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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO

ENGAGING CONTENT MARKETING

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING, AND WHY DO I NEED IT?



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WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING, AND WHY DO I NEED IT?

Content marketing is the process of creating valuable, relevant content to attract, acquire, and engage your audience. In Content Rules, Ann Handley and C.C. Chapman define content as "anything your organization creates and shares to tell its story." Content takes many forms, but it only qualifies as content marketing if, according to the Content Marketing Institute, it aims to drive profitable customer action.

Today, your buyers and customers live in an age of information abundance. They're more inundated by marketing messages than ever – more than 2,900 per day, by current estimations. As a result, marketers are challenged by attention scarcity – the concept that the more messages your audience is forced to filter out, the harder they become to reach.

So how does content marketing help? Done right, content marketing elevates your brand above those thousands of marketing messages, and becomes the fuel for engagement with your customers. It's the offer in your email campaigns, the link you share on social, the collateral you hand out at events, the case study you showcase on your website and the silver bullet your sales team uses to close a deal.



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WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING, AND WHY DO I NEED IT?

In our view, engaging content marketing fits these seven qualifications:

1. It engages individuals on their own terms, using buyer personas (see "Developing Personas" on p.16)
2. It's based on interactions buyers have with your brand, and mapped directly to their buying stages (see "Buying Stages" on p.22)
3. It tells a continuous story, with a unified narrative that evolves throughout a customer's journey
4. It's the right fit for your channel – whether it's being used on your website, in email, on social, or elsewhere
5. It has a clear purpose, and a clear call-to-action for your audience to follow
6. It has pre-defined metrics, and is designed to be measurable
7. It is created in the most efficient, effective way possible – without sacrificing quality

> "We're entering a new phase of content marketing right now. The new discipline is emerging from the early experiments and pilot investments. And it's way more strategic and central than anybody thought."
>
> **Doug Kessler,**
> **Creative Director & Co-Founder, Velocity Partners**



WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING, AND WHY DO I NEED IT?

The Benefits of Content Marketing

Traditionally, marketers have had to rent (or beg) attention from other people's media – through display ads on websites, booths at a tradeshows, or emails sent to third-party lists. In short, companies have essentially "rented" attention that someone else built. For example, when a brand pays out millions of dollars for a Super Bowl ad., they are "renting" attention that the TV networks have built.

Content marketing, on the other hand, allows marketers to become publishers – build their own audiences, and attract their own attention. While rented attention can be effective, when you own your own attention by creating content, you benefit in three major ways:

1. **You build awareness for your brand.**
   Your audience can't buy from you if they can't find you – and up to 93% of buying cycles start with a search online. Traditional advertising and outbound marketing can be an effective way of building awareness, but content marketing allows you to build organic awareness. When your valuable content ranks highly on search engines, or is shared widely on social networks, that's "free" brand awareness. And because your content will only rank highly or be shared when it's relevant, your audience will be less inclined to tune it out.

2. **You create preference for your brand.**
   Once you've established awareness, you need to establish preference. Engaging content marketing creates preference through thought leadership – it makes you a trusted source of information and education. You can also create preference through relationships, which are strengthened whenever your content entertains or helps your buyers. All other things being equal, people are more likely to buy from companies with whom they have relationships. Of course, this requires you to create content that people like – or even love.

3. **You reach more buyers and customers, at lower costs**
   According to Forrester research, today's customers distrust and resent marketing that interrupts or intercepts them. Engaging content marketing is part of a natural conversation with current and potential customers, is relevant to their interests and behaviors, and builds a continuous story over time. Unlike traditional marketing, content pays dividends for a very long time, and this effect multiplies as you create more and more content. Note that this means that content marketing is not a short-term strategy – results will be small at first, but will grow over time.

WHY CONTENT MARKETING? CONSIDER THESE STATS:

71% OF CONSUMERS TRUST SOLUTIONS THAT **provide useful information – without trying to sell them something.**

When you freely provide that information through your content, you communicate that consumers aren't just your customers – they're your partners.

85% OF CONSUMERS TRUST SOLUTIONS THAT **take the time to walk them through various paths toward decisions – rather than just providing an answer outright.**

This type of content shows consumers that you acknowledge and respect their evaluation and consideration processes.

62% OF CONSUMERS TRUST SOLUTIONS THAT **provide information and tools for using products they've bought.**

Don't stop supporting consumers once they've made a purchase – by creating content that guides them through the entire customer lifecycle, you'll activate repeat purchases and foster lifetime advocacy.

85% OF CONSUMERS TRUST SOLUTIONS THAT **use ads and sponsored content to share information or help address a need.**

Nothing builds trusts and engagement like content that solves problems – both large and small.

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EDUCATE FIRST, SELL SECOND



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EDUCATE FIRST, SELL SECOND

Create content that is meant to help your customers, not sell to them. When you freely give your audience something so valuable that they'd be willing to pay for it, you build trust – which, ultimately, is your most powerful selling tool.

For example, at Marketo we try to create assets that educate our audience about marketing automation as a platform, and how it can help marketers be more effective at their jobs. We aren't just pushing sales messages to our buyers – we're also teaching people marketing best practices, and clarifying the benefits of investing in marketing automation. Even when we're talking about our core competency – marketing automation – we focus on educating our audience with thought leadership, rather than pushing our solution.

To make sure we're helping, not selling (in the words of content marketing guru Jay Baer), one of the core tenants of Marketo's content marketing is the "411 rule." Put simply, we try to create four educational, entertaining assets for every one "soft promotion" (such as a 3rd party report) and one "hard promotion" (such as a product demo). We've also found that this approach works well in email marketing, on our blog, and in social marketing.

But this approach isn't just about numbers – at its heart, it's about educating first, selling second. We believe that if you focus your marketing on building relationships with your audience and making their lives easier, the rest will follow. Content marketing is one of the most powerful tools to develop and empower your base.

So even if you're understandably eager to sell products, keep your content informative, valuable, and relevant. Your audience's trust – an essential element if you plan to sell anything – hangs in the balance.

In the next five sections, we will take you through the different stages of content creation – Plan, Create, Design, Publish, Measure. These five stages are foundational to any successful content marketing program. They will help you elevate your Content Marketing from strategy to tactical execution and everything in between.



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Creating content is an investment – don't leave its effectiveness to chance. Before you flip the "on" switch, make sure you've got a clear blueprint in place. In this section, you'll map out your buyer personas and buying stages, consider the types of content you need, define your brand voice, and brainstorm some rock-solid ideas.



PLAN

MAPPING TO BUYER PERSONAS AND JOURNEYS



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MAPPING TO BUYER PERSONAS AND JOURNEYS

What kind of content do you need? Your buyer personas will help you define your audience – their challenges, questions, needs, and the kind of content they like to consume – while their buying stages tell you what each piece of content should accomplish.

As you brainstorm new content, start by identifying the content you already have for each persona, and then think about how to prioritize filling the gaps. You should also meet with your demand generation team – what's working best for generating interest from each persona?

Next, think about your audience's buying stages. Maybe you have an awesome piece of content for engaging early-stage buyers, but do you have a piece that moves them further along? Ideally, you'll have content that maps to each persona at each stage of the customer lifecycle.



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MAPPING TO BUYER PERSONAS AND JOURNEYS

Buyer Personas

Buyer personas are, essentially, fictional representations of your buyers. In the process of researching and creating these personas, you'll learn who your buyers are – and define how best to market to them.

Your buyer personas will uncover your audience's top concerns, consumption preferences, and goals – all of which will help you create content that engages your buyers.

Why Create Buyer Personas?

- **They determine which kind of content you need** – if you break your existing content down by persona, you can easily see which personas have plenty of content, and which personas need more.
- **They set the tone, style, and delivery strategies for your content** – some buyers respond best to a light, conversational voice, while others trust a more formal tone. In creating your personas, you'll find out the best tone and style for your content.
- **They help you target the topics you should be writing about** – why speculate about the topics your buyers care about, when you could just ask? You'll generate a list of relevant topics for each persona.
- **They tell you where buyers get their information and how they want to consume it** – does your audience like to sink their teeth into 100-page guides, or do they prefer short, snappy graphics? Do they spend their time reading third party reports, or do they comb through Twitter? This information will inform the way you create and distribute your content.

PLAN

DEVELOPING PERSONAS



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DEVELOPING PERSONAS

Developing Personas

Developing buyer personas requires some initial investment, but it pays off throughout the customer lifecycle – not only for content creation, but across all of your marketing efforts. The better you understand and humanize your customers, they more relevant your marketing will be.

If your business serves several different types of customers, you'll want to develop multiple buyer personas. Somewhere between four and six personas is ideal – although you might create fewer for a simpler audience.



DEVELOPING PERSONAS

Conducting Interviews and Research

To discover and create your personas, conduct interviews with current customers, potential buyers, and members of your sales and customer service teams. You can also send out surveys and do your own research. Focus on addressing the following topics as you create each persona:

- **Background:** Basic details about your ideal customer and his or her company
- **Job details**: Key job responsibilities, likes and dislikes about job
- **Main sources of information:** Where your persona does his or her research
- **Goals:** Persona's primary and secondary goals
- **Challenges/pain points:** Your persona's challenges, and the emotions which accompany those challenges
- **Preferred content medium:** What type of content, and in what voice/tone, does your persona respond to?
- **Source:** Where does you buyer seek out information?
- **Quotes:** Bring your personas to life with actual quotes gathered during interviews
- **Objections:** The objections you anticipate from your persona during the sales process
- **Role in purchase process:** Persona's influence in the decision making process
- **Marketing message:** The messaging that speaks directly to this persona

> "Our mission requires that we consistently sharing relevant content, recipes and insights that eliminate the frictions of forming healthy habits. But it can be infinitely challenging when you have tens of millions of users."
>
> **Tara-Nicholle Nelson,**
> **Vice President of Marketing, MyFitnessPal**

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DEVELOPING PERSONAS

Telling Your Persona's Story

Once you've gathered all of the information, it's time to turn that data into a story. Buying personas may be fictional, but the more "real" you can make them to your team, the more effective they will be. It may seem silly (or like a creative writing assignment), but remember that your audience isn't comprised of data sets – it's comprised of real people.

We recommend adding a first name and photo to each persona – it will help them come alive for your marketing team.

Next, take the information you've gathered, and weave it into a narrative. This should be a story you can tell your entire company about the people who you market to, so make it memorable, make it human, and include plenty of detail. Be sure to include the:

- Persona's responsibilities
- Persona's typical day/week/quarter
- Persona's characteristics
- Persona's biggest challenges



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DEVELOPING PERSONAS

Let's say your company sells software that helps businesses manage their social marketing. Here's an example of a buyer persona you might create, in narrative form:

