

Ideabook

OCTOBER 2023

20 + PARTICIPANTS

IDEAS & MORE



- Overview & product concept
- New ideas & group reflections
- Individual reactions



Deborah Carver, Founder
The Content Technologist

**THE content
technologist**



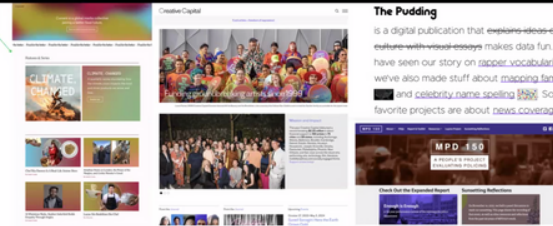
Tim Schuster, Facilitator
PopUpThinkTank

**POP
UP
THINK
TANK**

25 Thinkers. 1 Founder. 100s of Ideas
& Connections. popupthinktank.com



Our current state
**DIGITAL DISTRUST +
 TECHNICAL DEBT =**
**UNSATISFYING ONLINE
 AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE**



LET'S MAKE WEBSITES BETTER

Update our methodologies to what works - sustainable, not viral. Manageable, not mass. Remember why we like digital in the first place.

THE DIGITAL CONTENT STRATEGY EXPANSION PACK

- For digital agency teams who want to build the next phase of the internet now
- A year-long program in 2024 to skill up alongside peers and benchmark performance
- An in-depth review of what's worked and what's changed in the past 10-25 years of digital communications
- Connection with vendors and collaborators to support network-fueled growth



The format

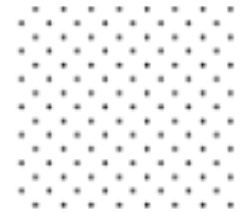
1. Introductions
2. Company overview
3. New product concept
4. Individual reactions (I Like, I wish)
5. Founder interview
6. Breakout ideation/reflection
7. Survey invitation

How to use this ideabook

1. Print
2. Read entire document
3. Read again - cross out anything that doesn't make sense
4. Star or + ideas that are easy to implement *and* high-impact
5. Circle anything that needs more attention or learning
6. Roadmap accordingly
7. Follow up with participants

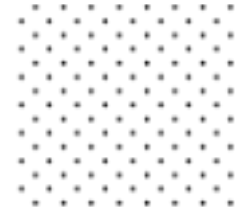
I Like

Based on what I learned about Expansion Pack, I like ...



- The idea of getting ahead of the next phase of the internet instead of waiting for it to happen.
- Bringing Agencies together to collaborate and build skills together
- I like "restoring enthusiasm" and a space for aligned thinkers sharing ideas. A program for practicing articulation of what best web looks like beyond headline jargon.
- the concept of bringing back enthusiasm and creativity to the content business. I like the idea of drawing from a network of innovative industry peers.
- The idea of having tools to support the creation of reliably successful content; the tech-hybrid focus; the expansion of an interdisciplinary network for crosspollination.
- ... the idea of bringing creative agency brains together to make the Internet "better," or at least strategize ways to be more deliberate as we head into the next iteration of digital marketing and content.
- The idea of "formalizing" a next step/phase with regard to creative content development for the human-first experience and pulling in best-in-class strategic partners as I believe it offers a chance for stronger content that will be more engaging and less process driven with the increased pressure for automation (AI).
- I like that it presents as a digital content strategy "boost to the arm". This feels like an obvious pain point for agencies because there is so much to keep up with.
- I also like what Deborah said about the goal of this program is to restore enthusiasm. This comes off as very genuine and immediately "get it".
- Deborah's vision and optimism!
- I love the goal of "restoring enthusiasm for the digital experience." I think a lot of agencies will really resonate with that.

