16 COMPANIES IN 'BORING' INDUSTRIES

Creating Remarkable Content

A Publication of HubSpot

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INTRODUCTORY — THIS RESOURCE

Introductory content is for marketers who are new to the subject. This content typically includes step-by-step instructions on how to get started with this aspect of inbound marketing and learn its fundamentals. After reading it, you will be able to execute basic marketing tactics related to the topic.

INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate content is for marketers who are familiar with the subject but have only basic experience in executing strategies and tactics on the topic. This content typically covers the fundamentals and moves on to reveal more complex functions and examples. After reading it, you will feel comfortable leading projects with this aspect of inbound marketing.

ADVANCED

Advanced content is for marketers who are, or want to be, experts on the subject. In it, we walk you through advanced features of this aspect of inbound marketing and help you develop complete mastery of the subject. After reading it, you will feel ready not only to execute strategies and tactics, but also to teach others how to be successful.

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INTRODUCTION.

When we talk to companies new to the practice of creating useful web content to attract new business, one of their number one concerns is that their products or services are not interesting enough to warrant blog posts, videos, ebooks, tweets or eye-catching photos.

“Not interesting enough?!” we say. “Are you passionate about it? Do your customers have unanswered questions about your products? Do your employees have hidden talents? Does your company have a greater purpose beyond selling stuff? Of course you company is interesting enough!”

To prove it’s possible to create salient content despite being a seemingly boring company with uninteresting products or services, we’ve compiled 16 examples of brands that are doing just that -- telling stories in ways that get people talking about cleaning supplies, vacuums, real estate, and other (sometimes) snore-worthy topics.

Just because your company seems ordinary because you sell plastic sheeting to manufacturing businesses, for example, doesn’t mean it’s impossible to add some pizazz to your content creation efforts.

Take a gander to see if you can’t steal ideas from the examples we’ve put together for you.

boring

Body Wash.

Soap. It's slippery, it helps keep you clean yourself. As does body wash, deodorant, and similar cleansing products.

For such a basic concept, did you know there are at least 41 different brands of soap?! Each one of these bubbly cleansers has the same exact purpose, and are often seen as a commodity -- a product of need, not interest.

Who then is using body cleansing products to make remarkable content? (You can probably guess).

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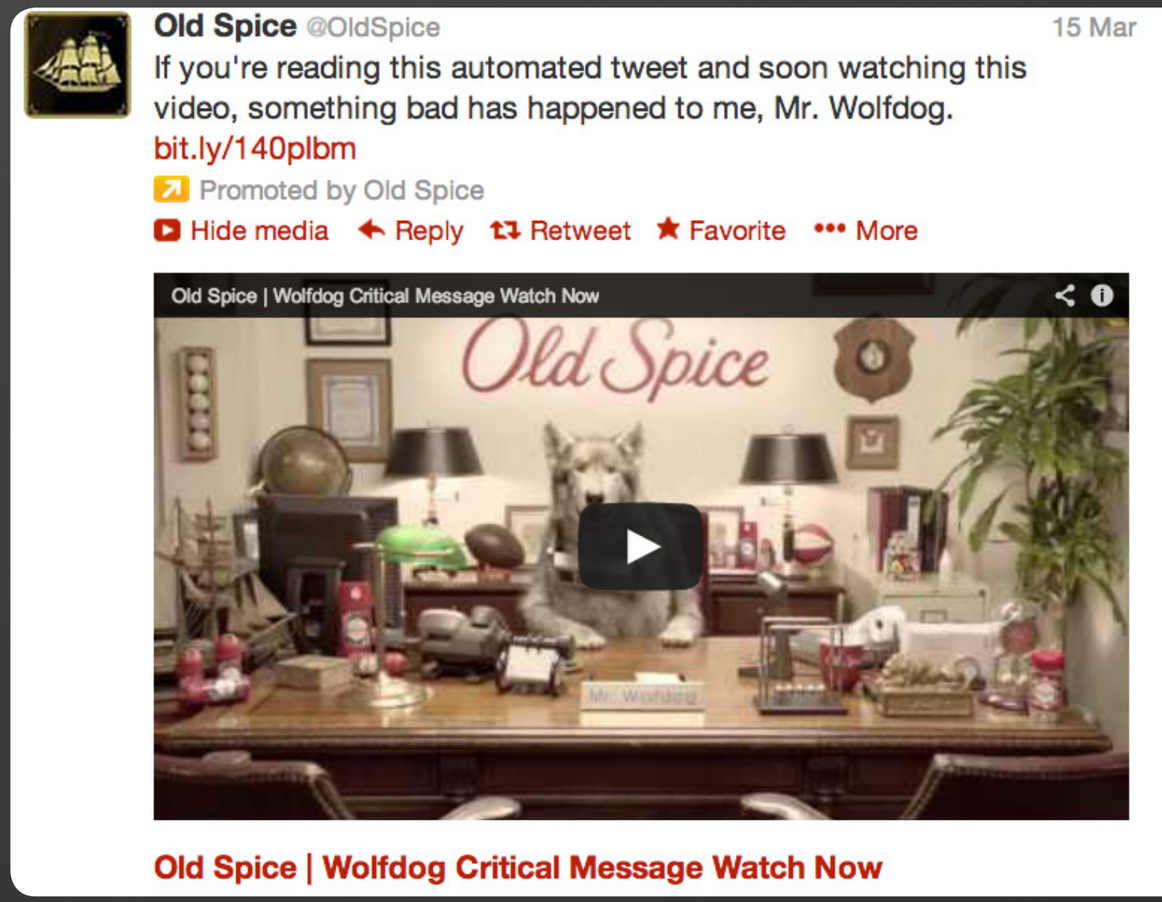
Old Spice.

While soap, body wash, or deodorant may sound like boring subjects, Old Spice has brought life to this traditionally boring industry.

Most recently, they've changed their Twitter account to be run by their new Director of Marketing -- Mr. Wolfdog. This wild, furry friend updates the Twitter account with humorous tweets that don't actually have anything to do with the hygiene brand -- and that makes sense! What could you possibly say about body cleansers that makes them stand out from the other brands? That yours smells nicer? It cleans better? There is no unique value proposition.