Emily

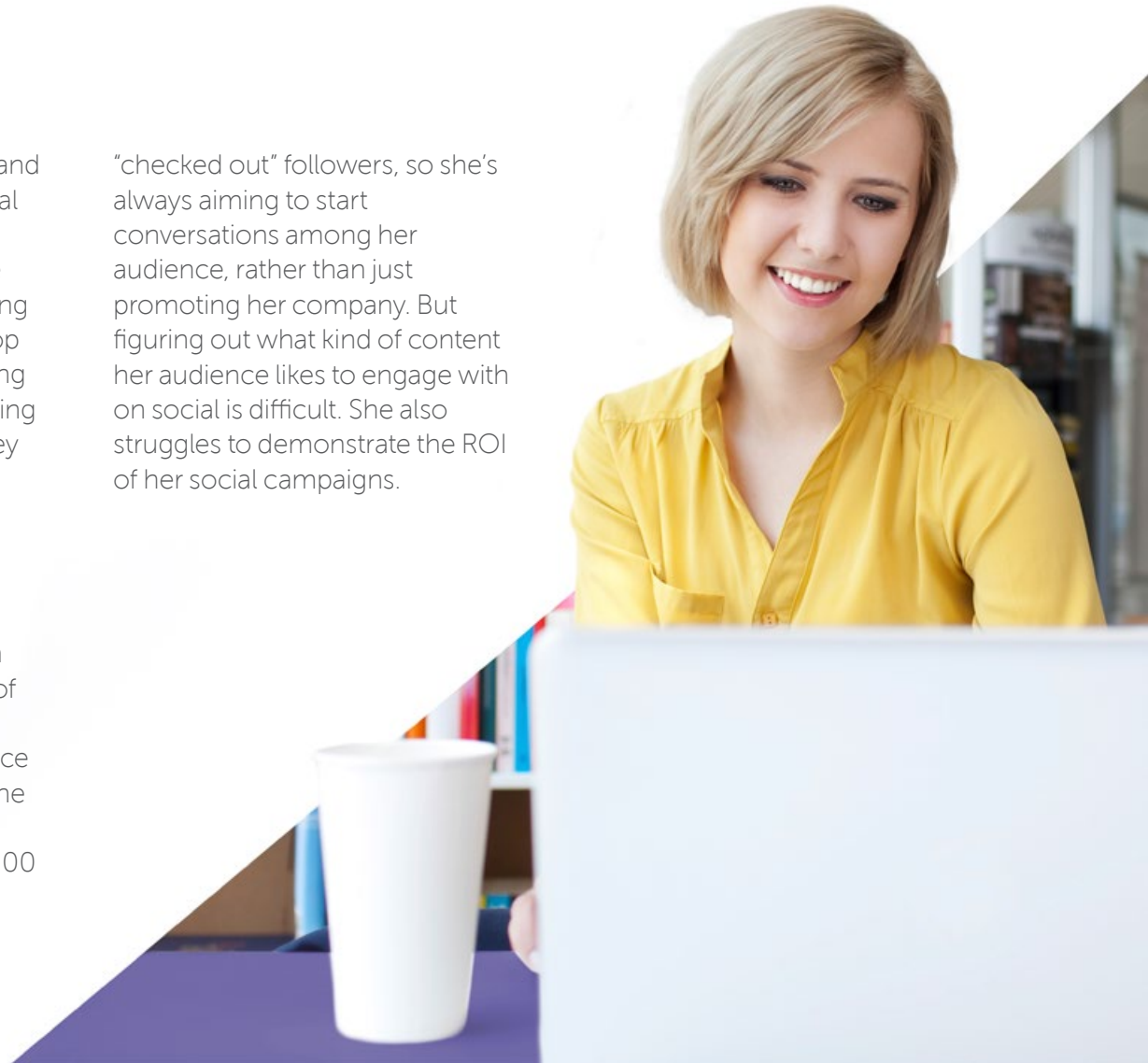
Job Title: Social Marketing Manager

Emily is responsible for

1. creating and managing her company's social media profile,
2. working collaboratively with her events, content, PR, and demand generation teams to promote events, promotions, new content, and company thought leadership, and
3. maintain her brand's consistent voice and tone.

In a typical week, Emily reviews her social media calendar to ensure that her company's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+ updates are accurate, well written, and scheduled to post at the correct times. She communicates and set priorities with her internal design team, and reviews metrics with an external social analytics vendor. On a quarterly and annual basis, she works closely with her marketing team to brainstorm and develop new social campaigns, including promotions and contents. During large events, she live-tweets key sessions and speakers. Emily is organized, creative, and detail-oriented; she's a risk taker who pays attention to trends.

Emily's biggest challenge is in finding the right combination of social marketing activities to continually engage her audience – and to build that audience. She believes that 1,000 engaged followers are better than 100,000 "checked out" followers, so she's always aiming to start conversations among her audience, rather than just promoting her company. But figuring out what kind of content her audience likes to engage with on social is difficult. She also struggles to demonstrate the ROI of her social campaigns.



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DEVELOPING PERSONAS

And then, for a different example, let's look at a buyer persona that a fitness app might create to help inform and manage their marketing:

Susan

40 year old, Single Mother, Income $80,000/year

Susan is responsible for

1. Taking care of her 2 boys,
2. Managing a demanding, high-stress corporate finance job, and
3. Trying to stay active and maintain her fitness level.

In a typical week, Susan works from 9 -5 in the office, eats lunch at her desk, and then goes to pick up her boys from after school day care. She often logs back on and does more work after her boys go to bed. To work on her fitness, she always takes the stairs and tries to do an at-home fitness video two days a week. Susan is organized, busy, and tired but likes to work out; she cooks her own meals, and is willing to try fitness trends. She is health conscious and tries to cook organic, nutritionally balanced meals. She primarily shops at Whole Foods and Trader Joes, and subscribes to multiple fitness magazine publications.

Susan's biggest challenge is finding the right balance of healthy eating and a manageable fitness routine. She is looking for motivation, maintainability and convenience.



DEVELOPING PERSONAS

Buying Stages

What steps do your buyers take on the path to purchase – and beyond? A buying journey maps a buyer's decision-making process during a purchase, and will help you determine what content you need.

Different kinds of content appeals to different buyers in different stages of their journey and by mapping your buying stages, you'll better understand the process buyers go through when considering your product or service. As a result, you'll be able to develop a content strategy that speaks directly to buyers – regardless of their stage.

An example of typical buyer's journey, where there is a long consideration cycle, is divided into three parts:

- **Early Stage:** Buyers in this stage could potentially become customers, but probably aren't in the market for your product – yet. These buyers are looking for educational, entertaining content, and your job is to present that content while building awareness and trust.
- **Mid-Stage:** In this stage, your buyers are aware of your brand, and are more actively researching your products. You can start to present more product-specific content, aimed at keeping your potential customers engaged as they research.
- **Late Stage:** Late-stage buyers are close to making a purchase. Late-stage content should speak directly to your offering and highlight product differentiators – think demos, feature comparisons, and third-party reports.

> "At Kapost, all our content is targeted to a buyer persona and sales stage. This isn't just a thought experiment; we actually tag it within our software. This ensures that we not only have a specific buyer, at a specific stage of the pipeline, in mind. It also catalogs the content and allows us to see where gaps are narrowing and widening in content library."
>
> **Jesse Noyes,**
> **Sr. Director of Content Marketing, Kapost**

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DEVELOPING PERSONAS

Another example of a buyer's journey includes different set of stages:

- **Awareness:** Buyers in this stage are potential customers, but need to know more about your product or service before they make a decision. They are looking to you to help educate and entertain them in order to build trust.
- **Purchase:** This stage of the buyer's journey is about building trust by delivering a good customer experience and then continuing your awareness building activities to promote additional products or services.
- **Advocate:** Customers in an advocate stage are well versed with your offerings and messages. The focus for customers at this stage is to leverage their advocacy to further promote your brand and products. Find creative ways to engage your advocates like insider programs or through gamification and use their enthusiasm to drive new interested customers and build awareness.

> "To make sure we're creating content for every stage of our sales funnel, constant communication between sales, customer success, and marketing teams is essential. A representative from each team gets together when we finalize our content calendar for the following month, and this helps ensure that we have great content at every phase of the buyer journey."
>
> **Hana Abaza,**
> **Director of Marketing, Uberflip**



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DEVELOPING PERSONAS

"We review different content formats across the different steps of the sales funnel, using our own content matrix tool. So we have blog posts and infographics at the top of the funnel, then free planning templates to encourage leads and explainer (animated videos) embedded into benefits pages at the bottom of the funnel."

Dave Chaffey,
CEO, SmartInsights.com

"We recognize that engagement with our students and prospective students is absolutely essential to getting them to choose Irvine Extension. That means content has to be both relevant and timely. We never want a student to ask, 'Why are they contacting me?' We create communications that are responsive to student interest."

Scott Rutherford,
Director of Marketing and Communications, UC Irvine Extension



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DEVELOPING PERSONAS

To map your own persona buying journeys, create a spreadsheet with a separate tab for each buying phase, and fill in the following items:

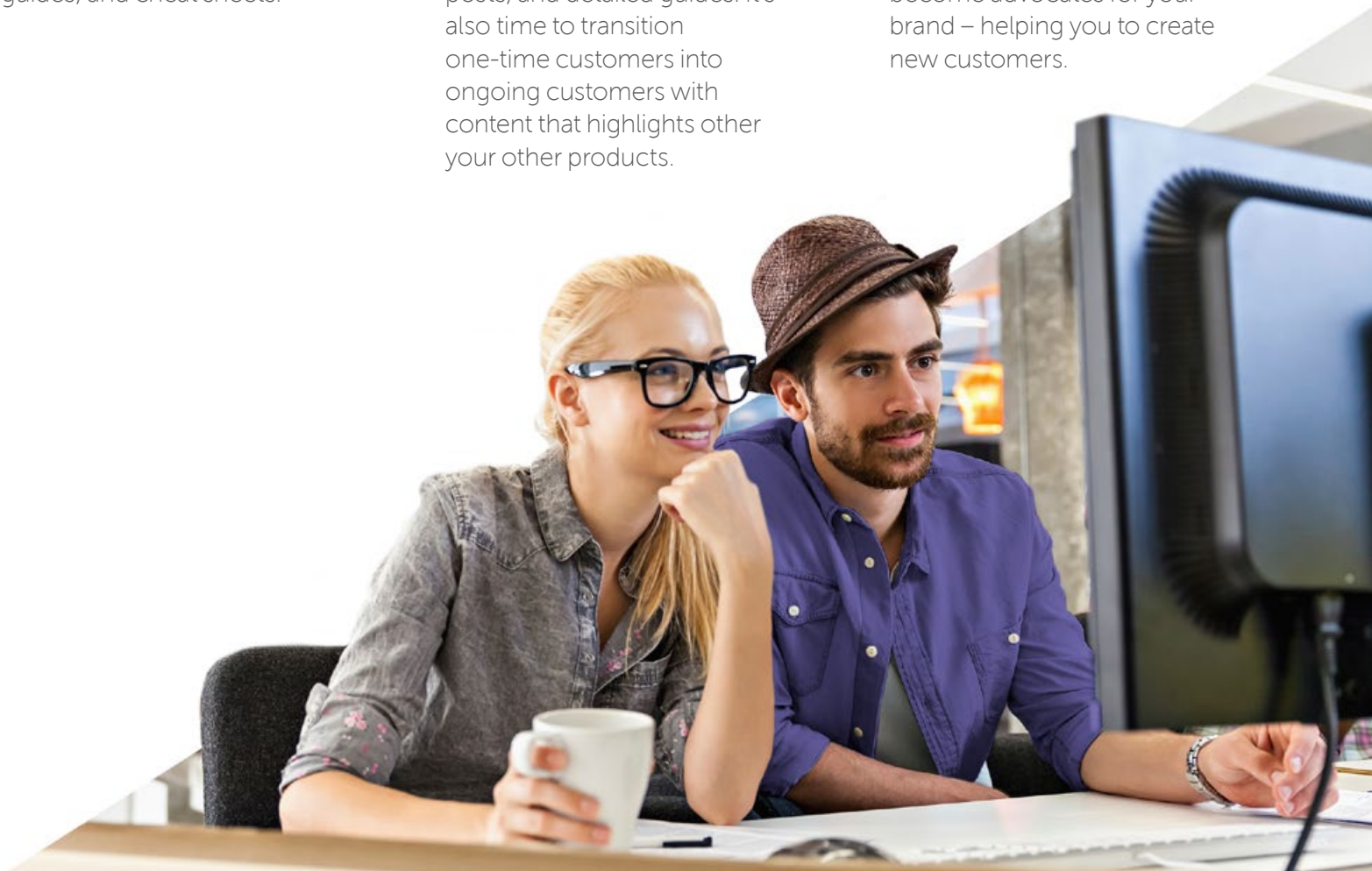
Buying Phase				
Actions & Questions	**Buyer Action**	**Buyer Doing (Y/N)?**		**Questions Buyer Asks**
Key Buyer Actions	Event Occurs		Event #1	
			Event #2	
			Event #3	
	Problem Surfaces		Problem #1	
			Problem #2	
			Problem #3	
	Consequences of Problem Identified			
	Consider Alternatives for Solving the Problem			
	Phase Exit Criteria			

PLAN

DEVELOPING PERSONAS

But the buyer's journey doesn't end with a purchase. To fully leverage a buyer's lifetime value, you'll need content that engages your audience after they become customers. This can be defined by three additional stages:

- **New Customer:** Activate your newest customers with content that guides them through set-up processes, answers common questions, and welcomes them to your community – think FAQs, guides, and cheat sheets.
- **Ongoing Customer:** As your customers become comfortable with your products, create content that helps them become successful – such as best practice webinars, helpful blog posts, and detailed guides. It's also time to transition one-time customers into ongoing customers with content that highlights other your other products.
- **Loyal Customer** – These are your advocates, they are deeply invested in your brand. Marketing to these customers should focus on rewarding them for their loyalty, and make it easy for them to become advocates for your brand – helping you to create new customers.



