

Content marketing for marketers:

YOUR GUIDE TO BETTER CONNECTIONS

Learn how sweeter content can help your company engage
more prospects and keep more customers



Overview



This article explores what content marketing is, its role in customer engagement and its core principles. In addition to descriptions of the most common types of content marketing, it explores the impact of content marketing on each stage of the sales process and the strategic role it can play with your sales team.

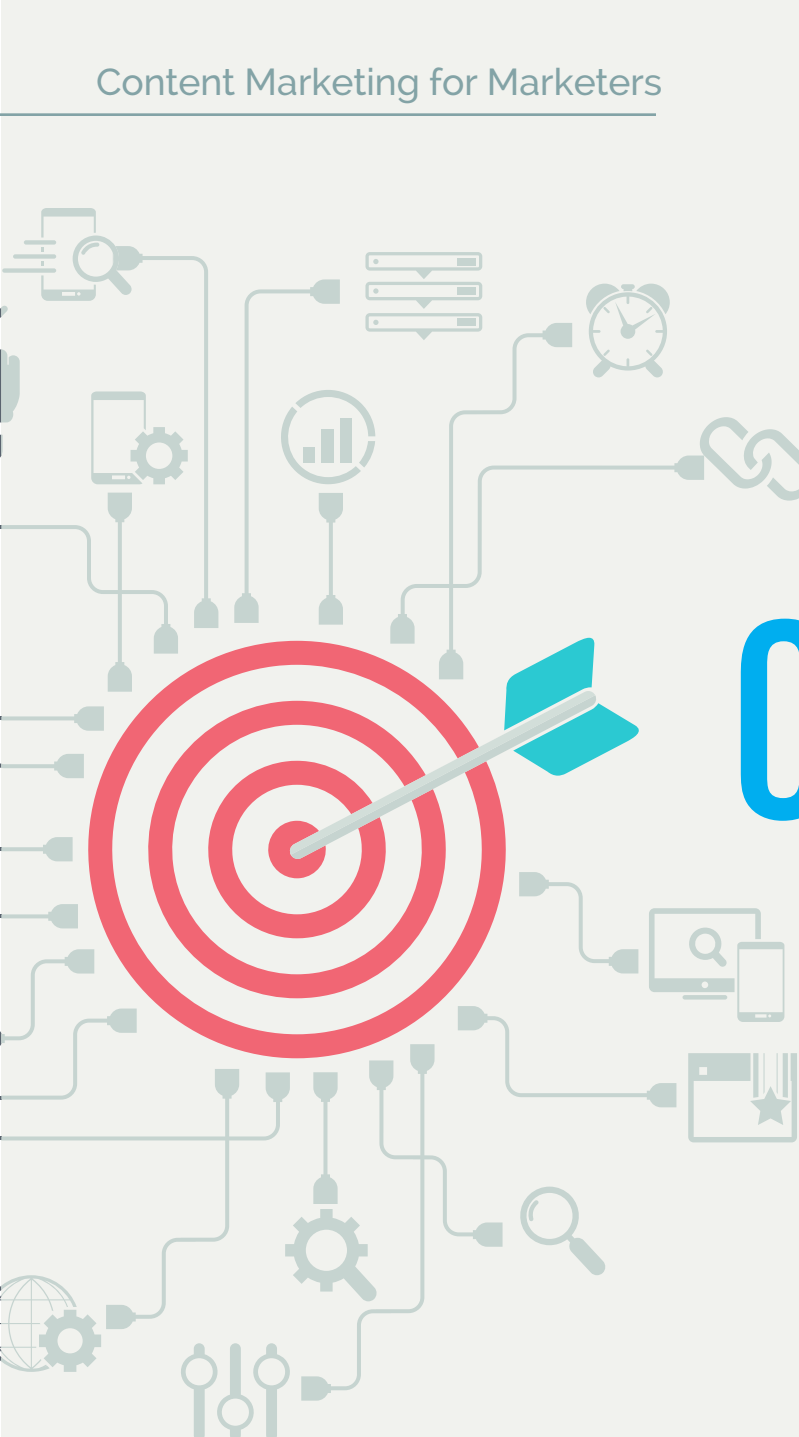


ABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Core principles	5
Types of content	6
Stages of sale	7
Producing content	10
Impact on sales	11
About us	12



Introduction



Content marketing is, simply put, about credible engagement with your audience. Using a variety of strategies, content marketing is designed to connect companies and brands with customers and potential customers.

Content marketing is a targeted approach that gives customers and prospects insights and useful information that is relevant to the company or brand. Content is designed to both attract new customers and foster loyalty among existing customers.

By engaging with customers through content, a business can add value to the relationship by providing useful information and, in many cases, compelling customers to seek additional information, goods or services from the company.



Core principles

A recent article discussed several core principles at the heart of content marketing.

They are:

1 CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Customers today want different relationships with the products and services they use. They want an interactive forum for gaining information and solving real problems. Content marketing serves as a valuable resource for them.

