



DEFINITIONS PAPER Digital Content Marketing

IAB SA launches industry-first “Definition of Digital Content Marketing”

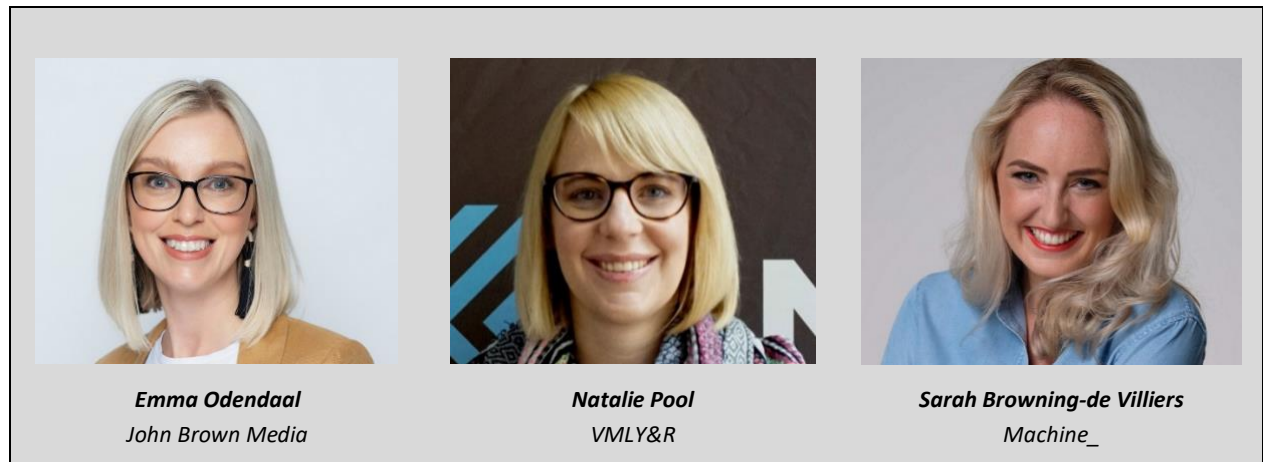
The IAB SA’s [Digital Content Marketing Committee](#) is proud to launch the *Definition of Content Marketing*. By defining the practice, the committee aims to empower South African agencies, brands and publishers to harness the power of digital content marketing – a niche discipline that makes up for 20% of marketing spend worldwide according to the UK’s Content Marketing Association.

“Content marketing has historically been underrepresented in the South African advertising industry, and frequently misunderstood by agencies and brands alike. One reason is because it’s got the ubiquitous word ‘content’ in its name. But not all content is created equally; and not all content constitutes content marketing. Our aim as a committee is to develop content marketing as a unique, independent discipline and an effective tool for brands to communicate with their audiences and deliver on business objectives,” comments [Emma Odendaal](#), Digital Director, [John Brown](#) and project lead.

In the wake of global lockdowns, consumers are yearning for authentic connection. This, coupled with the avalanche of disinformation and fake news we’re bombarded with on a daily basis, highlights the need for relevant, trustworthy content that resonates. Gone are the days of product-centered marketing; the brands who are able to tap into the power of content marketing and serve their audience curated, valuable content are the ones who thrive. As such, the launch of the Definition of Content Marketing, could not have been timelier.

The *Definition of Content Marketing* was compiled after a comprehensive, industry-wide consultative process, led by Emma Odendaal, Digital Content Director, John Brown; [Natalie](#)

Pool, Content Design lead, VMLY&R; and Sarah Browning-de Villiers, Chief Content Officer, Machine_ and IAB Digital Content Marketing Committee Chair.



“Globally, research shows us that 93% of successful brand leaders utilise content marketing in their marketing mix, wielding it to do everything from building 1st-party databases and nurture these communities to generating leads and driving retention and customer lifetime value. Overseas we see the UK’s Content Marketing Association and the US’ Content Marketing Institute building out rich bodies of benchmarking, thought leadership and best-practice work – and yet, on local shores, I’ve experienced a deep lack of understanding of the content marketing discipline, as well as under-utilisation of content marketing in brands’ marketing mixes. Ironically, South Africa has some highly awarded, globally leading content marketing agencies: Publicis Groupe’s Machine_, New Media, Dentsu’s John Brown, Cedar and so many more,” says Sarah Browning-de Villiers.

“It’s why we founded the first digital content marketing committee globally for IAB, here in South Africa. It’s allowed specialists like me to partner with other specialists like Emma and Natalie across South Africa’s leading agencies and brands in order to recognise and better understand the unique discipline of content marketing in our industry.

“Our first job was to create a clear definition framework to ensure we can talk, debate and better understand content marketing from the same springboard: what content marketing actually is, and how it’s different to the many other content disciplines within our industry.

“The process of creating this definition framework has been a year-long rigorous one, inviting feedback and submissions from brands, agencies and publishers, as well as an advisory panel of both local and global leading voices. While I have no doubt that, like everything in our world, this framework will evolve as our industry does, it provides a solid foundation from which to deepen our industry’s understanding and utilisation of content marketing to move our industry forwards.”

Emma Odendaal, on the Content Marketing Committee's future plans: "The committee is already well under way with a podcast series and in-depth white paper that will further unpack digital content marketing best practices, set benchmarks for success, develop measurement parameters and celebrate excellence. The aim is to develop the category and show how digital content marketing can have a direct, tangible impact on brand sales, customer retention and business objectives."

The *Definition of Content Marketing* paper is available, for free, to all industry members. You can access it [here](#).