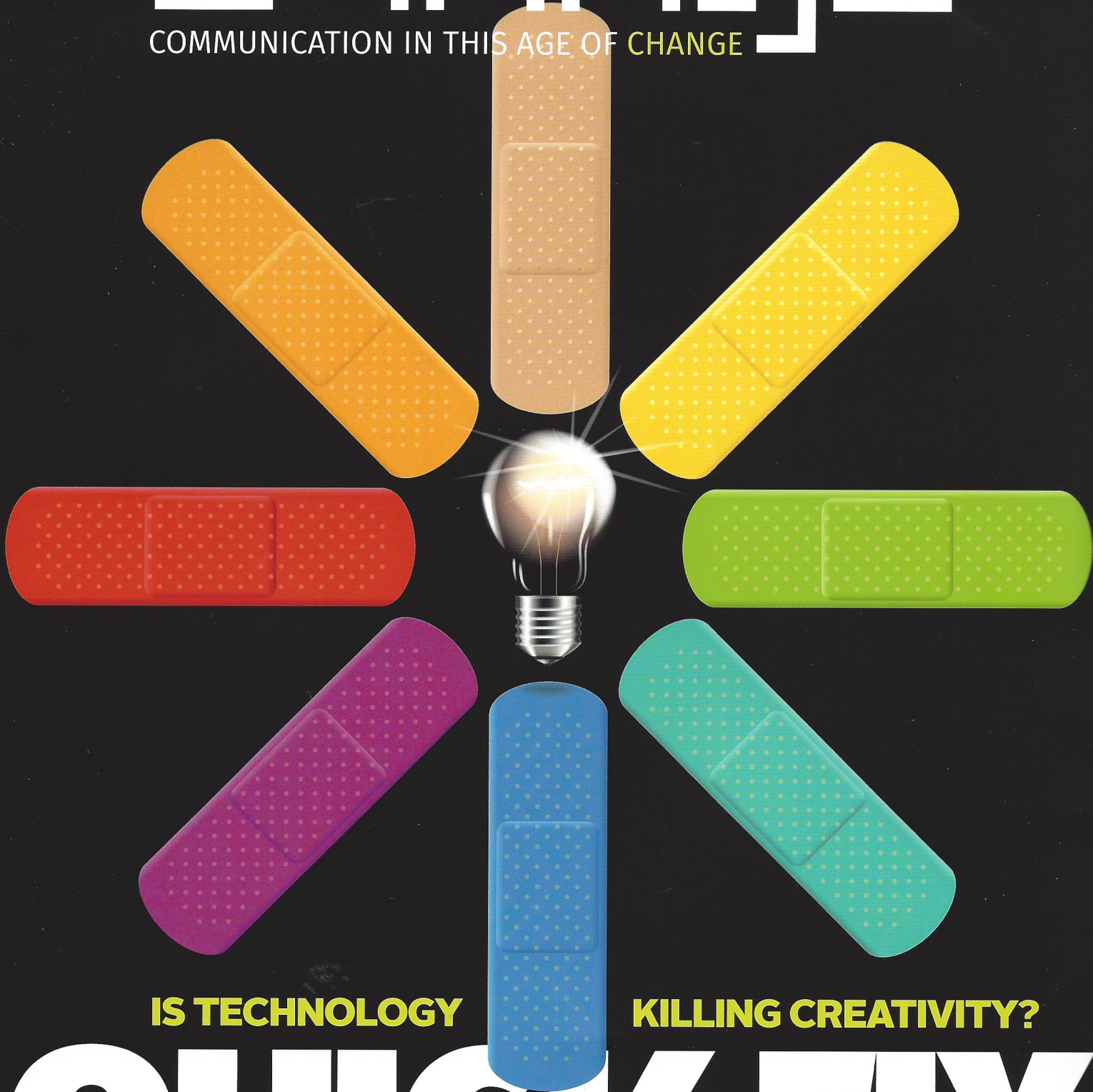


# CHANGE

COMMUNICATION IN THIS AGE OF CHANGE

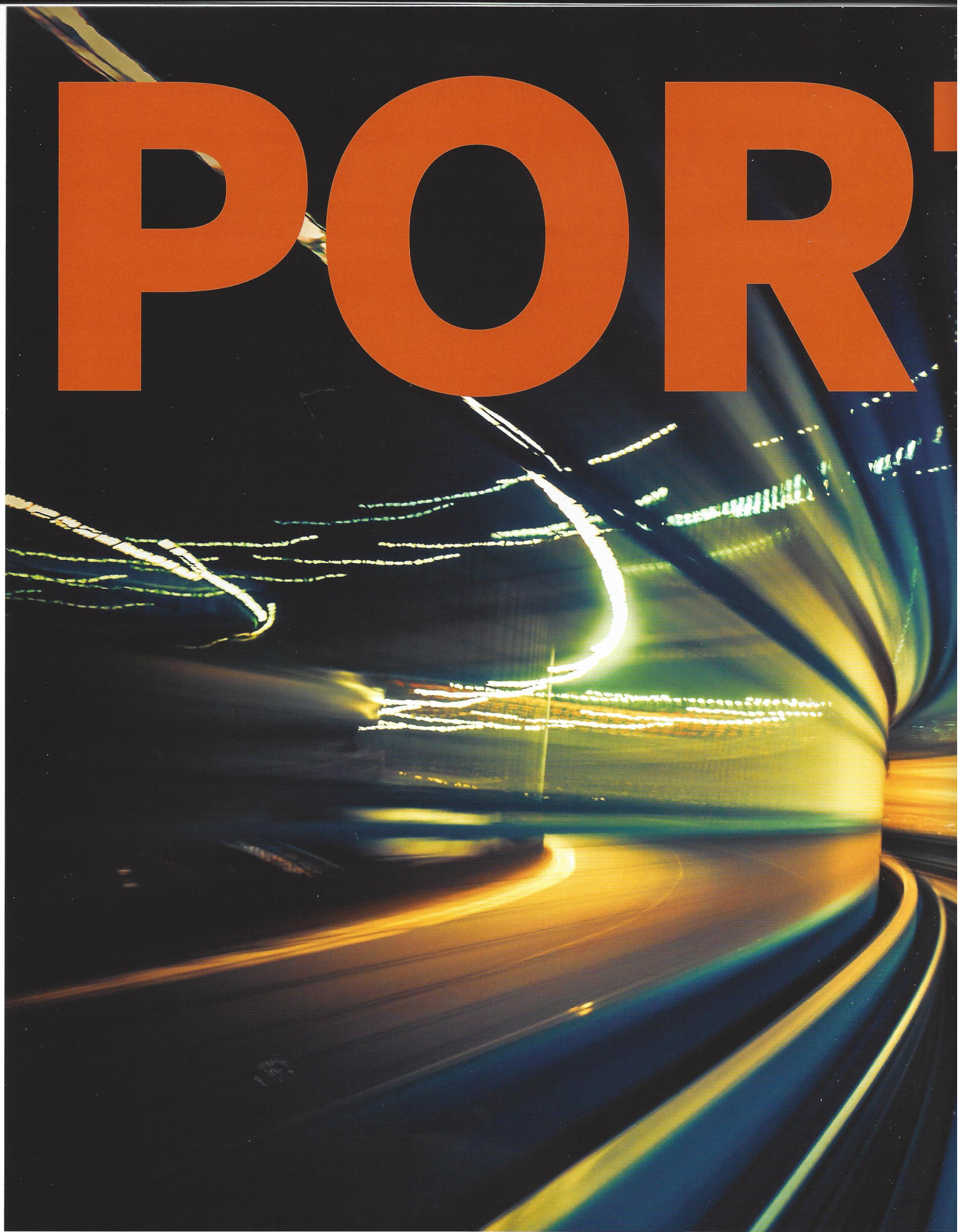


**IS TECHNOLOGY**

**KILLING CREATIVITY?**

# QUICK FIX

# POOR

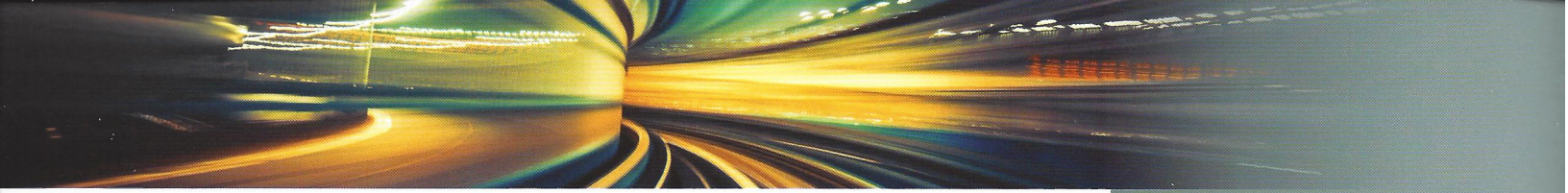


# TALS



MARKETING PORTALS HELP ORGANIZATIONS CONSOLIDATE INVENTORY, MANAGE ASSET DISTRIBUTION, PROTECT BRAND, AND CONTROL COSTS. LEARN WHY MORE COMPANIES ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THESE LIBERATING PLATFORMS.

**BY MICHAEL SOLENDER AND ANNA ROGERS**



# M

arketing portals help organizations consolidate inventory, manage asset distribution, protect brand, and control costs. Learn why more companies are taking advantage of these liberating platforms.

For Blair Primis, Vice President of marketing for Charlotte, NC-based healthcare provider OrthoCarolina, the decision to incorporate a marketing portal into his arsenal of tools to support his business units was easy.

“Having an on-demand, live portal where our people can access branded promotional

items, templates, letterhead, posters, and a host of other regularly needed items, allows our marketing department to extend and expand our reach,” says Primis. “There’s no question that marketing portals save us time and money, reduce the hassle factor, and allow for greater responsiveness and customer service to our many field locations.”

