



# THE FUTURE OF CONTENT

▶ PART III: RETHINKING CONTENT CONSUMPTION

# Executive Summary

## DISCOVERY IS WHAT IS DRIVING CONSUMERS TODAY.

Consumers don't trust content that's pushed at them. They're not relying on it when researching purchases. And nearly all consumers are going out of their way to avoid seeing it by blocking pop-up ads, disabling cookies, opting out of emails, and skipping pre-roll video ads.

**To understand this rapidly growing issue, we surveyed an audience of over 1,000 consumers to discover:**

- How personalized they feel content is to their needs and interests
- How they feel about content that's pushed at them vs. content they discover
- How they would engage differently with content if it was more personalized
- How millennials, in particular, want to explore and interact with content

**Consumers want content that's meaningful, helpful and valuable to their specific needs and interests.** But equally important is their desire to seek it out themselves. And beyond the ability to seek it out, content needs to be personalized in a way that allows consumers to customize, navigate, click and control it.

Millennials are showing an even greater mistrust for pushed content and continue to stiff-arm brands' attempts to reach them in this way. The effort to successfully reach, build trust with, and gain loyalty from the next generation of brand consumers and advocates starts with rethinking the way content is consumed.

## KEY FINDINGS:

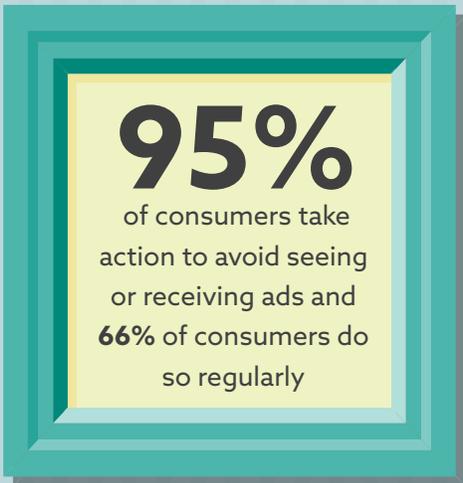
- **43%** say online ads are not personalized to their interests, but
- **62%** say content they discover themselves is personalized
- **95%** take action to avoid seeing or receiving ads
- **61%** say even if content is customized, they still prefer to find it on their own
- **5%** say ads influence their purchasing decisions
- **46%** say content they find on their own influences their purchase decision
- **57%** of millennials block ad content because it is too pushy vs. 38% of those over 45
- The main reasons why consumers want brands to stop interruptive channels:
  - **67%** - They're sending too much of it
  - **55%** - It's not interesting or relevant to them
  - **46%** - It's too pushy
  - **42%** - They don't trust them

## THE VALUE OF DISCOVERY

When it comes to the online experience, consumers have more control at their fingertips than ever before. They can customize their social news feeds, control who sees the content they post, opt out of brand emails, and decide the types of news they want to read.

But despite consumers being increasingly in the driver's seat, brands are still attempting to personalize the content experience by pushing content at them at the right time and through the right channel. What they've failed to realize is that consumers don't want content pushed at them at all.

**Consumers want to discover content on their own, and they don't trust brands who don't realize this.** This mistrust makes it apparent that brands who attempt to personalize advertisements and not content experiences are missing the mark, with most consumers saying that even if marketers tailored ads to their interests, they still wouldn't click on it. Why? It removes the element of discovery that they want online.



## The Problem with Pushed Content

**THE MAIN REASONS WHY CONSUMERS TRY TO GET BRANDS TO STOP SENDING CONTENT AND ADS INCLUDE:**

**42%**  
They don't trust them



**46%**  
It's too pushy



**55%**  
It's not interesting or relevant to them



**67%**  
They're sending too much of it



# The Millennial Demand for Personalization



## 42%

say they'd spend more time reading or viewing content if they could tailor it to their interests, vs. **28%** of those over age 45

## 57%

of millennials block ad content because it's too pushy, vs. only **38%** of those over age 45 who cited the same reason



