

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

# Key content marketing take-aways from our esteemed property experts

by WILL WALSH | JAN 29, 2021



Key content marketing take-aways from our esteemed property experts.

"Such a great session and I have to say by far the best I've done virtually"

Caroline Donaghue,  
Business Development Director, VI.

## A De-Brief of our Property Marketing 2020 De-Brief!

Our remit together from these two sessions was simple – to look into the changing role of content and the lessons learned during what was a tumultuous year for us all. What worked, what didn't, and what needs to change?

Authors: Will Walsh, Wonderhatch CEO, Chair of our December 2020 Wonderchats, and Marc Webbon, Wonderhatch co-founder.

It's great to be following up with you from our very first Wonderchats sessions at the end of last year. One thing has been made pretty clear to us since the start of 2021 – the property and development sectors seem to be in good health! There appears to be a significant re-focus in marketing and communications in general, with engagement up and a number of projects now moving forwards, after a slight and understandable pause for breath and contemplation during the second half of last year.

The early signs, therefore, seem encouraging for 2021 and beyond, so here is to a successful year for the sector. Hopefully, our findings below can help us all in this regard.

## First things first.

"There is no silver bullet," advised Andrew Derrick of Socrates.

This was to be expected, of course!

Whilst the intention of our sessions was not necessarily to find one, we did hope that by bringing together the right minds and personalities, with a desire to both listen and to share, we might find one or two good ideas and little nuggets. Our hope was also that, in sharing these, it might allow us all to create our own solutions to tackle the specific problems we've had to deal with during a challenging 2020, and into 2021.

Finally, we hoped our sessions might help us all to make new connections, re-connect with some old ones, close off 2020 with an enjoyable retrospective view, and get participants enthused and geared up to face our next challenges together in 2021.

Thanks to you, our experts, we feel we achieved this. Everyone made strong contributions across the two sessions and the feedback we have received has been

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contributions across the two sessions and the feedback we have received has been nothing short of excellent. It was great to get our Wonderchats series off to such a positive start – here's to the next one!

## What did we Wonderchat about?

So, what did we discuss across the sessions, and what does it all mean? And do we agree with all of it?

Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether we agree or disagree – what matters is that you have all contributed to bringing this information together and to share; so that, as a group, we can select what we feel might put us on the right path for future success in 2021 and beyond.

Here is a distilled review of what was talked about, some of which are conflicting of course given the different perspectives from our groups, but it is good to see the range of ideas.

There is no huge detail gone into here (let's keep it light!), but just some general thoughts and comments for you to consider further. Let's hope this can, in some small way, help us all get a little better at what we do.

## What we heard about the Market

*Who are our buyers, what has changed for them, and how should we be communicating to them?*

Purchasers ideally need to come, to touch, to feel.....this is what they have always wanted to do. This has proved difficult over this last year of course, and certain buying behaviour may have changed for good as a result.

By definition, property marketing has been old fashioned – printed collateral, etc. Accelerated move to digital.

Some people in 2020, in particular many of the HNW's, have had plenty of time on their hands. And in 2021 this will remain the same, at least to some extent. But what, exactly?

People have appreciated their downtime/home time, no question. And for the future, they are likely to make decisions about their lives to ensure they have more of it. Whether that's more about working from home, traveling less, or just doing more 'virtually' than 'in person', time will tell.

Then again, times change, but people don't. Perhaps their behaviour won't change fundamentally.

Many more HNW's are now young tech entrepreneurs, who have a different view of the world.

Ultimately buying a property is and remains an emotional process.

Ultimately, buyers make decisions on the 'feel' of a place. Until they have felt it, they won't commit. So, does content need to become more focused on capturing this 'feeling'?

*Will prospects be more discerning in the future? Be more efficient & visit fewer marketing suites?*

The marketing is and should be all about getting prospects to the Marketing Suite. But is this true? After all, significantly fewer people are coming into them at the moment.

It's all about the storytelling, not the numbers. The craftsmanship from here, the detail over there. The care, the curation, the thought behind the product.

Exclusivity is still very important for HNW's. Don't promise it and then produce a book with the layouts of all the flats. Stick to the script! Be consistent with your message.

One developer has built their own bespoke platform to show people around and view in 'private'. Actually, this sounds like it should be available off the shelf. Do you know one?

Clients are buying into a lifestyle.

Clients are buying into total products.

And, of course, knowing who is rejecting the property is as important as knowing who is buying.

## What we heard about Outside Space

Outdoor space is increasingly important and in big demand.

People want more access to nature, to more open green spaces.

The balance with nature is becoming increasingly important. Climate change. Health. Virus. All elements are accelerating the need.

Developers will need to make the decision they hate making – sacrificing units for

better amenities.

## What we heard about **Internal Space**

Adaptable layouts are becoming more popular. One size does not fit all anymore, people want their space tailored.

Agile working is here to stay, so this must be factored into the design process and the comms.

Your home is now your office. And your office is more social. It needs to be more collaborative and requires a different feel and layout.

3<sup>rd</sup> bedrooms are now very often looked upon as studies. So perhaps they should be thought of as that first, and marketed as such?

May well be important to sacrifice something to make the difference, e.g Sacrificing a unit in a development for better amenities. But persuading the owners can be impossible.

