

THE MARKETING STRATEGY MUSIC FESTIVALS NEED TO START USING RIGHT NOW

How to stand out, attract and retain loyal festival-goers



DISCLAIMER!!

If you're OK with keeping status quo and continuing to do the same things, then this deck is NOT for you (still might be an interesting read though, especially slides 19 and 24 😊).

But if you like to innovate, be first, adopt early and like to add value to your audience then please read on! The strategies in this deck will help your festival stand out from the noise and give you a competitive advantage.



THE MARKETING STRATEGY MUSIC FESTIVALS NEED TO START USING NOW

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A BETTER WAY





IT'S TIME FOR A NEW IDEA

[A great lineup no longer ensures solid ticket sales.](#) Traditional marketing is becoming less and less effective by the minute. On social media, organic reach is considered dead and engagement rates are decreasing year over year.

According to Forbes, traditional ads don't work anymore because 84% of millennials simply don't trust traditional advertising ([and millennials are the ones driving the growth of music festivals](#)). They don't like the pushy, disingenuous nature of it and will do anything within their power to skip and even block any content that even hints at advertising.

As a forward-thinking decision maker in business, you know there has to be a better way. [Enter content marketing.](#)





WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing **valuable, relevant, and consistent** content to **attract** and **retain** a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to **drive profitable customer action.**



“SELLING” DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE

Go back and read the content marketing definition one more time, but this time remove the relevant and valuable. That's the difference between content marketing and the other informational garbage you get from companies trying to sell you “stuff,” even tickets.

Companies send us information all the time – it's just that most of the time it's not very relevant or valuable (can you say spam?). That's what makes content marketing so intriguing in today's environment where an average person receives thousands of marketing messages every single day. How are you standing out?

Content marketing is the present and future of marketing, and marketing is impossible without great content.



CONTENT IS KING

Regardless of what type of marketing tactics you use, content marketing should be part of your process, not something separate. **Quality content is part of all forms of marketing:**

- **SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**: Content marketing strategy comes before your social media strategy.
- **SEO**: Search engines like Google reward businesses that publish quality, consistent content.
- **PPC**: For PPC to work, you need great content behind it.
- **INBOUND MARKETING**: Content is key to driving inbound traffic and leads.



SOURCE: Content Marketing Institute



FESTIVAL GOERS ARE LEADS

You may never have thought about your festival goers as leads, but that's what they are. **Even if they've been to your festival before, once your event is done, they are once again just leads.** They may be warm leads, but they're leads nonetheless. They are prospects that need to be convinced to purchase a ticket and attend your festival next year, and the year after that, and so on.

But your existing audience is not enough to ensure your success. **You also need a constant flow of new leads.**

It's vital that you have a healthy pipeline of leads - they are literally your lifeline! So your marketing goal and budget needs to be focused on a strategy to attract new leads, and retain existing ones. **You need to be doing content marketing.**





CONTENT MARKETING IS SO HOT RIGHT NOW

If content marketing is so “in” and effective, why hasn’t the music festival industry embraced it yet?

For starters, most companies don’t innovate. They see what brands in their space are doing, and simply copy. They’re not good at coming up with new ideas, let alone trying them. **But content marketing isn’t a theory, it works for any industry if done right.**

That’s also the issue, content marketing won’t amount to much if it’s not done correctly. According to the Content Marketing Institute, **while 60% of B2C marketers are committed to content marketing, out of those, 63% of them don’t know how to use it and don’t have a documented content strategy, or worse, they think they’re doing it right.**





CONTENT MARKETING IS MARKETING

Content marketing as we know it is still a relatively new phenomenon. As recently as a few years ago, marketers handled content mostly as a side project. It was a bonus, not an essential role – something you did when you had time because it took a backseat to more traditional marketing projects and advertising.

That's changed. The days of pushing one-sided conversations towards consumers are over.

Content is one of the best tools you have for earning trust, building your brand, generating site traffic and qualified leads, selling tickets and everything in between. According to Forbes [content marketing is marketing](#), and successful brands understand that content is essential to effective marketing – and, ultimately, to their entire business.





STRATEGY NOT OPTIONAL

Just because you make content and push it to your audience, it doesn't mean you are doing content marketing. **Your content must trigger audience behaviors that help your festival reach its business goals.**

Your content needs to be made with purpose and intent. How does your content help attract, acquire, and engage your prospects and turn them into ticket buyers? If you can't answer this, you don't have a real strategy.

