

Engaging Customers With Content, With Amy Hatch

Introduction

[0:09] Kevin Benedict: Hello, I'm Kevin Benedict, Senior Vice President of Solution Strategy here at Regalix, and I want to welcome everyone to the program today.

This is Deep Dive with Kevin Benedict, and I'm thrilled to have Amy Hatch from SAP as my guest today. She's in charge of SAP Customer Experience's global content marketing.

Amy, welcome.

[0:33] Amy Hatch: Hi. Thanks for having me today, Kevin. I'm very excited to be here.

[0:36] Kevin: Wonderful. So, where are you located this morning?

[0:39] Amy: I am in the beautiful Western New York city of Rochester, New York, which is where I live and work.

I'm allowed to work virtually through SAP, and it's been a great experience.

[0:51] Kevin: That's one of the beauties of being responsible for content, because

you can manage content from anywhere, right?

[0:59] Amy: You can. Over the last 12 years, I actually had a consultancy before I joined SAP internally, and I managed most of that from my living room in Central Illinois.

We recently moved back to Western New York, and it's been a really great thing for both my family and my career to be able to work as virtually and collaboratively as I have.

Section 1: Customer Experience in a Customer-Led World

[1:22] Kevin: So, for those who aren't as intimately familiar with the SAP world as you and I perhaps are, why don't you share what part of SAP you're working in, Amy?

[1:34] Amy: Absolutely. I work in SAP Customer Experience, and our business unit is responsible for all of the solutions that help you create engaging, purposeful connections with your customers.

From sales and marketing to customer data protection, we cover the gamut. We're really empowering our own customers to deliver the kind of digital and consumer experiences, both B2B and B2C, that people are demanding today.

Customers are more demanding than ever, and creating a beautiful, seamless, connected experience is really the difference between being a success and falling behind your competitors.

[2:18] Kevin: Well, that's terrific. So, that's a new emphasis within SAP—to focus on that area, isn't it?

[2:26] Amy: Absolutely, yes. It's definitely driving a lot of excitement inside SAP overall.

I know Bill McDermott is very excited about our business unit and references us often in his conversations with both the press and customers.

Really, this is the future of engagement. It's the future of how businesses are able to thrive and survive in a world where the customer is really in charge now.

[2:56] Kevin: Wow. So, in addition to all these new developments and the emphasis at SAP, your area is also new, isn't it?

Why don't you talk to us about that and what you've been involved in?

Section 2: The Changing Role of Content in the Buyer Journey

[3:09] Amy: Sure. I run the content marketing team inside SAP Customer Experience. We've recently expanded. We grew from three—I had three direct reports, and now I have 13.

They're really empowering our team to take content for our customers to the next level, which is so important right now.

I really think marketing has changed in that there are two ways we reach customers. One is, of course, our human interaction, right? Our sales teams, our field, that relationship, that human touch is still deeply crucial, I think, to everyone's success.

But when you think about how you interact with brands, you're mainly consuming content.

Whether it's at an event, online, or in a one-to-one conversation with your sales representative or with the field, you really are empowered by content as a consumer.

We know that many buyers do most of their research online before they even come to the table to talk about making a deal.

So, it's more crucial now than ever that we're communicating with everyone, no matter where they are in their buying cycle, with a unified message and content that's really engaging and helpful.

The statement I tell my team is that it's our job as marketers to help people make sense of a rapidly changing world.

That's the purpose all content should serve, in my personal philosophy.

[4:39] Kevin: That's brilliant.

Now, it seems to me that digital transformation is impacting the customer experience area so dramatically. More and more of the interactions customers have are digital, which puts more responsibility on your team to provide the right content at the right time, in the right size and the right amount.

All of that seems almost overwhelming when you think of the responsibility.

Why don't you walk us through one of your typical days, Amy?

[5:13] Amy: A lot of my time is spent empowering my team to create really delightful experiences.

Whether it's an Instagram post, a white paper, an eBook, a blog post, or thought leadership, we really strive to create things that are not only helpful but also beautiful and engaging.

I spend a lot of time working with my strategy guy, Jack Dyson, on my team. He's responsible for how we approach the kind of content that we create and why.

For instance, one of the things we're doing now is actually going a little

throwback to print. That may seem counterintuitive in a digital world, but it's actually disruptive of what many of our competitors are doing.

[6:27] We spend a lot of time talking and thinking about a nonlinear buyer journey, all of our different personas, and how we can best put the customer's needs first.

One of the things we've found as we do that through our days is that when we put the customer's needs before our business goals, we always exceed our business goals, which has been a really interesting learning for us.

[6:51] Kevin: Oh, wow.