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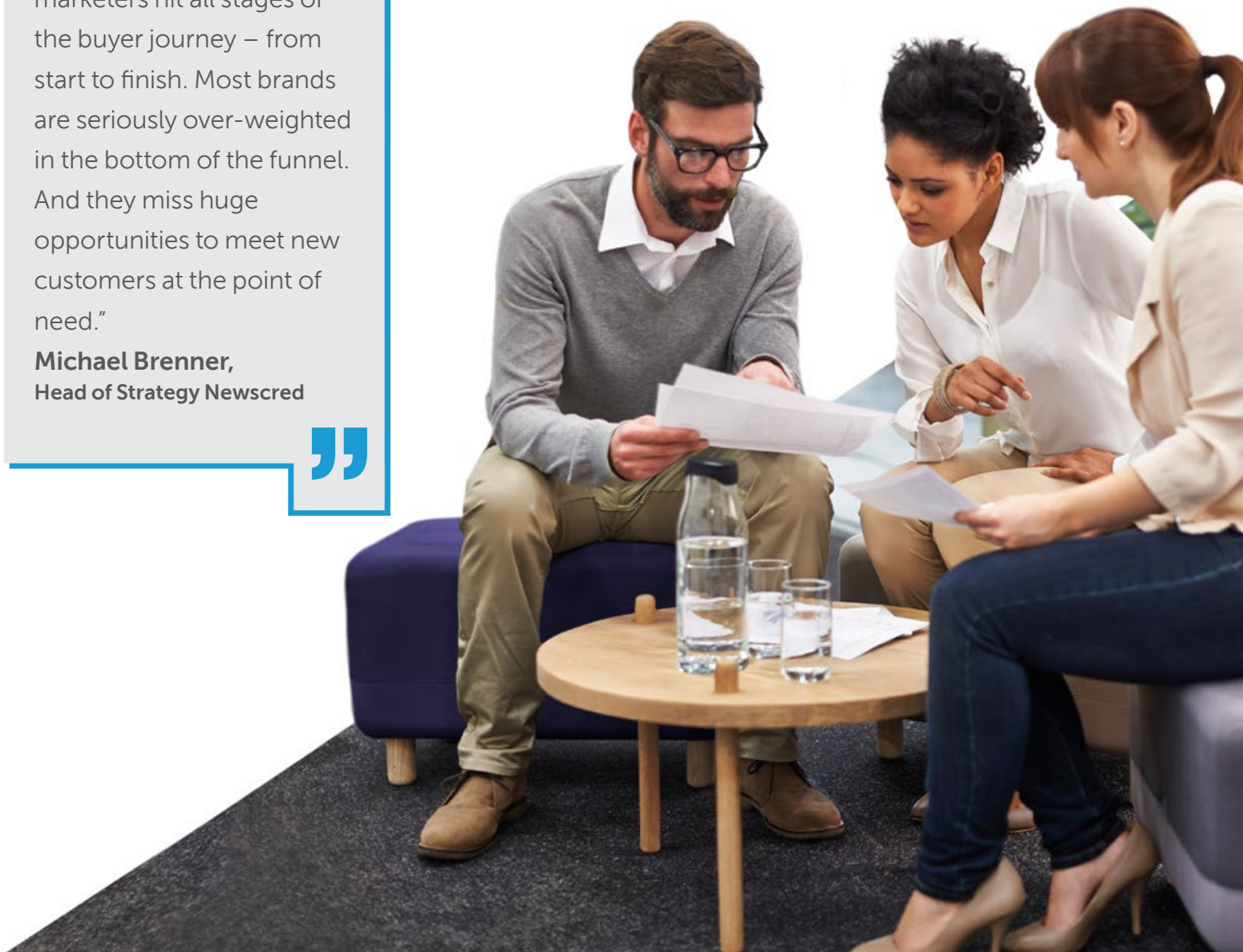
DEVELOPING PERSONAS

"To develop your audience, you need to create content for every stage of the buying process. As a whole, your content should cover off on three important points: topic awareness, consideration of you as a vendor on that topic, and how you offer differs in the market."

Byrony Seifert,
Publisher, France and Germany at TechTarget

"Successful content marketers hit all stages of the buyer journey – from start to finish. Most brands are seriously over-weighted in the bottom of the funnel. And they miss huge opportunities to meet new customers at the point of need."

Michael Brenner,
Head of Strategy Newscred



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DEVELOPING YOUR BRAND VOICE



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DEVELOPING YOUR BRAND VOICE

It's important to present a consistent experience across channels, which means you need to define your brand's voice.

Whether you're creating content for your blog, your website, or on social, the style you write in will become the "voice" of your brand. But while you might adopt a more playful voice on Twitter, and a more professional voice in a whitepaper, consistency is key. The voice you use will also depend on the persona you're creating content for – see "Developing Buyer Personas" on p.15.

"For new brands who need to define their voice, my advice is to pick three base notes. No more. This is your personality. It doesn't change. Then stir in 'accent' flavors to match the context."

Doug Kessler,
Director & Co-Founder, Velocity Partners

"If you can take your personality and inject it into what you do and the messages you share, you'll be one step ahead in the content marketing game. Audiences can sense when a person is passionate about a certain topic, and whether or not they are sincere in their message and delivery. In addition, passion adds credibility and trust – which I find missing in much of the content on the web today."

Jason Miller,
Sr. Manager of Content Marketing and Marketing Solutions, LinkedIn

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DEVELOPING YOUR BRAND VOICE

Stephanie Schwab of Social Media Explorer breaks down a brand's voice into four categories: Character/ Persona, Tone, Language, and Purpose. Here's her list of attributes for each category – which of these descriptors belong to your brand? (Note: You may decide that some attributes fit with one buyer persona, but not with another.)

Character/Persona

- ☐ Friendly
- ☐ Warm
- ☐ Inspiring
- ☐ Playful
- ☐ Authoritative
- ☐ Professional

Tone

- ☐ Personal
- ☐ Humble
- ☐ Clinical
- ☐ Honest
- ☐ Direct
- ☐ Scientific

Language

- ☐ Complex
- ☐ Savvy
- ☐ Insider
- ☐ Serious
- ☐ Simple
- ☐ Jargon-filled
- ☐ Fun
- ☐ Whimsical

Purpose

(different content will probably serve different purposes)

- ☐ Engage
- ☐ Educate
- ☐ Inform
- ☐ Enable
- ☐ Entertain
- ☐ Delight
- ☐ Sell
- ☐ Amplify



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DEVELOPING YOUR BRAND VOICE

Once you've defined your voice, you'll want to aim for consistency across your entire company – allowing for some variability for each persona. Here are some strategies we use at Marketo to achieve a consistent voice:

- **Align your writers.** Make sure anyone writing for your brand (whether it's advertising, press releases, ebooks, or blog posts) is closely aligned. If multiple people handle these functions, meet regularly to review and improve.
- **Extend the review process.** At the end of each day, our social team sends their scheduled tweets, Facebook posts, and LinkedIn posts to a cross-functional team of reviewers. This way, members of our PR, demand generation, content, SEO, and PPC teams all have a chance to weigh in. (This is also a great way to catch typos and bad links!)



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CREATE

BRAINSTORM



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BRAINSTORM

Planning and creating new content isn't just about mapping and metrics – you'll never inspire your audience if you are uninspired. But inspiration can strike at any time: in the break room, during a meeting, or even at a happy hour.

That's why brainstorming and asset planning can be one of the most challenging parts of content creation. To catch inspiration when it strikes, you need a receptive environment, and a team-wide willingness to try new things. Establish an environment within your marketing team that allows for experimentation – some of the best content we've made at Marketo seemed unrealistic (or just plain crazy) at first.



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ASK THE EXPERTS

WHAT INSPIRES YOUR CONTENT?

"Inspiration is a habit. It's rooted in how you approach your craft. It's a matter of seeing stories in everyday experiences as well as in what you read. To that end, it's important to continually show up at the page (regardless of format – computer or paper) and put words together. This helps train your mind to think like a writer."



Heidi Cohen,
Chief Content Officer,
Actionable Marketing Guide

"My inspiration almost always comes from what I read. Believe it or not, I get some of my best blogging/presentation ideas from reading fiction books."



Joe Pulizzi,
Founder,
Content Marketing Institute

"When I'm brainstorming, I use data to inform particulars on content angles, hooks, and specific narratives. Web analytics, keyword research, social media monitoring, data collected from prospects and current customers – all of this trending data provides a goldmine of insight."



Lee Odden,
CEO,
TopRank Online Marketing

ASK THE EXPERTS

WHAT INSPIRES YOUR CONTENT?

"Those moments of inspiration can happen anywhere – walking to work, working out, watching a movie, picking up your kids, having a drink with friends. We always have people coming in saying "I just thought of a great idea. What about this." I love those moments."



Patricia Travaline,
VP of Marketing,
Skyword

"My best content ideas come from stealing – from movies, comedy routines, novels, maybe even marketing – and spinning my swag into a new place."



Doug Kessler,
Creative Director & Co-Founder,
Velocity Partners

"At Mynewsdesk, we talk about what we know through updates, round-ups, influential bloggers, etc. What we do – through case studies, event coverage, and about us having fun...it's the most human facet of our content."



Mutesa Sithole,
Global Content Marketing Manager, Mynewsdesk

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TYPES OF CONTENT



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TYPES OF CONTENT

A critical part of planning is defining the type of content that serves your objectives best. Content marketing comes in many forms, and the form you choose depends on many factors: your audience's preferences, your industry's standards, and, of course, your bandwidth and budget. Here's a basic overview of the types of content you might consider:

Ebooks

Ebooks are one of the most common forms of content marketing, especially in the B2B world. These digital books vary widely in length, level of design, and subject matter, but typically follow a narrative from start to finish, have some element of design, and contain educational, informational material. The more valuable and relevant your ebook is, the better success you'll have enticing your audience to share and download it.



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TYPES OF CONTENT

Cheat Sheets

Cheat sheets are short, snappy summaries of a specific topic. Generally no more than a few pages long, cheat sheets are typically designed to be printed and displayed for easy reference. Cheat sheets often include checklists and bullet points, so that readers can quickly absorb, and act on the information. At Marketo, we often include links to further reading for those who want a deeper dive.



TYPES OF CONTENT

Worksheets and Templates

Worksheets and templates are some of the most popular assets that we create. They're interactive by nature (readers need to fill them in), and they make your audiences' lives easier, providing a tool to help frame their thoughts and plans. If you're not sure what kind of worksheet or template to create, think about a typical day for your current/potential customers. What actions do they consistently perform? What are their goals? What tool might help them succeed?



TYPES OF CONTENT

Whitepapers and Reports

Whitepapers and reports are informational, educational, and are typically are only minimally designed. To enhance credibility, you may want to work with a third party source to create these assets, or purchase the rights to an externally created report.



PLAN

TYPES OF CONTENT

Infographics

These graphics present complex information using a combination of images and text to simplify core concepts. Infographics attract backlinks and add visual interest to dense material. Marketers can use infographics to attract buyer attention and simplify complicated information, like warnings and instructions. Because of they are a longer form visual, you can use infographics to present facts and data that are too complex for a single graph or chart.



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PLAN

TYPES OF CONTENT

Slide Decks

Slide decks are often created in PowerPoint, and are intended to be viewed sequentially, like a presentation. Slide decks tend to be highly designed and visual, rather than text heavy, for easy consumption. Like infographics, slide decks are best for breaking down complex information into a digestible form, and can be posted to sites like SlideShare to expand your viewership.



PLAN

TYPES OF CONTENT

Video

Videos can achieve multiple objectives – they can improve branding, demonstrate instructions, answer questions, provide customer reviews, and/or entertain your audience. Based on the production quality and timeline, videos can be a big investment, so maximize your time and money by integrating the footage with the rest of your marketing plans. This usually involves developing all of your content at the same time, so think ahead.



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PLAN

TYPES OF CONTENT

Blog Posts

A company blog is a great place to share educational thought leadership, industry insight, upcoming events/ announcements, and awesome new content. But maintaining a blog is different than other types of content marketing – with an emphasis on maintaining. At Marketo, we update our blog 4-5 times per week, but we also leverage our community of marketers, partners, customers, and industry thought leaders to help us continually create new content. (Note: Consistency is always a challenge with a company blog – refer to our section on "Developing Your Brand Voice" on p.27.)



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TYPES OF CONTENT

Case Study

Often the most compelling story comes from your current customers. Just because a case study is a more traditional content medium does not mean that it should be overlooked or that it doesn't provide high value. The best way to use a case study is to talk about the light, not the candle that produces it, meaning the story that you share is about the value, outcome and results versus the tool, product or service. At Marketo, we run a customer reference program that helps us uncover these awesome stories and highlight them across various channels.



PLAN

CONTENT MIX



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CONTENT MIX

For obvious reasons, content marketing is a text-heavy form. But people are highly visual – and the more inundated with text they become, the more visual content stands out. That's why visual content is on the rise – and why, at Marketo, we try to make all of our content visual.

According to the recent estimates, over 758 million photographs are shared on social media every single day. Images define brands and companies, whether they're viewed on social networks, websites, mobile devices, emails, ads, or in your content marketing.

The human brain processes images 60,000 times faster than text. In a world of information overload, content that is broken down into small, easily digestible images can break through the information clutter.