Instead, Old Spice uses humor and creativity to keep their audience engaged.



boring

CRM Tool.

A CRM tool for web-based businesses? Yawn.

As much as we value Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software here at HubSpot, let's face it, the industry itself isn't as exciting as Justin Bieber's latest clothing line. Is it a valuable product? Of course. Just not the most exciting.

However, there are brands out there striving to make it as interesting as possible for their audience to read about CRM-related topics.

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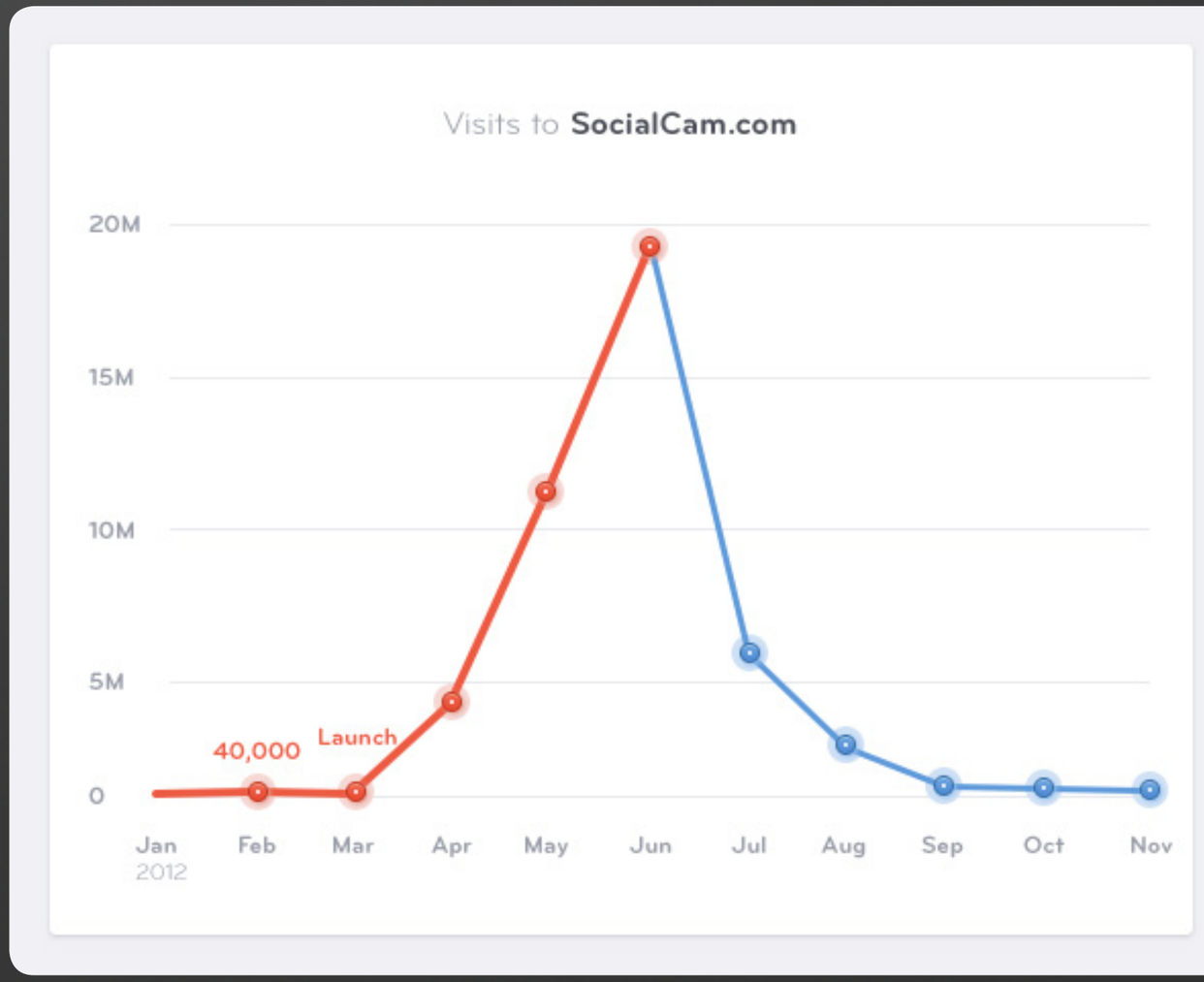
Intercom.

If you visit the Intercom blog, you'll find insightful articles that are -- gasp! -- really easy and entertaining to get through. A good example is their most recent article on growth hacking called, "If It's Important, Don't Hack It." To the right you'll find a snippet from it.

Even if you're really into the topic of growth hacking, a bunch of graphs packed into a blog post has the propensity to be really dull. That's why it's genius that Intercom has decided to use colloquial language, like "gonna," and "pisses off" in their copy. It's relatable because that's how most people actually talk -- like humans. So if you think you need to sound all business like and professional when talking about industry concepts, consider whether your audience would appreciate more laid back and playful language. If most of your competitors use a serious, professional tone in their content, perhaps lightening the mood a bit could help your company stand out.



boring

File Storage.

Cloud file storage and sharing products (snoooore).

Backing up your files may sound like a party to some, but to most, it's a process of waiting for your files to upload, sync, and finish storing. For others who happen to be accustomed to storing files on their local hard drives, storing your computer files in the cloud may be uninteresting simply because it's a new concept that involves learning how to use newer technology. Let's face it -- for the not so tech-savvy, that could be a total put off!

So, cloud storage companies have a lot education to do if they want to convince people to try and keep using their services. That's not the easiest thing to do. It's even harder when you try to make how-tos, product tours, and usage reminders sound fun or cool. Yet, one special brand is pulling it off.

