



The **ADVANCED**



CONTENT MARKETING

GUIDE

WRITTEN BY NEIL PATEL & KATHRYN ARAGON

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INTRODUCTION

WHY DID WE WRITE THIS GUIDE?

We wanted to give you the most extensive and detailed guide of advanced content marketing techniques available today. This resource is chock full of tactical, immediately actionable ideas that you can implement in your own business — to start building a community of fans and followers, to increase engagement and traffic to your website, and to drive sales.

We've included everything from planning to writing to promoting your content so you have all the information you need to all be insanely successful and prosperous on the Web — all in one place!

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

If you've only read about content marketing or have already begun to get your hands dirty, if you want to learn more about producing and publishing content, this Advanced Guide To Content Marketing is for you.

If you've already mastered the basics of Content Marketing, such as starting a blog or producing videos and podcasts, and want more, this guide is for you!

The Advanced Guide To Content Marketing is for anyone looking to take their success on the Web to the next level: bloggers, business owners, eCommerce sites and even affiliate marketers. This guide provides you with dozens of actionable tactics you can put to work today to begin engaging your ideal customers with high-value content.

HOW MUCH OF THIS GUIDE SHOULD YOU READ?

To get the most value, you'll want to read the whole thing! While you may not need to apply every section to your content plan today, you will gain an understanding of the concepts in each part.

Content marketing can be started by implementing just one type of content at a time. So start with your blog. Then add one new type of content at a time. The key is to integrate it into the rest of your marketing plan, so it works together like cogs in a machine.

To start, you may read whatever section applies to you now, but it can definitely benefit you to read it all.



BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION

In this chapter, you'll lay the groundwork for a powerful content marketing strategy that can help you build your business.

If you're ready to jump into content production and want to start writing right away, I understand. But at some point, you'll need to define why you create content and what you're trying to achieve with it. The decisions you make in this chapter will give you a strong foundation for your content marketing plan — and make you stand out as a content publishing guru.



CHAPTER

2

HOW TO GENERATE THOUSANDS OF CLICKABLE IDEAS FOR YOUR CONTENT

As a content marketer, you need to be able to generate an unending stream of interesting, unique, and valuable content ideas. Let's face it, that's a big task!

So to make sure you have what it takes, this chapter offers seven practical tactics for creating your own idea-generation system, so you can easily come up with all the ideas you need.



CHAPTER

3

HOW TO PLAN YOUR CONTENT FOR MAXIMUM PRODUCTIVITY

By now, you have a working content marketing plan and a list of ideas. It's time now to start planning your content. (*This is the fun part.*)

In this chapter, you'll continue to expand on the Content Plan you created in chapter 1. You'll develop a working Editorial Planner in which you can plan and track your content, and after it's published, record results. You'll also begin planning content for the next few months.



CHAPTER

4

LEARN TO WRITE CONTENT LIKE A PRO

It's time to start creating content. But not just any content. We're talking relevant, creative, engaging content that actually gets read.

And that's exactly what you'll get in this chapter. Here we cover the six steps of the creative process, in depth and with specific examples showing you how to turn your idea into a finished piece of content.



CHAPTER

5

12 CONTENT WRITING SECRETS OF PROFESSIONAL WRITERS

One of the biggest struggles content marketers have is producing enough content and simultaneously keeping the quality high. That's something professional writers must work through on a daily basis.

So in this chapter, you'll learn 12 secrets of professional writers: the tips and tricks that help them consistently produce a steady stream of high-quality content.



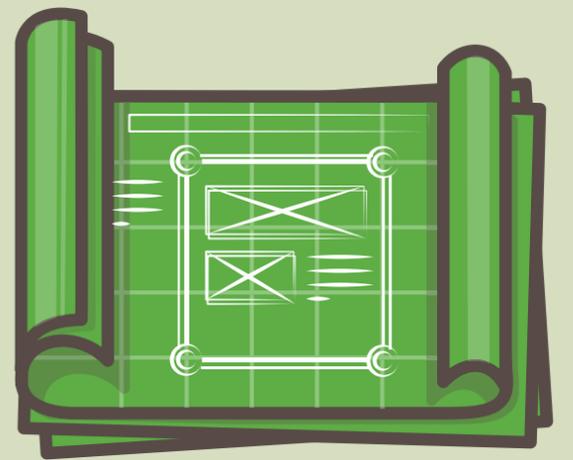
CHAPTER

6

TEMPLATES FOR QUICK AND EASY CONTENT CREATION

In this chapter, you'll find 12 tried-and-true templates that content writers have used successfully for years. These templates are invaluable for finding the right structure for the type of content you're creating.

Why is this important? Because when it comes to communicating your ideas, the way you organize and present them is as important as your ability to put them into words.



CHAPTER

7

OVERCOMING COMMON CONTENT MARKETING ROADBLOCKS

Because content marketing involves more than publishing a few blog posts, and because content creation demands a huge commitment of time and resources, there are a lot of roadblocks that can slow your progress.

Some of them are obvious: dealing with writer's block, for instance. Others stem from wrong thinking about what content marketing is and how to manage it.

So in this chapter, we'll talk about ways you can overcome ten common obstacles. *(If you proactively put these strategies to work before you get stuck, you can reach your goals in record time.)*



CHAPTER

8

THE OTHER SIDE OF CONTENT CREATION: OPTIMIZE FOR SEARCH

Planning and writing your content is only part of the process. You also need to optimize it so people can find it in search engines.

In this chapter, you learn the basic tactics you need to use to make sure your content is well received by search engines *and* readers.



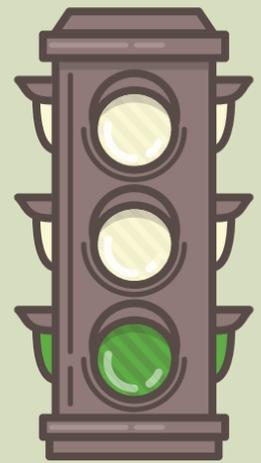
CHAPTER

9

PROMOTING YOUR CONTENT TO INCREASE TRAFFIC, ENGAGEMENT, AND SALES

The secret to content marketing boils down to three things: creating great content, making sure it gets found in search engines, and promoting it to your followers.

You've learned the secrets of creating great content and making sure it ranks well in search engines. Now let's talk about ways to promote your content.



CHAPTER

10

DRIVING BUSINESS OBJECTIVES WITH CONTENT: 5 SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR MONETIZING YOUR CONTENT

The optimization and promotion tips we've shared in the last two chapters can make a big difference in your traffic levels. But once people are on your site, you need to convert that traffic into sales.

In this chapter, you learn five methods for monetizing your content without advertising. Not all of them will work for every business. But all of them are valuable strategies that are being used successfully by other content marketers.



SIMPLY PUT, USE THIS GUIDE TO HELP YOU TAKE YOUR CONTENT MARKETING TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

**TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER ONE**





The ADVANCED



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BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION

Welcome to my first chapter in the Advanced Guide to Content Marketing. In this chapter, you'll lay the groundwork for a powerful content marketing strategy that can help you build your business.

If you're ready to jump into content production and want to start writing right away, I understand. But at some point, you'll need to define why you create content and what you're trying to achieve with it. These are the decisions that give your content focus and clarity — and make you stand out as a content publishing guru.

Why not make those decisions now so you can lay a strong foundation!

When you're done with this chapter, you'll know your objectives, your target audience, and your strategy. You'll also learn the technology and work flow that will help you meet your objectives.

So you can confidently plan and create your content, knowing you're creating the type of content that will engage your ideal customers and grow your business.

New marketing is about the relationships, not the medium.

Ben Grossman
founder of BIGMarK

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

It is a strategy of producing and publishing information that builds trust and authority among your ideal customers.

It is a way to build relationships and community, so people feel loyal to you and your brand.

It is a strategy for becoming recognized as a thought leader in your



No 1

CREATE A SIMPLE PLANNING DOCUMENT

Throughout this chapter, you'll be making important decisions about how you'll structure and manage your content marketing efforts. As you make those decisions, you need to write them down, so you will end up with a simple, actionable content marketing plan that will guide your content creation from now on.

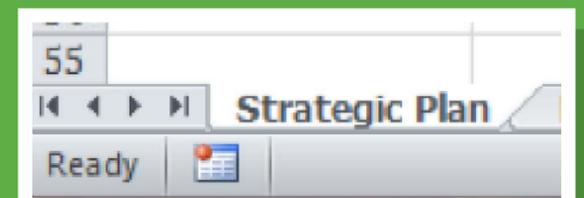
Here's what you need to do:



STEP 1

START A NEW EXCEL DOCUMENT

Name it Content Plan [y ear] For [y ear] put the current year.



STEP 2

IN ROW 1, TYPE "CHANNEL PLAN."

STEP 5

IN ROW 2, TYPE IN THE HEADER FOR EACH COLUMN

N

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	CHANNEL PLAN							
2	Content Types	Channel	Objective	Structure	Frequency	Tone	Desired Action	URL

Column A: Content Types

Column E: Frequency

Column B: Channel

Column F: Tone

Column C: Objective

Column G: Desired Action

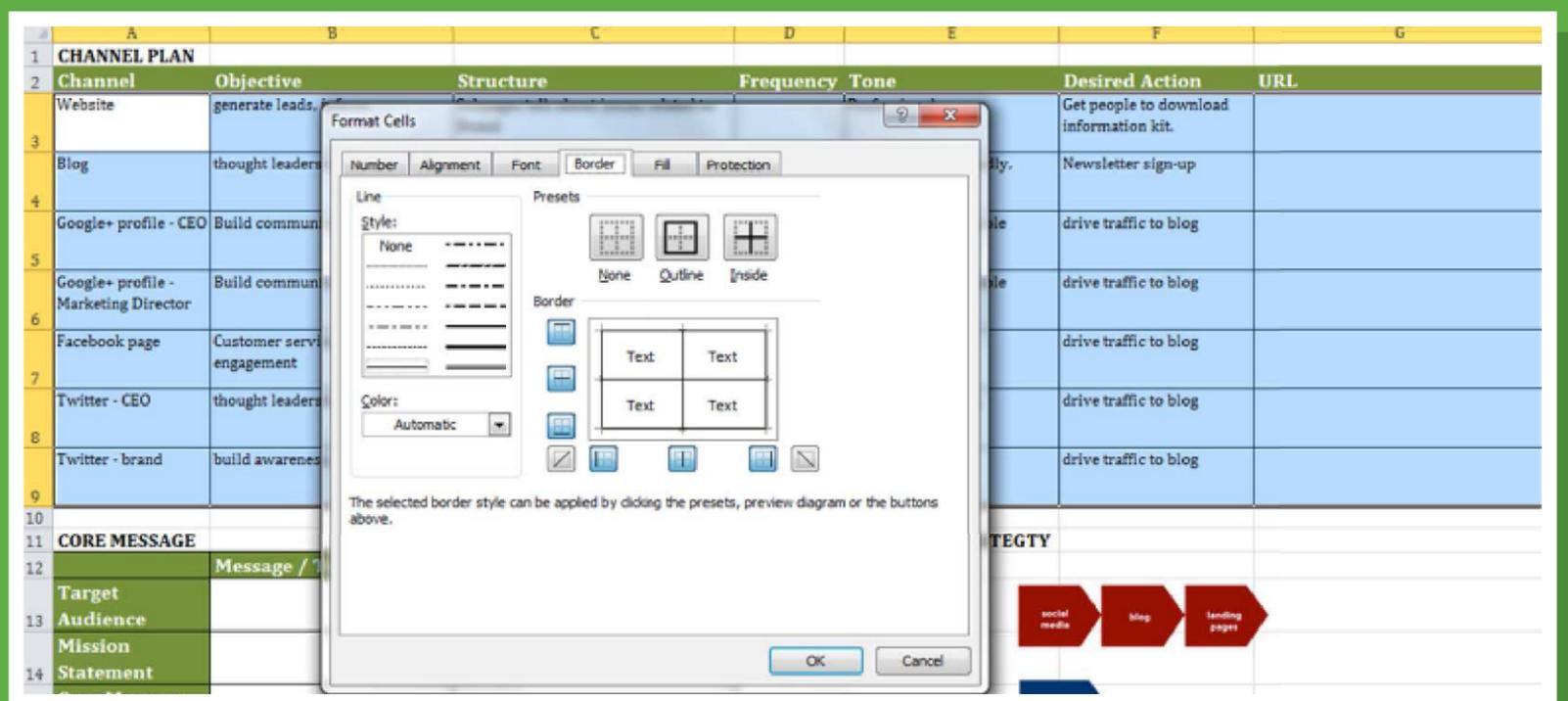
Column D: Structure

Column H: URL

STEP 6

CREATE BORDERS AROUND THE 7 ROWS BELOW THE COLUMN HEADINGS

- Select cells A3 through H9.
- In the ribbon, click Format > Format Cells (*the bottom command*).



- In the pop-up box, select the “Border” tab.
- There are three border styles in the upper right-hand side of the box. Select “Outline” and “Inside.”
- Click “OK.” You will create a box, ready for the decisions you make later in this chapter.

NOTE:

If you wish, format the box with your brand colors.

Do NOT start filling out the Channel Plan yet. You need to make other decisions first.

STEP 5

CREATE A BOX FOR YOUR CORE MESSAGE

Next, under the Channel Plan, create a box for recording your core message, which we'll do later in this chapter. Use the same branded colors/formatting that you used in the channel plan

- 1/ In cell A11, type "Core Message."
- 2/ In cell B12, create a heading, "Message / Topic."
- 3/ Next to it, in C12, create a heading, "Summary / Keywords."
- 4/ Beginning in A13, create several subheads:
 - A13: "Target Audience"
 - A14: "Mission Statement"
 - A15: "Core Message or Question"
 - A16: "Secondary Messages"
- 5/ Then list the numbers 1 through 7 in the rows that follow.

Use the Borders command to create the boxes for your final decisions.

11	CORE MESSAGE		
12		Message / Topic	Summary / Keywords
13	Target Audience		
14	Mission Statement		
15	Core Message or Question		
16	5-7 Secondary Messages		
17	1		
18	2		
19	3		
20	4		
21	5		
22	6		
23	7		

STEP 6

UNDER THAT, CREATE A BOX TO RECORD AND TRACK YOUR BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

25	BUSINESS OBJECTIVES						
	Business Objectives	Business Impact (Reason Why)	Benchmark	1st Quarter Results	2nd Quarter Results	3rd Quarter Results	4th Quarter Results
26							
27							
28							
29							
30							
31							
32							
33							

1/ In cell A25 of this Excel file, type “Business Objectives.”

2/ Create these column headings in row 26:

Column A: *Business Objectives*

Column E: *2nd Quarter Results*

Column B: *Business Impact*

Column F: *3rd Quarter Results*

Column C: *Benchmark*

Column G: *4th Quarter Results*

Column D: *1st Quarter Results*

3/ Use the Borders command to create 5 rows of boxes below this header (rows 37-41).

That’s it! You now have a strategic planning document, ready and waiting for the decisions you’re about to make. Now it’s time to begin developing your strategy.

OBJECTIVES

When planning, it's important to decide what you want to accomplish before you decide how you'll accomplish it. So we start with your objectives for content marketing.

I've broken the process into steps so it's easy for you to see what decisions need to be made, and in what order. But realize that, while some decisions are simple, others feel like guesswork. That's okay. Content marketing is like any marketing strategy. You need to test your ideas to see what works.

Make an educated guess for now. You can easily change your mind if you find that your original decision isn't giving you the results you need.

I recommend making a plan and sticking with it for three to six months. Then evaluate your results. If some of your decisions don't pan out, tweak them and give it another three to six months. That gives you enough time to test your decisions while allowing you to find your best methods quickly.



STEP 1

DECIDE HOW YOU'LL USE CONTENT MARKETING TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

There's no right answer here. Just pick one. From a high level perspective, what do you want to do? For example:

- *Prospecting. Generate leads for follow-up by sales and marketing teams.*
- *Sales. Help your sales team close sales more quickly.*
- *Marketing. Generate interest in your products.*
- *PR. Build and repair public opinion about your brand and products.*
- *Community. Develop friends and fans who interact with your brand socially.*
- *Customer support. Help customers get the most from your products.*
- *Thought leadership. Develop name recognition and respect, and to influence your industry.*

STEP 2

NAME YOUR SPECIFIC GOALS.

- 1/ Go to the Business Objectives box in your planning document.
- 2/ Name one primary goal and two or three lower-level goals for your content marketing efforts. Be specific. Name the exact outcome you'd like to see or percentage improvement. You may also include a realistic time frame for achieving each goal. Record these in column A, Business Objectives
- 3/ Next, write down why you'd like to achieve each goal. Your answer should define a particular way it will help your business grow. Record this in column B, Business Impact.

 Now create a benchmark that will allow you to track future results. Under “Benchmark,” enter sales figures, profits, number of click-throughs, or some other number that will help you measure growth.

NOTE:

At this point, you’re deciding on the business objectives you hope to achieve with content marketing, including the business impact of that goal and your current status.

Notice that this Business Objectives box also provides space to track results. Once a quarter, plan on reviewing results of your decisions so you know which strategies are working and which need tweaking.



DECIDE HOW CONTENT MARKETING FITS INTO YOUR OVERALL MARKETING PLAN

Your plan will be as individual as your own business. But here are three common strategies you may consider:

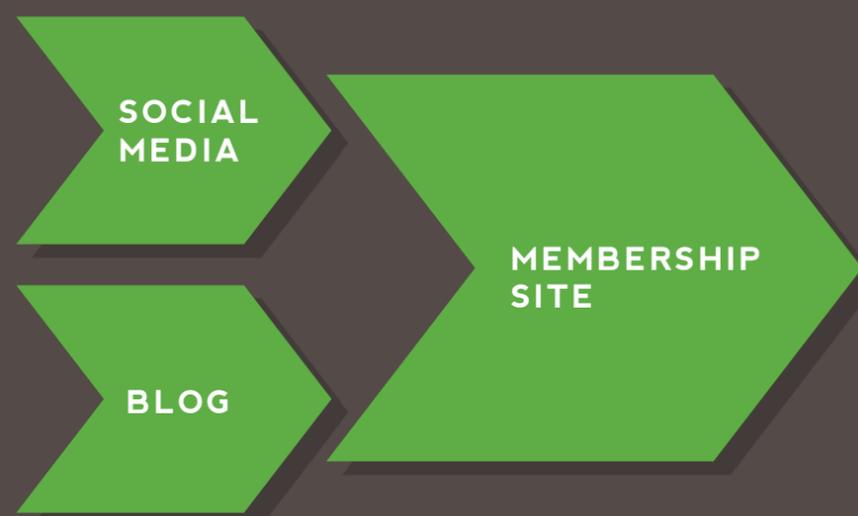
Directed Traffic:

You could use social media to drive traffic to your blog, then write blog posts that drive traffic to landing pages.



Integrated Messaging:

You could use all content to drive a particular action, such as enrollment in a membership site. So social media, blogs and videos give tips and useful information, but how-to information is reserved for paid members.



Single Focus on Sales:

You could use a wide variety of content — blog posts, podcasts, videos — to drive sales. So each piece of content is written for the express purpose of piquing interest in one of your products.



Now you.

- 1/ Beside the Core Message box in your planning document (cell E11), type “Content Strategy.”
- 2/ Decide which approach you want to take. If it’s one of the three listed above, copy and paste the appropriate image into your Excel file under the “Content Strategy” heading.
- 3/ If you have another plan, write it out in this spot, so you can easily refer back to it.



CREATE YOUR CORE MESSAGE

Your core message is the primary benefit you offer your customers. It might include your story or the one piece of advice you share with customers.

This message is the bottom-line reason why you’re in business and should be the guiding

- 1/ **START WITH YOUR MISSION STATEMENT.**
What do you want to do for your customers or clients? What impact do you want to have on their lives?

- 2/ **PHRASE YOUR CORE MESSAGE.**
Based on your mission statement, what is the big benefit you want your followers to get from engaging with your content.

If you can’t decide what it is, look for one central solution you provide your customers or one big question you answer when talking with them.

- 3/ **DECIDE ON 5 TO 7 SECONDARY MESSAGES (OR TOPICS) THAT SUPPORT YOUR CORE MESSAGE.**
If you only have one message that you write about in every piece of content, it’s going to get stale quickly. To avoid repeating your core message ad nauseum — and to give you lots of editorial topics to write about — select 5 to 7 sub-topics that support your core message.

EXAMPLES

WORKINGMOMSONLY.COM

Mission: “To supply the tools that can give EVERY working mom the ability to lead a healthy, wealthy, and more balanced/blended lifestyle.”

Core Message: You can live the life you have always dreamed of, the life you and your family deserve.

Secondary Messages: business, health & well-being, kids, relationships,

CRAZY EGG

Mission: To provide affordable, effective heat-mapping technology that helps people improve on-page conversion.

Core Message: You can boost your website’s profit within 30 days

Secondary Messages: web design, conversion optimization, blogging for

RECORD IT IN YOUR EXCEL FILE ...

In the Core Message box, write down your mission statement.

Write down your core message. (*You can refine it over time, but get something down on paper now.*)

List 5-7 secondary messages. (*If you aren’t sure, list as many as you like. Then narrow the list*)



PERFORM A COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Select five brands in your industry that are using content marketing successfully. You may select brands that are industry leaders or smaller brands — as long as they use content marketing to grow their business.

In the Competitive Analysis Box you created above, list those five brands.

35	COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS						
36	Competitors	Their Core Message	Topics they Cover	Types of Content	Frequency	Typical calls to action	The Gap
37							
38							
39							
40							
41							

Then evaluate their content:

 Try to identify their core message.

- 👤 List the topics they cover. How well do they support the core message?
- 👤 List the types of content produced, include blog posts, social media posts, podcasts or videos, special reports, slide shows, infographics, ebooks, and more.
- 👤 Make note of how often each type of content is posted. If several types are used, lay out each content type in its own line in the previous column, then list the frequency of that type of content beside it in this column.
- 👤 Make note of the calls to action used in different types of content.
- 👤 Try to find the gap, or what they don't cover in their content marketing.

STEP 6

IDENTIFY YOUR PURPLE COW

Your content won't get noticed by Google or by your readers if it just rehashes everything else on the Internet. To stand out, you need to do something unique.

Review your competitive analysis one more time, and try to find the "thing" that each brand is known for, the unique element that makes them shine.

Your goal is to come alongside the competition and still offer something different. So look for something that none of them cover. This is the gap that you can fill to make your own brand unique.

A few examples of what might set you apart:

- *Your style*
- *Your personality*
- *The depth of your information*
- *Your unique approach to the core topic*
- *Your value proposition*

This is your "differentiator." Type it into your planning document below the competitive analysis.

43	MARKETING STRATEGY	
	Differentiator	
44		
45		

TARGET AUDIENCE



STEP 1

DECIDE WHO YOU WANT TO READ YOUR CONTENT

1/ SELECT THE NICHE.

The truth about marketing is that if you target everyone, you'll hit no one. So you need to define the niche that you want to serve. This is a specific group of people who are interested in the topic you write about.

2/ REFINE THE NICHE.

to be specific about who you write for. For example, "Animal lovers" is a niche, but it's relatively broad. "Cat lovers" is a more targeted niche and could make a better target.

3/ CAN YOU NARROW THE FIELD EVEN MORE?

A micro-niche is a subset of your chosen niche. For example, "cat breeders" or "lovers of hairless cats" are micro-niches in the "cat lovers" niche.

When picking your target audience, choose as small a group as possible that is large enough to help you meet your marketing objectives.

4/ ENTER YOUR DECISION IN THE CORE MESSAGE BOX IN YOUR CONTENT PLANNER.

11	CORE MESSAGE		
12		Message / Topic	Summary
13	Target Audience		

STEP 2

MAKE SURE IT'S A VIABLE MARKET.

Just because you want to write for a particular market doesn't mean they're a good fit for you. Before you settle on a specific niche, make sure it's a viable market.

1/ ASK YOURSELF:

- Are there enough people in this group to meet your sales and community-building objectives?
- Do these people want or need the information you provide?

- *Will they benefit from your product/service?*
- *Do you understand what triggers their buy response?*
- *Can they afford your product/service?*
- *Are they accessible through email and social media?*
- *Are they open to receiving your messages?*

🗨 DO A GOOGLE SEARCH TO VERIFY THAT PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR THE INFORMATION YOU PLAN TO DELIVER:

- *Visit Google adwords.*
- *Type in your keywords*
- *Verify there are at least 10,000 monthly searches.*

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches
hairless cats	Low	49,500	33,100
Cat Breeders (25) - hairless cat breeders, hairless cats breeders...			
Cat Breeds (56) - hairless cat breeds, breeds of hairless cats, cat breeds...			
Cat Rescue (16) - hairless cat rescue, hairless cats rescue, sphynx cat rescue...			
Cats And Kittens (16) - hairless cat kittens, hairless cat kitten...			

STEP 5

LOCATE YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER

A market isn't just a type of person. It's a group of people who you can connect with. So you need to look for signs that your target audience sees themselves as a unique group of people. If they gather together and if there are lists of email addresses that target this group, you have a good market.

- *Find the associations or groups they belong to.*
- *Find out which social media sites they use.*
- *Identify magazines or other media they subscribe to. Check to see if you can rent the list.*
- *Find at least three events they attend. Check to see if you can attend, or if possible, speak at or have a booth at the event.*

STEP 4

CREATE AN "AVATAR," OR PERSONA, WHO REPRESENTS THE AVERAGE PERSON IN YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE.

You should never write content to a group. It should sound as if you're writing to one person — your ideal reader. So you need to know who that reader is. And to do that, you need to focus on the details.

For this exercise, don't pick a range for the age or income level. Be specific. Create one person who represents everyone in your target audience. So when you create content, you can write to this one person.

1/ LIST THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF YOUR IDEAL READER.

- Age
- Location
- Gender
- Income level
- Education level
- Marital or family status
- Occupation
- Ethnic background

2/ LIST THE PSYCHOGRAPHICS (VALUES AND MORAL CODE) OF YOUR IDEAL READER.

- Personality
- Attitudes
- Values
- Interests/hobbies
- Lifestyles
- Behavior

3/ GIVE HIM OR HER A NAME.

4/ IF YOU CAN, FIND A PICTURE.

Take a picture of a real customer

Visit <http://www.morguefile.com> for royalty-free images

Visit <http://www.dreamstime.com> for paid and/or free images.

Your ideal customer avatar won't be used in your marketing. It's just for you to know who you create content for. But that doesn't mean you should skip this exercise. The better you know your target audience, the more engagement you'll get.

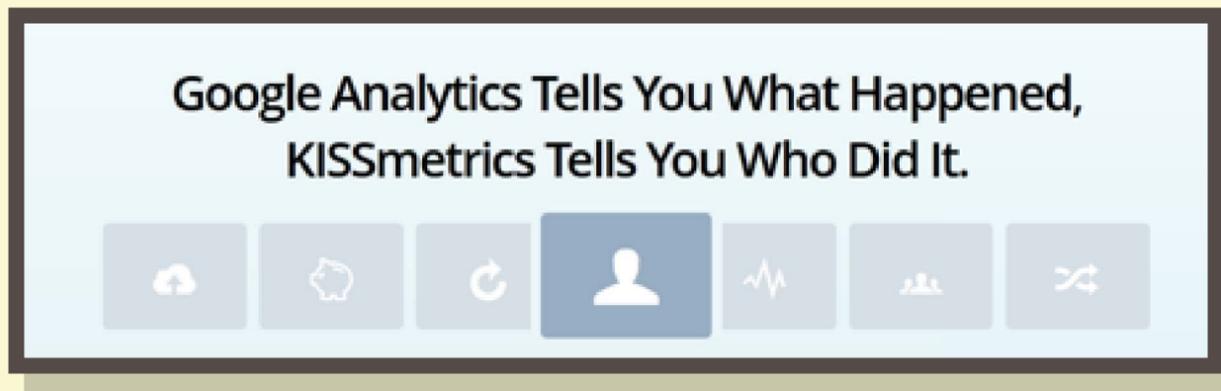
BONUS

LOCATE YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER

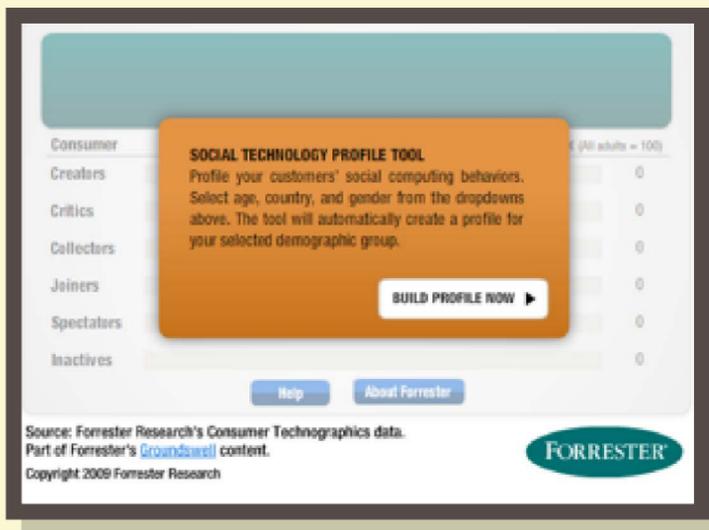
Research.ly. (paid) This program filters conversations from 1,000 days of social data for insights into influence, sentiment, demographics and psychographics — to help you connect with your target audiences, manage brand perception, collaborate across networks and increase your social media ROI.

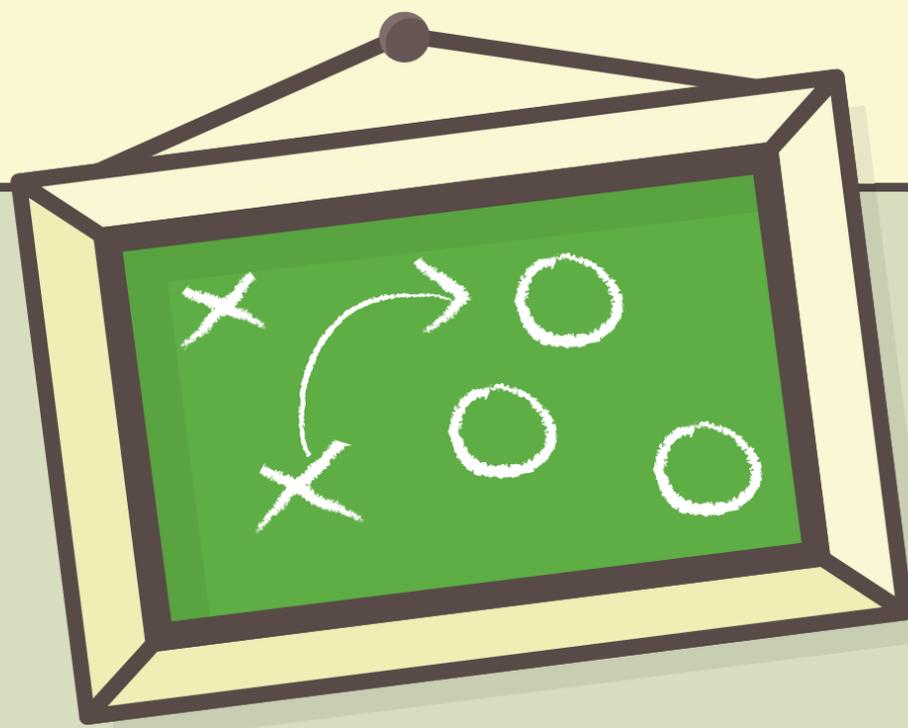


[KISSmetrics](#). (paid) Helps you know your customers better by tracking “events,” or actions people take on your website, such as “Visited Site” or “Completed Checkout.”



[Forrester](#) (free tool, paid service) This tool helps you profile your customer’s social computing behaviors so you know where they look for content online.





STEP 1

CRAFT YOUR CORE MESSAGE INTO A BENEFITS STATEMENT OR TAG.

From now on, your core message will serve as a guidepost for every piece of content you produce. If a topic or idea doesn't support your core message, don't waste time on it.

- 1/ BRAINSTORM FOR SHORT PITHY STATEMENTS THAT SUMMARIZE YOUR CORE MESSAGE.
- 2/ ALTERNATIVELY, COME UP WITH SETS OF THREE WORDS THAT COULD SUMMARIZE YOUR CORE MESSAGE OR THE BENEFIT OF DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU.
- 3/ CREATE A LIST OF YOUR BEST IDEAS FOR TAG LINES.
- 4/ TEST YOUR IDEAS WITH FRIENDS, CO-WORKERS, AND EVEN CUSTOMERS.
- 5/ RECORD THIS TAG (BENEFITS STATEMENT) UNDER "SUMMARY/KEYWORD" IN THE CORE MESSAGE BOX IN YOUR PLANNING DOCUMENT. EVEN CUSTOMERS.

STEP 2

TURN YOUR SECONDARY TOPICS/MESSAGES INTO KEYWORDS

In chapter 3, you'll create categories on your website that make it easy for people to find your content. Each category will be based on one of the secondary messages in your Core Message box.

For now, you simply need to turn each of your secondary messages into a keyword or phrase that could be used as a category heading.

WELCOME TO MY BLOG! YOU'LL FIND ARTICLES ABOUT...

Copywriting Secrets

Internet Marketing

Marketing Success

Social Content + SEO

Success and Productivity

- 1/ THINK OF A KEYWORD THAT SUMMARIZES THE CONTENT YOU WILL CREATE FOR THAT SECONDARY MESSAGE.
- 2/ ENTER THAT WORD OR PHRASE UNDER "SUMMARY/KEYWORD" IN THE CORE MESSAGE BOX BESIDE EACH SECONDARY MESSAGE.

STEP 5

DECIDE ON THE SPECIFIC TYPES OF CONTENT YOU WANT TO CREATE

You can create one type of content or multiple types. Your options include:



Blog posts: Articles that talk about issues related to your core message and secondary messages. They can range anywhere from 100 words to 2,000 words, depending on the format you choose and what your readers prefer.

Articles that are more in-depth tend to rank better on the search engines than articles that aren't thorough.



Magazine articles: Like a blog post, these posts talk about issues related to your core message, but instead of publishing them digitally, you publish them in a print magazine. That magazine may be your brand's magazine, a trade (*industry*) magazine, or a consumer magazine such as Inc., Fortune, Time, etc.



Video: Not all content is housed on your website. You can create a channel on YouTube or Vimeo that provides another access point to your business. Some content marketers upload videos to YouTube, then reposted on their blog. Others create a video blog, or vlog, that lives on YouTube.



Podcasts: Podcasts are audio articles or radio shows, often published in iTunes, Stitcher Radio, or Blubrry. Podcasting is gaining renewed popularity now because people who don't have time to read are able to listen to articles while in their daily commute or other activities.



Webinars and Teleseminars: You can present information to a live audience during webinars and teleseminars, then use the recording and slides as content on your website, in newsletters, and in programs/products.



Speeches, workshops, interviews: If it's information, it's content. And it's easy to recycle this information, incorporating it into other content types to add value.



Powerpoint presentations: Offer the them on your website. Turn them into infographics. Use them in blog posts. Upload them to Slideshare.



Tutorials, guides: You can create a Web page that provides links to additional information, essentially making a lesson plan for learning something new. This is a great way to build authority in your area of expertise. Remember to tell people what to do if they need additional help. *(See how easy it is to drive business objectives with your content!)*



Infographics: Infographics are creative presentations of facts and figures rather than dry-as-toast reports. If they're well done, they are also very sharable. Visual.ly is a great resource for simple infographics.



White papers and special reports: People want useful information that helps them make better decisions. That's why white papers, special reports, and other researched information make such great premiums and free offers. You can periodically offer these as a value-add to your followers, or you can offer them as an incentive for signing up to your email list.



Newsletters: Content marketing is about building relationship. What better way than to send your content to people's inbox rather than making them visit your website every day? A newsletter also helps you build your email list, which allows you to make email offers as well.



Ebooks, books and products/programs: Ebooks and books are a great way to build authority and trust. You can easily produce a short ebook and sell it on Amazon. Then turn it into a PDF and offer it on your website as well.