Why is a deliberate strategy critical? Content Marketing Institute's annual *Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends* research has consistently found that **a documented content marketing strategy is a factor that separates successful content marketers from their less successful peers.** Again, content marketing only works when done right.

STRATEGY = ←



CONTENT MARKETING STATS

- Content marketing gets three times more leads than paid search advertising.
- **72% of marketers say content marketing increases engagement.** In addition, 72% say it has increased the number of leads.
- **Content is one of the most effective ways to promote a business.**
- 86% of B2C marketers think content marketing is a key strategy.
- Marketers who prioritize blogging efforts are 13x more likely to see positive ROI.



SOURCE: CMI (Content Marketing Institute)



CONTENT MARKETING VS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING



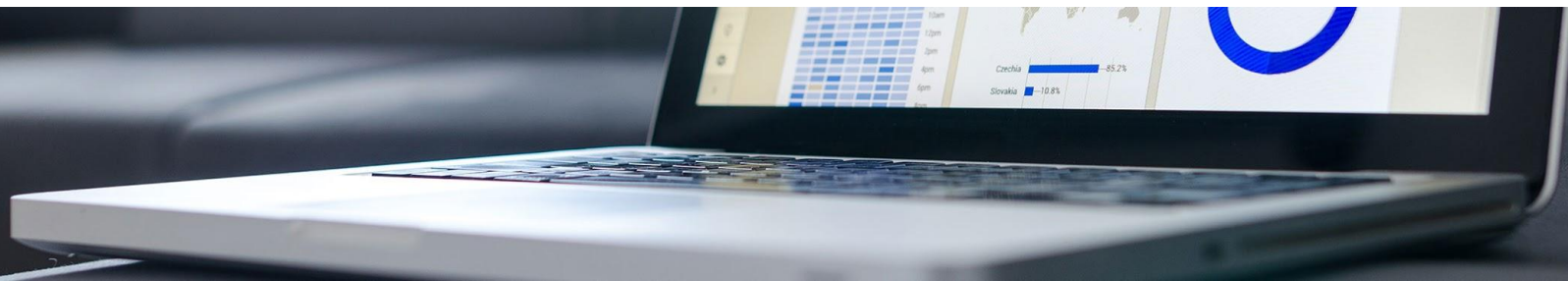


DON'T FORGET ABOUT YOUR WEBSITE

In social media marketing, the focus of the marketing activity is located within the social networks themselves.

In contrast, **the center of gravity for content marketing is a brand website**. Social networks are vital to the success of content marketing efforts, but here, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are used primarily as a distributor of micro-content and links back to the content on your website — not as containers of the content itself.

In content marketing, the context of websites permits **much longer forms of content**. Brands can publish blog posts, videos, checklists, and how-to guides, just to name a few formats. **Here, brands model their behavior after that of media publishers.**





YOU ARE THE MEDIA PUBLISHER

The internet has unleashed a revolutionary ability for every brand to communicate directly with its customers — without the need for a media industry intermediary.

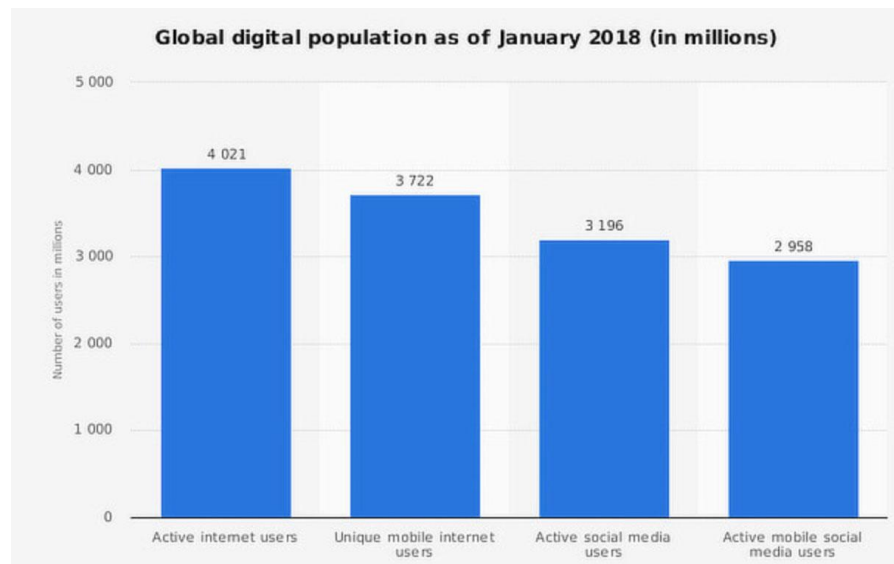


INTERNET IS FOREVER

When it comes to content, music festivals clearly focus on social media. **Just remember though that there are about a billion more general internet users than social media users.** That's a billion people that content marketing can potentially reach, that social media can't.