Section 3: Building an Agile Content Strategy at Scale

[6:52] Kevin: It seems to me that digital transformation, again, is impacting your area probably more than a lot of different areas in an enterprise.

You've been in the industry and in content for many years. How have you seen the requirements for content generation, especially for a company like SAP, evolve and change over the last few years?

[7:17] Amy: I think the biggest change I've seen is speed to market.

It's so crucial that we're able to be agile and quick when we're creating content. To that end, our content strategy really focuses on creating what we call "big rock" assets that we can plan to break out as needed.



We actually approach it from a backwards-in approach. We start by thinking about where we're going to need all these pieces that we can very quickly execute on, and then we build up to what the full bundle looks like.

So, taking a content map and saying, "We know we're going to need these 15 things that have the same theme. We know we need to have this big rock piece of content that we can use as either a campaign offer or a grounding asset, like our Gold Guide, which sets out our entire messaging and tells our customers' stories."

How are we going to be able to quickly manipulate that piece in a digital world to meet a need that might arise that we haven't anticipated?

We really try to look at the full spectrum of what we're creating and anticipate where we might need to be fast.

My background is actually in print journalism, so I come from content, just a different kind of content. We had a daily press run, and the speed at which we had to create content was even slower, even though it was still a daily operation, right?

If we think about 24 hours, sometimes it might be 12 hours in terms of the time you need to create.

For me, that's the most challenging piece for content creators—the ability to say, "Okay, we need this piece of content. It's

come up. Where are we going to source it from? How are we going to create it?"

It's about trying to think strategically beforehand so that you don't have to scramble to meet that need.

[9:23] Kevin: Wow. So, are the 13 people on your team primarily overseeing different areas of content that need to be generated? And then, do you have a big network of writers and content generators?

How does that work?

[9:38] Amy: We do. Our team is responsible for building all of our demand generation assets.

We're also responsible for thought leadership, and in some ways, that ties into demand. We run a platform called The Future of Customer Engagement and Commerce, which is high-level, high-quality, original thought leadership.

It's tied to demand, but we don't have an aggressive strategy there. It's very much around engagement and building trust.

We know that when somebody has come, signed up for a newsletter, and revisited us, when it comes time to make a decision, they will hopefully tip into the buying cycle with us.

We have people who are responsible for looking at strategy, and we do have some in-house writers. But we're finding more and more that we need to pull those people into strategic projects and work

across our different teams—our product teams and demand generation teams—to support them strategically from a content standpoint.

So, we employ a fairly large network of external freelancers that myself and some of my colleagues, who've also come from journalism, have sourced.

We also use our internal network, Studio SAP, where we have a cadre of writers who are well-versed in our brand that we can call on.

[10:58] Kevin: Now, I'm looking at that and just thinking about the incredible amount of complexity involved in the scenario you just painted for us.

If we can pull back the curtains, what kind of tools do you use to line all of this up and keep it organized?

[11:15] Amy: We have some content management tools that we use right now. We do have NewsCred.

We're looking at creating a system, through tools and human effort, where we can see end-to-end what everybody is doing and provide a global view.

That's the biggest challenge, I think, for any content marketer today—actually wrapping your head around all the different pieces of content that everybody is creating.

We have comms, podcasts, videos, partners, sales enablement, and people out in the field creating their own content.

There's so much to wrap your head around.

Governance is really key, I think, going forward in this industry because, right now, it's still kind of the Wild West.

Section 4: How Mobile and Social Are Changing Content Consumption

[13:09] Kevin: Just how have you seen that in your experience?

[13:11] Amy: Absolutely. I think there have been a couple of paradigm shifts.

One, we went from paper to digital, right? If you think about industry trade magazines and catalogs, those were some of the first places people would look.

Then we went to the screen—the big screen. We went to our desktops and laptops. And now we've moved to mobile.

People are so transient. You're always in your car or on a plane. You can't even always read on your phone.

So, I think the rise of the podcast is really starting to peak. More and more brands are approaching that as a way to get their content out there, where people can consume it while they're multitasking.

People's lives are busy, and we want to be able to come to our customers in a way that's convenient for them.

When you're on the treadmill or in your car driving from sales call to sales call, for

instance, that's a place where we can touch you with a podcast.

I think social—LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook, not so much for the B2B market—definitely LinkedIn and Instagram are places where you have to be present. You have to have content that's really tailored for that brief moment when you have someone's attention.

That's another thing, too. Attention spans have shrunk. The average engagement with any piece of digital content is eight seconds.

[14:34] Kevin: Wow.

[14:35] Amy: You have eight seconds to get that person's attention. If you don't, they look away.