I Like Cont'd



- I like bringing together people from different companies to participate in a cohort. As individuals inside of companies we can get stuck in how we've always done things or just responding to what work shows up. But in a cohort based approach, the structure is more proactive. It strikes me that it is about educating as well as helping agencies stay relevant with how tech is changing.
- The idea of sharing knowledge with other industry experts. I know that I don't know what I don't know, and the thought of leveraging community insights to help grow my business and my clients, is a very exciting prospect.
- The comparison between digital content and film and relating it to other fields at their beginnings. The whole program seems really smart and connected to what's actually going on in digital right now.
- A holistic review of digital content and the industry + relevant tooling to apply the day-to-day. Rarely do working content professionals get opportunities to zoom out for comprehension, but really to generate a point of view on what, where, and how they can apply their skills to make a better internet.
- This is absolutely an area where agency teams need more structure, better processes, and better internal education, so I think there's plenty of opportunity here.

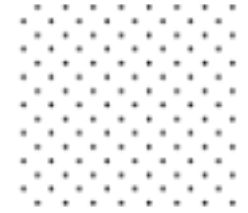
I Wish

Based on what I learned about Expansion Pack, I find myself wishing...



- For more clarity about cost and what the agencies signing up for this will be contributing.
- I wish I knew more about what the commitment looked like, tactically.
- I knew more of the details. I still feel a little fuzzy on what the expansion pack is and how it would work.
- That there had been more focus on supporting content creators themselves.
- ... I had more details. :-)
- to understand HOW brand will continue to be developed and introduced as part of the offering?
- I wish I knew more about what it enables teams to do. I find myself wishing i knew "what would i get out of this" in a more concrete / tangible way.
- I understood a couple of examples of the kinds of discussions that would be had with the cohort. It may help solidify the idea more for the agency if they understood a couple things you might talk about.
- To see more specific evidence / concrete examples of what she's describing. I see the vision, but not the path. I also feel like she's underselling her experience, which makes it look like she's overselling her ideas. I know she has tons of experience and some amazing projects under her belt, but none of those are offered as examples of what she wants to do!
- there were more resources around process and best practices available were more focused and curated to my needs and experiences.
- I'd be interested in a full breakdown of what exactly the program will involve (but I'm sure that's coming!) :)
- I better understood who would be a part of this cohort. What are their challenges, goals, etc. How/ why would they fund being a part of this? Who else influences their professional journey and empowerment/

I Wish Cont'd



- • I had to run out in the midst of this, so my apologies if this was covered! But I have questions about how this intersects with client work, where budget drives so much of the conversation about what can be accomplished. I think it points to something that needs to be addressed in the selling of this.
- I'm not 100% on this, but I wish there was a smaller package for agencies that are interested but not willing to sign up for a full year.

Your Experience

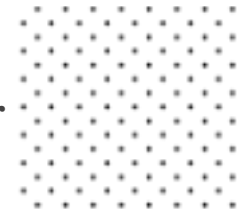
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- Clients wanting to mimic strategies they're seeing, to the point where they're not differentiating enough from their competitors.
- Lack of shared framework and understanding of what content strategy is and what content strategy deliverables are. From the very beginning of the biz dev process to delivery there's not a throughline of what content strategy practice and deliverables are. It's a frustration of not having enough information to give the client up front.
- In small environments you have more freedom of expression. In larger environments, there's an implicit drive to follow the lead of what already exists/suppression of creativity.
- Fragmentation of social media in terms of reach. Not clear how to reach an audience of where they are and HOW they should/could reach good content. Rapidly changing sphere action.
- What comes first, content strategy or design? That makes me feel confused, cause it depends.
- Not questioning why a system exists, why things are done a certain way.
- Content strategy is a moving target. How do you evolve and take that part of the audience that you want to keep? It makes me feel perpetually anxious.
- Content/design being undervalued!

Learning & Dev

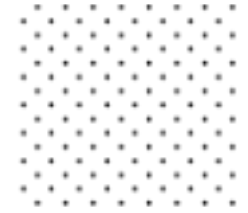
What are you reading? How are you skilling up? How do you learn what you need to learn? Making time for learning & development - WTF is that about?