With social media, there's always a new platform and the popularity of social networks always change - **TikTok is already more popular than Twitter or Snapchat.** Isn't that crazy? I bet your festival doesn't even have a TikTok account or if you do, you don't use it.

And one thing is for sure, if your go-to social platform disappeared tomorrow (it is a business after all), your website will still be around.





EMOTION SELLS TICKETS

Let's not forget about your business goal. You want people to buy tickets! Then it's important to know, **people make purchase decisions with emotion then justify it with logic later.**

So the better you are at creating that desire within your audience to attend your festival, the more tickets you will sell, and the longer you'll be around. Your festival needs to be so appealing that they get the FOMO.

If you wanted to convince someone to choose you out of a ton of options, commit 2~4 days of their lives and spend their hard earned money, would your pitch fit in a 1 minute video, or would you rather have 10 minutes? If you can send them a message and are allowed a full page, would you just write a few sentences or use the whole page?





LONG FORM CONTENT FOR THE WIN

The question is, which has a better chance of evoking emotion - short form content or long form content? Long form of course! It's hard to add real value with 1 photo or few sentences and this is why **content marketing is better at driving consumer action than social media marketing or any other type of marketing.**

Yes, long form content is much more difficult to create, but the rewards and results are, arguably, more powerful. **Brands can engage more deeply with their customers through content marketing efforts.**

And by driving consumers to your own website, **you have a greater opportunity to gain leads and move them down the conversion funnel.** Yes, even festivals should have one of those!

Stories matter



HOMOGENIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

While many music festivals are beginning to stand out and see an uptick in ticket sales by offering a unique experience onsite, when it comes to social media, many have fallen into the sea of sameness.

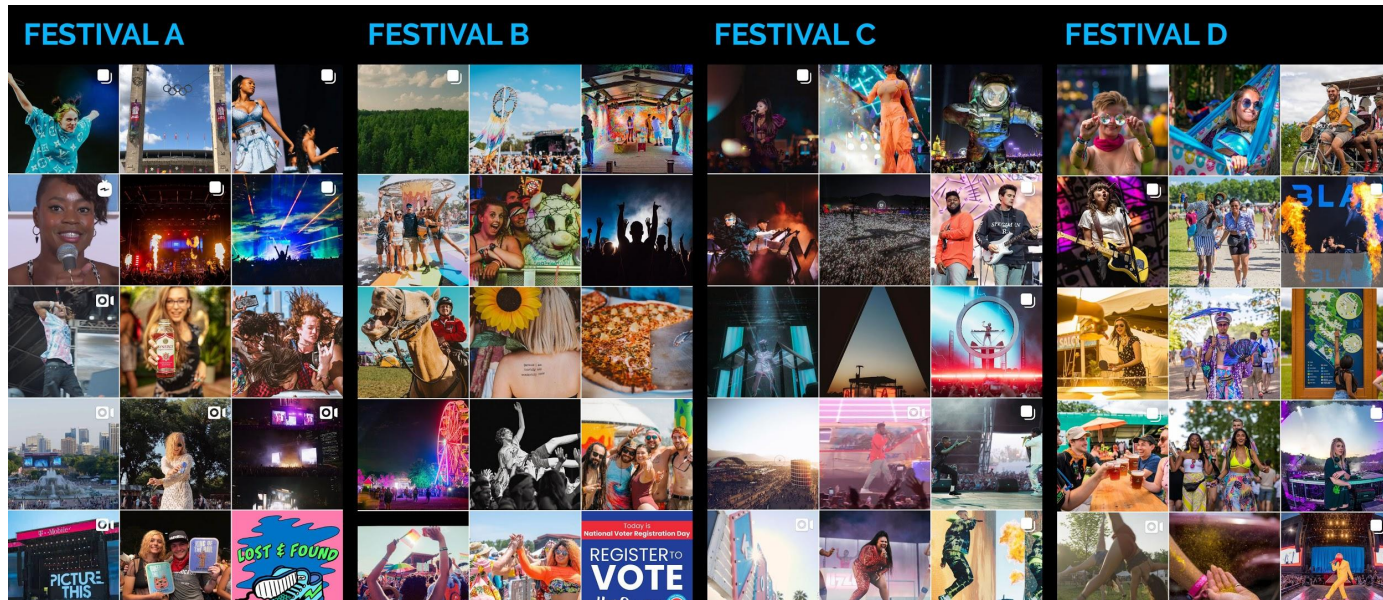
All of the festivals, big and small are posting the same type of content: Promotional content, photos of the audience, artists, experiential and art installations, landscapes, sponsors, sizzle, highlight or recap videos. **The content is essentially exactly the same, save for a different backdrop. It's not standing out, or giving you a competitive advantage.**

Look at the image below, it's a mix of Instagram content from several different festivals. Where does one festival begin and where does it end? It's very hard to tell.