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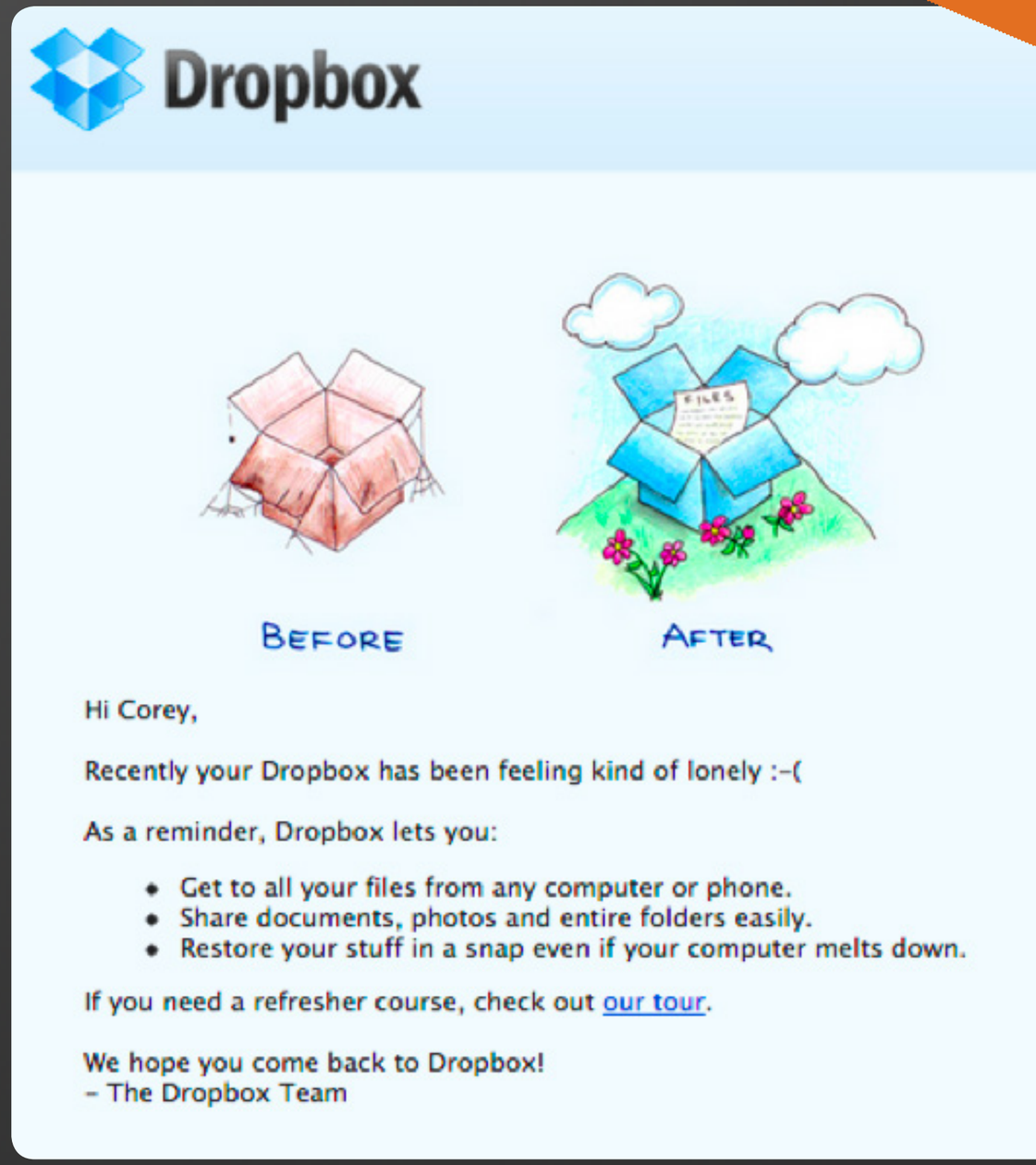
Dropbox.

Dropbox recognizes that if they want their emails to get read, they have to minimize the snooze factor of the content inside them, especially when your attention is drawn to email notifications from Facebook or new pictures from Grandma.

That's why they keep the message short, use a simple and compelling illustration, and use language that has personality. They do this particularly well in their email content, which combines lovable design and personable, easily consumable copy -- just check out the example to your right.

See? Why does cloud storage have to be lame and boring, full of jargon no average consumer would understand? This email ... makes sense. It has cute images that make your Dropbox look sad for being unused. And it has an emoticon. :-)



boring

Meeting Platform.

What does everyone love most about their jobs? All the meetings they must attend! What's even better are the magical online tools that help you attend meetings for all the days you unfortunately can't make it into work.

...Yeah, okay.

Meetings are not the most exciting part of anyone's day, and yet there's a company out there making the most of it.

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GoToMeeting.

Citrix's GoToMeeting does a great job taking a professional yet friendly approach to their content. Their Twitter stream is one of the best instances of this balance. Take a look at some of their most recent tweets to the right. You'll notice they mix up their Twitter content using popular internet memes, such as the Harlem Shake videos, retweets, and other articles about the modern workplace. It's refreshing to see a B2B brand that isn't afraid to play a little.

GoToMeeting is also very focused on telling their customers' success stories, which makes their customers feel appreciated while helping prospective customers understand the value of their software.

boring

Cleaning Supplies.

Vroom vrooooom... goes a vacuum.

That's pretty much as exciting a vacuum can possibly get -- making "vroom" sounds and watching children run away from the vacuum because they're pretending it's a monster.

While you may be among those who enjoy watching dirt disappear from your kitchen floor, you may not find it as exciting to read why one vacuum manufacturer is better than the other.

But there are ways to tie topics of interest to vacuuming or cleaning. Here's a company that does that well.