TIP #1: If you're just starting your content marketing strategy, start with your blog. Then as you gain expertise, add one or two new type of content at a time.

TIP #2: Before settling on a type of content, double check your choice:

➤ *Is it something that is easy for you to create?*

➤ *Do your followers want to receive information in that format?*

Now you:

At the top of your planning document, in the first column of the Channel Plan, write the type(s)



SET YOUR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

From now on, your core message will serve as a guidepost for every piece of content you produce. If a topic or idea doesn't support your core message, don't waste time on it.

1/ DECIDE HOW OFTEN YOU'LL PUBLISH.

Some bloggers and vloggers publish every day, while others publish every month. Select something in that range that works for you. Be sure to think about how much time that will allow you to create other types of content, participate in social media, and get the rest of your job done. Record your decisions in column E, "Frequency."

2/ DECIDE ON LENGTH.

Do you want to set a word count for written content and a time length for webinars/podcasts? Or do you want to allow each post to be whatever length it needs to be to cover the topic at hand? Both approaches are acceptable, but you need to set the standards for your brand's content. Write your decisions in column D, "Structure."

3/ DECIDE ON STYLE.

What tone or style do you want your content to have? Chatty? Friendly? Short and to the point? Professional? Brash? Will you allow slang or profanity? The choice is yours. Record your decisions in column F, "Tone."



STEP 1

CHOOSE THE PUBLISHING PLATFORM FOR EACH TYPE OF CONTENT YOU WILL CREATE.

- *Wordpress.org is one of the most popular platforms for a website/blog combination.*
- *YouTube and Vimeo are popular video platforms.*
- *Blubrry, Stitcher and iTunes are excellent podcast platforms.*
- *PDFs sold on your website may work for ebooks and special reports. You may want to publish them on Amazon as well.*

In column B of your Channel Plan, record the channels that you'll use to publish each type of

STEP 2

DECIDE WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS YOU WILL BE ACTIVE ON.

Don't try to be on every social media platform. Choose the platforms where your customers are active.

- 1/ Search on Facebook for pages that are similar to yours or target the same people. Check out the engagement levels. If engagement is good, you may benefit from a Facebook presence.
- 2/ Search for your competitors in Twitter. How many followers do they have? How often do they tweet? If it appears that your target audience is active in Twitter, you may benefit from adding Twitter to your content plan.
- 3/ Are you a B2B business? Look for one or two LinkedIn Groups that relate to your expertise.

You will definitely need a Google+ presence to help optimize your content for search engines:

- *Set up a Google+ personal profile for your CEO, owner, or the person who manages your content marketing. This will allow you to set up Author Rank for your content writers.*
- *Consider creating a Google+ business page for your business. This step is optional, but if you choose to do it, you can set up your business as a publisher of content.*

Enter the social media platforms you want to use in your Channel Plan.

- 1/ If you need to add more rows to your Channel Plan, highlight row 9, then right-click your mouse. Select “Insert.” Do this as many times as you need.
- 2/ Add the social media channels you’ve chosen in column B, “Channel.”
- 3/ Beside it, under “Content Types,” enter “SMM,” which means Social Media Marketing.

	A	B
1	CHANNEL PLAN	
2	Content Types	Channel
3		Website
4	Articles, podcasts, video	Blog
5	SMM, curation	Google+ profile - CEO
6	SMM	Google+ profile - Marketing Director
7	SMM	Facebook page
8	Podcasts	Burbrry
9	Videos	YouTube

STEP 5

DECIDE WHETHER TO HOST YOUR BLOG ON YOUR BUSINESS WEBSITE OR ON A SEPARATE URL.

There are arguments for and against either scenario.

In favor of a separate URL for your blog:

Back in December 2007, Matt Cutts, Head of Google’s Webspam team, disclosed in his blog that Google prefers to provide only one or two results per hostname/subdomain in search results. If this is still true (*and I haven’t heard otherwise*), then having a website and blog — each with separate domain names — would allow you to have more results per page.



Take the Crazy Egg blog, for example. It’s on its own subdomain, separate from the Crazy Egg website. That increases the number of times this blog could show in SERPs.

In favor of making your blog a subdirectory (tab) on your current website:

In recent years, Google has shown preference for active websites that add useful information (such as *blog posts*) on a regular basis. Having your blog on your website could, therefore, help your website rank better in the SERPs.



This blog is in a subdirectory within the business website. So it shows up as a navigation tab. By organizing the blog this way, the entire website appears more active because new pages (*blog posts*) are added each week. This helps the website move up in search results, even for a high-competition keyword.

The choice is yours.

This is not a decision that needs to be recorded in your strategy page. It does, however, help you know what actions to take next.

For instance, this decision could impact the name you give your blog. (*We'll cover that in the next step.*)

And if you decide to use a separate URL for your business and blog — or if you're just starting out and don't have a website yet — you need to purchase a separate URL. (*We'll cover that in a moment.*)



SELECT THE NAME OF YOUR BLOG.

If your blog is simply a tab on your website, you may not to give it a special name. You may decide to call it the [your business name] blog or [your name] blog.

If your blog posts will also be sent out as a newsletter, you could name your blog after the newsletter.

However, if your blog is on a different domain, you could give it a unique name. Just be careful that the name you choose relates back to your main website or brand, so customers don't get



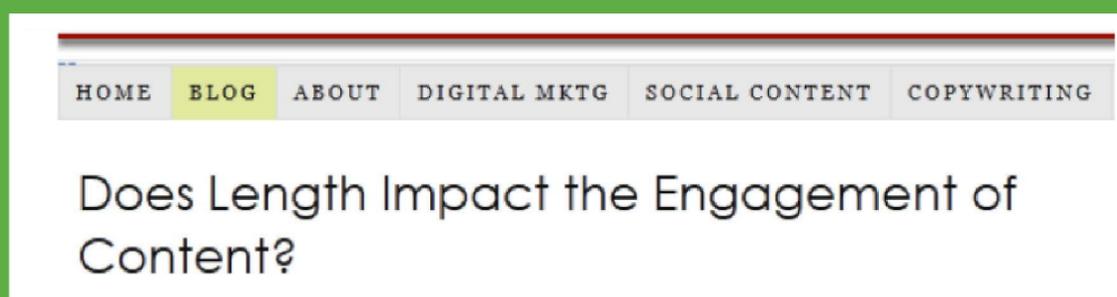
PURCHASE THE DOMAIN NAME IF YOU WANT TO HOST YOUR BLOG ON A DIFFERENT DOMAIN.

If you decide you want to put your blog on a separate domain (URL) from your business website, this step is for you. If not, skip down to section 6, Content Management.

Visit Register.com, GoDaddy.com, or Namecheap.com to see what's available. Don't be discouraged if the "perfect" URL isn't available. Consider using a longer URL or coming up with a

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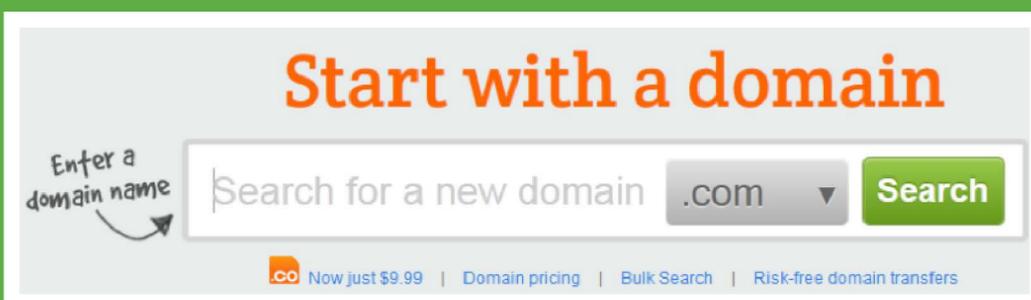
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STEP 6

PURCHASE A WEB HOSTING PACKAGE.

Choose a hosting service:

- *With C-Panel (control panel) interface*
- *Providing 24/7 support*
- *That allows more than one domain*
- *With a good track record and 30-day, money-back guarantee*

A few recommendations:

- *www.Hostgator.com*
- *www.bluehost.com*

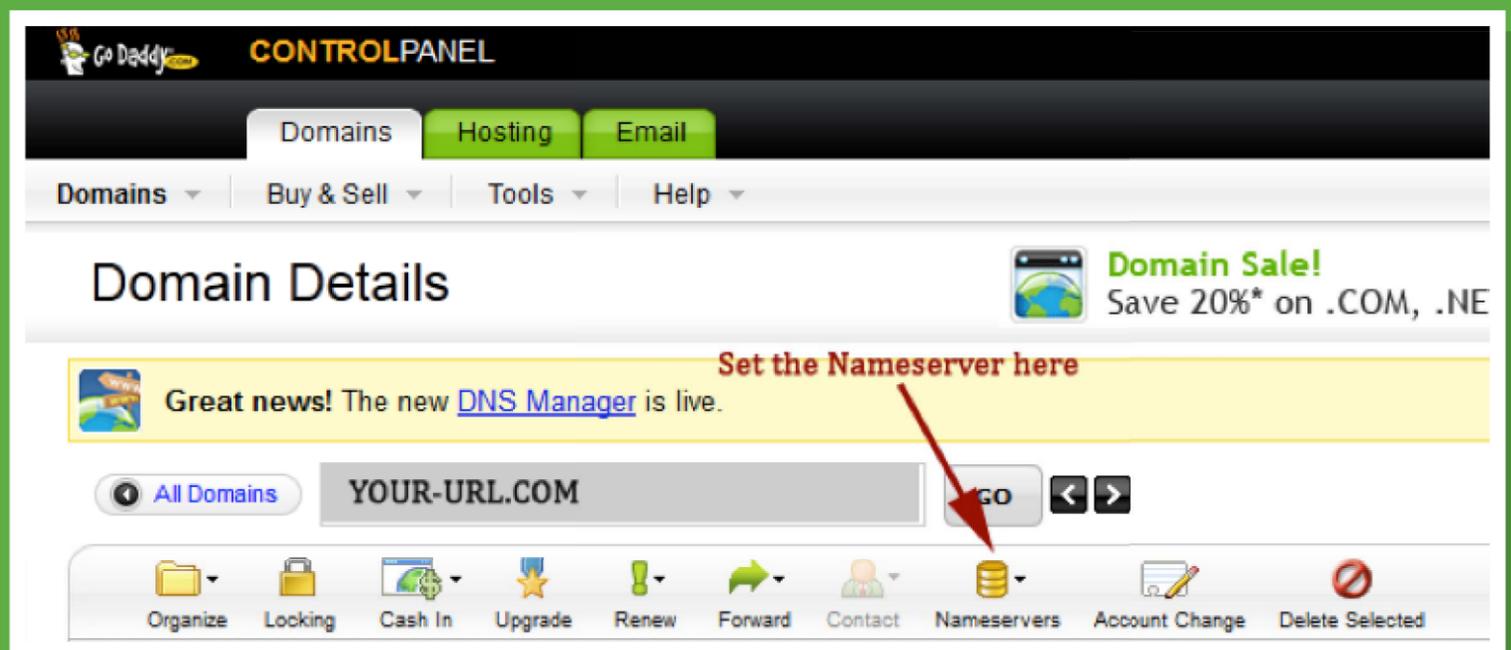
STEP 7

ADD YOUR NAME SERVER TO YOUR DOMAIN

Once you have a registered domain name (URL) and a hosting company, you need to connect them.

Your hosting company uses what is called a nameserver to connect to your registered domain. This is a unique series of code numbers (like a password) that translate a domain or subdomain into an IP address, making it accessible on the Web.

- 📌 You will find your nameserver codes on your front page when you sign in to your hosting account. (For example, they look like NS1.BLUEHOST.COM and NS2.BLUEHOST.COM.)
- 📌 Cut and paste your nameservers into a Word document. Then log in to you domain



STEP 8

SET UP YOUR WORDPRESS BLOG (IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY)

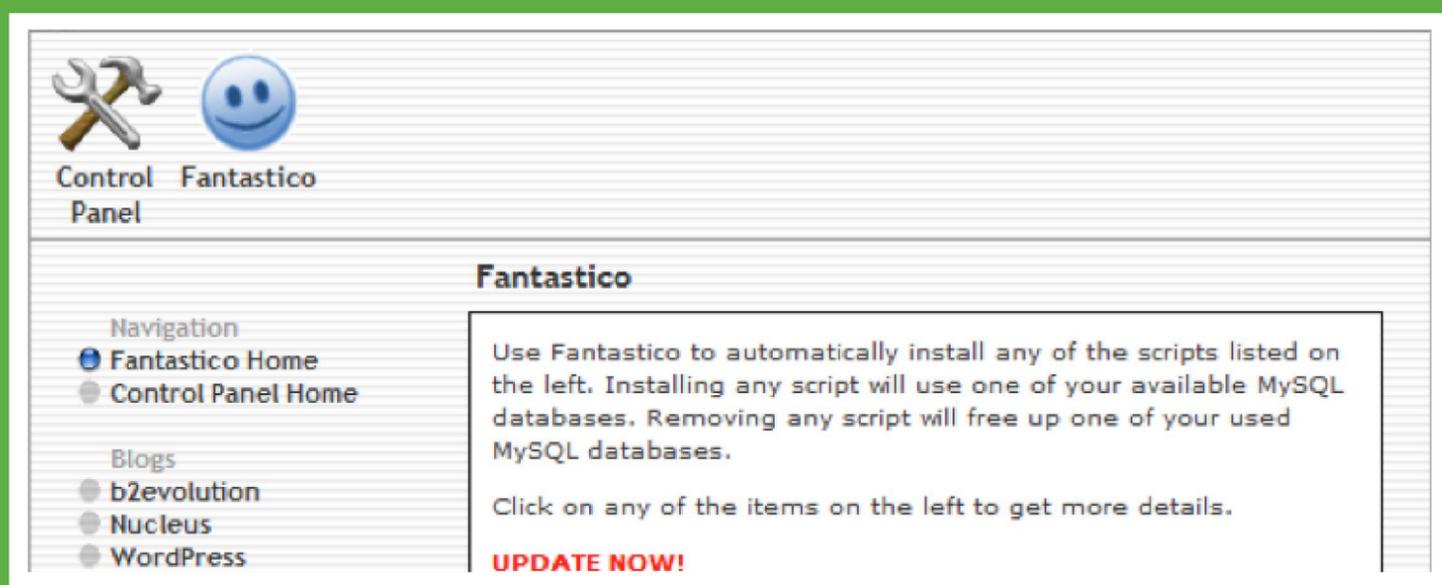
In case you're new to content marketing and don't have a website yet, I want to touch on the matter of setting up your website.

I recommend WordPress.org, which is a favorite among content marketers because it makes it easy to create and maintain your website/blog.

- 1/ Log into your administrative control panel, also known as the cPanel:
 - Visit <http://yourwebsitename.com/cPanel>.
 - Log in with the user name and password from the hosting company.
- 2/ Under the section **Software/Services** click on the **Fantastico De Luxe** icon to install WordPress.



- 3/ In the left-hand panel, you'll see a selection for WordPress. Click the radio button beside it.



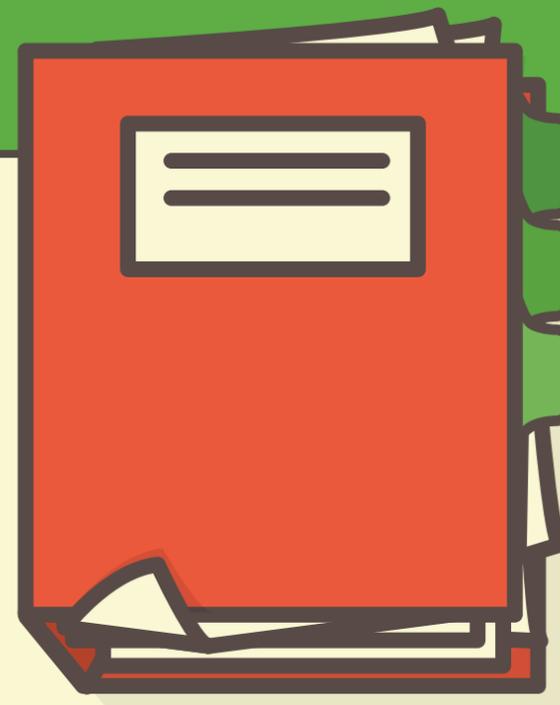
- 4/ You'll be taken to a WordPress installation page. Select New Installation.
- 5/ Fill out the options, then click "Install Wordpress" at the bottom of the page. Then click "Finish installation."
- 6/ You now have a basic WordPress website, ready for customization. If you need help with that, visit http://codex.wordpress.org/Main_Page.

But, fortunately, it's not hard to figure out. You can access your WordPress admin page at www.yourURL.com/wp-admin using the user name and password you set in the cPanel.

In this admin panel, you can create pages and blog posts. If you choose to have static web pages with your blog on one tab, you'll set that up here.

Or if you want to let this URL be a stand-alone blog, you can do that as well. You'll simply create categories for each of your secondary messages, so visitors can easy find the articles that interest them. (We'll walk through the process of setting up categories in chapter 3.)

CONTENT MANAGEMENT



STEP 1

SET OBJECTIVES FOR EACH CHANNEL, OR TYPE OF CONTENT

1/ **EACH CHANNEL CAN (AND SHOULD) HAVE A UNIQUE PLACE IN YOUR CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY. SET ONE OF THESE 7 GOALS FOR EACH CHANNEL:**

- 1/ drive traffic to another channel (your blog, for example)
- 2/ engage
- 3/ build community
- 4/ generate leads
- 5/ inform
- 6/ educate
- 7/ build thought leadership

But don't limit yourself just to these seven. You can set any goal you like. Be creative, and think of unique ways to engage people and build relationship with them.

2/ **WRITE THIS OBJECTIVE IN COLUMN C, "OBJECTIVE," OF YOUR CHANNEL PLAN.**

	A	B	C
1	CHANNEL PLAN		
2	Content Types	Channel	Objective
3		Website	generate leads, inform
4	Articles, podcasts, video	Blog	thought leadership, educate
5	SMM, curation	Google+ profile - CEO	Build community, engagement
6	SMM	Google+ profile - Marketing Director	Build community, engagement
7	SMM	Facebook page	Customer service for customers, engagement
8	Podcasts	Burbrry	thought leadership, engagement
9	Videos	YouTube	Instruction for customers and prospects.

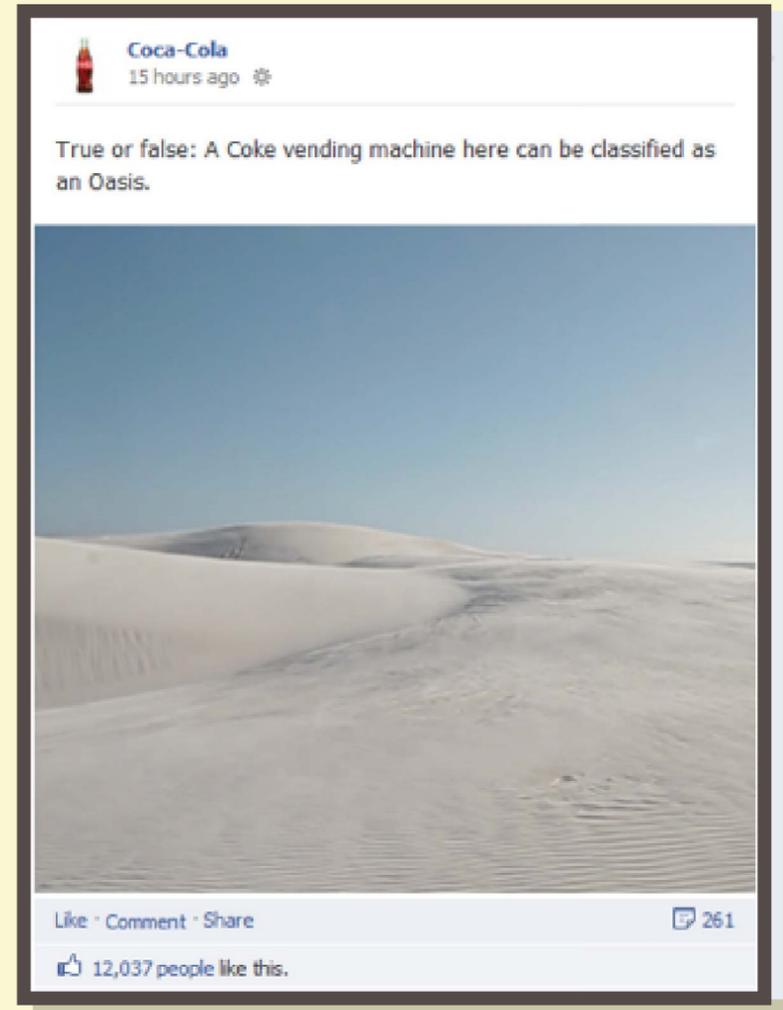
STEP 2

DECIDE ON THE APPROACH YOU'LL TAKE IN EACH CHANNEL

Each channel is used in a different way in your communication plan. For instance:

You may decide to use Facebook for engaging people personally.

Coca-cola did this recently by creating a Facebook post that related to a new advertising campaign. All it did was ask a thought-provoking question, and it got more than 200 shares and 10,000 likes. (*No cokes were sold, but people got involved with the brand.*)



You may choose to use Twitter for content curation, thought leadership and quotations.

And maybe you like Google+ for discussing ideas related to your core/secondary messages.



Make that decision now.

- 1/ Refine your decision about the types of content you'll post in each channel. Be as specific as possible about how you'll use each channel.
- 2/ Also refine your decisions about the structure of your content.
- 3/ Consider the appropriate tone, or speaking style, that will help you achieve your objectives

NOTE:

You want to maintain a single branded voice, but you can tweak that voice for different channels.

 Record your decisions for “Content Types,” “Structure,” and “Tone” in your Channel Plan.

A few considerations that could help you decide...

- Which followers are on each channel?
- What are their expectations for marketers in that channel?
- What type of content do they want or need?



CREATE YOUR WORK FLOW.

1/ SET UP MANAGEMENT OF YOUR CONTENT MARKETING.

Who decides on and assigns topics? How far in advance? Does this person maintain the editorial calendar or does the person producing the content? You may have one managing editor who does this, or you may let writers suggest ideas.

2/ DECIDE WHO PRODUCES THE CONTENT.

You may have in-house writers who write all your content, you may hire outside writers, or you may do it all yourself. Some companies even allow any employee to apply to become a contributing writer and write blogs in addition to their other activities.

3/ SET UP APPROVAL PROCESS.

Who edits and approves content after it’s produced? Generally, the managing editor also edits the content, provides meta-data to optimize it for search engines, and add pictures and other formatting. But in some organizations, one person edits, a subject matter expert approves, and yet another person approves the final article. Select a workflow that suits your own business structure.

4/ ASSIGN TECHNICAL LABOR.

Who uploads the content? Does the writer, the editor, or a web specialist? And who maintains the blog or content pages to keep them working well technically?

5/ ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROMOTING THE CONTENT.

Who will promote your content in social channels? Do you have a social media specialist, or will one person write, post, and promote. If you have more than one person doing these tasks, make sure the communication lines are open and everyone is on the same page. That way your overall business objectives will be met in every stage of the process.



REVIEW THE DECISIONS YOU’VE MADE FOR EACH CHANNEL

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	CHANNEL PLAN							
2	Content Types	Channel	Objective	Structure	Frequency	Tone	Desired Action	URL
3		Website	generate leads, inform	Subpages talk about issues related to Brand.		Professional	Get people to download information kit.	
4	Articles, podcasts, video	Blog	thought leadership, educate	500-750 words.	2 post a week	Approachable, friendly, knowledgeable	Newsletter sign-up	
5	SMM, curation	Google+ profile - CEO	Build community, engagement	curate content, share news	3 posts/day	friendly, approachable	drive traffic to blog	
6	SMM	Google+ profile - Marketing Director	Build community, engagement	promote blog posts. Announce upcoming events.		friendly, approachable	drive traffic to blog	
7	SMM	Facebook page	Customer service for customers, engagement	how-to tips on getting the most from your purchase. Answer questions.	1 post/day	friendly	drive traffic to blog	
8	Podcasts	Burbrry	thought leadership, engagement	announcements, invitations, ideas	each blog post	casual, welcoming	drive traffic to blog	
9	Videos	YouTube	Instruction for customers and prospects.	friendly tips	1/month	Professional	drive traffic to blog	

In column A, you should have all the types of content you want to create as part of your content marketing strategy.

In column B, you should have the channels where you will publish that content. Include your website, blog, social media sites, and membership sites.

In column C, you should have your objective for each channel.

In column D, you should have a short description of the type of posts you'll publish in each channel.

In column E, you should see the frequency of your posts in each channel.

In column F, you should have the tone of your communications in each channel, based on your avatar and the expectations of people in those channels.

In column G, you should have the primary action you want to drive in each channel. This will

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

You should now have a good idea of:

- *Your objectives for content marketing and how it will fit into your marketing mix.*
- *Your target audience.*
- *Your strategy for creating and publishing content.*
- *The technology you'll use to publish your content.*
- *Your work flow for getting it done.*

The decisions you've made so far have already placed you among the ranks of the best content marketers out there. Congratulations!

So let's move on to chapter 2 ...

How to Generate Thousands of Clickable Ideas for Your Content.

There you'll learn how and where to find plenty of ideas to keep a steady flow of high-quality, engaging content.

**TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER TWO**





The ADVANCED



CONTENT MARKETING

GUIDE

WRITTEN BY NEIL PATEL & KATHRYN ARAGON



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GENERATE CLICKABLE IDEAS

In chapter 1, you made some decisions that will form the foundation of your content marketing plan. Already, you're ahead of the majority of businesses that have adopted content marketing.

But now that you have a plan, you need to be able to generate enough great ideas to make it work.

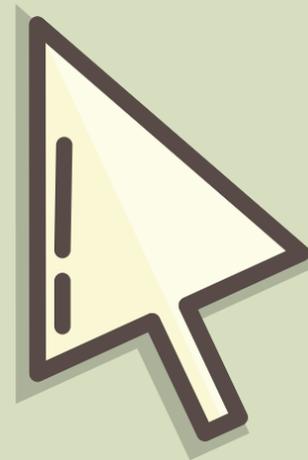
According to the [2013 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks Study](#), the two biggest challenges for content marketers are:

- 1/ PRODUCING ENOUGH CONTENT.
- 2/ PRODUCING ENGAGING CONTENT THAT GETS READ.

Notice that both of these challenges are related to the core problem of coming up with new ideas.

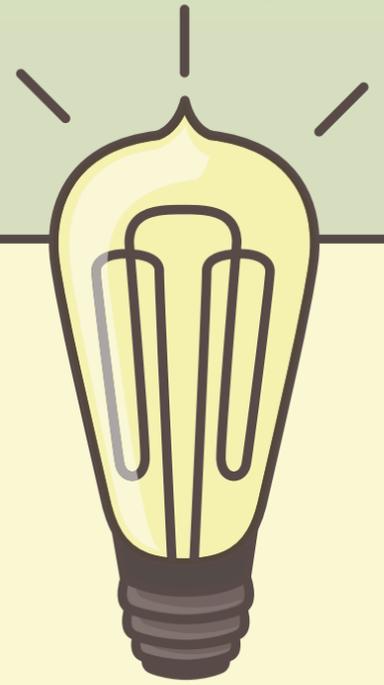
As a content marketer, you need to be able to generate an unending stream of interesting, unique, and valuable content ideas. Let's face it, that's a big task!

So to make sure you have what it takes, this chapter offers seven practical tactics for creating your own idea-generation system, so you can easily come up with all the ideas you need.



A mediocre idea that guarantees enthusiasm will go further than a great idea that inspires no one

Mary Kay Ash



TO START...

CREATE A PLACE TO CAPTURE ALL YOUR CONTENT IDEAS.

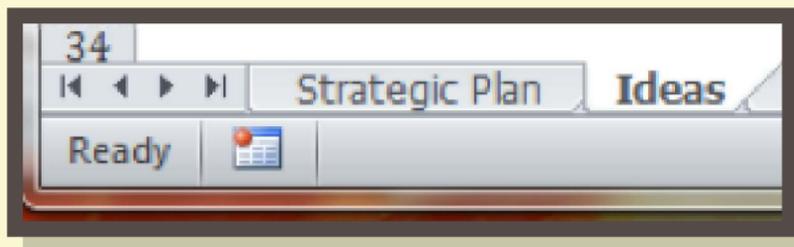
Ideas are finicky things. They can appear out of nowhere — and disappear just as fast. So it's important that you create a place where you can collect ideas and have them on hand when you're ready to plan your content.

STEP 1

OPEN THE CONTENT PLAN EXCEL DOCUMENT YOU CREATED IN CHAPTER 1.

STEP 2

DOUBLE-CLICK THE SECOND TAB (AT THE BOTTOM LEFT) AND NAME IT "IDEAS."



STEP 3

IN CELL A1, TYPE THE PAGE'S TITLE, "CONTENT IDEAS."

	A	B	C	D
1	Content Ideas			
2				
3	IDEA	TYPE OF CONTENT	POSSIBLE TITLE	NOTES
4				
5				

STEP 4

CREATE YOUR COLUMN HEADINGS IN ROW 3.

Column A: *Idea*

Column B: *Type of Content*

Column C: *Possible Title*

Column D: *Notes*

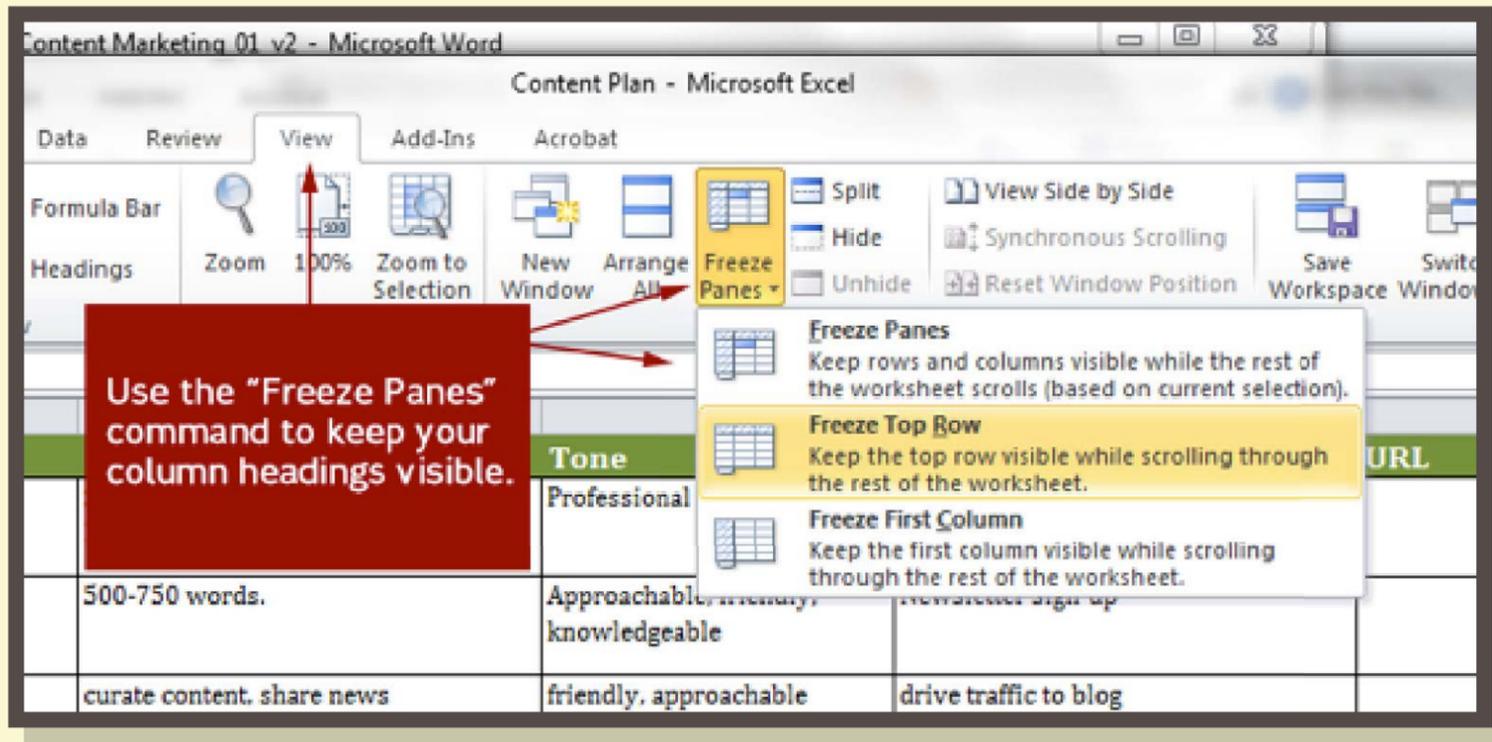
If you wish, format this row with your brand colors.

STEP 5

FREEZE PANES.

Highlight the row below your column heads. (*In the example above, that's row 4.*)

Click View > Freeze Panes > Freeze Panes to keep the column heads visible when you scroll.



STEP 6

BEGIN USING THIS PAGE TO COLLECT YOUR CONTENT IDEAS.

As you work through this chapter, ideas for new content will likely pop into your head. That's a good thing. It means your creative juices are flowing.

From now on, when that happens, record your ideas on your new Ideas page. Don't try to refine these ideas or make them presentable. Just jot them down as they come to you, no matter how rough (*or ridiculous*) they may be.

4	IDEA
5	Work-Play Balance in the Holiday Season
6	Need a post on call to actions.
7	Need for multi-touch campaigns if you want to connect.
8	Productivity for Solopreneurs. Respond to http://peacefulplanetcommunication.com/2011/07/25/why-im-jealous-of-men-its-not-what-you-think/ My point is that I became most productive after a massive injury that meant I couldn't do any of the housework. Yes it's hard to juggle it all and still be productive.
9	My Crummy Life and Other Tidbits: The story of my injury and the struggle for normalcy
10	Free report: quotations about marketing and sales, focusing on the 4 Cs.
11	intent: community or bob (\$\$)
12	CE - Click-through depends on readability. % of people read your website from a mobile device. Is your Web page accessible to them?

This will give you an idea of how a typical idea log looks: messy and even unclear in sections.

That's okay. When it's time to sit down and plan or write content, no matter how messy it may be, this list is invaluable.



On a side note, when you're away from your computer, you may jot ideas in the notes app on your smart phone.

But don't try to maintain two lists.

To ensure you don't lose valuable ideas, you need to keep one master planning document. So when you return to your main computer, transfer new ideas from your notes app to the Content Ideas page in your planning document.

NOW... LET'S SET UP YOUR IDEA-GENERATING SYSTEM

There are seven key tactics for creating the right environment for new, creative ideas to flow. Put them all together, and you have a powerful idea-generating system.

We use this word, *system*, for a reason. The process of coming up with ideas depends on a set of interdependent components that work together to generate the desired outcome.

It's a bit like gears fitted together in a complicated machine. No gear carries the whole load. But when they all work together, the entire system works smoothly and easily.

In the rest of this chapter, you'll learn the seven gears that work together to create an idea-rich environment. Take time to set each of them up. Then take note of how much easier it is to generate a constant flow of great ideas.

Ready? Let's go...

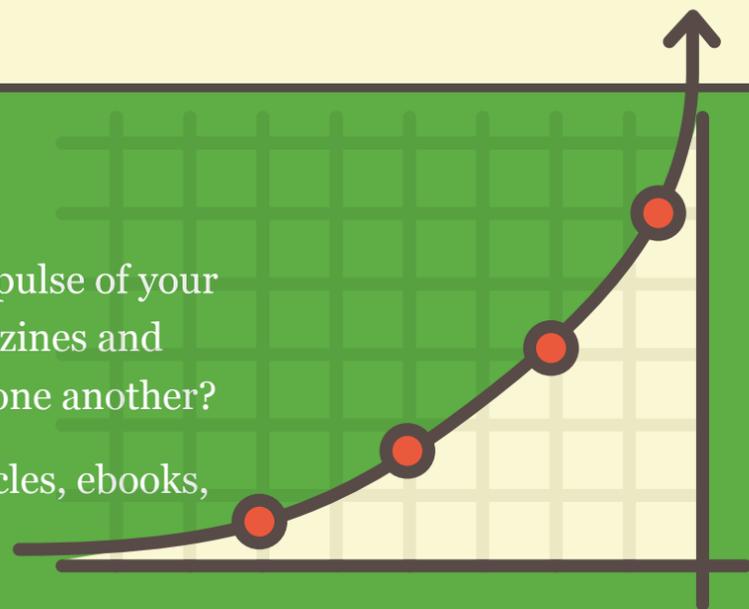
No



KEEP UP WITH TRENDS.

