SEJ

EBOOK

CONTENT

MARKETING

THE ULTIMATE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO WHAT WORKS
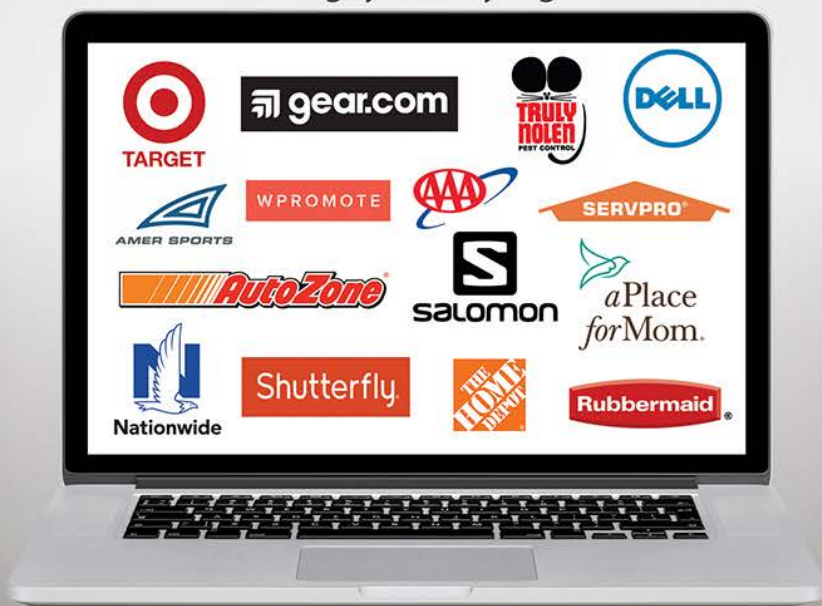
CONTENTS

We write awesome content.

It's literally all we do.

These guys totally dig us:

15% OFF

ENTER PROMO CODE: **SEJ2020**
*On orders of $3,000 or less

www.bkacontent.com

This is why we're kind of a big deal!

Who are we?

Having been in the industry since 2009, we have experience crafting high-quality content for thousands of agencies, enterprises, e-commerce companies and small businesses. We pride ourselves on contracting only the best U.S. writers and providing extraordinary account management.

How do we work with you?

Self-Service
We offer the easiest to use self-service ordering process in the industry. No retainers, no contracts, no nonsense.

Managed Service
If you have a monthly content budget of $1k or more, you'll qualify for managed services. No extra fees, only extra convenience.

Subscription Service
Need content but don't have the time to come up with topics or keywords? Put your content marketing on autopilot and let us take care of it for you.

Why are we the best?

We focus on written content only, which makes us the best at what we do. We're extremely selective with our writers to ensure consistent quality. Oh, and did we mention that our pricing is affordable? Get the best bang for your buck while resting easy knowing that your content is going to meet your specifications.

Give us a try!

99.84% Content Approval Rating

Are you unhappy with your current content provider? It doesn't have to be that way. Come see how we can save you time, money ... and your sanity. Contact us today!

bka CONTENT

CONTENTS

1

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING? AND, WHY DOES IT MATTER?

AUTHOR
JULIA MCCOY

44,000 years.

That's how long humans have been sharing stories, according to a new study published in the journal Nature.

From ancient **Indonesian cave art** to cutting-edge infographics – fast forward a few millennia, and people are telling more stories than ever.

We've just shifted the medium.

The internet of 2020 is evolving at a breakneck pace. Content gathers dust like fossils, and today's trending hashtag is tomorrow's ironic meme. Attention is at an all-time premium.

In a recent projection, data giant Seagate estimated that by 2025, over 75% of the global population will interact with data **every 18 seconds.**

Why are users so distractible?

The modern internet is noisy: promotions, clickbait, flashing banners, subscription pop-ups, and plain old spam all clamor for notice.

In the deluge of information, it's easy to see why savvy consumers are using services like AdBlock to streamline their browsing experience.

Unfortunately for your brand's carefully calibrated marketing campaign, 2020 marks the start of an annual trend that will send 35 billion global advertising dollars right down the drain.

The culprit? Adblockers.

So how does a modern brand reach discerning customers whose attention is their most valuable resource?

How do you earn the interest of an audience who could just as easily ignore your advertising?

By giving them what they want: content that matters.

bka
CONTENT

What Exactly is Content Marketing?

According to the **Content Marketing Institute**, "content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action."

Translated into everyday English: Content marketing is relevant and useful storytelling that captures the interest of your specific audience and helps them solve their problems.
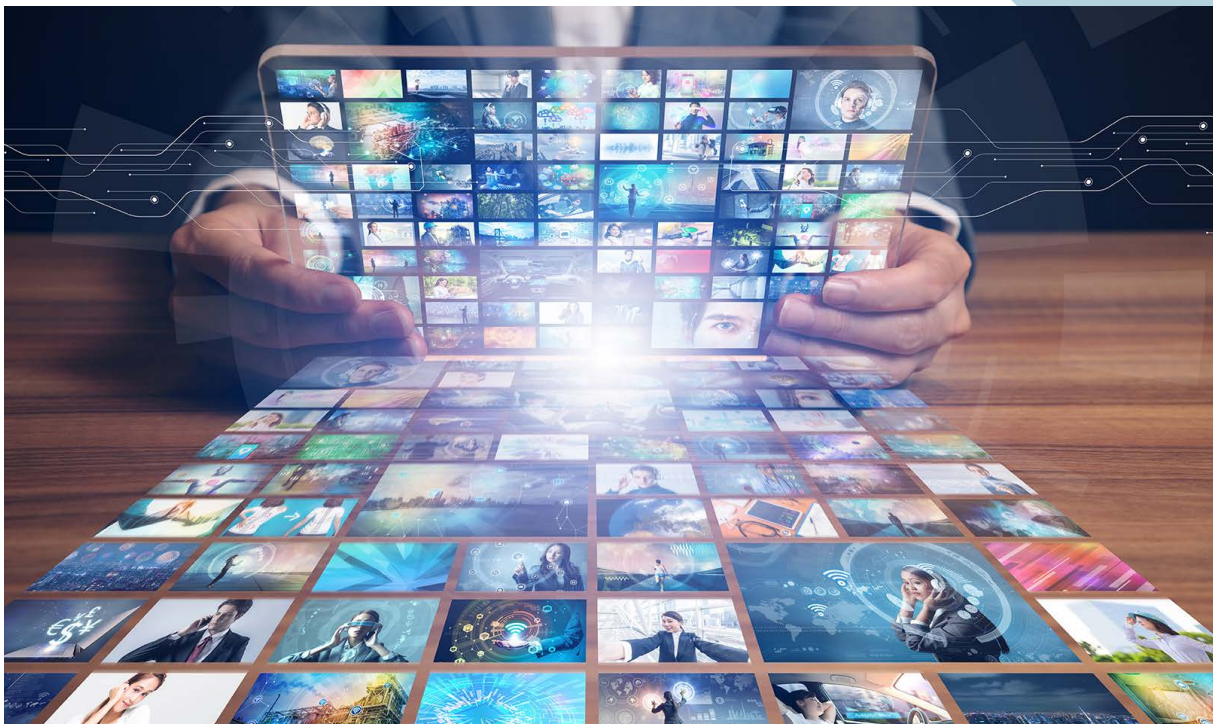
However you define content marketing, the main takeaway is: it works.

Here's why: awesome content – that is, great content marketing – is legitimately engaging. Your audience doesn't need to be convinced to read your content.

They seek it out.

They can't help but consume it.

They may not even realize the content they love is actually marketing. Or if they do, they appreciate the goodwill shown by a brand that helps them make decisions pro bono.

Let's say you're a brand with deep pockets. You could shell out over 5 million dollars for a 30-second Super Bowl spot and reach 100 million prospects at one time.

Or, **as Joe Pulizzi suggests**, that same budget could instead be put toward building a consistently engaged community of organic, voluntary brand loyalists through long-reaching initiatives.

70 issues of a print magazine? Check.

Large-scale customer events? Check.

Tens of thousands of blog posts, thousands of white papers, and more? Double-check.

Wait, what happened to content marketing?

Believe it or not, these wallet-friendly, easy to actualize, Google-ready methods mentioned above can pump up your SEO and captivate your prospects.

Let's take a deeper look at what successful content marketing looks like.

Way Beyond Blogging: What Content Marketing Looks Like in the 2020s

Blogging may be a key aspect of content marketing, but it's not the name of the game anymore. Instead, it's all about being dynamic by reaching audiences on all types of platforms.

If your business is only using one avenue, you may be missing out on a huge potential audience.

Consider adding another form (or two!) of content outreach such as:

◆ Ebooks

◆ Podcasts

◆ Webinars

◆ TedTalks

◆ Social Media Posts

◆ Email Campaigns

◆ Influencer Updates

◆ Online courses

◆ Videos

A **2020 analysis** from Entrepreneur predicts that this decade's content marketing will expand to encompass these essentials, too:

◆ Live-streaming (i.e., Twitch).

◆ Content that is voice search-optimized.

◆ Augmented Reality (AR) experiences.

◆ One-to-one conversations with customers through tools like Facebook Messenger.

◆ Personalized content that adapts to your audience based on collected data, such as location, online behavior, or demographic.

As you can see, the scope of content marketing is virtually limitless.

What remains the same across all successful channels is the dedication to including audiences in the brand's story, and through that, laying the foundation for a community based on trust.

90% of all modern businesses use content marketing in some form, from industry leaders like John Deere and Red Bull to the smallest indie brands.

Curious about how it all works?

Now that we've laid out what exactly it is, and what forms it covers, let's take a deeper look at what content marketing can do for you.

The Power of Awesome Content (& Why Your Audience Will Love It)

IT'S ANYTHING BUT SUPERFICIAL

Whether your brand is big or small, readers have come to expect your content to be in-depth and well-sourced, and unabashedly authentic.

In the era of deepfakes and heavy Instagram filters, your audience is looking for something a little more genuine.

Something worth their valuable time.

Longer content – content that dives in deep, provides more information, and cites more research – **has a higher perception of value than shorter content.**

IT'S UBER-PERSONALIZED

Everyone uses the internet a little differently. Many users have come to expect algorithms to accurately track their interests and guide them to what they're searching for.

With the same ethic, content marketing caters to individuals.

Take YouTube, for example. Rather than offering calls to action, or using traditional television's appeal to the popularity of well-known actors to drive sales, YouTube's algorithm instead considers a tapestry of data and recommends ultra-individualized content.

And it's working.

From more than 2 billion logged-in users every month, the Google-owned video giant gathered that it is **3 times more important** to viewers to engage with content connected to their passions than content that features Hollywood's who's who.

IT'S RESPONSIBLY TRANSPARENT

The modern consumer doesn't just engage with a brand – they're part of a brand's story. This includes the best of times... and the worst of times.

53% of users expect companies to show corporate responsibility on social media, as well as be transparent about changes in products or services.

Types of Social Media Posts Consumers Consider Most Transparent

- **67%** Video
- **23%** Text
- **6%** Photo
- **4%** GIF

sprout social   sproutsocial.com/brandsgetreal

It may take a little extra effort, but it's clear that transparency is well worth it. In today's market, high transparency is the key to high public trust.

bka CONTENT

3 Reasons Why Creating Powerful Content Marketing is Worth the Effort

CONTENT MARKETING HELPS YOU CONNECT WITH YOUR EVOLVING CONSUMER BASE

Technology is rapidly changing the way your prospects interact with information and make decisions. In a 2020 study by Statista, it's projected that by 2023 more than **7 billion** people worldwide will own a smartphone.

Let that sink in for a moment. That's nearly the entire current population of the world.

Now more than ever before, your content has the potential to reach a truly global audience. The challenge?

For this, let's zero in on a population a bit easier to wrap your head around: adults in the US.

On average, American adults are engaged with multiple content channels for **more than 11 hours** every single day.

Yes, you read that right.

More than ever before, the chance to sustain a consistent dialogue with your consumer base is at your brand's fingertips.

CONTENT MARKETING DRIVES CONVERSIONS (WITHOUT BEING PUSHY!)

Nerd out with me for a moment.

Did you know that, on average, content marketing is responsible for **6 times** as many conversions for content marketers than for marketers that stick to other strategies? (That's 2.9% for content marketing, versus 0.5% for traditional marketing.)

Turn your gaze to the B2B slice of the pie, and content marketing accounts for **0.8% to 1.1%** of all B2B conversions.

How is this possible?

Take a look at your consumer base. Whether B2B or B2C, your prospects are craving worthwhile content that stands out from the noise.

Want to catch their attention?

You'll need to find what I call your **content differentiation factor** (CDF).

This is your brand's refreshing new take on content your audience has seen before. Find your CDF, and you're well on your way to a huge boost in conversions.

CONTENT MARKETING SAVES MONEY (& DRIVES SALES, TOO!)

Every business, no matter the size, is looking for ways to cut costs.

Content marketing is a money-saving powerhouse: it costs **62% less** and drums up a whopping 3 times as many leads as traditional marketing.

The past decade has seen astounding growth in the realm of content marketing.

According to Google Trends, worldwide interest in content marketing has skyrocketed to **nearly 100%,** or peak popularity, over the past 16 years.

Content marketing will not only slash your marketing budget but also drive more sales over time from higher-quality leads. How?

Through opt-in advertising (aka subscription-based advertising) you'll save on lead generation and develop a network of pre-purchase followers who, over time, will think of your brand first when the time comes to make a decision.

Ready for Your Business to Thrive?

With the development of new technology and a steadily growing potential audience, content marketing will only continue becoming more important.

Ready to demonstrate your brand's value, build a community, and ultimately, convert your audience into devoted action-takers?

It's time to make marketing human again. It's time to develop a content marketing strategy for your business.

2

CONTENT GUIDELINES: WHY YOUR BRAND NEEDS A STYLE GUIDE

AUTHOR
ANNA CROWE

You're ready to publish a white paper, but a debate about how to cite your sources has brought the approval process to a halt.

You spend an absurd amount of time adding Oxford commas to the drafts you get from your freelancers.

An internal subject matter expert submits a blog that's uptight and hard to follow, nothing like the blogs that come from the marketing team.

Your intern takes interesting creative liberties with the infographic copy you assigned her.

Sound familiar? They're all symptoms of a lack of a content style guide.

Creating one is a crucial step that's easy to overlook in the rush to get content in front of eyeballs.

But it's totally worth your time. Presenting your brand consistently can increase revenue by **33%.**

And brand consistency isn't just about logos and colors; it's also about the image and character you convey in your content.

If you don't have a style guide already, don't beat yourself up.

Lots of companies start producing content before setting up a guide. I'll walk you through the steps to create one in this blog.

But first, let's break down what a style guide is, and why you need one.

What Is a Content Style Guide? And, Why Is it Important?

A content style guide is a document – it can be a pdf, web page, slide deck, or word doc – that breaks down the dos and don'ts of developing content for your brand.

Think of it like this. Your content strategy details what types of content you'll create, and when.

Your content style guide deals with the nuts and bolts of creating that content. It gives your content creators specific directions on how to create on-brand content.

A style guide also sets the rules for more practical matters of writing:

◆ Is it a white paper or a whitepaper?

◆ Which words do you capitalize in headers?

◆ Is your tone relatable and fun, or authoritative and educational?

A style guide keeps everyone on the same page.

It's sometimes overshadowed by its flashier, sexier sibling, the visual style guide.

Some companies combine their content guide into their overall branding guide. But others make it its own separate entity.

bka CONTENT

Depending on how involved your content guide is, you can choose what works best for you.

WHY YOU NEED A STYLE GUIDE

Everyone creates content these days: salespeople, executives, subject matter experts, etc. You need one rulebook to keep you all marching to the beat of the same drummer.

Without a style guide, the content made by different creators is all over the place. There's no way to enforce the rules if they aren't documented.

And when you start **scaling your content production**, things can really get out of control.

Planning, creating, and distributing content takes up a lot of time. A style guide acts as your gutter guards by keeping your content in the right lane.

So let's address how to create one now.

How to Write a Content Style Guide

1. START BY SWIPING

There is no reason to create your style guide from scratch. You can start with old faithful matriarchs of style, such as **AP Style** or **The Chicago Manual of Style**.

Or you can go with one of the newer guides that are available online, like **Mailchimp's** or **Mozilla's**.

The key to this step is the swiping. Swipe away.

bka CONTENT™

2. DEFINE YOUR CONTENT MISSION

Why do you create content? Look at your **goals for your content marketing program** and work backward from there.

Having a documented mission keeps you honest as you develop each piece of content.

Take some time to consider the purpose of your content. Is it to enlighten? To entertain? To explain complex issues?

Document what you want your content to do and be for your audience. Mailchimp's approach is a good example to follow:

Writing Goals and Principles

With every piece of content we publish, we aim to:

- **Empower.** Help people understand Mailchimp by using language that informs them and encourages them to make the most of our products.

- **Respect.** Treat readers with the respect they deserve. Put yourself in their shoes, and don't patronize them. Remember that they have other things to do. Be considerate and inclusive. Don't market at people; communicate with them.

3. SET YOUR VOICE & TONE

This is the really stylish part of the style guide. This section of your guide should describe how your content comes across to your audience.

Your voice and tone should line up with your brand's image. The happy-go-lucky charm of Target doesn't work for the serious, caring image of a children's hospital.

Google's developer style guide gives a Goldilocks-style table illustrating how to get their voice and tone juuuuust right:

4. LAY THE GROUND RULES FOR THE BASICS

Now's your chance to put your foot down.

Will you use the Oxford comma? When do you use numerals or write numbers out? To emoji or not to emoji?

Die on that hill. And the guide will back you up for the rest of time (or until you change it).

Even if you choose to follow the rules from a popular style guide, it's a good idea to outline common usage practices and provide examples.

See how **Canada Post** eliminates confusion around commonly used terms:

Vocabulary

Common expressions and standard labels can be found here. Use them in your copy as the default go-to.

e-commerce (not eCommerce)
email (not e-mail)
e-tailer
fulfill and fulfillment
pick up (verb), pickup (noun), pickup (adj.)
post office box (PO box)
preprint (noun), preprinted (adj.)
sign up/in (verb), sign-up/in (adj.) sheet
U.S. (not USA, except for Canada Post product and service names)

5. ADDRESS SPECIFIC TYPES OF CONTENT

Different types of content may require you to switch up your tone or voice. This is also a chance to outline best practices for the types of content that you create.

For example, your subject matter experts may not realize that **blogs need to be scannable** for people to actually read them. That's how you end up with a four-page word wall that you're expected to upload on the site as-is.

You may know the importance of headers and short paragraphs, but they don't. Document those details in the style guide.

Take a look at how Mailchimp gives guidance on the kinds of blogs it creates:

Basics

We update the main Mailchimp blog a couple times every week. We generally publish:

- Feature, release, and integration announcements
- Mailchimp user case studies
- Tips and tricks for small businesses
- Examples of how we use Mailchimp's features in our own marketing

We publish blog posts that explain the "why" behind the work we do at Mailchimp. We want to show people that we're an industry leader with the best products, and we use our blog to tell the stories behind those products.

And then they offer guidelines for the writing style to use in their blogs:

Guidelines

When writing for the blog, follow the style points outlined in the Voice and tone and Grammar and mechanics sections. Here are some more general pointers, too.

Be casual, but smart

This isn't a term paper, so there's no need to be stuffy. Drop some knowledge while casually engaging your readers with conversational language.

Be specific

If you're writing about data, put the numbers in context. If you're writing about a Mailchimp user, give the reader plenty of information about the company's stage, workflow, results, and values.

6. DOCUMENT YOUR RULES FOR GRAPHICS

While your visual style guide goes in-depth on how to use logos, images, and visual design elements, your content style guide should include some guidance on images too.

Your design team may not touch every blog or content piece you produce.

Should images be left, right, or center-aligned? Are there certain types of images to avoid? Put those rules in the guide to protect brand consistency.

See how Search Engine Journal does it in our **editorial guidelines:**

Images

- A Caption is optional.
- Always add Alternative Text. This can be the post title or a succinct description of the photo that fits the post's topic.
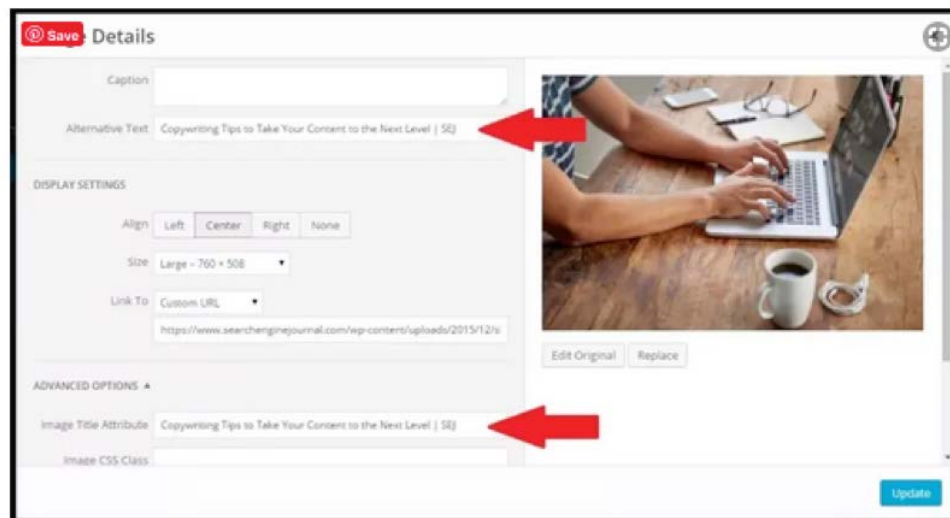
- Optimize your image file names. IMG_123454646572.png or screenshot3.png is bad.

5 Examples of Content Style Guides

Now that you know all of the steps you need to take to develop your guide, I'm sure you've got a lot of questions about how to structure it.

Fortunately, there are plenty of existing examples to pull from. So, in the spirit of swiping, take some inspiration from these guides as you develop yours.

MOZILLA'S GUIDE FOR FIREFOX

Like this

Your life is your business, not ours. Everything we make and do fights for you. (assertive POV)

It shouldn't be hard to own your life online. (clear, confident, inclusive, concise)

Privacy isn't a setting. It's a mindset. (speaks directly to our ethos)

Not this

Do the work to protect yourself online. (bossy)

Big Tech doesn't care about you. Choose Firefox. (accusatory)

You're doing passwords all wrong. Get Firefox Lockbox. (accusatory, know-it-all)

Key takeaway: By being as prescriptive as possible, Mozilla leaves no room for confusion. The quick parenthetical explanations make sure everyone (remember, everyone's creating content) is clear on the subjective stuff.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

REMEMBER THE CAROLINA CONNECTION

When writing, ask these questions:

• Why is UNC-Chapel Hill communicating about this issue or situation?
• What makes the Carolina perspective unique?

