THE CONTENT CREATION GUIDE

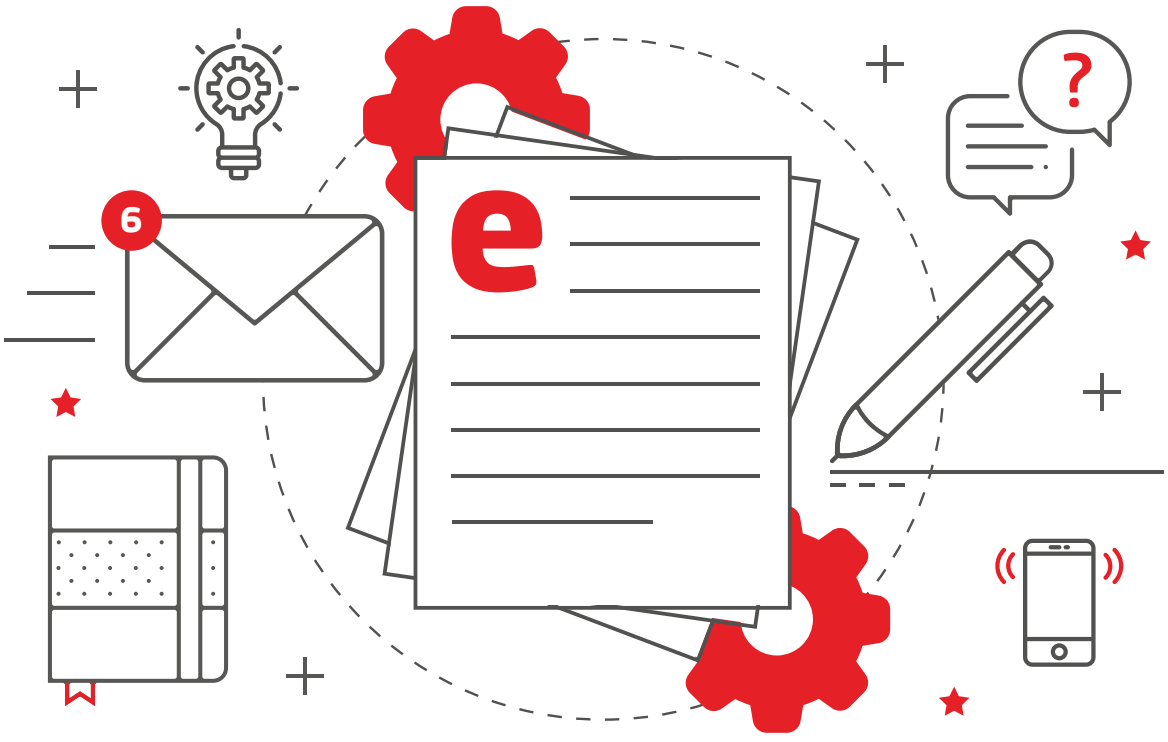


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WHY CONTENT IS KING

There's no denying the power of content marketing. It's increasingly taking up vast swathes of B2B marketing budgets and business professionals seem to have an unending appetite for new content. However, getting your content in front of an audience is only half of the equation. A successful strategy relies on that content informing the reader, leaving a lasting impression and driving them down the sales funnel. That means that before you kick off any form of content syndication, you should ensure that your library is watertight. Done right and you're handing your sales team a golden goose; done badly and you're landing them with a Sisyphean task.

So what does good B2B content actually look like? After 17 years of providing lead generation services to the world's top B2B brands, over at emedia we believe we have some idea of what works and what doesn't. In this paper we'll share some tips for crafting quality content, take a look at the different shapes and sizes B2B material comes in, and outline the process for creating content with emedia, taking you from concept to completion.



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

There's no shortage of B2B content out there, covering a huge range of topics across countless industries. However, no matter what subject matter you're focusing on, there are some general rules of thumb that differentiate truly effective content from your standard marketing fare. Here are some of our top tips for crafting content professionals won't be able to resist.

GO EASY ON THE SALES PITCH

Every company wants to sing the praises of their products from the rooftops but when it comes to lead-generation, a sales-intensive approach can often hurt rather than help. This may be your first point of contact with professionals who might not be aware of your brand and who are on the hunt for informative and educational content.

Total newcomers won't take time out of their day to read a brochure and so you need to ensure you're giving them a good reason to engage with your content. That doesn't mean you shouldn't mention your product or services, it just means you need to show how they can solve the issues the piece is discussing.

ESTABLISH YOURSELF AS AN AUTHORITY

Good content should prove your credentials, establish your brand as an industry expert and ultimately provide the reader with something they can use. Maybe it offers insights into industry trends or top tips on how to develop a business strategy.

