



THE CMO GUIDE TO DRIVING DEMAND WITH CONTENT ACTIVATION

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Synopsis:

- The role content activation plays in the buyer journey
- Benefits of content activation and recommended KPIs for CMOs
- A 6-step playbook to activate content demand performance effectively



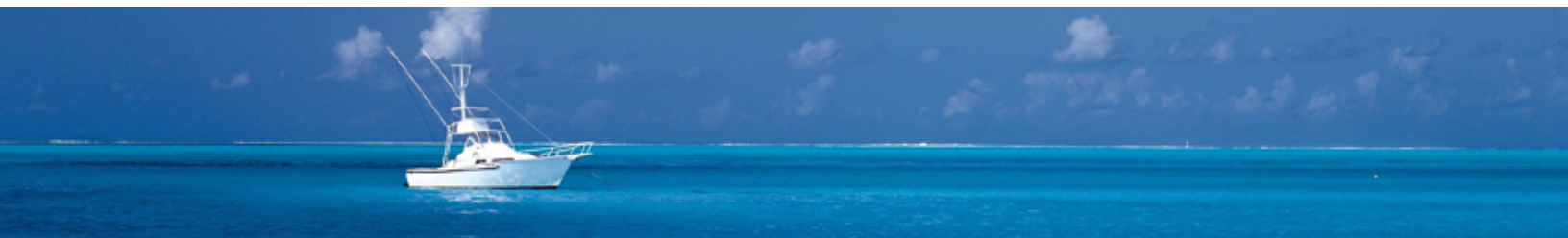
WHAT IS CONTENT ACTIVATION?

Content activation, also referred to as content syndication or content distribution, refers to the process of distributing existing content through third-party websites or platforms, linking back to the original source, in order to reach a larger audience. Both new posts and repurposed (pre-existing) content are eligible for content activation strategies. These tactics contribute to fostering demand, due to their capability to position your brand as a trustworthy solution provider in front of broader audiences.

Content marketing within the B2B landscape has become more important than ever due to increasing buyer expectations, longer buying cycles, and a greater need for personalization and quality lead nurturing.

According to the [2022 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends report](#) by the Content Marketing Institute, 73% of B2B marketers use content marketing as part of their overall marketing strategy, and a [2021 survey by Semrush](#) demonstrated that 91% of marketing professionals achieved success with their content marketing in 2021.

With this growth in content marketing comes a growth in marketing syndication, which is expected to rise from \$4.5 billion to \$5.3 billion between 2020 and 2027 according to a [2022 Global Strategic Business Report by Research and Markets](#). Also, a [2022 report on the state of demand generation](#) found that content distribution was the fastest-growing lead generation channel, with 44% of B2B tech marketers reporting that their organizations had increased spending on this channel.



Why use content activation?

Content activation can help CMOs showcase their business via content marketing to a larger audience than relying solely on their brand website or social media channels. This is especially helpful within the B2B environment, as more channels and third-party outlets allow greater reach in [targeting buying committee members](#).



In addition, companies that are gaining a following and ranking up the search engine result pages (SERP) create much-needed traffic by activating content via other publishers (therefore securing backlinks, which are a crucial ranking factor for Search Engine Optimization—SEO).

This is particularly relevant to CMOs as, according to a 2022 marketing research paper [The Marketing Evolution: Leadership, Transformation, Skills, Challenges & the Future by Digital Marketing Institute](#), 30% of VPs ranked SEO as number one in delivering the best ROI in their campaigns.

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Why professional distribution platforms are key to efficient content activation

Companies that choose not to hire professional content distribution platforms often face the challenge of searching for websites, partners, and blogs that allow third-party content. This process can be time-consuming and may result in lost opportunities due to the need for pitching to and negotiating with partnerships individually.

Conversely, content distribution platforms offer a valuable service by handling the entire distribution process for organizations. They have established relationships or own various publications and can provide a comprehensive overview of the best platforms to distribute content based on the desired target market. This also includes content performance, allowing for data insights into the most effective content to prioritize producing. This saves time and effort, allowing brands to focus on creating high-quality content while leaving the distribution and activation aspects to the experts.

In the [current B2B climate](#), where competition is fierce and efficient content distribution is vital, the inclusion of demand generation experts in syndication platforms becomes crucial. Demand generation experts bring considerable market knowledge and insights, enabling the brand to strategically align content, distribution strategies, and audience targeting to meet the [evolving demands of the target audience](#).