> "People are visual beings. Visual content attracts people, even amidst everything else screaming for our attention."
>
> **Heidi Cohen,**
> **Chief Content Officer, Actionable Marketing Guide**



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CONTENT MIX

So how can you make your content more visual? You don't have to create custom illustrations for every ebook – but you should create visual interest in every piece of content. This might involve a custom cover and interior graphic, or it might just be an attractive typeface and a crisp layout. Here are some factors to consider:

- **Your industry standards.** How visual is the "norm" in your industry, and how far are you willing to push the envelope? Visuals are a great way to stand out, but it takes less to stand out in some industries than others.
- **Your persona.** Who are you making this content for, and how do they respond to visual content? Design that feels fresh and fun to one persona may seem childish or condescending to another.
- **Your brand guidelines.** Ideally, you'll develop a distinctive visual style that makes your brand instantly recognizable by your audience. To create brand guidelines, simply translate this style into words, include plenty of examples, and get buy-in from the C-suite. Check all content against these guidelines, and be sure to share them with any outsourced design agencies.



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THE CONTENT FOOD GROUPS



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THE CONTENT FOOD GROUPS

It's important to have a variety of content types – but what does a well-rounded mix look like? You can think about types of content as food groups, and a healthy content mix as a healthy diet. Here's how to build a robust content food pyramid:

Roasts

Think of your biggest content pieces as your "roasts." At Marketo, these pieces are our Definitive Guides – comprehensive guides to subjects within our core expertise, such as marketing automation or email marketing...or the one you're reading right now. Even though your "roasts" can take a lot of time and research to produce, they can easily be divided and repurposed into smaller assets (see "The 3 R's" on p. 72).

Raisin Bran

Your "Raisin Bran" content is the kind you could eat every day for breakfast: simple, consistent, and easy to consume. You should be able to produce your "Raisin Bran" content quickly and frequently – think cheat sheets, checklists, and basic best practices.

Spinach

Spinach is packed with nutrients; likewise, your "spinach" content should be packed with valuable, educational information. This is the kind of content that demonstrates that you know your stuff, and establishes your company as a thought leader in your space. You don't need to serve spinach every day, but do it often enough to keep your audience healthy.



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THE CONTENT FOOD GROUPS

Chocolate Cake

"Chocolate cake" content is all about indulging – this is your fun, light-hearted, purely entertaining content, such as fun infographics, quizzes, or silly videos. Be parsimonious with this type of content, depending on how seriously you want your audience to take your brand,– it should be an occasional treat, and not an everyday thing.

Tabasco

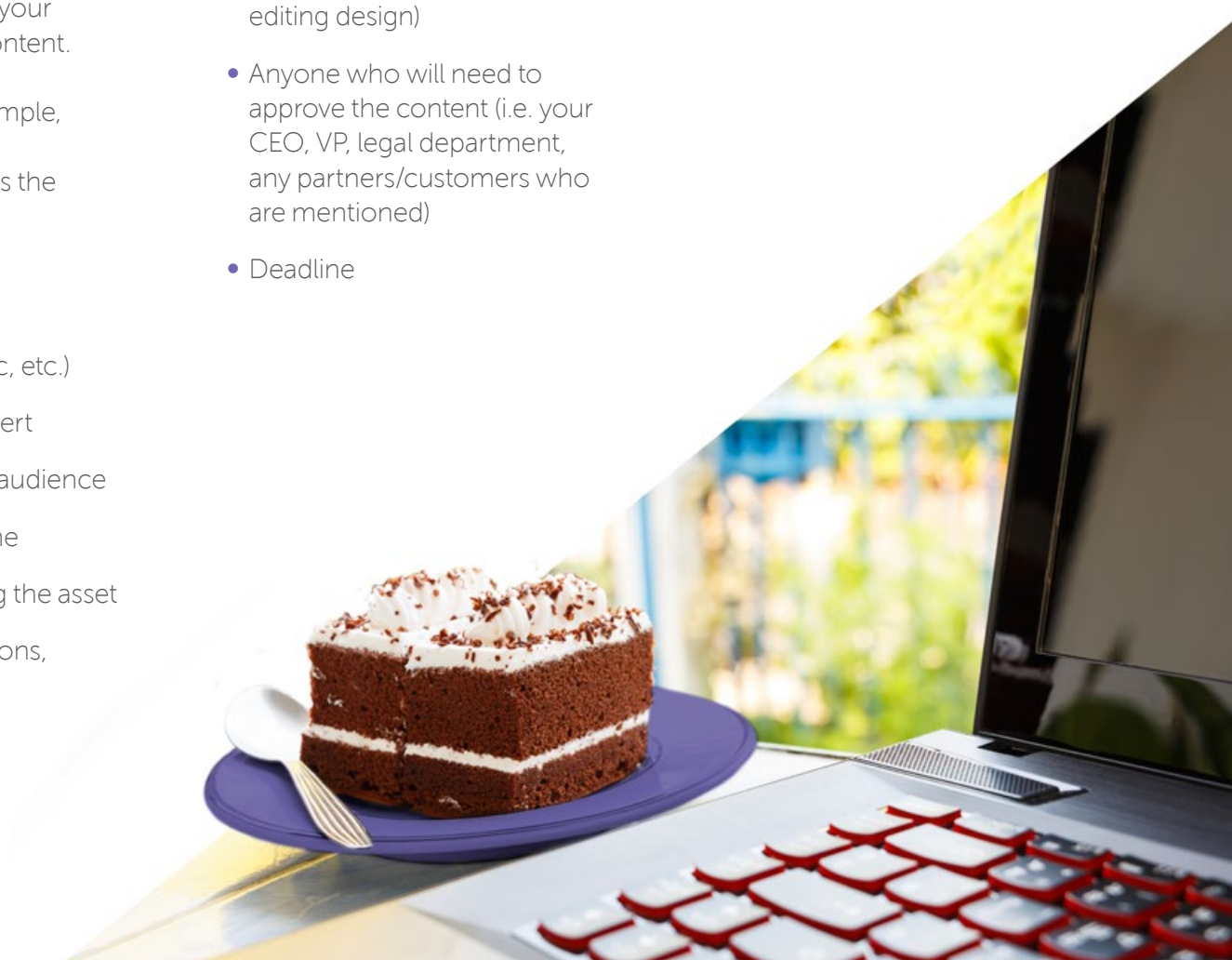
What's life without a little spice? Every once in a while, you might want to create content that challenges conventions, asks hard questions, or provokes a big response. Even more conservative brands can use "Tabasco" content to attract attention or stimulate conversations – but, like the hot sauce itself, you don't want to overdo it.

Strategy Document

Before you start writing your content, we recommend creating a content strategy document about each asset. This puts your content in a larger context, helps you stay on track as you write and edit, and later will help your colleagues use your content.

At Marketo, we use a simple, one-page document, which typically includes the following information:

- Asset name
- Asset type (ebook, infographic, etc.)
- Subject matter expert
- Intended persona/audience
- Vertical/product line
- Reason for creating the asset
- Goals (i.e. conversions, downloads, sales enablement, etc.)
- Metrics you'll use to measure success
- Where the asset will be used
- Person who will own each stage of content creation (outline, writing, editing design)
- Anyone who will need to approve the content (i.e. your CEO, VP, legal department, any partners/customers who are mentioned)
- Deadline



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EDITORIAL CALENDARS



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EDITORIAL CALENDARS

An editorial calendar is not only where you keep track of, coordinate, and share your upcoming content, it is a strategic tool that helps your team execute integrated programs that include your content. Keeping an editorial calendar ensures that you're releasing your content at the best possible moment, and that your whole team is aligned around the release dates.

Your calendar doesn't need to be anything fancy – it might be a shared Excel sheet, a dynamic scheduler, or even a simple dry erase board. The most important requirements are that all stakeholders have access, and that it gives you a wide view – to truly detect patterns and enforce themes, you'll want to look at your content releases over at least the next few months, if not the whole year.

The principal benefits of creating such a calendar are:

- Visibility and alignment
- Accountability
- Organization



PLAN

EDITORIAL CALENDARS

Visibility and Alignment

Visibility is the content marketer's best friend: it fosters collaboration, encourages multi-channel campaigns, and (best of all) it's guaranteed to cut your daily emails in half.

Here's who you'll want to align with as you create your calendar, and the questions you should ask in order to get these teams aligned:

- **Demand Generation:** Is your content generating new interest? Which content generated the most leads?
- **Product Marketing:** Do you have content to support each product line?
- **Public Relations:** Is your content mapped to press releases/ announcements/publicity?
- **Social:** Which content earns the most engagement on social?
- **SEO:** In order to rank highly in search engine results, what content do we need to create? Is our current content optimized for search?
- **Customer marketing:** Does your content actively align with overall customer advocacy and engagement programs?
- **Partner marketing:** How best can your content strategy leverage thought leadership and assets from your partners?
- **PPC:** Which content does best when offered in PPC ads? How does your PPC messaging map to your content?

> "I have a hard time understanding how any content team can function without an editorial calendar. We plan a year in advance, but get very particular on the quarterly calendars."
>
> **Joe Pulizzi,**
> **Founder,**
> **Content Marketing Institute**



PLAN

EDITORIAL CALENDARS

Accountability

Content is the fuel for your marketing team's efforts, which means it's crucial that you agree upon, publicize, and meet your creation deadlines. If your demand generation team is planning to use your new ebook in an email offer next month, or the events team needs collateral for an upcoming conference, you need to be accountable and get it done.

Your editorial calendar – which includes estimated dates for completion – will ensure that expectations are reasonable and are met. Here are some additional best practices to keep in mind:

- Give yourself some wiggle-room. Don't promise that something can be done at the earliest possible date – set a deadline that allows for unforeseen challenges.
- Hold your vendors accountable. If you're working with an outsourced writer or designer, get a firm deadline ahead of time – and make sure they stick to it.
- Revisit your deadlines. Check in with your upcoming deadlines every few days – are they on track for completion?
- Keep stakeholders updated. If you aren't going to meet a deadline, let all stakeholders know immediately.



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EDITORIAL CALENDARS

Organization

Last but not least, a calendar keeps you organized. A calendar isn't just for planning your future content and social posts – it's also a log, recording your posts from the past. It isn't always easy keeping track of ebook progress, whether you've already tweeted, or which event you've already advertised on LinkedIn, especially if you have multiple people on your team.

An editorial calendar will also help you stay organized in the initial brainstorming process. We recommend populating your calendar with the following information, even before you start brainstorming ideas:

- ☑ Upcoming product releases/updates
- ☑ Company events
- ☑ Industry events
- ☑ Announcements
- ☑ Holidays
- ☑ National/international events (i.e. The Academy Awards, the Super Bowl etc.)



EDITORIAL CALENDARS

You might also consider breaking up your content planning into quarterly or bi-yearly themes or arcs to help you focus your strategy. Include your arcs in your initial content planning, and work to execute against them for the allotted period of time. Here's a template you could use to map themes for the year:

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme
☐ EBook	☐ EBook	☐ EBook	☐ EBook
☐ Infographic	☐ Infographic	☐ Infographic	☐ Infographic
☐ Slide Deck	☐ Slide Deck	☐ Slide Deck	☐ Slide Deck
☐ Blog Posts	☐ Blog Posts	☐ Blog Posts	☐ Blog Posts

Ongoing Initiative

Ongoing Initiative

Ongoing Initiative

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CREATE

Once you've done the hard work of mapping out your content, it's time to put your plans in motion. Here's how to design a team to execute (including writers, editors, and subject matter experts), develop content that you're proud to publish, and strategize to make the most of every asset you create.



CREATE

HIRING TEAM/POSITIONS



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CREATE

HIRING TEAM/POSITIONS

Before you dive in, you need to determine whom will project manage, create, curate, and distribute your content to the rest of your marketing department.

Ideally, you would have at least one person who owns the function of content marketing – the strategy, project management, and creative skill involved is easily a full-time time job. Dedicated headcount also encourages consistency, and makes it clear who's responsible for keeping content on-schedule.

"Increasingly, much of our prospects and customers interactions are managed through content. They go to our resources, read our emails, join our forums, etc. That means content is at the center of the buyer-seller relationship. If you don't have a leader to manage this content, your buyers are in for a bumpy ride as they'll likely be getting a lot of discordant and unorganized messaging."

Jesse Noyes,
Sr. Director of Content Marketing, Kapost

"I do believe that someone needs to drive content strategy. It's great to have lots of storytellers, but you can't have everyone telling a different story. You create the greatest impact when you can keep people on the same page or at least in the same chapter."