SEA OF SAMENESS

Below are the Instagram feeds of 4 major music festivals. Can you tell which is which? Do any of them stand out to you? Aside from the different backdrop does the experience seem unique or do they all feel similar? Is there enough here to pick one festival over the other? Do you feel like you've gained value?





CASE STUDY: SHORT FORM CONTENT

These are Instagram feeds from Bonnaroo. Two of them are from 2015, and one is from 2019.

A thing to note here is that Bonnaroo had their lowest ticket sales ever in 2016, while they were able to sell out in 2019. Clearly they've been posting the same type of content for over 5 years.

This means that Bonnaroo's social media strategy has little to no effect on ticket sales, positive or negative.





LEVERAGE BLOGGING AND YOUTUBE



POWER OF SEARCH

While there are many types of content, the 2 content types you should focus on is written content (blog) and video content.

One reason is searchability. **Google is the world's largest search engine and YouTube is the world's second biggest search engine.**

This means organic traffic potential and the possibility of being found by prospects are far greater than social media content.

You can also lookup search volumes of keywords and phrases and make content on topics that people are already searching for. There will be an example of this in the next slide.





GOOGLE SEARCH

The phrase “what to bring to a music festival” is **searched 390 times per month in the U.S.** and 510 times per month in total worldwide (excluding some countries). You can research this information, so knowing this, it’s smart to write a blog post on this topic and increase your chance to be found.

And what happens when you actually Google that phrase? While there are tons of results, no music festivals websites show up on the 1st page. In fact only 1 festival appears in the first 3 pages, and that is, Backwoods Festival on page 3.

Backwoods is a very small festival but they do have a blog section, and although they don’t post often, 2 of their blog posts show up on **page 3 of the Google search!**

The screenshot shows a Google search for "what to bring to a music festival". The search bar indicates 510 searches in the US and 390 worldwide. The results are on page 3 of approximately 387,000,000 results. A red box highlights the first two results:

- backwoodsmusicfestival.com › top-10-foods-to-pack-when-traveling-...
Top 10 Foods to Pack When Traveling to a Music Festival ...
Top 10 Foods to Pack When Traveling to a Music Festival. Backwoods at ... Ramen Noodles – Bring you back to the college days, or maybe you're still there.
- backwoodsmusicfestival.com › bring ...
What to Bring - Backwoods Music Festival
We've prepared a list of what to bring to Backwoods Music Festival. This page has a list of camping gear as well as other little things you may not even think of.

Below the highlighted results, other search results are visible:

- www.walkaboutoutfitter.com › pages › everything-you-didnt-think-y...
13 Music Festival Essentials - Walkabout Outfitter
Waterproof Everything Water and Music Festivals just seem to go together, either due to the weather or that water slide that is just all to tempting. Don't bring ...
- www.upvenue.com › article › 1135-things-to-bring-at-a-music-festival
What to Bring at a Music Festival - UpVenue
This edition of Tune Up Your Mind covers the essential items you'll want to bring with you at a music festival.



GOOGLE POTENTIAL

Truth be told these 2 blog posts are poorly done in terms of both actual content and visual presentation. We're not going to explain the boring details of why it's not optimized for SEO and how best practices aren't being used, but the important takeaway is that **even with very little effort, these posts are ranking within the first 3 pages, and they are the only festival website to appear in the search results.**

Imagine if you wrote a better version of the topic with best practices and optimizations in place - your post will not only rank ahead of Backwoods, but it'll **potentially be seen by 390 people in the U.S. every month. And that's just from 1 post.**

[TICKETS](#) [LINEUP](#) [EXPERIENCE](#) [COMMUNITY](#) [WORK WITH BACKWOODS](#) [BLOG](#) [MERCHANDISE](#)

[WHAT TO BRING](#)

Worried you may be forgetting something? Here's a list of what to bring to the Backwoods Camping and Music Festival. We've tried to think of most of the basics required for you to have a great time. Of course, you may want to bring other things as well, but try not to over-do it. Remember, you'll be at camp usually at night just to sleep, and maybe in the mornings. The rest of the time you'll probably be having a blast inside the main venue! So, the word of advice is pack light. Only bring what you need which will make setup and tear down a breeze. Last, remember that every camping "group" of 3-4 people gets a defined 12x30' space for setting up camp which includes their car, so make sure whatever you bring for your group is going to fit within that space. If you need additional space, VIP campsites are 15x30', and remember RVs and Campers ALWAYS need an RV pass in addition to your individual tickets/wristbands.