Just make sure there's real value there; brief, bland and trivial content can leave a bitter taste in the mouth for readers (although that doesn't mean you need to write your own War & Peace).

"PEOPLE IGNORE DESIGNS THAT IGNORE PEOPLE"[1]

There seems to be a lingering notion that B2B can get away with being ugly. That might have held some water in the early days of the "dot com" boom, but today's business professionals expect the same sort of quality from their B2B channels that they're receiving on the consumer front. That translates into good graphic design, effective copy-writing and quality control.

"PROFESSIONALS EXPECT THE SAME SORT OF **QUALITY** FROM THEIR B2B CHANNELS THAT THEY'RE RECEIVING ON THE CONSUMER FRONT"

1 Frank Chimero https://quotesondesign.com/frank-chimero/

THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

Content marketing has evolved markedly over the years and there are a plethora of options available when it comes to developing your library. We've detailed the main offerings below, each with their own pros, cons and ideal use cases.



WHITE PAPERS & GUIDES

The bread and butter of any business's content library and the perfect tool for lead-generation. A white paper or guide allows you to establish your business as an industry expert, provide readers with insightful takeaways, and drive home the efficacy of your products and services.

Structure and clarity are the keys to success in this realm. Some studies have found that on average readers lose interest in an article in as little as 15 seconds,[2] so you need to ensure you quickly establish what a reader can expect from your paper and how it's going to be delivered to them. There's nothing worse than getting a page into a white paper and still having no idea what it's all about. In the same vein, avoid waffling on; keep to the point and as Orwell said, "If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out."

"ON AVERAGE READERS LOSE INTEREST IN AN ARTICLE IN AS LITTLE AS **15 SECONDS**, SO YOU NEED TO ENSURE YOU QUICKLY ESTABLISH WHAT A READER CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR PAPER"

With that being said, have some fun with your work. The notion that B2B needs to be painfully serious is counter-productive. Just because someone's a member of a company's C-suite doesn't mean they don't appreciate a bit of flare in writing.



SURVEY REPORTS

It would seem business professionals are obsessed with what their peers are thinking, but with a distinct lack of telepathy in their ranks many instead choose to turn to industry reports. Here at emedia we have a global reach of over 47 million and can offer surveys through to report creation. These can even be coupled with infographics, speaking of which...

2 http://time.com/12933/what-you-think-you-know-about-the-web-is-wrong/

INFOGRAPHICS

Short, snappy and informative, infographics are great way of putting the important facts and figures in front of audiences and their waning attention spans. Infographics are best suited to lead nurturing and brand awareness rather than all out lead generation, as leads usually expect a little more detail in exchange for their personal information. There's a surprising range of variation in the realm of infographics, so let us know whether you're looking to focus on the facts or get creative with your design.

BLOG POSTS

This format has grown from being a plaything of 90s computer enthusiasts to an absolute must-have for any serious brand. Whilst not ideal as gated content, blogs are the perfect medium for regular nurturing of engaged leads. Unfortunately, many take a quantity over quality approach to business blogs that can end up unwieldy. Spending time crafting quality blog articles with well-defined SEO criteria can drive serious traffic to your site and help convert new found leads into solid opportunities.

WEBINARS

With much of the consumer sphere moving to video, it's no surprise that webinars have become the golden child of B2B content marketing. Only making its way into the dictionary in 2008, this new kid on the block allows you to build a far more personal rapport with potential leads. However, quality is key when it comes to webinars. A slap-dash recording with tinny sound will drive viewers away before you have a chance to get your message across. At emedia we can offer high-quality studio recording for on-demand, simu-live and live webinars.

"WEBINARS HAVE BECOME THE **GOLDEN CHILD** OF B2B CONTENT MARKETING"

VIDEO WHITE PAPERS

An emerging medium that takes the effectiveness of white papers, combines it with the graphical quality of infographics and meets the growing demand for video. Whether you want to convert your existing papers into a video format or create something entirely new, emedia can help you take an early lead with this exciting new format.