As a content marketer, it's important to keep a finger on the pulse of your audience. What are they watching on TV? What books, magazines and blogs are they reading? What ideas are they discussing with one another?

This insight gives you a head-start in creating content — articles, ebooks,



STEP



SET UP GOOGLE ALERTS FOR YOUR PRIMARY KEYWORDS.

- 1/ VISIT [HTTP://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/ALERTS](http://www.google.com/alerts).
- 2/ PUT THE TOPIC YOU'D LIKE TO MONITOR IN THE "SEARCH QUERY."
- 3/ CHANGE THE OPTIONS TO SPECIFY THE TYPE OF INFORMATION AND HOW OFTEN YOU RECEIVE THEM.
- 4/ CLICK "CREATE ALERT."

Search query:

Result type:

How often:

How many:

Deliver to:

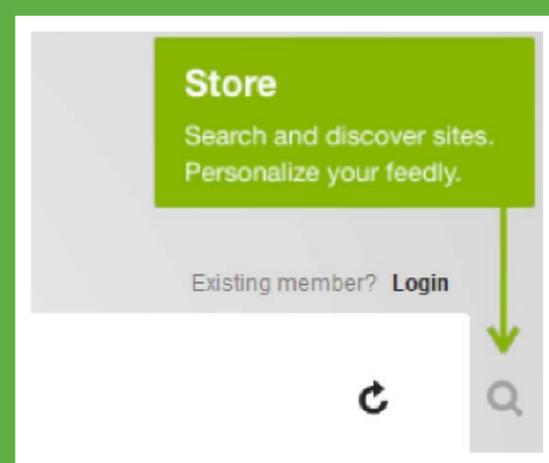
Do this for every topic you'd like to stay current on. You'll get regular emails from Google with links to content about your keyword. When they arrive, take a few moments to review the links.

STEP



SET UP AN RSS FEED, SUCH AS FEEDLY, TO STREAMLINE YOUR ONLINE READING.

- 1/ VISIT [WWW.FEEDLY.COM](http://www.feedly.com)
- 2/ IN THE UPPER RIGHT-HAND CORNER, LOG IN WITH YOUR GOOGLE SIGN-IN.
- 3/ CLICK THE MAGNIFYING GLASS ICON TO CONNECT TO YOUR GOOGLE READER, TWITTER OR FACEBOOK ACCOUNTS.



- 1 IN THE SEARCH BAR, TYPE IN THE NAME OF YOUR FAVORITE BLOG OR WEBSITE.



- 2 OR CHECK OUT THE BLOGS THAT FEEDLY RECOMMENDS IN THE "STARTER KIT."

- 3 SUBSCRIBE TO BLOGS AND WEBSITES THAT WILL KEEP YOU UP-TO-DATE ON TRENDS AND IMPORTANT NEWS.

Here's how...

After you search for a particular blog, you'll see suggestions below the search bar.

Select one, and the posts from that site will populate your Feedly stream on the left.

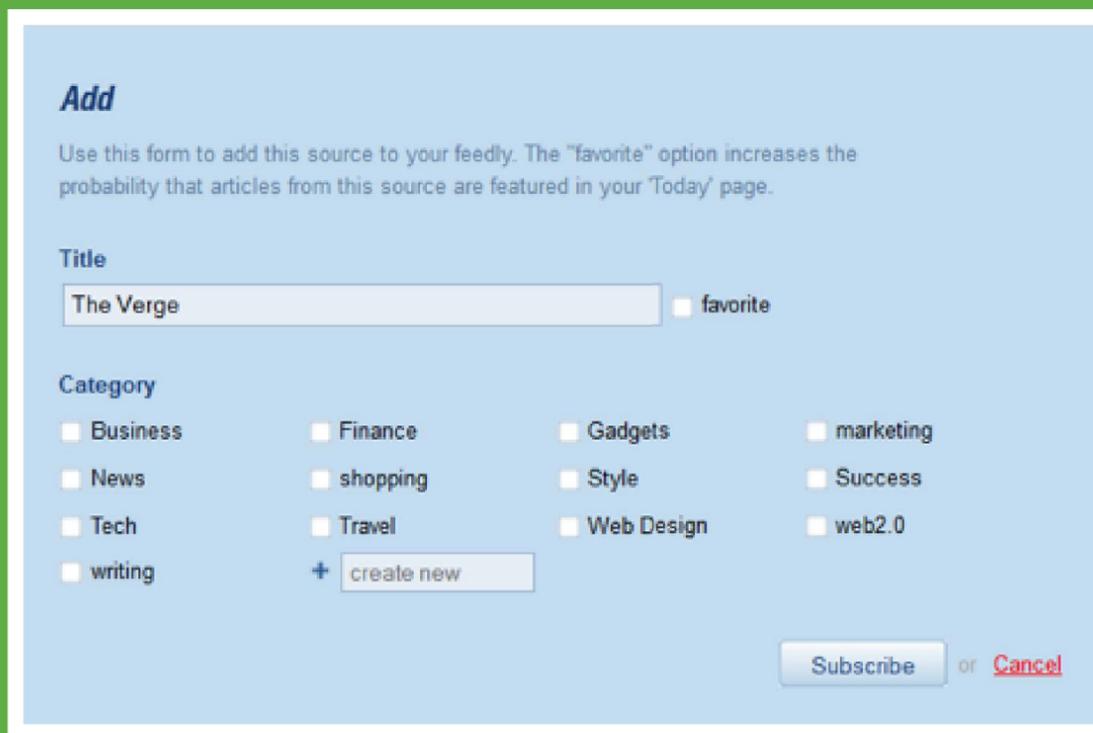
Review the posts to see if you like their content. If you do, click the green +add button.



A form will pop up with the name of the blog. Check the Category you want this blog to show up in.

(If you don't see an appropriate category, add a new one.)

Then click "Subscribe."



That's it.

Do this for every blog you'd like to follow. This will fill your reader with your favorite publishers, giving you one place to easily keep up with what's going on in the world.

STEP**CHECK YOUR FEEDLY STREAM EVERY DAY.**

- 1/ BROWSE THE ARTICLES TO KEEP UP WITH WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR INDUSTRY.**
- 2/ FOLLOW OTHER INDUSTRIES TO KEEP UP WITH SOCIETAL TRENDS AND HOW THINGS ARE CHANGING IN OTHER INDUSTRIES.**
- 3/ LOOK FOR INTERESTING IDEAS THAT YOU CAN WRITE ABOUT.**
- 4/ LOOK FOR GAPS IN THE COVERAGE OF TRENDING TOPICS AND WHAT YOU CAN ADD TO THE CONVERSATION.**
- 5/ WRITE THESE IDEAS IN YOUR IDEA LIST.**

Be sure to paste in the URL of the post that gave you the idea. That way, when it's time to write, you have your original source to reference and link to.

STEP**KEEP AN EYE ON THOUGHT LEADERS AND COMPETITORS**

- 1/ KEEP UP WITH WHAT OTHER CONTENT MARKETERS ARE WRITING.**

Watch the types of content they produce and the topics they cover. This will help you evaluate reader expectations. It can also fuel opinion pieces.
- 2/ READ NEW AND BEST-SELLING BOOKS IN YOUR INDUSTRY.**

The ideas in these books often influence the way people think about life in general. As you read, try to find ideas that intercept with your core topic. Consider writing book reviews or simply introducing new ideas into your own content. *(Always give credit where credit is due.)*
- 3/ WATCH THE NEWS AND OTHER INDUSTRIES TO SEE IF TRENDS ARE RESTRICTED TO YOUR INDUSTRY OR AFFECTING OTHERS AS WELL.**

Look for changes that you can forecast to your followers. Respond to news as it relates to your readers. Your goal is to become the news source for your niche.
- 4/ EVERY TIME YOU GET A NEW IDEA, TAKE TIME TO ADD IT TO YOUR IDEA LIST.**

No 2

TAP INTO THE POWER OF GOOGLE.

When ideas run dry, let Google help you think about your topic in a new way. Here's how:



STEP 1

LET GOOGLE SUGGEST IDEAS.

When you type a search term into Google, the search engine makes suggestions based on what other users are searching for.

This is a quick way to see what people are searching for online.



- 1/ AS YOU TYPE, WATCH THE LIST OF SUGGESTIONS GOOGLE MAKES
- 2/ REVIEW THE LIST AND CONSIDER WHAT PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR WHEN THEY TYPE THOSE SEARCH TERMS.
- 3/ THEN THINK ABOUT HOW YOU COULD ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS.

NOTE:

This is a quick and dirty way to see what people are searching for, but it doesn't give a lot of insight or suggest a lot of new ideas. For more useful information, use Google's keyword tool (step 2 below).

STEP 2

PERFORM A KEYWORD SEARCH

Google's keyword tool is your best option for finding out what information people want or need.

1/ SIMPLY TYPE IN YOUR KEYWORD AND PRESS THE SEARCH BUTTON.

Google will generate a list of terms people use to search for information about your keyword.

Google's keyword tool is your best option for finding out what information people want or need.

Keyword	Competition
<input type="checkbox"/> content marketing	Medium
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Social Media Business (9) - social media for small business, social media small business...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Marketing Strategy (27) - content marketing strategy, content marketing strategies...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Social Media Marketing (51) - what is social media marketing, social media marketing blog...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all B2b Marketing (47) - b2b content marketing, b2b internet marketing...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Marketing Plan (10) - content marketing plan, marketing plan...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Marketing Blog (6) - content marketing blog, content marketing blogs...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Web Marketing (17) - web content marketing, web site marketing, web marketing...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Marketing Services (14) - content marketing services, marketing services...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Business Marketing (26) - business marketing, business to business marketing...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Marketing Company (6) - internet marketing company, marketing companies...	

2/ EXPAND EACH CATEGORY TO SEE SPECIFIC SEARCH TERMS FOR THAT PHRASE.

3/ REVIEW THE KEYWORDS, HOW COMPETITIVE THEY ARE, AND HOW MANY MONTHLY SEARCHES ARE MADE FOR EACH.

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches
<input type="checkbox"/> content marketing	Medium	60,500	27,100
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Social Media Business (9) - social media for small business, social media small business...			
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Marketing Strategy (27)			
<input type="checkbox"/> content marketing strategy	Medium	2,400	1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> content marketing strategies	High	1,600	720
<input type="checkbox"/> marketing strategies	Medium	673,000	165,000
<input type="checkbox"/> internet marketing strategies	High	22,200	12,100
<input type="checkbox"/> marketing strategy	Medium	823,000	201,000
<input type="checkbox"/> internet marketing strategy	High	22,200	12,100
<input type="checkbox"/> marketing strategy template	Medium	9,900	2,900
<input type="checkbox"/> marketing & strategy	Medium	823,000	201,000
<input type="checkbox"/> what is a marketing strategy	Medium	823,000	201,000
<input type="checkbox"/> what is content marketing strategy	Medium	2,400	1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Save all Social Media Marketing (51) - what is social media marketing, social media marketing blog...			

 **LOOK FOR KEYWORDS THAT HAVE SUFFICIENT MONTHLY SEARCHES AND LOW TO MEDIUM COMPETITION.**

Some marketers want to see 10,000 searches minimum. However, for niche keywords or longtail phrases, fewer searches may be acceptable.

Don't avoid high-competition topics either, particularly if you can create useful,



GENERATE IDEAS FROM THIS SEARCH

-  **SELECT THE KEYWORDS THAT YOU WANT TO TARGET.**
-  **PERFORM A BRAINSTORM FOR SPECIFIC PIECES OF CONTENT YOU COULD CREATE FOR THOSE KEYWORDS.**
-  **LOOK FOR A UNIQUE ANGLE FOR TALKING ABOUT THE TOPIC.**
-  **ADD THESE IDEAS TO YOUR EDITORIAL CALENDAR.**

RELEASE YOUR CREATIVE MIND WITH BRAINSTORMS.

There are two ways to brainstorm new ideas: listing and mind mapping. Let's start with the list.



THE LIST.

STEP

1

SELECT THE TOPIC YOU WANT TO BRAINSTORM.

You may brainstorm any topic: broad or narrow. But if you start with a broad topic, you'll also brainstorm broad ideas.

To get specific content ideas, you want to narrow your topic before the brainstorm.

STEP

2

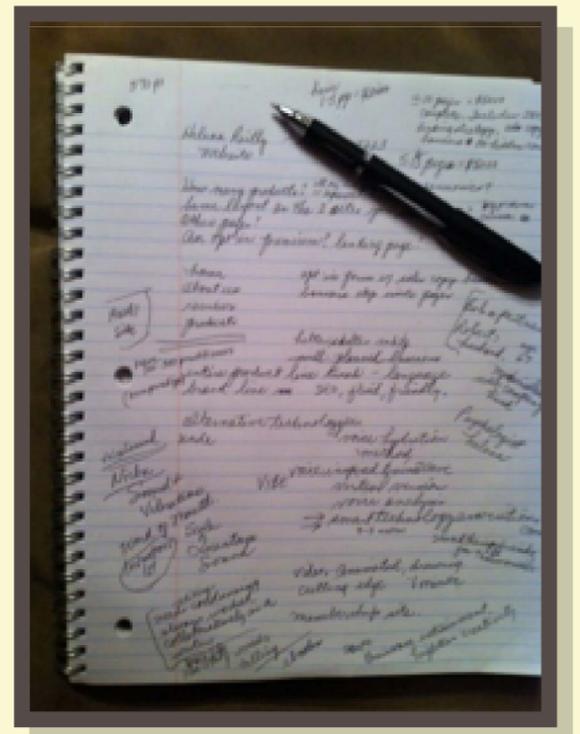
WRITE THE TOPIC YOU'RE BRAINSTORMING AT THE TOP OF YOUR PAGE.

STEP

3

LIST EVERYTHING YOU CAN THINK OF RELATED TO THAT TOPIC.

Don't worry about neatness. A brainstorm is about filling your page with ideas, not with having neat rows and columns. Fill in ideas as they come to you, wherever they fit. If you can place them near related ideas, all the better, but don't restrict yourself.



STEP

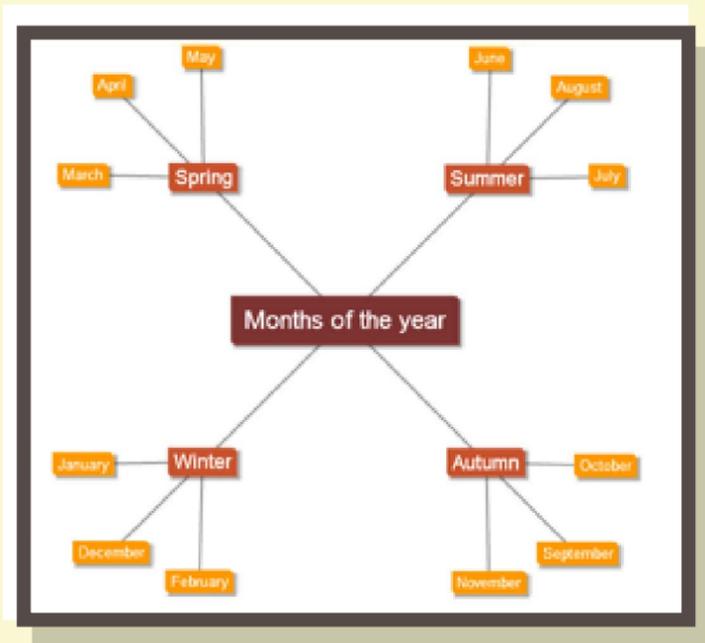
4

REVIEW YOUR LIST TO FIND YOUR BEST IDEAS.

As you review your list, some ideas will be generic, dull ideas. Mark through them.

Other ideas could show promise: they're interesting or have a unique angle on your topic. Circle (or highlight) them so you can easily find them again.

Of course, it can doesn't have to be that involved. Most mind maps look more like this.



Here's how to make your own mind map:



WRITE YOUR BRAINSTORM TOPIC IN THE CENTER OF YOUR PAGE.



DRAW LINES RADIATING OUT FROM THAT KEYWORD.

At the end of each, write an idea related to the keyword. They may be subtopics or categories of related ideas. Or they may simply be ideas that connect in some way to your keyword.



DRAW LINES RADIATING OUT FROM THESE SECONDARY IDEAS.

At the end of each, write a related idea or subtopic.



CONTINUE CONNECTING TOPICS AND SUBTOPICS UNTIL YOU RUN OUT OF IDEAS (OR PAPER).



REVIEW YOUR MIND MAP TO COME UP WITH NEW CONTENT IDEAS.

As described in "List" above, review your ideas to find interesting topics for content. Be sure to consider unique combinations of ideas, as well as questions raised by your mind map.



ADD ALL NEW IDEAS TO YOUR CONTENT IDEAS LIST.

RULES FOR MIND MAPPING:

- *There are no rules.*
- *You can use a computer, paper and pen, paper and colored pencils, or canvas and paint.*
- *You can write, draw or doodle your mind map.*
- *You can make it black and white or color, plain or fancy.*
- *Every idea needs to be connected to a previous idea with a line so you can easily see how your ideas connect.*

A FEW ONLINE MIND MAPPING TOOLS:

<http://www.text2mindmap.com/>

<https://bubbl.us/#>

<http://www.mindmeister.com/>

No. 1

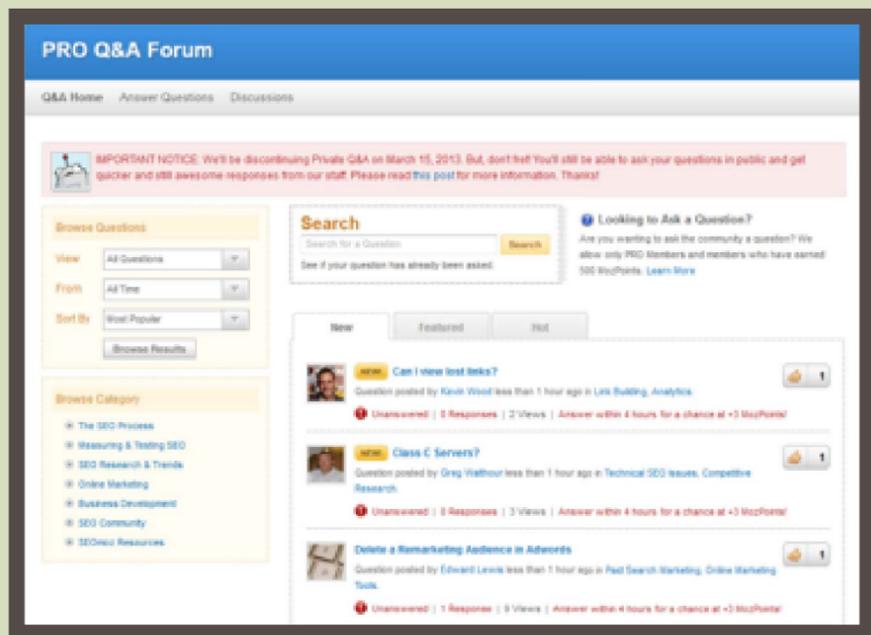
VISIT AND ENGAGE IN FORUMS

A forum is an online message board where people can discuss a particular topic. For example, at right is a forum that discusses search engine optimization (SEO) topics.

Each conversation is called a **thread** and any forum member can join and put in their two cents.

Many forums have different **categories** of subtopics related to the main topic of the forum.

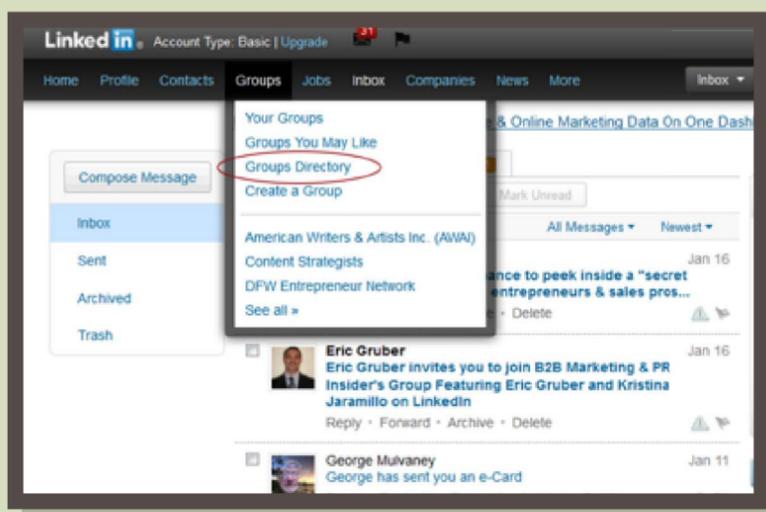
Your goal, then, is to find forums in your core topic so you can see what people are asking and what topics are on their mind.



STEP 1

FIND FORUMS IN YOUR NICHE

WWW.LINKEDIN.COM



LinkedIn groups are forums for professionals. They may help you network with peers in your industry or, if you are a B2B seller, follow discussions among your target audience.

To find groups that relate to your topic:

- 1/ HOVER OVER THE “GROUPS” TAB.
- 2/ SELECT “GROUPS DIRECTORY.”
- 3/ ALTERNATIVELY, BROWSE THE “GROUPS YOU MAY LIKE” FOR LINKEDIN’S SUGGESTIONS BASED ON YOUR CONNECTIONS.
- 4/ REVIEW THE LIST LINKEDIN GENERATES.

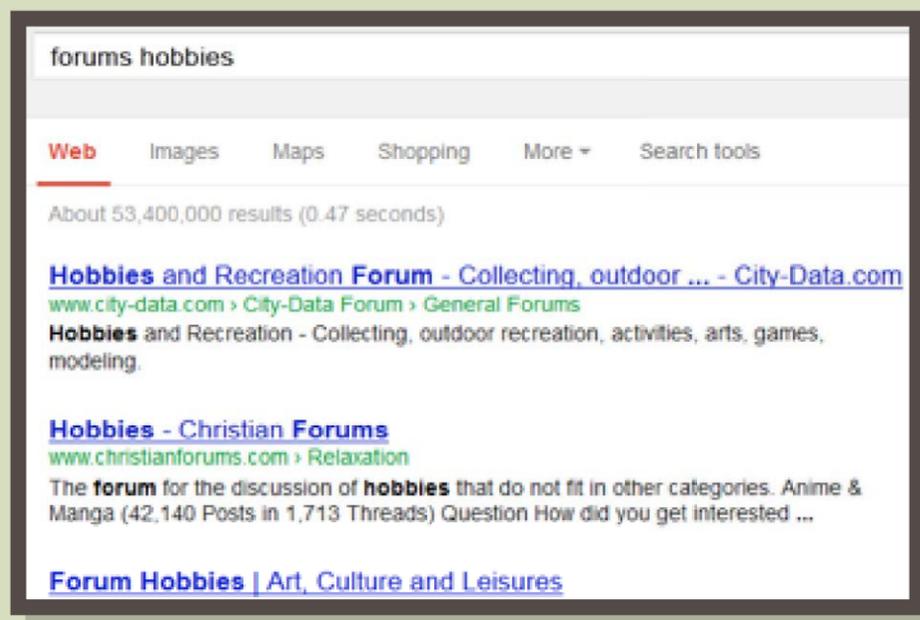
Note the description of the group, the activity level (*Very Active, Active, or no rating*), and whether any of your connections are members of the group.



- 5/ YOU MAY LEARN MORE ABOUT A GROUP BY CLICKING THE GROUP’S NAME OR THE VIEW BUTTON.

Some groups are open forums — you can explore threads without joining. Others, you’ll need to click the Join Group button to see discussions.

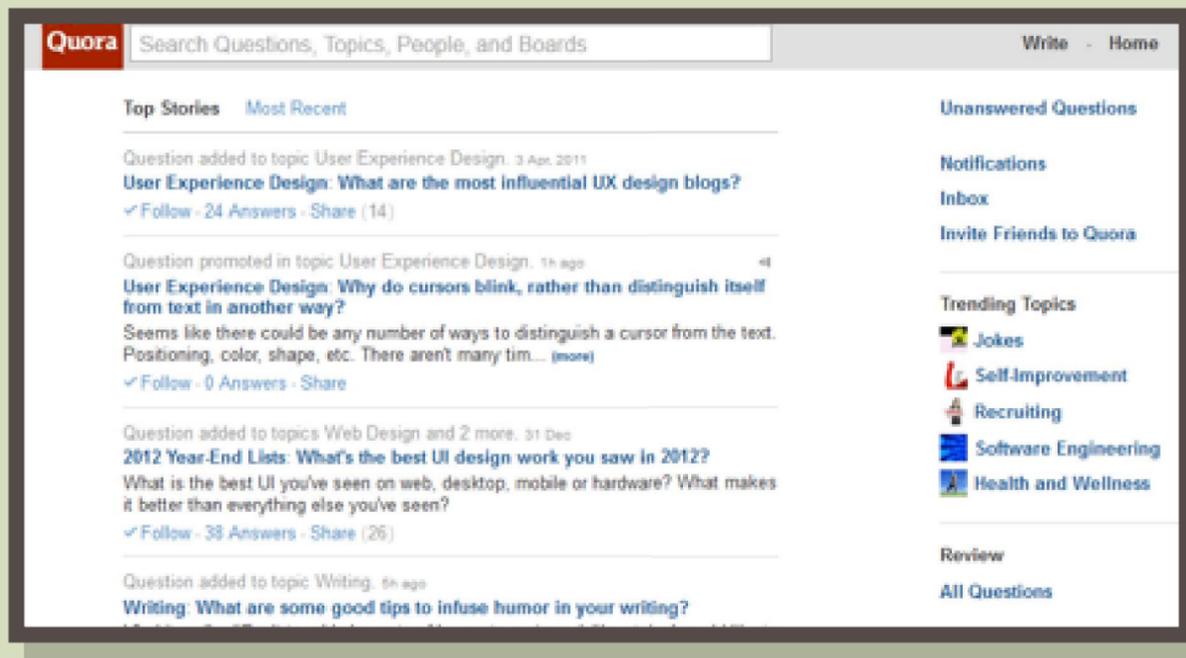
[WWW.GOOGLE.COM.](http://WWW.GOOGLE.COM)



Some forums can be found in a Google search.

- 1/ IN GOOGLE’S SEARCH BAR, TYPE “FORUMS [YOUR TOPIC]” AND SEE WHAT COMES UP.
You may need to try different topics to get good results.
- 2/ FOLLOW THE LINKS AND EXPLORE EACH FORUM UNTIL YOU FIND ONE THAT FITS YOUR NEEDS.
- 3/ FOLLOW THE GROUP’S MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN.

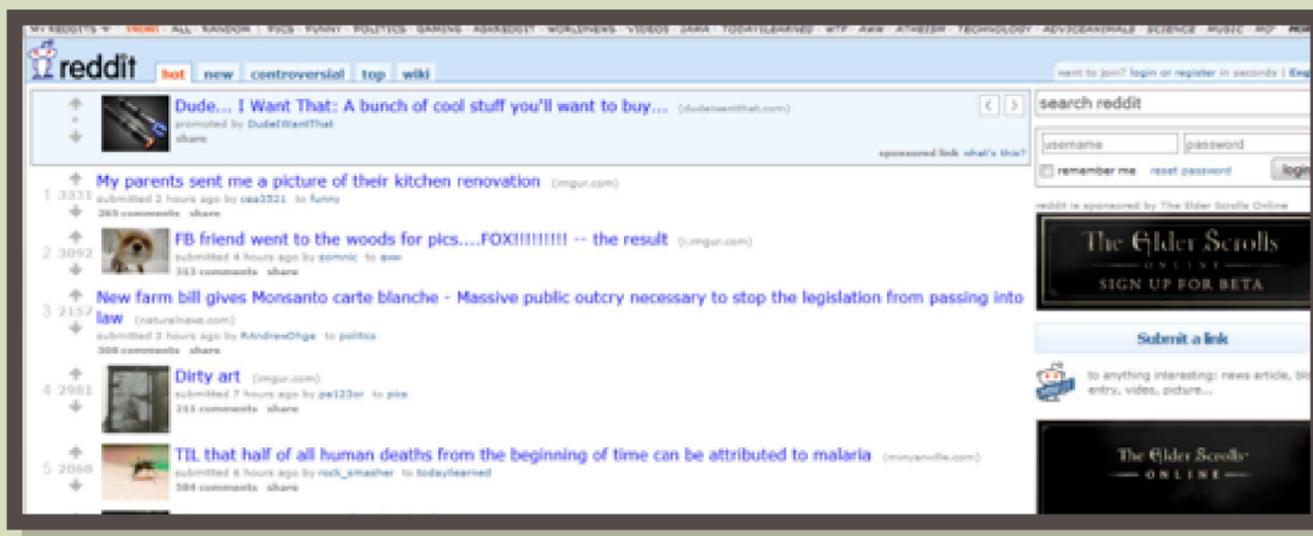
WWW.QUORA.COM



Quora is a forum on steroids. Its sole purpose is to give people a place to ask questions. So if you want to know what topics are on people's mind, this may be a good resource.

- 1/ VISIT WWW.QUORA.COM.
- 2/ CREATE AN ACCOUNT.
- 3/ LOG IN TO QUORA AND BEGIN TYPING ONE OF YOUR TOPICS INTO THE SEARCH BAR.
- 4/ CHECK OUT THE SUGGESTED KEY PHRASES, AND EITHER SELECT ONE OF THEM OR CONTINUE TYPING YOUR SEARCH TERM.
- 5/ EXPLORE THE DIFFERENT THREADS AND JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION IF YOU FEEL INCLINED.

WWW.REDDIT.COM



Reddit is an online community where users vote on content, comment on posts, and discuss ideas. Trending topics are at the top of the page, and a search bar allows you to find discussions related to your topic. If you need ideas, this could be a great resource.

- 1/ VISIT WWW.REDDIT.COM.
- 2/ TYPE YOUR TOPIC INTO THE SEARCH BAR IN THE UPPER RIGHT-HAND CORNER.
- 3/ REVIEW THE DISCUSSION TOPICS THAT COME UP, OR EXPLORE RELATED "SUB-REDDIT" THREADS.
- 4/ JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION IF YOU FEEL INCLINED.



VISIT YOUR CHOSEN FORUMS ON A REGULAR BASIS.

Some people like to visit forums on a daily basis, say, on their lunch hour. Others visit once a week or so. Find a schedule that works for you.



BROWSE THE TOPICS PEOPLE ARE DISCUSSING.

In particular, look for comments or questions that relate to your core topic.



READ THESE THREADS TO SEE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE SAYING.

One of your key objectives is to understand the conversations taking place about your core topic. This will help you stay current on what people think about your topic and what information they are looking for.

- 1/ YOU MAY SEE A COMMENT THAT YOU DISAGREE WITH.**
Consider writing something that addresses the comment, presenting your point of view. Record your thoughts and the URL of the comment in your Idea list.
- 2/ A COMMENT MAY MAKE YOU LOOK AT AN ISSUE IN A NEW LIGHT OR QUESTION SOMETHING YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW.**
Write your question and the comment's URL in your list of topics. It could make a good thought piece.
- 3/ YOU MAY IDENTIFY A MEMBER OF THE FORUM WHO IS PARTICULARLY KNOWLEDGEABLE.**
Consider connecting with them outside of the forum. You might be able to interview them or use them as a subject matter expert in future content.



MAKE IT A GOAL TO ADD AT LEAST ONE NEW IDEA TO YOUR CONTENT IDEA LIST EACH TIME YOU VISIT A FORUM

No. 1

TUNE IN AND LISTEN.

A surprisingly simple way to get new ideas is to start listening.



STEP 1

LISTEN TO STRANGERS WHEN YOU'RE OUT AND ABOUT

When you're at the store or coffee shop, listen to what people are saying. (That's right. We're giving you permission to eavesdrop. Discretely, of course.)

- *What topics do they talk about?*
- *What questions are they asking?*
- *What are their biggest concerns? Joys?*

Look for ways that everyday conversations relate to your core topic. Write these ideas in your Content Idea list.

STEP 2

LISTEN TO YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

When gathering with family and friends, if the conversation turns to the topic of what you do for a living, encourage them to ask questions.

- *Listen for the gaps in their knowledge.*
- *Look for the things they're curious or confused about.*
- *Listen for the words they use to talk about your topic. These are the words your customers likely use too.*

Add any ideas that surface to your list of ideas.

STEP 3

LISTEN TO YOUR CUSTOMERS

When you get an email or comment from a customer or peer, make a point of listening more than talking.

- *What seems to be the biggest challenge? Concern? Fear?*
- *What are they trying to do?*
- *What stops them from doing it?*
- *What do you know — or what process are you using — that could help?*

Get out your idea list and write down possible content topics that would answer these questions.

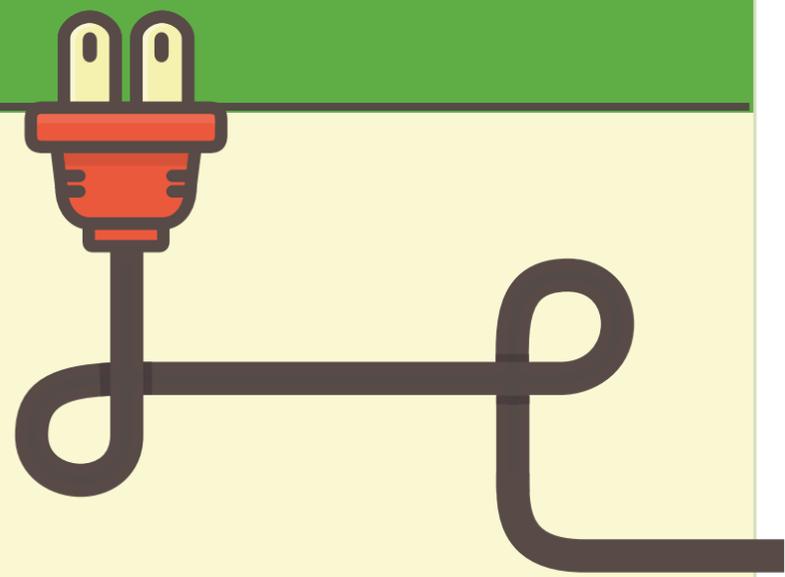
TIP #1

If you get a chance to talk one-on-one to customers, encourage them to talk about the things that matter to them, including their hobbies and passions. This gives you a wealth of information about who your target audience is — as well as the topics that are guaranteed to pique their interest.

TIP #2:

Ask all employees who deal with customers to keep a notepad handy when talking to customers, whether on the phone, instant messaging, or in person. As they talk (*or as soon as the conversation ends*), have them jot down topics that the customer is confused about or has questions about. Add these to your list of content ideas.

PLUG IN TO THE ENERGY OF SOCIAL MEDIA



You can get lots of ideas from your social media interactions — if you are present and engaged. (*Being present and engaged will not only make you a better content marketer, it will make you a better social media marketer too!*)

Part of the secret to this is to follow the right people. Look for the thought leaders in your industry, the people setting trends and coming up with the ideas everyone else shares. These are the people to follow.

STEP 1

MAKE A LIST OF THE TERMS THAT YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT.

Include keywords related to your core topic and terms that you use in your secondary messages.

STEP 2

USE THESE TERMS IN A SEARCH IN EACH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM.

