons you should care about content at scale

The volume of content you publish is something that every brand should be thinking about, despite the fact that many often think it goes against established content rules about quality vs quantity. While the rules still stand, it's essential for retail brands to be able to achieve the perfect balance. Here are three reasons why:

### 1 Standing out from the crowd

E-commerce and online sales grew by a staggering 46% last year<sup>9</sup> as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is now estimated that there could be anywhere between 12 to 24 million shops online as of 2021.<sup>10</sup>

These statistics show just how competitive the retail industry is. Now, imagine if your competitors are producing great quality content and they happen to be making a lot more of it than you, they're going to be more attractive to your shared audience.

Don't forget, plenty of companies have highly trained content teams and strategists, so opposition is fierce. The power now lies in producing quality, relevant and engaging content at a much larger scale.

### 2 Improve your SEO efforts

Another obvious reason for pushing out fresh content at speed is to make your website more friendly for search engines. Optimisation is more important than ever in 2021, with an overall rise in online search queries<sup>11</sup> due to COVID-19. But even before the pandemic, 85% of consumers<sup>12</sup> were already doing online research before making a purchase.

This makes SEO one of the most important marketing strategies and one which retailers cannot afford to ignore. And the amount of content created can directly impact how search engines crawl, index and value your site. This is because fresh content is critical for SEO, inviting search bots to visit your site more frequently. As a result, the more you produce, the better your search engine rankings will be over time.

### 3 Great content influences purchases

Finally, in today's retail landscape, creating content is no longer solely about building an online presence and boosting SEO. Nowadays, it has a more specific purpose - to influence buyer decisions. And according to a 2018 survey,<sup>13</sup> 73% of consumers have made purchases as a result of viewing marketing content.

What's more, 70% said they consider content marketing to be useful and valuable as it pushes them to further research the company and perhaps then make a purchase. This is why retail brands must take a strategic approach to content.

<sup>9</sup> <https://internetretailing.net/industry/industry/e-commerce-grew-by-46-in-2020---its-strongest-growth-for-more-than-a-decade--but-overall-retail-sales-fell-by-a-record-19-pts-22603>

<sup>10</sup> <https://digitalintheround.com/how-many-online-stores-are-there>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2020/05/08/seo-during-covid-19>

<sup>12</sup> <https://transaction.agency/e-commerce-statistics/85-percent-of-consumers-conduct-online-research-before-making-a-purchase-online>

<sup>13</sup> <https://smallbiztrends.com/2018/10/2018-content-marketing-statistics>

## How does this translate into better CX?

Today's customer expects fast, compelling content on all devices - and across all channels. They don't want to experience your brand as different and disconnected departments, such as your call centre being a disparate hub to your Twitter and Facebook. More importantly, with mobile commerce sales expected to account for 72.9% of e-commerce sales worldwide in 2021,<sup>14</sup> businesses need to be thinking mobile-first.

That's why we're now seeing so many unified contact centres, bringing together phone, email, messenger and social media communications for an omnichannel approach to customer service.

Consumers want an enjoyable, seamless and hassle-free experience with your brand. By ramping up your content velocity, you can become an expert in your field, provide answers to problems and respond to customer pain points - placing your brand front-of-mind when it comes to purchasing solutions.

### Know the challenges

Before you get started in building your new content plan, it's crucial to know the challenges that lie ahead. Managing more content at speed isn't as simple as increasing volume.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/806336/mobile-retail-commerce-share-worldwide/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.sitecore.com/resources/index/analyst-reports/holiday-trends-2021-uk>

Other challenges that can impact your campaigns are:

### 1 Too many channels

With so many channels available and many more being introduced all the time, it can be hard to make time for content creation. Not only does it mean increasing your output, but you also need to treat each channel differently as each has its own audience and unique algorithms. It's also important that you understand which channels your target audience uses and engages with the most, so you can put more focus on creating content for these platforms.