One of my favorite metrics about our online platform is that we actually have a time on site of six minutes. So, we know that we're well above that eight-second mark. We know we're hitting engagement.

I think with mobile, too, you have to underpin everything you do with analytics, data, and testing. You have to make sure you're not spending money on that eight-second chance you're taking and losing.

[15:10] Kevin: Wow. So, two questions there. One, you excluded Facebook, but you kept Instagram in the mix.

Instagram is mostly photo sharing. What is the strategy behind a large company and group like SAP Customer

Experience? What do you try to achieve on a photo-sharing platform? Is it really about awareness and engagement?

[15:38] Amy: We leverage Instagram a lot for events—driving registration, driving excitement, and driving people to join our live streams.

We do use Facebook for live streaming. I should backtrack a little bit there and say that the platform we use most for live streaming is Facebook, and that is actually really valuable.

Then, we take the content we're able to capture there and turn it into other content.

We'll do blog posts based around that and smaller snippets on Instagram—short, bite-sized videos to capture someone's attention and drive them to a call to action.

I think people are very visual right now. Again, this is around that eight-second mark, right? It's a lot faster to look at a photo than it is to read a 500-word blog post.

So, I think it's a doorway into brand awareness and engagement that is low-threshold for both the company and the consumer.

Section 5: Humanizing the Brand Through Purpose-Driven Content

[16:36] Kevin: But what role does Instagram play in influencer marketing, getting to know your audience, and



showing the human side of the company? Is that important as well?

[16:50] Amy: It's huge. I think SAP is very upfront with its brand purpose. We are a people-driven, purpose-driven brand.

We're engaging with customers that are helping build a better world, and that's so important today.

I think if you look at, for instance, Nike's recent engagement with Colin Kaepernick, you can see that brands that are humanized and engage in current events and purposeful marketing reap the benefits.

Their sales went up 30% with that campaign.

In this climate, there's so much to choose from and so much noise that you need to show how your company lives its values.

I know our Instagram channel does that. There's a lot of humanity in the pieces of content we share, and we're fairly transparent about who we are and what we believe in.

I think that matters. Content that reflects your company's values is so important, not just for customer engagement but also for employee engagement, because it makes you feel like you're part of something bigger than just your job.

[18:08] Kevin: So, under the content umbrella, are you including everything you mentioned there, from video to long-

form reports and web content? Do you cover the whole gamut with your group?

[18:22] Amy: We cover the whole gamut. We're producing a book. We do thought leadership.

We publish five blog posts a day on The Future of Customer Engagement and Commerce. We support our PR and communications team.

We're engaged in video creation—short demo videos, but also longer-form content.

We recently came off Customer Experience Live, where my team supported keynote creation and all of the content and content strategy behind that event.

We had 502 sessions, and we were responsible for making sure they aligned with the red-thread messaging, which we also created.

So, we have a vast amount of responsibility, and it covers every piece. But we're not alone.

We work in a really collaborative environment, so we have the support of other teams. We may not create every piece of content bespoke within our team, but we influence and have eyes on everything the organization is doing from a content perspective.

Section 6: Personalizing Content Across the Customer Journey



[19:26] Kevin: Wow. Amy, some of the digital transformation we're seeing in sales is the ability to track the entire customer journey—from a prospect first visiting your website to becoming a long-term customer with multiple subscriptions. You now have that visibility.

I know that's a major emphasis within SAP Customer Experience and that there's a lot of value in that data.

But knowing that much about a prospect and a customer also means you have the opportunity to personalize content.

Are you finding that you're having to track more and more data points and provide increasingly personalized and customized content based on personas and where someone is in the customer journey?

It seems to me that this can exponentially increase the demand for content.

[20:20] Amy: Absolutely. It absolutely does.

I think every brand is up against that, and every brand requires it because consumers are more demanding than ever. They will close their eyes to you if you don't engage with them on their terms.

As we move forward, our team is really looking at how we can achieve that goal without overpowering both our manpower and our budget.

I do think the tools we're creating in-house at SAP Customer Experience empower that journey.

We're looking to use our own platforms to move forward and make sure we can deliver. We have to walk the walk. We can't just talk—we have to deliver.

That is definitely a goal for us: to create the most personalized and impactful customer experience our own customers can have.

[21:14] Kevin: Amy, you've been a brilliant guest.

I want to thank you so much for pulling back the curtain and showing us what it takes at a huge company like SAP to really provide that exceptional customer experience.

Thank you so much for sharing with us.

[21:30] Amy: Thank you very much for having me. It's been great. I love talking about this stuff.

[21:33] Kevin: All right. Thank you again.

I want to thank everyone out there for joining us as well.

[END]