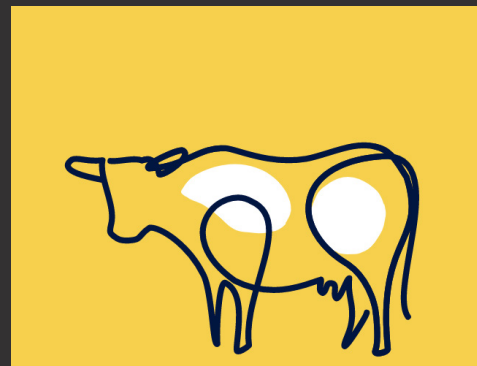




Arguably, content marketing has never been more important. As we all grapple with the impact of the global pandemic, Australian marketers have shown that the best way to connect with their customers is to create useful digital content that serves their audience.



In the second annual 'Top 20 Australian Content Marketing Brands', otherwise known as "The COVID 20", we've chosen brands from a range of industries that represent the best of content marketing in what has been an extraordinary year by any measure. They are brands that have stopped to reconsider the needs of their audience, asking themselves 'How can we help our customers during this time?' and pivoted quickly to deliver content that does exactly that.



From a ballet company engaging a stay-at-home audience to a fashion retailer helping people to navigate new fashion norms to a scientific agency making the pandemic personal, we applaud these brands for staying true to their audience and for showing the entire industry what is possible. Take a bow.

Brands are listed in alphabetical order and not ranked

[Australian Red Cross](#)

[Australian Seniors](#)

[Beyond Blue](#)

[Coles](#)

[CSIRO](#)

[Dairy Australia](#)

[Macquarie Group](#)

[Macquarie University](#)

[MinterEllison](#)

[MYOB](#)

[NRMA Insurance](#)

[Officeworks](#)

[PwC Australia](#)

[Spirits Platform](#)

[SWEAT](#)

[Telstra Enterprise](#)

[The Australian Ballet](#)

[The Iconic](#)

[The National Farmers Federation](#)

[Uber Eats](#)



Australian Red Cross

COVID Collective

Industry
Charity & NFP

Content hub
redcross.org.au/stories

Social
@AustralianRedCross

Thanks to lockdowns around the globe, podcast listening figures have exploded. Working, learning and socialising at home has meant a sharp increase in daily screen-time and as a result many are opting to give their eyes a rest by listening over looking.

Arguably the need for both diverting and informative podcast content has never been stronger and [The COVID Collective](#), launched by Australian Red Cross, delivers by directly tackling the emotional impact of the pandemic in a way that is both accessible and entertaining.

Hosted by the ABC's Francis Leach, the series looks at a range of topics, from better understanding and regulating the range of emotions we are feeling

around the pandemic, to First Nations' perspectives of connection.

Human stories are well told, such as the episode where singer Montaigne explains her disappointment at the cancellation of Eurovision 2020. While the five-episode series is a little brief it packs a lot in: we hear from professional athletes, an actor, a psychologist, an Indigenous Australian and a disaster resilience expert among others.

It's these different perspectives that underscore themes such as community, culture and resilience and reinforce the Red Cross' purpose as summarised in its slogan "The Power of Humanity".



Australian Seniors

DARE Magazine

Industry
Financial Services

Content hub
seniors.com.au

Social
@AustralianSeniorsInsuranceAgency

The launch of [DARE magazine](#), the new bi-monthly title for over-50s, was announced just before the pandemic hit, so the very first issue of the magazine was sent to press with the team working from home under COVID-19 social-distancing regulations.

Arguably the title, produced by insurance specialists Australian Seniors, couldn't have come at a better time for an audience that is grappling with heightened isolation and anxiety and is often overlooked and misunderstood by media.

Edited by former Managing Editor of *The Australian Women's Weekly*, Michelle Endacott, the tone is positive, adventurous and confident. Stories, covering topics like finance, health, family and love, are lively and well-timed and are delivered by some of Australia's favourite personalities such as Matt Preston and Jean Kitson.

Australian Seniors has backed this up with a digital hub which includes valuable content like the [Connectivity in the Age of COVID-19 report](#), a robust survey of the impact of the pandemic on over 5,000 Australians over 50 with infographics and illuminating statistics.