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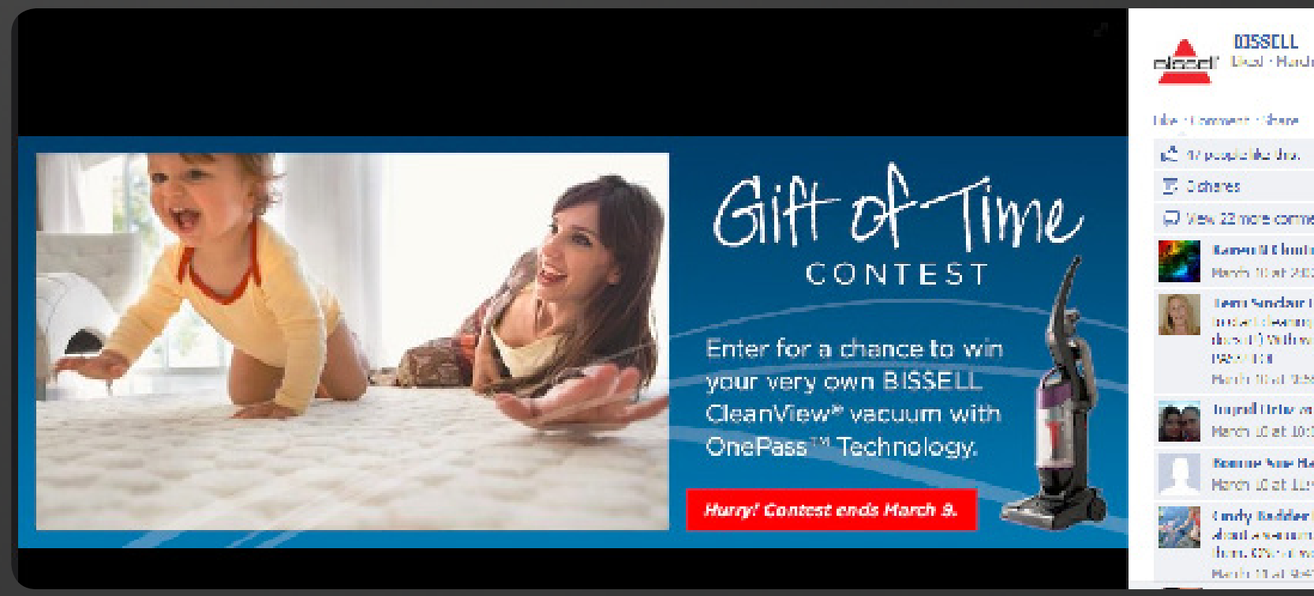
Bissell.

Bissell is built on the promise of providing vacuum cleaners that can “tackle any mess.”

They’re also very active on social media. Particularly Facebook.

Bissell recently launched a “Gift of Time” contest. Instead of running an easy-to-ignore ad campaign talking about increased suction, they built an entire campaign around the importance of using your time wisely.

Instead of spending hours cleaning, you should be spending time with your family, and Bissell’s latest new DeepClean Premier vacuum is so efficient that you can reallocate your precious time doing what matters most. They complimented this campaign with visual content that appeals to its fan base, as illustrated through the likes and comments generated. One woman responded, “If I had more time, I could crochet more afghans & shawls to give to friends & family. I’d love to have a vacuum to make things easier.”



boring

Real Estate.

While it's exciting to move into a new home and fill it with your possessions, it's not as exciting spending tons of time trying to find one. In fact, it's usually a huge headache.

There's an opportunity to make the apartment-hunting process much easier with helpful and non-traditional content, and there is a company out there taking advantage of it. By doing so, they're turning this traditionally boring and complex industry into a topic worth talking about.

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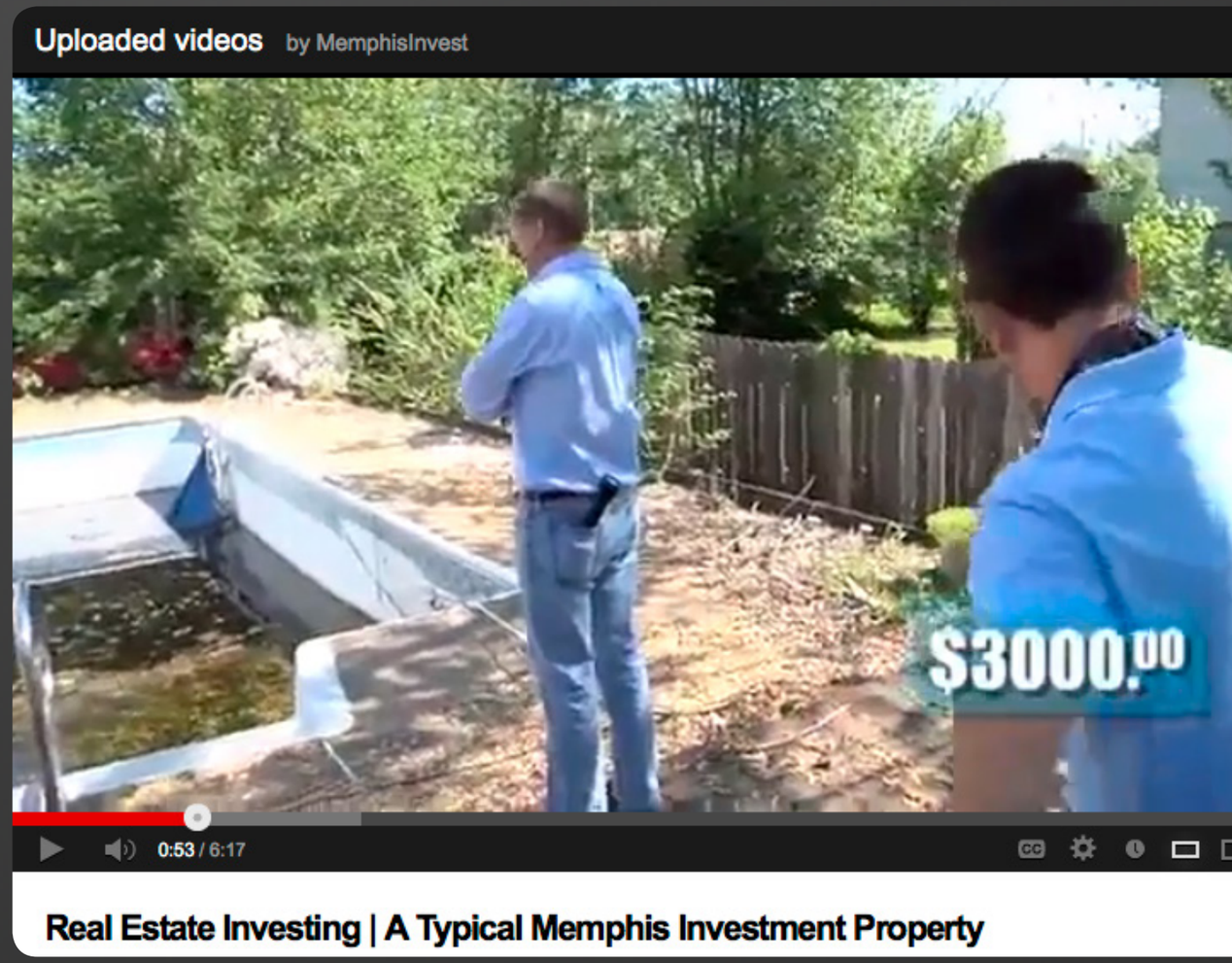
Memphis Invest.