[Download the PDF Checklist](#)

Music Festival Camping Equipment Essentials

Your Wristband - Obviously this is the most important thing to bring to the festival. If you don't bring this, you don't get in! Your RFID wristbands (tickets) will be sent to you in the mail and will arrive just a couple weeks before the festival.

Shelter - Probably second to purchasing tickets is planning on how you and your friends are planning on camping at Backwoods Bash. Whether a cushy RV tickles your fancy, you enjoy roughing it a tent, or sleeping under the stars, there are plenty of campsites to post up for the festival. Get a tent that has lots of windows, as during the day it can get hot and you may want the breeze to blow through. Size is also important, many times if a tent says it fits four people, it's actually comfortable with two. If it says eight, figure four can fit comfortably.



IMPORTANT BLOGGING STATS

- 55% of marketers say blog content creation is their top inbound marketing priority. (HubSpot, 2018)
- **Over ¾ of internet users say they read blogs regularly.** (Quoracreative, 2019)
- **Marketers who prioritize blogging efforts are 13x more likely to see positive ROI.** (HubSpot, 2019)
- 66% of marketers surveyed used blogs in their social media content. (Social Media Examiner, 2019)
- 43% of people admit to skimming blog posts. (HubSpot, 2018)
- 23% of today's posts on social media include a link to a blog post. (Quoracreative, 2019)
- Websites that also have a blog are shown to have 434% more indexed pages. (Optinmonster, 2020)
- Companies who blog get 97% more links to their websites. (Optinmonster, 2020)
- Blogs have been rated as the 5th most trustworthy source for gathering online information. (Optinmonster, 2020)
- Internet users in the US spend 3X more time on blogs than they do on email. (Optinmonster, 2020)
- **57% of marketers say they've gained customers specifically through blogging.** (Optinmonster, 2020)



THE POWER OF VIDEO

Human attention spans are less than that of a goldfish today and getting shorter. Video helps deliver messages **more effectively** in a shorter amount of time while also **striking an emotional chord** through visual and auditory storytelling elements not present in text or static images. According to HubSpot research, **54% of audiences want to see videos from brands they support, which is more than any other type of content.**

Video is the most powerful way to evoke emotions online. It's king because it offers a slew of attributes above and beyond traditional content like tone of voice, face expressions, and music, to name a few.

Evoking emotion in marketing has been **proven to positively impact consumer decision-making** (SOURCE: Vidyard).





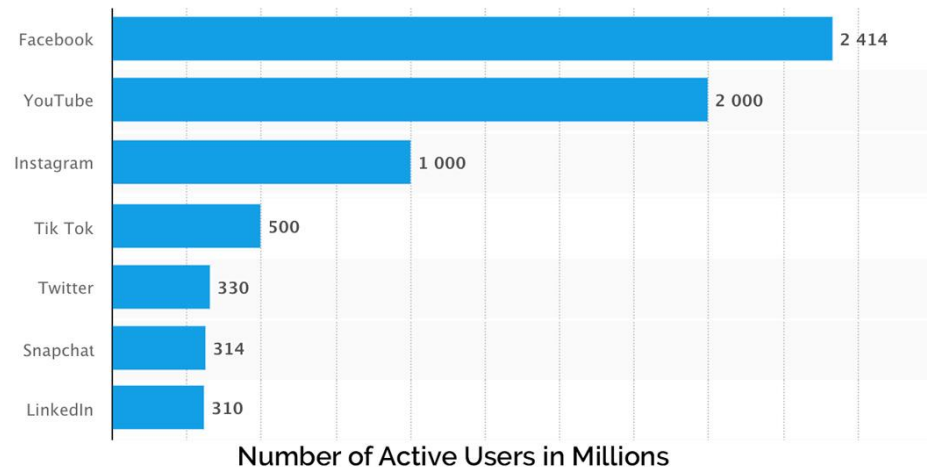
YOUTUBE IS A MUST

Generally speaking, YouTube is the most underutilized platform for music festivals and Instagram is the most utilized. But **YouTube has 2x as many active users than Instagram!**

People watch over 1 billion hours worth of videos on YouTube daily, more than Netflix and Facebook video combined (Get more [YouTube stats here](#)).