- Meet really smart people and spend time with them.
- Know what you know and know what you don't know.
- Meeting w/ people, talking about how they work.
- Slack channels
- Helpful to follow people on social media that are learning out loud, especially as they try new platforms
- Reading far too many newsletters + substacks. Pick and choose based on headlines, random walk.
- I should do more professional development reading. I love to read fiction in my free time and this makes me feel like I should step my game up!
- Listening to books and non-computer reading ("Be Useful" by Arnold Swarzenegger")
- I'll read linkedin articles or blogs, but I do not have a consistent source of information probably to my detriment.
- AI tools
- Newsletters we read most often: The Content Technologist, Marketing AI Institute, Litmus, Zeta Global
- Analyzing one's own content and optimizing; thinking about process
- I've embarked on a journey to improve myself. I have felt stuck since the pandemic started. Recently started with a career coach and I'm looking forward to improving myself since it's been a hot minute.
- Newsletters; learning by doing
- Designated time in calendars for prof dev as committed goal across team
- Lot of exploring new tools hands-on; listening to team/colleagues
- Bureau of Digital Affairs
- Conferences (Nat'l association of state CIOs)
- Podcasts: Content Rookies, The Content Strategist
- Teach backs, cross-departmental learning

Learning & Dev

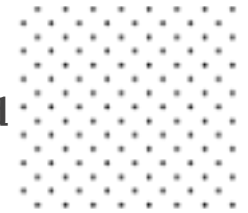
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- I do things in real life to learn about something, rather than reading about it. This is my way of avoiding burnout.
- Read articles online to see what other people are doing. People you follow on social media
- Morning reading with coffee

Magic Wand

When it comes to content (from creative to analytics to the business), if I could wave a magic wand, I would



- Solve our clients content production problems. Because every project has clients that VASTLY under-estimate what will be in the client content list and there is always need for that.
- Google rules on content authority
- Fragmentation of communities/too many platforms/better community discoverability.
- If there was a tool that could streamline the hand-off of content for when it's ready to go (stop the Word doc madness).
- Too many replications of platforms.
- I'd like to know on earth can I manage things across a variety of platforms and media. How to measure progress across different platforms that need to be measured in different ways?
- Brand marketers/clients who are willing to take risks to stand out in their industry.
- Require more long-term thinking -- more lenses for thinking through impact
- If there way to take the pressure off of quantity vs. quality and have an ever-present consumer filter when developing and delivering content.
- Have clients understand the importance of spending time on content/the importance of content as a function of their overall work and business goals.
- Get rid of the urge to produce content *constantly.*
- Everyone could somehow magically understand each other via the same language/framework, etc. Immediate understanding.
- I wish there was more experience with people running their own business -- people assume there are people who do business and people who don't. People not willing to engage in learning how to make a business succeed or realize that they're even *doing* business and need to learn how to do it well.

Survey

From the post-event survey - thank you!



- “Keep on being awesome! Let's work together!”
- “I wish the equivalent of the Content Technologist existed for a broader agency audience. Want to build it? ;)”
- ...”we are already talking about other ways to “...collaborate with the Content Technologist.”
- “It all sounded great, so smart and well put-together (not that I'm surprised!) and I think something that's sorely needed in the tech/business space. Keep doing what you're doing, and of course, if you need any extra copy editing or anything else, don't hesitate to reach out.”
- “I thought it went really well. I was definitely worried I wouldn't be much of a help with brainstorming as I have mostly been working in a different field but everyone was very nice and I think we all found enough commonalities to have something to say that made sense to everyone. Thanks for inviting me, Deb, and hope all is going well!”
- “I haven't really seen anything like this before and it was a really interesting concept.”
- “Nice format!”

Thank you!

Survey respondents.

Ryan Hagen
Alex Pratt
Mary Cooke
Tina Morgan
Brian Skowron
Amber Christian
Allison Widmark
Sarah Howard
Mike Ostaffe
Tara Lirette
Eric Weber