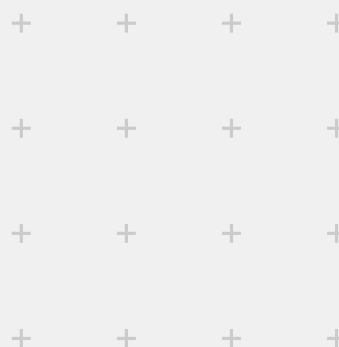
### 2 Not enough resources

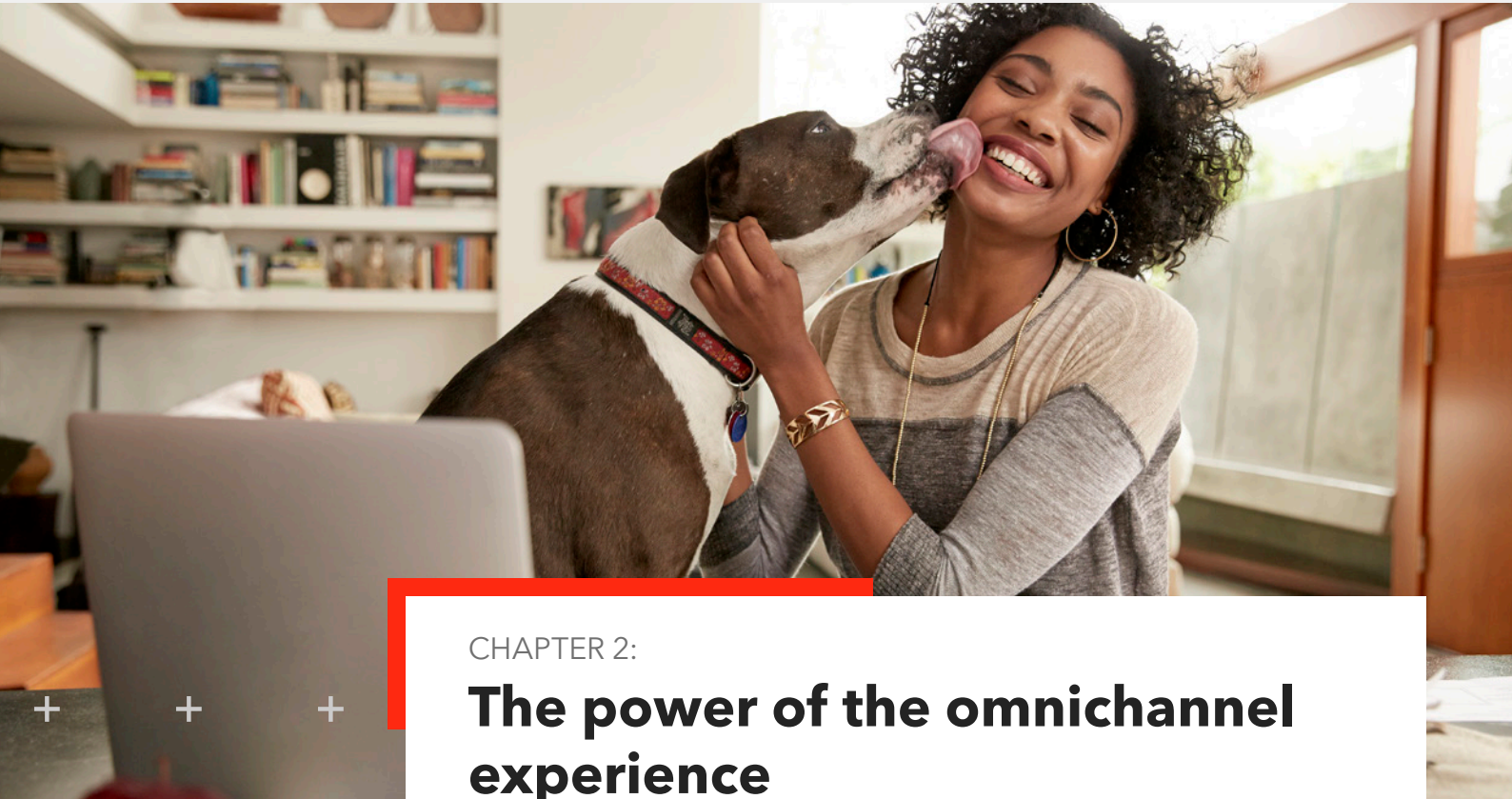
As channels and the need for content increase, resource will likely be overstretched. Particularly for smaller retailers who may only have a handful of employees. But by measuring content velocity against competitors, content strategists can actually make a case for more team members or for third-party content creators. The key is in content data and presenting it to financiers and stakeholders in a way that's clear and ROI-driven.

### 3 Need for personalisation

In order to build meaningful, 1-on-1 conversations with consumers, brands must adopt personalisation techniques when delivering content. But tailoring content for each consumer or demographic can be tricky, especially when there are so many devices and channels to bear in mind.

Finding the right tools is essential if you want to find fast and cost-effective ways of making personalised content work for you and your customers. The good news is, 87% of marketers in retail businesses said they're better prepared for personalisation than they were last year.<sup>15</sup>





## CHAPTER 2:

# The power of the omnichannel experience

In order to master content velocity for your retail business, you need to be able to connect multiple channels, streamline workflows and perfect personalisation. It's clear that there are many challenges ahead, but there are ways to manage content velocity - as long as you have the right tools and knowledge.

## How to make omnichannel content work for you

Here are some tips for unleashing your content potential and unlocking its true value for your target audience:

### 1 Use data to your advantage

It's true that we're overloaded with data these days, but the issue isn't in the collection of it - it's in the sharing. By analysing data on customer content consumption, you can amend your strategy to meet the consumer's needs, wants and desires. In order to create actionable insights for your team, there are some important things to bear in mind. Data needs to be:

- Presented in an easy-to-understand format
- Shared openly with the right people
- Updated regularly to keep your business nimble

### 2 Let your customers lead the way

To be relevant and effective, it's essential to get the speed and frequency of your content right. This should be determined by your audience though, and not your resource or capabilities. Let your customers guide you in what they want in terms of content delivery (when, where and how often?) and build a strategy to fit. Make a case for more resources if that's what's required, and adapt your budget if possible.