Beyond Blue

Coronavirus Mental Health Wellbeing Service

Industry
Health

Content hub
coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au

Social
[@beyondblue](https://www.facebook.com/beyondblue)

Australians were still reeling from a summer dominated by bushfires when we were struck by an unprecedented global pandemic. It's no surprise that there have been increased levels of stress, with some estimating between [25% to 33% of the community have experienced high levels of worry and anxiety during similar events](#).

The not-for-profit organisation Beyond Blue has responded to an obvious need by creating a stand-alone [Coronavirus Mental Health Resource](#) hub. While the site includes direct support such as online chat, community support and phone services, there is a strong focus on content.

The content goes beyond the trite coronavirus "resources" that are flooding our feeds and inboxes

by focusing on the niche issues impacting everyday Australians.

One article highlights an [Asian-Australian's experience with racism fueled by the coronavirus outbreak](#) and provides tangible help for others experiencing heightened levels of racism: "If you are from a diverse community and need support for your mental wellbeing, Beyond Blue has [information](#) and [translated resources](#) on our website, or you can google the 'transcultural mental health service' for your state or territory."

The multi-format experience also features video content, like this [goal-setting technique](#) to help manage anxiety.

In a sea of sameness, Beyond Blue is creating stand-out content to tangibly service our community.



Coles

What's for Dinner?

Industry
Retail

Content hub
coles.com.au

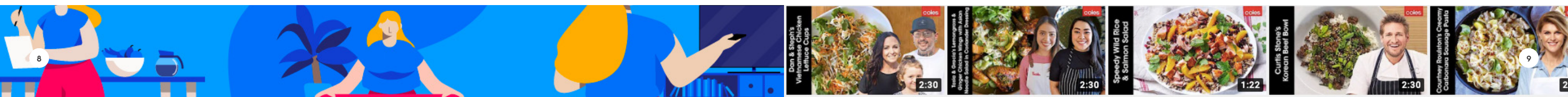
Social
[@colesupermarkets](https://www.facebook.com/colesupermarkets)

Coles has been a content marketing powerhouse for more than a decade – not least because the [Coles magazine](#) is the most-read publication in Australia. But when the first wave of the pandemic sparked panic-buying in March the supermarket chain ramped up its content strategy to inspire calm and provide practical guidance to customers stuck at home.

Moving at an unprecedented pace, Coles partnered with Channel Seven in early April to launch the lo-fi "What's for Dinner" segment during the ad break on the six o'clock news with chefs such as Curtis Stone and Luke Mangan filming themselves preparing their favourite recipes at home.

By leveraging rich data about what customers are buying, Coles is able to create content that puts audience needs at the centre.

Coles CMO Lisa Ronson said they quickly realised that during the lockdown customers had cupboards full of basics and many were learning to cook from scratch for the first time – and Coles needed to switch gears quickly to help them. "Our marketing messages have not changed, but the rate we're getting these out there is extraordinary," she told the industry publication Mumbrella.





CSIRO

COVID-19 Coverage

Industry
Science

Content hub
blog.csiro.au

Social
[@csirogram](https://www.instagram.com/csirogram)

While most international science and research organisations are rightly focused on communicating the science underpinning the pandemic, CSIRO is going beyond this to make the pandemic personal. They're telling the stories of the science and the stories of the people behind the science.

[The organisation's COVID-19 content](#) reveals something distinct and compelling about these stories: these are real people fighting a deadly virus, each with their own backgrounds and reasons for doing this important work.

[Stories like that of Dr Denis Bauer](#) who uses AI and

machine learning to understand the virus and, in an endearingly [lo-fi video conversation](#), explains how this research works and shares how her childhood computer and programming hobbies led to a career in science.

Over on Instagram, CSIRO has continued their [trademark eye-catching imagery](#) but also stepped up their #AskAResearcher videos with meaningful, accessible answers to some common virus-related questions, like this one about [the most important thing we've learned about COVID-19](#) with Dr Rob Grenfell.

GET INVOLVED IN PICASSO COWS

It's easy to get your school involved in the Picasso Cows program - the link below to lodge your expression of interest.