Over 90% of users say they have learned about a new brand or product on YouTube.

You festival needs presence where your audience is! You have to give YouTube more attention!





YOUTUBE SEARCH

Now let's try that Google search we did, "what to bring to a music festival" on YouTube. **You can keep scrolling and scrolling but you won't see any content published by a music festival. Why? It's simple. Currently, no festival makes this type of content.**

Look at the view counts - 19K, 1.4K, 26K, 3.9K, 11K, still don't think it's important to be on YouTube?

And pay attention to when it was published. 1 year ago, 2 years ago, 6 months ago and even 3 years ago. This goes for Google as well, but **content on blogs and YouTube have a very long lifespan.** Social media content on the other hand is buried as time goes on and reaches its peak within a few days.

The screenshot shows a YouTube search interface with the query "what to bring to a music festival". The results are as follows:

- THINGS NO ONE TELLS YOU TO BRING TO MUSIC FESTIVALS!!**
 - The Festival Finesser • 19K views • 1 year ago
 - Here are common and not so common things you should bring to a music festival and why. I recorded this video the night before I ...
- What to bring to your FIRST MUSIC FESTIVAL**
 - Cotton Kandi Raves • 1.4K views • 6 months ago
 - Here's a list of what to bring with you to a music festival or rave like Lost Lands, Nocturnal Wonderland, Electric Forest, ...
- MUSIC FESTIVAL ESSENTIALS 2017 | WHAT TO PACK!!**
 - Billie Rose White • 26K views • 2 years ago
 - WATCH IN HD & THUMBS UP IF YOU LIKED THIS VIDEO Hey hun, today's video is a festival essential, the must haves I bring ...
- 11 Things You Should Bring With You to a Music Festival**
 - Marc Freccero • 3.9K views • 3 years ago
 - As a DJ/Music Producer, I've been to a lot of Music Festivals, and they're one of the best experiences you can have. In order to ...
 - 4K
- How to Go to Your First Music Festival | Tips & Advice**
 - Vibe with Ade • 11K views • 1 year ago
 - How to Go to Your First Music Festival | Tips & Advice I hope you found these tips helpful in going to your first music festival.

THEY WIN, YOU WIN

When you earn the trust of your audience, when you add real value to them, when you help them, when they feel you care about them and they feel you understand them, amazing things happen.

When you strive to build relationships with your customers instead of just selling or promoting to them, they reward your authentic, genuine nature with not only purchases but with loyalty and even evangelism.

They become your most powerful marketing tools by willingly and passionately promoting your festival all on their own.

It's a real win, win.





READY FOR A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE?

What if your audience looked forward to receiving your marketing? What if when they received it, via email, website, social content, they spent 5, 15, 30 minutes with it? What if they anticipated it and shared it with their peers?

Remember, in order for you to be effective at content marketing, it is essential to have a documented content marketing strategy and you need to do it right. **All content is not created equal.** **Knowing how to create effective content is vital.**

If you are intrigued and ready to learn more, we can help. If you want to learn what questions to ask and how to develop your strategy and content, or have any questions about content marketing, don't hesitate to reach out and ask us!

CONTACT: Mitchell Setbon [E] mitch@highlarkcollective.com

SCHEDULE A CALL: <https://highlarkcollective-scheduling.as.me/schedule.php>



RESOURCES

Are you a decision maker for music festivals? Read our [Music Festivals: The Time To Adapt Is Now](#) deck to be up to date on current audience behavior and market trends in the music festival space.

Feel like your lineup isn't drawing enough of a crowd? Check out our [Music Festivals: Beyond The Lineup](#) deck where you'll learn why a solid lineup no longer ensures festival success and what you need to do.

Need more stats on YouTube? Download our [YouTube Stats You Need To Know In 2020](#) deck which has all the insane YouTube stats that support why 88% of marketers planned to use YouTube in 2019.

Need advice specific to your festival? Contact us at mitch@highlarkcollective.com to find out how they can help you meet your content marketing challenges.



Thank you!

CONTACT: Mitchell Setbon [E] mitch@highlarkcollective.com

SCHEDULE A CALL: <https://highlarkcollective-scheduling.as.me/schedule.php>

We've Worked with:

