

Marcus Brown

content will kill  
your agency



# killing them softly

The basic idea is that content will kill the agency you work for; that the current agency model (or versions off it labeled as new), the work that agencies do, how it's reviewed and rewarded and the channels that are used to transport it all are doomed. Unless, that is, your agency starts creating content.



# last man standing

This means of course that the agency you work for would have to radically change their business model and completely rethink what it is they do. It means that they would have to walk away from advertising to achieve the same strategic and business results for their clients and therefore revenues and I'm going to try and explain how your agency could do this; and it requires a little more effort than hiring someone to be "head of content".

I'm saying that the company you work for isn't scalable or "future proof". If you push me, I will probably go as far as to say that the work you do within the agency is meaningless; that your skills, ideas and creativity are being wasted and that, in business terms, your work has no overall effect on the success or failure of the clients you are currently working on because it is void of content.



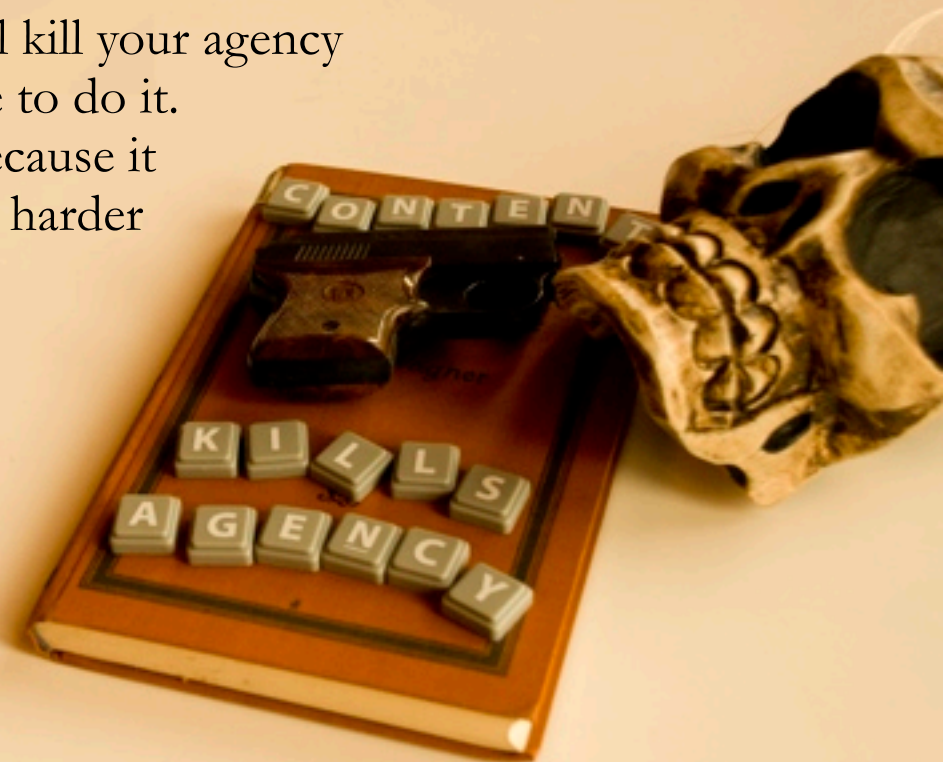
# last man standing

For me, the kind of content that will kill your agency is the kind of content that happens without a brief - nobody has told you or the so called business development people in your agency that they would like to have a specific piece of content.

I've gone on record (albeit in German during one of the werbeblogger late night podcasts) and said that every single agency, regardless of size, is capable of producing content that would challenge anything that is currently on the market; whether that be film, television, literature, online, radio, games or events. The skills, ideas and creativity of the people that work within the agencies is, however, being wasted by the people running them and a business model that is increasingly neither meeting the needs of "consumers" nor those of the businesses that are their clients.

The kind of content that will kill your agency is briefless content. It will kill your agency because nobody is telling you what to do and you won't have a mandate to do it. You will have to work it all out for yourselves. It will kill your agency because it will be bespoke, unique and without comparison. You will have to fight harder for it, harder than you fight for stuff now.

It will kill your agency because it's not advertising, at least not as we know it today.