For CMOs, time is a valuable resource. As such, hiring a professional content distribution platform that can curate the most relevant publishers for the chosen target audience is a smart and effective choice, enabling CMOs to focus on other, more critical aspects of their marketing strategy while ensuring efficient content distribution.



Why publish content on AI-curated publishers?

Content distribution is a growth marketing strategy from before the internet. From the 1950s through to the 1990s, brands were attributing a significant part of their marketing budgets to publishing articles in newspapers, magazines, and periodicals.



Since the early 2000s, marketers have been using high internet traffic as a key criterion to begin distributing content on blogs and news websites.

In more recent times, AI curation is selecting the most relevant publishers for organizations' brands and content.

AI sets itself apart from regular content distribution through its ability to process large amounts of data quickly and apply specific analysis at scale.

The benefits of an AI publisher include:

- **Accuracy, speed, and efficiency:** AI curation is more accurate and efficient than manual curation, as AI systems can process large amounts of data quickly and identify patterns that would be difficult for humans to see. This also reduces the margin for human error.
- **Personalization:** AI curation allows for more personalization than regular content distribution, as AI can analyze user data to identify content that is likely to be of interest to each individual user and select [market segments](#).
- **Scalability:** AI curation can be more scalable than regular content distribution, facilitating publishing for more verticals and larger audiences. This is due to the fact that AI can be used to curate content on a substantial scale, without the need for a large team of human curators.

[ITCurated](#), for instance, is a network of more than 30 publications in software, healthcare, security, finance, and many more industry verticals for content distribution. The network uses AI to select the best publishers according to the industry and target audience.

How content activation meets the needs of CMOs

CMOs are currently faced with a number of challenges due to rapidly changing buyer behavior, ongoing economic uncertainty, and more.

Below are 3 ways content activation helps CMOs meet their organizational needs:



#1 Increase reach, lead generation, and ROI

According to a [2022 marketing research paper](#) by the Digital Marketing Institute, 20% of senior marketers rate delivering a greater ROI on their marketing budget as the number one issue they face.

Content activation can directly assist with improving ROI as professional syndication platforms not only boost reach by providing a larger audience for relevant content, but also the conversion rate of nurtured leads, as the audience for the content is more qualified and [aligned with Ideal Client Profiles \(ICP\)](#). In the case of gated content, targeted content activation provides valuable lead generation through forms filled and, on some platforms, even additional revenue.

By significantly augmenting reach and providing lead generation data, effective content activation provides an increased ROI by maximizing brand visibility, capturing qualified leads, and driving conversion rates.

For CMOs, Directors of Marketing, and VPs of Marketing, the focus is on the bottom line. Crucial KPIs that can be achieved through content activation include lead generation, sales conversion rate, lead to opportunity ratio, ROI, and cost per lead (CPL).





#2 Reduce costs

According to the [aforementioned 2022 marketing research paper](#), 70% of CMOs, Marketing Directors, and VPs of Marketing experienced budget reductions over the past 2 years. This makes optimizing and streamlining campaigns while securing outcomes and reducing costs essential.

Content activation can reduce costs through:

- **Expanded targeting:** By distributing content through syndication networks, companies can tap into existing client and ICP-aligned audiences, eliminating the need for extensive marketing campaigns and reducing advertising expenses to engage buyers.
- **Access to new distribution channels:** Content activation facilitates access to untapped markets by leveraging existing distribution channels of partners, allowing organizations to reach new prospects without heavy investment in creating their own distribution networks. This approach saves on operational costs while rapidly expanding the reach of products or services to a broader audience.
- **Increased ROI:** By leveraging content activation, businesses can extend the lifespan of valuable assets, reducing the constant need for costly and time-consuming content creation. The initial investment in creating high-quality assets can be maximized through activation across multiple platforms, ensuring continued exposure and engagement with potential clients.
- **Optimal Resource Allocation:** Content activation allows businesses to maximize their resources by focusing on creating high-quality content while relying on networks to handle distribution, thus optimizing costs.