Patricia,
Travaline, VP of Marketing, Skyword

HIRING TEAM/POSITIONS

If you don't have the budget or resources for dedicated headcount, designate a member on your team to take responsibility for your content. It is important that whoever owns content creation is:

- A frequent consumer of content in your industry, and of best-practice content outside your industry
- A talented writer/editor
- An excellent communicator/ project manager

Here are the most common roles on a content team (one person may fill multiple roles):

Chief Content Officer
Some companies have embraced content marketing so deeply that they have their own C-level title – Chief Content Officer – while others task a Director of Content with high-level content strategy. Still others delegate content strategy to operate as a part of Corporate Marketing, Product Marketing, or Demand Generation.

Whatever you call this "CCO" role, the responsibilities should include:

- Owning the story of the business
- Strategy and innovation
- Audience development
- Final approval of content
- Measurement and business accountability
- Influencer relationship development

Managing Editor
If you don't have headcount for this role, these responsibilities should at least be part of a Campaign Manager or Program Manager role.

Your Managing Editor's responsibilities should include:

- Content strategy and creation
- Content calendaring
- Content production
- Vendor coordination
- Consistency in messaging
- Content publishing
- Blog management
- SEO

Outsourced Writers
You may need to outsource some of your writing. There are many content marketing agencies that can write copy for you; explore services like Scripted, which connects you with low-cost writers to work on your projects; or you can leverage independent writers and freelancers. Get recommendations, ask for writing samples, and expect to be more hands-on during your first projects with outsourced writers – this should become easier as the writer becomes familiar with your brand and objectives.

CREATE

HIRING TEAM/POSITIONS

Designers
Great content needs to be designed, even if it's only at a very basic level. If you don't have internal design resources (or your internal team lacks bandwidth) you can supplement your team with outsourced design firms. As with outsourced writers, get recommendations and ask for samples. Note that you'll need to work closely with an outsourced designer, and share your brand guidelines to make sure your visuals are consistent. If you have an internal design team, loop them into the outsourcing process from the beginning – they'll have the right vocabulary to express what you need.

Subject Matter Experts
As you create content, you'll probably need to write about subjects that are unfamiliar to you – or that someone else understands better. Identify and leverage experts both internal and external to your organization – your Subject Matter Experts (SME). Note that your SMEs don't necessarily need to be writers themselves. Your goal as a content marketer is simply to soak up their knowledge. To start, set up an information sharing session (or "brain dump"), in which you or another writer can jot down thoughts and record the SME's particular knowledge. Depending on the subject, you might also ask the SME to review your final content for subject accuracy.

Partners, Customers, and Thought Leaders
Think outside of the box when it comes to content creation and leverage resources within your community. At Marketo, we frequently use partners, customers, and thought leaders to help create additional content. Just remember, it usually is a give and take – one party writes, the other designs, both edit, etc. Before engaging with a third-party, make sure you have your style guide/ general guidelines solidified – see our "Style Guides" section on p.67 .



WORKING WITH INFLUENCERS

Influencers are people who can change opinions and behaviors among your audience, driving measurable outcomes for your brand. Depending on your business, influencers might be popular authors, speakers, bloggers, analysts, journalists, and more. They are people who make their opinions known and who your customers listen to and respect.

Brian Solis – an author, speaker, analyst, and influencer in his own right – talks about the "three R's" of influencer marketing: Reach, Relevance, and Resonance.

- **Reach:** How big is the audience an influencer can reach?
- **Relevance:** How relevant is that audience to your brand? How much crossover exists between an influencer's reach and your target buyers/ customers?
- **Resonance:** What level of engagement (conversations, social shares, etc.) does an influencer typically spark?

Aligning yourself with influencers can give you access to new networks, and lend your brand industry-wide credibility. Look for relevant figures in your space, and build relationships that last beyond a one-off campaign. Here are some simple ideas to get you started working with influencers:

- **Get a quote.** If you're working on a piece of content, why not ask influencers in that space to contribute a quote – written or recorded? This lends additional expertise to your content, and gives your influencer an outlet for their thought leadership. We find that asking specific questions is good for sparking lively, thoughtful contributions.
- **Ask for a guest post.** Many influencers are prolific writers, and would be happy to contribute to your company blog – or offer you a guest spot on his or her blog.
- **Collaborate.** Create a piece of content together. At Marketo, we'll often ask an influencer to write an ebook, which we then edit, design, and promote. But don't stop with ebooks – videos, podcasts, events, and social campaigns are all good ways to collaborate.

Remember: With influencer marketing, the golden rule is reciprocity. If you're asking for a free contribution, make sure you're offering something real (publicity, exposure, new business opportunities, etc.) in exchange.

This is a lot easier to do if your brand is well known, and can therefore offer influencers greater exposure. But you don't always have to solicit the most established influencers in your space. If you're still building your brand, look for influencers who are still building their brands. These are the people who can still benefit from the exposure, and by finding them first, you'll be ahead of the curve.

CREATE OUTLINES



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CREATE
OUTLINES

Never start writing without an outline – it will keep your thought process organized and your messaging on-track.

Your outline should be a joint creation of the writer and the subject matter expert. Start with the concept – similar to a traditional thesis statement, this is the main message you're trying to get across. If your concept isn't clear, or it can't be easily summarized in a sentence or two, it's time to go back to the brainstorm phase. An unclear concept translates into an unclear piece of content every time.

Remember, if you're going to make big changes, this is the right time to do it – once you actually start writing, big revisions become much more painful. Make sure that your subject matter expert reads the outline carefully, and that your highest-level approvers have signed off on the project before you get started.

This is also a good time to talk to any other teams that might use the asset. Often you'll find that they suggest a few small tweaks that could greatly broaden the content's appeal – saving you time and resources down the line.

> "For longer form content, outlines are very useful – you can essentially fill in the outline with your story, research and insights. Of course, sometimes the outline gets tossed when you go in a different direction, but for audience-specific content, it's still important to start with one."
>
> **Lee Odden,**
> **CEO, TopRank Online Marketing**

> "I'm allergic to the word outline. It reminds me of English Comp. class and diagramming sentences, and it feels hard. But I do erect a kind of scaffolding around the content I create: I call it a writing GPS, or a plan and a map that gets me from start to finish, or a shopping list. A list feels nonthreatening (anyone can make a shopping list!), whereas an "outline" feels so structured and serious for me that I want to give up and go take a nap before I begin."
>
> **Ann Handley,**
> **Chief Content Officer, Marketing Profs**

CREATE

EDITING YOUR CONTENT



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EDITING YOUR CONTENT

Editing a piece should never be an antagonistic or negative process. After all, the writer and editor share the same goal: to create the best quality content that generates the highest ROI.

As the author William Faulkner once said, "In writing, you must kill all of your darlings." He meant that good writers are ruthless when they edit – and this is especially true when you're creating content.

To that end, don't take it personally when your colleague suggests a big change or re-writes your favorite sentence. And as you edit, be as constructive as possible. Avoid unnecessary criticism, and suggest an alternative whenever possible. "Why don't we try it this way" or "Let's clarify the terms in this section" will go a lot further than "I don't like this" or "I'm confused."

> "When it comes to editing, we look for quality, but not at the expense of agility."
>
> **Mutese Sithole,**
> **Content Marketing Manager, Mynewsdesk**

> "A really great editor adds a lot to the writing process, preserving a writer's voice while making the writing more taut, the message more coherent, the words flow. A great editor is an advocate for the reader – improving the experience for the person who you want to reach. The editor is the one who helps remind you that (as writing teacher Don Murray once said), 'The reader doesn't turn the page because of a hunger to applaud."
>
> **Ann Handley,**
> **Chief Content Officer, Marketo Profs**

EDITING YOUR CONTENT

Style Guides

Language is constantly evolving. Depending on who you ask, there are many "correct" ways to spell and punctuate – consistency is key.

Even the word "copy edit" is up for debate – while "copyedit" (one word) is supported by Merriam-Webster's and The Chicago Manual of Style, "copy edit" is preferred by The Associated Press Stylebook and The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage.

That's why, as you're copy editing (or copyediting), you need a company style guide. Almost every style preference has legitimate defenders – the important thing is that your brand is consistent, whether you're editing a blog post, a tweet, your website copy, or an email send. As the always-eloquent Grammar Girl blog puts it, "People might not consciously notice it, but they'll feel like something is wrong if things aren't consistent from page to page."

Even if you decide to simply defer to an existing style guide, such as The Chicago Manual of Style or the Associated Press Stylebook, you'll still need a guide to handle industry-specific situations. Your style guide should cover any style issues that might be up for debate, which will vary from business to business.

Finally, a style guide doesn't just help out your editing process – once you've created it, you can simply hand it over to new bloggers, outsourced writers, designers, or anyone who writes content for your business to ensure consistency.

Here are some places to start:

Closed vs. Open

When a word can be closed ("website"), hyphenated ("web-site"), or open (web site), what's your company's default? While we recommend choosing a default in how you handle these (for example, we typically close these words), there might be some cases that you prefer to treat differently. Keep a running list of these words as they come up.

Brand and Product Names

Capitalization, spelling, and article usage can have a big effect on your brand. For example, Facebook was once called "The Facebook" – and it could've become "the Facebook" (lowercase "t"), "Face Book" (two words), or "facebook" (all lowercase). Every option would've given the brand a slightly different feel. So every time you name a product or a service, come to company-wide consensus on spelling, capitalization, and accompanying pronouns.

CREATE

EDITING YOUR CONTENT

Numbers

Whether to spell out numerals or use digits can cause a lot of confusion. Remembering that consistency is key -- here are a few acceptable ways to handle numbers:

- Spell out numbers one through nine, use digits after that (Associated Press) OR spell out numbers one through ninety-nine, use digits after that (Chicago)
- Spell out all numbers that begin a sentence, with the possible exception of dates.
- Hyphenate compound numbers (like "forty-three") and fractions (like "one-third")
- Spell out or symbolize percentages (either "43 percent" or "43%")
- Spell out or symbolize money (either "43 dollars" or "$43")



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EDITING YOUR CONTENT

Types of Editing

The editorial process involves several steps – and for good reason. Trying to fix everything in one pass is both overwhelming and counterproductive. There's no point in correcting comma usage if the whole paragraph needs to be re-written; you'll never catch big structural problems if you're busy with spelling mistakes. We think of editing as a three-part process: developmental editing, copy editing, and design proofing.

> "At Content Marketing Institute, we have three editors that work on every post. Our managing editor reviews for content, then we run that by a proofreader, then we run that version by an SEO specialist...particularly the headline. We've been using this practice for the last two years, and traffic has more than doubled during that time."
>
> **Joe Pulizzi,**
> **Founder, Content Marketing Institute**



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EDITING YOUR CONTENT

Developmental Editing

Before you even think about hunting for typos, you need to start with larger, conceptual concerns – this kind of editing is known as "developmental."

In this phase, you'll focus on the big picture: Have you stuck to your outline? Is your message coming across? Is the piece written in the brand voice (which you defined earlier in the guide)? Is the content truly valuable?

You'll also want to look at flow – this is where a solid outline pays off in a big way. Does the writing move you gracefully from one idea to the next? Does each section seem to naturally follow the last one, answering questions just as you start to form them?

In our experience, it often takes more than one developmental edit to get a piece just right. If you're getting frustrated, don't underestimate the power of a second opinion. You may want to send the draft back around to your subject matter expert, or even to someone who's never seen the piece before, just to get a fresh set of eyes.

Copy Editing

At this phase, the content itself is solid. Your ideas are clear and sharp, the structure is fluid and natural, and you've verified that the piece is aligned to your business objectives. Now it's time to get granular.

You'll look for:

- True typos – spelling errors, missing words, etc.
- Style guide violations – capitalization, comma usage, spelling conventions, etc.
- Brand consistency – product names, company description, etc.

If there's one thing we can't stress enough, it's that your content should be copy edited by someone other than the person who originally wrote it. Humans have a habit of unconsciously filling in missing words and correcting mistakes as they read, which is great for fast comprehension but terrible for copy editing. The more familiar you are with a piece of writing, the more likely you are to do this, which is why a fresh set of eyes is always best.

CONTENT CURATION

Curated content is content written by other people, which you then organize and share with your audience (common examples include "best of" lists, round-ups, or even summaries of other articles). While it shouldn't be the centerpiece of your content strategy, it can play a role as part of your overall content mix – especially if you have limited resources. The golden rule of curated content is that it must be relevant. If you can find and share something your audience is dying to know about, and give the content's author proper credit, you'll score points for being in the know.

"Curating content adds value for your audience. As great as your own content may be, your audience will want different perspectives and opinions. Reduce the need for them to spend time finding other content; and bring it right to them with your own insight in the form of curated content. In addition, adding your own insight to curated content is a great way to "create" in your owned property and get an SEO boost from Google."

