



## Bagging Your Content Marketing

by [Steve Brown](#)

A Visa survey finds the average person spends \$2,746 per year on lunch. It seems people eat out about 2x per week on average at a price of \$11.14 per meal. That leaves packed lunches or meals at home for the rest of it at an average of about \$6.30 per meal. For those keeping score, the data shows it costs about 43% less to eat at home or brown bag it than to eat out. That said, what's the fun in that? As you ponder where you may get your lunch today, we give you something else to think about too.

Content marketing is one of the most effective ways to enhance a brand or company. In case you were wondering, content marketing is the sharing of online content that does not directly plug a company, brand or product. Unfortunately, many companies forget about that important last part.

Banks are not immune and may also be prone to overlook the subtlety required for effective content marketing. As community banks join the content marketing trend, you will want to be especially mindful of the need to avoid direct sales pitches.

As one prominent content marketing expert pointed out, the goal of content marketing should be to engage with people and offer them helpful or useful information. One of the best ways to do this is to tell stories about real people who can provide examples of success. Start by imagining your target customer. If it's a small business owner, create content that engages that demographic such as how real businesses overcame tough obstacles. You can end a story with a soft sales pitch by offering links to bank services or a form for more information.

Content marketing should not only respond to the needs of a particular group of people, but it should also be timely and helpful in decision making. Providing financial literacy content to families at the beginning of a school year may facilitate new accounts for teenage children the same as information on wealth management may help millennial customers who have a few working years under their belt.

Content that contains research is usually well-received. Anything that your target group finds interesting, relevant and helpful will be what you want to provide. If you can add interactive content to your website, such as calculators, you will definitely be able to engage new and current customers alike.

Tracking is important of course, to insure your bank knows how well its content marketing works. Tracking "clicks" offers some indication of how popular content might be. But, to track return on investment, a better metric is to keep tabs on form leads - the number of readers who took the next step and filled out a form that ultimately generates a business lead for the bank.

Since creating content that engages can be difficult, it is important to consider a few things. First, do you have the bandwidth internally to source, repurpose and update content on a regular basis? After all, this is a dynamic process, so you cannot simply post content and come back later in a month. For

this reason, outsourcing may be an option. But, it is important to keep in-house experts involved to help guide the topic selection and information that the bank wants to emphasize.

Finally, content marketing needs distribution. There are many ways to accomplish that, from direct emailing to publishing on [social media](#) to publishing on the bank's website or microsite. As an example, SunTrust created a microsite called OnUp to engage people and provide valuable information while generating higher SEO rankings and building an online community. Bank of America has a small business online community site to help small businesses with financial and business questions. Whatever outlet or combination of outlets is used, you will need careful tracking to determine the effectiveness.

When done right, content marketing can enhance a bank's reputation, communicate more effectively with customers and win new ones. This could be an important way community banks participate in the digital space, while deepening important customer relationships and preserving the customer's sense of community and brand identity. Eat up!

# BANK NEWS

## Retail Stress

Fitch reports delinquency rates on bonds backed by retail store commercial mortgages have jumped to 6.23% in June, marking their highest level in 4Ys.

## Fed

Market investors currently expect the Fed will start to shrink its \$4.5T balance sheet at the Sep 20 meeting and hike rates next at the Dec 13 meeting. We will see.

## Regulation

Bank regulators are seeking comment on a proposed rule that would raise the threshold where commercial real estate appraisals are required from \$250,000 to \$400,000 as a way to reduce burden. Regulators are also seeking comment on whether or not to increase the current \$1mm threshold for business loans.

## M&A Activity

1) South Shore Bank (\$1.1B, MA) will combine with The Braintree Co-operative Bank (\$259mm, MA) under the South Shore Bank name. 2) West Shore Bank (\$428mm, MI) will acquire wealth management services firm Ellis Capital Management (MI) for an undisclosed sum.

## SHARED NATIONAL CREDIT WEBINAR: JULY 20

In this webinar, PCBB's C&I experts will offer a deeper understanding of Shared National Credits (SNC). You'll also, learn how PCBB manages its own SNC portfolio and how your bank can benefit. Register today by visiting our [website](#).

*Who Should Attend: Community Banks with total assets over \$100MM and in good regulatory standing.*

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