BOOK
Clout: The Art and Science of Influential Web Content

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SYNOPSIS [From the publisher]
Clout explains the key principles of influence and how to apply them to web content. Along the way, those principles come to life with practical examples from HowStuffWorks.com, Newell Rubbermaid, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and many more brands. With this book, you'll:

- Discover why a technology feature, marketing campaign, SEO effort, or redesign aren't enough to influence online.
- Understand the business value of compelling web content.
- Learn 8 principles for influence from the art of rhetoric and the science of psychology.
- Find out what context is and why it's so important to influence.
- Jump start your planning for content with a content brief.
- Learn how to evaluate your web content and determine whether it's making a difference.

"Persuasive design is the effort to apply persuasion research to design, especially graphic and interaction design. Persuasive design has potential to help results. (For a practical introduction, see Neuro Web Design.) The problems? 1. Practitioners don't get enough time to learn persuasion deeply enough to apply it well. The result often is pushy tricks. 2. Persuasive design does not address content—the substance of most websites."

"To compete in this aggressively interactive environment, companies must shift their focus from driving transactions to maximizing customer lifetime value. That means making products and brands subservient to long-term customer relationships."

"Become Liked and Trusted: People won't spend enough time with your organization to be influenced if they don't like it. People also won't consider making a change for your organization if they don't trust it. For this phase, your web content needs to demonstrate your personality, values, expertise, credibility, and more in a useful and appealing way."

"People will not take an action—whether it's subscribe to Grasshopper or get tested for STDs—unless they want to and can do so easily. For this phase, your content has to explain how the action will meet people's needs best, offer them unique benefits, and prove that it's easy. At the right time, your web content must call people to act. Finally, your content should guide people through the action itself."

"Sometimes, your organization or product has a rich and relevant history. The original Mini Cooper, for example, was designed to offer less expen- sive and more efficient transportation in the 1960s. Mini Cooper's website makes that story pertinent to today's environmental concerns."

"The innovative research team of Gerald Zaltman and Lindsay Zaltman have found these metaphors to be the most common and compelling around the world. They've made the basic list freely available. (The examples noted below are simply my opinion.) For their take on discovering and using metaphors, get Marketing Metaphoria.
1. *Balance*. Includes the ideas of equilibrium, adjusting, maintaining or offsetting forces, and things as they should be. Example: Make It Right (makeitrightnola.org)
2. *Transformation*. Involves changing states or status. Example: Mint.com
3. *Journey*. Addresses how the past, present, and future meet. Example: Your Life, Your Money (www.pbs.org/your-life-your-money/)
4. *Container*. Involves keeping things in and keeping things out. Example: Shoeboxed.com 5. Connection. Encompasses feelings of belonging or exclusion. Example: American Express OPEN Forum (Connectodex)
6. *Resource*. Involves acquisitions and their consequences. Example: TED.com (ideas worth spreading)
7. *Control*. Covers mastery, vulnerability, and well-being. Example: Livestrong.com

"It often involves feeling indebted or obligated to repay a favor. If your neighbor brings you a pie, you likely will feel the need to do something kind for that neighbor in the future. If a week later that same neighbor asks to borrow your drill, you likely will say yes. Reciprocity is core to business, too. Psychologist Robert Cialdini notes, for example, that "after accepting a gift, customers are willing to purchase products and services they would have otherwise declined.""

"People find your content in many ways other than your website's home page. That means your deeper content is as important for influence as your home page."

"Content Lifecycle/Shelf Life. This tool summarizes the life of all your content, from when you create it to when you archive it. It specifies your content's shelf life. Just as an apple goes bad much quicker than a block of cheese, different sets of content can have different shelf lives. For example, a video for a campaign should expire sooner than content about your core product or service."

"If uncoordinated teams publish your social and advertising content, and that content links to your website content (which is likely published by still another team), you risk a rift in your brand's message or voice. A little variation is interesting, but inconsistency or contradiction damages your brand's credibility and confuses users about what you stand for. If the rift is big enough, you'll give users a shaky introduction to your website, not to mention your brand. No one likes a bait and switch."

"If you are a media property, then you probably have this figured out. If you're not a media property, take inspiration from one. You need someone, such as an editor-in-chief (or use whatever title you like), and supporting staff. (For a detailed explanation of roles, see Kristina Halvorson's Content Strategy for the Web.) That team should act as content stewards, with input from important stakeholders such as sales, marketing, and subject matter experts (SMEs). Trust that team to call the shots about web content. The final call should come from the editor-in-chief."