Michael Gerard,
CMO, Curata



CREATE

THE THREE R'S OF CONTENT MARKETING



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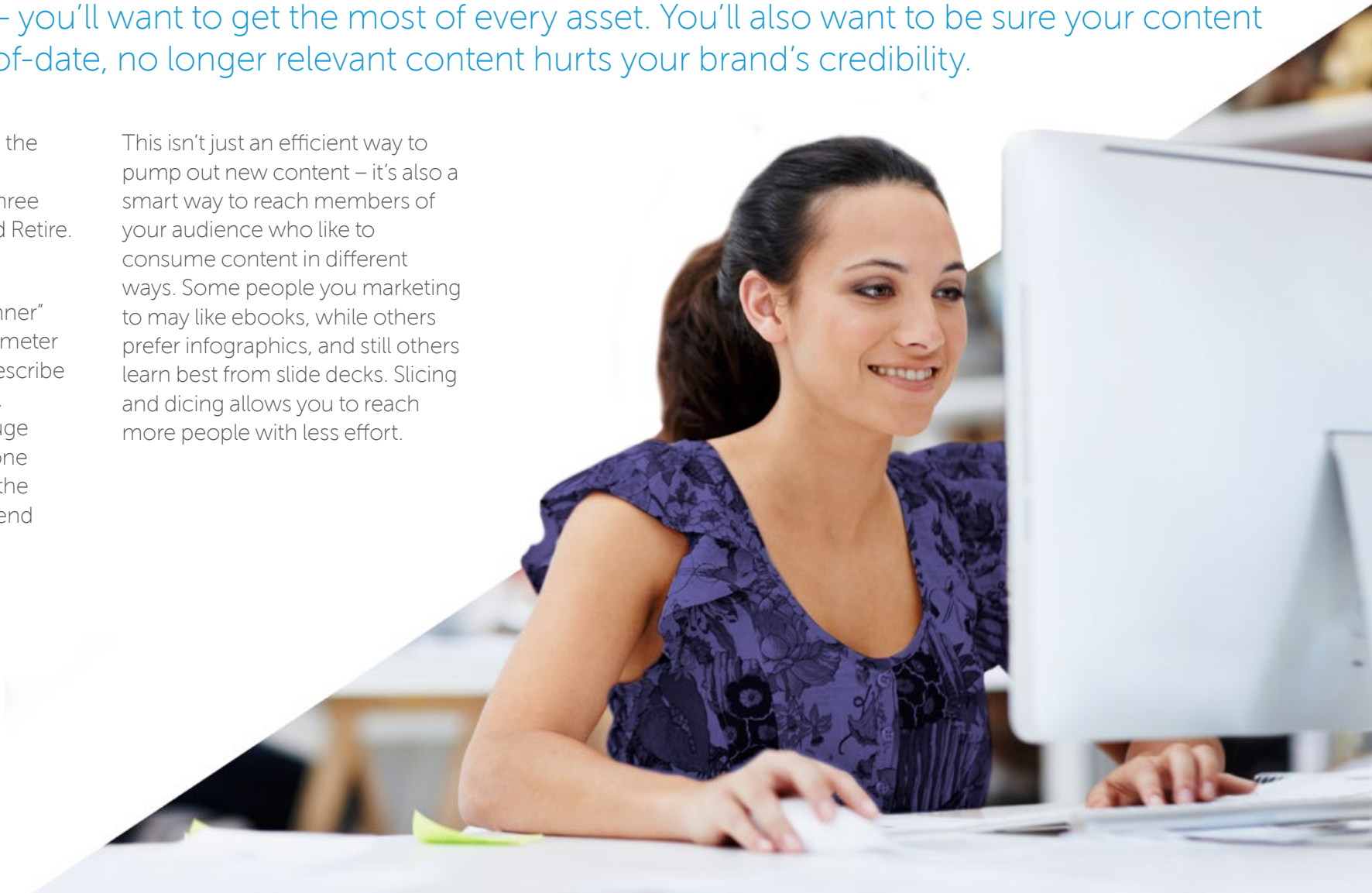
If you're starting with original, high-quality content – content that you've invested real time and money to create – you'll want to get the most of every asset. You'll also want to be sure your content stays fresh – out-of-date, no longer relevant content hurts your brand's credibility.

To make sure you're getting the most out of your content marketing, remember the three R's: Reorganize, Rewrite and Retire.

Reorganize

We often use the "turkey dinner" analogy (popularized by Altimeter Group's Rebecca Lieb) to describe how we repurpose content. Essentially, you expend a huge amount of effort to create one piece of content (this is like the Thanksgiving turkey you spend the whole day basting), and slice and then you dice it to create "leftovers."

This isn't just an efficient way to pump out new content – it's also a smart way to reach members of your audience who like to consume content in different ways. Some people you marketing to may like ebooks, while others prefer infographics, and still others learn best from slide decks. Slicing and dicing allows you to reach more people with less effort.



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CREATE

THE THREE R'S OF CONTENT MARKETING



To see how this looks in action, let's take a look at one of Marketo's Definitive Guides, The Definitive Guide to Lead Generation. This guide, which weighs in at an impressive 160 pages, is the allegorical turkey in this situation – we sliced it into multiple ebooks, cheat cheats, and infographics.

Of course, this is an extreme example of repurposing – you can also repurpose on a smaller scale. For example, you could turn a page of an ebook in to a cheat sheet, take data from a whitepaper to create an infographic, or expand on a particularly good blog post to create an ebook.

If you do choose to present the same information in a new way, make sure that you aren't just repurposing for the sake of looking productive. Repurposing works because people consume content differently – some prefer slide presentations, some like to quickly scan infographics and blog posts, while others won't bother downloading anything under five pages. Repurpose your content to reach a bigger slice of your audience.























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THE THREE R'S OF CONTENT MARKETING

Rewrite

It's an inevitable situation: you invest brainpower, time, and money into an amazing piece of content...and then it goes stale. Maybe your ebook predicted that minidiscs would make a comeback last year, or recommended a best practice that you wouldn't be caught dead doing today. Or maybe it's just a matter of design – the hottest graphic styles of yesterday don't always have staying power.

What to Rewrite

But before you dive in, how do you decide that a piece of content is worth re-writing? First of all, get the numbers. As we cover in our section on "vanity" metrics and FT/MT-attribution, you should run reports on how your content is affecting engagement and your company's bottom line.

Whenever an asset shows consistently high-performance, earmark it for a future update. Eventually, the number of engagements will start to drop – a good sign that it's time to update.

Of course, your content's shelf life also depends on your industry. If you're in technology or healthcare, for example, you might need to update your content frequently to stay on top of developments and trends. If you're in a more stable industry, you might only need to update on occasion.

How to Rewrite

If you do have an asset you think is worth giving an overhaul, here are a few tips to get you started:

1. Change the dates. This isn't just about timestamps. If you used words that reference time, like "recently," "lately," or "in the next few years" make sure those still apply.
2. Check your stats. If you cited a study or a report, find out if there's a more current version and refresh the data points in your content.
3. Add some fresh thinking. Is there a relevant thought leader who'd be worth getting a new quote from?

Finally, reach out to whomever in your organization knows most about a topic (see "Subject Matter Experts" on p61). Set up a meeting to gather input from your resident expert, and ask her/him to give your asset a thorough review. Often, this person will identify out-of-date or inaccurate information that you never would have noticed.

CREATE

THE THREE R'S OF CONTENT MARKETING

Design Refresh

Don't underestimate the power of a simple design refresh. Visual trends change quickly, and an asset's style might look outdated way before the writing goes stale. Replacing or eliminating photographs, changing out fonts, adding new graphics – these are all great ways to put a new cover on an old book.

Here's a small selection of assets we've redesigned at Marketo – as you can see, we've swapped stock photography for streamlined graphics:



THE THREE R'S OF CONTENT MARKETING

Retire

Even the very best content doesn't last forever. If a content asset needs help beyond a design refresh or simple update, it may be time for it to retire.

Content that is past its expiration date damages your company's authority and credibility – effectively undoing all of the good work your content has done. That's why you should continually ask yourself these questions about every piece of content that you publish:

- Is this content asset performing well? How is it performing this quarter compared to other quarters, or compared to other similar assets?
- Does this content cite reports that are outdated or no longer accurate?
- Was this content created to support or leverage a particular moment in time, such as an event, which has now passed?
- Does my audience still care about this topic?

> "Even an evergreen piece of content can earn its retirement when it no longer represents the 'best we can do' on the topic. Theoretically, we're going to get much better at content month after month and year after year. So, our 'thought leadership' piece from two years ago is probably not reflective of our current awesomeness – which means it's time to retire that piece and write it again."
>
> **Robert Rose,**
> **Chief Strategy Officer, Content Marketing Institute**

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DESIGN

In content marketing, the way that you visually present your content is almost as important as the content itself – if you can't entice people to read or view it, your hard work is wasted. This section will walk you through the design process, from initial concepts to final proofs.



DESIGN

CONTENT DESIGN



Marketo

DESIGN

CONTENT DESIGN

Depending on your asset, "design" might mean anything from converting your Word document into a simple PDF, to treating your content to a custom cover - graphics, design elements, and illustrations.

Design For Your Audience

Ideally, you'll start thinking about design at the same that you're initially brainstorming your content and defining your audience. The persona and buying-stage of your content's intended audience should have a big impact on the direction of your design, as should the way you plan to use your content.

For example, let's say we're creating content for an SMB audience, which we intend to use as an offer in a large email send to potential customers. The design for that content will be very different than content created specifically for CMOs, an IT audience, or content for marketers in higher education.

To hit the right design notes, you'll want to work closely with whoever knows the specific audience best – whether that's a product marketer on your team, or a person on your sales team who handles those deals. If you haven't made content for a particular audience before, it's always a good idea to research the competition. How are your competitors designing content to appeal to those audiences, and how could you design something even better?



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CONTENT DESIGN

Working with Designers

At Marketo, we either work with our "in-house" designers, or we leverage tried-and-true design agencies that are familiar with our visual style. The advantage of an outside designer is that they lend extra bandwidth to your internal team when they are swamped. The disadvantages are that they eat up extra budget, and that – however familiar with your company they might be – they don't live your brand the way an internal does.

Here's the process we recommend you use to design content, especially when using an outside agency:

Preliminary Styles

Send the designer the carefully edited copy for your content (whether it's an ebook, a report, an infographic, a slide deck, etc.). If you already have an idea, describe it as clearly as you can. It's often difficult to be specific at this stage – especially if you don't have a design background – which is why you should include examples for inspiration. Specify whether you'd like custom graphics, if you'd like the designer to incorporate photography, and describe the audience you're content is targeted towards.

In return, your designer should send you some preliminary styles to consider. These will probably be comprised of examples the designer has researched and found online – maybe four examples per proposed style. Let the designer know which style you think best suits your project, keeping in mind that you can pick and choose elements from each design proof. For example, you might like the typeface used in Style #1, but the color palate in Style #2. A good designer will be willing to accommodate you.

Concepts

Using the copy you've provided, and the style you've chosen, the designer will work to design a small section of the asset. We ask our designers to show us at least two different ways to approach the concept, which is why they only design a small portion – typically the cover and one internal page for an ebook, report, or slide deck.

As with the preliminary styles, it's important to be as specific as possible with your feedback. Tell the designer what is and isn't working, and make your final suggestions now – before it's too late!

DESIGN

CONTENT DESIGN

Creative Rounds

Now that you've agreed upon the design direction, styles, and concepts, your designer will show you a complete version of the designed asset, and you'll add your edits.

We find that once you have a fully designed version to work with, it takes several rounds to get the design just right. We also find that it's easiest to edit and attach comments to PDFs (compared to JPEGs, PNGs, or InDesign files), but that's entirely up to you and your designer.

Things to consider during creative rounds:

- Are the headers consistent? Do you know where you are in the asset at all times?
- Are page breaks in the most logical place?
- If the designer is using photography or custom graphics, do they fit with the content's themes and text?
- Does the text still make sense? For example, if you wrote in the copy "See chart above," and the chart is now to the left of the copy, you'll need to change the text.
- Are there any widows and orphans? These are words or short lines left dangling alone at the end of a paragraph, or at the top/bottom of a column – a serious design faux pas that your designer can easily fix.
- Are the page numbers correct? If you have a table of contents, is it accurate?
- Is your company's logo and boilerplate correctly represented?
- Do a final proof: are there any spelling errors, sentence structure issues, or last-minute additions?



CONTENT WORKFLOW

Now that we've covered the content creation process step-by-step, here's how the entire workflow looks when you put it all together – from your first idea to the final proof.