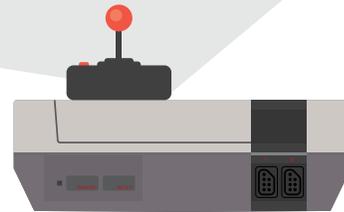
## 30%

said they would tell friends about a brand/company if it delivered them personalized content, vs. only **18%** of those over age 30 and **8%** of those over age 60



## 60%

of millennials say that they would be more likely to make a purchase after spending more time engaging with content, vs. **44%** of those over age 30



## THE ROLE OF MILLENNIALS

In looking at how discovery and personalization drive engagement and purchases, it's worth examining the consumers that are driving this trend and how the demand for personalized content is likely to continue.

According to YouBrand, millennials were estimated to have a combined global spending power of \$2.45 trillion in 2015<sup>1</sup>. So as these younger consumers make up a larger portion of the U.S. consumer base, with tremendous spending power, brands should take notice of what they want most from their content experience, how to build trust with them, and how to ultimately turn them into loyal consumers.

<sup>1</sup> YouBrand, *How to Tap Into the Purchasing Power of Millennials with Social Media*

Millennials make up a young consumer group that has yet to form the same brand loyalties that most older age groups have already formed. That makes this a crucial time for brands to reach these consumers, and what's becoming increasingly clear is that millennials aren't buying what marketers are selling.

**Millennials are driving the trend of increased engagement with personalized content and purchasing more as a result of that engagement.**

## CONNECTING DISCOVERY AND ENGAGEMENT

One of the best indicators that brands are striking a chord with consumers is by watching how they engage with content. As we've highlighted in the first two reports of this series, this is why it's crucial that marketers create content that is inherently measurable through opportunities for interaction. The pull of interactivity lets consumers connect with specific messages within content that are most relevant to them.

A deeper look at the metrics of interactive content will clearly demonstrate that **the more consumers can discover, interact with and navigate content, the more likely they are to spend more time engaging with it.**

# The Desire to Discover

**61%**

of consumers said even if content was more customized to their interests, they'd still prefer to find it on their own online through search

**43%**

say online ads are not personalized to their interests, but **62%** say content they discover themselves is

**54%**

of consumers said if marketers personalized ads to their interests, they still wouldn't be interested and probably wouldn't click on them



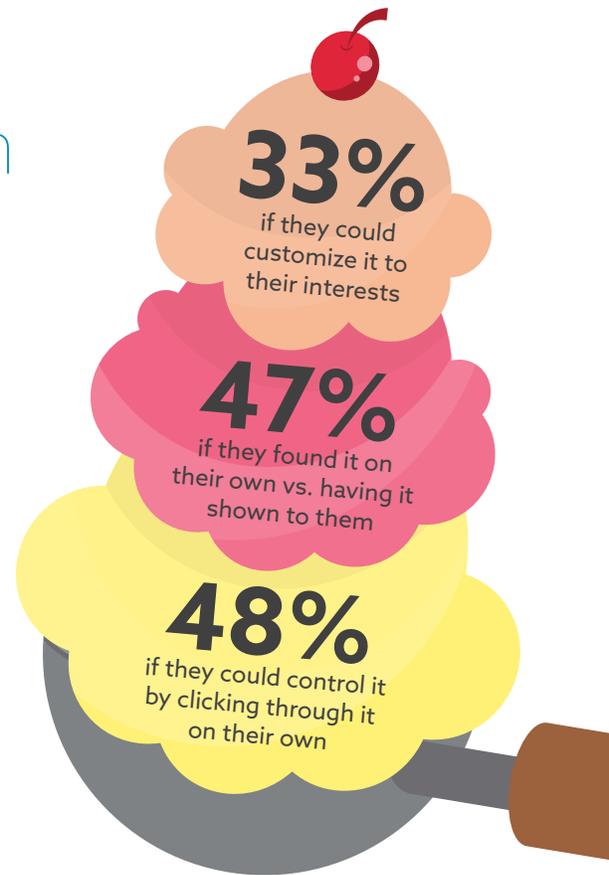
# Content Personalization Increases Engagement



## 66%

of consumers said that if they don't view a content piece all the way through, it's because it was uninteresting or irrelevant to them

**CONSUMERS WOULD SPEND MORE TIME READING OR VIEWING ONLINE CONTENT IF:**



As you might expect, these increased engagement times yield a wealth of benefits for brands who are offering these personalized content experiences. Forrester Research's Jim Nail recently sat down with Rapt Media to discuss what he calls the "Gratitude Effect," where consumers' positive feelings and reactions to the quality of the content they're given from a brand halo over to the brand and establishes a connection and relationship between the brand and the consumer.