INVOLVED ➔

Dairy Australia

Discover Dairy

Industry
Agriculture

Content hub
dairy.edu.au

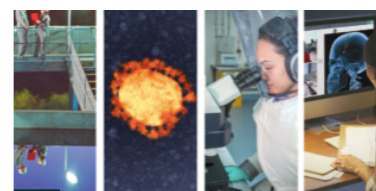
Social
[@DairyAustralia](https://www.instagram.com/DairyAustralia)

Any parent with school-aged children will tell you that one of the hardest things about the pandemic has been handling their kids' remote learning. One brand that quickly recognised the unique challenges of this situation is Dairy Australia. The national body skewed the content on their well-established [Discover Dairy](#) educational content platform to support this new reality for teachers and students.

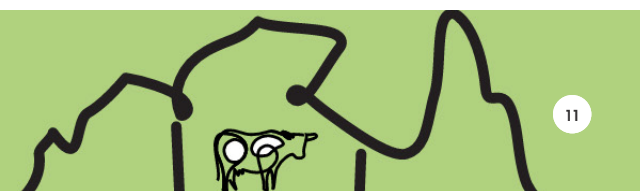
Creating content better suited to independent learning, especially for students in years five to eight, Dairy Australia has been able to maintain its relevance, even

in a time when traditional school routines have been up-ended. In doing so they have shown how even small changes to a brand's content program can make a big impact for their audience in this challenging time.

Paired with an updated approach to key channels such as email and social media, content like this rich, interactive [Discover Dairy Breeds activity](#) and [Kids Activity Book](#), released to coincide with World Milk Day in early June, show how Dairy Australia has been able to position itself as a genuine supporter of this important audience.



VIEW THE COW MAP





Macquarie Group

Coronavirus Resource Hub

Industry
Finance

Content hub
macquarie.com.au

Social
[@macquariegroup](https://twitter.com/macquariegroup)

In a sea of similar content from financial institutions, Macquarie stands out as one of Australia's best for providing breadth and depth of COVID-related content for its varied customer base. [Its coronavirus resource hub](#) features content in areas as diverse as online fraud, the future of work and even sector-specific insights.

Importantly, Macquarie relies on experts, both within the bank and from brands like [Atlassian](#), [EY](#) and the [Harvard Business School](#), to anchor this content. Expansive and topical videos (with full transcripts) delve into these

experts' opinions and advice, elevating this content above the average pandemic article.

Of course, Macquarie isn't alone in creating a COVID-related branded content hub. While the concept itself isn't groundbreaking in 2020, this particular hub is a highlight for its accessible and well-structured approach to business topics related to COVID-19 with a clear focus on delivering against the different needs of each of Macquarie's key audiences.



Macquarie University

The Lighthouse

Industry
Education

Content hub
lighthouse.mq.edu.au

Social
[@macquarieuni](https://twitter.com/macquarieuni)

While 2020 could rightly be described as the Australian university sector's "annus horribilis" without high fee-paying international students, Macquarie University has continued to shine a light on the important work being done by its academics via its content hub The Lighthouse.

Launched in 2018 with journalist Angie Kelly at the helm, The Lighthouse aims to "amplify the achievements of Macquarie's researchers to national and international audiences". With headlines like [How an algorithm is like an omelette](#) the content is perfectly pitched for media looking for quirky, factual pieces and its stories are regularly picked up by news outlets including *The Sydney*

Morning Herald, *The Australian*, and the ABC.

Since March, The Lighthouse has published an impressive tranche of stories on the pandemic covering everything from how COVID-19 has changed our spending habits to our relationship with our pets. The university has done so without neglecting stories on other important areas of research such as dementia, sexual harassment and the property market.

Its pithy "[Please Explain](#)" series unpicks commonly misunderstood topics ranging from the winter solstice to oil prices, and its (somewhat infrequent) podcast tackles an equally broad range of subjects.



MinterEllison

COVID-19 Implications. Insights. Impact.

Industry
Professional Services

Content hub
minterellison.com

Social
[@minterellisonofficial](https://twitter.com/minterellisonofficial)

MinterEllison is Australia's largest multinational professional services firm – and one of the oldest of the “big six” – so it's not surprising the company sought to be the first to launch a content hub with a chatbot powered by artificial intelligence to answer questions around-the-clock.

Of course so-called “lawyer bots” aren't new – they've been providing legal advice and access to justice for the masses for a number of years now. MinterEllison, however, was the first in its competitive set to launch a bot specifically to answer questions related to COVID-19 and connect users to an expert from their COVID-19 response team to provide immediate support.