Primis isn’t alone in taking advantage of third-party support in this arena. Many organizations, particularly those with multiple and geographically dispersed locations, find marketing portals are an efficient way to seamlessly manage marketing efforts, from brand integrity to timely delivery of business information.

What exactly is an online marketing portal? Portals are configurable and customizable internet-based solutions that manage static and variable branded content for customers. The benefits of this centralized portal are extensive — consistency in brand messaging while allowing for customization, 24/7 employee access to marketing materials, control over regulatory compliant verbiage, user access control, and streamlined invoicing and accounting, to name a few.

## Flexible Solutions

Online marketing portals are customizable systems that integrate with customers’ business rules to drive several important outcomes: brand integrity, marketing agility, and productivity.

Portals create a central source allowing dealers, distributors, and sales personnel direct access to collateral. The portal is accessible from any location with internet at any time, immediately placing

orders in a fulfillment queue for efficient and timely distribution.

This centralized system consolidates promotional requests and controls inventory, all while increasing customer service, expediting response time, and saving money.

In addition to streamlining procurement and distribution, marketing portals automate product allocation controls and simplify accounting.

“Portals address two business challenges for clients,” says Glen Swyers, Director of Marketing Integration for Classic Graphics. “The first is ensuring the right line of business is getting charged back the necessary cost for the materials. The second is controlling who gets what inventory based upon established parameters. Larger organizations often have multi-level dealerships with variable pricing. A platinum dealer, for example, might have different pricing or different access to items than a gold dealer. Managing these complexities usually requires a great deal of human capital, but an appropriately structured portal manages them directly and automatically.”