#3 Provide rich data and opportunities to optimize

The [same 2022 research by the Digital Marketing Institute](#) showed that 17% of senior marketers rated “unlocking the power of data” as their second-greatest challenge. Content activation can provide rich data on prospects by expanding the reach of content across various platforms and audiences and providing detailed reports on performance. This is particularly pertinent for CMOs as their responsibilities often require achieving specific performance KPIs.

As content is distributed to different websites, social media channels, and digital publications, it generates valuable data on audience engagement, click-through rates (CTRs), and conversion rates. This data can be analyzed to gain insights into audience preferences, content performance, and user behavior.

CMOs can use this information to make data-driven decisions to optimize their content strategy, refine their messaging, and tailor their distribution channels. This iterative process helps improve content effectiveness, enhance audience targeting, and maximize ROI through continuous optimization based on rich data insights.

[Discover key insights from industry leaders on how to optimize demand strategies in the current state of the B2B market](#) →



How content activation fits into the B2B user journey

Content activation plays a pivotal role within the B2B user journey in the form of [lead nurturing](#). By strategically distributing valuable and relevant content across various channels, businesses can effectively nurture their leads and guide them through the buying process.



Content activation amplifies the reach of content beyond the business's owned channels, tapping into established networks and subscriber bases. This targeted approach ensures that the content is delivered to the right people, increasing the likelihood of attracting qualified leads who are genuinely interested in the offerings and more receptive to the nurturing efforts, ultimately driving higher conversion rates.

In addition, content activation can be a powerful tool for organizations targeting particular committee members involved in complex purchasing decisions, as well as tailoring customized buyer journeys to enhance conversion rates. By disseminating relevant content across targeted platforms and channels that these members utilize, content activation ensures that key stakeholders receive personalized information, ultimately guiding them through the buying process and maximizing the likelihood of successful conversions.

Content activation allows B2B companies to provide consistent touchpoints with their target audience, delivering informative and engaging material at each stage of the buyer's journey. This helps build brand awareness by establishing trust, credibility, and thought leadership, as well as position the business as a go-to resource.

[Discover how to build an effective B2B sales funnel to improve demand outcomes and ROI](#) —>



Social distribution

WHAT IS SOCIAL DISTRIBUTION?

Social distribution is the process of distributing and sharing content across multiple social media platforms (from partners or third-parties) to increase its reach, brand visibility, and audience engagement.



With social distribution, businesses can promote content to a wider audience with low effort and cost by having their content shared on third-party social media channels.

With this strategy, businesses can track engagement with easily accessible analytics. By utilizing paid ads on these social platforms, organizations can further increase the reach of their content, also often increasing ROI.

Indeed, [according to the same 2022 marketing research paper](#), 31% of VPs ranked paid social media and content distribution as number one in delivering the best ROI in their campaigns.

Some B2B companies use social distribution with their clients or sister companies on a favor-to-favor basis which can be effective if the target audience of both brands is similar.

However, if the brands have different voices and target audiences, prospects will notice the disconnect and will likely not engage.

Benefits

- Increased reach
- Enhanced brand visibility
- Improved SEO and website traffic
- Targeted audience engagement
- Cost and time efficiency
- Collaboration opportunities

Challenges

- Content adaptation and customization
- Maintaining brand consistency
- Loss of control over content presentation
- Potential duplicate content
- Monitoring and managing multiple channels
- Competing with native platform algorithms

Co-marketing

WHAT IS CO-MARKETING?

Co-marketing is a collaborative marketing strategy where two or more companies unite to create and promote a product or service together. By leveraging each other's resources and client base, they aim to achieve mutual benefits and reach a wider audience while sharing costs and efforts.



Co-marketing, where content distribution is concerned, refers to two or more companies uniting to launch content on an identified platform. This works best with long-form content, such as reports, whitepapers, and eBooks.

With a co-marketing strategy, businesses share their leads and filter them according to qualification criteria. This helps to reduce costs for reputable publishers, such as news websites, and allows each brand to tap into a wider audience than might otherwise be unachievable.

According to [2018 research by Partnerize](#), 54% of companies said that partnerships drive more than 20% of total company revenue, a statistic that continues to ring true for many. [2020 research by Hubspot](#) also reported that roughly 11% of marketers said that “partnership posts” are their brand’s most engaging type of social media content.

An example of co-marketing could be two start-ups that co-write a specialist article, with links to their own assets, for the blog of an industry figure.