Keep in mind that every piece of content that you'll create is different. An infographic might not require multiple written drafts; a simple report might not require so much design. That said this workflow should give you a basic idea of the necessary steps.

1. Brainstorm
2. Meeting with SME
3. Create Strategy Doc (and get it approved)
4. Outline
5. Rough Draft of Copy
6. Developmental Edit 1 (structure, accuracy)
7. 2nd Draft of Copy
8. Developmental Edit 2 (continuity, sentence structure, style)
9. 3rd Draft of Copy
10. Approval of Copy from Stakeholders
11. Copy Edit (spelling, grammar)
12. Send Copy to Design
13. Rough Designed Draft
14. Proof 1 (visual themes, images, widows/orphans, continuity)
15. 2nd Designed Draft
16. Proof 2 (final copy edit)
17. Final Approval from Stakeholders
18. Publish and Promote!



PUBLISH AND PROMOTE

In content marketing, the way that you visually present your content is almost as important as the content itself – if you can't entice people to read or view it, your hard work is wasted. This section will walk you through the design process, from initial concepts to final proofs.



PUBLISH AND PROMOTE

CONTENT REPOSITORIES



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PUBLISH AND PROMOTE

CONTENT REPOSITORIES

Once you're ready to publish your content, where do you put it? Most companies keep their content on their website, where it can be easily accessed and downloaded. But as you create more and more ebooks, guides, webinars, slide decks, infographics, and analyst reports, you might end up with various types of content scattered across your website.

This is exactly where a content resource center, or a repository, comes in. A content resource center is a section of your website where you can organize and publish your content. This makes it easy, for your audience, and for your team, to find and share the content they need.

A content resource center can either be built directly on your website, or you can use a content management system like Uberflip or Kapost. The important thing is that you can easily upload, organize, access, and share each piece of content you create.



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PUBLISH AND PROMOTE

CONTENT REPOSITORIES

To Gate, or Not to Gate?

Inviting visitors to download content from your website is a great way to generate interest. But there are many perspectives about whether to put a form in front of content assets (known as "gating"). Some approaches include: gating all of your assets, only gating your product-focused assets, or asking a person to fill out a single form in order to access your entire library. There is no right or wrong way to do this, and we find that it varies from company to company.

Reasons to Gate

The pros of gating are fairly obvious: if you ask someone to fill out a form, you get their information, and then you can market to them. If you believe that by downloading a particular piece of content, a visitor to your website is indicating real interest in your product, it makes sense to grab his or her information and then send an email.

Once someone has downloaded your gated content, you not only have his or her information from the completed form – you also know what kind of content the contact interested in. You can use that data to engage him or her with similar, relevant content and add that data point to your knowledge about that persona.



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CONTENT REPOSITORIES

Reasons Not to Gate

If you're creating early-stage content, your goal is to build brand awareness, credibility, and to earn the right to market to your audience. An interest in early-stage, educational content probably doesn't indicate an interest in your product, so it doesn't make sense to start sending emails to those viewers.

When you gate your content, you put a barrier in front of it – which, of course, leads to fewer views. And it isn't just because filling out forms is a hassle – many people assume that if they provide contact information, they'll start receiving an endless stream of emails and phone calls.

At Marketo, we only gate our mid-stage assets (like third-party research reports, or product-specific ebooks) because we are offering something that we think indicates interest. In most other cases, we offer our content un-gated because we consider it a top of the funnel, educational piece that drives awareness and builds brand value.

Early Stage Pre-Purchase	Middle Stage Commit to Change	Late Stage Evaluation
Thought leadership and enjoyable content to build brand, awareness, and desire	Tools that help buyers find you when they are looking for solutions	Company-specific information to help evaluate and reaffirm selection
Blog, e-books, research data, funny videos, curated lists, infographics, webinars	Buying guides, RFP templates, ROI calculators, definitive guides, analyst reports	Pricing, demos, services information, 3rd party reviews, customer case studies
Gated? **NO**	Gated? **YES**	Gated? **MOSTLY NO**

PUBLISH AND PROMOTE

CONTENT ALERTS AND STRATEGY DOCS



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PUBLISH AND PROMOTE

CONTENT ALERTS AND STRATEGY DOCS

Your content is only useful if people actually use it. That's why it's important to keep your whole team aware of new content, and share insight about how it might be leveraged.

At Marketo, we send around an "Alert" email each time that we create a new asset. The email is sent to anyone who might possibly use the asset as part of their own strategy. Our email recipients include: the demand generation team, product marketing, the PR team, and members of our sales team, just to name a few.

To make each asset even easier to leverage, we also send our strategy document (see "Strategy Document" on p. 50) to anyone who might use the content.



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PUBLISH AND PROMOTE

PROMOTION



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PUBLISH AND PROMOTE

PROMOTION

Your promotion strategy will depend on your audience and your needs, but the best approach to promotion is a wide-reaching one.

In the same way that different people like to consume content in different mediums, they like to consume content in different places. That's why a wide approach to promotion is best. You want to use inbound strategies to help your content get discovered – through SEO, Pay-Per-Click, and an easily navigated resource center – and outbound strategies like display ads, paid promotions on social networks, and content syndication.



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PUBLISH AND PROMOTE
PROMOTION

OWNED

Social
Social is a perfect place to share early-stage, educational and entertaining content – and you control your social profile pages. Beyond simply posting about your new content in an update, most pages allow for customizable images – why not change your profile picture (or cover image on Twitter/Facebook) to a promotion for your content?

Email
If you're going to promote your content in emails to your database, you should segment your list and send content only to individuals who will find the content relevant and valuable. For example, we send content in demand generation emails to potential customers – early-stage content for buyers early in the sales cycle, and mid and late-stage content for people who are closer to a purchase. We also email our current customers with content about our platform, as well as content related to up-sell and cross-sell opportunities.

Blog
Your company blog is a great place to promote your content and the more educational and entertaining, the better. At Marketo, we typically write a blog post to accompany and promote all of our new content assets. But, don't stop after writing a few sentences and then throw in a link – why not use the opportunity to expand on one of your asset's points, or highlight a key finding? Ideally, posts promoting your content will not only entice your audience to download, but will offer value of their own.

"When you're promoting your content on social, you should pay to promote what's working. I always say that organic is good, but paid is better. Adding a paid strategy can give your content legs beyond your initial audience, and with today's targeting capabilities, there's no waste if you know who to target."

Jason Miller,
Sr. Manager of Content Marketing and Marketing Solutions, LinkedIn

PROMOTION

PAID

Paid Social

Paid promotions are when you pay to improve your content's chances of being seen on social. One of the biggest benefits of paid promotion is that you can specify which portion of a network's audience will see your ad. If you have specific demographics that you're targeting, or there are certain interests that indicate a good fit for your product or service, many social networks allow you to tailor your promotion to those specific audiences.

At Marketo, we put a portion of our marketing budget behind paid promotions across all our social channels – as sponsored posts on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. While ad products vary from network to network, the core product for most networks charges fees based on audience interaction with your posts – with good click-through rates (CTRs), your ads are given preference and served more often. With paid social, you are always working towards ads and content that attracts a higher CTR and have higher engagement. Typically with good CTRs your ad is served more often, but it can vary from network to network. It's important to be strategic with your ad placement, check in on their progress and optimize them regularly. If you're reaching the end of your budget, you'll need to either allocate more money or pull the ad.

To determine how effective a campaign is, we recommend taking the long view – are your impressions/click-through rates/ conversions dropping? If an ad isn't getting enough traction, you might want to switch it out.

Content Syndication

You can pay third-party sites, such as industry or news sites, to host your content. You can syndicate a complete content asset, or syndicate a snippet -linking the page to your own website or blog. Doing this provides you with the opportunity to promote your content to new audiences – just make sure the site's audience is a fit for your product/service.

Paid Email Programs

Paid email programs are sent from an external organization on your behalf. Find an organization with a high-quality database filled with members of your target audience, and be as granular as possible. You should be able to target subscribers based on audience, topics of interest, and region. When you send your content in paid email programs, pay close attention to the metrics – does a certain database respond positively (or negatively) to a specific type of content? Because these email sends can be expensive, be strategic about which content you include.

Search Marketing

You can pay third-party sites, such Search marketing is the process of gaining traffic by purchasing ads on search engines. Companies bid on keywords and phrases that are most relevant to their company and/or products, and the highest bidder ranks the highest above search results. These are often called "Pay-Per-Click" or PPC ads, because you only pay when someone actually clicks on your ad.

PROMOTION

EARNED

Earned Social
When you post your content to social, you want people to share it with their own networks – when they do, it's known as "earned" social promotion. Earned social promotion is difficult to get (you can't control how your audience behaves) , but highly valuable because people trust content recommended by their peers more than content recommended by brands.

Media Pickups
Any time another media source distributes your content – your infographic gets shared on Buzzfeed or TechCrunch gives your latest guide a shout-out – that's an earned media pickup. If your brand isn't already well known, earning these pickups can be a challenge. Tap into current events and conversations, differentiate your brand's unique perspective, coordinate with your PR team to develop a pitch plan, and be sure that you're promoting your content across channels for your best chance at exposure.

Influencer Mentions
Every industry has its thought leaders and influencers (see "Working with Influencers" on p.62), and their public praise is a boon to your brand. Make it easy for influencers to share your content by establishing relationships beforehand, include them in your content when it's appropriate, and alert them about content their audiences might enjoy.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)
SEO ensures that people can find your content. The more effective you are at using the same language buyers use when conducting a search, the more likely you are to rank highly in search engine results.

Writing your content to rank highly in search shouldn't be your first priority, but it should definitely be on your list. This doesn't mean stuffing your copy with keywords. Search engines like Google are smart enough to recognize keyword-stuffed copy, and your audience is smart enough to be bored by it.

Search engines now factor in the amount of time visitors spend on a webpage, and the rate at which they "bounce" to other sites – both of which are indicative of your content's quality, and its relevance to searchers. SEO best practices change all of the time, but to improve your ranking, the trends suggest that the you need valuable, compelling, and relevant content.

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MEASURE

Content marketing has a reputation for being difficult to measure, which can make it hard to obtain buy-in and support. But that's no excuse for playing it by ear – there are plenty of ways to test and measure your content. Here's how to measure your early, mid, and late-stage content.



MEASURE

THE CONTENT ROI MYSTERY



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THE CONTENT ROI MYSTERY

Many marketers struggle to prove the return-on-investment for their content. Rather than making ROI an afterthought, start solving the mystery at the gate.

In our experience, marketers struggle to justify their content marketing for one of two major reasons:

1. They don't think about measurement during content creation. If you aren't creating a measurable structure/framework from the beginning, how do you know what to measure?
2. They aren't aligned on the metrics that matter to key stakeholders. Your CMO wants to hear about opportunities, pipeline, and revenue; your social team wants to know about shares and views. Make sure you're measuring and presenting the right metrics to the right people.

Before you start measuring you content, take these steps:

- Define your content goals. Will the content be used to build brand awareness, or to drive revenue? Establish goals and ROI estimates upfront, so you'll know whether or not expectations have been met.
- Decide how you will measure results. Will you be measuring reach, engagement, time on your website, PR mentions, revenue, etc.? There is such a thing as measuring too much, so focus on the metrics and data that will actually help you make decisions later.
- Align key stakeholders. Measure what matters most to your stakeholders. We recommend covering your bases by measuring early-stage metrics, and then tying them back to pipeline and revenue.