Remember that content now needs to be produced at the speed of social media. That means producing consistently engaging, well-designed and visually appealing content is going to be a struggle for most retail businesses. More often than not, brands aren't reaching these targets, so adopting better digital processes is vital.

### 3 Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate

A joined-up approach is needed if your marketing efforts are to pay off in the new digital era. While traditionally, marketing and sales have operated in silos, now's the time to work together. This means sharing customer data, creating actionable insights for various teams and having a collaborative effort for demand and lead generation campaigns.

The same applies to content and design teams. Your social media executives should know what your article writers are publishing and vice versa. Design teams also need to work closely with content writers to produce visuals that complement the content and branding. The more effectively you join forces internally, the more unified your brand messaging and the more productive you'll be.

## Next steps for transforming CX

So what are the next steps for making your customer experience enjoyable and seamless? For businesses that want to delight their audience with the right content at the right time, staying flexible is paramount. To have organisational agility, choosing the right technology is a must.

On top of this, marketers must also treat content as a holistic system, one that gives them integrated views of how content is consumed. Then they can address any inefficiencies in sourcing, production and distribution as well as performance.

By organising and optimising these processes, you'll be able to go further than just churning out articles and reports. You can develop an entire content ecosystem to delight your customer and make their experience as satisfying as possible.



**CHAPTER 3:****Your content strategy's secret weapon**

As already mentioned, the next and most important step in mastering content velocity is using the right tools. Technology acts as the enabler, especially in this disruptive time of change where the tech solutions can increase agility and resilience.

**Here are the tools you need right now**

Designed to support your content workforce, a lot of content tools are there to maximise output, while ensuring you get the most out of your return. Here are some of the secret weapon solutions that can transform your omnichannel strategy:

**Digital Asset Management (DAM)**

The reality of storing digital assets is that it's often an after-thought. But with companies spending between \$150 million and \$250 million<sup>16</sup> on digital content related activities every year, and retail setting aside the largest budget for content of any industry,<sup>17</sup> good organisation is key. Despite this, few companies are actually doing it successfully, and many are compromising security with ineffective storage solutions.

A Digital Asset Management system<sup>18</sup> gives you easy and secure management of content assets, making them easier to store, share and find. This type of tool is essential in fostering a collaborative culture, giving you a central hub for everything from photos, layouts, artwork, video, 3D, source files and more.

What's interesting to note is that research actually shows the ROI of DAM tools being somewhere between 8:1 and 14:1, which is very high. This is due to the time savings accrued and the ability to boost staff productivity.

**Content hubs**

Do you need to find a way to take charge of your entire content lifecycle? A content hub such as Sitecore's<sup>19</sup> can help you unify content planning, production, collaboration and management with a single, integrated solution.

With this centralised tool, you can gain a 360° view of your content landscape, making omnichannel content production much easier. It includes a DAM system, which helps you store, share and access assets as and when you need them. It also gives you a content marketing platform to assist with planning and scheduling in a very structured way.

**Content-as-a-Service (CaaS) platforms**

One of the most difficult things when navigating an omnichannel content world is staying agile and being responsive to trends. As we've learned with COVID-19, things can change in a flash, and survival is all about being able to adapt. But most brands don't have the flexibility in-house, and that's where Content-as-a-Service (CaaS) comes in.

Sitecore Experience Edge<sup>20</sup> is designed to catapult businesses into the future with headless content delivery at scale. This puts content production at your fingertips, meaning you can create differentiated digital experiences faster than before and engage customers for longer while also boosting revenue opportunities.

<sup>16</sup> <https://learn.g2.com/digital-asset-management>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.brafton.com/blog/content-marketing/the-ultimate-list-of-marketing-spend-statistics-for-2019-infographic>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.sitecore.com/products/content-hub/digital-asset-management>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.sitecore.com/products/content-hub>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.sitecore.com/blog/content/were-thrilled-to-announce-groundbreaking-sitecore-experience-edge>



## How to implement change like a pro

In order to make the most of these tools and ensure change runs smoothly, retail businesses will need to find ways to nurture and empower their content creators. Technology can support your most powerful asset - human talent - giving your team the capability to learn more about the audience and improve their strategies and techniques.

Training and support are critical elements in change management, so the goal is for people and technology to work together. As mentioned before, collaboration should be a priority if omnichannel is to be successful, and this requires a cultural shift.

Tools such as CaaS allow you to adapt and modify the experience for better results, and that's why choosing the right technology is the very first step in conquering content velocity.

If you're looking to create the perfect customer experience for the rising number of millennial buyers - now and in the future - striking that balance with quality and quantity is crucial. Therefore, adopting the right technology is of the essence for companies - as efficiency and productivity are set to be more important than ever in the world of content.



# About Sitecore

Sitecore delivers a digital experience platform that empowers the world's smartest brands to build lifelong relationships with their customers. A highly decorated industry leader, Sitecore is the only company bringing together content, commerce, and data into one connected platform that delivers millions of digital experiences every day. Leading companies including American Express, ASOS, Kimberly-Clark, L'Oréal, and Volvo Cars rely on Sitecore to provide more engaging, personalized experiences for their customers.

Request a demo at [sitecore.com](https://www.sitecore.com)

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