Key takeaway: These easy questions force everyone writing content for **UNC Chapel Hill** to check their content against the brand's content mission.

bka CONTENT

MAILCHIMP

Disability

Avoid disability-related idioms like "lame" or "falling on deaf ears." Don't refer to a person's disability unless it's relevant to what you're writing. If you need to mention it, ask whether your subject prefers person-first language ("they have a disability") or identity-first language ("they are disabled").

When writing about a person with disabilities, don't use the words "suffer," "victim," or "handicapped." "Handicapped parking" is OK.

Key takeaway: Mailchimp avoids offensive faux-pas by outlining how to talk about gender, disabilities, sexuality, and ethnicity. Even well-meaning content creators can step on a banana peel in these areas. Their guide keeps everyone aware and on the right track.

SPOTIFY

Key descriptive messaging

With Spotify, your music is everywhere. Working out, partying or relaxing, the right music is always at your fingertips.

There are millions of songs on Spotify – from old favourites to the latest hits. Just choose the music you love, or let Spotify surprise you.

This is an alternative paragraph to use if you want to get across catalogue breadth.
There are millions of songs on Spotify – from Beyoncé to Bach, and Metallica to Mumford & Sons. Just choose the music you love, or let Spotify surprise you.

(Feel free to localise these artists.)

Key takeaway: This excerpt from **Spotify's Partner Messaging Guide** shows how a style guide can anticipate users' needs. The alternative example here gives Spotify's partners a little flexibility and keeps them from going off the ranch when talking about their catalog.

ATLASSIAN

A

B Brand

Personality

Writing style

Color

Illustration

Logos

Typography
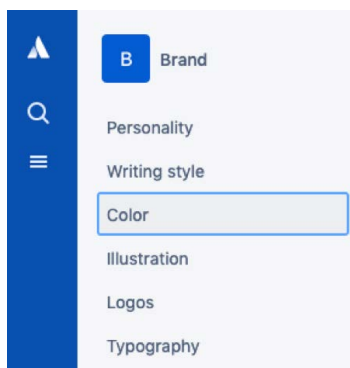
Key takeaway: Atlassian's easy-to-navigate table of contents makes the style guide super easy for users. Even if you don't have the tools to build a sophisticated site for your style guide, a clickable table of contents can go a long way.

Over to You

So that's it! I've covered what a content style guide is, why you need one, and how to do it. Now it's time for you to start building your guide.

And remember, the guide is only as good as your ability to enforce it. Here are some tips to help you in that process:

◆ Make it easily accessible to your content creators. Whether it's on the web or a shared folder, this isn't something to keep tucked away.

◆ Refer to it when giving feedback. Adopting your style standards can take time. Keep nudging your creators to look at it so the guidelines can really sink in.

◆ Make it easy to read. A style guide can be a monster of a document. Take a cue from the Atlassian example above and break it into chunks that users can easily understand.

When done well, a content style guide can be a key step towards producing content that **makes a lasting impression** with your audience. So go forth and conquer!

Draw your lines in the sand, put your foot down, document it all, and don't forget to swipe from existing guides.

3

HOW CONTENT MARKETING HAS EVOLVED

AUTHOR

BRAD SMITH

Newer is better. Right?

It takes just one look at the Apple product lineup to confirm that companies are constantly trying to out-innovate each other. It's only a matter of time until you're using the iPhone 32 for teleportation.

But there's something to be said for the tried-and-true. If it ain't broke, don't fix it, they say. No need to reinvent the wheel, they say.

The solution is right in front of you. Has been the whole time. Literally.

That Coke can. That pack of Jello. That John Deere tractor. There's a reason they're all still around. It ain't because of some newfangled, millennial hipster growth hack.

Here's why.

Why 'Content Marketing' Is 100+ Years Old

It's hip and it's trendy and everyone is talking about it. But **content marketing** isn't exactly new.

Known today for their big green tractors, **John Deere** was an early adopter of content marketing, producing its own lifestyle magazine for farmers in 1895 called "The Furrow".

No, it wasn't a catalog to sell their product. It did, though, increase brand loyalty.

Increased sales were just one happy byproduct (of many) from the valuable content John Deere provided for its customers.
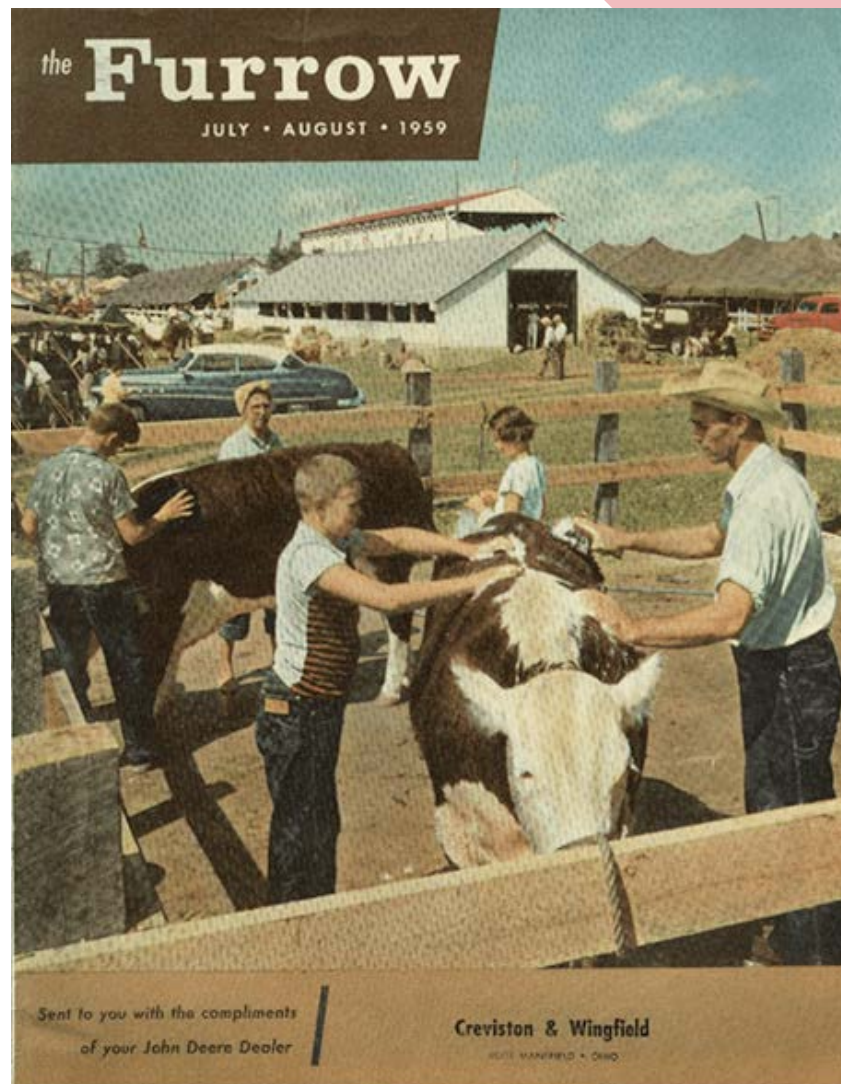
Jell-O, too, was an early adopter of "content marketing."

In 1904, Jell-O put out a recipe book for users to create concoctions using their awkward, gelatinous substance.

It wasn't a blatant advertisement of the tasty treat but more like product placement. You better believe those recipes included the product!

They also helped the company address what they believed to be their major sticking point to higher sales: People didn't know what to do with Jell-O.

The examples throughout the history of content marketing go on and on.

Content marketing has certainly evolved over the years but comes with the benefit of decades of guinea pigs. It still comes with the **same main components** to keep in mind: your audience, what you hope to achieve, and how you'll promote it.

Coca-Cola was another early adopter of content marketing over a century ago in 1895 as medicine.

Yes, you read that right. The sugary beverage we all know and love was initially touted as a disease killer, cure for morphine addiction, and even an early impotence alternative.

Today, Coca-Cola is simply doubling down on the same formula they've been perfecting for the past 100+ odd years.

In 2012, they launched their Coca-Cola Journey, a digital platform that allows users to connect on topics that encourage dialogue: social causes, news about the company, and consumer trends.
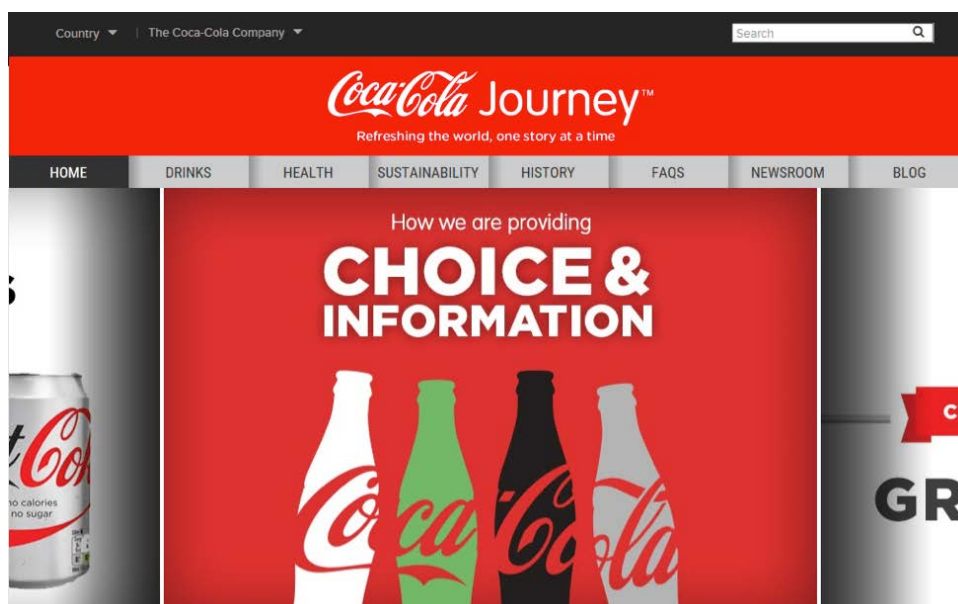
Then, there was the #ShareACoke campaign, where soda buyers could "share" the drink with a friend since each bottle's Coca-Cola label was replaced with popular names. This one received millions of shares on social media.

Now, they have the Content 2020 campaign up and running to collaborate with artists and creatives to solidify Coca-Cola's place as a content marketing leader.

Why 'Only Rookies Write From Scratch'

Formulas take out the guesswork and give you a template for what goes where. Always. Every single time.

Like the good ol' AIDA. This one goes wayyyy back. **E. St. Elmo Lewis** thought it up in 1898.

◆ Attention: Grab the reader.

◆ Interest: Pull in their mind.

◆ Desire: Pull on their heartstrings and their sense of want.

◆ Action: Get them to make the next move.

AIDA works – today still – because it doesn't jump ahead. It doesn't suffer from the **curse of knowledge.**

Instead, it seduces you. It brings you along on a journey and shows you all the ways the point is relevant to you. It draws you in, and by the end of the ad or email, you're reaching for your wallet.

This kid is an animal expert? He knows that a grown elephant can eat up to 500 pounds of food every day? He learned all this for $1?!

My kid is dumb in comparison. So much for that Honor Roll bumper sticker. I'm going to fill out this handy-dandy response card and order these Safari Cards today!

For nearly 10 years through 1986, this ad ran, appealing to parents who wanted their kids to learn more, and for a cheap price. Attention, interest, desire, action.

HubSpot still uses the formula today in their Facebook ads.

"Of course you would" want to double your lead flow in 30 days. It's a no-brainer.

In 1907, **Claude Hopkins** "insisted copywriters research their clients' products and produce 'reason-why' copy." He originally wrote **Scientific Advertising** in 1923. A text that still guides how we run tests today:

> *"Hopkins outlines an advertising approach based on testing and measuring. In this way losses from unsuccessful ads are kept to a safe level while gains from profitable ads are multiplied. Or, as Hopkins wrote, the advertiser is 'playing on the safe side of a hundred to one shot'."*

PAS (Problem-Agitate-Solve) is another all-purpose formula that's been around for decades. You present the problem that's out there, you stir the pot a bit to make the problem seem even worse, and then you present a solution. **Like this**.

Why does this work so well? An unsolvable problem invokes fear. And fear motivates.

Present them with what's at stake, and then show them how you can help them keep it secure.

Ramit Sethi will show you:

The 80/20 Guide to Finding a Job You Love

Hi, I'm Ramit Sethi, New York Times bestselling author and founder of I Will Teach You To Be Rich.

PROBLEM

We know that our Dream Job won't just fall into our laps... and that the best jobs usually aren't listed on any job boards. But when tired old job hunt "tricks" fail us, we end up frustrated, embarrassed, scared of wasting time, and paralyzed by the fear of being stuck. *AGITATION*

SOLUTION **In this video, you'll get insider information** thousands of students have already used **to get out of a "rut"**, get raises, find their Dream Jobs, and take control of their future, **including:**

- *A simple word-for-word script that can save you years of wasted effort*

- *Invisible **Scripts that affect our behavior**...without us even knowing it*

- *Which 3 job hunting activities are most effective – delivering 80% of the results in 20% of the time (most people don't even know about them, giving you an advantage)*

- *How to stand out in a sea of faceless applicants and avoid the resume "Black Hole of Doom"*

bka CONTENT™

Once again, this PAS model ain't new. Even the U.S. Army got on board with the formula back in 1967.

He just lost his chance to make a choice.

His induction notice caught him with his decisions down. He waited too long to choose Army.

If he had acted sooner, he would have had his pick of more than 300 jobs. And his choice would have been guaranteed in writing *before* he joined up.

So don't wait. Choose your specialty and get the best training in the world. In an outfit you can be proud of. There's no better way to become highly skilled. No better way to fulfill your military obligation.

Your future, your decision . . . choose **ARMY.**

Army Opportunities   PM 11-67
Dept. 200
Hampton, Va. 23369
Please mail me your free 40-page booklet.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Phone_____ Education_____ Age____
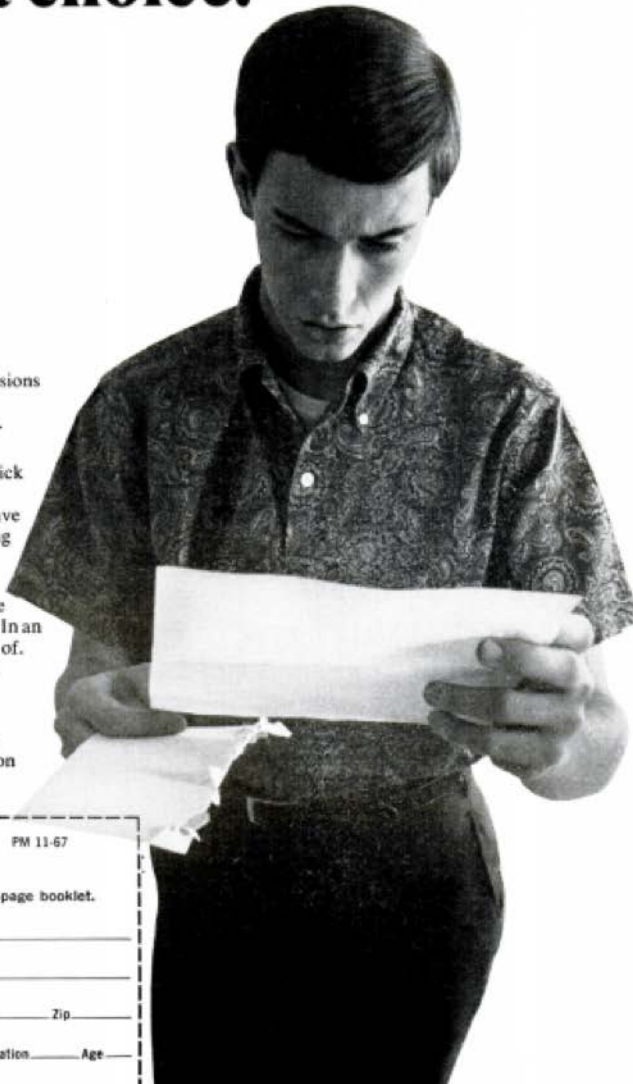
Just look at that sad kid. He waited too long, and now he won't get his first choice of jobs in the branch he really wants.

Don't be like him, the ad implies. Make your choice now.

Why Facebook's Ads are an Ogilvy Rip-Off

We can't even laugh out loud anymore. Or talk to you later. It's all LOLs and TTYLs these days.

We need our content to be quick and meaningful, so we can get it, and move on.

Your full message is important. Maybe we'll get to it later. But in the meantime, it's that headline that pulls readers in. And in that case, nothing beats fear.

Van Camp was doing this way back in 1911, letting customers know that buying their competitors' milk was a bad choice and that their brand was obviously better.

Want to attract even more? Have someone else give your message with a testimonial.

Weight loss programs have always notoriously relied on testimonials to help validate their claims.

But sometimes, even the best headlines can get overlooked.

Thankfully, content with images is more likely to be shared than other types of content. It's more engaging. People don't want to read tons of text.

Once again, this information is not new. Advertising wiz David Ogilvy was telling people this in the early eighties.
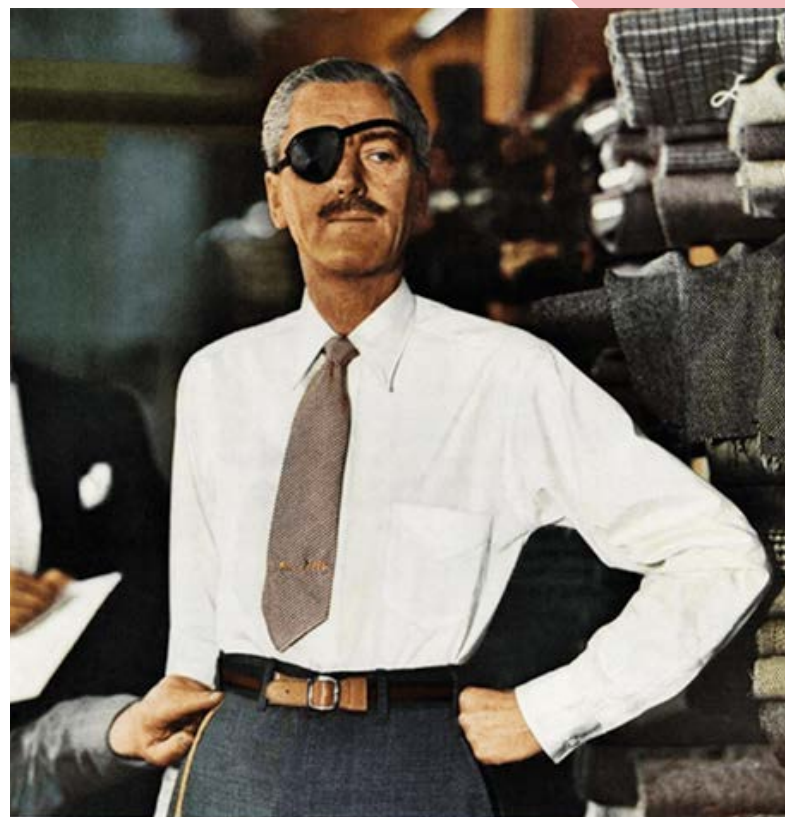
"Most readers look at the photograph first. If you put it in the middle of the page, the reader will start by looking in the middle. Then her eye must go up to read the headline; this doesn't work, because people have a habit of scanning downwards. However, suppose a few readers do read the headline after seeing the photograph below it. After that, you require them to jump down past the photograph which they have already seen. Not bloody likely."

What was he suggesting? Put the image first. Now you've got their attention. Add the headline underneath for context.

Ogilvy took his own advice with this piece from 1951.

I need to know about this man with the eye patch. What's his story? How is he so cool?

Ahh. He's "The Man in the Hathaway Shirt." But what the heck does that mean? Guess I'll have to read on to find out.

The man in the Hathaway shirt

At long last American men are beginning to realize that it is ridiculous to buy good suits and then spoil the whole effect by wearing a cheap, mass-produced shirt. Hence the growing popularity of more generously, and is therefore more comfortable. The tails are longer, and stay in your trousers. The buttons are made of mother-of-pearl—very big and masculine. Even the stitching has an ante-cloth from Manchester, linen batiste from Paris. You will get a great deal of quiet satisfaction out of wearing shirts which are in such impeccable taste. Hathaway shirts are made by a small

bka
CONTENT™

Conclusion

There will always be a new hack to hack. A latest and greatest marketing method to try. You never know – some of them are even bound to work!

But for every new and passing fad, there are countless other marketing principles that have been honed over the last century, most of which are more relevant today than ever before.

Content marketing is a perfect example.

Our consumer behavior has evolved a lot in the past few years. But our brains and habits and innate desires haven't all that much.

The tactics and tools and tips will change. Repeatedly. Monthly. But the century-old fundamentals still apply.

That iPhone on your desk hasn't "changed marketing." It's just accelerated it.

bka CONTENT™

HOW TO SCALE YOUR CONTENT CREATION NEEDS

MATT SECRIST
CO-FOUNDER AND COO, BKA CONTENT

Talking about content strategy is one thing, but executing the creation of it is where many businesses can get hung up. If you fall into this category, you're not alone.

There's a lot to consider when trying to efficiently create high-quality content that gets results all while staying within your budget.

For starters, how much content should you create? How consistently should you create it? How long should the content be? Who should write it?

This is where an efficient content creation strategy comes in.

How Much Content Do I Need?

First, it's important to take into account just how much content you'll need to meet your overall content marketing goals.

Statistics show that the more content you consistently create for your business, the stronger your results are likely to be.

As of 2020, more than half of bloggers published anywhere from one blog a week to several per month. The more that bloggers wrote, either in the length of the blog or the frequency of posting, the more likely they were to see strong results in search engine rankings.

Let's take a closer look at some of the main factors that can influence how much content your business should create.

FREQUENCY OF POSTING

Companies that publish blog posts 16 times or more per month tend to see **3.5 times** more traffic and 4.5 times more leads than businesses that blog four or fewer times per month.

B2B companies may see up to 67% more leads when they blog more, and consistent blogging can increase links to a company's website as much as 97%.

Just because you start a blog does not mean you will see these kinds of results right away, however.

The "magic" number for seeing increased traffic and engagement appears to be **around 70 blog posts.**

LENGTH OF THE BLOG

The frequency of posting is not the only factor affecting the amount of content and engagement businesses see on their blogs.

The length of each blog also plays an important factor. The average blog length in 2020 is **1,236 words**, and the average word count for blogs ranking #1 on Google is **1,900 words.**

This does not necessarily mean that every piece of content you create must be 1,200 or more words.

Different types of content have different purposes that call for custom word counts. But when it comes to blogging, it's clear that more is better.

bka
CONTENT

QUALITY OF THE BLOG

Of course, how long the blog is and how frequently you post matters very little if it is poorly written. For this reason, it is vital to ensure the content you are creating is well-written and has value to the reader.