Memphis Invest, a Tennessee-based real estate company, engages visitors with some clever video marketing.

Memphis Invest uses YouTube for a reality TV show type series that shows a typical property a real estate investor works with. Through the video, you watch the real estate agent examine a property and determine its dollar value based on his expertise in real estate. It has a Cribs-esque feel to it, complete with the cheesy price pop ups.

As a family-owned company, Memphis uses their musical selection and employee personalities to tie back to their promise of being family-owned. It's an entertaining and unique way of approaching real estate.



boring

Consulting.

As of 2011, there were around 400,000 people in the U.S. who call themselves consultants. While this may include sole proprietors, that number shows that there are many companies with many consultants.

Uh, that's a lot of companies.

With so much choice out there, how can consulting companies truly differentiate?

As good inbound marketers, we know that one of the best ways to prove yourself to the world is through authoritative content. And that's what one Boston-based consultancy has figured out.

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Deloitte.

Deloitte is a Boston-based consultancy with services that include auditing, financial advisory, risk management, and tax consulting. The company works with a massive cross-section of industries, from government to life sciences. At Deloitte, their knowledge is their selling point, so creating informed, useful content is core to their marketing strategy.

What is interesting about Deloitte's content is that it comes in a number of different forms. From guides to podcasts, and newsletters to debates, there's never a shortage of new content.

One of the formats Deloitte's content takes is in the form of open-ended debates on topics like merger integration, big data, and health care exchanges. These debates are prime content for CIOs and COOs preparing to make a decision on similar topics, and thus, great lead generation content.

Taxation and Investment Guides and Country Highlights

The increasing number and variety of business transactions undertaken by companies in today's global economy create both challenges and opportunities. Whether a company already operates in multiple jurisdictions or seeks to expand globally, access to accurate and timely information on taxation and other business conditions is critical.

Two tax series are available: the Guides, which provide extensive reviews of the tax systems of the major trading jurisdictions, and the Highlights, which provide high-level overviews covering almost 150 countries.

Taxation and Investment Guides

The Taxation and Investment Guides are a first stop for investors wishing to gain a working perspective on the operating conditions and investment climate – including the legal, accounting and taxation framework – in the countries covered in the **Deloitte International Tax Source**:

Guide selector Go

Health.

Unless you're a health nut or a healthcare professional, you probably don't understand the chemistry behind medicine or what makes probiotics different than other types of bacteria.

And the truth is, many health-based topics are utterly confusing to keep up with and understand. The biggest content opportunity when it comes to the health industry is making complex topics easy to comprehend. That's exactly what makes the following company awesome.

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Probiotics Now.

Probiotics Now is a small company with a focus on being healthy in body, mind, and spirit. The company itself is founded off a powerful story of how probiotics saved a man's life -- the founder's father.

Not only is Probiotics Now interesting because of how they got started, they have great blog content, too. They frequently write posts that bridge the gap between science and health.

Let's take one of their recent posts, Culture Shlock (showed partially to the right). The post explains why unadulterated yogurt is better for you than ones filled with sugar. But instead of just leaving it to the why, the post also answers *how* by including a video on how to make yogurt.

One solution? Unadulterated yogurt. In most countries, plain yogurt is deliciousl
available kind. In the United States, plain yogurt takes a back seat in the dairy ais
Once you find it though, you are good to start manufacturing your own in your kit
added to warm milk—and given time to "culture"-- will keep you in probiotics withe
plain yogurt can replace fatty sour cream and whipping creams in cooking. Soups
dressings, quiches, and desserts taste delicious with more tang, fewer calories a

Here is a video on how to make your own yogurt. Thanks, YouTube!

boring

Insurance.

If you told someone you worked in insurance at, say, a party, you might not get the same reaction as if you told them you worked at Disney World.

Yet the keyword with the most expensive PPC bid in Google AdWords is "insurance," according to the State of Search.

While demand for information about insurance is high, that doesn't mean the topic is particularly interesting. It simply means that despite this recognized boring industry, it's an important part of everyone's life.

It the insurance companies buzzing with popular content we are most likely familiar with.

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Geico and All State.

Geico and Allstate have both found ways to lighten up the discussion around insurance -- Geico with its long-running mascot, the Geico Gecko (alongside other mascots like the Caveman), and Allstate with its newer character, Mayhem.

Most recently, the Geico Gecko has been featured in a blooper commercial, showing his “behind the scenes” footage from shooting commercials. And the Mayhem character? Well, he’s been featured doing everything from running into the road like a deer in headlights, to jogging around the ‘burbs with pink hand weights, to our personal favorite -- streaking across a football field.

boring

Customer Service.

Most people cringe at the thought of having to call a customer service line. Most commonly, you hear complaints about how long someone had to wait for proper support, or how unhelpful a customer service team was.

But there are loads of companies that do not operate like this -- and are not given the proper recognition for it. That's why fantastically useful content can make the lives of both the customer service agent and the customer much easier. And we've found one company that has realized how exceptional content can help in this way.