## Beyond Marketing

Developing solutions for customer business needs often extends to fulfillment beyond marketing collateral to

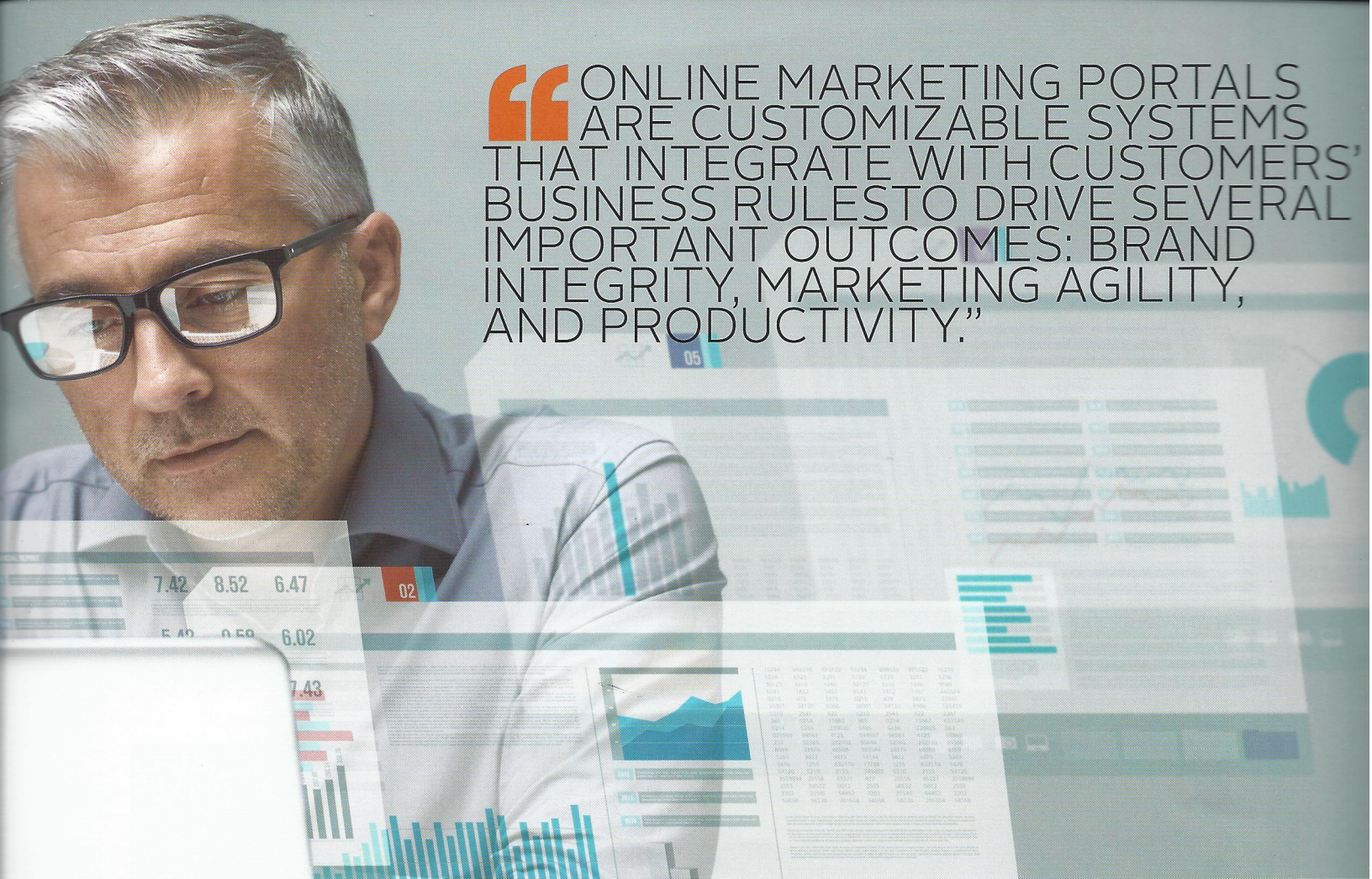
internal employee materials and supplies. Materials from branded apparel to coffee cups, envelopes, and paperclips can all be ordered directly through the marketing portal. New hire kits and orientation materials are fulfilled in the same manner.