Typically, higher quality work either takes more time or costs a little bit more to create. To give some context, the average amount of time spent writing a single blog in 2020 is **nearly 4 hours.**

obka
CONTENT™
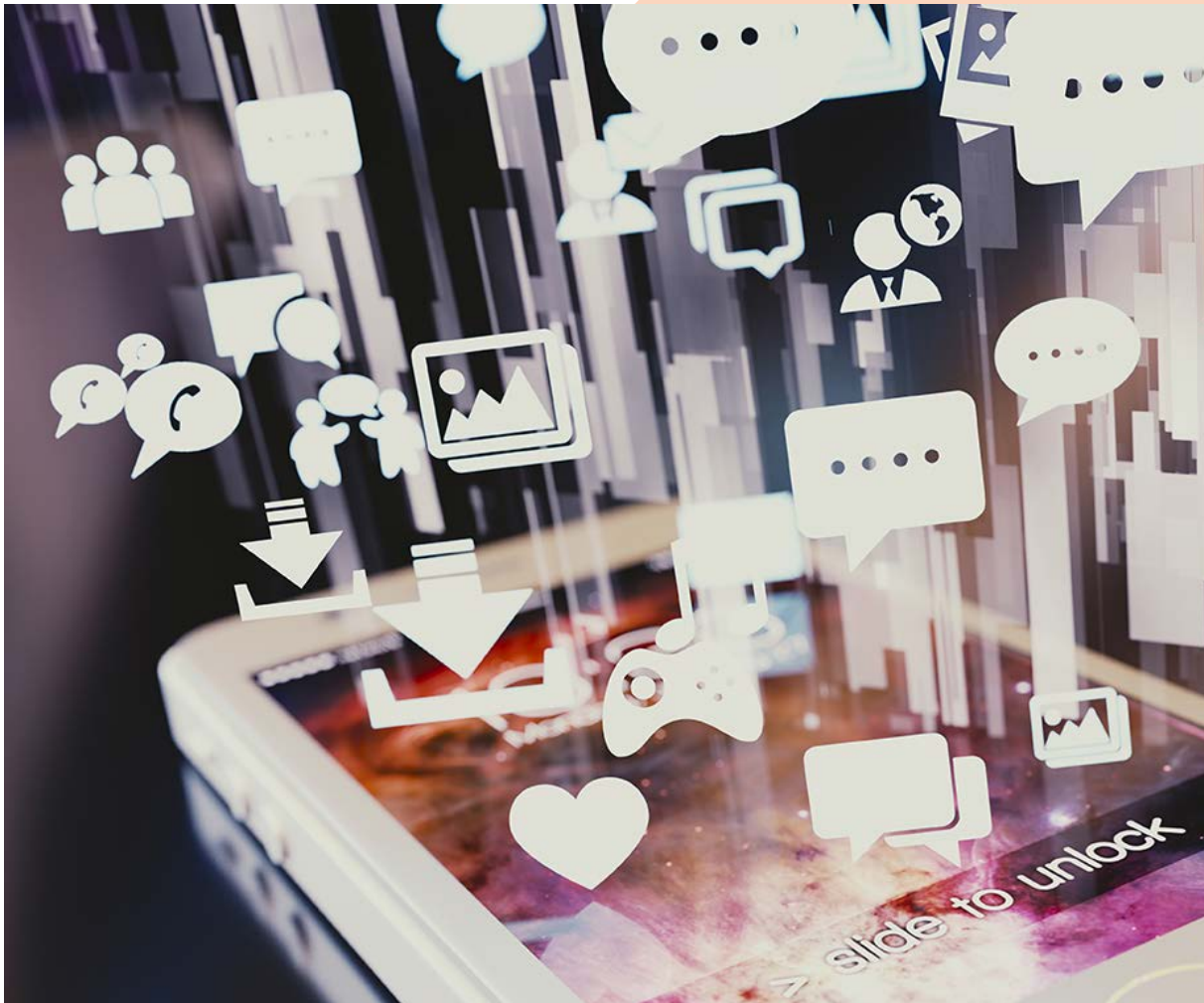
Content Creation Recommendations

Ultimately, the amount of content you create depends on your company's custom content strategy.

Every industry is different, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to blogging that will work perfectly for every business.

That being said, we can conclude some general recommendations based on the statistics over the last several years.

Companies that want to see the very best results should be publishing longer content more frequently.

Still, when starting your blog from scratch, remember that it can take anywhere from a few months to a few years to see the strong results you are aiming for.

How Do I Scale My Content Strategy?

If it takes almost 4 hours to write a blog post and you need to create 16 a month for improved results, you likely do not have the time to spend over 60 hours a month writing your online content.

A more efficient approach is to have a dedicated writer or team of writers creating the content for you.

When hiring for content creation, you will want to consider a few factors:

◆ The keyword, topic and brand style guidelines for the content.

◆ The size and scope of your project.

◆ The types of content you're creating.

◆ The length of the content.

◆ The complexity of your industry.

◆ Your budget.

Each one of these things will affect the overall cost and resources that will be required to complete your content creation project at scale.

obka
CONTENT™

Content Creation Options

Here are the three most common options available for content fulfillment:

1. HIRE AN IN-HOUSE TEAM

This option usually gives companies the highest level of control, but it also tends to be the most expensive.

The greatest advantage of hiring an in-house writing team is that the writers become **familiar with your brand** and company culture in a way freelancers may not be able to, and that can be more easily implemented into the writing.

It's generally easier and faster to communicate directly with an in-house team as well, thus allowing you to have more control over the turnaround and quality of the content.

Once the writers are trained, you can rest a little easier knowing your team has inside knowledge and experience.

Hiring writers in-house also comes with some major costs.

You are looking at a full salary, increased overhead, plus any offered benefits for every writer you hire, which might not make as much sense for short-term or one-time SEO and blogging projects.

In addition, there is a limit to what can be produced by a single writer.

If your content project requires a lot of content, you will need to ensure you hire enough writers to produce the amount of content you are looking to publish, which can increase the cost exponentially.

Creating an in-house team often encompasses the following:

◆ Most reliable content and quality control.

◆ More easily tailored to your brand and voice.

◆ Most expensive solution.

◆ Very hard to scale.

Ultimately, building an in-house team may be beneficial for companies that require greater control at the expense of being able to scale quickly.

This option is likely to work better for businesses working with a large budget.

2. CONTRACT FREELANCE WRITERS DIRECTLY

It can be difficult to determine the exact cost of hiring freelancers as they tend to negotiate their own rates for each project; however, companies that use independent contractors are likely to save a lot of money over hiring an in-house team.

On the other hand, you may need to hire more freelancers if you require a lot of content. In order to do this, you need to have the experience of contracting, training and managing writing and editing teams.

obka
CONTENT™

It's important to spend time ensuring the writers you have under contract understand your business enough to blog with some level of expertise.

You'll also need a system of quality monitoring and management on your end to ensure content is completed on time and at the quality level desired.

Extra management translates into increased time on your end, so you'll want to factor that into overall costs.

In addition, the skill level of a freelance writer varies. More experienced freelancers are likely to charge more for their services, meaning the total savings could be less than you initially anticipated.

Overall, you can expect the following with directly hiring freelancers:

◆ Typically more affordable.

◆ More diverse writing base.

◆ Higher writer turnover.

◆ Requires hands-on management.

The bottom line is that directly contracting freelance writers can be a great option for **businesses on a lower budget** if you have the time and expertise to manage, train and monitor the quality of the work.

bka
CONTENT

3. HIRE A WRITING AGENCY

Hiring a writing agency can **provide a balance** between working with freelance writers and hiring an in-house team.

A good writing agency works with businesses to become familiar with their brand voices and blogging strategy, and they may also have managers who work directly with a dedicated team of writers to complete content specifically for your business.

Two distinct advantages of using an agency are scalability and convenience.

bka
CONTENT

An agency is more likely to be able to get more writers working on a bigger project quickly, meaning you do not have to worry as much about finding, training and paying the right talent yourself. This also means you can order only what you need when you need it.

Agencies also tend to take on the responsibility of vetting, training and managing ongoing teams of writers, allowing for some time savings on your end.

However, it is also important to keep in mind that, even when working with a managed agency, you will have less direct control over the content creation process.

This is where a feedback loop with your agency contact becomes key.

The short of hiring an agency is the following:

- ◆ Agency handles the hiring, managing and quality of writers.

- ◆ Ability to scale quickly.

- ◆ Less direct control over writers.

- ◆ Requires good communication with agency contact.

A writing agency may be the ideal option for businesses that do not have the budget, skills or time to manage an in-house team but still want managed, quality writers.

This option is also great if you plan on creating a lot of content in a short amount of time.

An agency will likely be more expensive than contracting freelance writers directly but is a great option if you don't have the time, bandwidth or structure to manage them on your own.

The Bottom Line of Content Scaling

The consistent creation of online content is an essential component of any modern company's marketing strategy.

To make a strong impact, you should be creating more high-quality, long-form, consistent blogs a month, which may be too much for you or any other single person to handle.

In order to appropriately scale your content creation to your business strategy, it might be a good idea to hire a freelancer, build an in-house content writing team or work with a writing agency.

The ideal solution for your unique business needs depends largely on your budget and goals.

There is no single strategy that will work perfectly for everyone, which is why initial research and planning for your target market and audience is so essential.

Although it can take some time to reap the fruits of quality content creation, investing in a solid strategy now is likely to help you see greater success sooner than you think.

bka
CONTENT

4

CONTENT WITH PURPOSE: HOW TO SET GOALS FOR EVERY CONTENT PIECE YOU CREATE

AUTHOR

JAMES BROCKBANK

Are you guilty of producing and publishing content simply for the sake of doing so?

Maybe you were once told that a surefire way to increase your presence on the SERPs is to regularly publish 500-word blog posts on the grounds that "Google loves fresh content."

On the other hand, maybe you've just always been in the practice of producing as much content as possible, ticking a box against a requirement from above, placing more of a focus on the number of pieces published rather than the quality.

If this sounds like the extent of your "content strategy," then you need to take immediate action.

STOP IT NOW!

Why?

Because, at best, you're wasting your time.

There's a good chance that producing content without a clear goal is doing very little for your brand.

There's also every possibility that much of this would classify as **thin content** with no unique value.

The good news?

It's easy to change old habits.

You just need to understand how to put a purpose on every piece of content you create.

The Purpose of Content

Ask yourself a question:

"As a brand, why do you produce content?"

Seriously. Go ahead, write down your answer(s).

What did you come up with?

Hopefully, you have a list of a number of different purposes.

Some common answers include:

◆ To keep our blog looking active.

◆ Google likes to see regular content.

◆ Our director wants five blog posts published every week.

obka CONTENT™

If these are the types of answers you'd give, then you're producing content simply for the sake of it.

There's no real purpose behind the content you're producing and, clearly, no goals in place.

This is a massive mistake. It can result in a significant waste of resources.

Every single piece of content you produce must have a purpose.

Your content should be working toward one or more wider marketing goals. You should be able to justify to anyone why you took the decision to write that blog post or design that infographic.

What then, can the purpose of a piece of content look like?

4 Simple Content Purposes

Typically (and there's always exceptions), content will be produced for one of the following reasons:

◆ To earn links.

◆ To rank on the SERPs.

◆ To educate an audience.

◆ To drive social engagement.

It's all about understanding what any specific piece of content can do for your brand.

◆ How can it work hard toward wider marketing goals?

◆ Is it good enough to actually achieve any of these?

◆ Does it need to take a certain format to do so?

Here's a deeper look at these four content purposes.

1. TO EARN LINKS

Maybe you're using **content marketing as a link building tactic** – producing story-first content which is then covered, and linked to, by top-tier publications.

This will likely be produced in a way which is accessible to journalists:

◆ Data-driven infographics.

◆ Interactive tools.

◆ Survey results.

Think **"linkable assets"** and you're somewhere along the right lines.

This certainly isn't exclusive, however.

Common types of content produced with the intention of earning links include:

- ◆ **Infographics.**
- ◆ Interactive tools.
- ◆ **Surveys.**
- ◆ **Guest posts.**
- ◆ Expert comment contributions.

No one content format earns links, and that's OK.

You can't be expected to stick to one type of content, rather understand during the strategy and planning stage of a campaign that links are the goal.

We're typically not talking 10,000-word guides here, rather something linkable and which adds fresh, data-driven value to a topic.

With this in mind, we know that links are one of the **main ranking signals** used by Google. Without big links, you'll struggle to gain visibility.

As such, every brand, regardless of whether they're competing on a local scale as a brick and mortar store or are an ecommerce giant, needs to be producing content with the purpose of landing links.

Content that earns links needs to be amazing.

Not just good.

Not great.

AMAZING.

Link building gets harder and harder, however with the right ideas and an understanding as to the goals, both ideation and production can align to deliver content solely intended for this purpose.

2. TO RANK ON THE SERPS

If you want to earn traffic from organic search, you need to rank in top positions.

It's as simple as that.

Long gone are the days when you can rank with garbage content, however. **Panda** put an end to that.

If the purpose of the content you're producing is to rank and earn organic traffic, it's likely you'll be creating something very different than if you're looking to land links.

Again, that's absolutely fine. It's all about acknowledging the purpose of the content and aligning the format and production to the goals.

Let's look at an example.

If you've carried out **keyword research** and established that there's the potential to earn high-quality traffic through a top ranking for the term "free things to do in San Francisco" (let's, for a moment, say you're marketing a travel brand).

When the purpose of the content is to rank, it needs to be the best piece about the topic.

Work to this principle and you'll already be miles ahead of many competitors, but this is one of the areas where marketers commonly fall down.

Remember our discussion above around writing 500-word blog posts that add no value to a topic? Listen up...

If you want to rank in prominent organic positions for searches of "free things to do in San Francisco" you're going to struggle unless you're able to create the very best guide on the web.
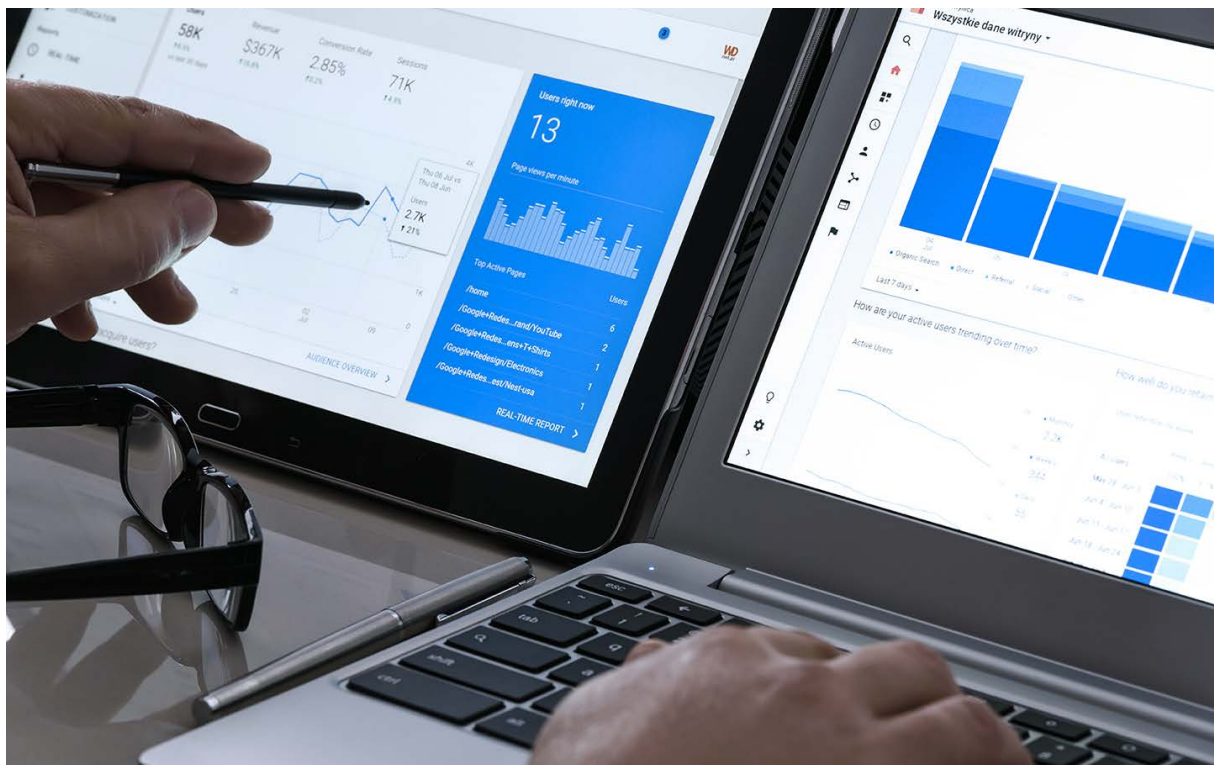
Think about it.

Google, Bing and the other search engines want to return the best and most relevant results for a query.

So why would they rank content that isn't up to scratch?

It's simple. They won't.

Again, we come back to the fact that it's easy to waste time and resources producing content if you've not properly aligned to goals and understand the purpose behind it.

In terms of creating the very best content, you need to understand what makes a piece better than another and it's why it's so important to spend time analyzing the SERPs for terms before you move into production.

That way you can look to establish the commonalities between first page rankings and understand ways in which you can enhance those already ranking at the top.

It's a common misconception that you can knock a result off the top spots by simply increasing the length.

If only!

Creating the best result for a specific search query goes far beyond this.

It's important that you consider **searcher intent** (what does the user actually want to read and engage with), user experience and other factors.

Think of it this way:

If you're able to find 100 free things to do in San Fran, who really wants to read a straight-up, bulleted list? That's by no means the best format for a #1 ranking.

What would better meet the searcher's query and intent is a filterable guide which allows you to sort by the type of 'to do' – for families, couples, solo travelers, etc. – complete with specific location information, contact details, images, reviews, and a write-up.

See the difference?

When the purpose of your content is to rank, you need to focus on what will result in that happening rather than falling into a trap of producing sub-par 500-word blog posts.

3. TO EDUCATE AN AUDIENCE

Content is typically produced as marketing material.

That means there will always be content intended to educate an audience – that with the goal of moving potential clients and customers through the **sales funnel.**

In many cases, there's a lot of crossover between content produced with the purpose of ranking and that which educates, however, there are also instances where these are done in a silo.

For example, an ebook or white paper that typically won't rank on its own under competitive terms but has a definite place in the overall marketing strategy.

When it comes to producing content that educates, take the time to understand the **questions your audience is asking** as well as conducting a detailed **content gap analysis** against competitors.

It's all about ensuring that:

◆ When a potential customer searches for information relating to the products or services you offer, you've produced content that answers their questions – and it's ranking.

◆ Once this user lands on your site, there's further content that pushes them through the sales funnel.

Bottom line: such content can take many different forms.

Content absolutely doesn't need to be produced solely for the purpose of ranking or earning links, so long as you've got the justification as to how it plays a role in the wider strategy.

4. TO DRIVE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

You can't ignore social media.

For many brands, it's a powerful platform to drive brand awareness and engagement.

From a content perspective, however, to see real success you need to produce content solely for the purpose of driving **social engagement** – again showcasing just how content needs to be produced with a goal in mind, not just for the sake of it.

We're all aware that video does well across social platforms, as do images, quizzes and other fun, interactive formats. If that's the case, that's what brands need to focus on creating.

A 5,000-word guide written with the goal of ranking on the SERPs is likely going to tank on social media.

It's just not what social audiences want to consume (unless there's something really special within it that can generate shares, likes, and buzz).

However, a quiz or competition may only perform on social.

When you're producing content with a purpose, however, that's absolutely fine. So long as it meets its own goal, no problems.
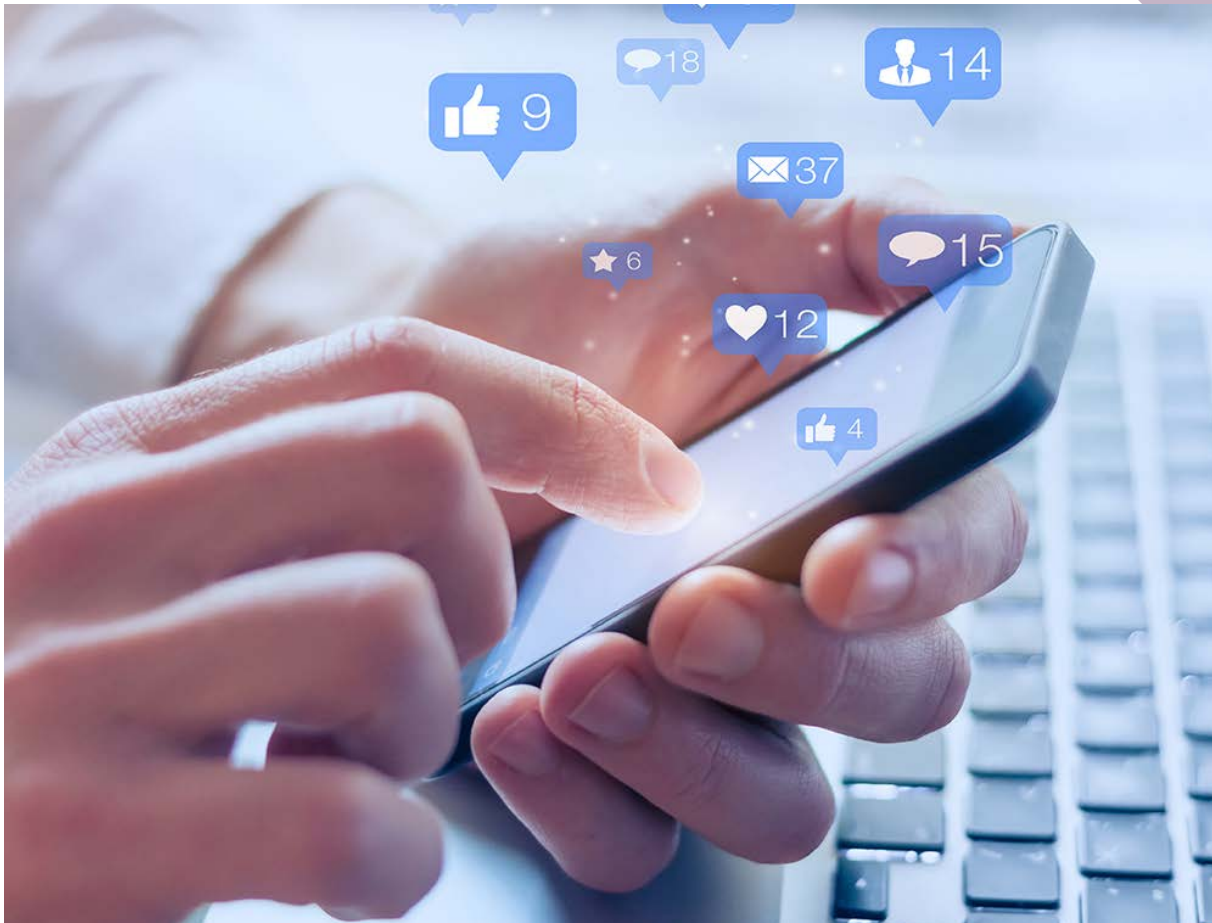
By all means, understand the value of social (you'd be crazy not to).

However, don't be tempted to try to utilize content for different purposes if it seems difficult to do so.

Focus on seeing great results from the main goal and move on to producing a different type of content to meet other goals.