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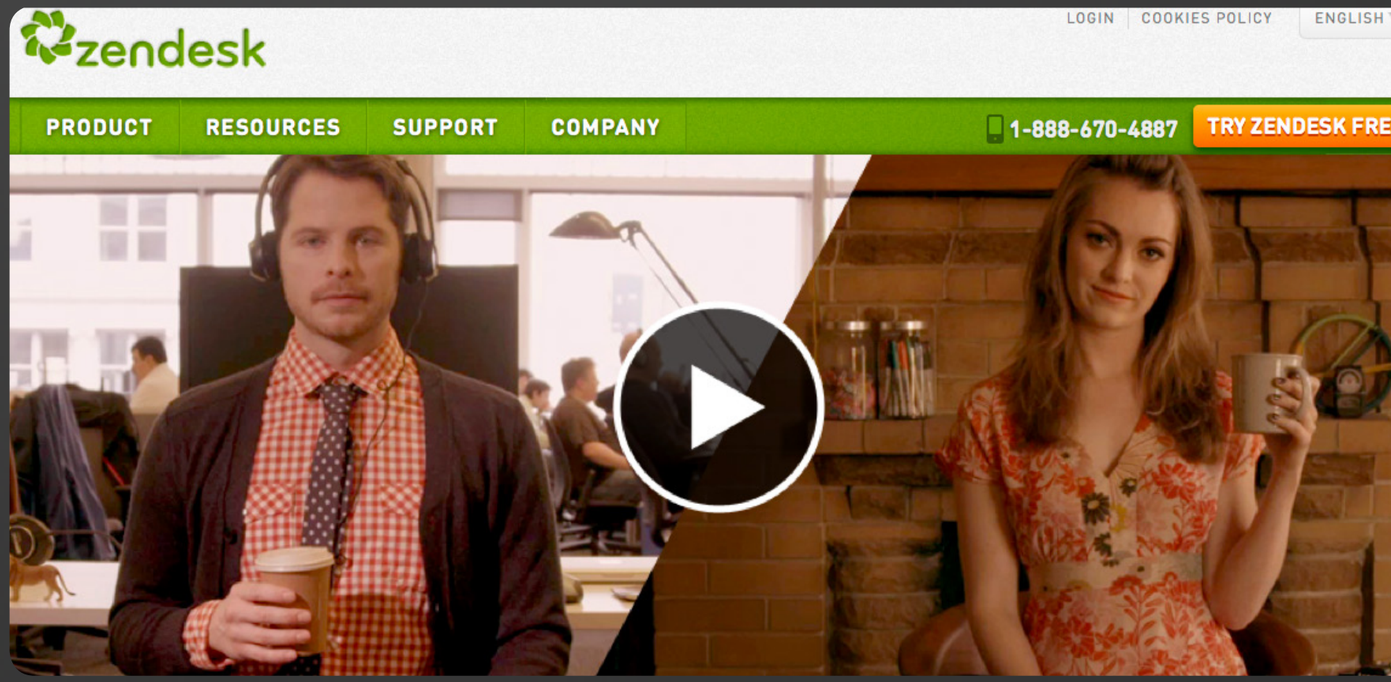
ZenDesk.

ZenDesk offers customer service and support ticket software, but has found a way to infuse the human element of the customer service industry into their marketing. Any B2B marketer interested in storytelling should take a look at the video they have on their site of the story of support ticket #24.

One of the best parts of this video is the contrast in communications the customer, Jessie, sees from one provider, versus the ZenDesk-powered provider.

When Jess sees a warm message “Hey there, Jessie” come through on live chat from one customer service rep, as opposed to the cold and impersonal “Dear Sir or Madam,” she chooses to talk to the more personable rep.

This is just a small example from the video, but it demonstrates how ZenDesk recreated a real-world story to showcase the value of their service.



boring

Crutches.

While crutches shouldn't be labeled as a "boring" industry -- they are needed for actual injury and should not be joked about -- they still aren't the most intriguing.

And when it comes to purchasing crutches, no one is truly an expert. How do you know where to go, or which type is best for you?

That's where remarkable content comes in.

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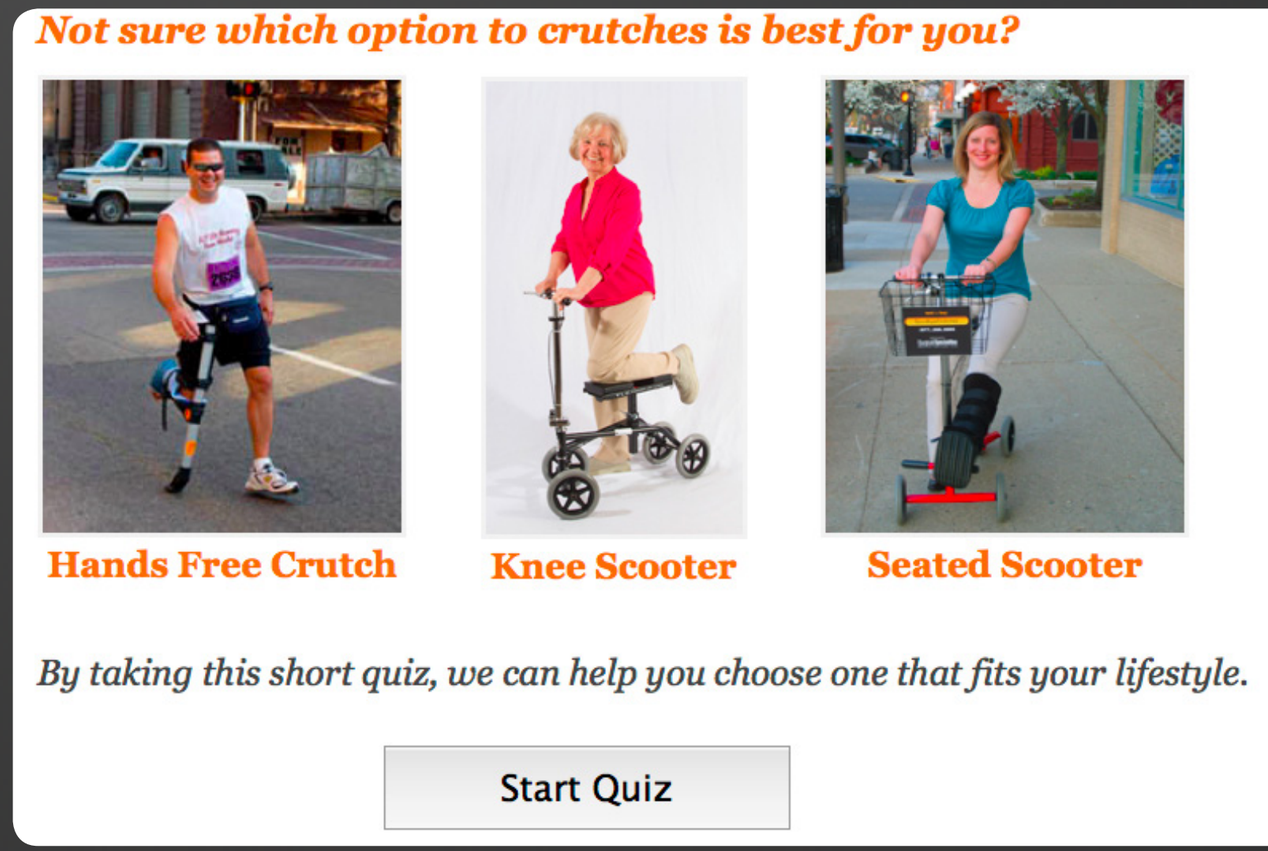
Goodbye Crutches.