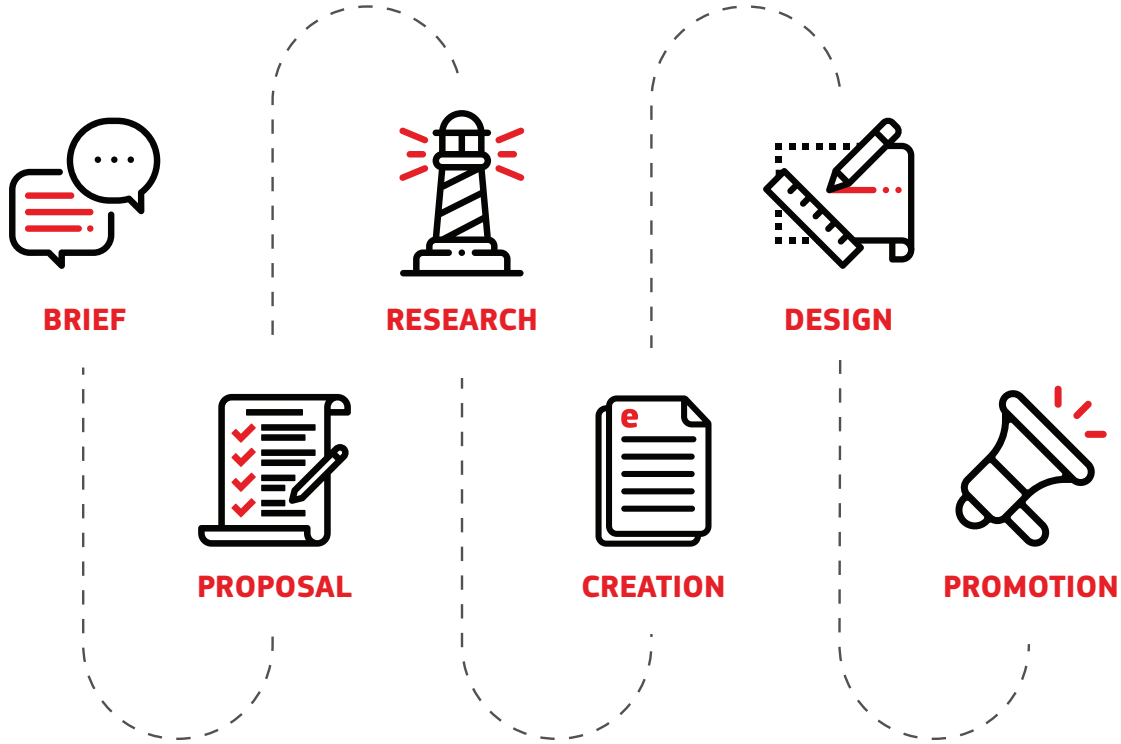
CHOOSE A PARTNER

So you've got everything in place to start building your content library; now you have to decide how you're going to do that. On the surface it might seem like the more cost-effective option to create content in-house but if that content fails to engage and convert potential leads, then you'll be throwing money away on your lead generation activities. By choosing an expert partner to develop your content you'll get far more bang for your buck down the line. But who do you choose? Not only does emedia have a team of expert copywriters and designers, we also have years of experience creating and then promoting content for the world's top B2B brands. Other agencies may think their ideas will work; we know ours will. So if you do choose to partner with emedia, here's what the content creation process will look like.

"IF YOUR CONTENT FAILS TO ENGAGE AND CONVERT POTENTIAL LEADS, THEN YOU'LL BE **THROWING MONEY AWAY** ON YOUR LEAD GENERATION ACTIVITIES"

THE 6 STAGES OF CONTENT CREATION

There are a number of steps on the way towards a finished piece of content, but each is designed to ensure the process runs as smoothly as possible and that the final product matches your initial expectations. If you choose emedia as your content provider, this is how you can expect the process to unfold.



1 STAGE 1 : BRIEF

First we'll need to get an idea of what you want. We'll provide you with our brief template and you can tell us the type of content you're after, the word count for the piece, the topic you'd like us to cover and anything the project needs to include. Whether you have a specific concept in mind or would like us to drive the creative, we can accommodate your needs.

2 STAGE 2 : PROPOSAL

At this point we'll take your initial brief and build a structural outline of what the content will include. If you know exactly what you're after, this will simply fill in some gaps in your brief and raise any questions we may have. If you're looking for new ideas we can propose any number of concepts and approaches. Once we've all agreed on the details of the project, it's over to us.

3 STAGE 3 : RESEARCH

We'll get things started by amassing all the information we'll need for the piece. This can be anything from general research and collecting survey information, to contacting experts and arranging webinar dates. We may ask you to provide us with information about your product or offering, or alternatively, any vital messaging you need included in the content.

4 STAGE 4 : CREATION

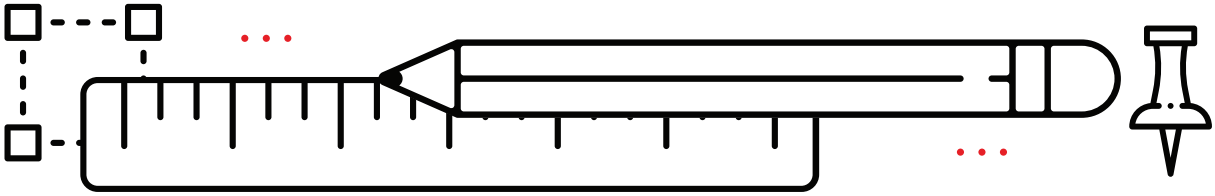
Now we have everything we need to start building the content. This process takes on many forms depending on the type of content we're creating.