Both social distribution and co-marketing methods are simpler and more affordable than traditional content activation. The trade-off is that results can vary dramatically depending on the chosen partner.

Benefits

- Increased reach
- Expanded audience
- Cost efficiency
- Access to targeted segments
- Improved brand visibility
- Cross-promotion opportunities
- Enhanced content distribution
- Lead generation and conversion
- Shared resources and expertise

Challenges

- Lack of control over distributed content
- Consistency of brand messaging
- Quality and relevance of distributed content
- Competing with other distributed content
- Difficulties in measuring ROI
- Maintaining partner relationships
- Potential for negative brand association
- Intellectual property, privacy, and copyright issues
- Potential for content overexposure

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Podcast, video, and webinar distribution

Many marketers only consider the likes of articles and press releases when distributing content, but there are other forms of media that can and should be utilized to engage a wider audience.



Podcasts, videos, and webinars can be distributed to publishers as embedded content or repurposed into transcripts, articles, or interviews, or even as add-ons to other articles.

For example, if an organization or its partner is planning to syndicate an article on [Account Based Marketing \(ABM\)](#), embedding a link to a podcast episode on a distribution network website would help increase the reach of this content.





Podcast distribution

To distribute podcasts (apart from directories):

- Publish a transcript as an interview.
- Embed episodes into articles or press releases.
- Use quotations from podcasts in content and link to the full episode.
- Leverage social distribution to publish episodes on a partner's social media channels.

Benefits

- Convenient and on-the-go consumption
- Broad audience reach and potential for niche targeting
- Establishing thought leadership and expertise
- Long-form content and in-depth discussions
- Repurposing and extending the lifespan of content
- Increased accessibility for visually impaired audiences

Challenges

- Audio quality and technical issues
- Building and retaining a loyal podcast audience
- Competition in the saturated podcasting market
- Monetization challenges without a large listener base
- Discoverability and visibility among numerous podcasts
- Consistently producing high-quality and engaging content





Video distribution

To increase your reach:

- Embed videos into partner blog posts (social syndication).
- Use videos as a source for articles and press releases.
- Edit short clips for third-party sites to share, such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter.

Benefits

- Increased exposure and reach
- Enhanced engagement and viewer retention
- Improved SEO and search engine visibility
- Brand building and storytelling opportunities
- Monetization through ad placements and sponsored content
- Shareability and viral potential

Challenges

- Ensuring video compatibility across platforms
- Copyright and licensing issues
- Measurement and tracking of video performance
- Limited accessibility for visually impaired audiences
- Keeping up with evolving video formats and trends
- Production costs, time, and technical requirements





Webinar distribution

To increase its relevance:

- Contact professors to use your webinars in lectures.
- Publish articles with key takeaways.
- Leverage co-marketing, launching webinars with partner companies, and vehiculating them in content distribution networks.

Benefits

- Real-time engagement and interaction with attendees
- Lead generation and conversion opportunities
- Showcasing expertise and establishing thought leadership
- Repurposing as on-demand content for ongoing value
- Collaboration and partnership opportunities
- Data collection and insights for audience behavior

Challenges

- Technical issues during live sessions
- Scheduling conflicts and time zone differences
- Building a targeted audience for webinar attendance
- Maintaining audience interest throughout the session
- Competing with other webinars and virtual events
- Ensuring smooth integration with webinar hosting platforms

[Learn how to successfully drive brand activation in the current B2B landscape from demand experts](#) →



Does content distribution equal thought leadership?

Not necessarily, but if your company would like to see its C-suite become thought leaders in your industry then content distribution can help to tie the brand together with relevant content to a wider audience.

It can be as simple as giving a byline. Some thought leaders write content themselves, others utilize ghostwriters.

The benefit of writing content as a CMO is ensuring an accurate tone, whereas a ghostwriter must learn to convey both your personality and that of the brand you represent.

With this in mind, establishing thought leadership with content activation is a positive side effect of all your efforts rather than a direct result of distribution on its own.

Thought leadership is a long-term process that is established by conveying knowledge with webinars, eBooks, podcasts, and other content that sets thought leaders apart.



How to avoid distributed content outranking the original

The goal of content activation is to reach a larger audience than possible with proprietary media channels.

In order to avoid other companies' distributed content outranking your own content on search engines, follow the steps below:



#1 Wait at least a week before activating content

Allow search engines to index your content before activating. There is no designated time frame, but a week is recommended to allow search engine crawlers to rank content.