Goodbye Crutches is a business founded on providing relief. The company provides free ground delivery on their various crutch alternatives.

But to make the process of picking your crutches painless and fun, they put together a brief, magazine-style quiz for site visitors.

The quiz takes the user through the path of deciding which crutch is best for them. Rather than reading long bodies of text on what crutch is appropriate for which situation, just click through a few questions, and Goodbye Crutches will let you know the answer!



Toilet Paper.

Like body wash, toilet paper is seen as a commodity to most people. It's the crap -- no pun intended -- you see on the ground of public bathrooms, or what constantly runs out.

You only buy it because you have to. And when you do buy it, you have a lot of options to choose from.

Let's take a look at a company that's using humor to keep their toilet paper brand top of mind.

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Charmin.

Charmin, one of the biggest toilet paper providers in the US, has done a hilarious job of converting their Twitter stream into a hub of amusement.

Their most recognized Twitter hashtag is "tweetfromtheseat," which is, as it sounds... tweets from the toilet seat.

One their more recent tweets of hilarity reads:

> If it went in green, does it come out green? #justwondering #tweetfromtheseat

What's even more impressive is that they're not afraid to the keep the conversation going and interact with the responses they receive.

boring

Radiology.

Radiology -- not exactly the first thing that comes to mind when it comes to getting a good laugh. You don't get lollipops or stickers when you leave the radiologist's office.

You do get a picture, just not the pretty kind.

On top of that, radiology, just like the health industry as a whole mentioned earlier, is not crystal clear to the world. The only time you think about this particular field is when you actually need an X-Ray.

And for when you do, there's one organization ensuring they stay top of mind.

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RSNA.

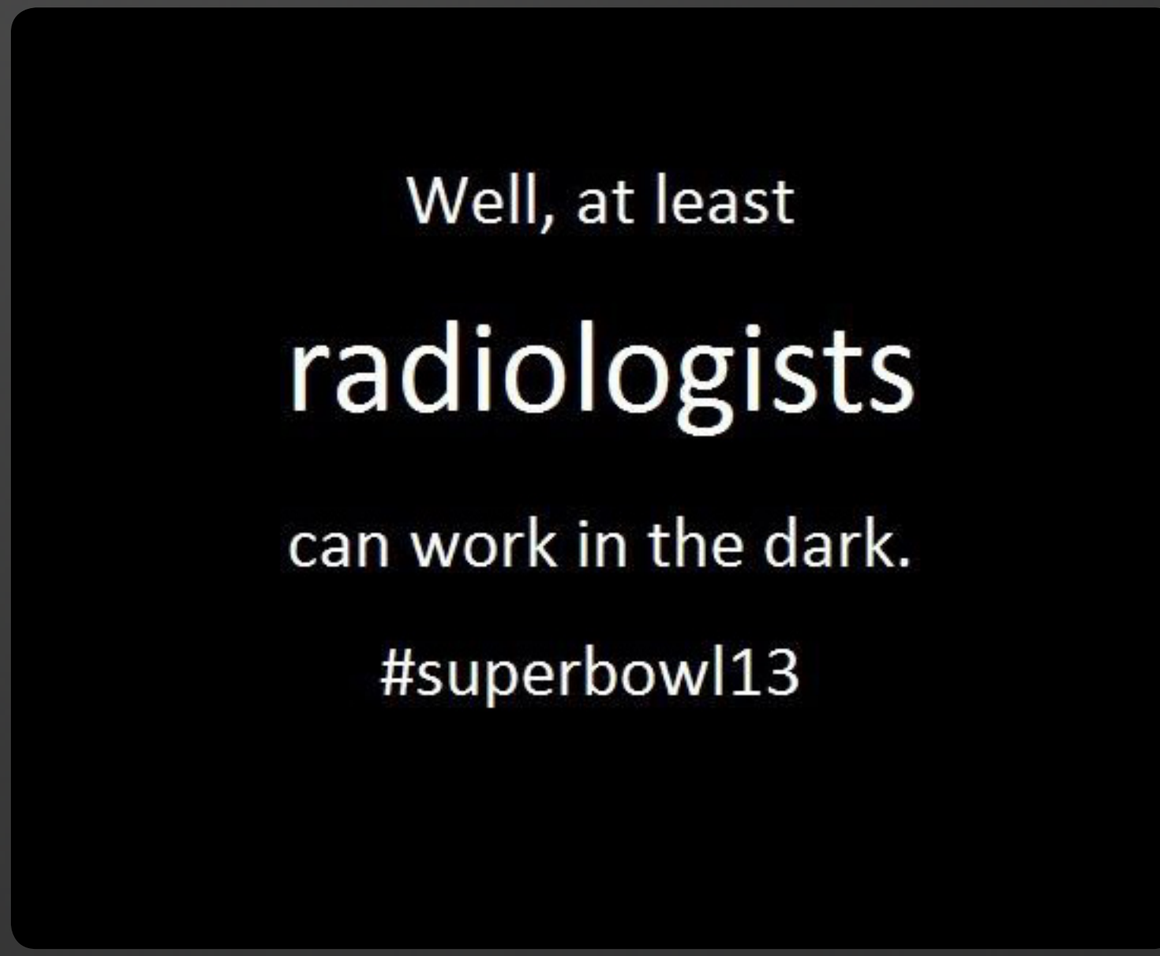
The Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) -- boy that's a mouthful -- uses their Facebook presence to easily connect with their audience in a light and friendly way.