This relationship between quality content and a positive brand relationship is evident in the research, with consumers saying that **personalized content will result in them discovering more about the brand, remembering the brand, and ultimately thinking more positively about the brand.**

## The Brand Benefit

**62%** of consumers said that if brand content was more personalized to them, they would be more likely to seek out other information or content to learn more about the brand, and **53%** said they'd be more likely to remember the brand

**63%**  
of consumers said they'd think more positively of a brand if it gave them content that was more valuable, interesting or relevant



## CONNECTING ENGAGEMENT AND PURCHASES

Perhaps the clearest way to demonstrate the benefit of offering personalized content experiences is to show how they impact purchase behavior. Consumers have clearly shown that pushed content, particularly in the form of ads, plays almost no role in their purchase decision, and that they're increasingly relying on the content they discover their own when making purchases.

Beyond the ability to discover content on their own, when the content they discover is personalized to their interests and needs, this also has a positive impact on purchase decisions. The majority of consumers say that it makes them more likely to buy from a brand, and nearly half say that the increased engagement times also positively influences their purchase behavior.

# What is Influencing Purchases?

## THE ROLE OF PERSONALIZATION & ENGAGEMENT

**46%**

said information and content they found on their own influenced their decision

**49%**

of consumers said they've researched the product thoroughly online first

**48%**

of consumers said spending more time engaging with content makes them more likely to make a purchase

**62%**

of consumers said they'd be more likely to purchase from a brand if it gave them content that was more valuable, interesting or relevant