Not Every Piece of Content Ticks All Boxes

There's often a tendency to try and align a single piece of content with multiple goals, trying to produce something which will earn links, rank at the top of the SERPs for high volume terms, educate audiences, and drive strong engagement on social media.

Sorry, it's unlikely to happen.

Just as it's a mistake to have no strategy in place and to produce content simply for the sake of doing so, it also isn't advisable to try to tick too many boxes with a single piece.

Think about it.

Content requires a significant investment both in time and, often, financial resources when done right.

As a brand, it's important that it performs as part of the wider marketing strategy – be that to drive awareness, direct sales, or contribute towards another channel (e.g., SEO).

When you make the mistake of setting multiple purposes for a content piece, you're ultimately going to have to make sacrifices somewhere.

Maybe you need to go wordier to rank when you wanted to keep it simple and visual for social sharing.

Maybe you really needed to earn links but decide to go long-form to rank as well...

It gets messy, doesn't it?

Taking this approach results in content that underperforms and, in reality, ends up being a waste of time and resources.

You're far better off focusing upon a single purpose for content and executing to the best of your ability.

Sometimes there will be a crossover between different purposes. But always look to identify a single reason why you're producing every content piece.

No one expects a single piece of content to achieve everything for a brand and for this reason, you need to focus on smashing goals and **KPIs** relating to the main purpose. Anything else is a bonus.

Take the time to educate your wider team and work to ensure everyone is on the same page, understanding the goal of every piece of content to drive forward success and ensure that resources aren't being wasted on content which, in reality, does nothing for a brand.

5

100 TYPES OF CONTENT: THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE

AUTHOR
DANNY GOODWIN

Creating content in a variety of formats will help you reach a wider audience. Here's a list of 100 types of content you can create, with examples.

Content is power.

It comes in countless forms, and each of those forms can be pivoted into countless permutations.

Think your about page has to be text?

Think again.

The world of media is at your fingertips: video, images, audio, and even GIFs.

They're each engaging on their own, but, use them in combination and you'll be making powerhouse content.

You can also get a ton of mileage out of a single piece of content by repurposing it.

A how-to blog is not just a blog – it's the script for an explainer video, or a shareable infographic, or the base of an e-book.

Each form reaches a different set of eyes and expands your network.

Ready to learn more?

Check out these 100 types of content to dive into getting the most mileage out of your content.

1. About

Your "about us" content is some of the strongest content you can create for your brand.

It positions you or your company as a market leader, earns trust, and builds a human connection – if it's done well.

Here's how we do it:

Our team is all over the world.

Educating and empowering the SEO community by providing the freshest news and latest best practices via the industry's smartest practitioners.

Launched in 2003, SEJ is unique in its community-based approach to search marketing content. Virtually all of our contributed articles come from real online marketing experts, both independent and in-house.

In three sentences, we outline our team's mission, a snippet of our history, and how we serve our audience authority content.

2. App

Great apps don't often start from scratch.

Just look at Gabriel Wyner, who **pivoted his best-selling book** "Fluent Forever" into a language-learning app.

bka CONTENT™

3. Audiobook

Reach your audience on the go by adding an audio-component to an existing e-book.

For example, Ryan Holiday's Growth Hacker **expands his book audience to include listeners** by adding an Audible audiobook.

Audible's easy self-production publisher platform, ACX, makes this accessible for everyone.
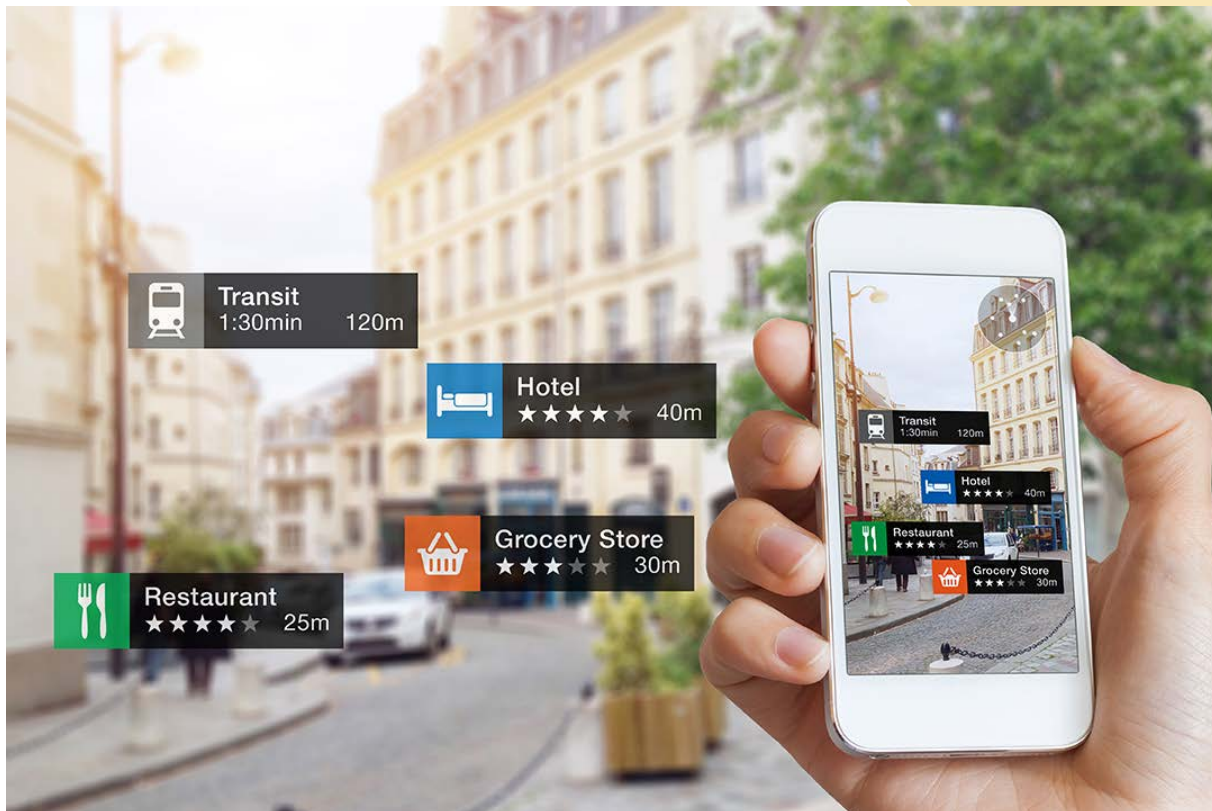
4. Augmented Reality

Want to make your brand part of everyday life?

Pokemon Go is an amazing example: they caught the casual mobile gaming network, reaching a whole new set of fans.

5. Awards

Awards are great for eliciting a response from professionals – and also generating content.

Look no further than the **U.S. Search Awards.**

Every year, they hand out awards to top SEO and marketing professionals.

6. Behind the Scenes

Team building, project progress, and culture are all great places to start for behind the scenes content.

Facebook shows off their behind-the-scenes London engineering office with this **exclusive look.**

7. Blog Post

Think of your blog as the hub for all of your wide-reaching content.

Our strategy at Search Engine Journal: **frequent, high-quality posts** to maximize traffic growth.

8. Cartoon / Comic

Need a laugh?

Marketoonist shows us **how it's done:** avoid tone-deaf marketing, keep it simple, and put out new cartoons frequently.

9. Case Study

Think a case study has to be a dry, visually boring pdf to be professional?

Hubspot begs to differ: they engage with **statistics, images, testimonials and more.**

10. Calendar

Great if your brand deals in local events and conferences.

Check out Amelia to build your own **events calendar.**

11. Cause

Causes take a brand from interesting to admirable.

Axe uses purpose-driven content to **confront an issue** and re-orient toward a human focus.

12. Certification Program

Up-level your authority by creating an online course or certification program.

Moz Academy provides polished, straightforward information about exactly what you can expect to learn.

13. Challenge

Challenges can be used to mobilize your audience.

Just look at **NaNoWriMo**, a nonprofit that hosts an annual novel-writing challenge.

Their dedicated community stays engaged all year long.

14. Cheat Sheet

What does a successful cheat sheet look like?

Marketing Insider Group knows: they teach beginners how to format a killer blog in a **single image and 13 words.**

15. Checklist

What better to exemplify a checklist than a **checklist for writing checklists?**

Create an objective-focused, breakdown with simple points and consistent formatting.

obka
CONTENT™
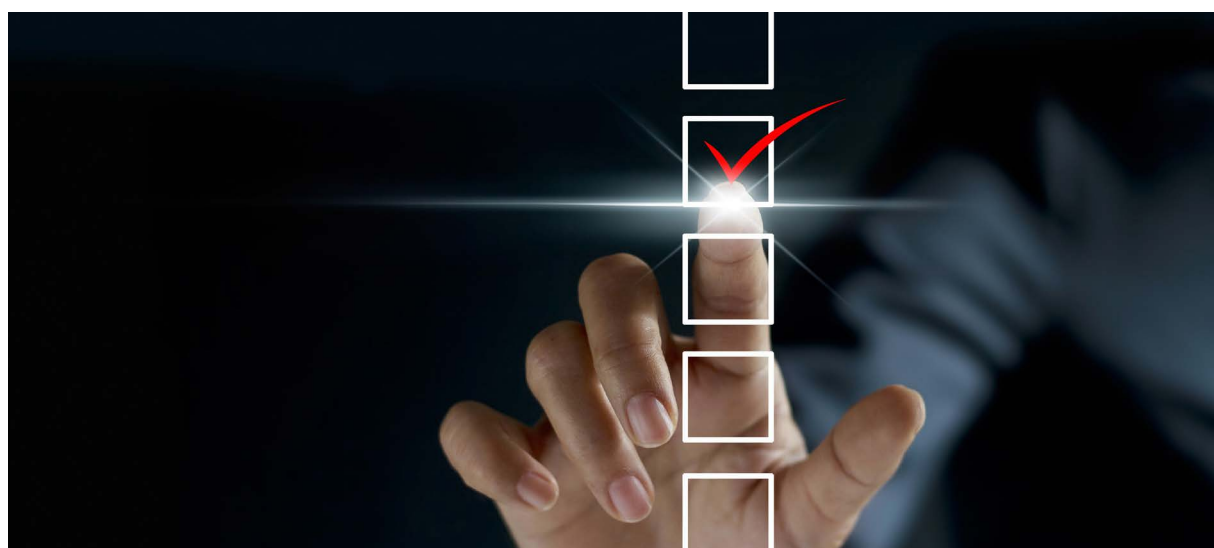
16. Clickbait

Bad clickbait is all surface-level, but you can use the same tactics for high-quality content.

Search Engine Journal does this by using the listicle format, emotional words, bringing unique value to the conversation.

17. Co-branded

When two brands partner to form a new product or service, that's co-branding.

A great example of this is **PayPal and Honey**, a match which magnifies the goal of maximizing your money.

18. Collaborative / Co-created Content

Collaborative content dramatically expands your audience with each contributor you add.

The bonus: guest posts, interviews, and contributor quotes add a **TON of value** to your content.

19. Company Culture

You can reveal a lot about company culture in just the form you present it.

Here's how: Scribe Writing's amazing **culture bible** is a publicly editable Google Doc.

20. Comparison

This content is great for outlining:

◆ Pros and cons

◆ Your product vs another

◆ Features available at different price points

◆ Your ideal customer's journey to conversion

Whatever your aim, be bold, but bottle up your bias.

Take **Growth Marketing Pro** for example: a quick-to-digest graphic highlights their rating, audience, and cost.

21. Content Library / Resource Center

If you're reading this, it's likely you found our resource library.

It's chock-full of **ebooks**, the history of **Google algorithm updates**, **podcasts**, and **webinars.**

History of Google Algorithm Updates

What are Google Algorithms?

Google's algorithms are a complex system used to retrieve data from its search index and instantly deliver the best possible results for a query. The search engine uses a combination of algorithms and numerous ranking signals to deliver webpages ranked by relevance on its search engine results pages (SERPs).

In its early years, Google only made a handful of updates to its algorithms. Now, Google makes thousands of changes every year.

Most of these updates are so slight that they go completely unnoticed. However, on occasion, the search engine rolls out major algorithmic updates that significantly impact the SERPs such as:

22. Contest

A contest is a great way to attract new followers and boost engagement from your loyal audience.

Take Upwork: they asked for **success stories** in exchange for a chance to win $1,000.

23. Course

The world of digital marketing never sleeps, and that means your followers are constantly looking for ways to level up their skills.

Social Creators (an education company focused on storytelling) immediately **boost their credibility** and show expertise with a single high-quality image.

24. Curated Content

Great for link-building and widening your audience, curated content comes in 3 main forms: your content, content from around the web, or a mix of both.

Check out **Brain Pickings** for curated content with a unified focus.

25. Data: Analysis

Original data is valuable. Original data + analysis? Priceless.

WordStream has done this incredibly well over the years.

For example, WordStream looked at **how COVID-19 impacted Google Ads** results in 21 industries – and also provided actionable tips on how to minimize the impact.

26. Data: Journalism

Put simply, data journalism is storytelling using data.

FiveThirtyEight are kings of data journalism, especially when it comes to politics

Check out their **The Atlas of Redistricting** – which used data to draw up alternative congressional maps to encourage more competitive elections.

27. Data: Visualization

Visual content is addictively readable.

Charts and graphs are a simple way to show a large amount of data without getting caught up in the nitty-gritty.

Visualized data can take the form of size comparison, like Reuter's **chilling graphics** on the single-use plastic crisis.

28. Day in the Life

This type of content was made for video.

Elif Hiz combines an **authentic, behind-the-scenes style** with a dressed-down approach to real challenges she faces as a digital marketing manager.

29. Demo / Product Tour

Transformative product demos not only show how awesome the product is, but also how it will help people achieve the outcomes they're looking for.

Take GoPro's HERO 8 Black + Max **demo** – it's visceral, edge-of-your-seat content and it shows the kind of extreme lifestyle many GoPro users aspire toward.

30. Diagram

Maybe you have a complicated idea you'd like to introduce.

Maybe you'd like to break down a product and show exactly how it works (guts first).

Diagrams – like the **Social Media Transit Map** – quickly and beautifully show interconnectivity.

31. Dictionary

Want to educate your followers on need-to-know industry terms?

Hootsuite's **social media glossary** is a great example of providing valuable definitions that bolster their brand-specific authority.

32. Easter Egg

Like their colorful real-world counterparts, this hidden content makes us smile.

That's because it can show a brand's silly side, like **Google's Dino Run Game**, which only appears on Chrome if your internet connection's gone out.

33. Ebook

How Search Engines Work

Want to optimize your site the right way and set yourself up for success? Then it's critical to know how search engines operate today.

DOWNLOAD

The Ultimate SEO Audit Checklist

This guide will help determine the essential checkpoints in your SEO audits and guide you through certain areas of your site as they relate to search ranking factors.

DOWNLOAD

A Complete Guide to Holiday Marketing

Want your business to get a bigger piece of the pie during the holidays? In this ebook, learn how to create holiday marketing campaigns that stand out.

DOWNLOAD

Think of e-books as a deep-dive on your most popular content, like our **Complete Guide to Holiday Marketing**.

Offering free ebooks is also an excellent way to grow your email list.

34. Email

Emails can offer information on upcoming webinars, motivate action, and way more.

Craft outstanding subject lines for a higher open rate use emotional words, second person (you, your), and keep it simple.

35. Ephemeral content

In the blink of an eye (or a few seconds, anyway), it's gone.

Think: Snapchat – it engages the **FOMO-instinct** and elicits immediate action.

36. Events: In-person

There's no substitute for live events.

That's why the Content Marketing Institute leverages **summits and award ceremonies** as part of their brand strategy.

37. Events: Virtual

Now more than ever, e-conferences and events are essential.

A virtual event could be as simple as livestreaming on YouTube like or as complicated as **hosting an eSummit** with thousands of attendees.

38. Explainer

Satisfy that knowledge-hungry urge and mobilize your audience.

PBS Eons kick major butt in the education market, with relevant merch connected to their smart content.

39. Fact Check

Want to expose fake news?

Corrective uses raw **investigative journalism** to shine a light on the truth.

40. Facts

Let facts triumph over fiction.

SEJ uses high-level research to **dive way deeper.**

41. Failures

Failure can be humbling – it can also be endearing.

Content Marketing Institute **shows their vulnerable side** by acknowledging failures and showing how they've grown.

42. FAQ

FAQs build trust and transparency.

Line's **image-based FAQs** are easy to read and align with their brand.

43. Forums

Reddit can be intimidating.

Redditors refuse to be marketed to – but they will participate as an honest focus group.

Insurance company TransAmerica **used their conversations** on Reddit to create new content.

44. Game

Make content marketing more fun with games.

Try tools like The Training Arcade, where you can create a **game tailored to your target audience.**

45. Gated

Want your audience to feel special?

Exclusive content – like **Patreon supporters-only content** – rewards your followers for their engagement.

46. GIFs

It's no secret the new language of the internet is GIFs.

Nerd Fitness harnesses them to explain exercises and include readers in inside jokes.

47. Gossip

Everyone loves a bit of hot gossip.

That's why **People** uses rumors as a jumping-off point for discussion and employs clickbait headlines to hook readers.
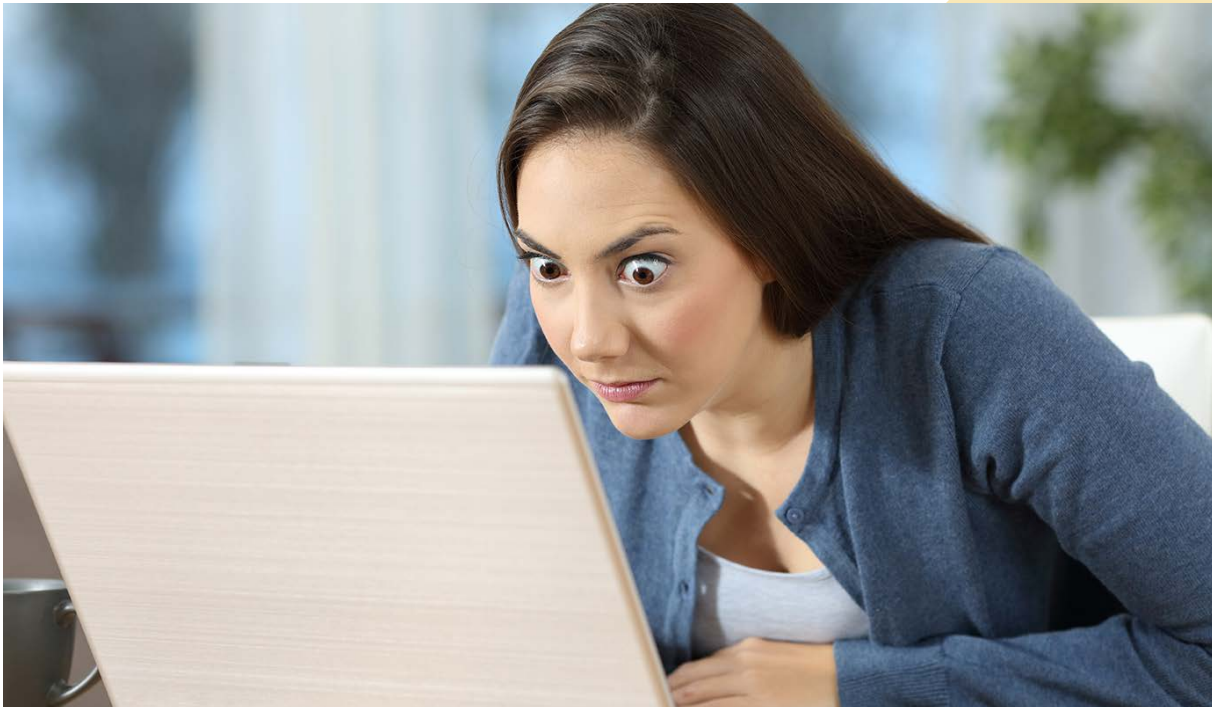
48. Guest post

Whether you are posting on a third-party site, or a guest blogger is posting on your blog, guest posts are an incredible way to expand your reach and talk to new audiences.

New to guest posting? Ace your first one by following **Quicksprout**'s checklist.

49. Guide

In-depth, definitive, ultimate – all three of these words describe a deep-diving guide on any topic.

Our **Linkbuilding Guide** is extensively researched and easy to digest.

50. Hiring & Recruiting

Help aspiring employees understand what you're looking for.

LinkedIn quickly outlines criteria on its streamlined, eye-catching platform.

51. How-To

Two rules of thumb keep your how-to's sharp: relevance and authenticity.

Optin Monster hits it out of the park with **How to Make Money on Instagram.**

52. Human Interest

This type of content is all about positivity.

Inspire your audience with growth-focused stories like Bold Content's high-quality videos.

53. Humor

Laughter is the best medicine, and it's also some of the best marketing.

Scott Adams builds camaraderie with his audience through hilarious cartoons.

54. Images: Stock

Stock photos and images add a professional polish to any content.

User-submitted photos on Pexels are **high-quality and millennial-oriented.**

55. Images: Original

Want to see your images all over the net?

Mark Smiciklas crafts **high-quality graphics**, expanding his follower-base without a tremendous effort.
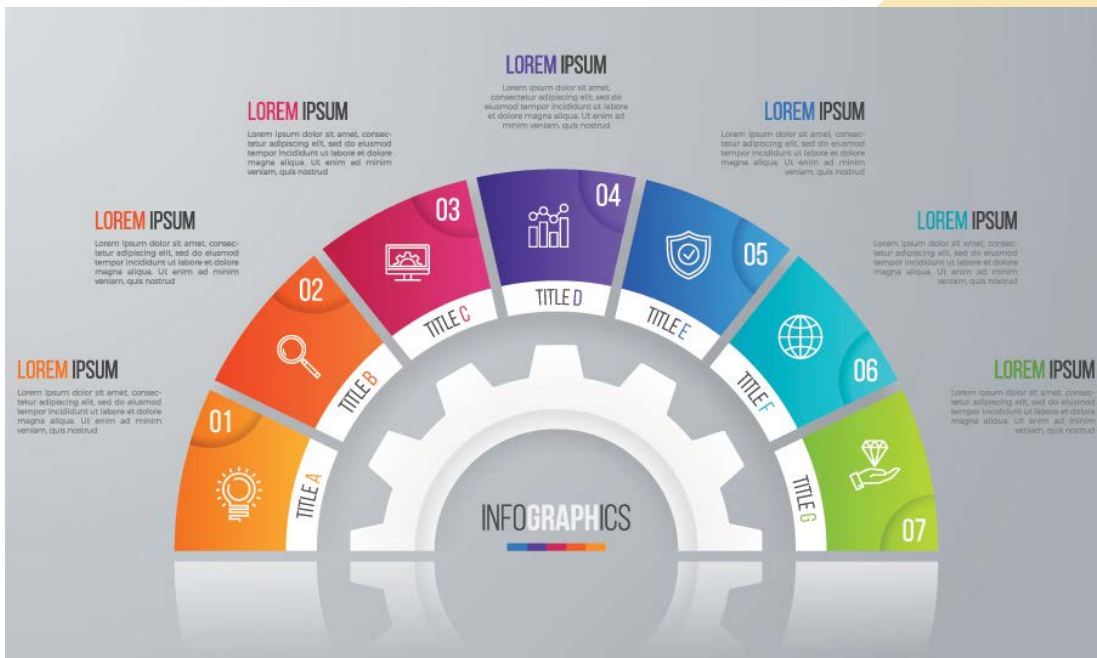
56. Infographic

Easy to skim, visually appealing infographics help readers digest (and share) data.