FACEBOOK



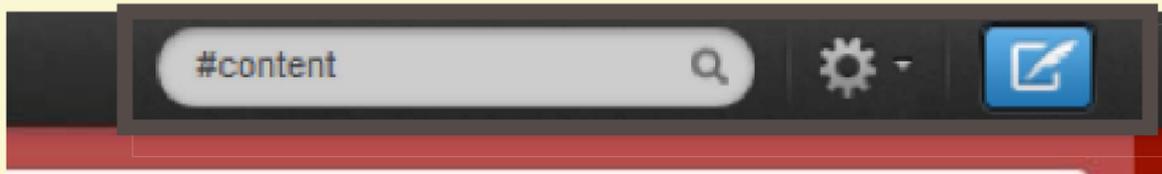
- 1/ TYPE YOUR KEYWORDS IN THE SEARCH BAR.
- 2/ LOOK FOR GROUPS AND PAGES RELATED TO YOUR TOPIC.
- 3/ VISIT THE PAGES AND REVIEW THE POSTS.
- 4/ ARE THEY USEFUL? IF SO, FOLLOW THEM.

NOTE:

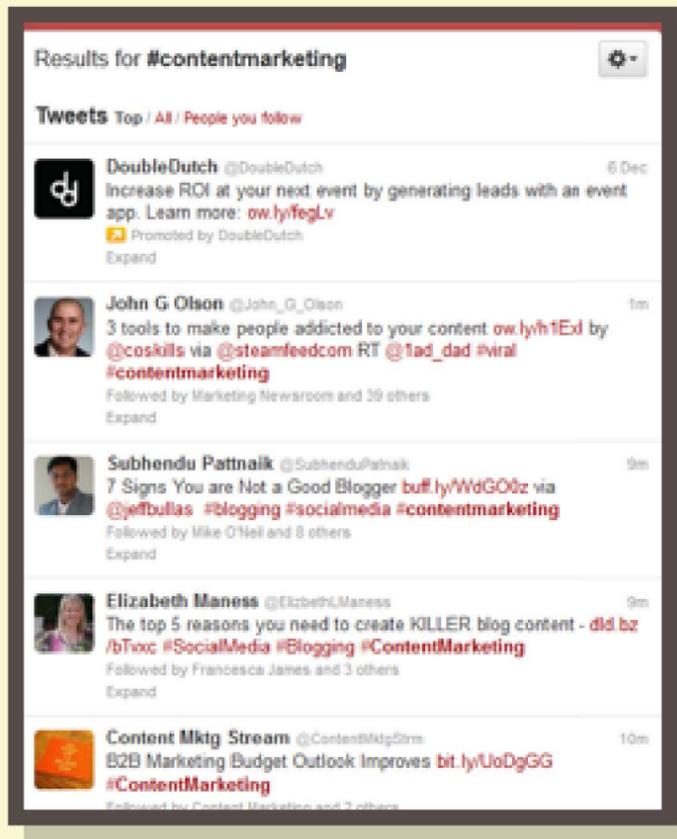
You can also search directly for the people you know are thought leaders in your industry.

TWITTER

- 1/ TYPE #KEYWORD (THAT'S A HASHTAG FOLLOWED BY YOUR KEYWORD) IN THE SEARCH BAR.



That will generate a list of tweets about your topic. Like this:



- 2/ IN THE PANEL ON THE LEFT, CLICK THE "PEOPLE" LINK.



The stream of *tweets* about your keyword will become a list of *people* who are tweeting that keyword.

- 3/ CLICK ON EACH PERSON'S NAME TO READ THEIR DESCRIPTION AND REVIEW THEIR TWEETS.

- 4/ LOOK AT HOW MANY TWEETS THEY HAVE AND HOW OFTEN THEY TWEET.

It isn't worth following someone who isn't active in Twitter.

5/ CHECK THE NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS THEY HAVE.

If they rarely tweet but have thousands of followers, then the number of followers doesn't indicate influence. It means they bought followers, which means they aren't thought leaders.

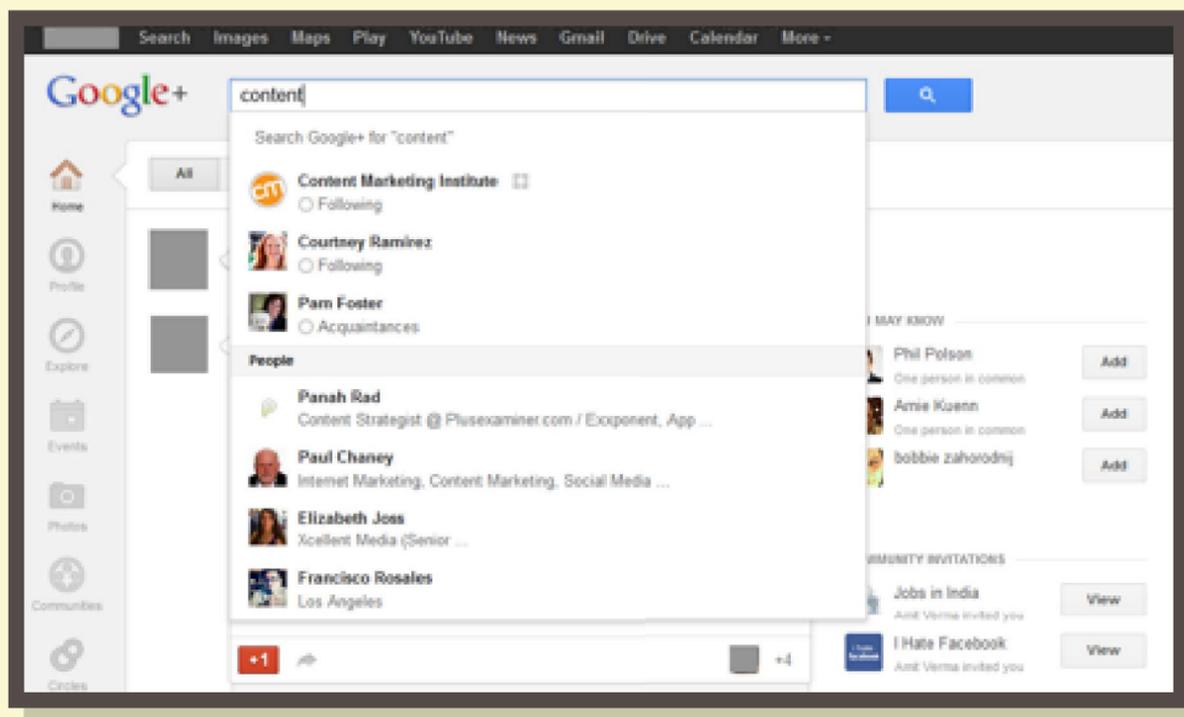
On the other hand, if they have a lot of followers because they make useful, thoughtful posts, then you may benefit from following them.

6/ IF, BASED ON YOUR REVIEW, A TWEETER LOOKS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT YOUR TOPIC, CLICK THE FOLLOW BUTTON.

NOTE:

If you want to find people whose name you already know, simply type their name in the search bar.

GOOGLE+



1/ TYPE YOUR TOPIC IN THE SEARCH BAR AND SEE WHO COMES UP.

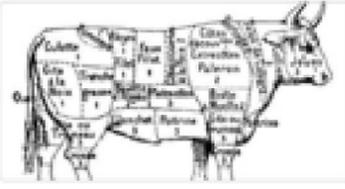
2/ REVIEW THEIR PROFILE, FOCUSING ON THEIR DESCRIPTION AND POSTS.

3/ IF YOU LIKE THEIR POSTS AND IF THEY LOOK KNOWLEDGEABLE, FOLLOW THEM.

STEP 5

USE FEEDLY TO IDENTIFY THOUGHT LEADERS.

COPYBLOGGER ← Industry-leading blog that accepts guest posts



The Great Chef and The Failing Restaurant
When the Head Chef dramatically walked out in the middle of Friday night service, a Sous Chef found herself in charge of the well-known and respected Manhattan restaurant. In the following months, though she was very competent, **100+** by Robert Bruce / 4 days ago



Brian Clark on Writing, Productivity, and Sitting Down to Dinner with William Gibson
7 years ago, Brian Clark glimpsed the future. With \$1,000, no audience, and no connections, he started a simple blog and slowly, steadily built a vast resource for empowering online writers. Now, he's the CEO of a multi-million dollar **100+** by Kelton Reid / 5 days ago



30 Ways to Build the "Know, Like, and Trust" Factor that Grows an Audience
Your content is good. You know your material. You know how to put words together in a way people want to read. You're nearly there. But the game isn't won yet. No matter how strong a writer you are, you won't grow the vibrant **300+** by Georgina El Morsh / 6 days ago

- 1/ **LOG IN TO YOUR FEEDLY STREAM.**
- 2/ **LOOK FOR INDUSTRY-LEADING BLOGS THAT ACCEPT GUEST POSTS.**
- 3/ **CHECK OUT THE NAMES OF THE WRITERS.**
- 4/ **SEARCH FOR THESE PEOPLE IN FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND GOOGLE+.**
- 5/ **FOLLOW THEM, AND KEEP AN EYE ON THEIR POSTS.**

STEP 4

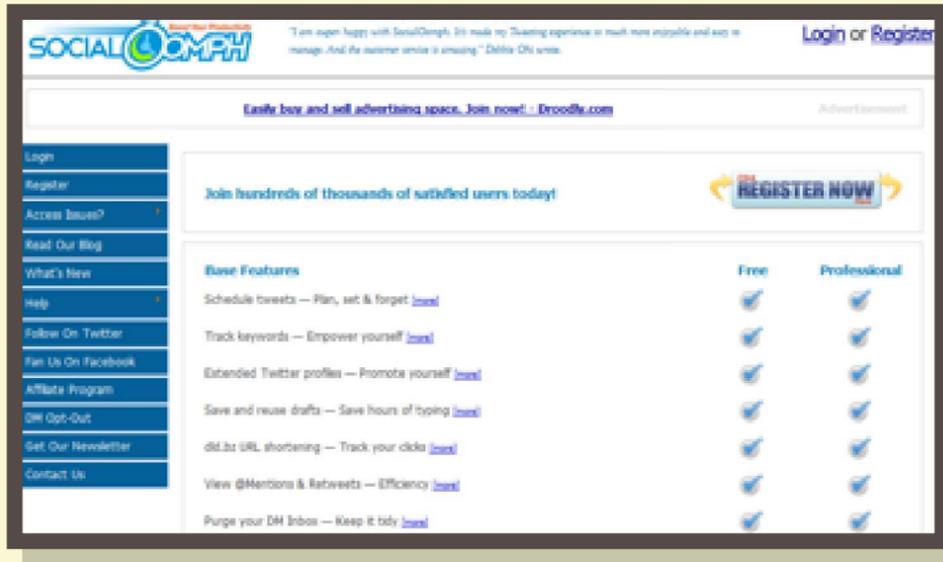
SET UP A SOCIAL MEDIA STREAM TO MONITOR YOUR STREAMS.

A lot of your ideas will come from posts you see in social media. But reading and following social media can eat up a lot of your time. It might help to use an app that lets you view all your streams at once and/or schedule your posts in advance. Here are a few suggestions:

HOOTSUITE



SOCIALLOOMPH



TWEETDECK



START GENERATING IDEAS.

Schedule about 30 minutes a day to review your streams, read posts and interact with your connections. But don't merely look at the posts people are publishing. Here's what you need to do:

- 1/ LOOK FOR THE TRENDING TOPICS.**
- 2/ PAY ATTENTION TO THE IDEAS BEING DEVELOPED, WHAT IDEAS ARE ADDED TO THE CONVERSATION, AND HOW PEOPLE RESPOND TO THEM.**
- 3/ JOIN THESE CONVERSATIONS.**

It's in these interactions that ideas will spring to mind.

- 4/ START ENGAGING WITH THOUGHT LEADERS.**

Build relationships. Down the road, if you need a subject matter expert to give you a quote or interview, you already have access to these people.

STAY RELEVANT WITH NEWSJACKING

Another great source of ideas is the news. But as a content marketer, you don't simply report the news. You employ an old journalist's trick called *newsjacking*.

WHAT IS NEWSJACKING?

It's finding ideas within the news that intersect with your core topics. This point of intersection allows you to produce relevant, timely content from a unique perspective. Like this:



10 People Annoyed That Inauguration Poem Didn't Rhyme



Inaugural poet Richard Blanco is no Dr. Seuss. Twitter users were apparently expecting something like **500+** Mashable! / 2 hours ago

On January 21, 2013, the big news was President Obama's inauguration ceremony. Any article that responded to this event was seen as timely and relevant.

People weren't looking for more reports about the inauguration, though. They were looking for fresh angles or entertaining responses to it.

Mashable reports on the importance of digital innovation and how it empowers and inspires people around the world. How does that intersect with the inauguration?

Social media usage, of course. So it examined how Twitter users felt about a particular aspect of the presidential inauguration.

See how it works? Now you try...

STEP 1

KEEP UP WITH THE NEWS.

Fill your Feedly stream with news sources as well as industry blogs. Then skim them on a daily basis to look for big events or interesting news.

STEP 2

LOOK FOR THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE NEWS AND YOUR CORE TOPIC.

Look for industry, local or national activities that you can relate to your own business.

- ▶ Do you write about social media? Review Facebook posts about the event.
- ▶ Do you write about green products? Report how this event affects the green agenda.



RESPOND TO THE EVENT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

Newsjacking requires immediacy. This strategy is not for you if you need two days to write a post and a week to get it approved.

So don't add newsjacking ideas to your Ideas list. If you have the resources to respond quickly to news events, here's what you do:

- 1/ ANALYZE A POTENTIAL NEWS STORY FROM YOUR UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE.
- 2/ INTERVIEW THOUGHT LEADERS IF IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE.
- 3/ LOOK AT WHAT PEOPLE ARE POSTING IN SOCIAL MEDIA.
- 4/ THEN CREATE A UNIQUE ANGLE FOR TALKING ABOUT THE EVENT.



KEEP IT TASTEFUL.

If newsjacking seems like a good option for your brand, keep a few thoughts in mind:

- 1/ DON'T BE RUDE OR OFFENSIVE.
- 2/ DON'T TRY TO PROFIT FROM NATURAL DISASTER.
- 3/ USE CURRENT EVENTS AS A WAY TO GENERATE INTEREST OR TO JOIN THE CONVERSATION, NOT PUT THE FOCUS ON YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

Coming up with relevant, interesting content ideas will never be a burden if you implement all seven of the tactics outlined in this chapter.

By adopting these tactics, you're now primed to generate and capture a steady stream of ideas. You have the resources to stay up-to-date on the ideas circulating in your industry. And you're well-situated to see new trends before they occur.

But setting up this idea-generating system isn't enough. You need to practice engaged listening to transform all the information you're now collecting into useable ideas.

For that, follow this simple 4-step process:



AS YOU READ, INTERACT WITH & TALK TO PEOPLE, PAY ATTENTION.

Come up with ideas that connect with their interests and answer their questions.



LET THE IDEAS YOU'RE COLLECTING & CONVERSATIONS YOU'RE HAVING INSPIRE YOUR OWN OPINIONS.

Jot these ideas in your Idea list.



DON'T BE AFRAID TO STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD OR SHAKE THINGS UP.

If your opinions are different from the mainstream, that's okay. Never hesitate to add radical new thoughts to your Idea list.



LOOK FOR GAPS IN THE CONVERSATION.

What parts of the topic aren't being covered? What questions do you still have? Those are ideal topics for you to write about in your own content, so add them to your Idea list.

Your goal is to continually add content ideas to the list in your planning document. That way, you never run out of subject matter for timely, engaging content for your readers.

But simply having ideas isn't enough. The next step is to evaluate and refine your ideas and then fit them into an editorial plan. Don't worry. It's easier than it sounds. And in the next chapter, you'll get the exact steps for how to do it.

READY TO BEGIN?

[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER ONE](#)



[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER THREE](#)



HOW TO PLAN YOUR CONTENT FOR MAXIMUM PRODUCTIVITY

By now, you have a working content marketing plan and a list of ideas. It's time now to start planning your content. (*This is the fun part.*)

In this chapter, you'll continue to expand on the Content Plan you created in chapter 1. You'll develop a working Editorial Planner in which you can plan and track your content, and after it's published, record results. You'll also begin planning content for the next few months.

Ready to begin?

No

1

SET UP [OR REFINE] THE CATEGORIES FOR YOUR BLOG



Remember the secondary topics you set up in chapter 1? In Section 4, Step 2, you turned each of these topics into a keyword or phrase. If you go back to the Strategic Plan in your Content Plan document, you'll find them in the Core Message box under "Summary/Keyword."

CORE MESSAGE		
	Message / Topic	Summary / Keywords
Target Audience	Digital marketers in small to medium-sized businesses	
Mission Statement	Helping SMBs master the art of digital marketing	Communicate. Connect. Convert.
Core Message or Question	Through a strategic blend of content, social media and direct response, you can easily build profits.	These are your categories
5-7 Secondary Messages		↓
	1 Effective DR copywriting will help you sell more	Direct Response Copywriting
	2 Low-hype, high-value content attracts your ideal customer	Content Marketing
	3 Marketing is a two-way conversation now	New Marketing

Each of these secondary topics needs to be a category in your blog.

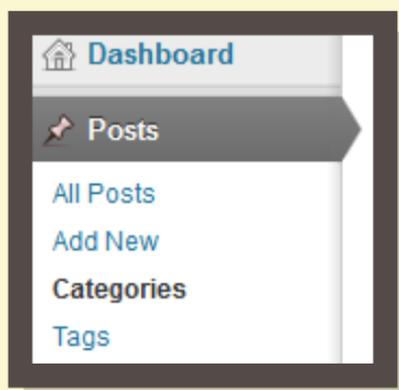
If you already have a website with categories, double-check that your categories match the terms you selected for your secondary messages. If they do, you're set. Skip down to Section 2, "Go deep with your Ideal Customer."

If you don't already have a website with categories — or if your categories don't align with your secondary messages — you need to set them up now. Continuing with our assumption that you have a WordPress blog, here's how to make that happen:

STEP

1

IN YOUR WORDPRESS ADMIN PANEL, NAVIGATE TO POSTS > CATEGORIES.



STEP 2

ENTER YOUR FIRST CATEGORY NAME.

Categories

Add New Category

Name

The name is how it appears on your site.

Slug

The "slug" is the URL-friendly version of the name. It is usually all lowercase and contains only letters, numbers, and hyphens.

Parent
None
Categories, unlike tags, can have a hierarchy. You might have a Jazz category, and under that have children categories for Bebop and Big Band. Totally optional.

Description

If you created short, easy-to-grasp secondary messages, this will be easy. Just type in your first one beside “Name.”

If your secondary messages are questions or statements, you’ll need to use the terms you entered under “Summary / Keyword.” This should be a short, recognizable name to capture the main idea behind your secondary message.

Remember, whatever you enter as the category name will show up in the sidebar of your website.

STEP 3

ENTER THE “SLUG.”

The slug is what shows up in the URL of your category page:

<http://www.yourURL.com/category/slug>

The last part of this URL is the slug that you enter in this step. It should be:

- Lower case
- Only letters, numbers and hyphens

STEP 4

ENTER THE PARENT CATEGORY IF YOU HAVE ONE.

Categories can have hierarchy. In other words, you can create a category for Marketing and then create subcategories for Digital Marketing, Email Marketing, Content Marketing, and more.

At this stage, you probably don’t have any lower-level categories, so keep the default, “None.”

STEP 5

ENTER SEO DETAILS.

To help optimize your site, enter a Title Tag, Meta Description, and Keywords for the category page.

Title Tag <title> Marketing Success
17 Search engines allow a maximum of 70 characters for the title.

Meta Description <meta> Great marketing helps you connect with your ideal customers, helping them know, like and trust you. Read Kathryn's tips and tactics here.
138 Search engines allow a maximum of roughly 150 characters for the description.

Meta Keywords <meta> marketing

Let’s say this is a category page for the topic, “Marketing.”

The Title Tag might be: **Marketing articles by YourBrandName.**

Your title should be descriptive and no longer than 70 characters. It should also contain your keyword.

The Meta Description should be 150 characters maximum and should include a short description of the articles that you'll include in this part of your blog.

Something like: **Great marketing helps you connect with your ideal customers, helping them know, like and trust you. Read Brand's tips and tactics here.**

For the Keyword, type in your category name.

STEP 6

ENTER A TITLE AND INTRODUCTION FOR THE CATEGORY PAGE.

When someone clicks on one of the categories in your blog, they'll land on the category page.

The title and introduction that you enter now will determine how this page looks.

Consider using the same title you entered in the SEO section above. Then create a short, compelling description of the information people will find in the articles you include in this section.

You can use the same blurb you included in the Meta-Description above, but here, there's no limit to length. We suggest two or three sentences.



STEP 7

CLICK THE "ADD NEW CATEGORY" BUTTON TO SAVE YOUR SETTINGS.

STEP 8

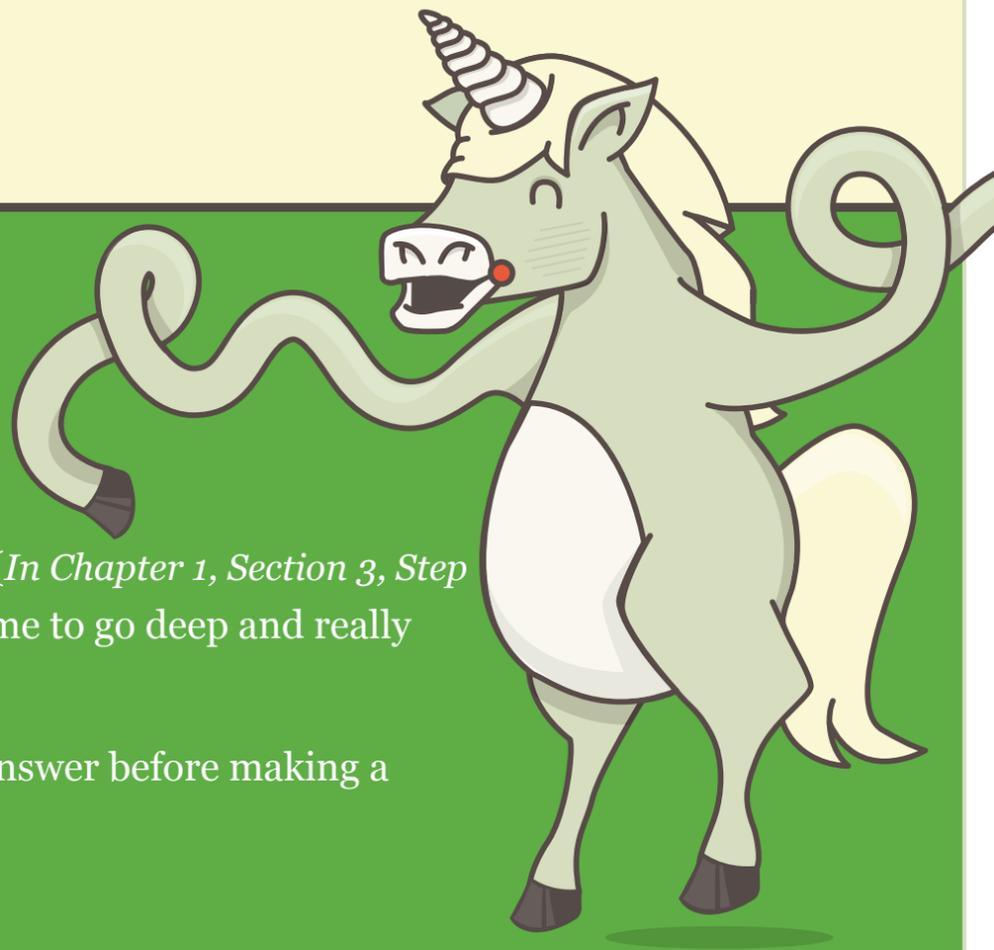
REPEAT FOR YOUR OTHER SECONDARY MESSAGES.

NOTE:

You don't need to create a category for your core message because that idea will work its way into every message you write. For instance, if your core message related to "optimization," then every piece of content you create will relate in some way to optimization.

You may develop two or three keywords that relate to your core message and then use those keywords liberally in all your messaging. This creates a strong, unified brand message across all platforms, regardless of the type of content.

GO DEEP WITH YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER



In Chapter 1, you identified your ideal customers. (*In Chapter 1, Section 3, Step 4, you even created an avatar for them.*). Now it's time to go deep and really get to know them.

There are three questions that all buyers want to answer before making a purchase:

- 1/ DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M TRYING TO ACHIEVE?
- 2/ IF I FOLLOW YOUR PROCESS OR USE YOUR PRODUCT, WILL I GET THE RESULTS I WANT?
- 3/ ARE YOU GOING TO BE THERE FOR ME IF I HAVE PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS?

Before you begin planning or writing content, you need to know the answers to these three questions.

STEP 1

FORGET WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS.

It's easy to get near-sighted about your products and *think* you know why people buy it.

In order to know what type of content you need to create, you need to know the real reason people choose you over the competition.

And in order to do that, you need to talk to your customers.

STEP 2

SET UP AN INTERVIEW WITH A CUSTOMER.

- 1/ If you have dedicated sales and marketing teams, you may need to talk to the Sales Director to help him or her understand the value of marketing based on real, not assumed customer pain points. Ask for help selecting the best customers for this interview, and to make any necessary introductions.
- 2/ Select a customer who is open to sharing insights about what was going on when they first realized they needed to find a product like the one they purchased from you.
- 3/ Call and set up a 30-minute meeting. To help, here's a possible script you can use:

Hello, **Customer Name**. This is **Interviewer's Name**, from Company. We're trying to step up our customer support by creating more content to help customers just like you. But we want to be sure we provide the type of information that is most useful. Since you've been a long-time customer, we were wondering if you'd be willing to share your insights.

Wait for response. If positive...

What we'd need is just **30 minutes** of your time to ask a few questions about why you purchased product and how well it has performed for you. Would you be able to carve out **30 minutes** to meet with me?

Set up your meeting.



DON'T TALK. LISTEN.

Your goal from this meeting is to learn:

- ▶ *The thoughts and events that prompted your customer to begin looking for a solution to its problem.*
- ▶ *What that problem was in their words, not yours.*
- ▶ *What criteria they were looking for in a product.*
- ▶ *Why they finally settled on your product.*
- ▶ *How it has solved the problem.*

Do not use a script in your interview. You want to have a real conversation, not merely collect data. Here's how you should proceed:

1/ **BEGIN BY ASKING YOUR CUSTOMER:**

Think back to the point when you first considered buying this product. What was going on at that time?

2/ **THEN LISTEN.**

Let your customer talk about what was happening and what s/he was thinking.

3/ **PROBE FURTHER TO GET AS MANY REAL-LIFE DETAILS AS POSSIBLE.**

You want to understand what the customer was feeling and what his or her challenges were. You also want to know what s/he was hoping to achieve by buying you product.

4/ **RESPECT THE TIME.**

After 30 minutes, if you don't have the information you need, ask if it would be possible for you to have a second meeting. But don't overstay your welcome. Thank your customer for his or her help and end the interview.

STEP 4

PERFORM MORE INTERVIEWS, FOLLOWING THESE SAME GUIDELINES

The more insights you can collect, the better. Aim for three to five interviews to start. But periodically, plan to perform other interviews so your research remains current.

Consider also surveying your readers and/or conducting focus groups.

STEP 5

EVALUATE WHAT YOU LEARNED

1/ IN YOUR PLANNING DOCUMENT, WRITE THESE THREE HEADINGS:

- *What people are thinking when they begin looking for your product.*
- *What need triggered their decision to get serious about purchasing.*
- *What information they found most useful in the buying decision.*

2/ RECORD THE ANSWERS ACCORDING TO YOUR CUSTOMER INTERVIEW.

• What people are thinking when they begin looking for your product.	
They have an ad, landing page, or web page that needs writing.	
Sales are down. They need a well-written ad or landing page.	
They're need a new angle to sell their stuff.	
They've used up all their own ideas and need new ideas.	
• What need triggered their decision to get serious about purchasing.	
They may have tried to write it themselves, but realized they didn't have the skill.	
They have a new product.	
They want to try a new marketing tactic, but feel uncomfortable with it.	
• What information they found most useful in the buying decision.	

Now use that information to create a Questions Analysis.

QUESTIONS ANALYSIS

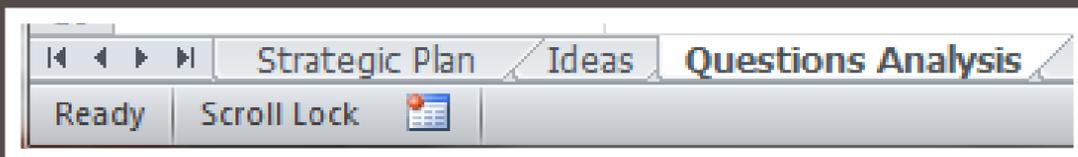
What questions do your ideal customers ask at each stage of the buying cycle? When you know this, you'll know what content you need at the core of your content marketing strategy.



STEP 1

CREATE A NEW TAB IN YOUR PLANNING DOCUMENT.

Name it "Questions Analysis."



STEP 2

TITLE THE PAGE IN ROW 1. THEN IN ROW 3, CREATE THREE COLUMN HEADS:

	A	B	C
1	Questions Analysis		
2			
3	Buying Stage	Customer Questions	Your Answer

Column A: Buying Stage

Column B: Customer Questions

Column C: Your Answer

STEP 3

IN COLUMN A, LIST THE FIVE STAGES THE BUYER GOES THROUGH WHEN CONSIDERING A PURCHASE:

- 1/ REALIZATION THAT THEY HAVE A PROBLEM.
- 2/ INFORMATION GATHERING.
- 3/ EVALUATION OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.
- 4/ PRODUCT SECTION.
- 5/ IMPLEMENT OF THE SOLUTION.

	A	B	C
1	Questions Analysis		
2			
3	Buying Stage	Customer Questions	Your Answer
4	Realization of Problem	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
5	Information Gathering	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
6	Evaluation of Possible Solutions	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
7	Choose Solution	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
8	Implement Solution	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.



IN COLUMN B, WRITE OUT THE QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS YOUR CUSTOMERS TALKED ABOUT IN YOUR INTERVIEWS.

Do you best to assign the different questions and concerns to a particular stage in the buying process.

TIP: To lay out your information as pictured, you'll need to put multiple questions in one Excel cell. Hitting Enter will take you to the next cell in the page. So instead, hold down the Alt key while hitting Enter. The cursor will move to the next line of text in the same cell.



PROVIDE AN ANSWER TO EACH QUESTION OR CONCERN IN COLUMN C.

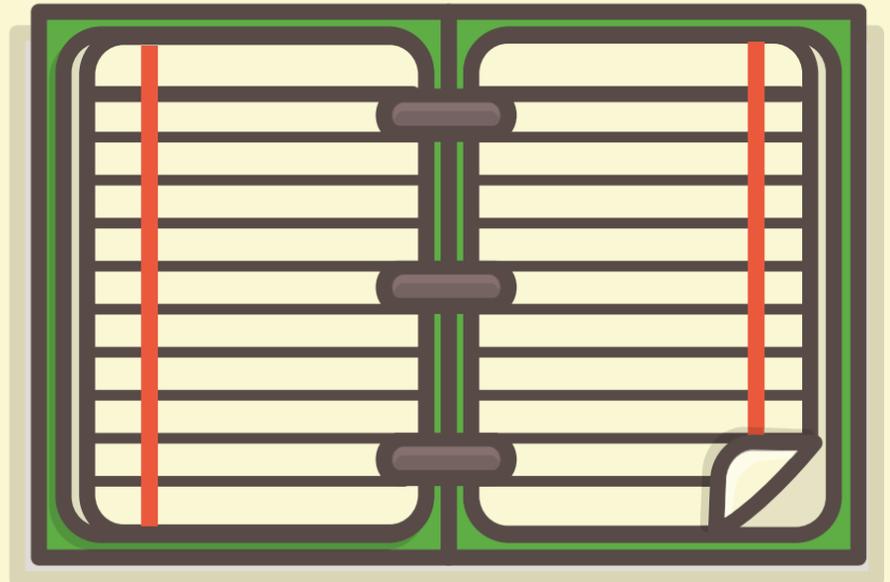
You may need to talk with your sales or customer relations teams in order to learn what responses are most effective.

If this is your first time to frame “official” branded responses, you may not know the answer that will resonate best with your prospects and customers. You may:

- *Create answers that you feel address the informational needs at each stage.*
- *Test your answers by using them consistently when talking to prospects and customers.*
- *Over time, as you evaluate people's responses to your answers, rephrase your answers (or change them) until you find the answers that resonate with people.*

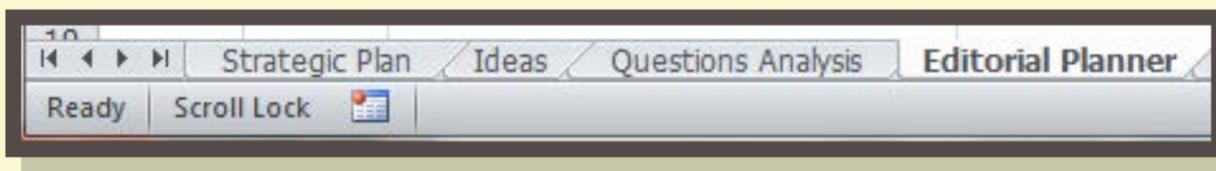


CREATE YOUR EDITORIAL PLANNER.



STEP 1

CREATE A NEW TAB IN YOUR CONTENT PLAN EXCEL FILE, CALLED "EDITORIAL PLANNER."



STEP 2

PREPARE EDITORIAL PLANNER PAGE

In row 1, name the page, "Editorial Planner." In row 3, create the column heads.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Editorial Planner									
2		Type of Content	CONTENT TOPIC OR IDEA	TITLE	OBJECTIVE	KEYWORDS	# COMMENTS	SOCIAL SHARES	SALES	NOTES
3	DATE									

Column A: Date

Column B: Type of Content

Column C: Content Idea or Topic

Column D: Title

Column E: Objective

Column F: Keywords

Column G: Views

Column H: Comments

Column I: Social Shares

Column J: Sales

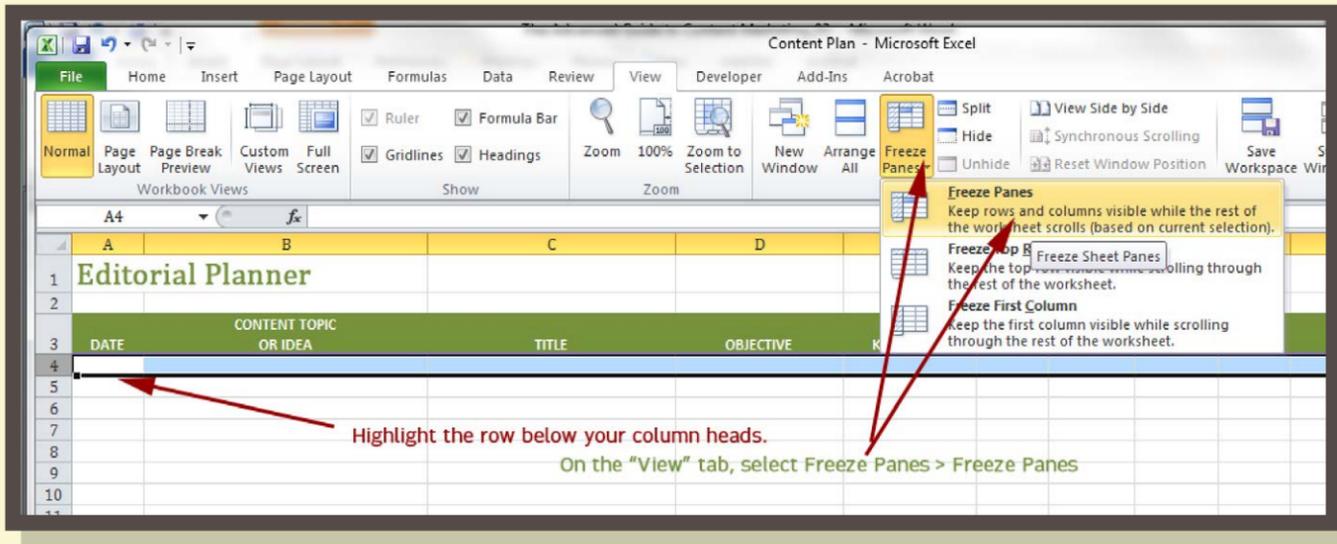
Column K: Notes



FREEZE THE TOP PANES

Place the cursor over the row number of the row below your header. (If you're using our layout, that's row 4.)

