

The Content 360 model
for creating disruptive
B2B content on LinkedIn

CRUSH THE CURVE

 SCORCH[®]



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Introduction

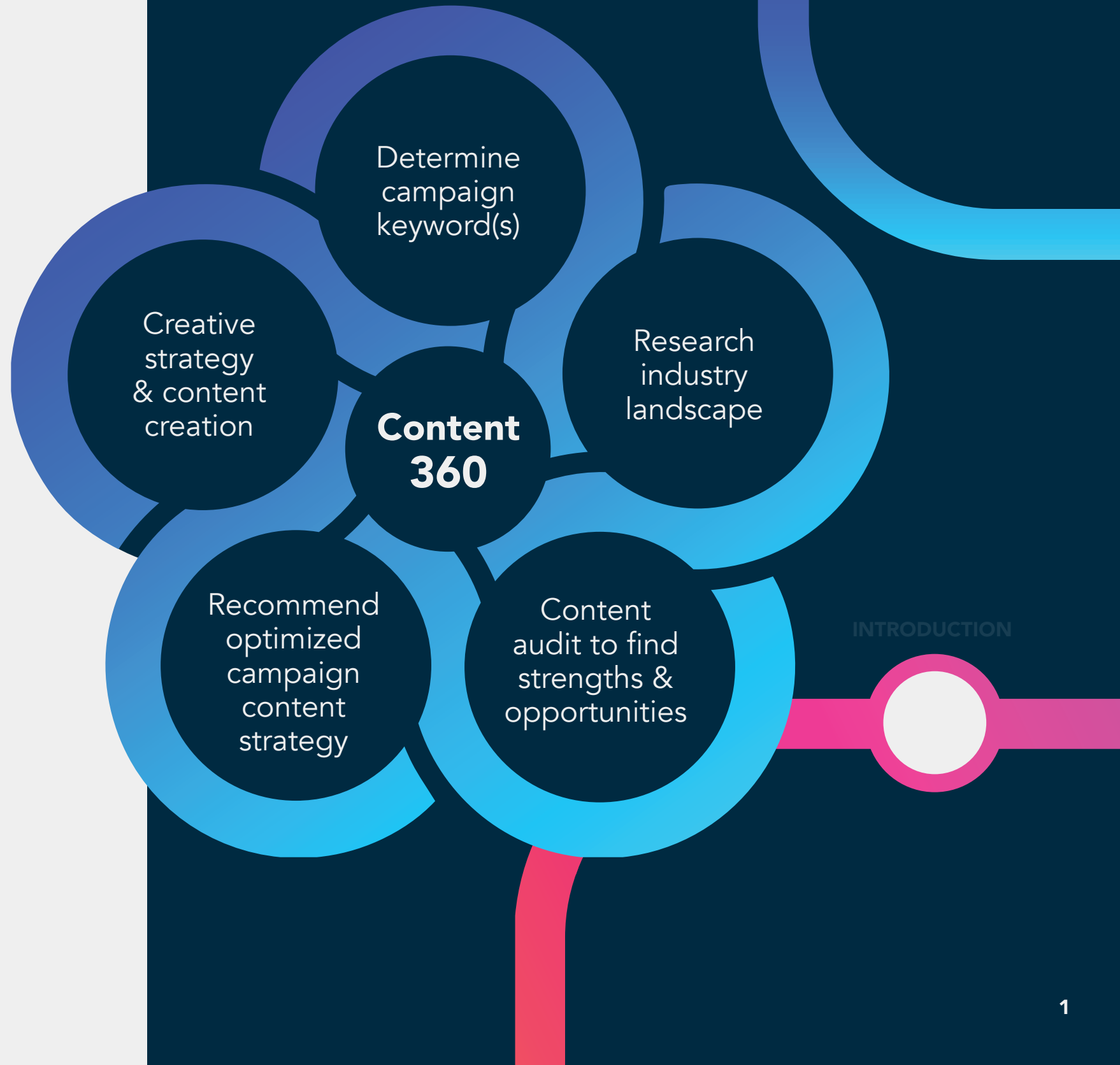
The B2B marketing model is broken.

Benchmarks are low—embarrassingly so—and still, most content doesn't live up to its industry average. As marketers, we've become complacent; satisfied when a campaign does meet the average benchmark of 0.33% to 0.58%.

The original LinkedIn Sophisticated Marketer's Guide crushed the curve, earning an astounding 18,000% ROI. Since then, marketers have been trying to mimic its success.

This is your instruction manual for crushing the curve from the team that made it happen.

Content 360 is the model, and it starts where all successful content begins—with research.



CHAPTER 1

Where Insights Meet Conversations

To reach an audience requires deep insights into their conversations, the information they're actively searching for, and why. Keyword-rich content can certainly boost your position in search rankings, but there's more to keywords than search volume.

- Topics with high search volume typically have strong engagement, but choose a topic that's saturated, and you risk your content getting lost amid the noise.
- Choose a topic with low search volume and you may uncover ownable white space in the industry, but you risk reaching a disinterested, unengaged audience.