Check out **Venngage** for amazing examples and templates.

57. Interview / Q&A / AMA

Want to increase your authority on a topic?

Interview an expert, or try an AMA session on Reddit – **Bill Gates** took what he learned and repurposed it into **tons** of cutting-edge content.

58. Investigative

You don't have to be a journalist to investigate a mystery or debunk some long-held beliefs.

You don't need to invest tons of hours into an expose.

The truth is out there – in the form of accurate facts, data, or quotes.

All you have to do is go find it.

Here's a simple example: **10 Facts You Think You Know About SEO That Are Actually Myths.**

59. Landing Page

It's your home base, so it pays to make it shine.

Our eye-catching landing page features **three hot stories** in a moving carousel.

60. Listicle

Here are 3 reasons listicles are awesome:

◆ They're skimmable.

◆ They're straightforward.

◆ People love lists.

"7 Awesome SEO Tools Offering a Free Trial" is a **stellar example.**

61. Magazines

Whether print or online, publishing a magazine is a great way to make sure there's always fresh, expert content on your website.

Check out **Forbes** for high-quality examples.

62. Maps

We can't pass this content type without mentioning one of the most-searched maps on the web in 2020: the Johns Hopkins live COVID-19 tracker.

It **converts complicated, global data** into a digestible map.

63. Memes

One does not simply make a new meme – it's all about community iteration.

BuzzFeed combines memes to connect with an internet-hip audience and give them an **inside-joke chuckle.**

64. Microsite

It's exactly what it says on the tin: compact, simple, and to the point.

Collaborative Fund uses a **fun infographic** to highlight the effect car sharing will have on the future.

66. News: Analysis

Take your audience on an in-depth journey.

Politico produces reputable, bleeding-edge analyses, raising the value of the entire publication.

67. News: Breaking

This just in: by-the-seat-of-your-pants content is a great tactic for maintaining reader engagement.

Adweek nails it with breaking news in the **marketing niche.**

68. News: Company

Have a new product or service?

Announce it with company news.

Check out SpaceX's **innovative coverage** of their new product, rightly reframed as history-making news.

69. News: Current Affairs

Create content that discusses how important happenings in the world are impacting your business, market, or niche right now.

The obvious example for 2020: The impact of COVID-19 is an opportunity to create content that will inform and help your audience.

Search Engine Journal did this by offering **several articles** on the **impact** of **COVID-19.**

70. News: Industry News / Recap

Google and social media platforms are constantly changing.

Our news section provides the **latest** on Google shifts, SEO, social media updates, and more.

71. Newsletter

Keep your audience in the loop.

We optimize our newsletter by **formatting for all devices** and making sure to add eye-catching images.

72. Opinion

This content type has many names:

- ◆ Argumentative
- ◆ Commentary
- ◆ Rant
- ◆ Thinkpiece
- ◆ Perspective

For an amazing example of a **smart, authentic opinion** piece, read Mark Ritson's Marketing in the Time of COVID-19.

73. Opposing Perspectives

Duke it out!

Steven Crowder's "Change My Mind" **prompts live discussion** on tough issues.

74. Paid Tools

All high-quality content goes through rigorous proofreading before going live. Tools like **Grammarly** provide free basic service, and in-depth attention for paid users.

75. PDF

Releasing a pdf is a great way to establish authority on a subject.

Check out Deloitte for a high-quality **example.**

76. Personal Narrative

Let your vulnerable side shine.

Noelle Stevenson **deeply humanizes her image** by exposing her difficult personal journey in "The Fire Never Goes Out".

77. Photo Gallery

Whether in a carousel format or a single page, photos boost engagement and drive clicks.

Expedia uses photos to sell not just a great trip, but a **lifestyle.**

78. Plugin

Developing a plugin for your particular niche helps your brand gain traction in the WordPress Sphere.

Check out **MonsterInsights** for a killer example.

79. Podcast

Podcasts come in three main forms:

◆ Podcasts with a regular team, **Marketing O'Clock**.

◆ Podcasts with guests, like our **Search Engine Journal Show**

◆ Third-party podcasts, in which you participate in another podcast.

80. Poll / Survey

Ask your audience exactly what you want to know.

Survey Monkey's Facebook survey gathers info to use as **fodder for future content.**

81. Predictions

Evidence-based speculation shows confidence and expertise.

Check out our webinar for an **evolving prediction** about the future of SEO in 2020.

82. Presentation

Who says a slide deck has to be boring?

Boost engagement with a **TED Talk**, like Dan Cobley's evergreen presentation.

83. Press Release

Have a major announcement?

Consider sending the details to news outlets in your niche.

Check out awesome examples of using **press releases for events** from McDonald's.

84. Profile: Company / Business / Brand

Consider introducing your company with a brief video that profiles your company, business, or brand in a way that humanizes you to your followers.

Phillips uses this method to **share their business journey.**
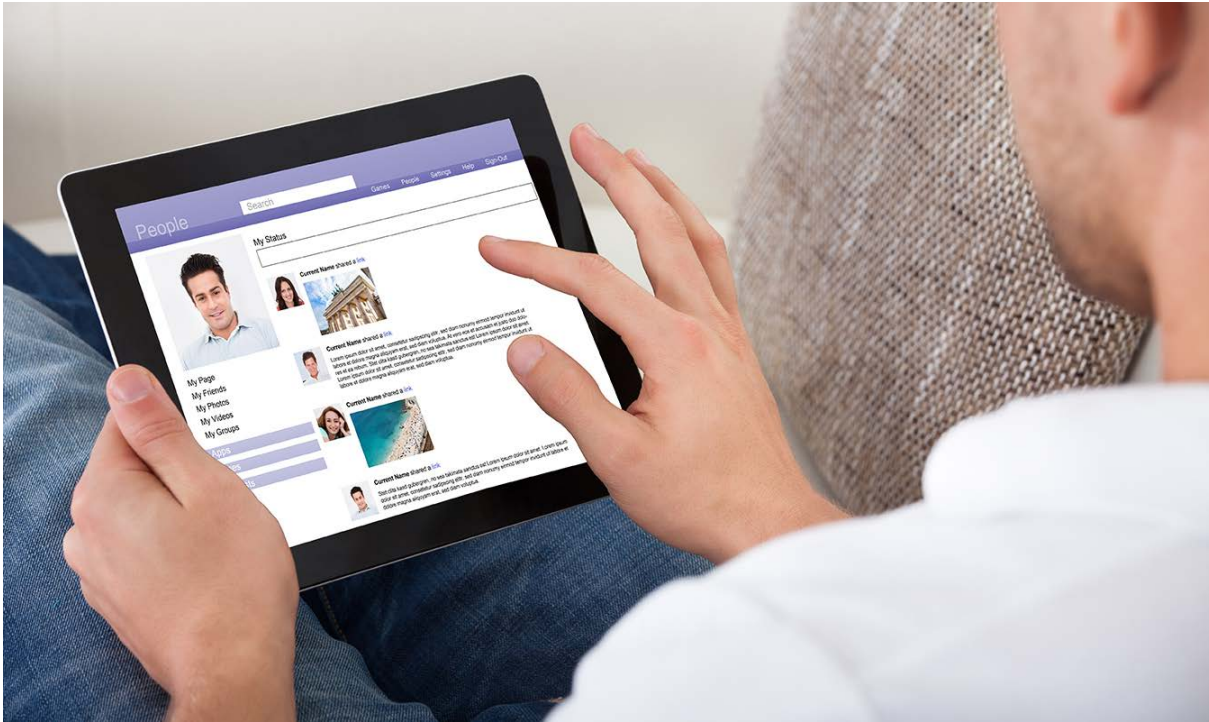
85. Profile: Personal

For your personal blog and your guest posts, a catchy bio is essential.

Check out Ann Handley's bios: in both her short and long version, her **personality (and authority) shine through.**

86. Promotion

Associate your brand with all your favorite content creators.

Here's a great example: **SquareSpace** announces promo codes via podcasts and YouTube channels.

87. Quiz

From silly to educational, everyone loves a fun quiz.

Clickhole is a great example of how to get satirical.

88. Research Report

Poll or quiz your followers and turn it into **original research.**

Looking for ideas? **MarketResearch.com** has tons.

89. Screenshots

Got tech-related content? Explaining a tool, method, or feature?

Check out The Smart Blogger – blogging leader Jon Morrow uses screenshots to help readers **quickly get tech in-use.**

90. Services

Show what you can do when it comes to your services.

SalesForce optimizes for skimming by using **checklists, images, and stats.**

91. Social Media

This enormous category of content's core element is right in the name: social.

Check out how we **maintain our brand** across platforms, while directly connecting with our audience in real-time.

92. Sponsorships

The new trend in sponsorships: supporting up-and-comers.

Blue Apron reaches a new audience by **sponsoring podcasts** outside of their niche.

93. Statistics

Relevant statistics are a great tactic to improve your researched content.

It adds more power to your content to quote and source the right statistics.

In fact, using statistics in blogs is proven to improve customer trust. (Yes, that's a statistic example! From **Hubspot**.)

Two great sources we recommend: **Pew Research Center** and **Statista.**

94. Testimonials

Let your customers do the talking for you!

Testimonial content is some of the best content to pull in ideal leads that share the same pain points.

For example, Hubspot brings **ideal customers** to the forefront to demonstrate the proveable value.

95. Tools

Tools can be a lifesaver (and expensive).

But free tools? Invaluable.

In addition to tools, calculators can be another popular type of content for your website.

And did we mention they're great link magnets? Check out **How to Earn Links by Creating Free Tools** for examples.

96. Video

Video is a powerful format type.

What's more: you can easily repurpose other content formats into a video.

For example, **Julia McCoy** turns each single YouTube video she produces into a **blog** and an **email** campaign.

Here are a few types of awesome video styles:

◆ Live – Unedited and off-the-cuff

◆ Video: 360 – Perfect for travel vloggers

◆ Video: Playlists – Curated for easy viewing

◆ Video: Recorded – Polished, produced, or bare-bones

Joe Rogan **streams his podcast live** on YouTube, which extends his audience and adds a visual element not available to audio-only listeners.

97. Webinar

Whether a webinar is live or on-demand, it connects growing professionals with experts.

SEJ hosts regular webinars based on white-hot **industry news.**

98. Whitepaper

Help your leads make an informed decision before taking action.

Content Marketing Institute's whitepaper library features reports **demonstrating the viability** of brands.

99. Wiki

In an industry with lots of complicated terms?

Seobility simplifies with a **niche-specific** wiki.

100. Why

Explainer content can be powerful.

An unanswered question is an incredible hook.

 "Why an Audience Analysis Is Necessary to SEO" is an amazing example of why this type of content has to be part of your repertoire.

bka CONTENT

Build the Right Types & Boost Your Brand: Content Is Everywhere

Every piece of content begins with an idea.

Once you have that great idea, you can use this list of content types to pick the format that will best showcase that idea.

And never limit yourself to one idea, one format.

One idea can be repurposed into multiple formats – text, video, or audio.

The only limit is your imagination!

By creating **all** the formats when it comes to great content, you're sure to reach a gigantic, varied audience, build your brand name, and cater to a wide variety of formats your audience loves and consumes.

Go ahead – choose one and get started.

6

CASE STUDIES: HOW CONTENT MARKETING BENEFITS COMPANIES

AUTHOR

SHELLEY WALSH

Part of being a great content marketer is keeping an eye on what other content marketers are doing – to predict the future one starts with what has gone before.

I'm a genuinely curious person and fortunately, a big part of what I do involves researching and consuming a lot of content.

When I'm doing concept work, I usually start by reviewing back through my files of saved content, campaigns, and ideas.

If you don't have a **commonplace book** then start now because it will be the best resource you have for ideas and creating content (I operate a digital version using Pocket, Instapaper and Evernote).

Inspiration can be found everywhere.

A good idea will inspire you, whatever the medium.

Instead of sharing the usual suspects of content that everyone else seems to share, I'm going to show you a few random examples of creative ideas (and some old ones) that will hopefully inspire you to create better content.

"If you only read the books that
everyone else is reading, you can only
think what everyone else is thinking."
– Haruki Murakami

1. Google

I know I said I was going to share random examples, but I had to start here because Google does produce some of the best content on the web. Well, they would, wouldn't they? I mean, all that money.

Being a minimalist is difficult because the more elements you remove from a page, the more the remaining ones have to justify their existence.

I'm a huge fan of clean design – I like to see a strong concept elegantly executed. And, Google is the master of elegant clean design.

Presenting results in helpful ways

To help you find what you're looking for quickly, Google provides results in many useful formats. Whether presented as a map with directions, images, videos or stories, we're constantly evolving with new ways to present information.

Learn more about useful responses ➔
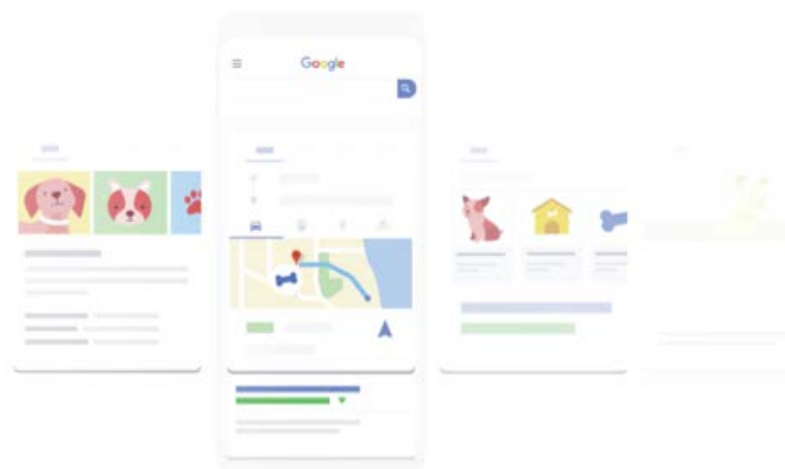
HOW SEARCH WORKS

Sadly, the original piece of content on this page has changed. The animated infographic that used to be here inspired me to push my coders to create the best interactive work we could. And I can tell you that is hard.

The existing page still is a perfect example of how to present a body of information so that the eye focuses on the content.

Animated graphics in the unmistakable Big G style add interest to the page, generating a rich visual experience to keep the eye engaged.

Google is also master at online typography – delivering the content with such impeccable spacing and balance of white that makes it easy to read.

As someone who studied classic typography, unless you have tried to do this, you won't appreciate just how hard it is to do.
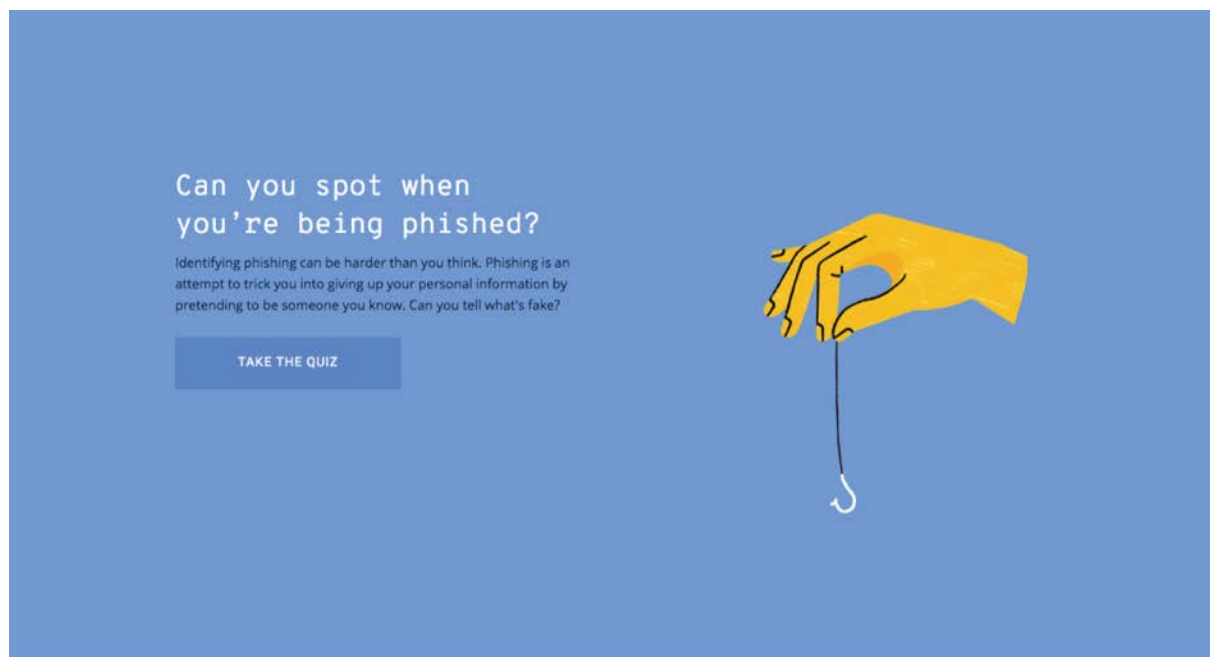
PHISHING QUIZ

An interactive quiz that walks you through how to avoid being scammed by phishing. Again, elegant design that highlights the key information and is intuitive to use.

Too many interactive pages are confusing or rely on over-design to compensate for a weak concept and low-quality research – I see this all the time.

The concept and quality of content are still paramount and the technical structure of the content is essential to get a user to the page.

But stage two of content marketing is to engage the user so they want to keep coming back. And this is where a great presentation will help to build your brand and build a relationship.

Google inspires a better presentation of content.

2. New York Times

Where do you start with the NYT? Undoubtedly they are world leaders at producing traditional content.

But they have also managed to embrace digital to keep innovating how content and information is presented.

A game of Sharks and Minnows is my go-to piece of content that I always cite because it was so ground-breaking in 2013 for how content is presented.

Other similar pieces include **Snow Fall** and **Camp X-Ray** to list just a few.

SBS was clearly inspired by NYT to produce **The Boat** but this falls towards style over usability.

It looks stunning, but as a practical delivery of content, it's not great. However, it won lots of awards and got attention so it was successful for brand awareness.

Apart from long-form content NYT also excel at data journalism and have produced a range of amazing data visualization and tools:

One Race, Every Medalist Ever when Usain Bolt set the new world record in 2012, the world was astounded. When NYT created this visualization of Usain vs 116 years of Olympic sprinters, I was truly astounded. This piece is 7 years old but still looks amazing.

How Y'all, Youse and You Guys Talk is one of the most popular digital interactive pieces for NYT. This interactive map shows what the way you speak says about where you're from.

Is It Better to Rent or Buy? is a calculator that went against convention to show that in some instances. It is better to rent, not buy.

3. HSBC

We Are Not an Island

Back at the beginning of 2019, I saw a billboard in the city center where I live.

I was stopped in my tracks by how brilliant this concept was – and that doesn't happen often.

By specifically targeting cities that are known for having a high level of local pride (Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham), the ads fed into the heart that beats in all of us.

Bam, it emotionally connected.

The wording of the ads resonated with those who were from each city – HSBC had clearly done their homework.

We were still reeling from the shock of Brexit (still are) and these ads perfectly tapped into the zeitgeist of needing to belong after being set adrift.

WE ARE NOT AN ISLAND. WE ARE A COLOMBIAN COFFEE DRINKING, AMERICAN MOVIE WATCHING, SWEDISH FLAT-PACK ASSEMBLING, KOREAN TABLET TAPPING, BELGIAN STRIKER SUPPORTING, DUTCH BEER CHEERS-ING, TIKKA MASALA EATING, WONDERFUL LITTLE LUMP OF LAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEA. WE ARE PART OF SOMETHING FAR, FAR BIGGER.

HSBC UK   Together we thrive

And the genius of this campaign was how many people shared images of the posters to their friends.

HSBC knew its audience and localized its ads to regional cities.

By applying the same approach to online campaigns we can serve content tailored to different regions to make an emotional connection.

The more you can be locally specific with your content, the more likely an audience will be to connect and inclined to share with others.

4. Studio 188

Studio 188 is a group that produces "spoof" style low budget versions of major films such as, Game of Thrones, Men in Black, Star Wars and The Matrix. The guys who do this clearly have a lot of fun.

To say something is a unique idea is saying something as there isn't much that hasn't been done before, but this really is a fresh creative concept.

The Matrix low-cost version on YouTube has nearly 1.2 million views so the idea is resonating with a lot of people.

I love spoof videos. I talk a lot about brands like Poo-Pourri and Old Spice that disrupted stale markets and I love the use of humor in marketing. But, it's so difficult to get it right and for every Studio 188, there's a lot of failed attempts.

If you know your audience and have seriously good writers or a great creative idea then try it.

The idea of the low budget version is why it works – don't spend buckets of marketing budget just spend ages to figure out an idea that might just be crazy enough to work.

5. Greggs

For years, Greggs lived in the brand wilderness until someone came along and shook up their advertising.

They adopted a cheeky approach to court publicity and **incited outrage** for replacing baby Jesus with a sausage roll in the nativity and turned a **confrontation with Piers Morgan** into social media gold.

They also did a spoof Apple advert on their new vegan sausage roll (**watch the video**).

The pasty brand is on fire.

In Newcastle (UK), the department store Fenwick's is respected every year for its outstanding Christmas window display. It's a bit like a northern Harrods.

It's so good that queues of people stand and wait in line just to walk in front and view it – it's a day out with the kids.

Opposite Fenwick's is a branch of Greggs and last year people were baffled to see that they had reversed their shopfront signage. The realization that this wasn't a mistake and was intentional is the best marketing idea I have ever seen.

As thousands of shoppers take selfies in front of Fenwick's windows, they're inadvertently **uploading thousands of images** to Instagram and Facebook with a reflected Greggs shop sign.

That year, Fenwick's had chosen the most popular theme of 'The Snowman' for their display theme, possibly the most popular Christmas theme ever.

If you can piggyback from someone else's success or exposure then it can give your brand a boost.

For example, if you have a newsletter, try to get a mention or guest edit another successful newsletter that is relevant to your audience.

Featuring influencers in your content to benefit in the bask of their social media glow has been a tactic for years – but not as easy as it used to be.

Interviewing influential individuals who are responsible for a significant brand or business success makes a great case study that people want to read.

6. Leeds City Developments Map

This last piece I want to share is an example of content that is understated can often be the most powerful.