Click to highlight the row. Then click View > Freeze Panes > Freeze Panes (the top selection).



This will keep your columns headers in view, no matter how far down you scroll in the document.

No. 5

PREPARE FOR YOUR FIRST PLANNING SESSION



STEP 1

INVITE KEY MEMBERS OF YOUR EDITORIAL TEAM

Who needs to be in your planning sessions? If you are a:

Corporate Team. editor, writers, media producers, graphic artists, webmaster

Virtual Team. writer(s) and editor, talking on Skype or over the phone

Solopreneur. It's all you, baby.

STEP 2

FINALIZE YOUR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Frequency

2 post a week:
Mon, Thurs.

3 posts/day
8 am, noon, 4
p.m.

1 post/day
7 am

each blog post

1/month
3rd Tues of
each month

In Chapter 1, you decided on the types of content you want to create and the technology you'll use to create/publish it. (See the *Channel Plan* section of the *Strategic Plan: Tab 1* in your *Content Plan* document).

Check the "Frequency" column of your Channel Plan. If you haven't already, set specific days of the week or month to publish this content, do that now.

STEP 3

DETERMINE HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE TO CREATE YOUR CONTENT

Based on the type of content, your production schedule, and your available resources, how much lead time do you need to be able to produce different types of content?

CONTENT	WRITING & RESEARCH	GRAPHICS & LAYOUT	EDITING & UPLOAD	TIME REQUIRED
INFOGRAPHIC	1 WEEK	3 WEEKS	2 DAYS	4.5 WEEKS
EBOOK	4-6 WEEKS	2 WEEKS	2 WEEKS	8-10 WEEKS
BLOG POST	2 DAYS	--	2 DAYS	4 DAYS
VIDEO	4 DAYS	1 DAY	1 WEEK	2 WEEKS



DETERMINE HOW FAR IN ADVANCE AND HOW FREQUENTLY YOU NEED TO HOLD PLANNING SESSIONS

Let's back up for a minute.

Once a year, usually in December, you need to perform a high-level strategy meeting to set your content strategy for the coming year. In that meeting, you'll:

- 1/ SET YOUR PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR.
- 2/ SELECT ONE OR TWO AREAS FOR IMPROVING OR INCREASING RESULTS OF CONTENT MARKETING.
- 3/ ENTER MAJOR PROMOTIONS AND CONTENT THEMES INTO THE ANNUAL CALENDAR.

January	April	July	October	Major Events
S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Major Events Spring Sale: 25% off one product. March 4-9 Content Writer's Retreat: May 10-13 Convention: June 5-8 Black Friday/Cyber Monday sale: Nov. 22-25 Holiday Bling: Dec. 23-31 Fireworks Sale: July 4-6
February	May	August	November	Priorities
S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	Priorities Improve quality of content Add video to the mix Create one ebook per month
March	June	September	December	
S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	

If you haven't already set your annual strategy, your first planning session should focus on that.

Then once you have your annual strategy, you'll hold regular planning sessions throughout the year to plan content for the coming weeks or months. When we talk about your planning sessions in the rest of this chapter, this is what we're talking about.

Right now, your goal is to determine how often you want to hold planning sessions.

- *If you produce a lot of content, you may need to meet weekly or bimonthly, if only to keep tabs on the volume of work being done.*
- *If you produce less content, one planning session a month may be sufficient.*

STEP 5

SCHEDULE YOUR CONTENT PLANNING SESSIONS

A few questions you need to consider:

- *How many types of content do you plan to create?*
- *Do topics need to be approved? By whom?*

What is the timeframe needed to get approvals so content production can begin?

Based on your answers, choose the days you want to hold content planning sessions. Mark them in your calendar.

NOTE:

If you have a large team meeting face-to-face, and if you create a lot of content, the meeting could take an hour or more. If you meet virtually with one content creator at a time, you may only need 30 minutes.

STEP 6

ESTABLISH A WORKFLOW FOR CONTENT CREATION

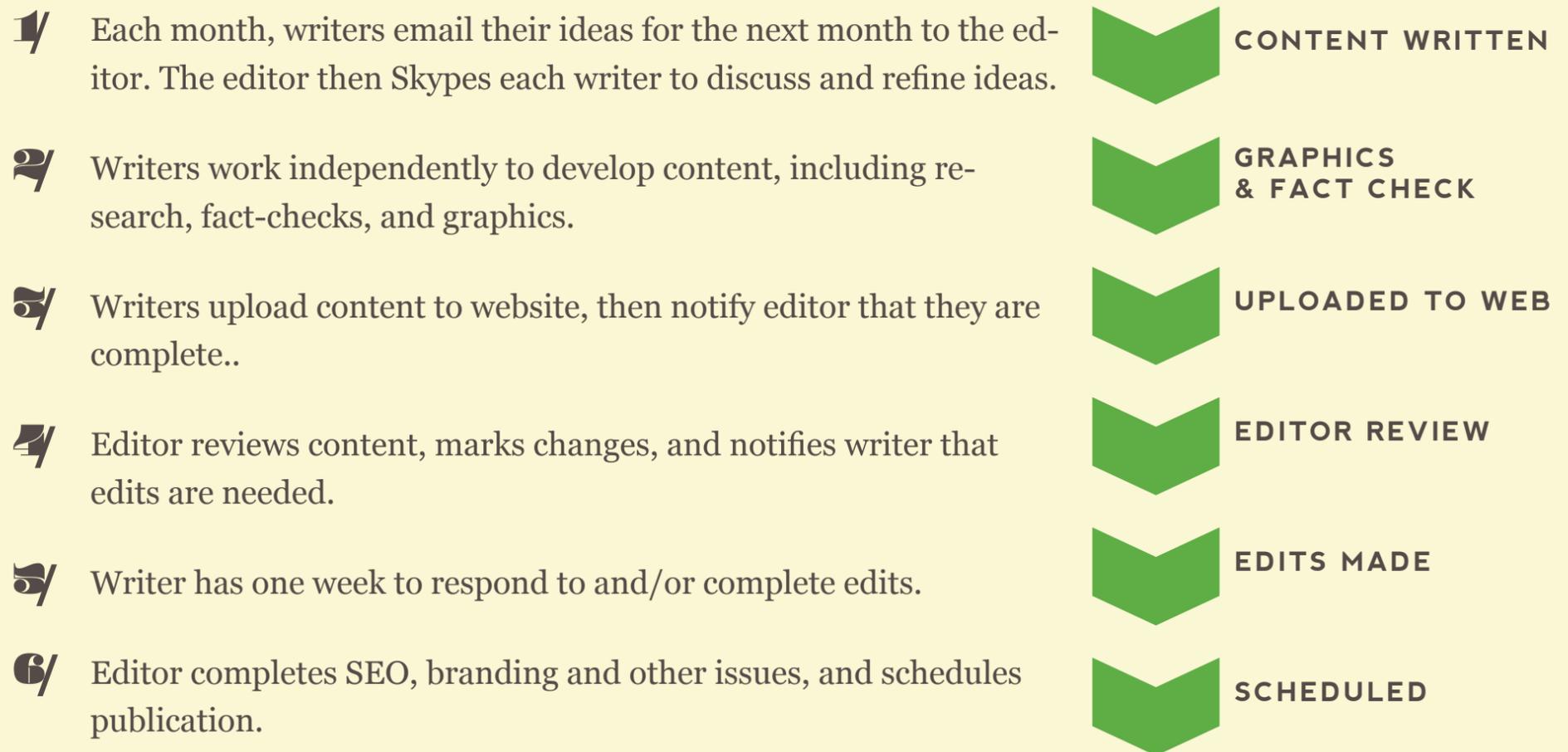
Before assigning content, you need to approve a workflow that will result in the best quality content for your brand. Two examples follow:

CONTENT MARKETING TEAM PUBLISHING TWICE A WEEK:

- 1/ Planning meetings are held once a month to review content ideas for the next month.
 - 2/ After the meeting, content writers produce the planned content and submit to appropriate subject matter expert for review.
 - 3/ Content is returned to writers for edits, then submitted to editor.
 - 4/ Editor reviews content and marks changes. It is returned to content creators for editing.
 - 5/ Once changes are made, content is given to Web team for uploading and layout according to branded Web standards.
 - 6/ Editor previews content, graphics and branding, and requests any final changes necessary. Then s/he schedules for publication.
- 
- CONTENT WRITTEN
 - SME REVIEW
 - CORRECTIONS MADE
 - EDITOR REVIEW
 - EDITS MADE
 - UPLOADED TO WEB
 - SCHEDULED

CONTRACTED CONTENT WRITERS WRITING TWO POSTS PER MONTH FOR DAILY BLOG:

In this scenario, most of the responsibility falls to the editor, who coordinates content creators and oversees the smooth operation of the blog.



YOUR WORKFLOW DEPENDS ON YOUR BUSINESS RESOURCES AND NEEDS:

Will you publish each day/week, once or twice a week, or once or twice a month?

Frequent publishing means you don't have time for a lot of reviews and approvals. It may also require monthly or weekly planning meetings to keep a steady flow of good ideas.

Will you write long educational posts or short newsjacking posts?

If you want your posts to be reviewed by subject matter experts and other stakeholders, you'll need more lead time to produce content, which means newsjacking may not be for you. On the other hand, if you want to create a lot of timely, relevant content, you'll need to give your writers freedom to publish quickly with fewer reviews. Create a workflow that allows the speed and quality control that works for your brand.

How many content creators do you have?

If you have a team of content creators, you can spread the work load, which means you can produce more content, more quickly, or hold fewer planning meetings.

NOTE: THERE IS NO “RIGHT WAY” TO PRODUCE CONTENT.



Some brands publish daily.

Their routine is to plan one week at a time, then write and publish content on the day it goes live.



Other brands publish once a week.

They hold a planning session once a quarter to loosely plan the topics that will be covered. Then once a month, they set aside a week to review and produce the next month's content.



Some brands publish only once or twice a month.

They plan in six-month chunks, and content is written as the publication date nears.

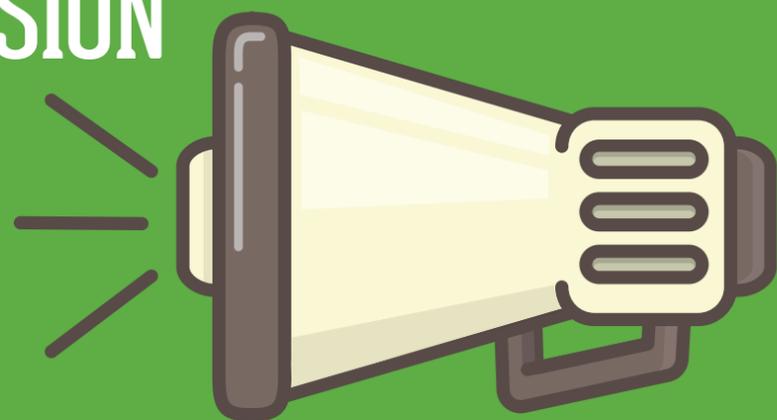
The choice is yours, and it depends on your priorities and how your workflow is organized.

At this point, you've made all the preliminary decisions needed to effectively run your content marketing.

- *You have your team in place.*
- *You have a workflow for getting content produced in the most effective way possible.*
- *You know how long it takes to create each type of content, so you know how far in advance you need to plan for each piece.*

You're ready to plan your content for the next few weeks or months.

HOLD YOUR PLANNING SESSION



During your planning sessions, you want to do two things:

- 1/ PLAN CONTENT THAT WILL BUILD READER ENGAGEMENT.
- 2/ OPTIMIZE THE IDEA TO MEET YOUR BUSINESS OBJECTIVES.

You must always place reader engagement above your business objectives. That being the case, you'll focus on developing your ideas for readers first.

STEP 1

IN COLUMN A, ENTER THE PUBLICATION DATES THAT YOU ARE PLANNING FOR.

DATE
KA 2/4
KA 2/11
KA 2/18
KA 2/25
CE 1/26
CE

Open the Editorial Planner you made in the Section 2 above. Then write the dates for regularly published content in Column A.

If you create content for multiple blogs or brands, use a code to identify which one the idea applies to. Or, if it would simplify matters, create a separate Editorial Planner for each brand.

If you are only responsible for creating the content, not scheduling it, you may enter publication dates after they're scheduled.

STEP 2

LIST THE TYPES OF CONTENT THAT NEED TO BE PRODUCED

Type of Content
blog, podcast
blog, podcast
blog, podcast
Video
blog
blog

Beside each publication date, in Column B, "Type of Content," mark the type of content needed. For example:

- *Social media post*
- *Blog post*
- *Special report or ebook*
- *Infographic*
- *Video*
- *Podcast*

STEP 5

LIST POTENTIAL CONTENT TOPICS IN COLUMN C, "CONTENT TOPIC."

Ideas are developed differently in different organizations. Your initial ideas may come from the writer, editor, or the C-Suite. However, the development of those ideas will be the same.

- ▶ *In some corporate organizations, ideas are mandated by the C-Suite, and the content marketing team merely executes those ideas. You'll simply enter their ideas in Column C.*
- ▶ *In other corporate environments, the writers have more input. At this stage, you may go around the room, asking each team member to suggest ideas they're considering. Enter each idea as it's proposed.*
- ▶ *If you have a virtual team, ideas likely originate with the writer or artist who will produce the idea. Rather than having a team meeting, you may simply make a Skype call and ask what ideas the writer has in mind.*
- ▶ *Solopreneurs, this entire process is done alone. As you plan, you'll need to fulfill all roles: strategic planner, content creator, and editor. You may need to brainstorm for ideas (see Chapter 2) or transfer ideas from your Notes app or scraps of paper you've been collecting.*

At this stage, your ideas may only be general, undeveloped topics or categories that need a new piece of content.

Google+ for SEO

There's a trend toward short blog posts:
ZAGG
Seth Godin
NFL blog
Gizmodo
Fastcompany

You may have already had some ideas about how to develop the idea. In that case, you may have a rough outline.

Whatever it looks like, write what you have in Column C.

STEP 6

REFINE YOUR IDEAS.

- ▶ **REVIEW ONE IDEA (OR TOPIC) AT A TIME**
Your goal at this point is to turn general, broad topics into focused, relevant content ideas. To do that, you'll address one piece of content at a time.

DEVELOP THAT IDEA

Here's the typical process for the evolution of an idea:

1. INTRODUCE THE TOPIC.



There's a trend toward short blog posts:
ZAGG
Seth Godin
NFL blog
Gizmodo
Fastcompany|

2. EVALUATE WHETHER IT WILL GIVE VALUE TO YOUR READERS.

Is this topic overdone?

Do you have something unique to say about it?

Is it useful?

Is it relevant?

Does it matter to your ideal customer?

3. THINK ABOUT THE TOPIC FROM YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER'S PERSPECTIVE.

Is there a story that gives background to the topic?

Is there a story that makes it more relevant?

Better yet, is there a problem faced by readers that this content solves?

4. REFRAME THE TOPIC TO INCLUDE THE STORY OR ADDRESS THE PROBLEM.

5. CAN YOU IMPROVE ON THIS IDEA IN ANY WAY?

Will additional information help?

Will visual elements help?

Does it relate to current news?

Does it relate to another trending topic, and could it shed light on that topic?

6. RE-EVALUATE THE TOPIC AFTER YOU'VE MADE THESE CHANGES TO THE IDEA.

What is the point now?

Is it more relevant, useful, or entertaining?

Can it be improved any further?

7. KEEP GOING UNTIL YOU'RE SURE THE IDEA WILL ENGAGE OR PROVIDE VALUE TO YOUR READERS.

DON'T OVERDEVELOP YOUR IDEA

It can be difficult for a writer to develop someone else's idea. So keep in mind, while most writers benefit from additional input, over-developing the content idea can stifle creativity. During this process, decide on the focus for each article, or give clarity to a broad topic, but allow the writer the freedom to develop ideas further during the writing phase.

STEP**WRITE YOUR DEVELOPED IDEAS IN COLUMN C OF YOUR EDITORIAL PLANNER**

CE - engagement lessons for content marketers
pick 3 bloggers who get great engagement. Evaluate how they do it.
Pull metrics: words in post: words in comments
Give traits of engagement:
1. Don't tell all the soup and nuts. Let people fill in the blanks.
2. SalesLion comments: genuine excitement that encourages engagement, as opposed to TomBrannon, who doesn't engage back.

Replace broad topics with the ideas you developed during your planning session.

Don't worry about developing titles until your content is written. Content ideas will continue to evolve during the writing phase, so titles will need to come last.

STEP**ASSIGN CONTENT TO TEAM MEMBERS AND SET DEADLINES FOR ITS PRODUCTION.**

Make sure that each publication date has a piece of content planned for it. Each member of the content team needs to know:

- *What content they are responsible for.*
- *The due date.*
- *The workflow for producing the type of content they're working on. (For example, video production will have a different process than a blog post.)*

TIP: In most cases, the writer who comes up with an idea is the one who should write it. However, if the idea evolves extensively during the planning session — especially if the new ideas are contributed by another writer — it may be easier for the other writer to produce it.

STEP**DETERMINE THE BUSINESS OBJECTIVE OF EACH PIECE OF CONTENT.**

Once you're sure your content ideas will inform and engage your ideal customers, you need to do some additional planning to ensure it fulfills your business objectives.

In Column E, "Objective," make sure each piece of content is assigned a business objective.

Essentially, you need to answer the question, "What should this piece of content accomplish?" Your options include (but aren't restricted to):

- *Drive traffic to [landing page].*
- *Generate interest in upcoming or new product.*
- *Thought leadership.*
- *Training, or how-to.*
- *Entertain.*



SCHEDULE CONTENT IN YOUR MARKETING CALENDAR.

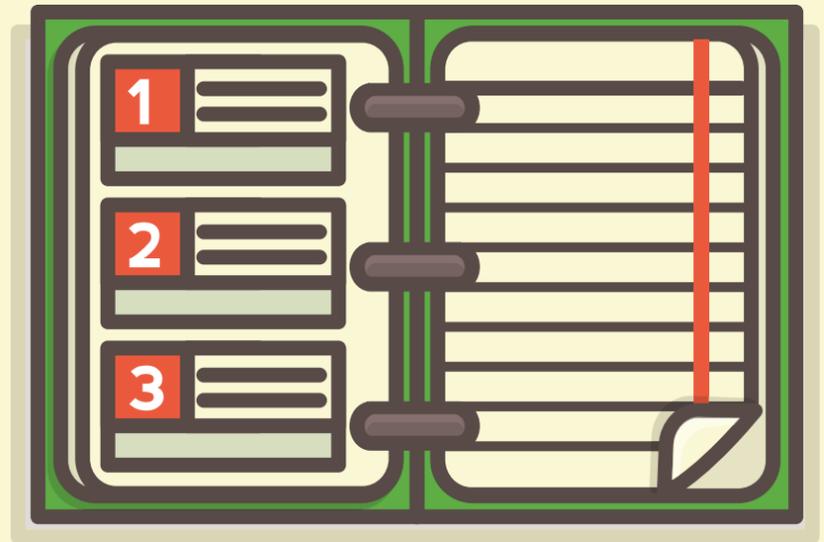
After your planning session, record your plans in your marketing calendar, so you can monitor all marketing being produced, whether it's social media, emails, landing pages, or content.

MARKETING CALENDAR							
WEEKLY SMM FOCUS	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	NOTES
SEO, Content Marketing	1 The importance of Google+	2 EBOOK: Rock Star Home Pages	3 Midweek Promo: Product 1	4 Case Study: 17% improvement in engagement	5	6 Weekend Roundup email	
Blogging, Social Media	7 An Easy Way to Set Up Author Rank	8	9 Midweek Promo: Product 2	10 New Developments in New Media	11	12 Weekend Roundup email	13
Google+, Author Rank	14 5 Essential Qualities of Irresistible Product Descriptions	15	16 Midweek Promo: Product 3	17 Author Rank: A Low-Tech Plugin for a High-Tech Solution	18	19 Weekend Roundup email	20
SEO, Content Marketing	21 What story does your brand tell?	22 VIDEO: CEO Live How we use Google+	23 Midweek Promo: Product 4	24 Google Update Forecast	25	26 Weekend Roundup email	27
Social Media	28 Facebook Tips and Tricks	29	30				

TIP: Consider color-coding your marketing calendar for easy reference. You could code your entries by:

- *The type of content*
- *The writer or team responsible for the content*
- *The customer segment receiving the communication*
- *The product/brand being promoted*

HOW TO USE YOUR EDITORIAL PLANNER



The Editorial Planner may be used by editors, content creators and your media team. It can be a useful resource for keeping the entire team on track.

1	Editorial Planner									
2										
3	DATE	Type of Content	CONTENT TOPIC OR IDEA	TITLE	OBJECTIVE	KEYWORDS	# COMMENTS	SOCIAL SHARES	SALES	NOTES
4	KA 2/4	blog	Google+ for SEO	The importance of Google+	thought leadership	Google+, social media, SEO				http://www.kathrynaragon.com/?p=2750 Podcast: http://www.kathrynaragon.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/The-Importance-of-Google-Plus.mp3
5	KA 2/11		How to set up Author Rank on your website	An Easy Way to Set Up Author Rank	how-to	author rank widget, easy way to set up author rank				http://www.kathrynaragon.com/?p=2764
6	KA 2/18		AuthorSure plugin	Author Rank: A Low-Tech Plugin for a High-Tech Solution	how-to	AuthorSure plugin, Author rank				http://www.kathrynaragon.com/?p=2807
7	KA 2/25	Video	Core message = brand		thought leadership					
8	CE 1/26	blog	CE - make people salivate over your product descriptions. Use examples from tea and food sales. Nabisco (oreo and fig newtons), Teavana, senory (aroma, colors, sound, feel) Key: they make you imagine.	5 Essential Qualities of Irresistible Product Descriptions	thought leadership, how-to		2	161		http://crazyegg.wpengine.com/2013/01/26/5-essential-qualities-of-irresistible-descriptions/
9	CE	blog	CE - The goal is to get response, right? So provide more ways to respond. (More items are clickable, not more calls to action.)		thought leadership, how-to					

STEP 1

AFTER YOUR PLANNING SESSIONS, MAKE SURE EVERYONE ON THE CONTENT TEAM HAS ACCESS TO THE UPDATED EDITORIAL PLANNER.

Your writers need this information to be able to produce the ideas you developed in planning. Your graphic artists, webmaster, and other team members need to know what content is coming down the pipeline.

And all of them need to know how to connect these ideas with readers on the one hand and business objectives on the other.

STEP 2

AFTER CONTENT GOES LIVE, TRACK THE RESULTS OF YOUR CONTENT.

The Editorial Planner provides space to track views, comments and social shares.

2	58	22	5	http://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/02/05/landing-page-openings/
	19	25		

You may also want to track product sales that result from your content or the number of leads generated.

In short, if there's a particular metric that's useful for you to rate your success, add it to your Planner. Then remain diligent about tracking it.



PERIODICALLY, REVIEW THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR CONTENT MARKETING TEAM.

Doing this will help you:

- *Know what content connects with your readers.*
- *What content or topics go viral, so you can create more of them.*
- *What content or topics don't, do you avoid producing them in the future.*

TIP: Your creative team can only help you create higher-quality content if they know how well their work is performing. Keep them involved in planning and strategy meetings. Let them help you drive your content machine.

THAT'S IT!

You've now have a killer planning process for creating high-value content that will attract and engage your ideal readers, while also growing your business.

This behind-the-scenes process is a high-level approach that's usually only seen in big brands. Which means you have what it takes to implement an impressive content marketing strategy — no matter how large your enterprise or what your resources are.

Of course, your next challenge is to produce that content. And that's exactly what we'll cover in the next chapter.

Click through to Chapter 4 now, and you'll learn the 6 steps of the creative process. These steps give you the framework for consistently creating high-quality content that can make you a thought leader in your industry and build your business. Sound good?

HERE WE GO...

[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER TWO](#)

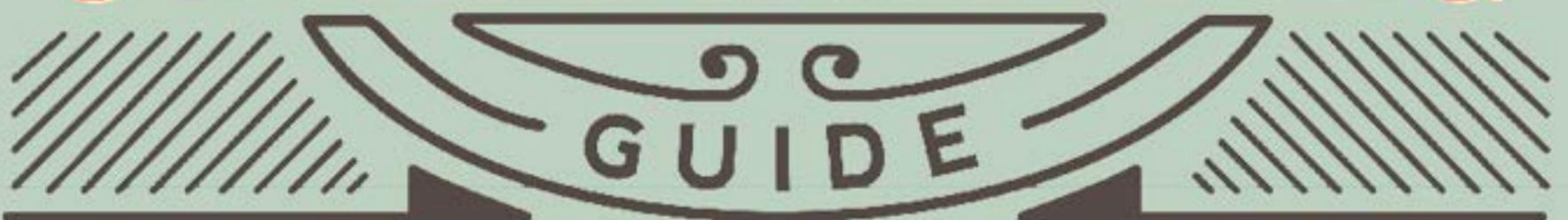
[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER FOUR](#)





The **ADVANCED**

CONTENT MARKETING



WRITTEN BY NEIL PATEL & KATHRYN ARAGON



LEARN TO WRITE CONTENT LIKE A PRO

By now, you have a winning strategy for how you will use content to grow your business... an effective idea-generating system in place... and an editorial plan for the content you'll create over the next few months, give or take.

It's time to start creating content.

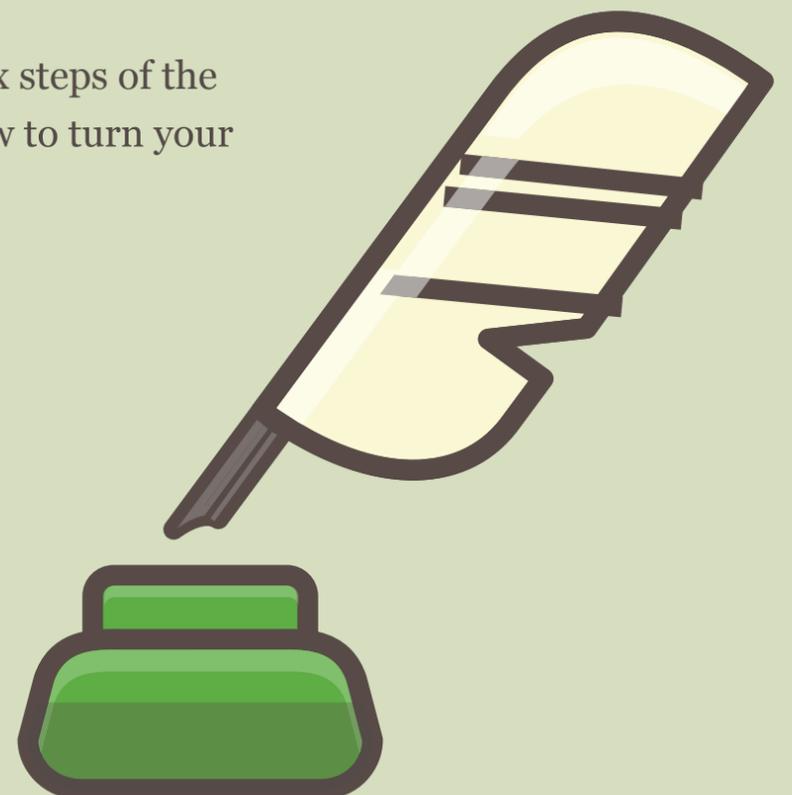
But not just any content. We're talking relevant, creative, engaging content that actually gets read.

And that's exactly what you'll get in this chapter. Here we cover the six steps of the creative process, in depth and with specific examples showing you how to turn your idea into a finished piece of content.

Just to be clear: In this chapter, we talk primarily about how to write content. That doesn't mean we think you ought to be creating blog posts only or that written content is somehow better.

It's just that all content ultimately starts with the written word. The steps you take to present your ideas in a video are the same as you'd use in an article. It's only in production that things change.

So no matter what type of content you plan to create, the processes you learn in this chapter can help. Follow these same steps, no matter what kind of content you want to create, and you'll end up with high-value content that gets your brand noticed.



THE CREATIVE PROCESS

If you've studied writing, you may recognize this as the writing process. We've renamed it the *creative* process on purpose.

That's because not all content producers consider themselves writers. But each time you produce a new piece of content — whether it's a blog post, podcast or video — you follow the same process of organizing your ideas and finding the right words to express yourself.

You're only limited by your own creativity. Which is why we think the term *creative process* works better.

Any time you sit down to produce a new piece of content, you'll use these steps. You won't always work through them in order, and sometimes you'll jump back and forth between steps. But the best content has usually gone through all six:

- *Select your topic and approach*
- *Research*
- *Organize*
- *Write*
- *Cool off*
- *Edit*

Let's take a look at each...



No 1

SELECT YOUR TOPIC & APPROACH

Sometimes an idea springs to mind fully defined, with a great angle and unique approach. But that's rare.

Most ideas start out as a broad topic, and you must massage them and play with them until you come up with an idea worth writing about.

Here's how we do it:



STEP 1

CHECK YOUR EDITORIAL PLANNER TO SEE WHAT'S SCHEDULED FOR PRODUCTION.

Look at the topic, the objective and any keywords you have listed. The objective and keywords will limit your options for developing the idea. But they'll also direct your thinking.

Your goal is to find the right way to talk about the topic, first, to engage readers and, second, to help you achieve your business goals.

STEP 2

IF PRELIMINARY RESEARCH OR IDEA GATHERING HAS BEEN DONE, YOU HAVE A HEAD START.

6 types of leads:
promise,
http://www.brainpowergameplan.com/uf/brainpowergameplan/prmsub/?keycode=155181&mktOfferId=PVN42993&product_code=041891&smartcode=1286500000782700001471822613320121219
prob/solution
<http://www.awaionline.com/copywriting/learn/make-six-figures/>
prob/solution,
http://www.thehungerfixprogram.com/thehungerfixprogram/fa/index?keycode=220384&mktOfferId=BKSS5917&product_code=151810&smartcode=1286500000782700001306192892920120823
big secret,
<http://naturalhealthinsiders.com/AwakeningfromAlzheimers/awakening-from-alzheimers-uc.php?EXITPOP=Y&SC=RIKALZ121028>
Proclamation
<http://www.elsearsmd.com/paceexpress/IV-OUT-Working-Moms-Face-Express-11.21.12.html>
story,
<http://www.millersmoney.com/retirement-reboot/money-forever>
direct offer,
<http://www.nightingale.com/offers/deepak-chopra-collection-1.html?promo=INPx294v10>
proclamation
<http://mail.canonburypublishing.net/q/12jxh0Q3rS1b8/wv>

Copy and paste the topic into Word document and skip down to the Research stage.

For example, this is a fully developed idea. No need for more research.

(You can find the finished article on the **Crazy Egg blog**, **6 Battle-Tested Landing Page Openings That Consistently Sell More**, <http://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/02/05/landing-page-openings/>)

STEP 3

IF ALL YOU HAVE IS A GENERAL IDEA OR BROAD TOPIC, YOU NEED TO NARROW YOUR APPROACH.

When writing is hard, it's usually because you're trying to cram too much information into too small a space. To keep that from happening, make sure you narrow your focus now.

Try to think of one aspect of the topic that needs to be covered or one question you will answer.

Here's an example of what we mean.

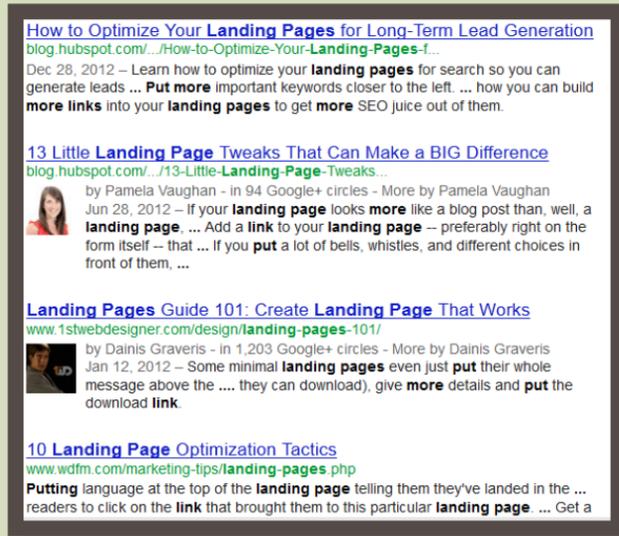
CE - The goal is to get response, right? So provide more ways to respond. (More items are clickable, not more calls to action.)

The topic, "getting better responses on your landing pages," is far too broad. So for this blog post, the focus was narrowed to "using more clickable elements."

HOW DO YOU NARROW YOUR TOPIC?

1 DO SOME PRELIMINARY RESEARCH.

First, search the Internet for other blog posts on the topic to see what others have written.



In our example, nothing was discovered in a Google search, so the writer began looking for examples of landing pages that use multiple clickable elements. She had been saving promotional emails from different brands and found a good example among them.

2 CHECK YOUR FEEDLY STREAM TO SEE WHAT'S TRENDING IN YOUR TOPIC.

Sometimes, a topic takes center stage in the online community for a while. Different bloggers and thought leaders contribute their ideas to the topic. Knowing what they're saying can help you narrow your topic. Try to find an angle that fits into the conversation already taking place.

3 LOOK FOR THE GAP.

Your narrowed topic should provide an *original* angle for talking about your topic.

Do *not* recycle content produced by other brands. Google evaluates uniqueness as well as usefulness when ranking your content. If it's too similar to existing content (*yours or other brands*'), it could be considered "duplicate content."

TIP: If an original angle doesn't come to mind quickly, move on to another project to let your brain simmer on it for an hour or two. Sometimes you'll come up with your best ideas when you're doing something unrelated to your problem.

4 USE THE TECHNIQUES YOU LEARNED IN CHAPTER 2 TO DO A BRAINSTORM ON YOUR TOPIC.

If preliminary research fails to turn up an interesting idea, a brainstorm may help. But don't worry about it too much. In step 2, Research, you may get additional ideas. Do a brainstorm now or wait until after you've done more research — whatever feels right for the topic you're writing about.



WRITE YOUR BEST IDEA IN YOUR EDITORIAL PLANNER, ALONG WITH IDEAS FOR HOW TO DEVELOP THE TOPIC.

If you do get an idea for how to narrow your topic or develop it, enter it in your Editorial Planner.

In the case of our example, the idea started as a general idea, that landing pages would perform better if they had more clickable elements.

Browsing landing pages from different brands turned up one brand that uses this tactic remarkably well. The writer selected one of their landing pages to use as a case study.

Then after evaluating the techniques used in that promotion, she decided on four main points for the article.

CE - The goal is to get response, right? So provide more ways to respond. (More items are clickable, not more calls to action.)
Use Rodale ad as example. They put links in:

- Headline
- Body
- Social proof
- Close

RESEARCH

Whether you share opinions or fact, and whether you want to inform, persuade or entertain, you need to back up your ideas with relevant details. That's why it's so important to research your topics.

WHAT TYPE OF RESEARCH DO YOU NEED?

Look for information that will prove your points and validate your opinions. Things like:

- *Quotes*
- *Statistics*
- *Case studies*
- *Stories*
- *Ideas from respected authorities*

On a side note, this is one of the reasons we recommended you visit your Feedly stream every day.

When you find articles that share useful statistics or reports or that could serve as research for future content, save them. Then, when you need numbers or facts to back up your claims, you already have them on file.



(In Chapter 5, we share some tips for saving these articles so you don't have to search for them every time you need a statistic.)