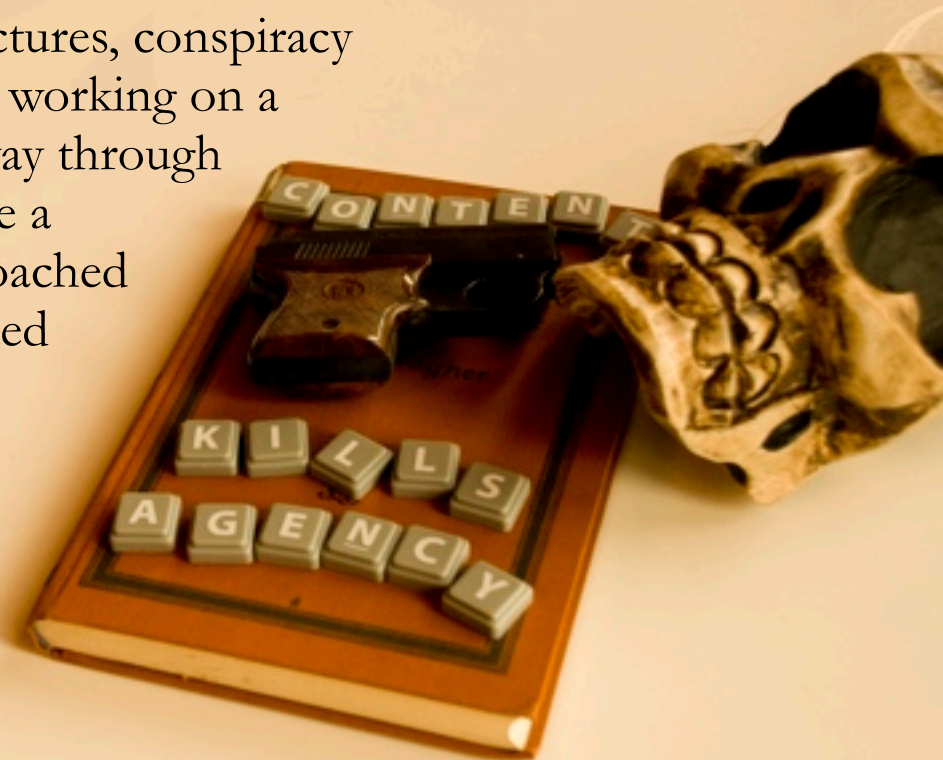


# this is my vision

My agency is called “Breitenbach + Brown”, you may call your agency anything you wish. It is full of people who know a thing or two about culture, communications, advertising and business. It’s full of people who know how people tick – yes, we even have a profiler in there too.

- ★ We create content.
- ★ We are never asked to create it.
- ★ We don’t have a brief to create it.
- ★ We can measure business results from the content we make and this is how we make our money.
- ★ And nobody knows we’ve been doing this, until now

A few years ago, we were doing some research into religion, belief structures, conspiracy theories and tourism. We thought we were on to something and started working on a project which was mainly a book but was later made into a film. Half way through the project we were pretty sure that the content of the book would have a positive financial impact for a number of potential clients and we approached them all, separately, with a very simple contract that outlined the expected increase in revenues and our potential salary percentage based on Key Performance Indicators that they could define. There was no initial fee. Only one potential client declined (thinking that they would benefit from it anyway) and a location in the book was changed from the South West of England to Scotland.



# this is my vision

The book was called “The DaVinci Code”\* and the impact this had on our clients has come to be known as “The DaVinci Code Effect”\*.

So, for the rest of this week and based on this particular project I’ll be explaining how our business model works, how we make our money and how it is actually more interesting than what your agency is doing right now. Unless, of course, you’re Wieden + Kennedy.

\*This is of course a work of fiction, I’m just using it as an example for how something like this could work. Dan Brown wrote “The DaVinci Code” and not “Breitenbach + Brown”.



# what is content?

Content is the stuff on the inside.

Content is the stuff that things get stuck too -  
when you stick stuff into content it ceases to become content.

Content gets surrounded by stuff.  
Yes, content gets walled in and surrounded by noise.

Content drives culture and can influence cultural change.

Content doesn't have a target audience.

Content can be dangerous (I would strongly advise you to listen to [this BBC Radio 4 podcast on gaming in South Korea](#)).



# what is content?

Content could be anything;

- ★ a book
- ★ a story,
- ★ a game,
- ★ a film,
- ★ a painting,
- ★ a song,
- ★ a band,
- ★ a poem,
- ★ a television show,
- ★ a web site,
- ★ a blog,
- ★ a concert,
- ★ a piece of design,
- ★ a chair,
- ★ a house,
- ★ a building,
- ★ a home,
- ★ and it could also be a bus



# what is content?

Content is close to costing nothing to “distribute”. ([watch this brilliant 45 minute presentation by Chris Anderson at the Nokia World 2007](#) about “the costs of doing things being nearly zero” - this is a really important factor in the argument that content will kill your agency).

Content is the product and the service but costs (nearly) nothing to “consume”.

**Content creates currency through connection, aura and reputation.**

Has this made my notion of “content” and how it’ll kill your agency clearer to you?



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