And while other Australian firms created content hubs

housing Q&A style content in the early days of the pandemic, by August many were obviously neglected with very few (if any) updates.

By comparison MinterEllison has maintained a consistent publishing rhythm and its hub remains up-to-date. Whether it's [decoding the latest government updates on Jobkeeper](#) or offering business insights on everything from the [impact on global supply chains](#) to [managing your workers' compensation risks](#), the content is thorough without being dry.

With the ability to sort articles and insights by industry, and clearly signposting on the length of each read it also offers a seamless user experience.



MYOB

COVID-19 SME Content

Industry
Finance

Content hub
myob.com/au/blog

Social
[@MYOB](https://twitter.com/MYOB)

MYOB's products are an integral part of many small businesses around Australia and, with its sector-specific COVID-19 content, the brand can now say that it's providing even more value to those SMEs with an incisive and unique take on how the pandemic is affecting them.

The brand has tailored their already successful content program to provide some of the best Australian content on micro aspects of the pandemic and associated economic challenges for small businesses and accountants. Their [responsive coverage](#) of COVID-

related SME news, and [analysis for accountants](#) on the impact of the pandemic on specific industries, such as hospitality, manufacturing and professional services, deserve a notable mention.

While future-looking and inspirational stories like [this piece about reinventing a business after lockdown](#) are not as common as they could be, the overall collection represents some of the most useful and actionable COVID-19 resources for small business at a time they need it most.



NRMA Insurance

Stories of Help

Industry
Financial Services

Content hub
thehub.nrma.com.au

Social
[@nrmainsurance](https://www.facebook.com/nrmainsurance)

An ambitious campaign that has run for more than a year, “Stories of Help” by NRMA Insurance very quickly showed that even brands in a low interest category can connect with audiences at scale with engaging, human content.

Laddering up to its brand platform “Help”, since launch the content has championed the real life stories of local heroes who have helped other Australians – an approach that earned them the number one spot in the Australian financial services category for social share of voice.

When the COVID-19 crisis hit, NRMA Insurance pivoted quickly to use the Help platform to showcase stories of Australians helping others in real time, reflecting the seismic changes that were happening in Australian society.

Over the past five months they have told dozens of stories about Australians across New South Wales and Queensland stepping up to help others face the challenges of the pandemic in small and significant ways on their Facebook, Instagram and content hub.

Stories like those about [GP Kamran Ali](#) who worked 40 days straight to help patients and [bookshop bicyclist Nerida Ross](#) who is offering free home delivery by bike for customers holed up at home. At a time when good stories can seem in short supply, this content is playing a timely role in helping people feel more connected within their community.



Officeworks

Noteworthy

Industry
Retail

Content hub
officeworks.com.au

Social
[@officeworks](https://www.facebook.com/officeworks)

Timing is everything, of course, but office supplies chain Officeworks had committed to content marketing well before WFH became a well-known acronym.

Owned by mega retail group Wesfarmers, Officeworks launched new content hub, Noteworthy, in March just before Australia’s first lockdown left everyone scrambling to create a home office while grappling with how to home-school their kids.

Conceived based on search insights, the new hub featured two content verticals – work (business) and learn (education) – and delivered immediate results, not just in audience engagement but also in sales uplift

directly attributable to its content.

For workers and small business owners, the focus was on utility-driven listicles such as [Clever Ways for SMEs to Upskill During a Downturn](#), whereas content for kids relied heavily on simple-but-effective animated videos that showcased Officeworks products such as [DIY Craft Projects with Blackboard Paint](#).

Most importantly Officeworks proved it could compete with the best brand publishers by moving fast to adjust its content and tone in response to changing audience sentiment as COVID-19 changed the landscape.



PwC Australia

Digital Pulse

Industry
Professional Services

Content hub
digitalpulse.pwc.com.au

Social
[@PwCAUdigital](https://twitter.com/PwCAUdigital)

PwC's Digital Pulse has long been a go-to for anyone interested in digital transformation and innovation.

The online publication shares insights from PwC consultants as well as thought leaders across the industry with dense, well-considered articles published almost daily on everything from [redefining the post-pandemic employee experience](#) to [colocation and the potential of data centres](#).