I stumbled across this piece of content by accident and was staggered by the significant amount of information it contains.
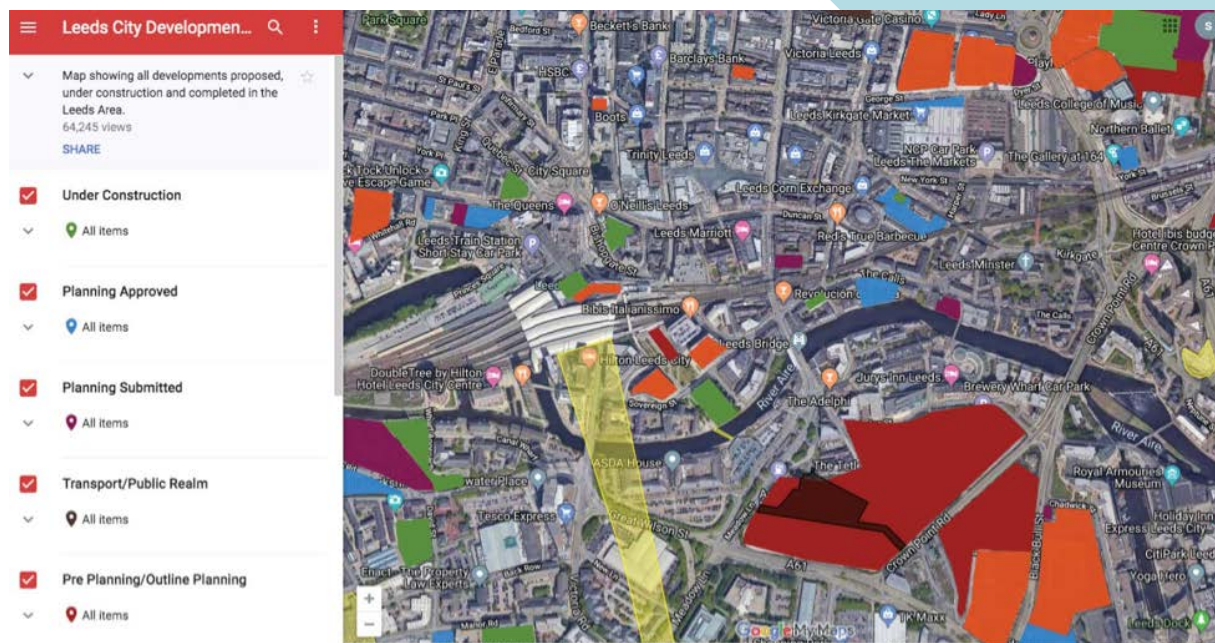
At first glance, it looks a little underwhelming, but when you start to click into it you realize that every proposed development in the city of Leeds is listed.

Not only is it listed, but you can quickly see where the proposed site is and what it might look like. The map can be segmented by developments underway, planning submitted and proposed ideas.

For someone who has an interest in property development, this is an incredibly powerful and valuable map.

Google Maps makes it easy to create content that is useful and looks great and if you can get to grips with the API you can put together some really creative stuff (I've produced a lot of pieces of content with Google Maps).

Curating a collection of information that isn't widely available and presenting in an engaging way (such as a map) is usually very popular with a niche audience. They also get a great response to outreach.

The Takeaway

Out of the six brands, here's what we can take away to inspire better content:

◆ Presentation of content to engage your audience is just as important as getting the traffic to the page.

◆ Think like a journalist, to produce well-researched long-form content or data visualization.

◆ Serve content tailored to different regions to make an emotional connection.

◆ Concepts based on humor can be low budget and get massive results.

◆ Piggyback on someone else's idea or success to give you a lift.

◆ Curate hard to find information to produce a valuable content asset.

7

TOP 14 TOOLS THAT WILL HELP YOU CREATE BETTER CONTENT

AUTHOR
VIKAS AGRAWAL

On top of the exhaustive amount of **content research** you need to conduct, you also have to spend hours – if not days – into developing and polishing the content itself.

Having the right skill set and tenacity is a good start. But if you really want to produce content that stands out from the competition, you also need to be well-equipped.

Remember, content development is an art that requires mastery of the tools of the trade.

But with a slew of tools out there, finding the ones that fit your needs can be tricky.

In this post, we'll discuss the best and proven tools that will up your content game.

These tools will span different areas of content development, such as research, editing, and analytics.

Let's hop right in.

CONTENT RESEARCH

In content writing, the challenge actually starts way before you type in the first word.

If you've been in this field for a while, you're probably familiar with the feeling of having no idea what to write.

This is especially true if you're expected to produce several pieces per week.

Fortunately, there are dozens of content research tools that can help you get in tune with your niche.

1. BuzzSumo

BuzzSumo simplifies the entire content research process by pulling in popular posts based on keywords.

Results can be sorted according to their reach in social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

This will allow you to scrape ideas that capture your target audience's interest.

bka CONTENT™

You can also play with the filters found on the left to further refine your search.

For example, you can look specifically for "how-to" posts, narrow your search down to a specific country, exclude a certain domain, and more.

2. Ubersuggest

While intended as a tool for keyword research, **Ubersuggest** can also help you find content ideas that will get your audience's attention.

It works by expanding the seed keyword using suggestions from Google Suggest and Google Ads Keyword Planner.

In some cases, Ubersuggest results include keyword ideas that can be used as content titles right off the bat.

These are usually "long-tail" keywords that include three or more terms.

To prioritize them in your search, click the small down arrow next to the "Keyword" column:
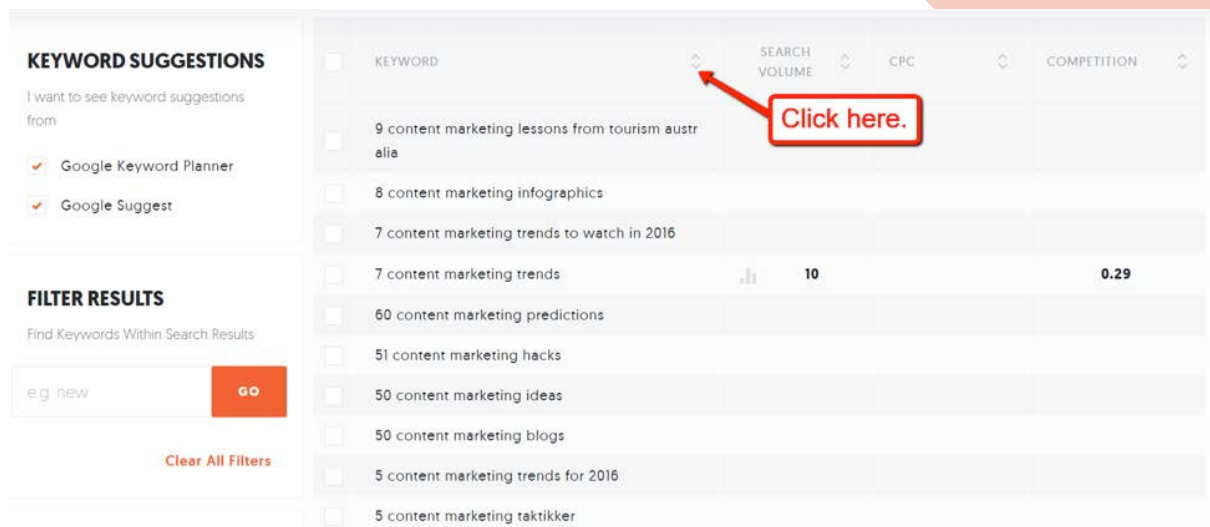
3. LeadFWD

Leadfwd is a website where you can turn an unknown visitor into a potential lead. Sounds so good to your ears, right? It does!

Who doesn't want a lead? This is what digital marketing agencies crave all the time. Lead is the most important thing for any digital marketing company.
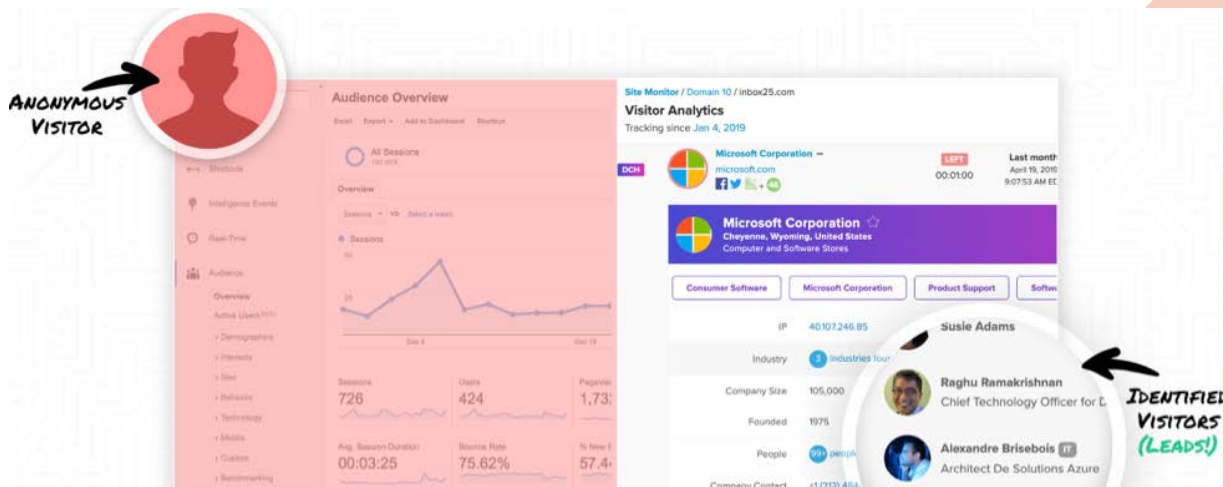
The name might suggest that it is not a tool that helps your content creation, then you can't be more wrong.

It tells you how a visitor spent their time on your website and shows the graph of the session. Based on that, you can alter your content and make people spend more time on your website.

Additionally, you can convert them into leads as well.

With the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the tool can scan your website in real-time to deliver dozens of insights.

For example, the company sector, contact info, key personnel, social footprint and many more are very much needed to contact the prospect.

Yes, it can be hard to learn about the new tool, but the user interface of this tool is very easy to work with for any new user.

4. Awario

Awario lets you monitor and listen to people's conversations on social media. It is a great tool to have at your disposal for your business development.
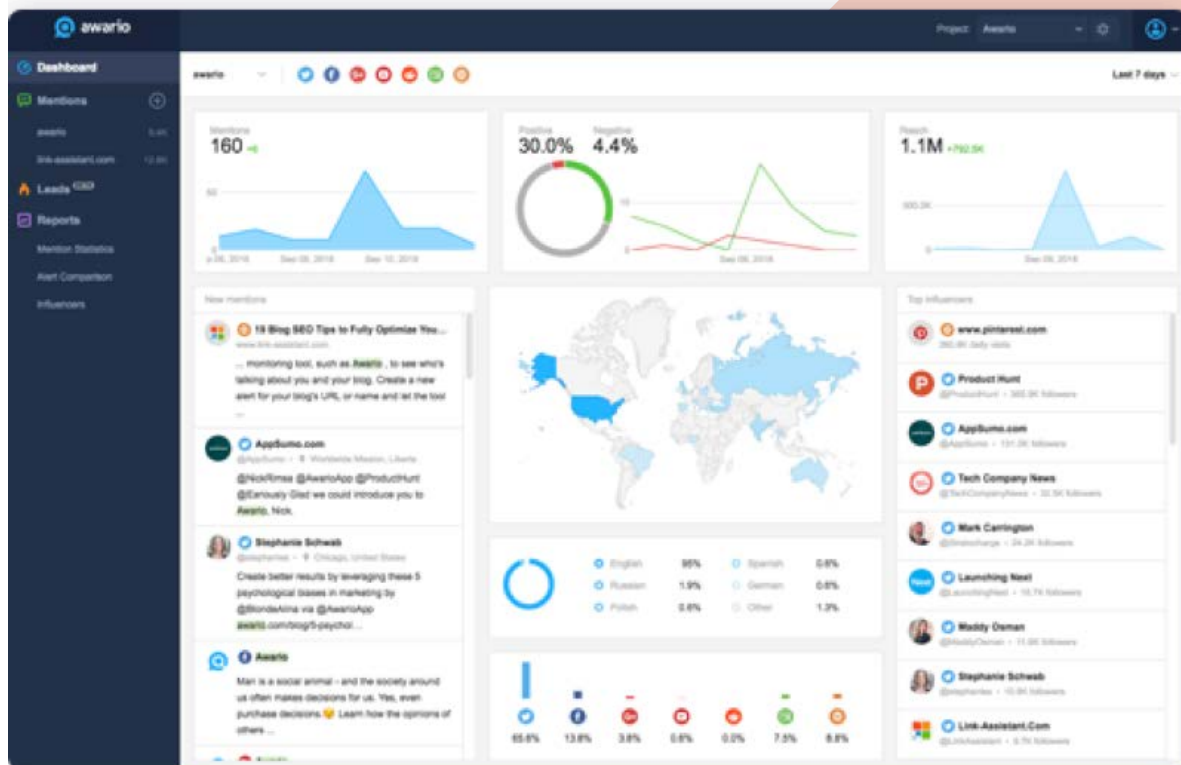
Using this social listening tool, you can spot and correct the mistakes you're making with your content – if any.

Yes, there might be odd and irrelevant conversations about your website, but hey, that's what you get with the internet sometimes. Just ignore it and you will be fine using this tool.

5. Portent's Content Idea Generator

Portent's Content Idea Generator is another awesome tool that can give you ideas within seconds.

Some may find it too gimmicky and less functional than the previous ones, but since it's completely free, it's definitely worth checking out.

Besides, it's more than able to produce interesting and unique content ideas that can pique your audience's interest:

6. Quora

Sometimes, the best source of attention-grabbing content ideas is the online community itself.

Q&A websites like **Quora**, for example, is a great way to be in touch with what your target audience is asking.

You simply need to use the built-in search feature and a handful of useful suggestions should pop up:
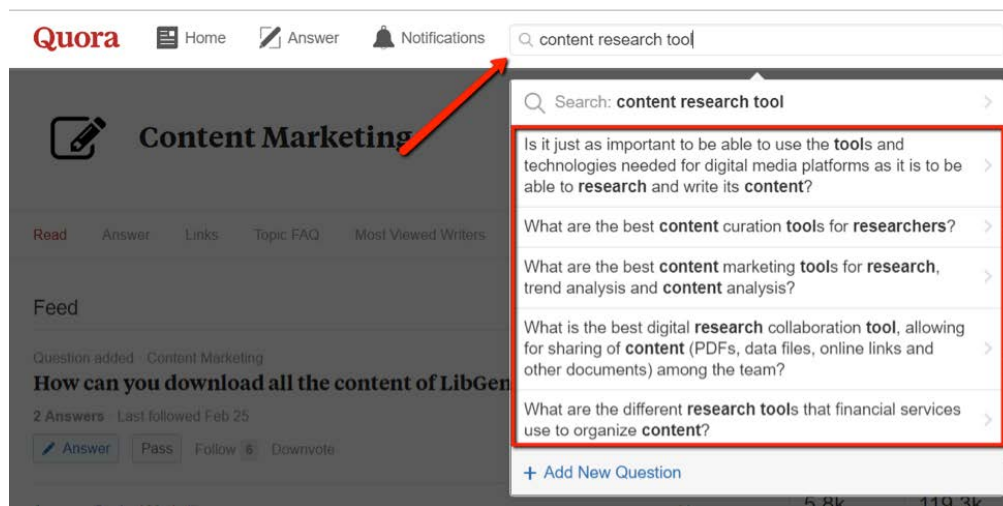
Take note that you can also leverage Quora to promote your content by offering it as an answer. This can help your content reach the right people and turn more of them into prospective leads.

7. Reddit

Apart from Quora, **Reddit** is also filled to the brim with content ideas supplied by its massive user base.

It's basically a discussion site that has specific subcommunities or "subreddits" for everything, be it content marketing or plumbing.
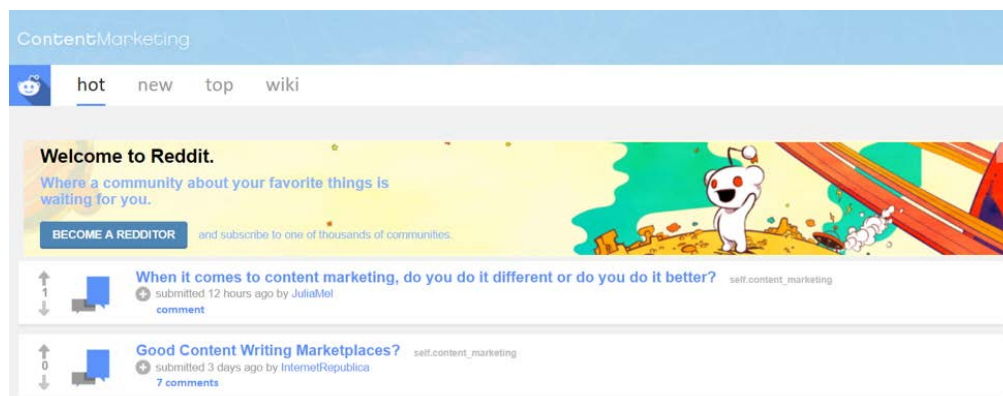
You can also use Reddit as intended by asking for feedback and insights that can help you improve.

In some cases, this will also help you find partnership opportunities with other content marketers.

COLLABORATION

Content marketers function better as a group. Keep in mind that the biggest and most authoritative websites are made by multiple people, not just by one person.

There's usually someone who does content research, writers who do the heavy lifting, editors who maintain quality, marketers who handle distribution, and so forth.

To make such a setup work, you need a platform that streamlines collaboration, file sharing, and project tracking.

Here are some of your top options:

8. Google Docs

Many content marketing teams today use **Google Docs**. This cloud-based document editing platform allows multiple users to seamlessly work in a single place.

The first thing you'll notice is the simple interface that also seemed to be toned-down in terms of features.
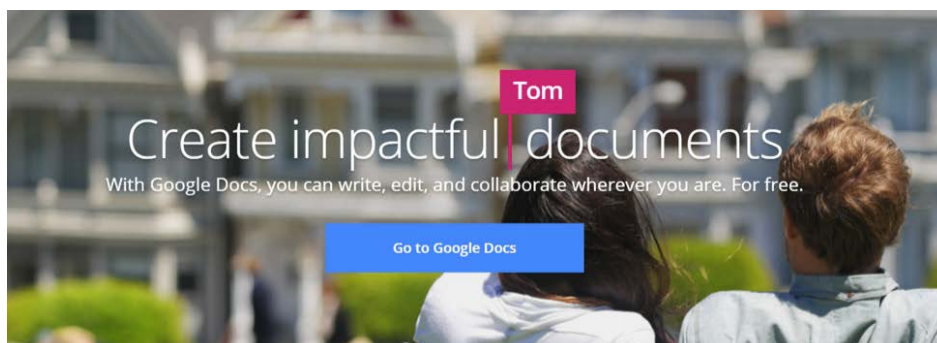
However, Google Docs has all the relevant features you'll ever need from a word processor.

You can customize your fonts, create bulleted lists, insert tables, add images, and so on.

Google Docs also allows you to quickly share a file with other users through the conveniently placed "Share" button on the upper-right corner of the screen.

From which, you can also specify the access privileges of those who get the link to your document:

If users are given the ability to at least leave comments, they would be able to do so by highlighting certain parts of the content:

9. Asana

Asana is another tool that helps your business a lot, especially in organizing things in order.
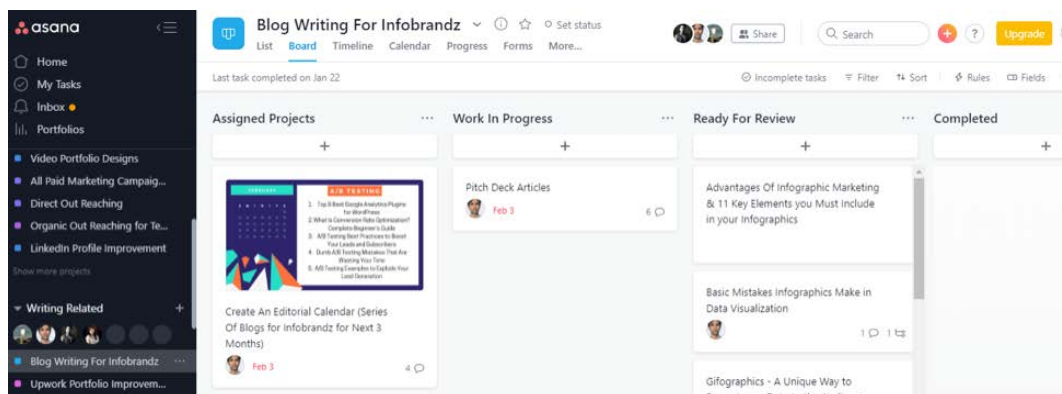
Asana will let you systematically organize your tasks with no room for confusion.

It is just a simple tool that lets you know the tasks assigned to you and when you should submit them.

At first, you might be facing some issues, but later on, you will get up to speed, you don't even want to switch to another one. It is that EASY!

10. Slack

Slack! If you are working for a remote team, you most probably know what it is already.
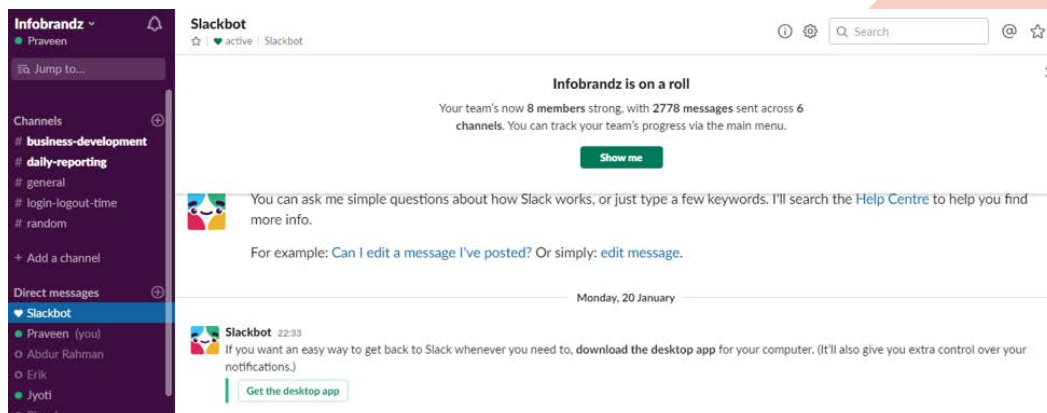
Slack is designed to replace your traditional email communication. Slack lets you communicate with your company staff in private or groups.

It also serves the purpose of sharing files, images, audios, and videos, etc.,

Though it doesn't add much value to your communication, it separates your professional life mails from your personal life mails.

It also adds value to the company's management as you can monitor at what time your employees are logging in and logging out.

At this point, you might be thinking, how does it help the content creation?

Here is the trick. In any organization, communication among all departments is crucial, so it lets you know what the SEO department is expecting from the content department.

Communication clears confusion, and hence makes way for proper content creation.

11. Dropbox Paper

If you already use a different communication app and simply need something that helps with file collaboration, then you should check out **Dropbox Paper**.