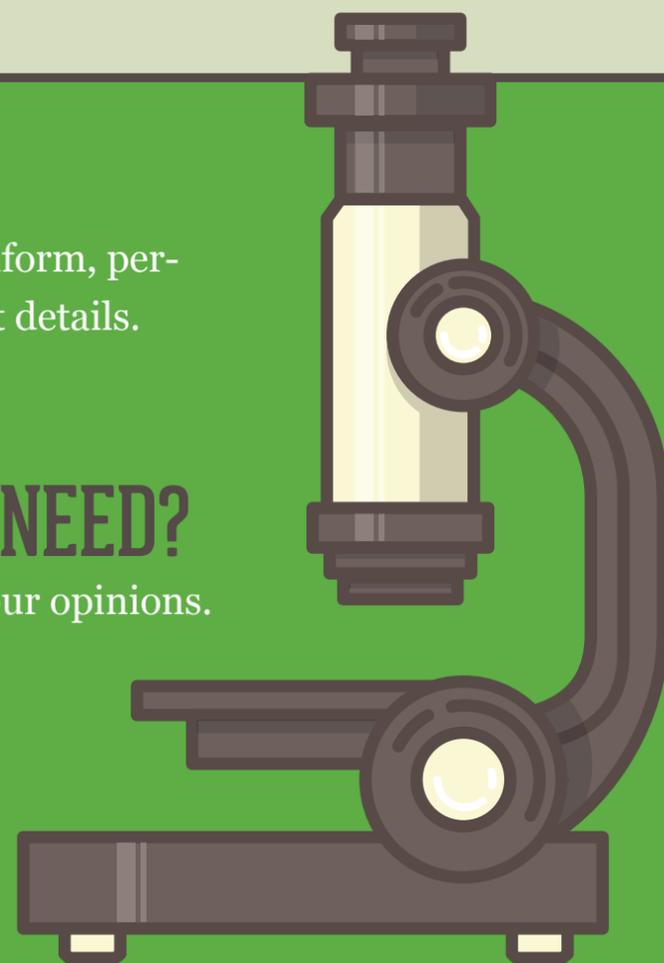
HOW DO YOU DO RESEARCH FOR CONTENT MARKETING?

STEP 1

GET FOCUSED.

Begin by copying the topic from your Editorial Planner and pasting it into the top of a new Word document. This will keep you focused on your topic as you research.

CE - The goal is to get response, right? So provide more ways to respond. (More items are clickable, not more calls to action.)
Use Rodale ad as example. They put links in:
- Headline
- Body
- Social proof
- Close



STEP 2

NEXT, PERFORM AN ONLINE SEARCH FOR YOUR PRIMARY KEYWORD.

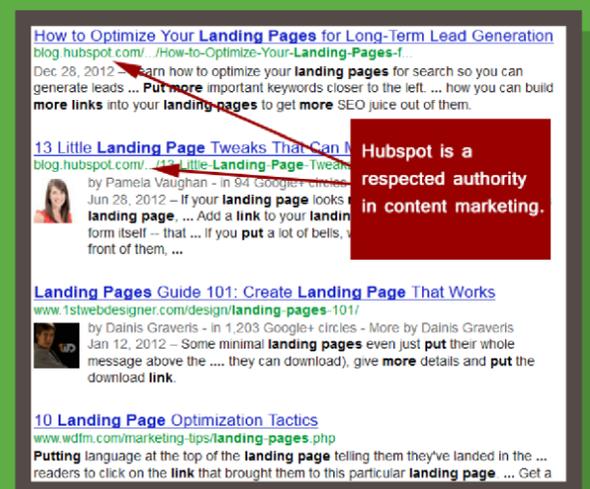
We prefer Google, but you may use your favorite search engine. Type your primary keyword in the Google search bar and look at the types of articles that show up in the SERPs. As in Step 1 above, you want to see what other people are saying about your topic. But now, you're looking for information that aligns with your message, so you can reference it in your own content:

- *To back up what you're saying.*
- *To bounce an idea off of.*
- *To give an opposing point of view.*

STEP 3

CHECK THE URL OF THE SITES THAT SHOW UP IN THE SERPS.

You want to find sites that are recognized as authorities in the subject. That's not to say that lesser-known brands don't have anything to contribute. But you can save time by focusing on industry-leading websites.



STEP 4

READ OR SKIM THE ARTICLES ON AUTHORITATIVE WEBSITES.

You're looking for facts, quotes, statistics, or new ideas that could help develop your topic.

NOTE:

Not all content needs research. An opinion piece, for example, may be entirely made up of your own ideas. But be aware that every piece can be strengthened by adding statistics, including other people's opinions (agreeing or disagreeing with you), or references to a book or other resource.

STEP 5

COPY AND PASTE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF RESEARCH INTO THE WORD DOCUMENT YOU CREATED (ABOVE).

Don't try to copy entire sections of other people's work. Simply collect the facts that can help you tell your story.

Always copy and paste the URL with your research so, when it's time to write, you can easily link those ideas to the source material.

For example, this is what our research for a section in this book looked like. As in this example, your research may include snippets of ideas, facts or links.



Notice that our research consists mostly of links to articles that can be referenced when we write that section.

Notice also that these links are mixed in with our own ideas. Research and collecting your own ideas often happen simultaneously. Most writers move back and forth between brainstorming and researching during these early stages of the creative process.



ADD YOUR OWN THOUGHTS

Research should never replace your own ideas. It should only strengthen and give credibility to your statements. So add your own thoughts to the researched facts you've collected.

Think about what your readers need to know about your topic, and jot down your ideas.



AS YOU WORK, BE CAREFUL TO MARK RESEARCHED INFORMATION SO YOU CAN EASILY SEE WHICH IDEAS ARE YOURS AND WHICH ONES NEED TO BE ATTRIBUTED.

There are two ways to do this:

- 1 *This info from Slingshot Blog Post Optimization Guide: The summary article is from* <http://www.inc.com/aaron-aders/how-to-write-an-insanely-popular-blog.html?nav=river>
- 2 **Not mine!** This section of the guide provides a checklist of common techniques used in SMO, CRO and SEO. Social media optimization (SMO) enhances success by adding the ability for users to create social signals by sharing the article.

1/ NEXT TO INFORMATION THAT YOU COPIED AND PASTED FROM RESEARCH, TYPE IN ITALICS WHERE YOU FOUND IT. THEN PASTE IN THE URL.

2/ IN FRONT OF ANY INFORMATION THAT YOU FOUND IN RESEARCH, HIGHLIGHT THE TEXT, "NOT MINE!" AT THE END, PASTE IN THE SOURCE URL. OR HIGHLIGHT, "END OF NOT MINE." ANY SIMILAR NOTATION WILL WORK.

Choose the method that works best for you. Your research is for your eyes only, so you can adopt any system that helps you organize your thoughts.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN RESEARCHING:

1 ALWAYS LOOK FOR PRIMARY SOURCES, NOT SECONDARY.



A **primary source** is the original research or statement. It will always be the most authoritative and accurate.



A **secondary source** is a blog post, press release or other piece of content that talks about the primary source.

In most cases, the information you get from a secondary source is valuable. But it isn't the original. And it's entirely possible that it took the information out of context or wasn't accurate in its presentation.

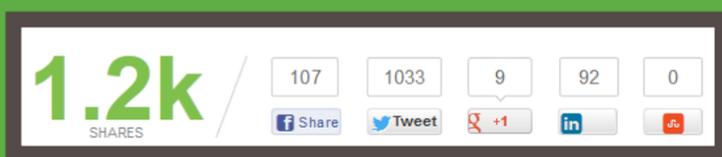
Whenever possible, follow the links until you find the primary source.

2 USE INDUSTRY-RESPECTED RESOURCES.



Always cite the most authoritative source possible. This may be a leading website, thought leader, author, or well-known blogger. You can often recognize authority by celebrity status, years of experience, or job title.

Interestingly, social proof may substitute for a big-name resource. When a lot of people are tweeting the same thing, or when thousands of people are following a resource, those numbers lend credibility.



That being the case, you can quote several stand-out social media posts instead of using one celebrity statement.





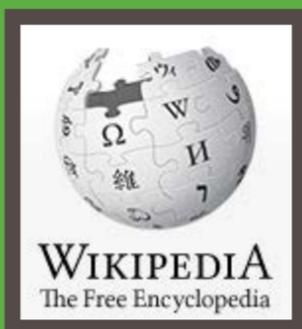
USE SOURCES THAT YOUR READERS RECOGNIZE.

Seth Godin
best selling author

If your readers already know your resource, you don't have to take a lot of time introducing it. That makes your job, as writer, easier. When your best resource isn't well-known, be sure to add its credentials and/or why it should be considered an authority.



AVOID WIKIPEDIA.



Wikipedia is a great resource if you need a quick overview of a topic, but it isn't considered an authoritative site. Use it for your own edification, but don't use it as a resource.



USE THE MOST RECENT RESEARCH POSSIBLE.

If you can, limit the age of your data to no more than five years. If the only research available is older than that, try to tie it to another piece of research that's newer. In other words, look for research that validates the older information.



FACT CHECK EVERYTHING.

If you aren't sure about a number or fact, do a fact check. Send an email or make a phone call to an authority in the topic. (*We'll show you an example of a fact checking email in a moment.*)

NOTE:

While you're talking with the authority, get a quote. Ask what they think of the topic or if they have anything to contribute.



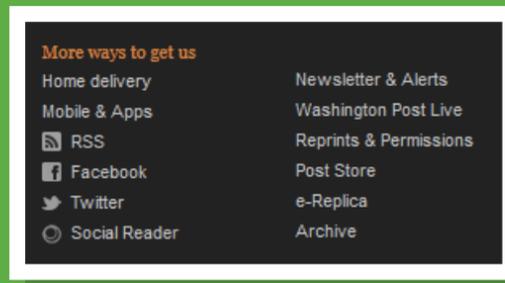
NEVER USE COPYRIGHTED INFORMATION WITHOUT PERMISSION.

If you want to reprint an article or quote substantial portions of a program or book, you need to secure permission from the owner of the copyright. This may be the publisher or the author.

The first thing you need to do is find out who owns the copyright.

If it's a book, the author will often provide contact information in the author bio. If not, you can contact the book publisher.

If it's an article on a website, check the website's footer for a link that says, "Reprints and Permission."



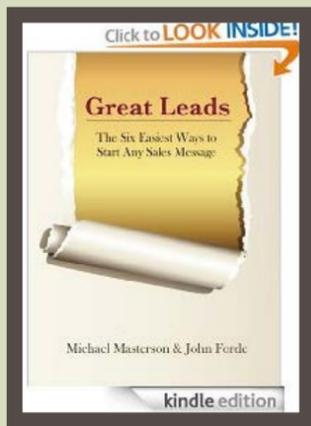
Otherwise, visit the “Contact Page” of the website.

Once you figure out who owns the copyright, you need to contact them and ask permission to use the copyrighted material. In your email, you need to explain how you’ll use it, how and where it will be published, and who will see it.

Secure written permission, not verbal. You may call the person to get a quicker response, but always follow up the call with an email or letter. *(At the end of this section, we provide an email template you can use.)*



FACT CHECKS AND COPYRIGHTS... AN EXAMPLE FROM OUR OWN EXPERIENCE:



We recently wrote a blog post, sharing ideas from a book, Great Leads, by Michael Masterson and John Forde. Usually, when referencing a book, if you cite the author(s) and provide a link to their website, you're covered when it comes to copyright.

However, in this case, the copyright for this information is owned, not by the authors, but by American Writers and Artists Inc. (AWAI). We found this out by accident when we were fact checking one of the statements in the blog post.

HERE'S OUR EMAIL ASKING FOR A FACT CHECK:

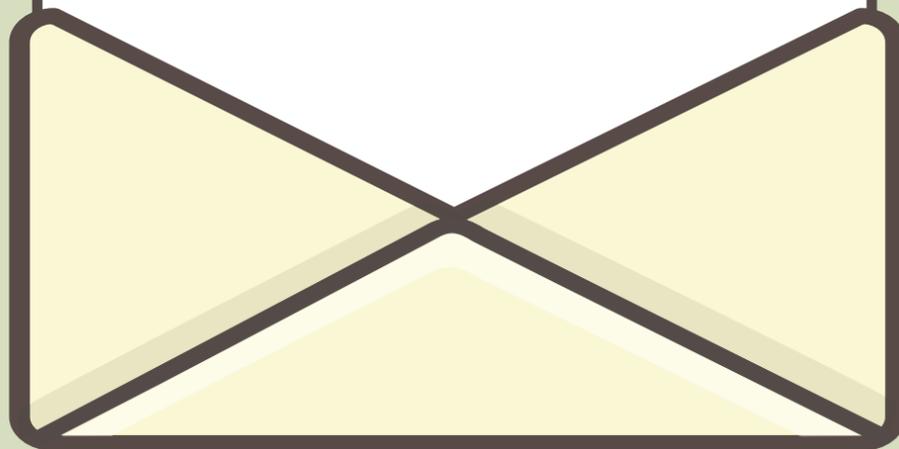
I'm writing a blog post on the six types of leads that Masterson and Forde wrote about in Great Leads, and I'm using the "Can You Write a Letter Like This One?" sales letter as an example of the promise lead.

I know this letter was your control for a long time (and may still be) How long has it been your control?

It's just a detail, but it would make that section stronger.

By the way, this post will be published on the Crazy Egg blog in January.

Hope you're having a wonderful holiday. And thanks for your help. I really appreciate it.



Notice that we explain exactly how the information is being used. This helps your resource know that you're a serious writer and that you can be trusted to represent them well.

Notice also that we ask our question directly. There can be no confusion about the information we need. But since we also tell our resource what we do know, we've made it easy for them to answer quickly.



KEY: When communicating with a resource, make it as easy as possible for them to respond to your request.

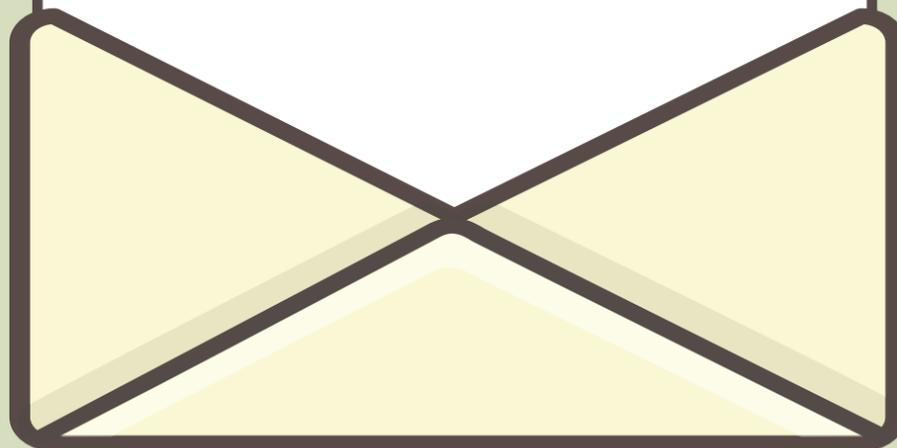
HERE'S THE RESPONSE, IN WHICH WE LEARNED THAT WE WERE DEALING WITH A COPYRIGHT ISSUE:

It was our control for probably almost a decade. We made changes to it over the years, but the headline still is our control.

Note that the six lead types are considered copyrighted material and actually come from the Six-Figure course – and then were further elaborated on in Great Leads.

Either way, proper copyright needs to be given to AWAI.

Mark, John, Katie and all are very protective of that kind of thing – so just a heads up to head off any headaches down the road.



See how useful fact checks can be!

Since we had already explained how the information would be used, we only needed to know how to reference the copyrighted material.



HERE'S HOW WE PHRASED THE QUESTION:

Thanks for the heads-up about the copyright. How do I need to handle that?

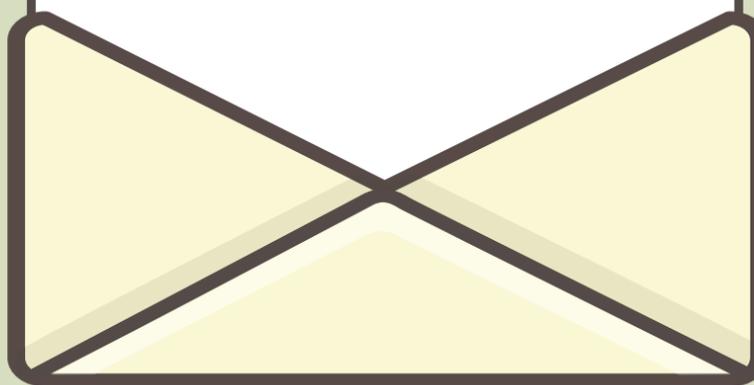
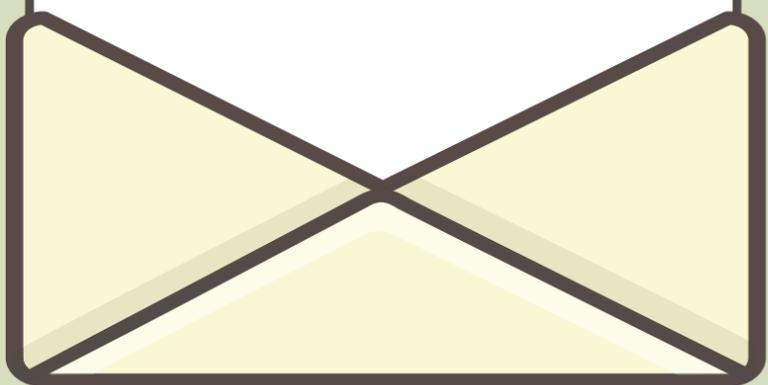
I did mention Michael Masterson and John Forde and linked each to their own website. Should I mention AWAI and link to the 6-figure sales page instead.... or along with?

Or should I change the types of leads so they aren't the same six that are in Great Leads?

HERE'S THEIR ANSWER:

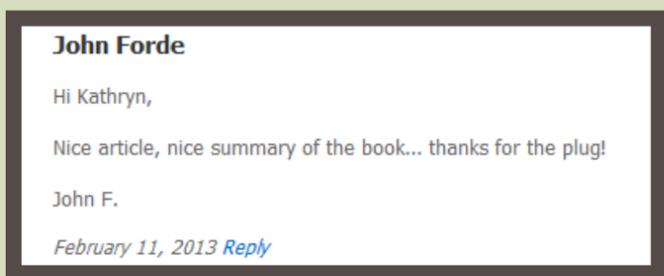
*You need to site it as copyrighted material – and give credit to the publisher – AWAI. Something like: In **AWAI's Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting**, six leads are described as ... (and just link to AWAI)*

And I think it's nice to mention Michael and John – but the copyright is with AWAI, so if you're limited on links, that's where it needs to go.



You don't need to shy away from using copyrighted material. In most cases, the owner will be happy to let you use it – it's a good plug for them.

Here's the comment on the article written by one of the authors.



Two things to remember:

- 1 Always be careful to follow instructions for how to reference copyrighted material.
- 2 Always keep a written record of your correspondence so you have evidence that you were given permission and that you are following instructions.

What to do when you can't get a response:

Unfortunately, resources aren't always as helpful as AWAI was. We once tried to reprint an article in a book, but try as we might, we couldn't get an answer.

It happens. And when it does, you need to find another resource. Do not use copyrighted material without permission.



USE THIS TEMPLATE WHEN SENDING A REPRINT REQUEST TO SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW:

SUBJECT: MAY I REPRINT YOUR ARTICLE IN MY [BLOG, EBOOK, MAGAZINE]?

Dear [author or copyright holder],

I just finished reading your article [article name, linked to the original source] at [blog name, linked to its home page]. Loved it!

May I reprint that article and its images in my [blog, magazine, ebook] titled [name it and link it]? [If you want to use a portion of a book, specify the sections you want to use.]

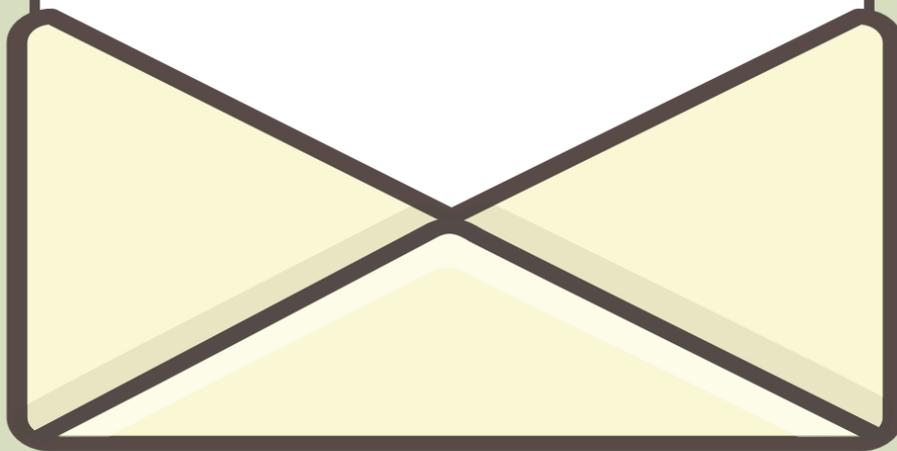
In exchange, I would provide a link back to your website in the author bio, so readers can get on your list and learn more from you.

[Now give a credibility boost.] Previously featured authors include [list big-name authors].

Please let me know if I have your permission to reprint the article.

Thanks!

[signature]



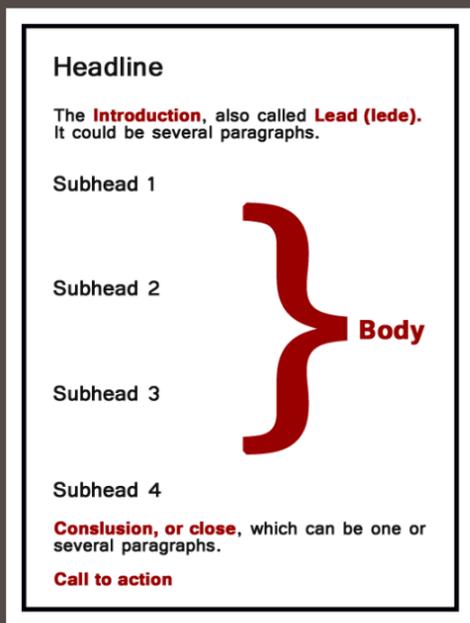
TIP: Go ahead and ask for permissions now, in the research stage, before you start writing. That way, you don't waste a lot of time writing something that you don't have permission to publish.

You don't need to wait to start writing. But this way, if you are refused permission or if you don't get a response, you have time to revamp your idea before you've invested too much time in your original idea.

ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS

At this point, you should have a narrow topic and some ideas of how to develop that topic. It's time to start organizing your ideas.

At the most basic level, all content is structured like this:



Introduction:

Get people's attention and tell them what information they're going to get if they keep reading.

Body:

Deliver on the promise you made in the introduction.

Close:

Summarize and bring everything back to your main point. If possible, add a "so what" section, which explains how this information benefits your readers.

Call to action:

Tell people what they need to do next.

A 250-page book has longer sections. The introduction and close may each be an entire chapter, and the body comprises ten or more chapters. The call to action could be a final chapter or workbook.

A 400-word blog post has shorter sections. The introduction may only be a few sentences, and the body may be several paragraphs. The close and call to action could be a short paragraph each.

But no matter what type of content you create, its most basic structure is this four-part framework.

Your challenge, then, is fitting the research and rough ideas you've developed into this structure. To do that, follow these steps:

STEP 1

FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY.

There's a difference between talking about a topic and making a point. In your Editorial Planner, you may have only listed a broad topic for each publication date. But that won't suffice when it comes time to write.

Based on your research and on the objective listed in your Editorial Planner, what point are you trying to make with this piece of content?

Type that under the topic you copied from the Editorial Planner. *(Insert some hard returns above your research to push it down the page.)*

CE - The goal is to get response, right? So provide more ways to respond. (More items are clickable, not more calls to action.)

Use Rodale ad as example. They put links in:

- Headline
- Body
- Social proof
- Close

Tips to Make Your Landing Pages More Clickable

|

Topic - copied from Editorial Planner

Point of the article

In some cases, your point will eventually become your headline. In other cases, it is more suited for your introduction, and you'll end up re-using it there. In either case, the idea doesn't have to be polished. It simply gives you somewhere to start.

So write down your point and highlight it in bold.



FIND THREE OR MORE SUPPORTING STATEMENTS THAT PROVE OR DEVELOP YOUR MAIN POINT.

➤ If you're writing an opinion or informational blog post, three will suffice.

➤ If you're writing a how-to piece, a list blog post, or an ebook, you may have as many as you want (or need)

➤ For longer content, you may need 10 to 20 supporting ideas, each making up a chapter.

How do you know what your supporting statements should be?

In most cases, you'll start seeing how your ideas fit together during the research stage, as you are jotting down your ideas and gathering research.

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Use Rodale ad as example. They put links in:

- Headline
- Body
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- Close

Tips to Make Your Landing Pages More Clickable

Get results with more links, not fewer

If the headline sells, make it clickable

Provide lots of links in the body copy

If it catches the eye, make it clickable

Drive sales to the very last word

Keep one focus, one response

Idea from Editorial Calendar, pasted into Word.

Narrowed Topic, highlighted as potential headline

Main ideas for developing the topic, organized in a logical order. These will become subheads of the final document.

RESEARCH:

Rodale's landing page:

<http://www.losetheweightlosetheweightcookbook.com/losetheweightlosetheweightcookbook/nc/index>

<http://uxdesign.smashingmagazine.com/2012/03/07/designing-engaging-enjoyable-long-form-reading-experiences/>

Great sales copy is highly focused. It relates to one big idea, which runs like a thread through the entire promotion.

Research, which will be used in writing.

Notice in this example that we planned four major supports: headline, body, social proof and close.

Each of those became a subhead in the article, but two other subheads were added: one giving the benefits of this approach (*an intro*) and one summarizing the article (*a conclusion*).

Often, these extra subheads are added during the writing phase. Other times, you'll see the need for them now, when you're organizing your ideas.

Every piece you write will be different. Few writers know exactly how the piece will look when it's done. So let it evolve.



CREATE A ROUGH OUTLINE FOR YOUR CONTENT

1 UNDER YOUR POINT (WORKING TITLE), WRITE OUT YOUR PROPOSED SUPPORTING STATEMENTS.

They don't need to be well-written or finished. In fact, they may only be a word or phrase, like the rough ideas you came up with during the Research phase.

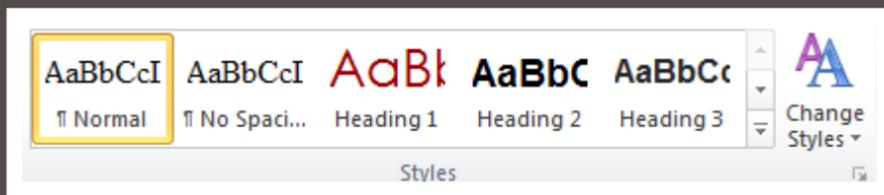
2 ARRANGE THESE STATEMENTS IN A LOGICAL ORDER.

The statements may be listed chronologically, as an ordered list, or in a logical progression of ideas.

3 THINK OF THIS LIST AS THE WORKING OUTLINE FOR YOUR FINISHED CONTENT.

Since you haven't written anything yet, it's easy to see the basic structure of your content simply by looking at this outline. If it isn't arranged logically, now is the time to rearrange your points.

4 APPLY A "HEADING 2" STYLE TO EACH SUPPORTING STATEMENT.



These are Word styles that apply formatting to your article. By using the same styles in your Word document that you plan to use on your website, you can save time formatting your content for the Web when you upload it.

In most blog posts, titles have a "Heading 1" style and subheads are formatted with a "Heading 2" style.

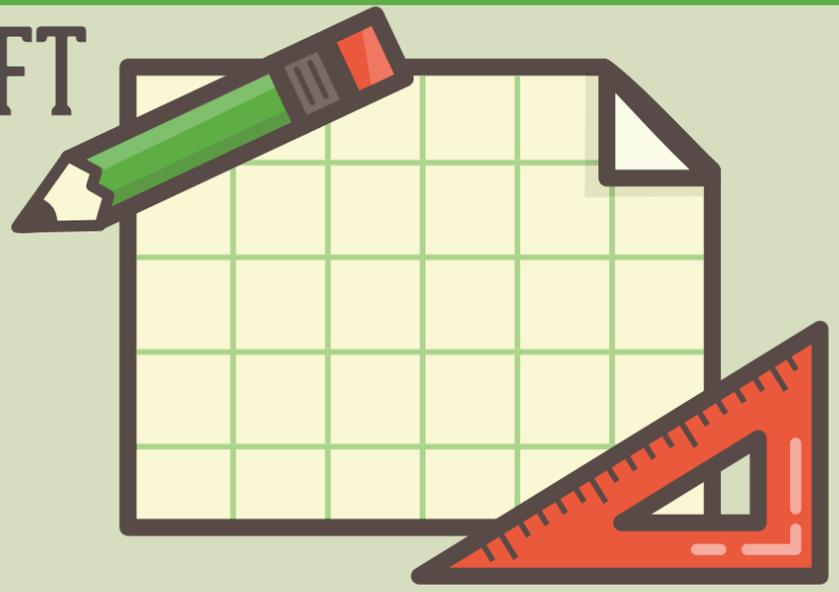
5 EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR OUTLINE.

Looking at nothing more than your headline and supporting statements:

- *Are you saying something unique?*
- *Do you offer a fresh perspective on the topic?*
- *Do all supporting statements relate to the topic?*
- *Are you making one point only, or trying to make multiple points? (Narrow the focus to one point.)*
- *Do you have enough supporting statements and research to prove your point?*

If you answer yes to all these questions, you're ready to start writing. Move on to the next section, "Rough Draft." If not, keep working with your idea until your idea is more refined.

WRITE YOUR ROUGH DRAFT



STEP 1

PICK ONE SECTION OF YOUR ARTICLE TO DEVELOP FIRST.

CE - The goal is to get response, right? So provide more ways to respond. (More items are clickable, not more calls to action.)
Use Rodale ad as example. They put links in:
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- Body
- Social proof
- Close

Tips to Make Your Landing Pages More Clickable

Get results with more links, not fewer

If the headline sells, make it clickable

Provide lots of links in the body copy

If it catches the eye, make it clickable

Drive sales to the very last word

Keep one focus, one response

The writer decides to start with an evaluation of the landing page.

In most cases, this will **not** be the introduction. Pick the subhead that you have the most ideas or the best research for.

Copy any notes you made in the research phase (*at the bottom of your document*) and paste it into the section.

Then begin writing out your ideas.

- *If you use quotes from research, put it in quotation marks or paraphrase and link to your source.*
- *Your own notes need to be fleshed out and expanded.*
- *Then fit it all together to create a logical flow of ideas.*

Don't worry too much about transitions between sections. You subheads often serve as transitions, and you can smooth out the flow of your article in the editing stage. **At this point, focus primarily on getting your ideas down.**



STEP 2

WRITE FOR ONE PERSON: YOUR IDEAL CLIENT

Remember the avatar you created in Chapter 1? Decide what you want him or her to understand after reading that section. Then write it as if you are talking to that one person.

How do you do that?

- *Imagine the person you're writing to is sitting across the table from you.*
- *Talk to them as you write.*
- *Use words like you and we, not he or they.*

STEP 5

DO NOT EDIT YOUR WORDS OR TRY TO WRITE BEAUTIFULLY.

At this point, you are merely roughing out your ideas. It's okay if your writing is awkward or even bad.

Your goal is to get your words into the document, and it's more about nailing down your thoughts than expressing yourself well.

One thing that helps is to give myself permission to write badly. I tell myself that I'm going to do my five or 10 pages no matter what, and that I can always tear them up the following morning if I want.

LAWRENCE BLOCK

Having trouble getting your ideas down quickly? We'll cover tips for non-writers and non-typists in Chapter 7, when we talk about common roadblocks to successful content marketing.

STEP 4

ROUGH OUT ONE SECTION AT A TIME.

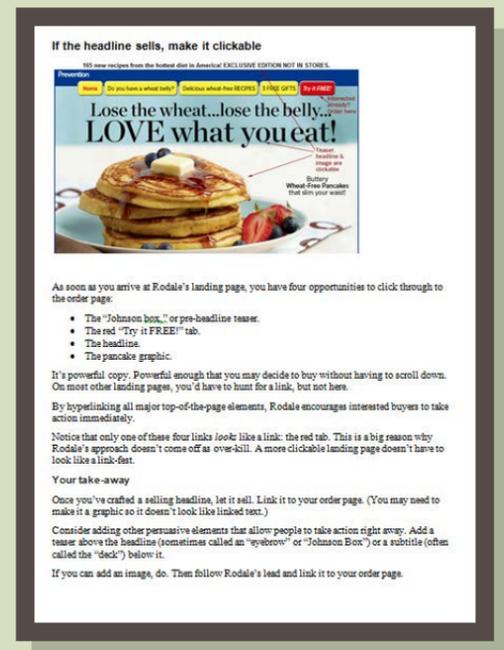
Tackle just one section at a time until all subheads have a paragraph or two written to explain and/or prove your point.

In Chapter 6, we'll give you templates for some of the most popular types of content, including several types of articles and blog posts.

At this point, you only need to worry about writing the body of your article. It's perfectly acceptable to move from the first section to the last. But it's also acceptable to skip around within the post until each section is done.

In our example post about clickable landing pages, the writer did, in fact, move from the first section to the last, but only because she evaluated the landing page that way:

- *Headline first (then write her ideas)*
- *Introduction next (then write her ideas)*
- *The sidebar (then write her ideas)*
- *And finally the close (then write her ideas)*



CE - The goal is to get response, right? So provide more ways to respond. (More items are clickable, not more calls to action.)
Use Rodale ad as example. They put links in:
- Headline
- Body
- Social proof
- Close

Tips to Make Your Landing Pages More Clickable

Get results with more links, not fewer

If the headline sells, make it clickable **1**

Provide lots of links in the body copy **2**

If it catches the eye, make it clickable **3**

Drive sales to the very last word **4**

Keep one focus, one response

In this article, the writer inserted a screenshot of each section of the landing page below the subhead, then explained why it worked.

STEP 5

NOW WRITE THE INTRODUCTION.

Consider everything you just wrote in the body of the article. How could you hook people's interest to get them reading? A few suggestions:

- *A startling statement.*
- *A true, but surprising, statistic.*
- *A personal story.*
- *A reference to a current event or news story.*
- *A historical reference.*
- *A metaphor.*

STEP 6

IF NECESSARY, DO MORE RESEARCH ON YOUR MAIN TOPIC (OR RELATED TOPIC) TO FIND THE HOOK.

In our example, the writer decided to research heat mapping to find a statistic that would support her main point. She couldn't find research on the subject, but she did find an interesting idea, "Hick's Law."

It was unique, so she knew it could work as her hook.

Tips to Make Your Landing Pages More Clickable

There's a little-known rule of thumb that may be hurting your online sales.

It's called Hick's Law, and whether you know it or not, it has probably lowered the click-through rates on your landing pages.

Here's why...

STEP 7

WRITE YOUR INTRODUCTORY THOUGHT AS CONCISELY AS POSSIBLE.

Writers have a habit of warming up to their topic rather than jumping in directly. In most cases, great writing nixes the warm-up.

Get to the point quickly

STEP 8

CREATE A TRANSITION TO YOUR POINT.

The point is usually at the end of the introduction. Here, you tell your ideal reader what your article is about and how this information will benefit him or her.

Get results with more links, not fewer

Studies have shown that people often hover their cursor over the section of a Web page they are looking at. As a result, the elements that attract their eye are the elements they click on first.

It may be a product image, a benefits statement, or an image of a happy customer. If it captures their interest — and if it makes them want to buy — that's where they click first.

But what happens if that element isn't hyperlinked to the order page? In many cases, people change their minds and leave. They're interested enough to click once, but not enough to hunt for a link.

Needless to say, more clickable items could easily improve sales. Provided, of course, that you keep Hick's Law in mind and maintain just *one* simple call to action.

Wondering how to do it? Let's take a look at one of Rodale's promotions, the [Lose the Wheat! Lose the Weight!](#) cookbook.

STEP 9**DRAFT YOUR CONCLUSION.**

Summarize what you talked about in the body of the article. Then explain why this

Keep one focus, one response

Hick's is right about one thing. You can improve results by giving people one thing to think about.

So keep it simple. One message. One call to action. With lots of opportunities for people to accept your offer.

Make it easy for people to buy. Boldly link where no one has linked before. And create the potential for significantly more sales.

STEP 10**FINISH WITH A CALL TO ACTION.**

In content, you have a lot of options for your call to action.