For written documents such as whitepapers and guides we'll provide a first draft for you to peruse and critique. We're thick skinned so feel free to question our choices and suggest amendments. Be aware, if you have multiple stakeholders involved this can elongate the process. Where possible try to condense all edits into a single document; the last thing you want is two managers suggesting conflicting changes and neither being satisfied with the end result. We'll go through as many rounds of amendments as needed to ensure the copy is watertight and meets all of your expectations.

When creating webinars the procedure can vary greatly depending on circumstances. We can provide anything from a simu-live event utilising your pre-recorded audio on our webinar platform, to a fully managed, live experience with specialist speakers, moderators and live Q & As.

5 STAGE 5 : DESIGN

Once all elements of the copy have been agreed upon, it's over to our designers. Following your brand guidelines, we'll provide the visual flare to turn the copy into a stand-out piece of marketing material. Our designers can provide everything from custom graphics and fonts to animations for your video white papers and webinars. Again we will provide you with a first draft and let you tweak the design until we have the polished and professional piece you had envisioned.



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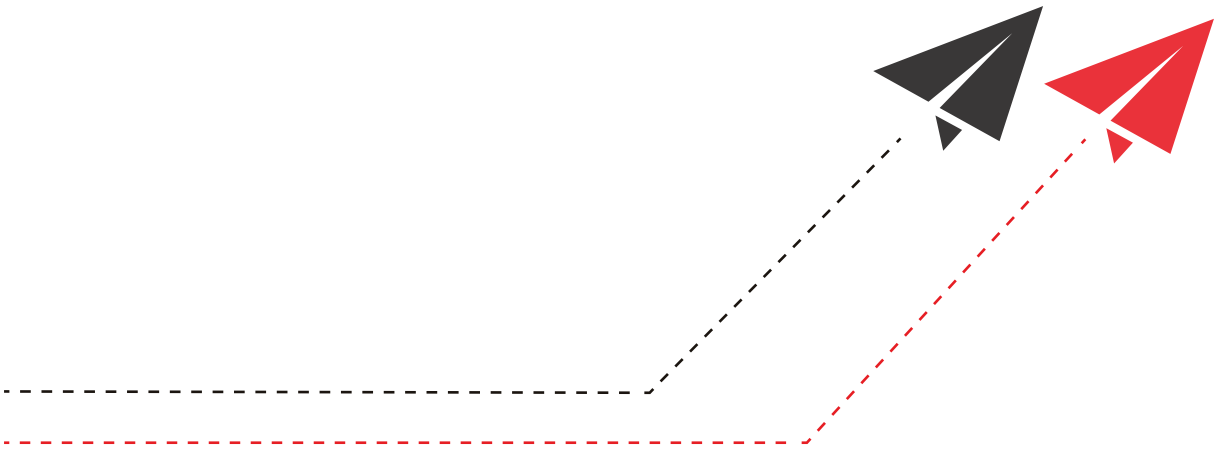
STAGE 6 : PROMOTION

With the finalised piece of content in your hands, it's yours to do with as you please. Host it on your website, share it with your mailing list and, just maybe, utilise it in a lead generation campaign with emedia. Our account managers will be able to arrange a number of great packages that include content creation and lead generation.

"WITH THE FINALISED PIECE OF CONTENT IN YOUR HANDS, IT'S YOURS TO DO WITH AS YOU PLEASE"

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Whether you're taking your first steps into the world of content marketing or looking to fill the gaps in your growing library, emedia can help you craft engaging content for your specific target audience. There's no subject matter, language or format that's off-limit; whatever your needs, we'll develop bespoke content to meet them. If you'd like to know more about what content creation with emedia entails, please contact your account manager or email: enquiry@emedia.co.uk.



About emedia

With two decades of experience in lead generation services, emedia today delivers news, content and advice to an audience numbering over 55 million contacts worldwide and consisting of prominent industry influencers and buyers.

Benefitting from our expertly curated calender of sector-specific bulletins, emedia is able to offer unique insight into what makes an effective content marketing campaign, equipping us with the tools required to take your campaign seamlessly from content creation through to syndication.

Get in touch to find out how emedia's content creation and lead generation services can assist you in meeting the changing expectations of B2B buyers.

E: enquiry@emedia.co.uk

T: +44 (0)203 701 5708.

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