It's a minimalistic, cloud-based app that allows you to write, add files, images, to-do lists, and pretty much everything else you'd expect from a word processor.

Online Marketing Listicle

Online marketing is a puzzle that requires many specific parts.

You could also invite other users to edit, comment, and share your document.

In other words, it's the leaner and more straightforward version of Google Docs.

If you have to choose between Dropbox Paper and Google Docs, it all boils down to your team's preferences.

SEO

Effective content marketers not only know how to produce engaging content, but they also know how to **optimize content for search.**

The quality of writing is an important factor, but there are also other details – the proper use of subheadings, keyword optimization, and so on.

Here are some of the tools that can help you zero in on content optimization in a jiffy:

12. Yoast SEO

As a content marketer, there's just no way you've never heard of WordPress – the most-used content management system for website creation purposes.

If you currently use it in your projects, then the **Yoast** plugin is definitely a must-have.

Once installed, Yoast works by rating the readability and SEO-friendliness of your content in real-time. It also highlights the specific issues you need to be mindful of as you work:
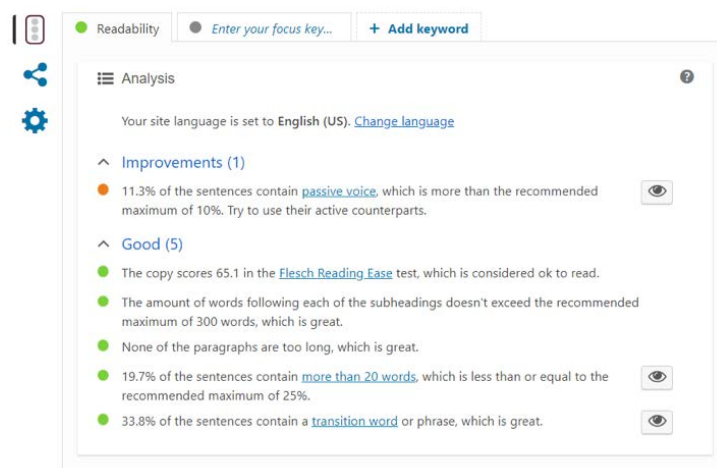
You can also use Yoast to set a focus keyword for each individual post. This will provide you with a checklist of objectives that can ensure the optimization of your content.

ANALYTICS

Let's face it – even the most skilled content marketers in the world have room for improvement.

They only need a clearer view of certain performance metrics to figure out what works, what doesn't, and how to turn these insights into data-driven decisions.

Here are some of the best tools that can help you accomplish all three goals:

13. Inspectlet

If you are wondering what the visitors have seen and read on your website, and how you can convert them from possible prospects into potential leads, then here is the solution for that.
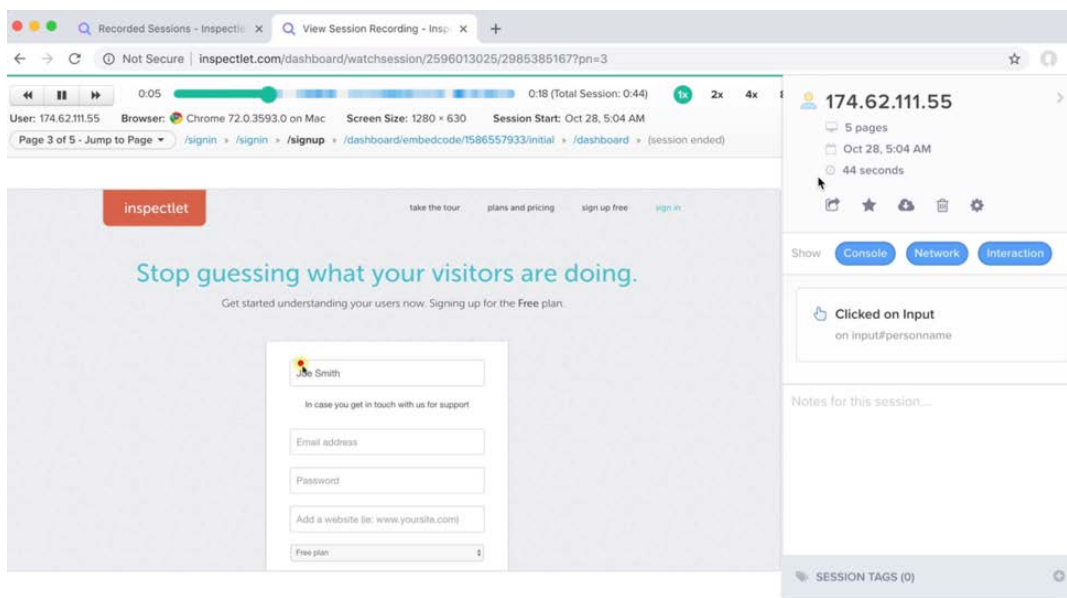
So, what does it do?

It just records the videos of your user behavior who are visiting your website so that you can know how long they were on your website, and at what aspects they had concentrated more.

This is one of the main advantages of **Inspectlet** over the other analytic tools in the market.

This way, you can also come to know where your website is lagging if someone leaves your website after facing an issue on your website.

Based on these analytics, you can create your content, and make it more appealing to the readers.

14. Google Analytics

It's impossible to leave out **Google Analytics** if we're talking about the top analytics tools.

Google Analytics is a free platform that can help you improve your content.

With Google Analytics, you can easily measure important engagement metrics such as page views, average session duration, and bounce rate.

	Page	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
		679 % of Total: 100.00% (679)	544 % of Total: 100.00% (544)	00:04:10 Avg for View: 00:04:10 (0.00%)	490 % of Total: 100.00% (490)	75.76% Avg for View: 75.76% (0.00%)	72.16% Avg for View: 72.16% (0.00%)	$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% ($0.00)
1.		215 (31.66%)	186 (34.19%)	00:05:33	186 (37.96%)	82.26%	81.40%	$0.00 (0.00%)
2.		121 (17.82%)	95 (17.46%)	00:07:17	94 (19.18%)	77.66%	76.03%	$0.00 (0.00%)
3.		93 (13.70%)	64 (11.76%)	00:01:10	54 (11.02%)	46.30%	54.84%	$0.00 (0.00%)
4.		27 (3.98%)	24 (4.41%)	00:04:57	22 (4.49%)	63.64%	70.37%	$0.00 (0.00%)
5.		21 (3.09%)	19 (3.49%)	00:05:03	17 (3.47%)	88.24%	80.95%	$0.00 (0.00%)
6.		19 (2.80%)	2 (0.37%)	00:00:54	1 (0.20%)	100.00%	5.26%	$0.00 (0.00%)
7.		13 (1.91%)	12 (2.21%)	00:00:08	12 (2.45%)	91.67%	92.31%	$0.00 (0.00%)
8.		10 (1.47%)	8 (1.47%)	00:06:35	8 (1.63%)	87.50%	80.00%	$0.00 (0.00%)
9.		10 (1.47%)	8 (1.47%)	00:29:52	8 (1.63%)	44.44%	80.00%	$0.00 (0.00%)
10.		10 (1.47%)	9 (1.65%)	00:03:29	9 (1.84%)	88.89%	90.00%	$0.00 (0.00%)

This will allow you to identify specific types of content that appeal to your existing audience.

For example, if you notice that your content on email marketing performs significantly better than other posts, you can double down on that topic to maximize your results.

To learn how to integrate Google Analytics into your website, you can follow their step-by-step guide **here**.

Conclusion

In the modern marketing landscape, content marketers are often required to wear many hats to do their jobs effectively.

After all, content is the lifeblood of any digital marketing strategy – the secret sauce that will help you establish your brand in the online world.

You can argue that content marketing isn't all about who has the bigger guns. But in a competitive world, tools can definitely make a huge difference.

Hopefully, you can find all the tools you need to get ahead of the competition in the list above.

8

20 PLACES TO SHARE YOUR CONTENT

AUTHOR

KEVIN ROWE

Writing and publishing blog posts or articles on your own website is critical to generate qualified traffic.

Publishing informational content on a website blog, resource section, or

Content is everywhere today. It's insanely competitive.

Did you know that **nearly 6.7 million** blog posts are published daily?

If you're going to gain any real traction, you need to look beyond publishing content on your website.

In addition to mainstream outlets like Medium, sharing your content on industry or niche platforms can also help it get seen by more people.

Think of sharing your content on other outlets like a megaphone: the more places you promote it, the wider the message will spread.

Ready to amplify your content and grow your website traffic and conversions?

Here are 20 places you should be sharing your content, from the mainstream to the niche.

1. Medium

Medium allows you to republish your existing blog posts (if you use their import feature, they even add a rel=canonical link), but you can also use this platform as a way to increase traffic to the full blog posts on your site.

This is the tactic DrumUp uses: they post snippets of full blog posts on Medium, and then direct users to the full article on their website.
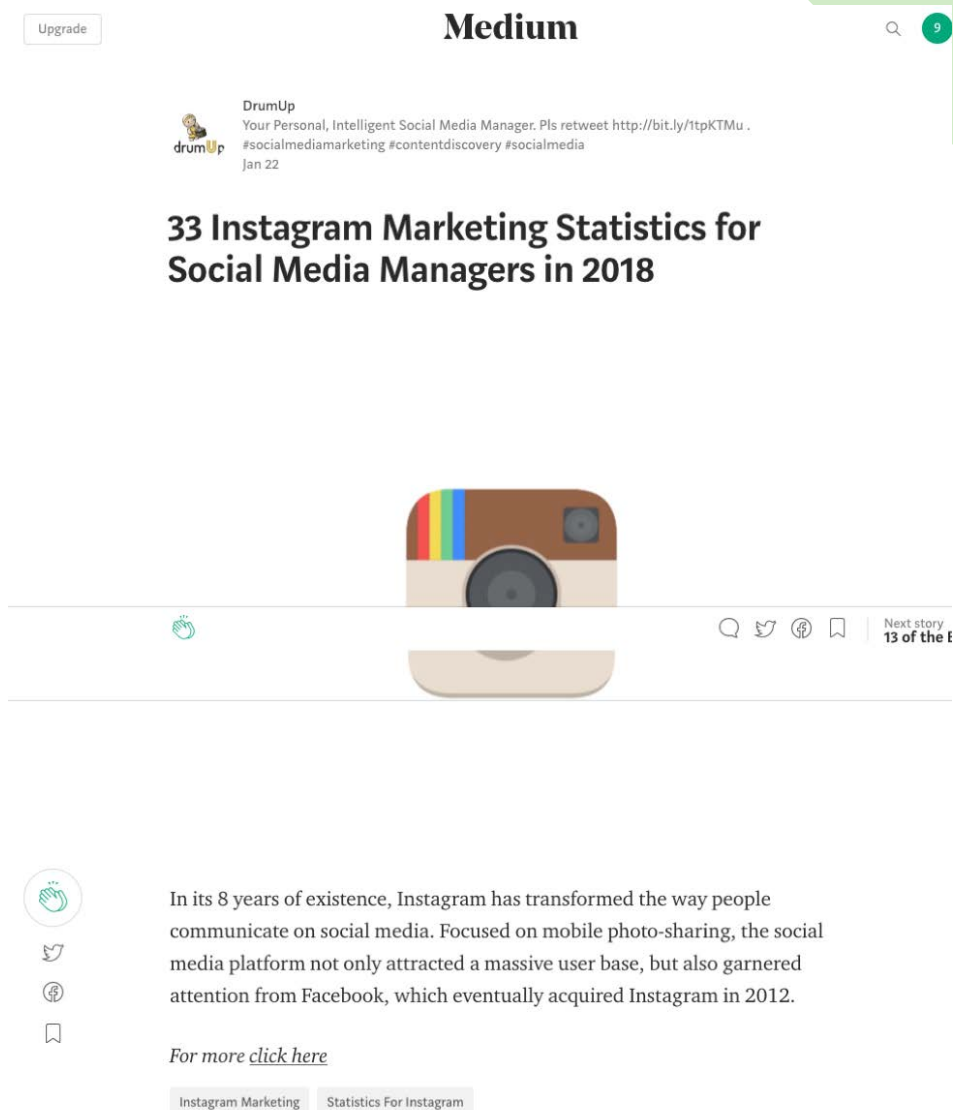
If you don't want to syndicate the entire text of your blog posts, this might be a tactic to try.

If you're getting good traction on Medium, you could mix it up by adding occasional exclusive Medium articles once you've built up your readership.

2. Reddit

Reddit can be a worthwhile platform to consider for sharing content, but it needs to be done the right way.

Redditors are very conscious of brands attempting to "spam" subreddits with their own content, so this is usually best left to a few employees with active Reddit accounts who may occasionally share company blog posts once or twice a month.

These articles should be carefully chosen and provide real value to the users. It's also possible for Redditors to view other users' activity, so make sure that employees are using their Reddit accounts for more than just posting company blog posts.

Otherwise, they'll be pretty easily found out and your company may get called out, which is never good on such an active platform.

3. LinkedIn Articles

Like Medium, LinkedIn allows you to syndicate blog posts on your personal **LinkedIn profile** as LinkedIn articles.

Although these articles currently don't automatically add rel=canonical links, **research** has shown that Google isn't flagging these as duplicate content (even though they show up on duplicate content search sites like Copyscape).

Because of their existing network on LinkedIn, many users have built up a strong subscriber base for their articles on the platform.

Users can choose to subscribe to users' posts, meaning they will get a notification every time that user publishes something new.

This built-in alert system is a definite advantage over other platforms, especially since your blog readers don't get alerts like that unless they subscribe to email notifications, which is a lot bigger commitment than checking a box to receive an in-platform notification on LinkedIn.

4. Email

Promoting your content through email is an "oldie but goodie" tactic that still pulls major weight.

In addition to being much more loyal to your brand, email subscribers are **3x** more likely to share your content via social media than visitors from other sources, according to Campaign Monitor.

Email clicks are also usually higher than the CTR on social media posts as well – Campaign Monitor also found that you are 6x more likely to get a click from an email than from a sent tweet.

The way you share your content on social media highly depends on what works best for your schedule and your users. It's worthwhile to experiment to see what gets the most clicks.

Some companies or writers prefer to send out a new email every time a new post is published (which is usually automated in some way using an RSS feed and a service like Zapier or IFTTT), while others wait until the end of the week or month to send a newsletter of updates and the latest published posts.

The platforms above are the most useful for driving traffic. However, there are plenty of other platforms to consider based on the topic and format of your content.

5. DesignFloat

An online discussion board for designers to share articles, element ideas, and more.

6. Managewp.org

This is a slightly different format, but users can up- or down-vote content about WordPress.

7. Dzone

This discussion board has over 1 million developers who share content and links on coding, cloud computing, and more.

8. Twitter Brand Accounts

If your article makes sense for your brand, consider adding your article to your sharing list for your brand accounts.

You can even schedule the article to be posted several times over a few months.

9. Twitter Personal Accounts

Twitter moves fast, so it makes sense to share your article, along with a great quote, in a few places on Twitter.

It is in your best interest to spread the shares out a bit so you don't overwhelm your audience.

10. Twitter Chats

For a more targeted audience, look for industry-related Twitter chats and use their hashtags when sharing really high-quality content.

Use it sparingly: don't spam the chat hashtag with every piece of content you write.

But it's fairly common to see popular marketing hashtags like #seochat and #twittersmarter active even when the regular Twitter chats aren't going on.
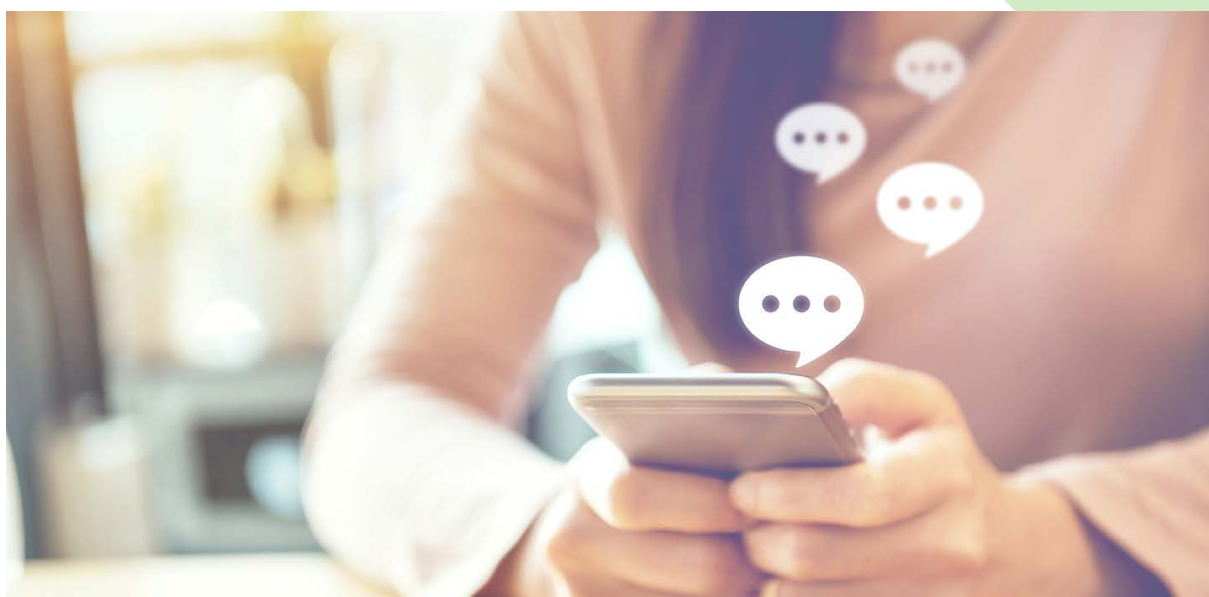
11. Personal Page on Facebook

This one seems obvious, but it is a place many people forget.

If you are concerned about spamming your family or friends who aren't in the industry, consider **creating a Facebook list** for work folks. This way you don't have to worry about confusing your Great Aunt Gertrude with a step by step guide to PPC.

12. Brand Facebook Page

Another sort of obvious one, but it shouldn't be overlooked.

Grab a good quote from your content, make sure your image displays correctly and send it out – assuming it is relevant to your audience.

13. Facebook Groups

Facebook groups are still alive and well! Because many users are already using Facebook in their personal time, they are usually more active in groups.

Join a few industry-related groups and share your best content once a month, while also contributing to the group when possible.

Be sure to stay active as a member of the chat or group by answering questions, reading others' content, and contributing genuinely to the group.

14. SlideShare

Creating really good content takes time.

One way to get the most mileage out of your content is by taking highlights and turning it into a presentation for SlideShare.

Just changing the format you present your content in can help reach a wider audience.

15. Quora

Quora has been around forever and is known as the internet's premier question and answer website.

Users post a question, and users answer that question. Pretty straight forward.

But when you consider that a business or a representative can research what kind of questions customers are asking, and have a detailed blog post ready to answer it, it becomes a great opportunity.

Knowing what your audience is having a problem with can help give you great ideas for content that will drive traffic to your site.

For example, if everyone is asking for information about how to hang a picture on a wall, and you sell the best picture hanging nails ever, why not flex some of your expertise on the matter?

You get to personally answer a potential customer's question while providing a handy link to your blog's detailed explanation of it.

16. Growth Hackers

Most businesses want to scale up to take on more work and overcome new obstacles.

Growth Hackers is an online community of user-generated content that provides insights on any topic that can be done to increase your company's size, revenue, customer base, lead generation, etc.

Every article is detailed and insightful to many different niche industries. Make your voice heard while shining a light on the many ways you are trying to grow your business. It is well worth it.

17. Flipboard

Flipboard is a neat app that condenses the internet into nice digestible bite-size blocks. They share content from every major publication you can think of, and they target it to the people who are looking for it.

Creating an account and posting your content to it is a great way to drive traffic directly to your blog. It is also a great way to keep track of industry insights, and even your own social media feeds.

What really sets this apart is its simplistic interface, which is backed by some serious clout, algorithmically speaking.

18. Scoop.It

Boasting organic traffic over two million monthly users, Scoop. It has become a powerhouse platform for marketers.

Offering content curation software, they help marketers find authoritative content in their industry, which can then be easily shared on social media.

You can post your content in the hopes that others will also see it and share it with their followers.

Everyone wants to share their content with the world, and this tool makes it easy. It is also a great way to come up with new topic ideas based on what is trending.

19. Listly

Another great content curation tool out on the market is Listly. With a web application and an official iOS app, it makes creating lists of content simple.

Once you have your lists created, you can publish them to your audience.

As an added benefit, it even allows your audience to cast a vote on the items on your list, providing you with more insight on what your audience values at that moment.

20. Business2Community

This site is a leader for professionally driven content distribution – a community of thought leaders, marketers, writers, etc. all coming together to share their insights and news under one roof.

This is an excellent place for a new writer to get their feet wet with public content. It is also a great place for in-depth and expert opinions on very specific business topics.

Summary

No one likes a self-opportunist who only seeks to share not engage.

When you are a valued member of an online community, whether that's Medium or a Twitter chat, you'll be much more likely to build strong relationships and become part of a supportive community that shares each other's links.

Contributing to the Internet as a whole follows these same guidelines. Sites like Medium and LinkedIn have given us the opportunity to share our content and get it seen in front of more people, but don't take advantage of that by sharing low quality, uninteresting content.

Megaphones can get tiresome after a while, so make sure to put down your self-promotional hat and participate in discussions regularly.

9

HOW TO INTEGRATE CONTENT MARKETING & SEO

AUTHOR

VIOLA EVA

When we spend all our time and efforts creating a fantastic in-depth piece of content that is visually appealing and loved by our customers, prospects, and clients – why not receive some of Google's love too and grow your qualified organic traffic?

In many ways, the things that the Google algorithm favors are very similar to what your target audience loves.

They all want relevance, structure, and authority: The best answer to a search query.

In today's search results an excellent piece of content has the best chances of ranking well.

In this chapter, we will cover how you can integrate content marketing and SEO to receive the most organic traffic and conversion from your content marketing.

Stating the Obvious

If you follow Kevin Rowe's ideas from chapter 8, you are already distributing your content piece to receive more online exposure and backlinks.

Backlinks are still one of the main ranking factors for Google.

Equally important is covering a topic thoroughly to increase relevance – as shown in several well-known correlational studies (**Brian Dean** and **others**).

*"**Backlinks** remain an extremely important Google ranking factor. We found the number of domains linking to a page correlated with rankings more than any other factor."*

*"We discovered that content rated as "**topically relevant**" (via MarketMuse), significantly outperformed content that didn't cover a topic in-depth. Therefore, publishing focused content that covers a single topic may help with rankings."*

*"**Keywords matter.** Both the number of keywords in the content and keyword density. Keywords in URL proved somewhat relevant. Keywords in metas, h1 and title tags showed much stronger correlations."*

*"While longer content does correlate with higher ranks, it's sensible to think the **length** is not the factor – rather it provides a room for more keywords to be inserted at a non-spammy density."*

bka
CONTENT

Of course, not every piece of content needs to be optimized for SEO.