And while the publication is unashamedly global, the Australian arm of the organisation has held its own.

For example PwC Australia Chief Digital Officer Vishy Narayanan turned the spotlight inwards in an article on how the local team [fast tracked the company's digital adoption during COVID-19](#) while not neglecting important non-pandemic topics such as a massive [cyber threat to Australian business](#).

Our only request? More Australian stories please including local data and insights incorporated into global trends pieces.



Spirits Platform

Home Five O'Clocktails

Industry
Hospitality

Content hub
facebook.com/simplycocktailsAU

Social
[@simplycocktailsAU](https://twitter.com/simplycocktailsAU)

Hospitality has been one of the industries hardest hit by the pandemic. While bars and restaurants in parts of Australia are slowly reopening, bartenders and mixologists are nowhere near in pre-pandemic demand.

As a sales, marketing, and distribution partner for premium spirits brands, Spirits Platform took action to support the industry by launching a series of social video series called '[Home Five O'Clocktails](#)' on their Facebook page.

The videos star out-of-work bartenders and mixologists creating their favourite cocktails from their homes. These experts are given a platform to share their passion

for mixology, while giving audiences the opportunity to easily experiment and recreate cocktails without braving the bars.

Recipes range from classics like a [Mai Tai](#) or a [Rum Punch](#) to more adventurous options like a [White Lady](#) or a [Metaxa Colada](#).

Out of necessity, the videos are underproduced and authentic, giving audiences a peek into the lounge rooms and balconies of some very personable bartenders. The videos foster a sense of camaraderie, as many Australians face reduced work hours and have more time to spend being creative in the kitchen.



SWEAT

BBG Zero Equipment

Industry
Fitness

Content hub
sweat.com

Social
[@sweat](https://www.instagram.com/sweat)

When the first lockdowns happened, boutique fitness studios around the world such as Barry's, Soul Cycle, and SolidCore scrambled to digitise business models that had previously relied so heavily on the appeal of working out in the same room as others. Australian fitness sensation Kayla Itsines was uniquely poised to pivot quickly as her SWEAT App already featured fully online programs from big-name trainers such as Kelsey Wells, Chontel Duncan, Steph Sanzo and Sjana Elise.

Though the SWEAT app is digital, many of the workouts previously required some level of equipment ranging from dumb-bells to full gym machines. When the pandemic hit, Itsines quickly began releasing no-equipment home workouts across channels like

Instagram and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com). Not only did she remove all equipment from her bootcamp-style workouts, she also moved the videos to a [lounge-room style backdrop](#) to mirror the at-home experience of her audience.

In addition to offering these videos for free on her social channels, Itsines offered one month's free access to the SWEAT app. She included a partnership with the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund with new members given the option to donate directly to [COVID-19 relief efforts](#).

This audience-first approach provided the utility people were desperately seeking, while giving them an opportunity to give back to the wider community during a challenging time.



Telstra Enterprise

Business Hub

Industry
Telecommunications

Content hub
telstra.com.au

Social
[@Telstra](https://www.telstra.com.au)

While there has been an abundance of content published to guide and support Australian small businesses through the challenges presented by the pandemic, relevant content tailored for enterprise business has been more limited.

Telstra's [Business Hub](#) is one platform that leverages a team of business and technology journalists and editors to develop articles, podcasts, webinars, whitepapers and videos to address the specific problems facing businesses big and small.

The content ranges from short, two minute reads

to deeper, hour-long videos about topics such as [understanding the importance of mobility in an adaptive workplace environment](#), [data collaboration across industries](#), [the impact of COVID-19 on supply chain and asset data](#) and [managing the increased risk of cybercrime](#) during the pandemic.

Local customer stories from organisations across a range of industries including NFP, Recruitment and Architecture add real time experiences and context. A deep and impressive resource for businesses dealing with some extraordinary challenges.

AT HOME WITH STUDIOS



The Australian Ballet

At Home with Studios

Industry
Arts

Content hub
australianballet.com.au

Social
[@ausballet](https://www.instagram.com/ausballet)

Melding content with product as artfully as one of its dancer's best pliés, The Australian Ballet's [At Home With Studios](#) video series stands out amongst performing arts companies for its quick reinvention of their business model while leveraging the unique strengths of Instagram video.