#2 Use tags such as 'Rel=Canonical' or 'NoIndex'

Publish content on distribution networks with these tags to prevent search engines from ranking that content over yours:

- Rel=Canonical:** This makes the syndicated content point back to your post as the canonical one. It signals to search engines that your company's blog is the source and attributes authority towards it.
- NoIndex:** This signals to search engines not to index the distributed content. Then, it will not appear in keyword searches on SERPs.

#3 Place a backlink

If the publisher will not allow tags, then place a backlink to your business in the content.

You can place the link at the start with "originally appeared on..." so readers can click to learn more about your brand. This phrase also signals to search engines that your company published the content first.



Measure and track KPIs

Prioritize content activation with outlets or publishers that provide metrics. This is the only way to truly evaluate whether syndication efforts are resonating with the target audience.

Where possible, always link to a landing page for an asset, such as an eBook, whitepaper, or webinar.

This generates leads that can be nurtured with content on brand channels.

Another option is to request that publishers place leads on a nurturing track for the brand after engaging with your content. This is only usually feasible on paid-for websites or with publishers that store client data.

There are three main types of metrics to track for evaluating content activation efficiency:

| Metric | Description | How It Affects ROI |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Engagement Metrics | | |
| Time spent on page | The average time visitors spend on a page | Longer time spent on the page indicates higher interest |
| Bounce rate | The percentage of visitors who leave after viewing a page | Lower bounce rate indicates better engagement |
| Social media shares | The number of times your content is shared on social media platforms | More shares increase brand visibility and potential reach |
| Scroll depth | How far down the page visitors scroll | Deeper scrolling suggests higher engagement with content |
| Comments | The number of user comments on your content | More comments can indicate an active community and interest |



Qualification Metrics

Job title

The job title of your content viewers

Helps target specific decision makers and influencers

Company size

The size of the company your viewers belong to

Identifies potential for larger or repeat purchases

Industry

The industry your visitors' companies belong to

Allows for tailoring marketing efforts to specific industry needs

Location

The geographical location of your visitors

Allows for targeting relevant geographical markets

Conversion Metrics

Link clicks to your company website

The number of times visitors have clicked to your website from your content

Indicates interest and potential for lead conversion

Opt-ins on your landing pages

The number of form fills, sign ups, or subscriptions on landing pages

Shows interest in further engagement with the brand and indicates a more advanced funnel stage

Number of leads from activated content

The number of leads generated from distributed content

Measures content effectiveness in generating leads

[Explore which KPIs are integral to your demand strategies and how to use them effectively](#) →



6 steps to activate content effectively

1 Create high-quality content

The foundation of successful content activation is creating content that is valuable, relevant, and engaging to your target audience. Ensure that your content is well-researched, well-written, and provides unique insights or solutions to the audience's problems.

High-quality content is more likely to be accepted by publishers and appreciated by readers, increasing the chances of successful activation. Some professional distribution platforms may have a service to assist with content creation.

2 Identify potential publishers

Research is crucial in finding the right publishers for your content. Look for professional distribution platforms, websites, blogs, or other online platforms that focus on your niche or industry. Consider the publisher's audience demographics, size, and engagement levels. Make a list of potential publishers that align with your content's theme and target audience. If you are looking for professional distribution platforms, they will usually provide metrics for audiences, industries, and content niches.

3 Review distribution guidelines

Each publisher may have specific guidelines and requirements for accepting distributed content. Carefully review their guidelines to understand their submission process, formatting preferences, word limits, and any other specific criteria. Adhering to these guidelines increases your chances of being accepted and published on their platform. If you use a professional distribution platform, they will usually assist you with amending content to suit these guidelines as part of their fee. Professional distribution platforms will also usually help you to optimize your content for wider reach.

4 Reach out

Once you have identified potential publishers, reach out to them with a personalized pitch. Introduce yourself, provide a brief overview of the content you want to activate, and explain its value to their audience. Tailor the pitch to demonstrate how your content aligns with the publisher's brand and the interests of their readers.

Be open to negotiations regarding exclusivity, length of distribution, and proper attribution to your original work. Professional distribution platforms can streamline this outreach process by connecting you directly with relevant publishers and handling the negotiation aspects on your behalf, saving you time and effort. In some cases, these platforms own the publications they distribute for and do all the work of selecting the correct publications that suit your niche and target audience.