The sweet spot? Where high engagement and low article volume intersect.

Cisco's Data Networking group leveraged Scorch as their LinkedIn Marketing Partner for Content and Creative to create a campaign designed to champion innovators and foster stronger customer engagement. The first step in crafting the content was to identify an ownable topic within the "data center" conversation.

Brands that reach specific ad-spend levels on LinkedIn can earn content credits. These credits can be used to engage a LinkedIn Marketing Partner for content creation.

Mind the Gap

SEO research surfaced keywords semantically associated with **“data center”**, and determined search intent to ensure the topic would meet the audience at the correct place along their customer journey.

But that was just the beginning.

Next, we leveraged proprietary LinkedIn insights to uncover trending topics, competitive whitespace, and potential gaps unique to the platform and audience.

The Content 360 model surfaced the keyword **“hyperconvergence”** as the ideal ownable conversation.

Chat with our team now about a whitespace analysis for your next campaign.

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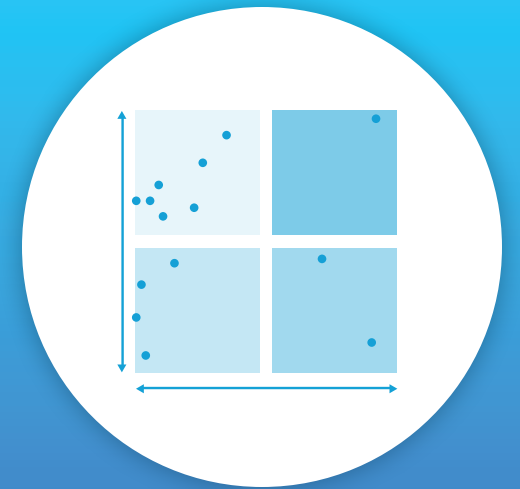
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“The Hyperconvergence Handbook” established Cisco’s authority in the “data center” space.

But the results went far beyond top-of-funnel brand awareness—it also generated leads. In fact, it was Cisco’s most engaged content asset of the year with paid media.

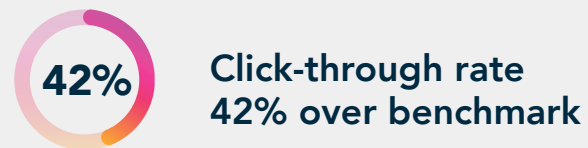


The LinkedIn Whitespace Analysis

The Whitespace Analysis calculates engagements per article and shares of articles across LinkedIn for a given topic.

Keywords that fall within the top-left quadrant represent optimal opportunities to create highly successful content.

Using the Content 360 model allowed Cisco to enter the conversation authentically, earn a **click-through rate 42% over benchmark**, **increase their engagement rate benchmark by 30%**, and **garner an 8% form completion rate**.



We've surfaced a topic and created content that fills a gap in the market. But does that content lead to your brand? Or *with* it?

Let's cover that next.

CHAPTER 2

Raise the Thought Leadership Bar

● SEO research in hand, your next step in the Content 360 process is an audit to determine the strengths and opportunities of existing content. Key to this step is uncovering gaps in your marketing funnel. ● Nine times out of 10, that gap exists at the top of the funnel.

● LinkedIn marketers are in a unique position to reach a massive professional audience, but what starts out as thought leadership frequently turns into mid-funnel content at best, filled with brand mentions and calls to purchase. Low-value thought-leadership content emphasizes selling rather than imparting valuable information.

Put another way: It leads *with* your brand, rather than *to* your brand.

Leading with your brand puts your company, products, and services front and center. And if there's one thing we know to be true about the LinkedIn audience, it's this:

They do not want to be sold to; they want data-backed insights and innovative ideas that give them an edge.

They want *Thought Leadership*.



Top-of-funnel content

Top-of-funnel content has the power to do the heavy lifting for you, establishing credibility and domain expertise to supercharge your sales funnel.

This allows your sales team to focus on higher-value tasks at mid-and-bottom funnel.

Missed Opportunities

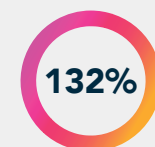
Nearly nine in 10 B2B decision makers say thought leadership has enhanced their perceptions of an organization and nearly half say it influences their purchasing decisions. **Still, only 26% of B2B content producers tie their thought leadership efforts to sales wins.**¹ That means most content creators are missing opportunities to impact their company's bottom line. They're also missing opportunities to build trust.

We know that high-value, thought-leadership content offers useful, actionable competitive intelligence. That is, it relies on compelling stats and data-backed research to add credibility and build trust. But, according to the Annual Content Marketing Survey, just **22% of marketers said they use fact-checking tools.** That's nearly eight in 10 marketers who are missing opportunities to build trust among their target audiences.

Cisco's Security team leveraged the newly released CISO Security Benchmark Report to surface

intelligence relevant to their audience and position Cisco as a trusted authority on cybersecurity best practices. Focusing on key research, credible stats, and compelling data helped drive traffic to the landing page and identify qualified leads while the sales team focused on converting those leads into customers.