Companies are now recognizing the importance of internal branding, a strategy that motivates employees by involving them in the branding process, yielding a sense of pride and enthusiasm that will ultimately affect the way they support and represent the brand.

According to a Gallup poll and article, “Few Employees Believe in Their Company’s Values,” by Nate Dvorak and Bailey Nelson, only 27% of U.S. employees believe in their company’s values. Since employees who believe in their brand are more likely to serve as brand ambassadors and excel in customer service, many companies are seeking to change the culture of their brand.

Portals support internal branding efforts by offering employees an opportunity to buy into the brand through an online company store.





“ONLINE MARKETING PORTALS ARE CUSTOMIZABLE SYSTEMS THAT INTEGRATE WITH CUSTOMERS’ BUSINESS RULES TO DRIVE SEVERAL IMPORTANT OUTCOMES: BRAND INTEGRITY, MARKETING AGILITY, AND PRODUCTIVITY.”

### No Going Rogue

Companies work hard and expend tremendous resources to establish and maintain their brand image and messaging.

According to Ira Kalb, president of Kalb & Associates and assistant professor of clinical marketing at the University of Southern California, one of the key objectives of brand marketers is to “penetrate buyer brains in developing brand identities for companies and products.”

Kalb wrote about the physics of marketing recently for HuffPost, where he said marketing tools such as names, logos, slogans, and jingles can create shortcuts to purchase. He notes that the most effective tools are messages that travel quickly, produce buying actions, and form habits.

It’s no wonder companies are so protective regarding their valued brand assets; these tools are proven vehicles in motivating action on the part of the consumer.

Marketing portals are an effective way for an organization to create an ease of doing business, providing sales teams, dealers, and branch locations easy access to materials that are in-line with a carefully crafted brand.

### Compliance

Many organizations also look to marketing portals for help with compliance.

Many pharmaceutical companies are using these tools to help monitor expired product information. An on-line portal serves as the sole source for obtaining up-to-date information. SKUs (stock keeping units) can be set to automatically timeout in the system according to expiration dates, ensuring that all utilization of marketing materials is current.

Financial institutions benefit from this automation as well. Organizations can easily access brand consistent and pre-approved compliant marketing collateral through print-on-demand

systems customized for clients. In today’s ever-changing legal environment, the ability to print on demand helps keep all information current to the legal and regulatory requirements. This yields drastic improvement in speed to market, reduced obsolescence and enhanced brand equity.

### Reporting

Marketers find gold in real-time reporting capabilities.

Marketing teams can look and see how many times a piece of marketing material has been requested from which locations and match this up with sales increases. Analysis of data usage (or non-usage) can show potential correlations with business results. Reports are easily accessible in the portal, providing a clear history that enables accurate tracking and analysis.