Rather than populating their Facebook page with one news article or research report after another, they keep the conversation light and call on others to share their opinions.

During the 2013 Super Bowl, RSNA jumped in on the blackout with a simple, but engaging, Facebook image that read:

> Well, at least radiologists can work in the dark. #superbowl13

Although the image posted was just a black background with white text over it, the newsjacking and comical elements made it a remarkable piece of content.



boring

Everything.

You know what's really interesting? A multinational conglomerate corporation that operates through four segments: energy, technology infrastructure, capital finance, and consumer and industrial.

(Thank you for that compelling description, Wikipedia.)

Basically, you're a company that does everything. So how do you take everything, and make it into something worth noting?

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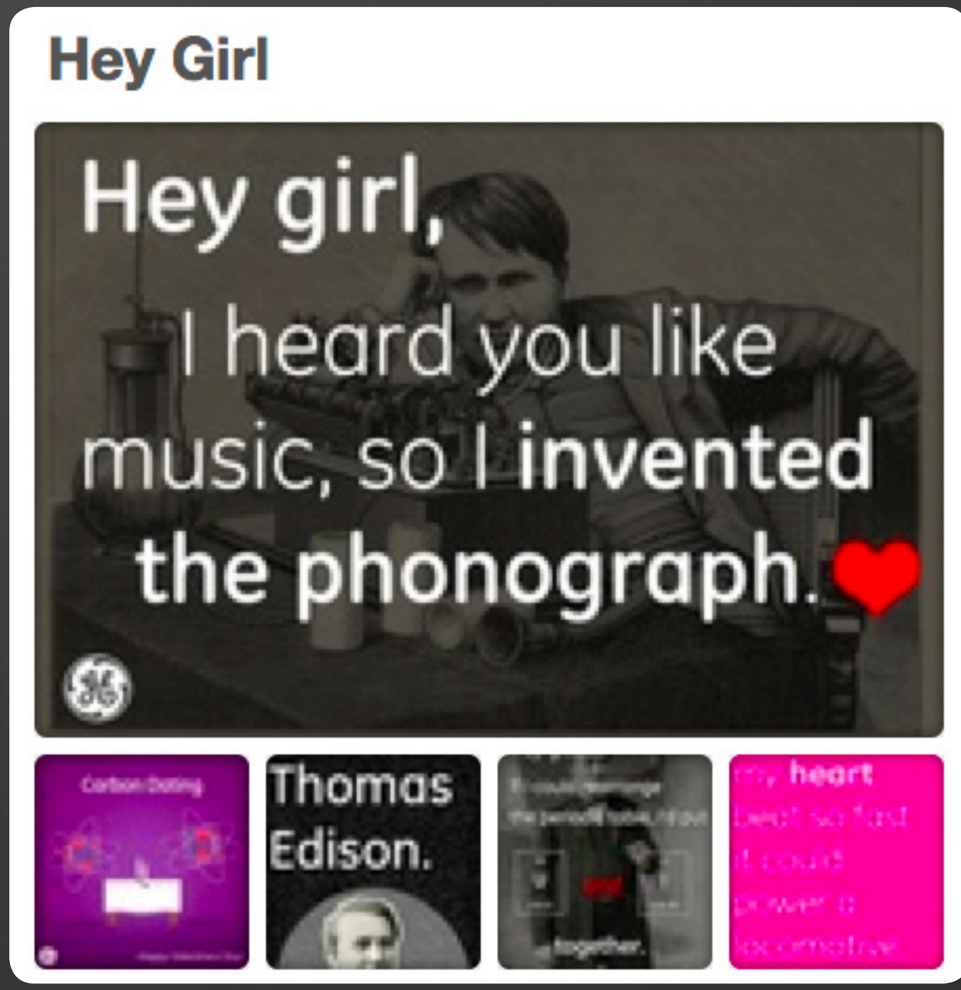
GE.

General Electric. While your home may be filled with their appliances, the appliance industry isn't what you like to read about in your free time. Until you check out GE's Pinterest presence (yes, they are on Pinterest!) and realize they don't take themselves insanely seriously. For instance, they have boards called "Mind = Blown" and "Badass Machines" right alongside boards like "Eco Efficient" and "The Art of Innovation."

But really, the crowning achievement of GE's Pinterest presence is their ability to find a way to incorporate the Ryan Gosling "Hey, girl" meme into their marketing. Only instead of Ryan Gosling, it's Thomas Edison. This strategy makes it easy for consumers to connect with the brand.



boring

Software.

Now it's time for a software company to admit that software isn't what people turn to for entertainment on YouTube, or content that's educational.

But with the right content mentality and dedication, your software company can spread in recognition and leadership by producing the right content for the right people at the right time.

If you've downloaded any of our content before, you know where this one is going.

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HubSpot.

Here at HubSpot, we pride ourselves in building a content machine. Since the beginning of HubSpot time, we've been producing videos to help spread our brand name.

We use video to educate and entertain, here's a few examples:

- Gangnam Style
- Harlem Shake
- Make Love Not Spam
- Congratulations on Avoiding the Sales Rep

This approach was adopted before software companies started to incorporate video marketing into their strategy, and the early success has carried over into our culture of content today.

CONCLUSION.

As mentioned, 80% of business decision makers prefer to get company information in a series of articles versus an advertisement.

With the importance of content front and center, we hope these examples have inspired ideas for your own content mastery.

At the end of the day, regardless of what industry you're in or which product you sell, a small dose of creativity can go a long way in the content creation machine.

GAIN EXPERT ADVICE ON YOUR REMARKABLE CONTENT STRATEGY.

Trying to figure out what content will work best for your business?

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