Leading the audience to Cisco earned a click-through rate an impressive **132% higher than benchmark, a 40% increase over the average engagement rate, and a form completion rate of over 8%.**



132%

Click-through rate
132% over benchmark



40%

Average engagement
rate increased by 40%



8%

Over 8% form
completion rate

Cisco's Security group was able to create relevant content that mattered to its audience.

But what happens when your audience does a 180 in real time?

That's when timing is everything.

¹Edelman LinkedIn Thought Leadership Study, 2020

CHAPTER 3

Meeting the Moment

You know your target audience and their challenges, arguably better than anyone else. And if you're a LinkedIn marketer, you probably know how your audience typically behaves on the platform and why they're there.

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Cisco's Small Business group is no different. But just as they were gearing up to use their LinkedIn content credits for a new national campaign, COVID-19 went global. It was a pivot that changed the game for businesses of all sizes around the world, but nowhere was it hitting harder than small businesses.

Cisco's audience, who up until that point were focused on leveraging technology for growth and productivity, was suddenly faced with a pandemic that was taking jobs and shuttering businesses.

Using the Content 360 model allowed us to leverage real-time, proprietary insights that helped shape the content to better align with the audience's immediate needs.

Those insights uncovered something unexpected: The way small business owners used LinkedIn—the very reason the audience came to the platform—had changed, virtually overnight.



90%

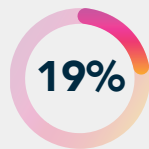
Nearly **90%** of decision makers say that compelling thought leadership addresses a topic they're currently thinking about.

However, just **17%** of those same decision makers rated the quality of most thought leadership they read as very good or excellent.

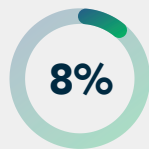
There's clearly a great deal of room for improvement.

In that moment, Cisco's small-business audience was thinking about whether or not their business could survive the pandemic. They were coming to LinkedIn to see what their peers were doing, what tools they were employing, and how they could hold on to their employees, their customers, and their revenue in the weeks and months ahead.

The Small Business Survival Guide met the moment when it truly mattered. It offered actionable steps and helpful resources. It provided hope in a time of uncertainty. And it delivered: earning a **CTR roughly 19% over benchmark** and an **engagement rate nearly 8% over average**.



Click-through rate
19% over benchmark



Engagement rate
8% over the average

Questions? [Chat with the strategist who created this content.](#)

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We've talked about entering conversations authentically, raising the thought-leadership bar, and meeting the moment with timely, relevant content.

So far, so good, but can you apply that same model to disparate groups with different audiences, stakeholders, and objectives?

Let's talk about what that looks like next.

"Scorch took the time to understand our brand and our audience needs, and were collaborative and responsive during the entire creation process.

The end result was spectacular—high-quality content that met all of our objectives and was delivered on time."

– Amy E. Blanchard
Cisco Americas Small Business
Marketing Strategy Lead

CHAPTER 4

Agile and Repeatable

According to the B2B Content Marketing 2021 Report, the majority of B2B marketers who reported low content success (**63%**) attributed that lack of success to content-creation challenges. There's little doubt that creating relevant, timely content is a tall order in normal times. Creating an entire eBook in the space of a few weeks during a pandemic? That requires an agile content model that can be replicated across teams.

58% of digital marketers say they need to prove ROI to justify content-marketing spend and gain approval for future budget asks. Content 360 is a strategic model that can be employed across teams, regardless of audience or objectives.

Powerful tools and technologies, coupled with real-time insights, provide a deep understanding of your industry, audience, and objectives.

Our creative incubator brings together a team of writers, designers, and strategists to shape the content to your audience, and identify themes and ideas for derivative content to support each hero asset. An amplification strategy bundles message ads, conversation ads, and LinkedIn Sponsored Content with specific a/b tests for each set designed to optimize results throughout the life of the campaign, constantly improving your return on ad spend.

This model ensures that your content is optimized for LinkedIn and delivers measurable results so that you can continue crushing the curve, driving leads, and proving the ROI of every campaign.

Each of the Cisco teams employed Scorch's Content 360 model to create thought-leadership content that moved the needle, established authority, and empowered audiences.

To date, we've replicated this model for seven Cisco groups and counting, as well as dozens of enterprise tech companies, including Microsoft, Twilio, Sprinklr, Comcast, T-Mobile, and Salesforce.

In doing so, we're able to help disparate teams align their content around an organization-wide strategy.

Conclusion

The Content 360 model can help you crush the curve and gain a serious competitive advantage on the LinkedIn platform.

Nearly 70% of the B2B Marketers that outsource content marketing say their biggest challenge is finding a partner with adequate subject-matter expertise.

If you're a B2B tech company that advertises on LinkedIn, The Scorch Content 360 model can give you a strategic edge.

Talk with an enterprise B2B tech content marketing expert now.

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CONCLUSION