# The Case for Change

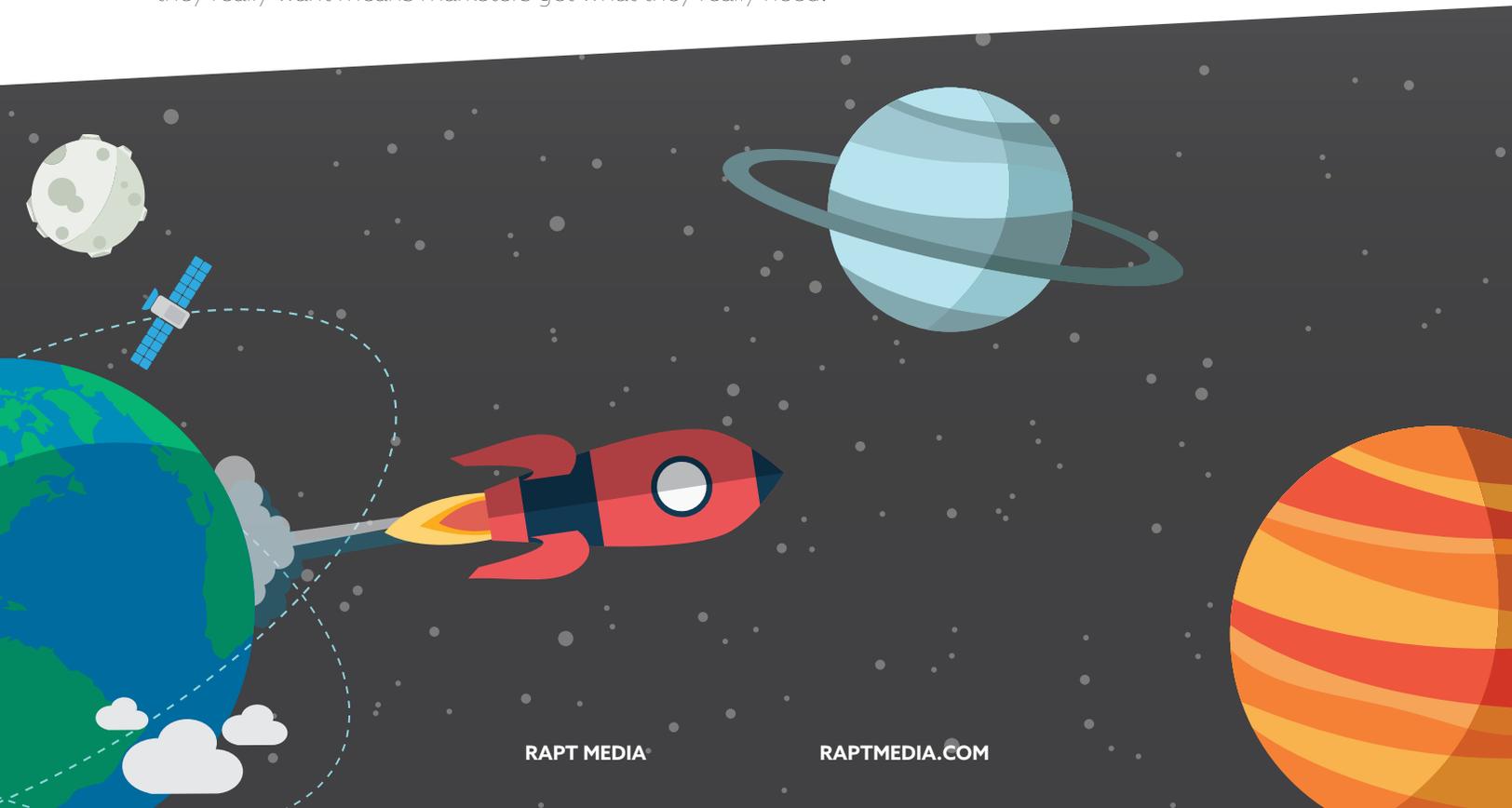
The value of offering a personalized content experience versus pushing advertising at consumers goes far beyond simply getting more clicks and views. Marketers continue to struggle to figure out what consumers really want, but the **technologies powering interactive content take the mystery out of it, allowing consumers to directly communicate with brands what it is that they want and need through their content interactions.**

Not only does it offer marketers a dramatically deeper layer of metrics on audiences, as discussed in parts one and two of this report series, but providing a personalized content experience also leads to a positive relationship between the brand and consumer that builds trust, drives engagement, and leads to purchases.

Interactive content experiences (just like the Web itself) are what consumers are increasingly seeking, and marketers can no longer overlook the element of discovery. And with millennials leading the charge, it becomes even more evident that these trends are only going to increase from here, making it imperative that content marketers make adjustments to their content strategies and tech investments now.

**A new generation of content creation technologies is powering the types of interactive content** that will help marketers understand how the consumer is interacting with a company or brand throughout every phase of the customer journey, closing the gap to create trust and quantify audience segments and behavior patterns to understand what is motivating your customer.

If personalization was built into content through the mechanism of choice and interactivity, consumers get what they want, as they're back in the driver's seat with content. **Create better content and you not only get deeper data and insights, but you build trust and brand loyalty with consumers.** Giving consumers what they really want means marketers get what they really need.





## **ABOUT RAPT MEDIA**

*Rapt Media — Data-savvy creative is the future of content, and only Rapt Media has the storytelling tech that combines personalized narrative with unparalleled insights and data integration. Rapt Media's HTML5, mobile-native video platform gives the power of choice, turning viewers into participants and engagement into real insights. Rapt Media is bigger than video alone and is helping to redefine the future of content.*

*Some of Rapt Media's innovative customers include ABC News, Toyota, eBay, WB, Anheuser-Busch, Fusion, Vodafone, Deloitte, Philips, and Maybelline.*

## **METHODOLOGY**

*Rapt Media surveyed more than 1,000 consumers in the United States through an online survey in February 2016. Responses were voluntary and anonymous.*