In a particularly fresh take on content marketing's tried-and-tested monetisation approach, the company has developed [a series of free class videos](#) teaching some of the basics of ballet. These videos represent a valuable

resource for ballet fans in themselves, but also act as a teaser to the full class series with videos starting at \$25 per class.

Over on Instagram, The Australian Ballet has used video to add texture and depth to its promotion of upcoming productions, like the short film [I Am Spartacus](#), created in portrait mode to make the most of the channel's strengths. Those productions then stream live and on-demand as part of the company's [2020 Digital Season](#).



The Iconic

#stayhome

Industry
Retail

Content hub
theiconic.com.au/edition

Social
[@theiconicau](https://www.instagram.com/theiconicau)

Many unknowns have arisen in the past few months, not the least of which are questions like: ["How To Get Away With Wearing Your Pyjamas All Day & Not Feel Like A Slug"](#) or ["Are Yoga Tights Now An Acceptable Form Of Pants?"](#)

As we adjust to working from home and spending much more time in our loungewear, online retailer The Iconic has seamlessly shifted their content focus away from corporate and going-out attire. The #stayhome section on their Edition blog features content to support every facet of our new lifestyle from [guides to dressing for zoom calls](#), [home workout videos](#), [healthy recipes](#), and [even home gardening tips](#).

As many of their competitors are creating content as if we're one slinky-party-dress purchase away from returning to normal, The Iconic has put their audience's reality at the centre of their strategy and is providing practical content to meet the moment.

As always, their content has strong shoppable calls-to-action connecting content to commerce, proving good content marketing is about driving meaningful business outcomes. We challenge anyone to read through a few articles without being tempted to buy a [lemon yellow matching tracksuit](#).



The National Farmers Federation

#gotyourback

Industry
Agriculture

Content hub
farmers.org.au

Social
[@AussieFarmers](https://www.instagram.com/AussieFarmers)

While it may seem like the days of empty grocery store shelves and panic-buying are long behind us, food scarcity has been a looming shadow of this pandemic, with many Australians worrying whether our agricultural supply chain is secure.

The National Farmers Federation (NFF) responded to this fear by introducing audiences to the [Aussie farmers who have #gotyourback](#) to show that alongside essential workers such as teachers and nurses, farmers work behind the scenes to ensure our daily needs are met.

By showing the human face of farmers, NFF has created a multi-format content experience to show Australians

the real people behind the food on their grocery store shelves.

[Chloe's story](#) talks about how she navigated the unique challenges facing a small family merino farm during the coronavirus. Craig at Ferngrove Wines shares [his excitement about the upcoming wines](#) he has to share with his customers.

A remarkable 89% of food in Australia is home-grown, and seeing real farmers talk about the lengths they are going to to feed Australians perfectly complements these reassuring statistics.



Uber Eats

Local Legends

Industry
Hospitality

Content hub
[instagram.com/ubereats_au](https://www.instagram.com/ubereats_au)


Social
[@ubereats_au](https://www.instagram.com/ubereats_au)

Prior to the pandemic Uber Eats felt like an after-thought for the ride-sharing platform and it showed in the brand's content. Back then Uber Eats represented a tiny proportion of the business' revenue and its content on social channels consisted largely of repurposed brand assets.

As the COVID-19 lockdown came into force in most states in Australia in April, Uber Eats upped its content game, launching an original content initiative called [Local Legends](#) featuring restaurateurs and drivers "going the extra mile to keep people fed through isolation" via Stories on Instagram.

They followed up with "[Your Local Food Fest 2020](#)" in their Stories in June, billed as a "13-day foodie adventure" which introduced the audience to restaurateurs who are passionate about different cuisines and included related polls asking the audience to vote on all-important questions like: "Would you rather Tikka Masala or Butter Chicken?" and "Can you name the mystery ingredient in ramen?"

By delving into the connection between people/place/food – and leveraging the foodie trend with trivia in a way that feels native to social platforms like Instagram – Uber Eats has gone a long way towards setting itself up for success in future.



NewsCred launched the Australian Top 20 Awards to celebrate best-in-class content marketing brands. From small, local brands to global giants, these brands are the ones with splashy, interactive content hubs, stellar social media presences, innovative new technology integrations, and strong behind-the-scenes strategies. They were brands that inspired us to push the boundaries with our own content marketing.