2 ACTIONABILITY

Content marketing is done best when the company knows its customers' needs and issues and creates content that is relevant. Give readers tools and content they can apply and use right now. To achieve this, you need content that is specific, not generic. Put the solutions in your customers' hands.

3 SIMPLICITY

Your readers are intelligent, but you still want to create content that is easily read and uses language that is simple to understand, easy to digest and read and absorbed on the fly. Readers may be reading your content on a mobile device, often in moments with little time to spare. Make your points brief, memorable and compelling.

4 PRIDE

The content you create will be associated with your brand. It should be high quality - work you can stand behind.



Types of Content

Let's take a closer look at the types of content available.

BLOGS

Blogs are narrative pieces, usually short in length (500 to 700 words). Content marketing blogs are slightly different than personal blogs, however. In that they are usually a part of a corporate website, the content is typically targeted and specific to the business.

EBOOK

A content marketing ebook is a longer form of writing, typically 1,500 to 10,000 words. Ebooks provide an in-depth look at a specific concept, issue or problem, often in short sections. They are not the Great American Novel. They are meant to provide customers with a deeper understanding of the topic at hand.

WEB CONTENT

Your website is content marketing. Listings of products and services, along with descriptions, locations and areas served all provide opportunities to speak with your audience.

INFOGRAPHICS

An effective infographic combines images, charts, illustrations and words. Infographics can effectively convey information quickly in a simple-to-understand format.

USER GENERATED

Depending on the product or service, it may be appropriate to invite customers and clients to create content on your behalf or cross-promote content on multiple sites.



Stages of Sale

All marketing needs to be targeted to a certain stage of the buying cycle. Content marketing is no different. A blend of content is needed that reaches customers where they are in the purchase process. Let's take a look at each stage and what types of content work best. Let's imagine, for this section, that your company makes iPhone cases with a personal photo on the back.



AWARENESS

At this stage, you want your customers to be learning about your products or services. In this stage, the question to ask is, "What does the potential customer need or thinks he or she needs?" This stage is about being sure your company pops up in search engine results for broad concepts such as "iPhone cases," "iPhone case gift ideas" or "personalized iPhone cases." Content can be fairly broad here, too - perhaps a blog post on how a case protects an iPhone.

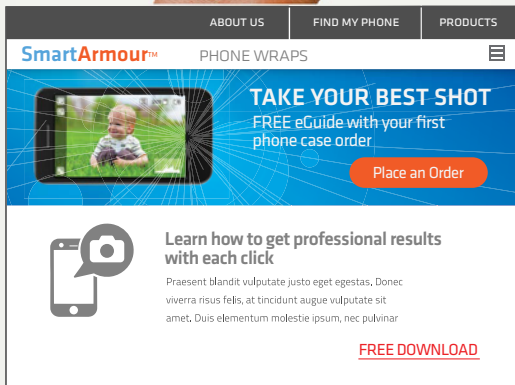
EVALUATION

In this stage, potential customers are assessing your product. They will be considering price, functionality and features. Here is where content marketing could discuss the high costs of repairing unprotected iPhones.

continued >



Stages of Sale



PREFERENCE

It's getting down to brass tacks here as customers decide whether to purchase your product. Customers are likely to be spending a lot of time on your website, reading about the services and products you provide, descriptions, reviews and blogs. At this stage, storytelling is crucial. This is where you provide testimonials, information about your company and the community, your green practices and where that iPhone case personalization made a mom's day on her birthday.

PURCHASE

Congratulations on making the sale! At this point, your content marketing should be purposed to leverage the relationship. Perhaps, after the sale, you point them to a special page with tips for getting the most out of your iPhone, how to take great photos with an iPhone, or iPhone safety for children. Again, the key is to demonstrate the value of the relationship you now have.

REPURCHASE

To increase the likelihood of another sale, you have an opportunity to maintain a relationship with the customer. Invite them to submit a review or provide a testimonial. Continue to send emails as new blogs, infographics, or ebooks are available. Driving customers back to your site, can keep you top of mind.



