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POINT OF VIEW

## Best-In-Class Content: The Key to Engaging Shoppers and Elevating E-commerce

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**Building best-in-class, search-optimized content online is a key element in engaging shoppers. In today's omnichannel shopping experience, the options for shoppers are nearly infinite, and channel-blurring means that it's more challenging than ever for both CPGs and retailers to know when and where shoppers will be seeking specific purchases.**

A deep understanding of e-commerce behaviors helps navigate this complex, 24/7 world, and that understanding comes from recognizing the mindset of shoppers, what they need to make their purchasing decisions and, ultimately, what content elements spurred them to click "buy."

Detailed product content is the number-one reason why 73 percent of consumers click "buy," according to Salsify. To capture this opportunity, IRI has developed a three-step, go-to-market strategy that provides the action steps to achieve success in e-commerce:

- **BUILD** a presence on e-tailer sites as good as own-brand web pages.
- **DRIVE** shoppers to your brand presence on e-tailer sites with media executions.
- **EARN** online through integrated marketing and media executions online and in-store.

At the core of this framework is the presence of best-in-class, search-optimized content displayed on an e-tailer's product detail pages. Here, we'll dive into tactical, action-oriented best practices on content development that will allow for content execution to meet the desires of core – and very valuable – shoppers.

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**"In today's omnichannel world, shopping experiences across channels blend into one another, allowing shoppers easy access to information and choices with just a few clicks."**

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– CLAVIS INSIGHT

## A Look at the Landscape

While in-store, shoppers can look, feel and engage with brands and products, very easily comparing competitive sets and making choices based on ingredients, claims, packaging or even promotion. The hands-on experience is very tactile, but it is limited by the physical square footage of the store and the assortment particular to that retail outlet.

Online, shoppers have access to similar information, but it is clicks away. Although the experience is far less tactile, it is far more expansive – delivering 24-hour access, easy search, endless selection and easy price comparisons, as well as value-added features driven by site suggestions for other products a shopper may like or those that would complement a purchase.

Because online shoppers don't have the luxury of holding and evaluating a physical package, e-tailer product detail pages convey information to the shopper that drives the purchase decision. Optimized content can be the difference between a shopper clicking "buy now" or returning to the search results page to seek alternatives.

By understanding how the shopper receives e-commerce content, brands and retailers can – and should! – adjust content execution to meet shopper expectations and deliver best-in-class content that moves the needle.

## What Is Content?

With almost no limit on space and consumers now used to getting flooded with options and messaging, shoppers' attention spans are quite narrow, and many will engage only with content that resonates. It's imperative that detail pages convey search-optimized and appropriate content to help drive shoppers' journeys and purchasing decisions. The best content is centered on key elements, including:

- Titles & Bullet Points
- Product Descriptions
- Enhanced Marketing Content
- Images
- Reviews

**Titles** are the first thing a customer sees, either on the search results page or on the detail page. Titles are indexed by Amazon's search algorithm and are key to enticing customers to buy. Be sure to have titles follow the syntax of brand, model/flower, item descriptor and any other unique identifiers. And keep it short and sweet—titles should have fewer than 200 characters!

Find the sweet spot and provide at least three but no more than five bullet points, each with fewer than 150 characters. And make each word count. **Bullets** are indexed by Amazon's search algorithm, helping to direct shoppers and highlighting key features for them to consider. Online shoppers expect content that is easy to digest, and effective, well-crafted bulleted content is a key to conversion.

**Product descriptions** enhance shoppers' engagement and help them to get as close to the in-store experience as possible. At this point in their journeys, shoppers consider whether or not these products meet their needs. Fundamentally, descriptions are there to answer these questions: What do shoppers want to feel, touch, think? How will their lifestyles be enhanced by your products?

**Enhanced marketing content** is the extra space below the fold that allows manufacturers to showcase the unique value proposition of their products through enhanced images and text placements. This content is important and it matters—it increases customer conversion, improves organic SEO, educates shoppers on model variations and features and builds brand awareness! This extra space for content below the fold allows for truly rich content yet still needs to be focused, relevant and compelling. Take into account the brand messaging and drive it home.

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**94%**

of people either abandon  
a site or just give up  
if they can't find the  
information they need.

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– SALSIFY

Additionally, high-quality **images** engage more senses and provide a level of familiarity, while product **reviews** can do the same in confirming a shopper's impression or expectation, whether good or bad. While reviews are popular, it's notable that shoppers say they do not want to see photos of customers who have bought a product—75 percent would rather see images of products against plain backgrounds, according to Salsify.

Hidden search keywords can be added to drive search results, and they often include product attributes and the synonyms and common misspellings to ensure that all shoppers are exposed to a product.

Combined, these content areas create optimized content that will engage shoppers, drive purchases and add value.

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**Brands and retailers should invest in:  
Accurate, complete, rich content**

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## Best-in-Class Content Delivers

Product content can – and should – be a differentiator for online shoppers, whose impressions are impacted greatly by what they see. Research shows that shoppers will spend more dollars if they have more information. With thoughtful and consistent **written** and **video** content, brands such as San Francisco Bay (coffee) and Kind (bars) are breaking through the clutter and enhancing impact (see exhibit 1).