> "This might sound overly simple, but the best way to measure content performance is according to the goals you've established for it. The problem in most cases is that marketers create content without accountability in mind outside of exposure."
>
> **Lee Odden,**
> **CEO, TopRank Online Marketing**

MEASURE

METRICS FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONTENT



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MEASURE

METRICS FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONTENT

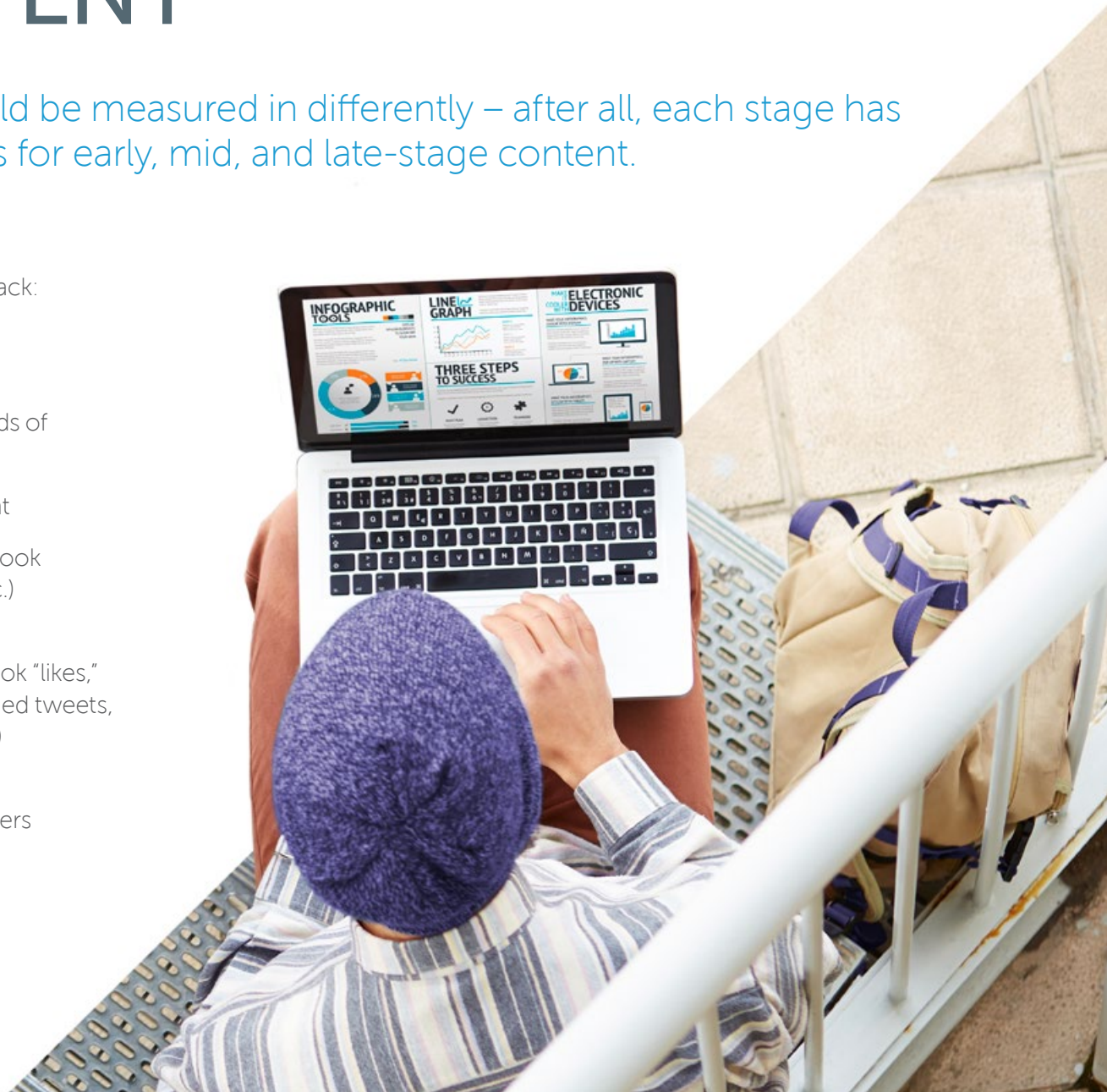
Content at each stage of the funnel should be measured in differently – after all, each stage has different goals. Here are the basic metrics for early, mid, and late-stage content.

Early-Stage Metrics

Early-stage metrics don't tie directly to revenue. The purpose of your early-stage content is to build brand awareness, create preference for your brand, educate, entertain, and engage your audience. Shares, downloads, and views tell you whether your content is attracting attention, and whether people like what they see.

Early-stage metrics to track:

- Traffic to your blog and website
- Views and downloads of your content
- Links to your content
- Social shares (Facebook shares, retweets, etc.)
- Social engagement (comments, Facebook "likes," mentions, "favorite"-ed tweets, +1 on Google+, etc.)
- Followers on social/blog subscribers



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METRICS FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONTENT

Mid and Late-Stage Metrics

Pipeline, opportunity, and revenue allocation give you insight into how your content affects deals. For mid-stage assets, you'll want to measure how your content is generating new interest; for both mid-stage and late-stage assets you'll want to know how your content is affecting your profits.

Using reporting like Marketo's, you can see the path new opportunities or customers follow to conversion – the Pay-Per-Click ads they clicked on, the webinars they attended, the emails they received, and, of course, the content they downloaded or viewed. A robust reporting solution allows you to see the number of opportunities touched by your content, and any revenue earned from buyers that viewed or downloaded it.

For late-stage content – such as customer testimonials, data sheets, feature guides, or demos – you'll want to know that your sales team is actually using your content. Valuable content should help your sales reps sell, so work with them to make sure your content is resonating with late-stage prospects. Meet with your sales team regularly to gather suggestions for content, and to train them on the content you've already created.

Mid and Late-Stage Metrics to Track:

- Lead generation (mid-stage only)
- Pipeline and opportunity allocation
- Revenue allocation
- Sales use

> "We maintain a close relationship with the people on the front lines – our sales team. We meet twice a month to discuss lead nurturing efforts and to make sure that when we create content to fill in the gaps, it features topics that truly speak to the needs of our target audience."
>
> **Steve Peck,**
> **Co-Founder and CBDO, Docalytics**

ASK THE EXPERTS

HOW DO YOU MEASURE YOUR CONTENT?

"The only metrics that matter to me ultimately are new leads and new business. But at the same time, I do pay some attention to so-called superfluous metrics like shares and likes – because they deliver a gut reaction to what resonates with people. That helps me jack up my content creation muscles – they're like a learning steroid. I learn a lot about what works by watching what others like."



Ann Handley,
Chief Content Officer,
Marketing Profs

"While there is no 'holy grail' metric, I believe the subscriber metric is the most valuable for us. Once we can attract someone to be a subscriber, we can start to see behavior changes – are they buying? Are they buying more? Are they engaging in the content? Does that affect buying behavior? The majority of our revenue comes from people that were first subscribers to our content. Subscribers drive our business."



Joe Pulizzi,
Founder,
Content Marketing Institute

"Measuring the effectiveness of your content marketing is one of the hardest – but also one of the most important – things to do. Unfortunately, too many marketers rely solely on page views and social shares. While these can provide some insight, we have to stay focused on the end goal – driving growth. The only way to do that is to effectively measure key growth metrics like lead and customer conversion rates, and the overall number of leads you're generating from your content."



Hana Abaza,
Director of Marketing,
Uberflip

MEASURE

METRICS FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONTENT

First-Touch and Multi–Touch Attribution

Using Marketo's Revenue Cycle Explorer, we track our own content's success using First-Touch (FT) and Multi-Touch (MT) attribution. If a buyer's first interaction with our marketing is to download a piece of content, and that buyer becomes an opportunity, the content gets First-Touch credit for that opportunity.

But content can influence opportunities at any stage in the process, which is why we also track Multi-Touch influence. Basically if a buyer becomes an opportunity after downloading content at any point in the cycle, the content still gets credit if it successfully influences the contacts associated with that opportunity. (Note: to do this properly, you need to tag which content assets are associated with each program that touches the account.)



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METRICS FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONTENT

In the report below, you can see how various content assets was the source of new opportunities (FT OPPS Created), or influenced the creation of opportunities (MT OPPS Influenced).

Program Name	(FT) OPS Created	(MT) OPS Influenced
The Definitive Guide to Engaging Email Marketing	16.7	35.3
The Definitive Guide to Marketing Metrics and Marketing Analytics	10.2	30.8
Gartner Magic Quadrant for CRM Lead Management	11.8	33.7
The Definitive Guide to Marketing Automation	15.6	43.6
Contagious Content: What People Share On Facebook and Why	2.2	8.2
Defending Your Marketing Budget	1.1	8.2
20 Quick Tips for Improving Your Email Programs	0.1	0.8
The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing	2.6	19.6
Workbook: Graduating from Email to Engagement: Using Marketo	0.6	1.0
The Definitive Guide to Social Marketing	4.1	12.6

File: "Opportunities created"

METRICS FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONTENT

We also take a look at how content affects actual revenue. If you're facing skepticism about content marketing's effectiveness, or you're having doubts yourself, there's nothing like tying content directly to closed-won deals. Below, you can see a report we ran in our Revenue Cycle Explorer, which tells us how the same assets have contributed to revenue so far. The "FT Revenue Won" column refers to revenue generated from customers who originally entered our database by downloading that particular asset. The "MT Revenue Won" column refers to revenue generated from customers who downloaded that asset at some point during the buying cycle.

Program Name	(FT) OPS Created	(MT) OPS Influenced
The Definitive Guide to Engaging Email Marketing	$139,975	$341,111
The Definitive Guide to Marketing Metrics and Marketing Analytics	$89,677	$366,900
Gartner Magic Quadrant for CRM Lead Management	$55,489	$366,803
The Definitive Guide to Marketing Automation	$103,884	$514,526
Contagious Content: What People Share On Facebook and Why	$5,478	$126,168
Defending Your Marketing Budget	$1,156	$74,413
20 Quick Tips for Improving Your Email Programs	$151	$9,893
The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing	$24,545	$225,444
Workbook: Graduating from Email to Engagement: Using Marketo	$0	$12,787
The Definitive Guide to Social Marketing	$9,694	$144,314

MEASURE

METRICS FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONTENT

Of course, with this type of reporting, it's important to keep in mind that it will take time for your content to generate opportunities or revenue, depending on the typical length of your sales cycle. Rather than comparing an asset you created a year ago to an asset created six months ago, check in on the metrics of both assets six months after they're published – and compare those numbers for an accurate view.

Finally, you'll also want to see how programs using your content (such as email programs that used your content as an offer) performed. There are a lot of factors involved in an asset's performance in programs – the relevance of the content to the audience who received an email, the email's subject line and copy, etc. But if your content is consistently tanking in certain types of programs, it's probably time to sit down with your team to figure out what's going wrong. If your content is performing beautifully, you'll want to keep up the good work.



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METRICS FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONTENT

In this illustration on the right, you can see how five different content assets performed, all sent within the same paid email program.

From this report, we can see that for "Awesome Email Program" (not its real name!), our Definitive Guide to Marketing Automation brought in a high number of new names, and the highest FT Pipeline Ratio. Our Content Marketing Cheat Sheet, on the other hand, brought us the most new names – but those names didn't turn into pipeline (note: it may take months before you see your programs pay off in pipeline, depending on the length of your sales cycle).

Program Name	Content Asset	Program Cost	New Names	FT Pipeline Ratio
Awesome Email Program V1	Marketing Metrics Success Kit	$7,500	593	1
Awesome Email Program V2	Content Marketing Cheat Sheet	$7,500	1,068	7
Awesome Email Program V3	Graduate From Email Marketing	$7,500	200	2
Awesome Email Program V4	Lead Scoring Checklist	$7,500	320	8
Awesome Email Program V5	**Definitive Guide to Marketing Metrics**	$7,500	945	**12**

File: "Program Content Analysis"

CONCLUSION

In today's digital, social, and mobile world, buyers are more empowered than ever before. Armed with an abundance of information, buyers self-direct their journeys – sometimes as much as 90% before a brand knows they are interacting with them. In order to capture the buyer's attention and interest in today's noisy market, content marketing mastery isn't just a "nice to have," but a must.

An effective content marketing strategy helps your brand engage with potential customers early in the buying cycle and build a relationship with them over time as they move through their lifecycle with your brand. After reading this Definitive Guide to Engaging Content Marketing, you have the tools you need to get started and build a successful content marketing strategy. Get to know your audience, and plan a variety of content for every stage of their journey. Use your content to tell a continuous story about your brand, and offer it on the channels your audience prefers. Give every content asset a clear purpose, and system of measurement – and do it without sacrificing efficiency or quality. Finally, remember that the heart of content marketing is value. Go use the best practices and strategies laid out in this Definitive Guide. It's time to engage your audience with content that educates, inspires, and begs to be shared.

APPENDIX

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About Marketo:
Marketo (NASDAQ: MKTO) provides the leading marketing software and solutions designed to help marketers master the art and science of digital marketing. Through a unique combination of innovation and expertise, Marketo is focused solely on helping marketers keep pace in an ever-changing digital world. Spanning today's digital, social, mobile and offline channels, Marketo's® Engagement Marketing Platform powers a set of breakthrough applications to help marketers tackle all aspects of digital marketing from the planning and orchestration of marketing activities to the delivery of personalized interactions that can be optimized in real-time. Marketo's applications are known for their ease-of-use and are complemented by the Marketing Nation®, a thriving network of more than 320 third-party solutions through our LaunchPoint® ecosystem and over 50,000 marketers who share and learn from each other to grow their collective marketing expertise. The result for modern marketers is unprecedented agility and superior results. Headquartered in San Mateo, CA with offices in Europe, Australia and Japan, Marketo serves as a strategic marketing partner to more than 3,300 large enterprises and fast-growing small companies across a wide variety of industries.

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