5 Publish and promote

Once the content is published on the publisher's platform, actively promote it through your channels, such as your website, blog, and social media networks.

Encourage your audience to visit the publisher's site to read the full article across your channels, driving traffic and exposure to both parties. Professional distribution platforms may also assist you in promoting your activated content, leveraging their existing network of connections and expertise in content distribution.

6 Assess performance and maintain relationships

Monitor the performance of the activated content on the publisher's platform. Track engagement metrics and evaluate the impact of the syndication on your brand exposure and website traffic. Utilize data gleaned from distribution reports to adjust your content to better meet the needs of your target audience. Professional distribution platforms often provide detailed performance analytics and insights, helping you assess the effectiveness of your content syndication strategy.

If the activation was successful, consider submitting more content in the future to continue building a mutually beneficial partnership. Professional distribution platforms can play an instrumental role in managing and nurturing these long-term partnerships, ensuring that your content gets the exposure it deserves while establishing your credibility as a reliable content provider across various publishers. As you expand your content activation efforts, having the support of a professional platform can streamline the process and open up new opportunities for your content to reach broader audiences.



Content activation and privacy laws

With the approval in past years of the GDPR in Europe, CCPA in California, and the LGPD in Brazil, marketers should be careful when it comes to data gathered from distributed content.

Businesses can only access data if clients provide consent.

If you are concerned there is not clear consent then do not proceed to collect data from publishers, only from users that click through to your sites and agree with your company privacy policy.

That being said, most reputable publishers have updated their websites to be privacy law compliant and as such, it should be safe to analyze their user data.



For privacy-compliant content activation, remember to:

- **Ask the outlet/publisher about their privacy compliance:** A company that respects privacy laws will gladly answer questions and even provide resources on how they use data. If they are avoidant, beware.
- **Prioritize data from leads that opt-in on your website:** If you want to guarantee compliance, collect the data yourself from your own sources.
- **Get details on their security measures:** If the publisher suffers a security breach and data is stolen your company could be liable, even if it is not your fault. Make sure your partners have tight security measures to avoid personal data theft.
- **Contact a lawyer:** Seek legal advice from a lawyer specializing in privacy laws when in doubt.



Key takeaways

- 1.** Content activation is a marketing strategy that promotes your brand to a large audience. It usually costs less to promote than other forms of advertising and can be free if co-marketed with partners that share a target audience.
- 2.** Posting relevant content to third-party publishers can help businesses generate brand awareness, leads, and can even establish a C-suite member as a thought leader.
- 3.** Many companies have partnerships with publishers to publish a certain amount of content per month, while others hire an outlet with a curated network, often managed by AI.
- 4.** Social distribution and co-marketing are simpler, more affordable options to contacting a publisher or paying for a curated network. Especially with co-marketing, where companies share the workload and fees with a partner.
- 5.** Avoid target audience miscalculations, low engagement, and dependence on partners as drawbacks to content activation.
- 6.** Privacy laws are rightfully a concern to some marketers, but compliance can be guaranteed by hiring and partnering with trustworthy publishers or brands.



Content Activation and other INFUSE programs

INFUSE is a B2B demand generation engine with a global reach of 252 million+ B2B profiles.

ITCurated, our wholly-owned network of publications is a content distribution platform of more than 30 publications in industries such as technology, security, healthcare, finance, and others.

We drive interest among decision makers at enterprises, mid-market, startups, and more and filter them with your selected qualification criteria, from seniority level to buyer intent.

Our 1000+ demand experts across the world craft custom-tailored and conversion-optimized content with input from subject matter experts to inform and engage your target audiences.

All our content is customized to any stage of the buyer's journey, professionally written to answer the needs of your unique audiences, as well as styled and published in their medium of choice.



Our INFUSE demand experts are available to help you not only craft high impact content and implement an effective content activation strategy, but create demand generation processes that achieve your goals.

CONTACT OUR TEAM AT letstalk@infuse.com TO DRIVE AN EFFECTIVE DATA-CENTRIC AND PERSONALIZED CONTENT ACTIVATION APPROACH AT SCALE →





2385 NW Executive Center Drive, Suite 100
Boca Raton, FL 33431
info@infuse.com

INFUSE.com