Producing Content



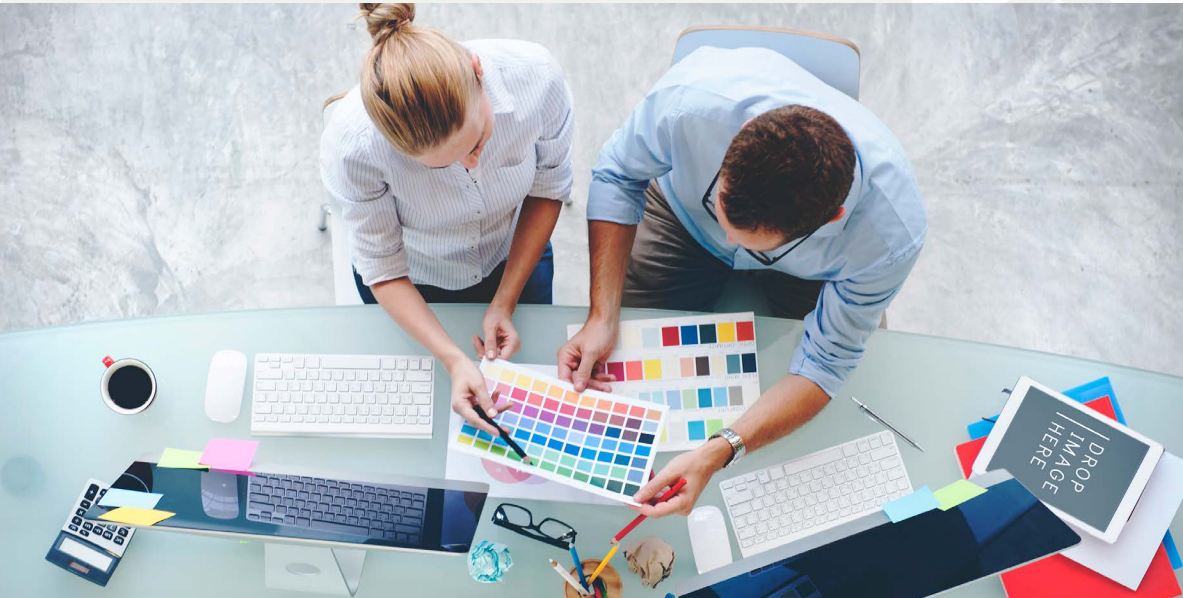
OK, you've decided on a content marketing strategy. Now what? Who's going to produce all those compelling blogs, powerful web pages and zippy infographics?

The first determination should be whether there are deployable in-house resources that are capable of expertly addressing the task. The marketing and communications department might take on these additional duties. It might even be a responsibility of executives who are experts on various topics.

Part of the content strategy needs to be who is positioned as the face of your campaigns. Do you want your CEO to be positioned as an industry expert in areas related to your business? Do you want multiple voices that are presented from within the organization? It's your choice.



Producing Content



If the resources or talent are not in place internally, there are terrific external options. Various content marketing firms offer services that include content strategic planning, search engine optimization, and analytics in addition to producing the pieces for you. Other sites make writers and editors available on an ad hoc or contract basis for specific projects.

The main advantage to in-house production is that the staff are likely, at least at the start, more familiar with the company's mission, objectives and short- and long-term goals. Product usage, services offered and differentiators are usually already understood. In addition, writers can speak with one corporate voice.

On the other hand, using external writers provides fresh perspectives and insights, a new way of phrasing a concept and different tonalities. For smaller companies that do not have the internal resources, hiring a skilled writer accustomed to producing compelling content can be affordable and efficient.



Inbound281.com



Impact on Sales

CONTENT MARKETING = LEAD GENERATION

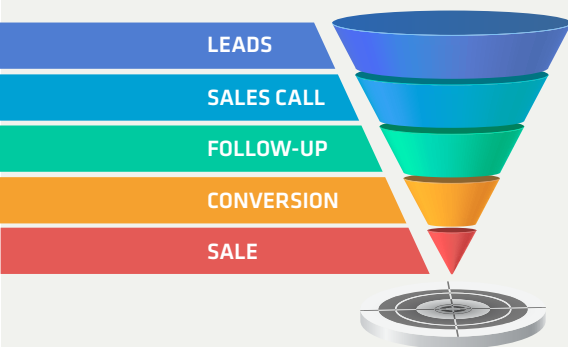


Content marketing gives your sales team several decided advantages. When used as part of a lead generation strategy, content marketing drives more potential customers to seek information, fill out a form or send an email.

Good content marketing forces a company to understand customer motivations and respond accordingly, providing deep insights for a sales force. Further, content marketing is an effective way to test-drive certain messages and see what sticks.

Content gives sales teams an understanding of what messages resonate best with prospects and what problems need to be solved well before they are a part of a sales funnel. In addition, the content can help forge a trusting relationship with a salesperson before the relationship begins, largely due to the value proposition the content offers.

Finally, managed content provides a rich resource pool for sales staff (and other employees), who need to stay up to speed on products or messaging.



About Inbound 281

WHO WE ARE

We are a digital marketing agency dedicated to helping our clients navigate the digital landscape, connect more meaningfully to their customers, and inspire their audience with purposeful content. We do this by leveraging inbound marketing and web design strategies for business, corporate, and enterprise marketers.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to use our inbound approach to develop leading-edge digital marketing plans, perceptive strategies, and valuable solutions to help you engage your customers with more two-way conversations and personal interactions to support revenue generation.

READY FOR A CONVERSATION?

If you are interested in a comprehensive plan that combines website design, email marketing, social media marketing, content development, and automation – or if you'd just like to learn more about how an inbound marketing plan can complement your established branding and communications strategies to meet your organization's unique needs, reach out and have a conversation with us.

[TALK TO US](#)



Inbound281.com

Inbound 281
2155 Butterfield Dr, Suite 205
Troy, MI 48084

1.800.834.4910
hello@inbound281.com