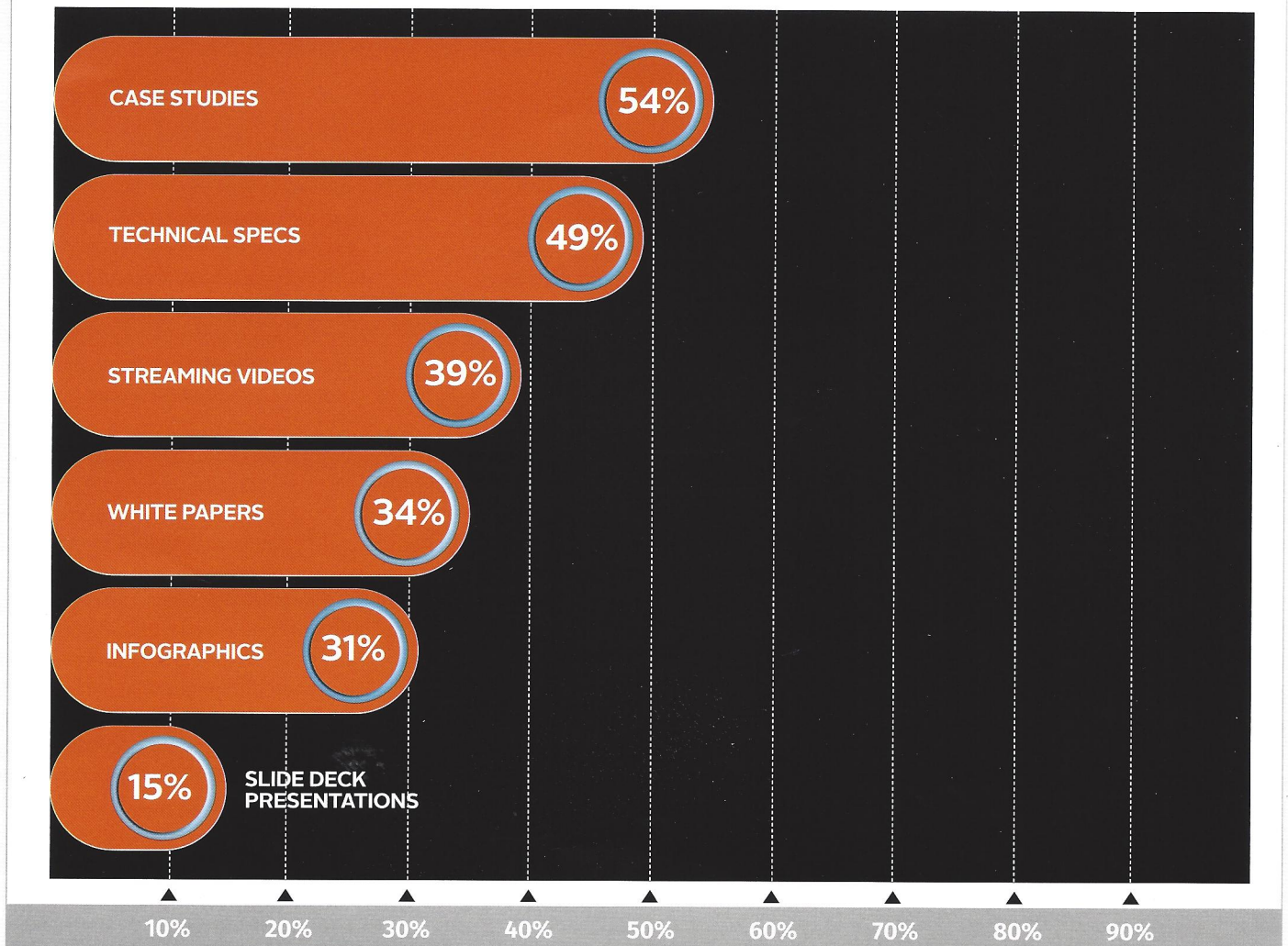
Online marketing portals hold great potential, not simply for labor and cost savings and ordering efficiencies, but for more strategic and informed marketing and sales practices.

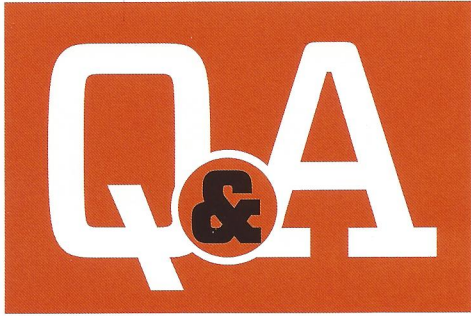
# CONTENT, MY CONTENT

SURVEY EXAMINES IMPORTANCE (BUT DON'T OVERDO IT) OF CONTENT IN THE SALES PROCESS

**How much content is too much content?** Funny you should ask. According to Showpad's "The B2B Buyer Experience Report," 86 percent of B2B buyers get overwhelmed anytime there are more than 10 pieces of content to read, while 42 percent draw the line at five or

more pieces. The takeaway here is that content matters; you just have to make the right content choices. To help you out, the report, which queried 656 B2B buyers from around the world, pinpointed which content they find most useful:





**Why should marketing be a brand's best friend?**

Marketing departments are often maligned in an organization because they're the "crazy kids" who just spend money. CEOs rarely come from the marketing discipline, but because they're smart they think they understand marketing. The first step to failure is to make a better widget and think that's enough. Product and service success only happens with marketing support. Don't believe otherwise.

**Where is the disconnect?**

That it's not in the logic, but in the available information that feeds the thinker. If all you hear and read about are successes, you'll think every product is successful, every campaign is successful, and it all happens effortlessly and efficiently. If you don't truly know what goes into it, you won't be in a position to advance an opinion. The process is a broad discipline with experts all along the sector continuum.

**Give us your favorite example of true marketing genius.**

It is the campaign for the Lung Cancer Alliance (LCA), a small advocacy group in Washington, D.C. that was trying to get a bill passed to increase funding for lung cancer research. Even though the disease kills more people than the next four cancers combined, it had the least funding. The organization received a million dollar gift and didn't know what to do with it.

I lead the strategic planning. We used the money to take on the stigma. We did a national campaign, "Deserve to Die," that was essentially a teaser campaign to incite social sharing, based on psychological bias. We printed signage that mysteriously appeared on a single day in key cities across the country (in 2012), declaring "Cat Lovers Deserve to Die" and "Hipsters Deserve to Die," among others.

**TRENDING WITH...**

**DENISE KOHNKE, HOUSE UNITED**

NOTED BRANDING THOUGHT LEADER ON WHY MARKETING SHOULD MATTER TO YOU



Failure happens. If you don't devote yourself to continually reviewing what's new, and what's working and what's not, you'll keep running in place. It's a message that Denise Kohnke takes to heart. The executive director of marketing firm House United and author of "All of the Other Marketing Books Are Crap" believes that if you're going to do something, do it with all you have. Take marketing, a field in which she has spent the past 25-plus years helping brands hone their messaging. To succeed, Kohnke says you must mix theory with practice, continuously fine-tuning your messaging and creative strategy with what actually works in real-life marketing situations. The problem, as she sees it, is that most brands don't. We sat down with Kohnke to get her thoughts on why it's time to take marketing seriously.

MISSION IS WHAT DRIVES YOU. VISION IS WHERE YOU'RE GOING. MARKETING MAKES WHAT DRIVES YOU ACTUALLY HAPPEN. "IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME" WAS WRITTEN AS FICTION.

We revealed the source after a few days, replacing the posters with identical images, this time with the LCA logo.

For days, the campaign was the No. 2 trending topic on Yahoo. The bill, which languished for years, was passed and signed in just a few months. It's my favorite story because it proved that smart marketing strategy plus focused activation works.

**How can every brand get the most from its marketing efforts?**

The reality is that marketing budgets have been skimped to the bone, mostly

because so much is allocated to digital infrastructure. Rather than setting yourself up for failure by obsessing about ROI, focus on improving the process metrics that happen before ROI can be calculated on a given campaign. Then you can better isolate what part of your process is weak (actionable to fix), and know that, because you continuously improved the little metrics, your ROI was, in the end, the best it could be. There are too many variables that impact true ROI, 99 percent of which are uncontrollable. Focus on what you can control.

**Why should marketing be a part of a brand's mission statement?**

Mission is what drives you. Vision is where you're going. Marketing makes what drives you actually happen. "If you build it, they will come" was written as fiction.

**What's the best advice you can offer to today's marketers?**

Marketing is about you. The visionary. It's not data. It's not tactics. It's you and the quality of what you see and that which you are exposed to. Feed your mind with creative goodness.