- *You may ask for a comment or a social share.*
- *You may suggest a new way of doing things or thinking about things.*
- *You could also ask people to click on a link or take a specific action.*

Here are a few examples:

What are some of your favorite apps to be released so far this year? Post your movers and shakers in the comments below!

By Sherice Jacob in her article, “5 Mobile Apps That Are Changing The Face Of eCom-merce” <<http://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/02/04/mobile-apps-ecommerce/>>

Go ahead and ask for comments or shares. But be specific. Pose a question that gets people thinking, then ask for a response.

Embed this infographic: Copy the code in the box below and paste it into your own website

By Russ Henneberry in his article, “Is Audio The Next Big Thing In Digital Marketing?” <<http://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/02/06/audio-digital-marketing/>>

This is basically an invitation to share. But notice that it's phrased as a command. That can often get better response.

I hope these tips will give you the last inch of motivation you need to start doing amazing things with Instagram.
Have you found other limitations using Instagram for business? Do you agree with the solutions suggested above?

By Thibaut Davoult in his article, “The 5 Biggest Misconceptions About Using Instagram for Business” <<http://blog.kissmetrics.com/biggest-misconceptions-about-instagram/>>

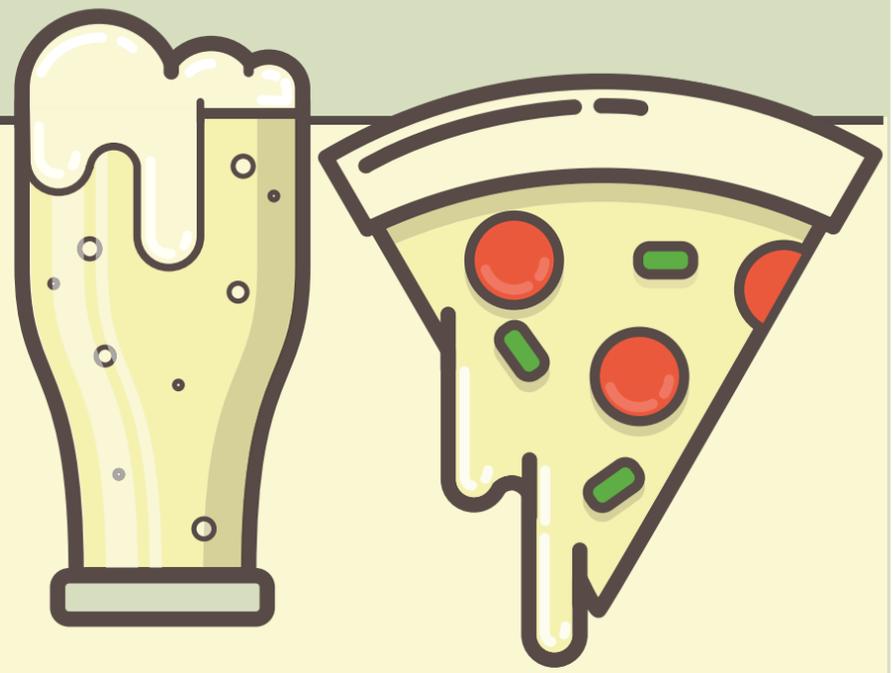
Here both techniques are used. The writer tells people to “start doing amazing things with instagram.” Then he asks for additional ideas.



GIVE IT A REST

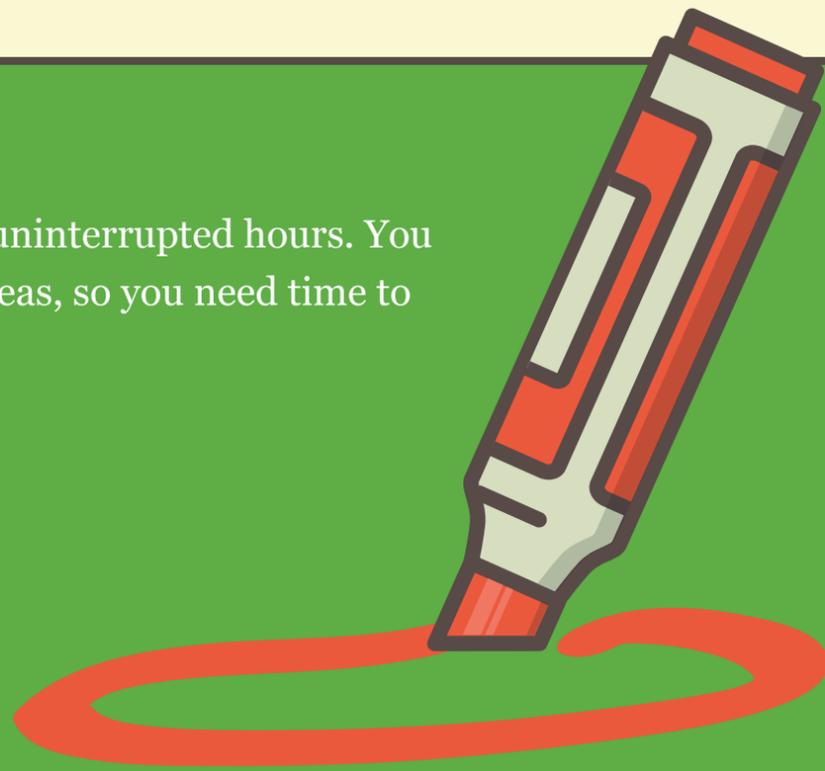
Congratulations! Your rough draft is finished. You may read it over and fix glaring mistakes in your writing. But that's it. It's almost impossible to edit your work immediately after writing. So save your document and set it aside at least until the next day.

This cooling off period will make a big difference in



No. 6 EDIT

When it's time to edit your work, try to set aside a few uninterrupted hours. You need to be able to evaluate the flow and logic of your ideas, so you need time to focus.

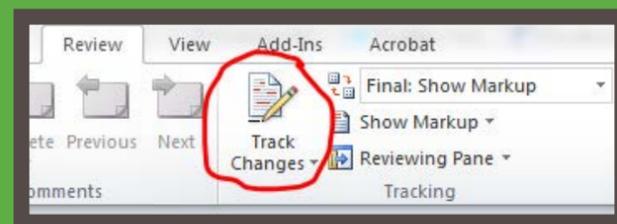


STEP 1

READ YOUR ARTICLE AS IF YOU ARE THE IDEAL READER.

Get inside the head of your avatar, or idea reader. Then read from start to finish.

Mark any sections that don't make sense or are unclear, but don't do any major editing yet. In this first review, you simply want to get a feel for how good (or bad) your first draft is.



STEP 2

EVALUATE YOUR ARTICLE FROM A HIGH-LEVEL PERSPECTIVE:

- *Does it make the point you set out to make?*
- *Does it make only that point?*
- *Is the angle unique enough?*

STEP 3

FIX ANY ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS FIRST.

- *If necessary, rearrange sections to create a more logical flow.*
- *Delete paragraphs and sentences that don't support your main topic or that interrupt the flow of your ideas.*



STEP 4

FIX YOUR INTRODUCTION NEXT.

- *Make the first sentence and first paragraph as intriguing as possible.*
- *Remove any waste. Pare down your idea to its core.*
- *Keep it interesting.*
- *Tie it to your main point.*

STEP 5

ONCE YOUR OVERALL STRUCTURE AND INTRODUCTION ARE GOOD, BEGIN TWEAKING THE LANGUAGE.

- *Make your verbs active. Rearrange your sentences, if necessary, to replace words like is, am, and be with action words. Find the strongest, most expressive verbs possible.*
- *Where possible, change adjectives to nouns and/or select more expressive nouns.*
- *Remove unnecessary words and phrases.*
- *Simplify complicated sentences. (I hoot for an 8th grade reading level.)*
- *Check spelling, grammar and punctuation.*

Headline

↓ This subhead went from one word to an active sentence

If the headline sells, make it clickable

STEP 6

FIX YOUR TITLE.

The title should be descriptive, not cute or clever. It should forecast the information people will find in your content — never mislead your readers.

In most likelihood, you will find the best wording for your title somewhere in the introduction or conclusion.

NOTE:

Research has shown that people are most likely to click through to your content if the title is approximately eight words long. But length is less important than interest, so don't shorten your title if that makes it less interesting.

STEP 7

SAVING YOUR FINISHED DOCUMENT

Saving your content properly is as much an art as writing it.

Most content goes through several rounds of drafts and edits before it can be considered done. Some of those rounds result in such drastic changes that it's worth "saving as" rather than saving over the previous version.

Of course, you don't need to do this with every new draft. But...

- *If you decide to experiment with another approach to your topic*
- *If you need to make dramatic changes*
- *If you need to submit each version to stakeholders until the final document is complete*

... Then it's worth your while to keep track of your content's evolution from first draft to final deliverable.

That way, if any version doesn't work or if someone wants to "go back to the way we had it before," you only have to open up a previous version. Easy!

1 GIVE YOUR PROJECT A SHORTENED PROJECT NAME THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO REMEMBER AND WORK WITH.

A few common ways to do this are:

- *A keyword or phrase from the title*
- *Shorten the keywords, then add the project type*
- *The initials of your full project name*



If you aren't able to create a shortened name, that's okay. It simply makes it easier to see the entire name — project and version — at a glance.

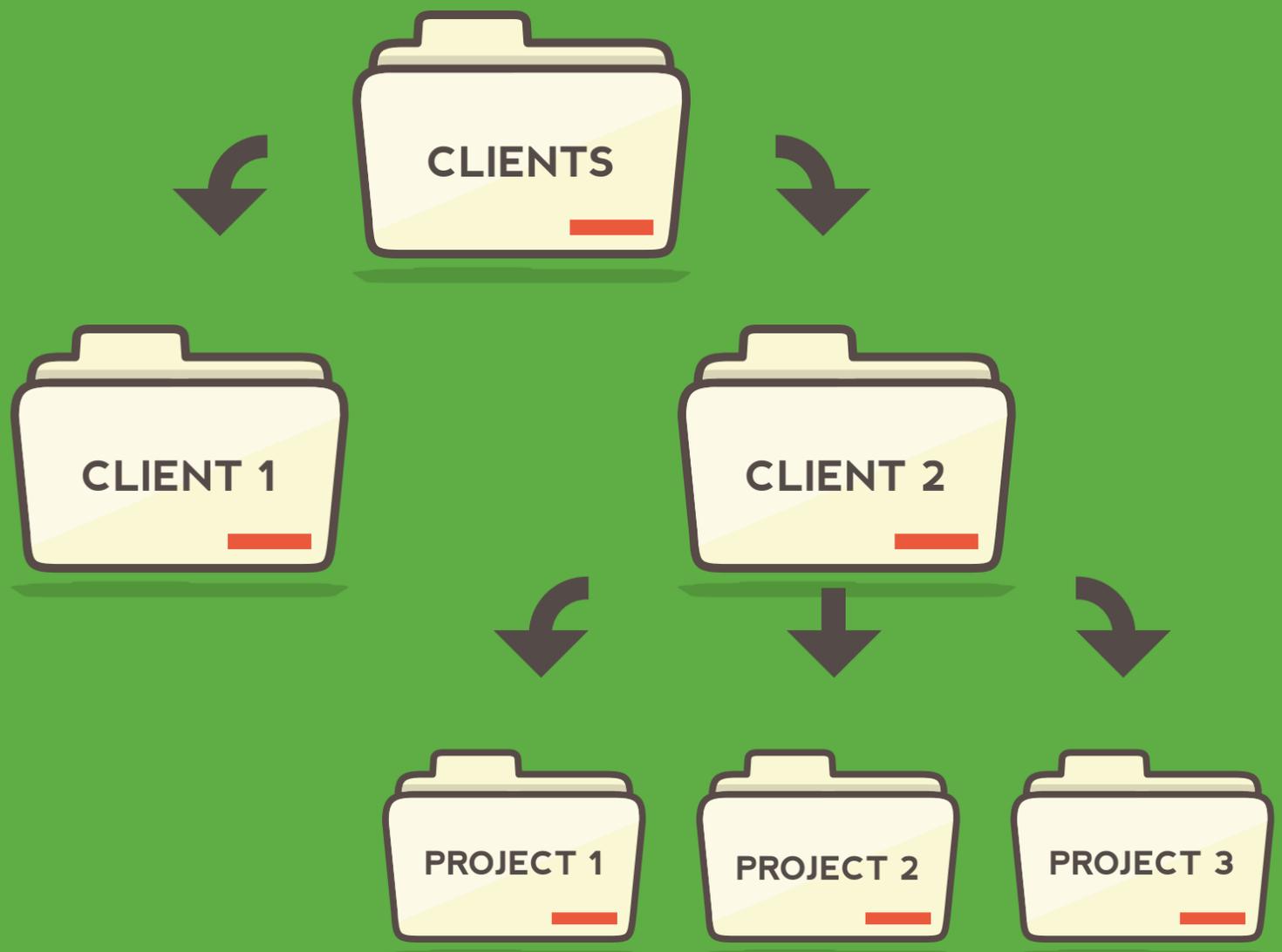
2 CREATE A PROJECT FOLDER ON YOUR HARD DRIVE.

Name it with the project name or the identifying tag you decided on in Step 1.

Save this folder in a logical location that's easy to find.

For example, if you create content for different departments in your organization, you might create a folder for each department, then subfolders for each project.

If you create different projects for different clients, you may have a folder called "Clients" with subfolders for each client. Then inside each client folder is a folder for each project.





SAVE YOUR FIRST DRAFT IN THAT FOLDER, USING THE FORMAT: PROJECT NAME_1

Use your project name first, so it's easy to keep track of the document when it's open on your desktop. This is important if you work on several projects at once.

If you can use the shortened project identifier, all the better. It makes it easier to see the project and version of each document at a glance. But it isn't always practical to use an abbreviated name, especially when stakeholders and reviewers will see the document. The full name may make it easier for them to recognize the document.

If you name your documents by their version — such as “draft 1” or “article 1” — then save them in project folders to keep them separate, you could end up with several “draft 1” documents open at the same time. It's easy to get confused.



Use the “underscore-number” format to identify the version of each document. And start the habit of numbering even the first draft. In many cases, you will have multiple versions.



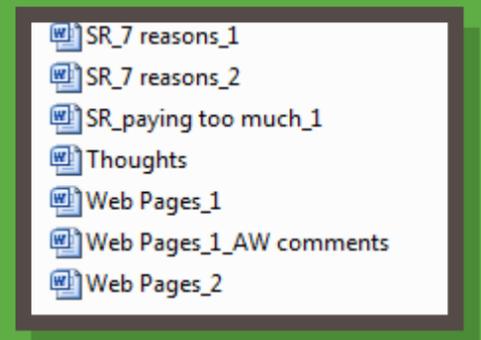
FOR ROUTINE EDITS AND THROUGHOUT THE WRITING PROCESS, SAVE OVER THIS DOCUMENT.

Short articles and small project may not need a lot of versions. So it's okay to save changes in the same document.

But if you make dramatic changes, or if you send you edits to stakeholders for review, consider creating a new version rather than saving over your first version.

Save as: **Project Name_2**

This is especially important if you submit revised versions of the document to reviewers. By numbering your drafts, stakeholders can see at a glance which document is most recent.

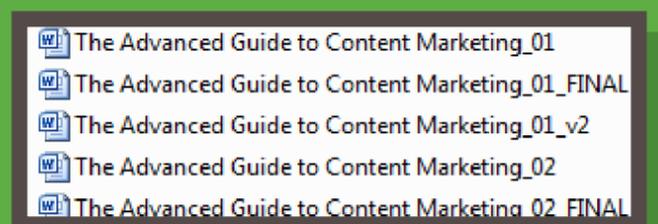


CONTINUE NUMBERING SUBSEQUENT VERSIONS OF THE CONTENT UNTIL ALL EDITS ARE DONE.



SAVE YOUR FINAL VERSION AS: PROJECT NAME_FINAL

In this FINAL version, delete your research. The last numbered draft may (or may not) contain the links and notes from your research. The FINAL should not.

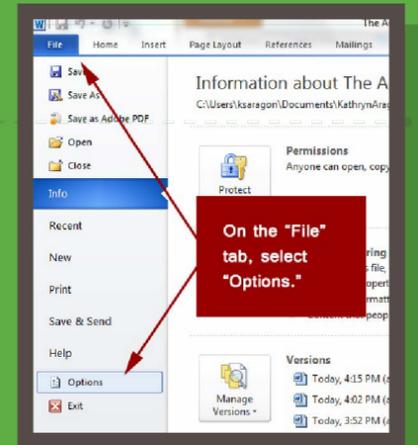


TIP

TO CHECK YOUR READING LEVEL, YOU'LL FIRST NEED TO SET YOUR READABILITY OPTIONS.

(The following instructions are for Word 2010.)

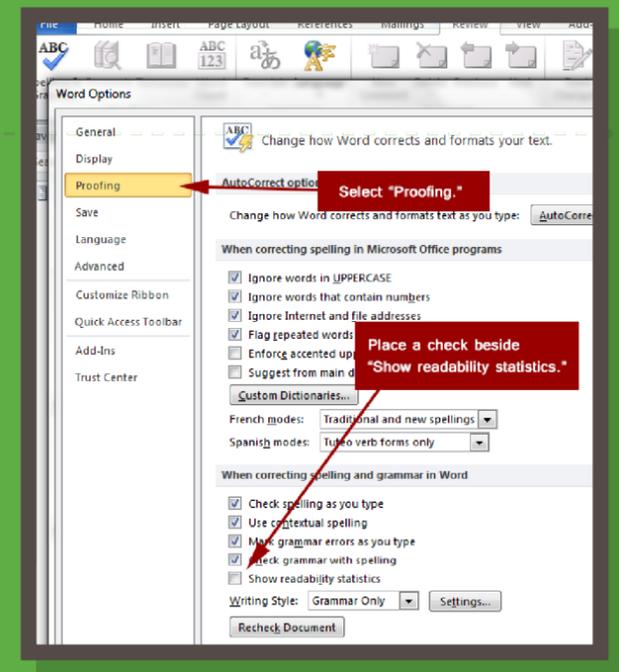
1 CLICK FILE > OPTIONS.



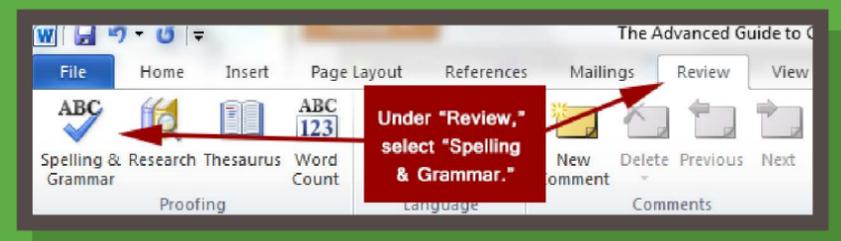
2 CLICK THE PROOFING TAB.

Then place a check beside “Check grammar with spelling” and “Show readability statistics.”

Click OK in the lower right corner.



3 SELECT REVIEW > SPELLING & GRAMMAR IN THE RIBBON AT THE TOP OF YOUR WORD DOCUMENT.



4 WORD WILL START BY CHECKING YOUR GRAMMAR & SPELLING

Word will start by checking your grammar and spelling, so make corrections as necessary. Then when you're done, a pop-up box will appear with your reading level statistics.

Ideally, you'll have a low percentage of passive sentences because you already changed “being” verbs to “action” verbs.

The Flesch Reading Ease score should be between 60 and 70. The higher the score, the easier it is to read your writing.

A screenshot of the Readability Statistics dialog box. The dialog box displays various counts and averages for the document. The 'Readability' section is highlighted with a red box. The data is as follows:

Counts	
Words	4175
Characters	20188
Paragraphs	252
Sentences	329
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	1.7
Words per Sentence	11.5
Characters per Word	4.5
Readability	
Passive Sentences	4%
Flesch Reading Ease	69.6
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	6.4

An 'OK' button is visible at the bottom right of the dialog box.

And your Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level should be between 7.0 and 8.0. (*Lower is acceptable. Consider making adjustments if it is 9.0 or above.*)

Depending on your target audience, the grade level may need to be higher or lower. For instance, if your audience is made up of professors or doctors, you may be able to get away with a higher grade level. But remember, even this audience enjoys an easy read when they're consuming content.

THAT'S IT!

Every writer, no matter how experienced, goes through these same steps when creating content:

- **SELECTING THE TOPIC BASED ON WHAT READERS ARE LOOKING FOR.**
- **RESEARCH AND REFINE YOUR IDEAS.**
- **ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS TO CREATE A BASIC OUTLINE.**
- **DRAFT.**
- **COOL OFF.**
- **EDIT.**

As a content marketer, you must take content production seriously, which means you need to think of yourself as a professional writer and publisher. That includes getting comfortable with the six steps in the creative process.

Do you still use these steps if you are creating media content, such as videos or webinars? You bet.

In the same way a writer selects the topic, develops the flow of ideas and drafts the content, media producers follow the same steps. Whereas a writer drafts the words then edits, a videographer must produce the video and edit. And a podcaster must record the audio and then edit.

No matter what your output, the creative process remains the same. And as a content producer, you are, in essence, a creative professional.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You now know more about content creation than the majority of brands publishing on the Web today. You have a strategy. You know where to get ideas and how to plan your content. And now you know the exact steps professionals use to produce their own high-value content.

But you aren't done yet. In Chapter 5 you'll learn 12 content writing secrets of professional writers, and in Chapter 6, you'll find 10 templates for creating some of the most popular types of content today.

READY? LET'S DO IT!

**TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER THREE**



**TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER FIVE**



12 CONTENT-WRITING SECRETS OF PROFESSIONAL WRITERS

Since most content starts with written words, it doesn't matter what type of content you produce, you can benefit from knowing the secrets of professional writers.

One of the biggest struggles content marketers have is producing enough content and simultaneously keeping the quality high. That's something professional writers must work through on a daily basis.

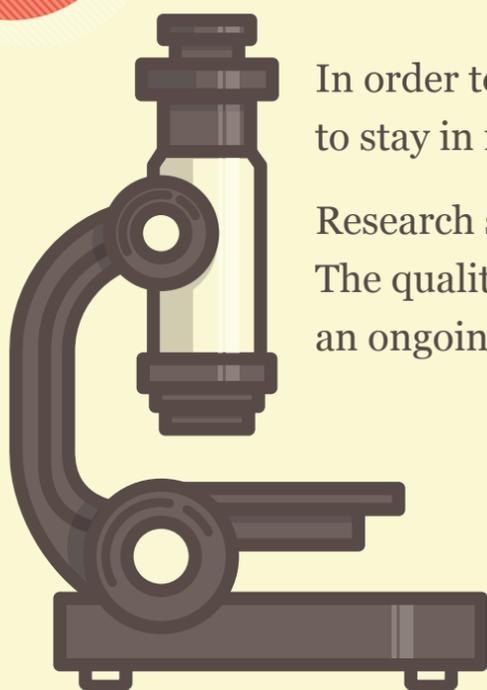
So in this chapter, you'll learn 12 secrets of professional writers: the tips and tricks that help them consistently produce a steady stream of high-quality content.



No

1

STAY IN RESEARCH MODE AT ALL TIMES.



In order to keep your queue filled with great content ideas, you need to stay in research mode at all times.

Research shouldn't be reserved for planning or writing sessions only. The quality of your content will increase substantially if you do it on an ongoing basis, as ideas pop into your head.

STEP

1

AS SOON AS YOU GET AN IDEA, BEGIN JOTTING DOWN WAYS YOU COULD DEVELOP IT.

You can wait until it's time to produce your content to think about what you want to say. But it's often easier to begin developing your ideas before it's time to write. To do that, as soon as you get the idea, begin looking for:

- *Major points you'd like to make about the topic*
- *URLs for sites that provide additional information*
- *URLs for Web pages that illustrate your points*

By stepping into research mode every time you browse the Web, you can often have your entire outline finished before it's time to sit down and write.

EXAMPLE #1

How to make your customer the hero in his own life story.
Copywriting tricks: "Imagine." "Not just Benefits, deep benefits" "before and after images." "help him succeed."

Customer showcase/focus posts: build relationship, feature your VIP customers/clients, provide case studies for what you do. Look for examples.

When you get an idea, you often have a few ideas of what you'd say in those articles — an example you could give or a point you'd like to make.

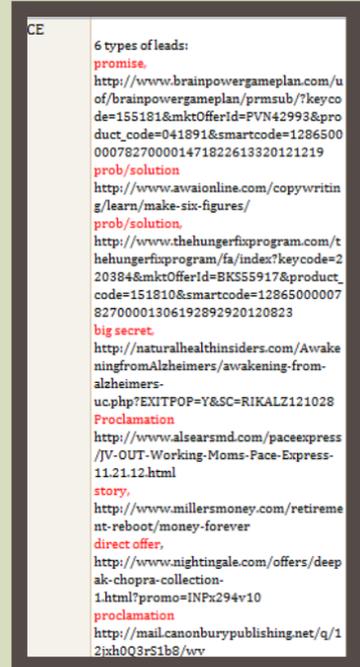
Don't just write down your content idea. Write down every thought you have about it, no matter how rough or undefined.

EXAMPLE #1

The idea for this post began with a simple idea, “6 types of leads.”

To create a rough outline, the writer entered the types of leads she was considering (in red). Then as she browsed the Web, if she found a good example of one of them, she entered the URL under the subhead.

That way, when it was time to write the post, she could easily find the Web pages again — and most of the research was already done.



AS YOU READ/BROWSE THE WEB, GATHER RESOURCES TO USE AS REFERENCE MATERIAL.

Don't just browse the Web. Research the Web. Whenever you're online, be on the lookout for material that could help you tell your stories.

CE - Persuasive writing: no need to manipulate (<http://www.rebelsociety.com/2012/08/10/11-tips-and-tricks-for-troubled-writers/>), sell confidence (<http://www.targetmarketingmag.com/article/build-confidence/1?e=ksaragon%40sbcglobal.net#>)

If you see a social media post or article that relates to a topic, grab the URL and paste it into the cell where you've listed your idea. Add notes so you know why you wanted to use the material, and when you finally sit down to write, you have much of your research already done.



USE GOOGLE+ AND EVERNOTE TO FILE YOUR RESEARCH

Sometimes you don't have an idea yet. But you see a Web page or report that has valuable information you know you can use.

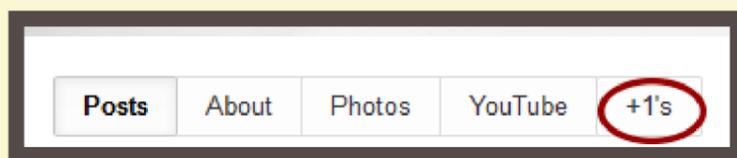
When you see posts that have great research or fresh ideas, or if you simply want to keep it as a sample of what works, be sure to save those Web pages.

There are three ways to do that, and we've listed them in order, from simplest to most advanced.

1 USE GOOGLE'S +1 FEATURE

When you +1 a Web page, Google keeps a record of it.

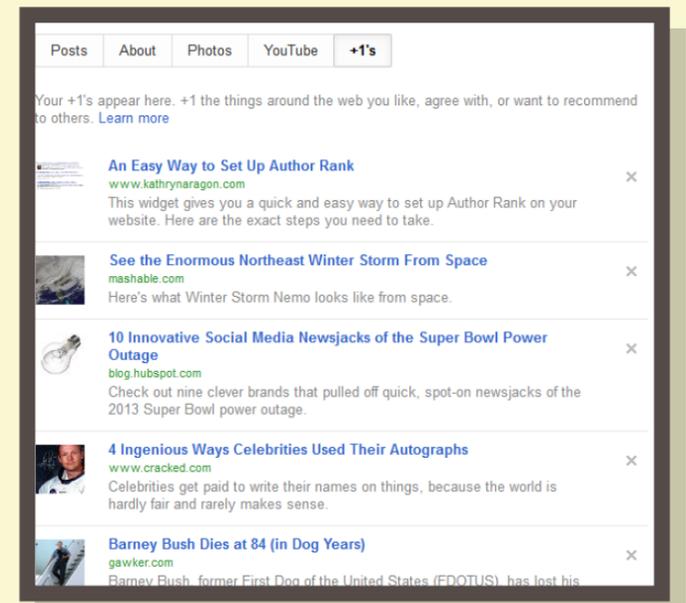
To see the pages you've +1'd, go to your Google+ profile, and click on the tab below your cover banner called "+1's."



You'll see a list of the Web pages you've +1'd, with the most recent ones on top.

This creates a simple log of the pages you want to be able to find again later. But it doesn't give you a way to add notes or categorize your pages.

If you'd like to save notes with your ideas, you'll need to use the technique we talk about next.



CREATE A GOOGLE+ CIRCLE WITH NO ONE IN IT.

Here's how it works:

Create a new Google+ circle called "Ideas," but don't put any people in it.

Then, when you find a Web page you want to remember, you can "share" it with your Ideas circle. Since no one is in that circle, you'll be the only one who can see it.

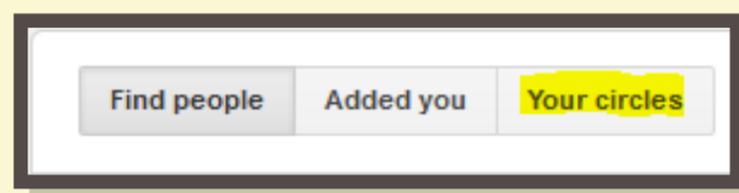
It's a simple way to keep track of Web pages you want to be able to find later. Here's how to set it up:

FIRST, CREATE YOUR "IDEAS" CIRCLE:

-  Go to your Google+ profile and click on the "Find People" link in the left sidebar.



-  Across the top of the page are three tabs. Click on "Your circles."



👉 At the bottom of the screen will be a row of blue circles.

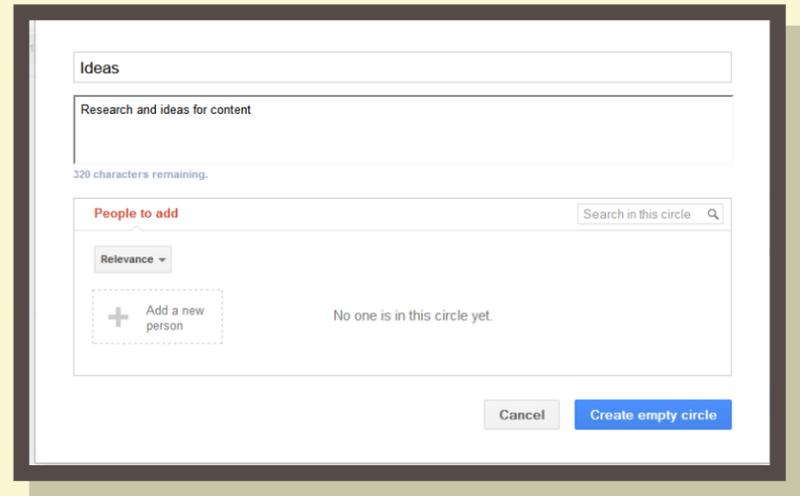


Click on the first one, which says “Drop here to create a circle.”
A pop-up will appear.

👉 Enter the name of the circle:
“Ideas”

👉 Write in a description of the circle: “Research and ideas for content”

👉 Click “Create empty circle.”



NOW, WHENEVER YOU COME ACROSS A PIECE OF CONTENT THAT YOU WANT TO SAVE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE, HERE'S WHAT YOU DO:

👉 Hit the +1 button on that Web page
(or copy the URL and manually paste it into your Google+ stream)

👉 Write your ideas into the post.

👉 Remove the circles you have showing, then click in the empty space to see a list of your circles. Scroll down to “Ideas” and click on it.

👉 Click “Share.”



WHEN YOU NEED TO FIND A WEB PAGE THAT YOU SAVED, SIMPLY REVIEW THE POSTS IN YOUR IDEAS CIRCLE. HERE'S HOW:

👉 When you are on your Home page, select “More” at the top of the page.

👉 The circles you have created will appear in a drop-down box. Select the “Ideas” circle to populate your stream. You will see all your Ideas in your stream.



- When you're done reviewing them and you want to return to your normal stream, select "All" from the options at the top of your Home page. You will see posts from the people you follow, including any recent Ideas you have created.

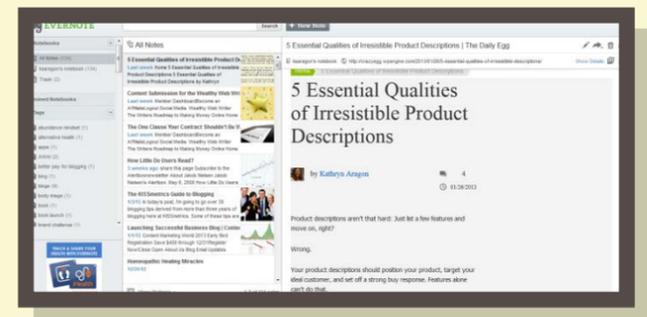
One caveat: Your posts to the Ideas circle won't populate anyone's Google+ stream, but they could show up in a Google search if they contain the keyword being searched for.

Here's a post we made for the sole purpose of capturing screen shots. It ranked on page 1 of Google!



USE EVERNOTE.

Evernote allows you to save Web pages to a cloud-based file system. You create the folders and tags, and you include notes that help you find that information when you need it later.

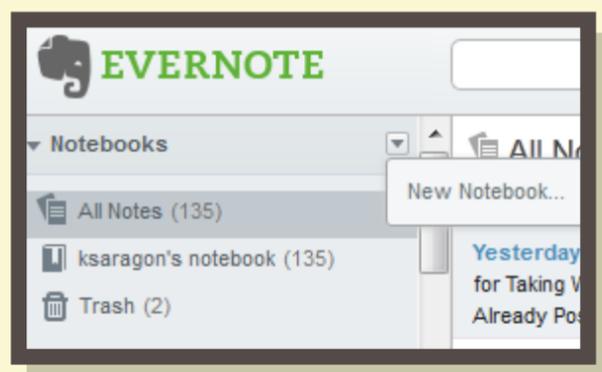


This is the most advanced technique for saving Web pages for future reference. And the nice thing is, you can customize the experience to your own needs.

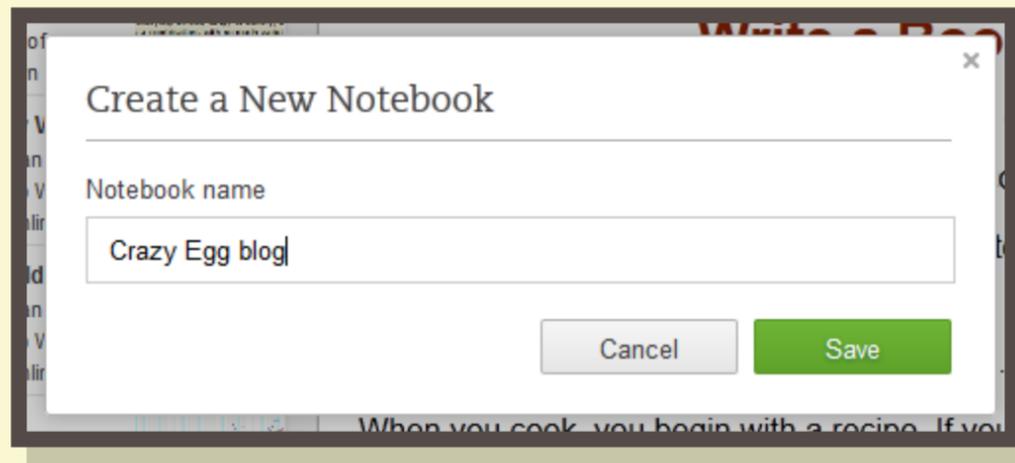
- Create a folder for each writing project.
- Create a folder for each category you create content for.
- Create a folder for each client or department you create content for.

ORGANIZE YOUR SAVED WEB PAGES IN WHATEVER WAY THAT WORKS FOR YOU. HERE'S HOW TO SET IT UP:

- In the upper left corner, beside "Notebooks," click the small caret. A link to "New Notebook" will appear. **Click it.**



- 2/ In the “Create a New Notebook” pop-up, write your project name or the category of the information you want to save.