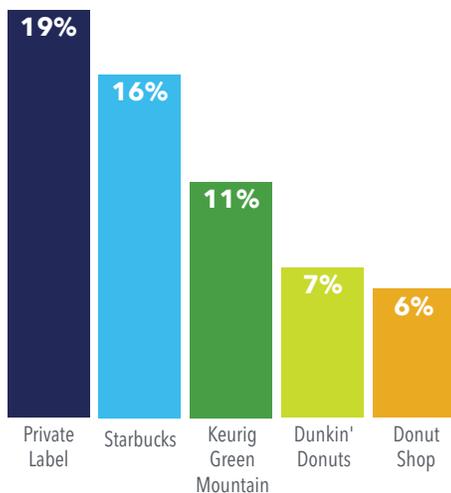
Strategically executed, best-in-class content works, and shopper behavior continues to prove that. San Francisco Bay coffee is a great example of the power of best-in-class content (see exhibit 2). The brand is not among the top-selling brands in the brick-and-mortar world, yet, as the top-selling coffee brand on Amazon, it boasts double-digit share and outranks brick-and-mortar category leaders.

Also, optimized content resonates beyond the e-commerce channel itself. Trends show that shoppers don't differentiate their brand experiences by channel, and thus, a positive e-commerce experience will translate to other marketing and merchandising efforts. Brand-building and loyalty will transfer from the digital to the real world, and vice versa, assuming strong, effective, useful and satisfying content is provided.

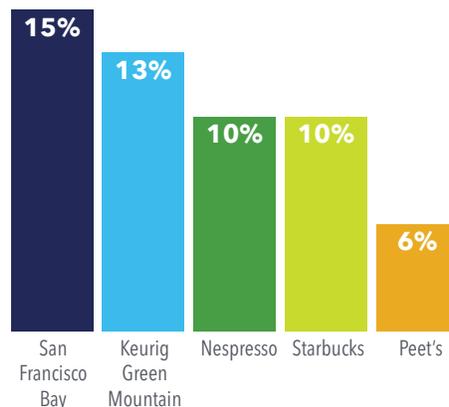
### EXHIBIT 2

#### Top Coffee Brands

#### Top-Selling In-Store Coffee Brands, Single Serve



#### Coffee Brands: Share of Amazon's Top 40 Sellers



Source: IRI Market Advantage™ 52 weeks ended 8/6/2017, IRI Analysis 8/21/2017

**1/3**

of shoppers buy products from different companies than they first expected after searching online.

– SALSIFY

### EXHIBIT 1

Videos provide a fun way to sharpen the value proposition.



View an example of best-in-class video content [here](#).

## How IRI Can Help

IRI's Private Cloud customization provides several benefits, and it can support efforts to build best-in-class content. It can:

- Integrate
- Harmonize
- Visualize IRI and client data access on IRI's Liquid Data™ platform

Full harmonization across dimensions such as time, geography, product and measures eliminates time-consuming, error-prone and often ineffective manual data consolidation.

Additionally, IRI can create and track new metrics based on custom requirements, such as retailer-level views, product hierarchies and digital shelf causal factors. With a fully integrated solution comprising insights and data from Clavis Insight, NCP, comScore, Return Path, Jumpshot and ePOS data (provided by multiple retailer/e-retailers), IRI will help clients understand the value of the digital shelf and how optimized content impacts sales.

Exploring e-commerce with even more depth, IRI eMarket Insights Private Cloud™ is a solution that can include unique client data feeds of Amazon and Walmart.com data, defining what e-commerce performance looks like and opening up opportunities to better engage and activate online.

### EXHIBIT 3

## Content Elements – Best Practices

Title	Bullets	Product Descriptions	Enhanced Marketing Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not use ALL CAPS</li> <li>• Provide relevant information to specific item</li> <li>• Use titles to entice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight key features</li> <li>• Maintain consistent order across products</li> <li>• Present content in sentence fragments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include key features from bullet points</li> <li>• Answer potential questions</li> <li>• Avoid simplistic descriptors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address shoppers' purchase barriers</li> <li>• Craft a compelling product story</li> <li>• Focus on the look, tone and feel of the brand</li> </ul>

**“Optimized product content is a key enabler to ranking highly on search and opening the door to brand exploration...**

**Accurate, recent and abundant product content will capture your shoppers' attention and can increase your products' e-commerce conversion rates.”**

– CLAVIS INSIGHT

To build a road map to execute, win and grow with e-commerce, contact IRI.

[WWW.IRIWORLDWIDE.COM](http://WWW.IRIWORLDWIDE.COM) 866-262-5973



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#### **About IRI**

IRI is a leading provider of big data, predictive analytics and forward-looking insights that help CPG, OTC health care organizations, retailers and media companies to grow their businesses. With the largest repository of purchase, media, social, causal and loyalty data, all integrated on an on-demand cloud-based technology platform, IRI helps to guide its more than 5,000 clients around the world in their quests

to remain relentlessly relevant, capture market share, connect with consumers and deliver market-leading growth. A confluence of major external events—a revolution in consumer buying, big data coming into its own, advanced analytics and automated consumer activation—is leading to a seismic shift in drivers of success in all industries. Ensure your business can leverage data at [www.iriworldwide.com](http://www.iriworldwide.com).

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