There are other reasons to write content (for example for social shares or to increase trust and conversion) but if you want to make the most of your content marketing and improve ROI – SEO should be on your radar.

Factoring in SEO

To create a holistic strategy when it comes to content marketing and SEO, I invite you to consider three factors:
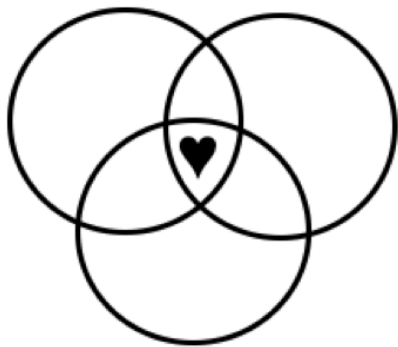
1. What you want to communicate: Your vision, value proposition, topics, and issues – the things that you stand for as a business and that you are passionate about.

2. What people are searching for: Using keyword research as an opportunity to study your target audience, the market demand and the interest online.

3. What Google favors: Reviewing Page 1 to understand what Google deems to be the most relevant answer – and replicating something competitive.

GOOGLE LIKES STRUCTURE

Let's talk about your content ideas from an SEO perspective.

Clarity and structure win the Google game.

Each one of your content ideas, pages or blog posts should cover one topic, one intellectual entity.

Think of your pages more like a Wikipedia entry (a knowledge base that covers a topic in-depth) than a collection of long-tail keywords.

A page should cover the topic so well that it satisfies the user's search intent.
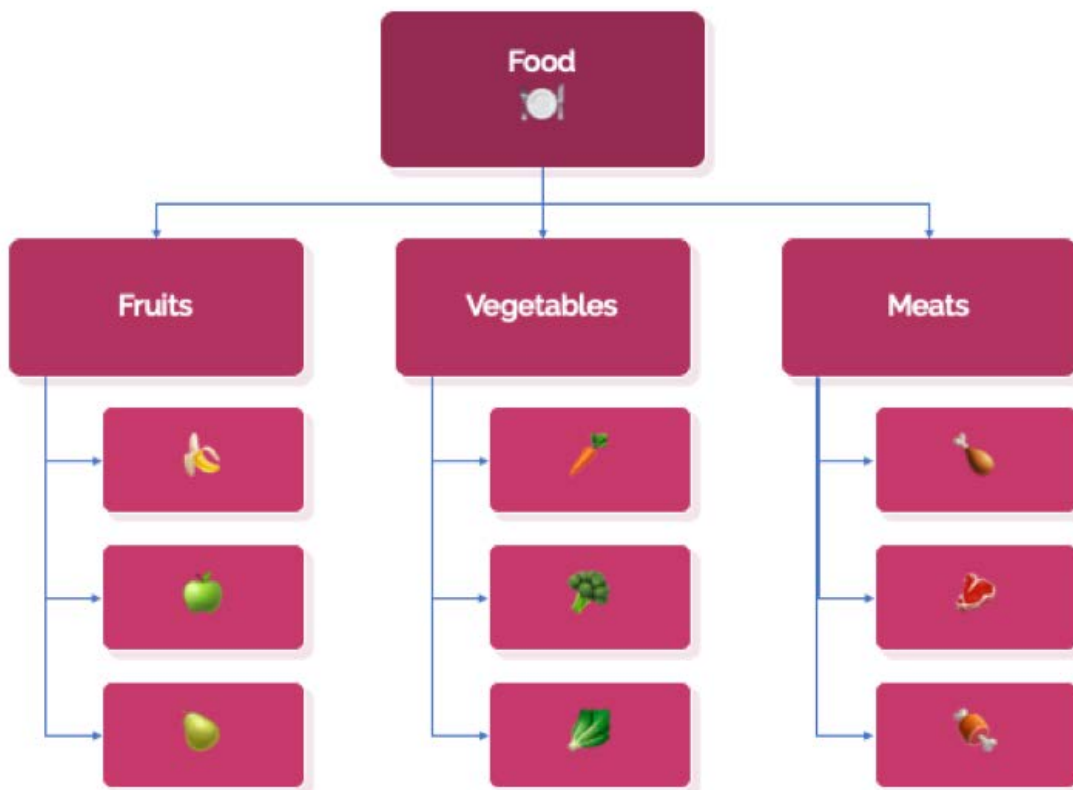
Each page will be optimized for one keyword cluster consisting of main and supporting keywords.

We use keyword variations and synonyms to make it easy for Google to understand what we are writing about – as well as the context of the topic.

The process of keyword research helps us to determine topics that are relevant to our target audience. SEO tools such as Ahrefs or SEMrush allow us to review the following:

◆ Synonyms, variations and related keywords to cover within a page

◆ Monthly search traffic to understand marketing interest

◆ Click potential by estimating click-through-rate to account for ads, featured snippets, etc.

◆ Keyword difficulty to prioritize based on chances of success

Making data-driven decisions helps to increase your chances of success online. When evaluating content ideas, you will always want to factor these metrics in.

AVOIDING KEYWORD CANNIBALIZATION

For each unique and clearly distinct topic idea, you will want to create a specific page and cover the topic in-depth.

Similarly, you will want to make sure that every topic is only covered once.

The questions are:

◆ Did we cover this topic before?

◆ Can we upgrade or rework an existing page?

From an SEO perspective, you will always want to update an existing page over creating a second, third, fourth piece on the same topic. Evergreen content wins for SEO.

You are already competing with billions of pages on the web for the top rankings, why compete with yourself?

When several of your own pages fight for page 1, SEOs call it **keyword cannibalization** and this really hurts your SEO effort.

In most cases, you will want to review your existing content and find the blog posts and pages that have covered the topic before.

Leverage the age of the post, existing ranking and links by turning a medium-performing post into something great.

If you are looking to create a "christmas gift guide for women", you are better off reworking, adjusting and redesigning the existing page every year – than creating a new post that will never make it to the top.

If you realize that you have several posts covering the same topic, consider migrating them all into one page and using that as the foundation for your new content piece.

Only start creating a new content piece, if you have a true content gap and have not covered the post in the past.

Understanding Page 1

Before jumping into content writing, let's have a look on Page 1 of Google to determine the right type of content to rank well.

Often content creators and marketers guess the user's intent behind a query and the content type they should be writing.

But the best way to figure out what users and Google want is to actually review Page 1. You will find that there are at least **nine different types of search results** that provide different types of content to the user.

◆ **Research –** definitions, long guides, knowledge graphs or featured snippets

◆ **Answer –** usual zero-click searches like weather, currency conversion, time zones

◆ **Transactional –** product and category pages, ecommerce results

◆ **Local –** maps, local results

◆ **Visual –** images, thumbnails media elements

◆ **Videos –** videos ;)

◆ **News –** newspapers, tweets, top stories

◆ **Branded –** homepage with sitelinks, social media channels of a brand

◆ **Mixed –** when Google is not clear on the search intent, they provide a bit of all. Google "Panda" or "Jaguar" to check it out.

The short answer is: You will want to create the type of content that is currently displayed on Page 1 for your topic and keywords.

Next to that, you will have the chance to understand the following by studying Page 1:

◆ Sub-topics and concepts used by top-performing content

◆ Headlines covered in the articles

◆ Keywords utilized

◆ Average content length of Page 1 results

You can use **tools** to save time in your Page 1 review but ultimately, a good content creator will always leave the tools and have a real look and factor the learnings into their content briefing.

And sometimes creating the best answer is not about creating an ultimate guide.

bka CONTENT™

Yes, We Still Do Keywords

Finally, make sure that your content is ft for SEO.

Of course, every piece of content will start ranking for many synonyms and variations because Google is getting better and better at understanding concepts and context.

BUT Google's algorithm is also still an algorithm. So make it easy for Google to understand what your piece is all about.

Yes, you will still want to use your main keyword in:

- ◆ URL
- ◆ Headline H1
- ◆ Meta Page Title
- ◆ First Paragraph

Not just because it makes sense for Google but also because it makes sense for the users to be congruent as they go from entering a search query to finding your result, to clicking and to reading the article.

Yes, you will want to optimize your **images,** especially if you are trying to win a visual search result page.

Some Technical Love

To be truly fit for SEO, you will lastly want to make sure to implement **schema markup** and structured data.

This is the technical marketers and SEOs favorite to **increase clarity for Google.**

You can mark up details about the author of a page, the product displayed, lists, videos and other elements, your business, and organization as a whole.

Making the Most of Content Marketing & SEO

To summarize, your content marketing has the best chances of succeeding in organic search if you factor in the following:

◆ Select specific, clearly distinct and unique topic ideas.

◆ Use keyword research to prioritize content ideas.

◆ Update existing pages if you want to cover a topic again.

◆ Review Page 1 to understand the content type to create.

◆ Optimize your page with keywords.

◆ Implement schema markup.

And you will have a piece of content that will have the best chances of bringing in sustainable, qualified and long-lasting organic traffic.

10

HOW TO CREATE AN EDITORIAL CALENDAR FOR CONTENT MARKETING IN 5 EASY STEPS

AUTHOR

MADDY OSMAN

For many content teams, building an editorial calendar seems like nothing more than an idealistic dream.

You know that you should do it – but what usually ends up happening is a content planning process that's haphazard, at best.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to actually using an editorial calendar lies in, well, it's usefulness.

To be sure, it's one thing to grab an editorial calendar template and add some placeholders for tentatively planned content.

It's quite another thing to flesh out these placeholders with useful information to guide the creation of content that's relevant and useful to your marketing efforts.

Before you completely give up on organizing your content marketing efforts with an editorial calendar, consider this robust process.

1. Start with an Editorial Calendar Template
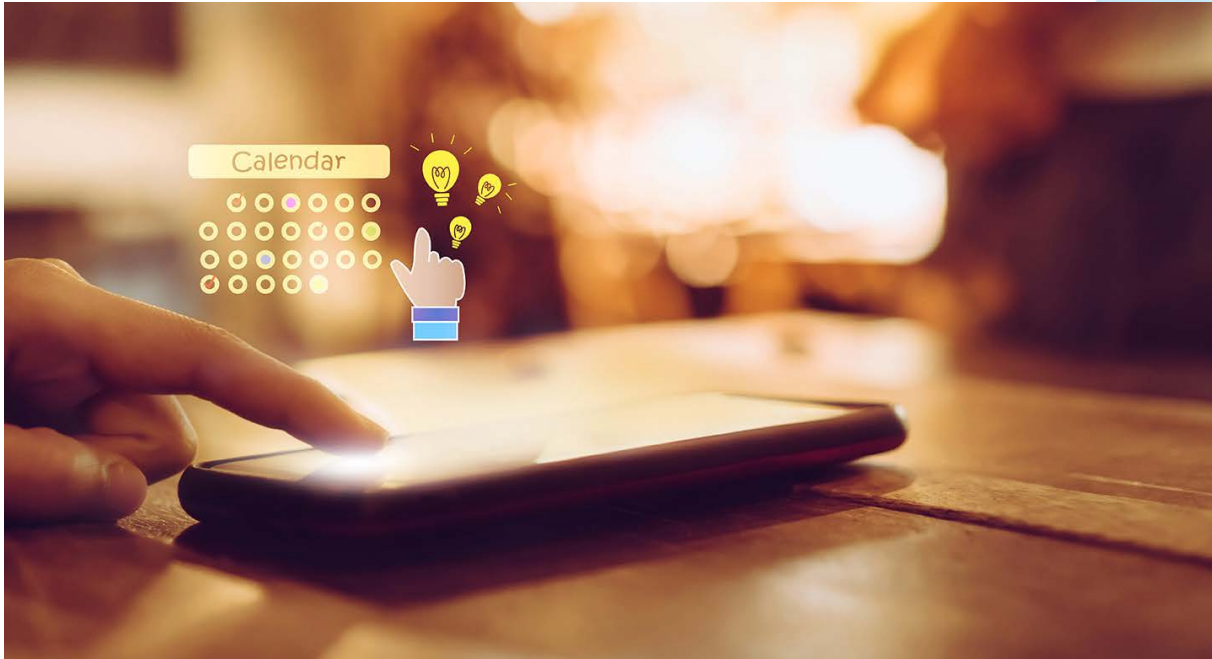
The major reason for spending time on an editorial calendar is to create an actionable system for coordinating various content marketing efforts.

Planning ahead and organizing for various initiatives makes it less likely that you'll forget about them – potentially missing an opportunity to build relationships with followers.

Getting ahead on your content creation efforts also makes the process a lot less stressful. This is especially important if you're coordinating the efforts of multiple parties, such as:

◆ A content writer.

◆ A graphic designer.

◆ An SEO strategist.

◆ An editor.

If everyone is aware of their roles (and relevant due dates), the process is more likely to stay on track.

As mentioned above, creating organization and structure also means less stress for all parties, because everyone can work around stated deadlines – instead of last-minute demands.

If you are coordinating efforts with multiple parties, some of this process may be best handled within a project management tool that your team already uses.

That said, you'll still want to have a separate tool for managing your big-picture editorial calendar so that it's easy to see what's coming up, at a glance.

You need to start with an editorial calendar template.

HubSpot's **social media content calendar** template makes for a nice base of operations when it comes to coordinating all of your company's content marketing efforts.

Bonus points?

It's free to use and exists as a Google Sheets file – perfect for collaborating with your team, in real-time!

Using Google Drive and comments, you could link to relevant content assets directly from this interface for easy access and recall.

Search Engine Journal has created their own version of this – with guidance for holidays to plan content around.

Or, you could follow the lead of top content creators like Sprout Social and Kinsta, which use Trello as their editorial calendar template tool of choice.

Trello makes it easy to work with numerous collaborators and visually display content assets in various publishing states (ideas, in progress, editing, published, etc.):

If you manage content creation within WordPress, there are also several WordPress plugins you could use to support your content planning efforts.
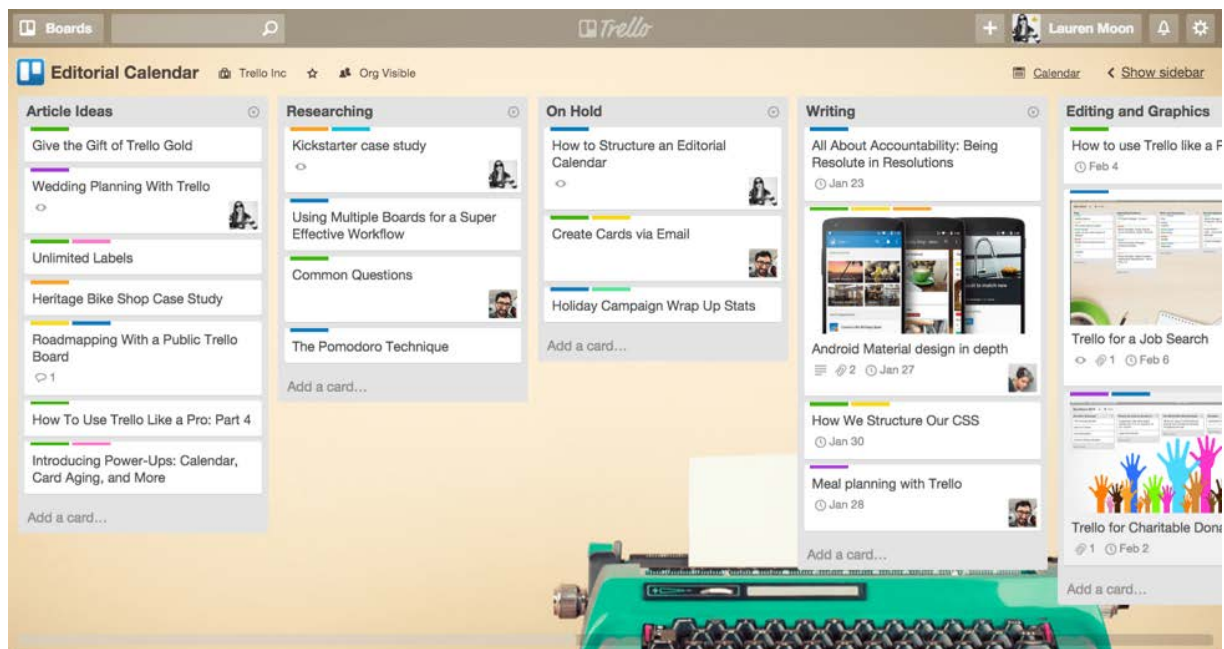
CoSchedule is a top paid solution:

And **Editorial Calendar** is a simple but functional free solution:

Both offer similar functionality to the editorial content templates already mentioned.
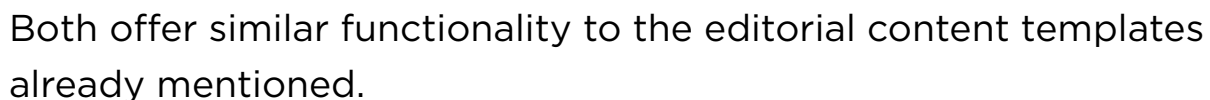
2. Determine Your Blog Categories (If You Haven't Already)

An important part of planning content is making sure that you cover a wide enough range of subjects to get readers excited about coming back for more.

Should you try to be everything to everyone on your blog?

No. That's a recipe for disaster.

It's absolutely ideal to operate within a clearly defined niche. The more specific, the better.

You just want to be purposeful in your coverage.

While planning out overarching blog categories, it's important to be thinking about things like your **sales funnel** and **search intent**.

When someone first interacts with your brand, they may not be ready to convert.

By creating content that meets your prospects where they are in the buyer's journey, you create an opportunity to build a relationship that eventually leads to a sale.

Two major types of search intent that align with important parts of the sales process include *informational intent* and *transactional intent.*

◆ **Informational intent** reflects the discovery and consideration stages of the sales funnel. People aren't ready to buy just yet but they are considering their options and are searching for more information. You'll want to optimize for keyword phrases that include "how to".

◆ **Transactional intent**, on the other hand, means someone is using keyword phrases that include words like "reviews", "discount", or "pricing". They're ready to buy now.

Your editorial calendar must reflect people's various levels of readiness to buy and the information they're seeking to make that decision.

It must also account for your audience's attention span and their need for a diversity of content to move them down the sales funnel.

Consider this aspect of content planning in this way: if you posted the same type of thing on your social channels every day, people would eventually start to ignore it.

If there's no diversity in what you're posting about day-to-day (or week, month, etc.), there's no curiosity gap for readers to satisfy when it comes to clicking through and reading your content (then converting).

Before you attempt to define individual blog topics, you must first determine higher-level blog categories.

Even if you already have some set categories in place, if you're already overhauling your editorial calendar process, it's the perfect time to audit your existing blog categories.

3. Do Your Keyword Research

Though an editorial calendar can help inform your efforts on multiple digital marketing mediums, the main focus is usually on blog content.

And if the goal of your blog content is to drive SEO traffic, determining individual topics should be a function of **keyword research**.

It helps to come in with ideas of what visitors want to learn about, then refining those ideas on your favorite keyword research tool.

It's harder to write a blog post without this information first – you may find that your chosen topic is hard to rank for or that there isn't enough search volume to justify its publication if you wait until after you've drafted most of an article.

When coming up with potential keywords that will lead to blog topics, you'll want to consider a few things:

◆ **Keyword relevance:** Be brutally honest with yourself: is your target keyword actually relevant to your target audience? If it's too vague, consider adding word modifiers to get more specific (and give your keyword a longer tail).

◆ **Keyword difficulty:** Unless you're a well-known entity that has built up a great deal of **authority, relevance, and trust**, you'll probably want to stick with options on the lower end of keyword difficulty. An SEO tool like Ahrefs makes it easy to see how many backlinks you'll need to realistically rank for a given term.

◆ **Keyword intent:** Make sure that your mix of keywords speaks to readers at various stages in the buyer's journey – not unevenly focusing on just "how to" queries.

◆ **Keyword volume:** Note that it's better to drive 10 qualified leads to your website than 1,000 random visitors. Anything under 10 monthly searchers is ignorable but anything over that is worth considering trying to rank for, especially for a super-niche keyword phrase.

4. Put It All Together in Actionable Briefs for Each Content Asset

You've found your ideal editorial calendar template/tool combination, have fleshed out the categories you want to be regularly creating content for, and have started the process of keyword research.

Congratulations – you're now well into the process of populating your editorial calendar.

There's really just one more step you can take to make sure that your editorial calendar actually gets used: creating a detailed brief for each planned topic.

This step is especially important if the person creating the editorial calendar is not the person who will be creating the content.

If you have a vision for how a certain piece will turn out, it's your responsibility to effectively communicate this vision – or risk a final deliverable that looks nothing like what you expected.

Here are a few items to consider adding to each content brief to be plugged into your editorial calendar:

◆ **The corresponding blog category:** If you're using a visual editorial calendar, consider assigning different colors to different categories so that you can quickly see how well you're fleshing out content for various focus areas.

◆ **A rough title:** Your content writer can flesh it out to something ready to ship but adding in the skeleton of a title can certainly help define the direction for content creation.

◆ **Primary and secondary keywords:** If you want your writer to use specific keywords, tell them upfront. It's easier to write content that sounds natural when you know what needs to be included (instead of trying to add it back in after the fact). If you have suggestions for semantic keywords, you should also add in this information to each brief.

◆ **Potential source material:** How can your writer learn more about this topic or make use of reputable sources for grabbing quotes and statistics? If you have an idea of where research should start, share it with your content writer.

◆ **A written brief:** For some, this is a few sentences. For others, it might be a complete outline, including suggested subheadings. In either case, the point is to give direction as to what you expect to see in the final article.

◆ **Article(s) to outperform:** If there's a company (or multiple companies) dominating the search results for your target keyword phrase, include links so that your content writer knows the nature of the content they need to beat in order to rank. This can also help your content writer start thinking about the article's structure.

◆ **A feature image:** Consider this step as bonus points: getting really ahead of the game. If a graphic designer will be creating relevant article imagery, leave some direction for them here (or remind your writer to provide direction as part of their final deliverable).

◆ **A publishing/promotional checklist:** Ideally, there will be some sort of process for publishing and promoting content. Adding a checklist directly to your editorial calendar helps ensure that proper process is followed so that each piece reaches its true potential. While you're still planning, you might also start coordinating the creation of copy, imagery, and other relevant content to promote your blog content.

5. Plug in Your Marketing Efforts on Other Mediums

While SEO content may be your sole purpose for creating an editorial calendar in the first place, it certainly isn't the only way you can make use of this tool.

Let's get real: no marketing efforts, like **optimizing content**, should operate independently in a silo.

Content marketing success comes from the coordination of cross-promotional actions across various channels.

A few ideas for other content assets to build into your editorial calendar, whether or not they're 100 percent related to your SEO content creation efforts:

- ◆ **Social media posts.**
- ◆ Social ads promotions.
- ◆ Email marketing sends.
- ◆ **Webinars.**
- ◆ Lead magnets, like ebooks and whitepapers.

Final Thoughts: How to Create Your Editorial Calendar for Content Marketing

With the right approach, an editorial calendar can simplify your content marketing process while reducing stress associated with last-minute coordination.

The better your planning, the more predictable and useful your output will be.

obka CONTENT™