## What we heard about **Sustainability**

Print is increasingly out! You can't be seen to be giving a big leather-bound book in this day and age. Certainly not to a younger clientele, in any case.

However, conversely print can be on point re sustainability and it might be the computers and the digital carbon footprint that will be criticised in the future. Real issue versus perceived?

Sustainability is being thought about a lot by the builders and their suppliers.

A de-carbonisation strategy right now is critical, at least for the builders.

Assets can take years to develop/change.

But perhaps in the end some buyers, currently, don't consider it too highly. Maybe this is more for their children?

## What we heard about the **Stakeholders**

Often too many are involved in the buying process and they can make it difficult to move things along.

To identify and involve the key partners as early on in the sales process as possible.

Owners must let the marketers do their job!

Taking assets off the market may be exactly the right thing to do from time to time, even if the owner doesn't want to.

Budgets are not pooled by stakeholders, but collaboration is critical. Maybe this is one for the future? Should budgets be pooled? Sounds tricky, but could it pay dividends?

Getting the message consistent across various stakeholders is a big deal, and requires a lot of thought.

The architect is very important. Use them.

## What we heard about **Content**

Be careful who you use – one 3D virtual tour company definitely did not deliver!

Some people are getting tired of watching films, particularly when they are doing the rounds, so the films need to be different, need to be quality, and short is often better than long.

Sometimes they just want to see the plans and understand the space.

Photography may not be that interesting whereas film can show so much more.

Content must be honest and transparent. It must maintain the project's integrity. People want to be matched to the right property.

If you say it's unique, then it better genuinely be so. Otherwise, find something else to talk about.

Communicate genuine points of difference with your content, not merely window dressing.

Developments must deliver on their promises – all too often they fall short. The same must go for the content.

Animation can work really well.

Try to segment

- Different geographical markets
- Different people buying
- Understand exactly who
- And target them with different/appropriate content

There was a feeling that this is not done nearly as much as it should be.

There is a new media landscape; the national printed press, in particular, is dying. Different content for different channels is essential.

Use and re-use your assets more – different edits for different channels, etc. Multiple edits make assets go a long way.

It is important to have shown/balanced that you're not profiteering from the current global situation.

Content must be tasteful/respectful, and mindful of where the world is right now.

Brand partnerships and events. Don't underestimate how important these still are and can be.

Luck is still involved too! We heard about an air quality system that was put into a property and so now becoming a major selling point, for example.

There is no magic bullet, as we have heard!

Spending more money to make more money – it's still true!

A multi-content approach is a must.

We need to be more fluid.

Influencer campaigns proving more popular.

Build a solid body of content early on, and keep adding to it.

## What we heard about the Comms channels

The old media has gone. Evaporated.

A bit like television, there used to be 3 or 4 places to get seen. Now there are hundreds. Tough to cut through.

PR across this complex system and getting it right is more important and harder than ever.

Luxury London magazine landed on the doormat the other day for the first time in months.

Magazines are still popular, but readership is right down, generally.

Need to explore LinkedIn more.

If you need to sell large numbers of units, then you still need an 'event' to do it.

Launch event, sell. Take off and repeat.

If a purchaser can't afford it, they shouldn't be aware of it.

## What we heard about the Future

How are we going to live in 3 years' time? Understanding this will be hugely advantageous, of course.

So, we need to start thinking now what that will look like, as it takes time for developments to come to market.

There are plenty of last-minute architectural re-drawing of projects, in response to the pandemic.

We have to think digital-first.

That's all folks!

Suffice to say that we learnt plenty ourselves and really appreciated all of your input. Thank you. If we've missed anything or remembered it wrongly, then we humbly apologise, and please feel free to tell us.

One final point that we can share with you from our experiences over these last few months.

We are seeing more and more conversations with our clients who are looking to communicate their own approaches to sustainability and what they are doing to reduce their carbon footprint, not just from their own business, but their suppliers too. This is particularly true for those who are in the public eye. Companies are looking to do this as a way to

only going to become more important. Companies really do see this as critical to their ability to remain competitive in this space.

See you next time... let's please keep this a two-way conversation, we would love to hear from you about any suggestions for topics; we're aiming for our next property chat to be in the early summer.

**Will Walsh, CEO, Wonderhatch**

We'd like to say a special thank you to our Wonderhatch team – Marc, Charlie, Jordan, and Justyna in particular for all their considerable hard work in putting Wonderchats together – and if you have any comments or thoughts or would simply like to get in touch, please call or email me, [will@wonderhatch.co.uk](mailto:will@wonderhatch.co.uk) or our head of property, [charlie@wonderhatch.co.uk](mailto:charlie@wonderhatch.co.uk) or indeed Marc Webbon [marc@wonderhatch.co.uk](mailto:marc@wonderhatch.co.uk)

Finally, thank you once again to those all of those who expressed their views and joined in our **Wonderchat** together. They were, in alphabetical order;

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- Andrew Derrick – Socrates
- Anthony Kooperman – Albion Nord
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- Caroline Donaghue – V1
- Charlie Firebrace – Wonderhatch
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- Hilary Forrester – Founder, The Trephina Luxury Collective
- Jenny Naylor – Westminster Development Services
- John Waters – Robert Bailey Property
- Marc Webbon – Wonderhatch
- Mhairi Smith – Qatari Diar
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