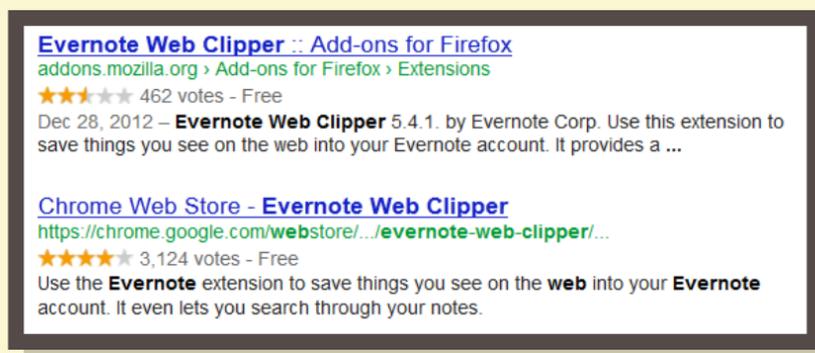
For instance, if you write blog posts for several categories on your website, create a folder for each. When you find research that applies to one of those categories, save it in the appropriate folder. (*We’ll talk more about that in a minute.*)

Or if you create content for several departments in your organization, create a folder for each. Then when you find research that applies to one of those departments, save it in the folder labeled with that department’s name.

- 3/ After you’ve created folders to store your research, set up the Evernote Web Clipper on your desktop.

From Google, search for “Evernote Web Clipper” and select the appropriate search result depending on your Web browser.

For instance, if you have Firefox, select the first option. If you have Chrome, select the second.

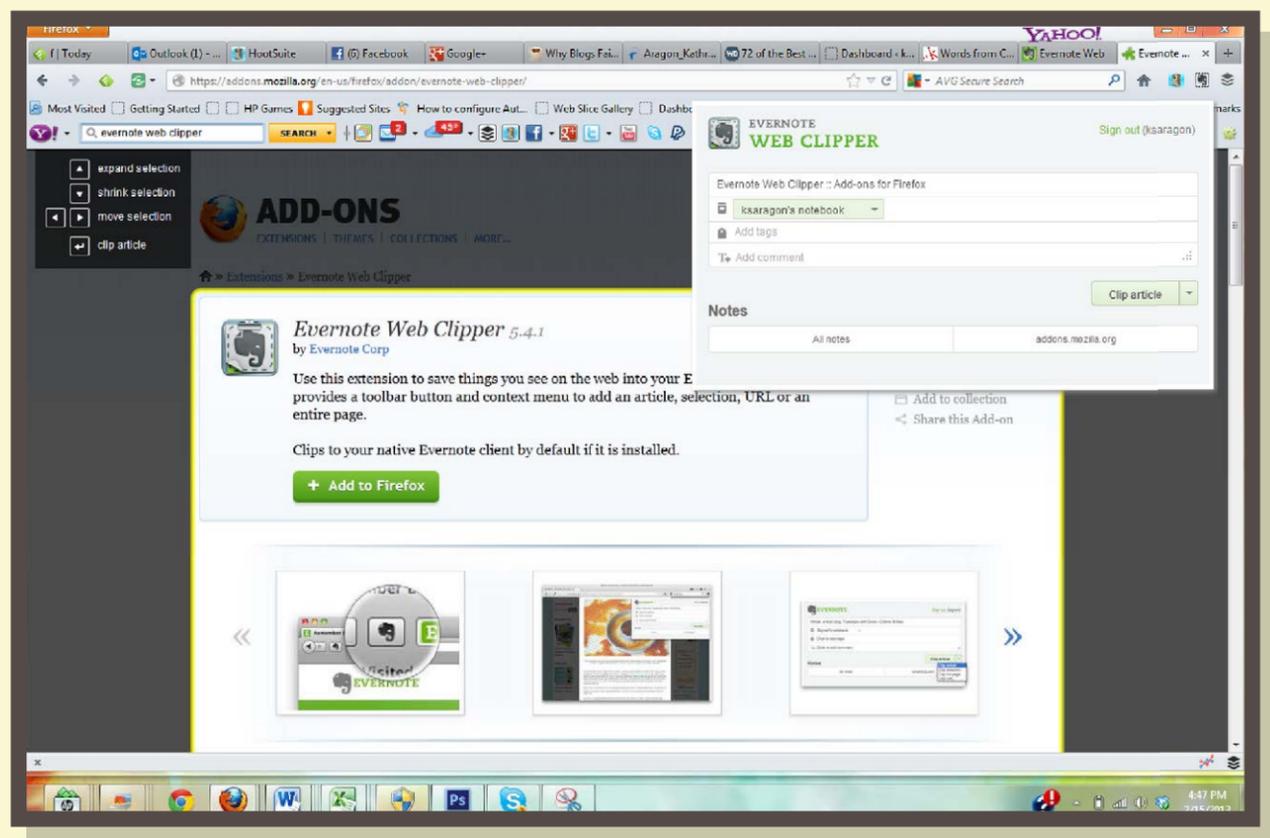


Evernote will add an icon to your search bar at the top of your browser.



NOW YOU’RE READY TO USE EVERNOTE TO FILE YOUR RESEARCH:

- 1/ When you are searching the Web and find a page you want to save, click the Clipper icon at the top of your browser.
- 2/ The Web page darkens and Evernote highlights the part of the page being saved. A pop-up also appears asking you to fill in the notebook you want this page saved in, the tags you want to assign it, and any comments you may have.



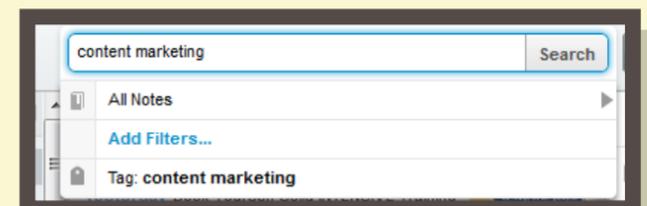
➤ **Enter the appropriate information and click “Clip Article.”**

That’s it. Your article is saved in Evernote in the file folder you specified.

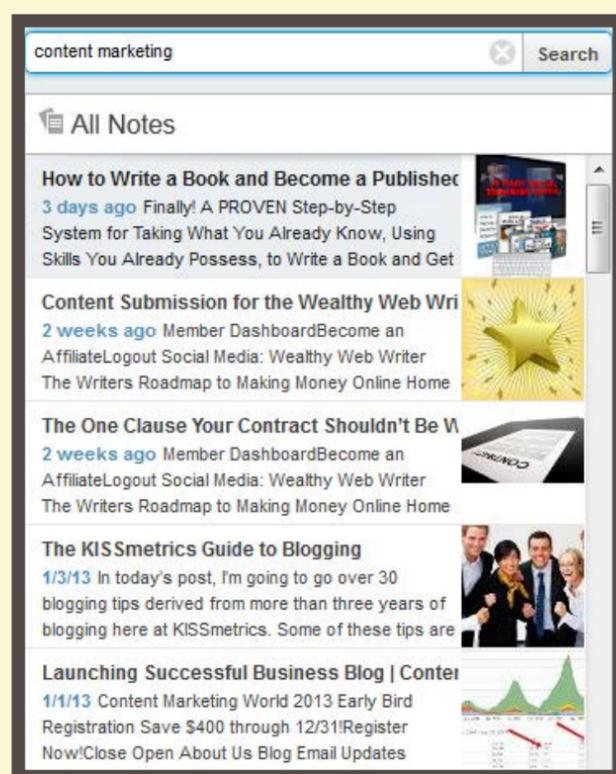
THEN WHEN YOU’RE WRITING AND NEED TO FIND A STATISTIC, HERE’S HOW YOU FIND IT IN EVERNOTE:

➤ **When you are writing a blog post or writing a video script and you need a statistic or other fact, go to Evernote.com and log in to your account.**

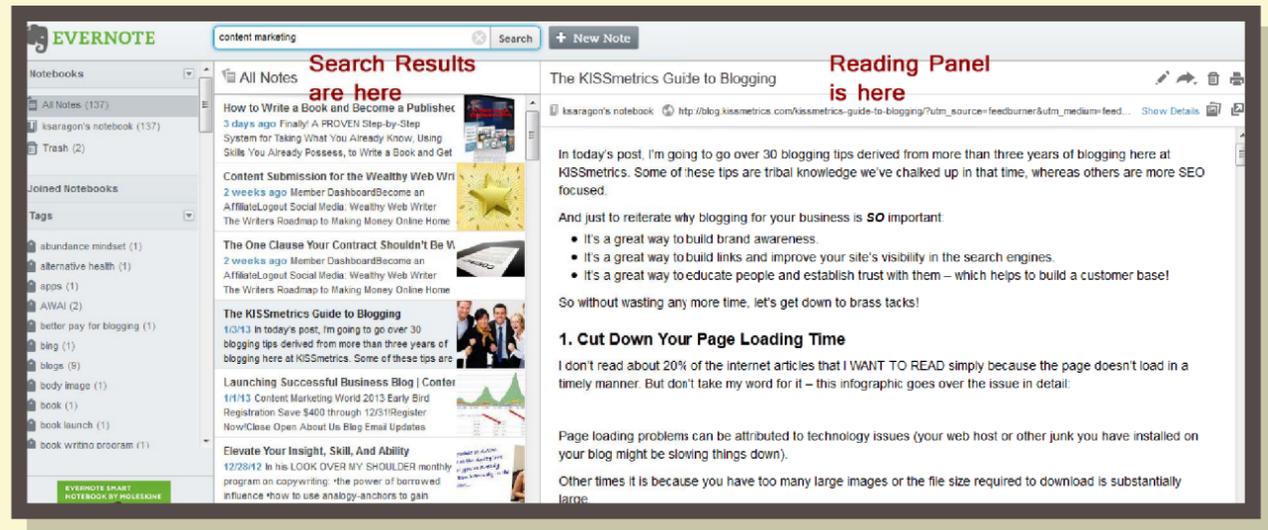
➤ **In the search bar at the top of the page, type in your keyword and click “Search.”**



➤ **All the Web pages that you tagged with that keyword will populate the Notes panel below the Search bar. Each page is labeled with the page title and the date you saved it to Evernote.**



Click on any of the search results, and it will appear in the reading panel on the right.



Of the three options for saving your research, Evernote takes the most up-front time. That's because, in order to be able to find information later, you must add tags to the pages you save.

But Evernote is your most efficient way to find your information later.

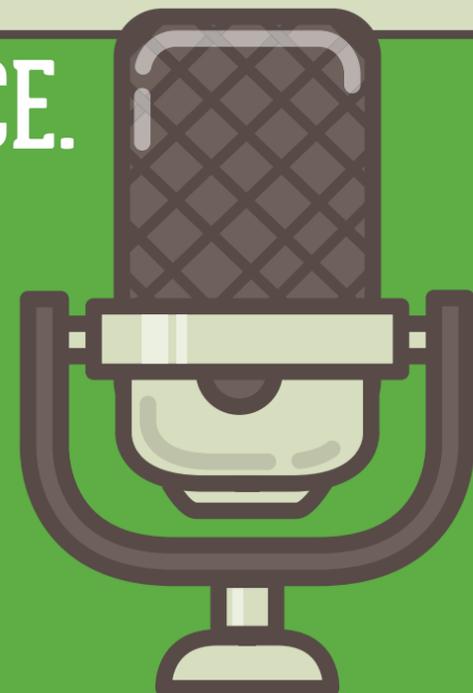
No 2

WRITE IN YOUR OWN UNIQUE VOICE.

Don't try to copy someone else. Your content should have an individual style that is unique to your personality or brand.

Once you develop your own voice, you aren't done. (*Writers never stop working on their writing skills. As a content writer, you need to continually hone your skills too.*)

Style is your most prized possession as a writer, and it should continue to evolve over the lifetime of your career.



We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

If you haven't found your voice yet, try this exercise:

HOW TO FIND YOUR VOICE

No matter what content you produce, it needs to be in your own voice, or style. It should never seem like a copycat of someone else. That said, it's only by copying skilled writers that you'll find your own unique voice.

Typically, creative professionals go through three stages of development: imitation, mastery and, finally, innovation.

You start out reading and studying the styles of writers you admire. Then you use what you learn to develop your own style.

Here's an exercise that can walk you through the process:

STEP 1

FIND 5 CONTENT WRITERS WHOSE STYLE YOU ENJOY READING

STEP 2

SELECT ONE PIECE FROM EACH THAT IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THEIR WORK, OR THAT YOU ENJOY READING.

STEP

5

SELECT YOUR FAVORITE OF THE FIVE WRITING SAMPLES, AND READ IT SLOWLY, WORD-FOR-WORD, OUT LOUD IF NECESSARY.

STEP

4

STUDY HOW THAT WRITER DOES IT:

- *What the first sentence looks like.*
- *Format of introduction.*
- *How the article is structured.*
- *How the topic is developed and ideas presented.*
- *How the article is drawn to a close.*
- *What the call to action was.*

STEP

5

NOW YOU TRY.

Write an article or blog post for your own brand that's similar to the one you just studied. Try to format your article the same, and imitate the style of your chosen writer.

STEP

6

DO THIS FOR EACH WRITER.

Repeat this exercise for the remaining four articles. When you're done, you'll have five articles of your own, each written in a style similar to one of your favorite writers.

STEP

7

REVIEW THESE ARTICLES.

Select the one that was easiest to write and sounds most "like you." It should sound or feel a bit like your own (or your brand's) personality and style.

STEP

8

WRITE A SIXTH ARTICLE IN THIS SAME STYLE, MAKING ONE SMALL CHANGE TO MAKE IT SOUND MORE LIKE YOUR OWN NATURAL VOICE

Let your personality come through, your own way of talking, your individual way of seeing the world. You may keep the structure of your chosen writer. Or you may continue to use some of the writer's style. But begin to make it your own.

STEP

9

WITH EACH ARTICLE YOU WRITE, TWEAK THIS ADOPTED STYLE A LITTLE MORE UNTIL IT BEGINS TO SOUND UNIQUE TO YOU.

Your goal is for someone to say, "When I read your posts, I can hear you talking." That's voice. And it should be as unique as you are.

No



TALK ABOUT ONE THING ONLY.

Each piece of content should have one point. Only one.

The first thing you should do when you sit down to write is to figure out what your bottom-line point is.

After you write, the first round of edits is to make sure your writing stays on point.

You need to be ruthless. As William Faulkner said, “kill your darlings.” Any word, sentence or paragraph that breaks this one rule must be deleted — no matter how much you like it.

1



No



DEPTH AND LENGTH SHOULD MATCH.

There are two things that make writing difficult to read. One is not giving enough detail and giving only a spotty coverage of an idea. The other is to try to give too much detail for the space allowed.

Whether you want your content to be long or short, make sure you only go as deep as your length allows.

➤ *Short articles should only provide a high-level discussion of your topic or in-depth coverage of one aspect of it.*

➤ *Longer content has the space to provide more details.*

Any length is acceptable. Seth Godin and ZAGG write as few as 100 words per post, while KISSmetrics and Crazy Egg blog posts range from 800 to 1,500+ words.

For example, this one on ZAGG is just 36 words.

Yes, this is the entire article.

Whereas this one on the Daily Egg is 2,100 words. It's far too long to include here, but you can read it at <http://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/02/12/how-to-write-a-landing-page/>.

The idea is to know what your readers want and provide the depth and length that gets them engaged.



Nothing Says Happy Valentine's Day Like Bacon Roses

by ALISON J. HERZOG on FEBRUARY 14, 2013 in WISHFUL THINKING

[Tweet](#) [Share](#)

So, Happy Valentine's Day from ZAGG to you and your bacon lovin' posse.

If you want to make these for your loved one (or let's be real, for yourself), you can get [step-by-step instructions](#) at instructables.com.

How To Write A Landing Page For Readers, Scanners and Bottom-Line Viewers



by Kathryn Aragon

© 02/12/2013



2

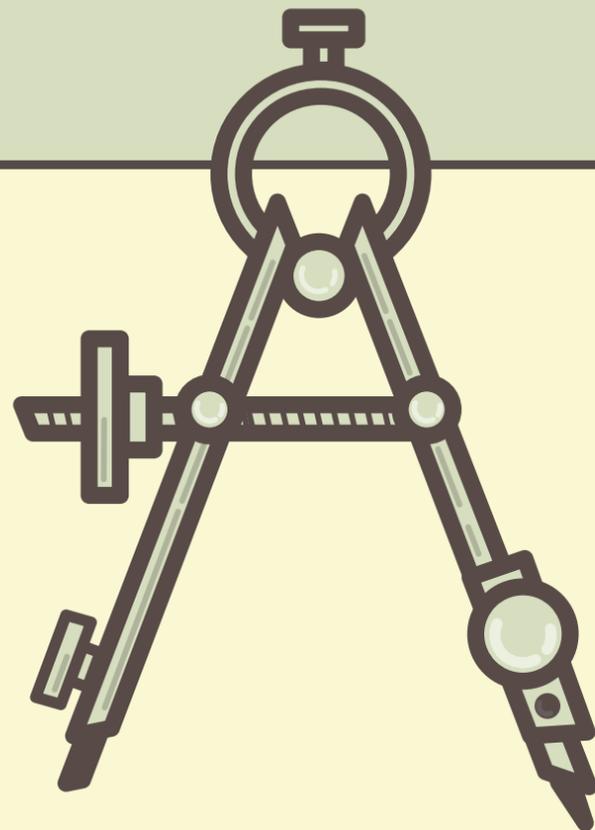
No



FIND A UNIQUE ANGLE TO COVER YOUR TOPIC

Every piece of content has a TOPIC, a POINT, and a SLANT.

TOPIC	a subject of discussion or conversation
POINT	a major idea
SLANT	a specific point of view



You may cover a trending topic that other content marketers are also writing about — but only if you add to the conversation, not repeat it. Try to make a new point or find a unique angle for talking about the topic. Otherwise, find something else to talk about.

No



SPEND AS MUCH TIME ON YOUR TITLE AS YOU DO WRITING



Even the most valuable, interesting content will be ignored if the title doesn't connect with readers. Your title should create interest and forecast the information people will find when they click through.

10 TYPES OF TITLES THAT TEND TO PERFORM WELL ARE:

- 1/ # of [Something Useful or Interesting]
- 2/ Top # [List]
- 3/ How to [Do Something Useful or Interesting]
- 4/ How [Brand Name or Celebrity] [Does Something the Reader Wants to Do]
- 5/ Best of [Category or Type]
- 6/ Why [Something] Is [the Way It Is]
- 7/ Interview with [Celebrity]: [Interesting Topic or Title]
- 8/ Newsjacking
- 9/ Breaking News
- 10/ Secrets of [Something We're Dying to Know]



MAKE THE FIRST SENTENCE YOUR BEST

You have about three seconds to hook your readers and get them reading. After your headline, it's up to your first sentence to do the job.

Never mislead. Your headline and first sentence should take the reader smoothly to your main point. But do say something that makes people pay attention.

In business, it's important to learn from your mistakes.

BABAR SULEMAN

As a reader, I think, "Mistakes? What mistakes? Maybe I'm making one..." That little bit of doubt creates curiosity.

So you noticed, eh?

RUSS HENNEBERRY

The tone is casual and fun. I think, "Noticed what?" And I'm into the article.

Want better results on your landing pages?

KATHRYN ARAGON

You'll hear that you should never ask a yes/no question. Readers might say no and move on. But in this case, everyone wants better sales results, so it's a safe question.

CRAFT AN IRRESISTIBLE LEAD [INTRODUCTION]

The lead (or as journalists call it, the “lede”) is what writers call the introduction to your content.

For very short articles, it could be the first paragraph or two. For books, it could be the first chapter. But for most content, it’s the first 100-600 words: the intro and your point.

Your lead must be compelling without being overly long. It must be tease about what’s to come without giving away the gold.

Types of leads that perform well in content:

- *Fascinating story*
- *Little-known fact*
- *Contrarian viewpoint*
- *Promise of information available nowhere else*
- *Breaking news*



No 9

KILL THE HYPE. KEEP IT BELIEVABLE

Your readers don't want to waste time on content that isn't accurate and trustworthy. So the rules are: no hype and no stretching the truth.

No hype.

Hype tends to make people feel like they're being manipulated — and no one likes that.

So tone it down. Write content to help people and add value to their lives. Use content to inform and entertain. Use sales copy to sell.

No stretching the truth.

People will only see you as a resource if they can trust you. That's why it's so important to research your topics.

If you present a surprising fact or figure, you need to back it up. Provide your source. If you quote someone or reference a book or report, link to it.

Make it easy for people to believe you — or they'll stop reading and move on.

No 10

THE CLOSE IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE LEAD

Good content tells who, what, where, when and why. Great content also tells "*so what.*"

Don't let your content lose steam just because you ran out of ideas.

At the close of every piece of content, summarize your main point, then tell your readers how they'll benefit from the information you provided.

If at all possible, go full circle by tying it back to the main point you made in the lead.



No 11

PLAIN WRITING IS BEST

Short paragraphs, short sentences, and easy words are the most readable. So don't try to win any writing awards.

Digital content is *not* what you learned to write in English class.

Shorter and simpler is your mantra for better readability.

PARAGRAH

6 lines max

SENTENCES

25 word max

SYLLABLES

1-2 syllable



EDIT. EDIT. EDIT.

Great writing never happens in the first draft.

The first draft is usually a good effort at figuring out how to put your ideas into words. As a result, they're almost always badly written. For all writers.

Great writing happens in the editing stage. So when you write:

- 1/ **JUST GET YOUR IDEAS DOWN.**
- 2/ **WRITE FAST SO YOU CAN KEEP UP WITH YOUR IDEAS.**
- 3/ **THEN PUT YOUR BEST EFFORT INTO YOUR EDITING.**

And don't just settle for one round of edits. For high quality writing, you'll need to go through several rounds of review.



TRANSLATING "WRITTEN" CONTENT INTO "NEW MEDIA"

We live in an exciting age. There was once a day when nearly all content was written: physical books, magazine articles, glossy brochures, and the like. Some marketers included recordings or videos in their arsenal of content, but for the most part, "content" implied "written."

We realize the last few chapters seem to follow that same assumption. But nothing could be further from the truth.

In reality, all media starts with an idea that is expressed in words. So even if the narrative is delivered in a podcast or video, the material must be well organized and logical. They still must rely on the basic architectural structures used by writers.

So how do you transform your words into new media instead of a written piece of content? Here's the process:

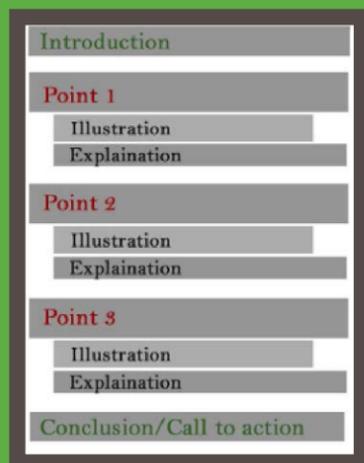
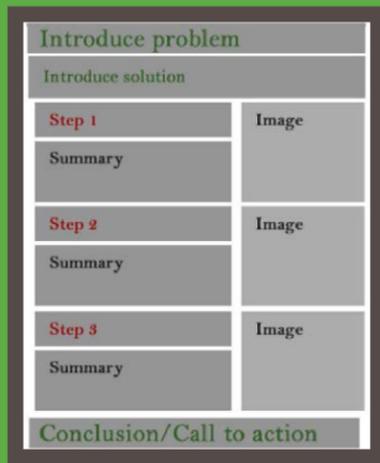


DEFINE YOUR TOPIC AND BIG IDEA.

STEP 2

SELECT THE STRUCTURE YOU'LL USE TO PRESENT YOUR IDEAS.

(You'll learn 12 structures in Chapter 6.)



STEP 3

RESEARCH, OUTLINE, AND FLESH OUT YOUR PRESENTATION.

6 types of leads:

promise,

http://www.brainpowergameplan.com/uf/brainpowergameplan/prmsub/?keycode=155181&mktOfferId=PVN42993&product_code=041891&smartcode=1286500000782700001471822613320121219

prob/solution

<http://www.awaionline.com/copywriting/learn/make-six-figures/>

prob/solution,

<http://www.thehungerfixprogram.com/thehungerfixprogram/fa/index?keycode=220384&mktOfferId=BKS55917&product>

STEP 4

DECIDE ON THE BEST MEDIA FOR DELIVERING YOUR INFORMATION.

STEP 5

SET UP THE TECHNOLOGY FOR CREATING YOUR CONTENT.

STEP 6

CREATE YOUR CONTENT

STEP 7

EDIT, REFINE, IMPROVE

See how similar it is to the Creative Process for writing?

The point is not to worry about whether you should write or make a video. The point is to start creating content — in whatever format works for you.

So get creative. Tell your stories. Talk about your products and services. Engage your readers.

That's ultimately what content marketing is about.

In the next chapter, you'll learn 12 templates for presenting your content. These templates are the same structures used by the finest writers for decades — updated for digital publishing. They will give you a framework for telling your stories through content, which will save you tons of time organizing your ideas.

READY TO START?

**TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER FOUR**

**TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER SIX**





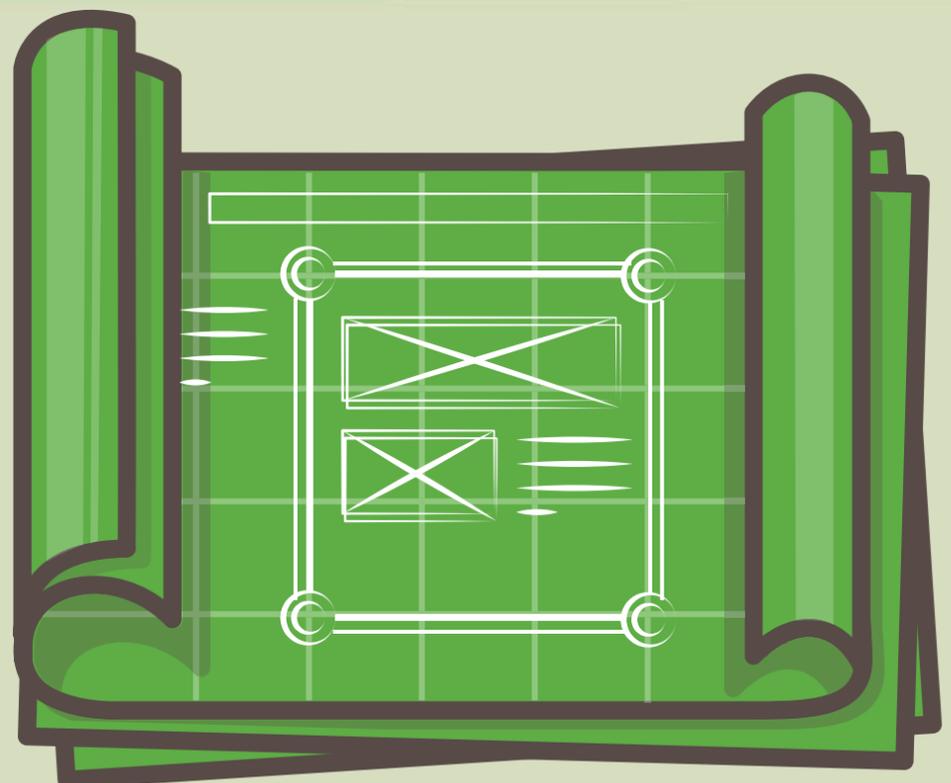
TEMPLATES FOR QUICK & EASY CONTENT CREATION

In this chapter, you'll find 12 tried-and-true templates that content writers have used successfully for years. These templates are invaluable for finding the right structure for the type of content you're creating.

Why is this important? Because when it comes to communicating your ideas, the way you organize and present them is as important as your ability to put them into words.

In most cases, one of these templates will suffice. What's more, these templates work for video and audio content as well as written.

So each time you begin a project — no matter what type of content it is — after gathering research and developing your ideas, review these templates to find the best structure for your particular message. Then all you have to do is plug in your ideas and develop each section.



What are the 12 structures?

- 1/ EXAMPLE
- 2/ POINT-ILLUSTRATION-EXPLANATION
- 3/ THOUGHT LEADERSHIP
- 4/ INVERTED PYRAMID
- 5/ INTERVIEW
- 6/ LIST
- 7/ LINK POST
- 8/ BOOK REVIEW
- 9/ PRODUCT REVIEW
- 10/ HOW TO
- 11/ CASE STUDY
- 12/ MEDIA POST

For short content, you can use one of these formats as you see them here. For longer content, you may mix and match them. For instance, your overall project may be a thought leadership piece, but individual chapters may use other formats, such as how-to, case study, or interview.

When it comes to content creation, variety adds to the overall impact of your content. So don't settle for just one or two. Experiment. Try different formats. And enjoy the creative process.

Let's take a look at each of them now.

No 1

EXAMPLE

Sometimes the point you want to make is simple enough to express in your introduction. The real value is in the examples you provide, showing your readers how other people have applied the information you share.

When that's the case, try an example post.

Readers love this type of article because they can see many examples in one place, without having to do the research themselves.

Title it right

The title often includes a number, such as 10 ways to show your inner geek, or 5 types of tiles you'll love in your kitchen.

12 Ways to Fight Stress and Help Your Heart

Relax! You can help your heart by learning how to de-stress, chill out, and let it go. Here are 12 ways to get yourself closer to the Zen zone.

10 Ways to Stay Depression-Free

Guest Picks: Beautiful Backsplash Tiles for Every Budget

Explore 20 tiles curated by a pro interior designer, ranging from everyday affordable to art for the kitchen



In the article, you can number your examples or not. It's up to you. So how do you structure an example post?

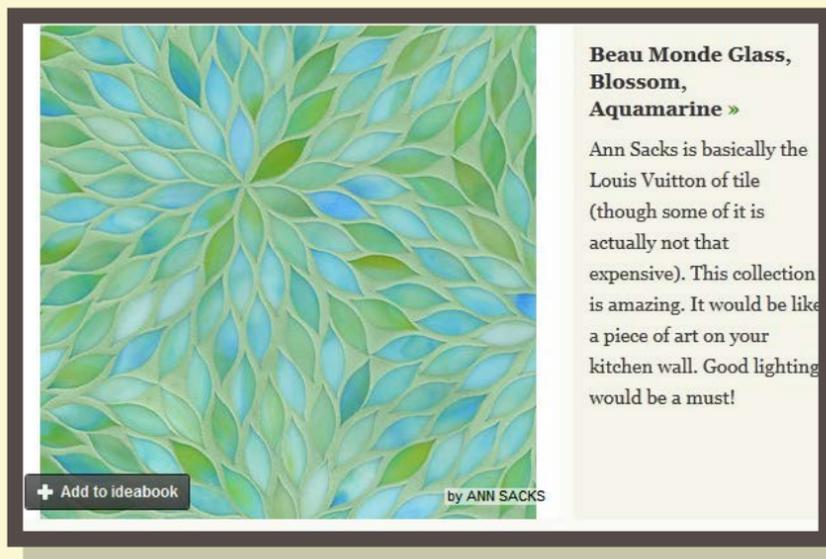
STEP 1**INTRODUCE YOUR TOPIC**

Tell people what you're talking about and why they'll be interested in it.

I am working with a client this month who strongly dislikes subway tiles. That's a new one for me. Subway tiles tend to be my fallback, especially on budget-conscious projects. But this project has pushed me to think outside the box and see what else is out there that would work. I've included various styles, both traditional and modern, for both high- and low-end budgets. There's something for everyone. — *Stephanie from SabbeSpot*

STEP 2**GIVE AN EXAMPLE**

The subhead may be the product name, as in this example from Houzz.com.



<http://www.houzz.com/ideabooks/7313761/list/Guest-Picks--Beautiful-Backsplash-Tiles-for-Every-Budget>

Or it could be a method or concept. This one, from Mashable, gives a general idea, followed by a specific resource:

Live Video Feed: NASA TV

NASA will stream live views of the asteroid via [Ustream](#) and NASA TV. The video feed will start at 2 p.m. EST, about a half hour before the asteroid is at its closest approach. NASA will host a 30-minute webcast at noon EST to show real-time animation of the asteroid's location.

The Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala. will also host a separate video feed on [its Ustream account](#).

<http://mashable.com/2013/02/15/watch-asteroid-2012-da14-online/>

Pictures aren't necessary in the Example format, but if your example is visual, pictures can help clarify your points.

STEP 3**EVALUATE IT**

After you give an example, talk about it. Include a few sentences about why you like it (*or don't like it*), why it works, or how your readers can get it.

Ivory Travertine Tumbled Herringbone Mosaic Tile - \$4.99 »

I like this tumbled stone product. The stones have a very traditional look, but the herringbone pattern gives it a little more design value.



REPEAT WITH REMAINING EXAMPLES

Follow the same format for all your examples. There is no right number of examples to use. We've seen posts that focused on two examples, and we've seen posts that give 20 or more.

In general, in short-form content, the fewer examples you provide, the longer (*or more detailed*) your evaluation. In long-form content, you have the space to provide a lot of examples and in-depth evaluation.



CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION

Many example posts leave this off. But you can make your content stand out if you'll wrap it up for your readers. End your article with:

- *A summary of the examples you've shown.*
- *Your opinion.*
- *Advice to your readers.*
- *A question.*

Then include your call to action. Ask for comments or social shares. Or tell people to visit another page on your website.

How Much Do You Know About Depression?

Depression is an extremely disabling disorder. Despite all the progress in diagnosing and treating this disease, many people still are in the dark when it comes to understanding depression. How much do you really know? Take this [depression quiz](#), which includes information from Dr. Lawson Wulsin's book, *Treating The Aching Heart*, and see how well you know fact from fiction.

ALSO SEE

-[Overcome Depression: How to Avoid Hitting Bottom](#).....
-[An Expert's Alternatives to Treat Depression](#).....
-[Depression Treatments: What Women Need to Know](#).....
-[The Stages of Depression](#).....
-[Overthinking? It Could Be Depressing You](#).....

POINT-ILLUSTRATION-EXPLANATION [PIE]

This type of content is very similar to the Example post above. But in this type of content, you aren't simply sharing examples of your point. You're making statements about your topic.

Each section provides another point, which is then illustrated and discussed.

A good example of this type of post is **5 Essential Qualities of Irresistible Product Descriptions**, which you can find at <http://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/01/26/5-essential-qualities-of-irresistible-descriptions>.



STEP 1

INTRODUCE YOUR TOPIC

Tell people what your topic is and why it matters.

STEP 2

MAKE YOUR FIRST POINT ABOUT YOUR TOPIC.

1) Spark imagination with vivid language: Teavana

Try to find a quick and easy way to summarize your point. This summary statement will be your subhead. If you like, number your points.

This particular post draws examples from different brands advertising online. So it includes the source at the end of the point.

STEP 3

ILLUSTRATE IT.

1) Spark imagination with vivid language: Teavana

Description

Enticing, tantalizing and truly energizing this rosy blush blend of pu-erh black and green oolong teas merge to create an intoxicating mix of sweet fruit with bright mint. Sweet strawberries and golden delicious apples swirl into peppermint and spearmint and create guilt-free, slimful beauty inside and out.

Complex flavors of strawberry, apple and hibiscus are followed by refreshingmint

If you have an image, include it under your subhead.

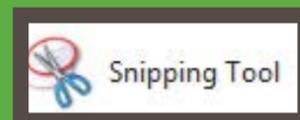
This example makes a point about product descriptions, so the illustration is words, not a graphic. That's okay. Simply take a screen shot of your example and post it as your illustration.



If you use a screenshot of words, check readability before you publish. If the words in your illustration aren't readable, forget the screen shot. Quote your source instead.



For screen shots, you can use Microsoft's Accessory, "Snipping Tool."



Or use SnagIt, by TechSmith, which is available for PCs and Macs. You can find it at <http://www.techsmith.com/download/snagit/default.asp>



EXPLAIN IT.

Include a paragraph or two that expand on your point. Give an explanation. Then give a practical tip on how your readers can implement it.

Tea, in and of itself, is nothing exciting. At least, not until [Teavana](#) talks about it.

The key is to nix all neutral words that don't inspire or persuade. Replace them with words that create mental images or an [emotional response](#).

Descriptions like *rosy blush blend*, *enticing*, *tantalizing* and *intoxicating* make this tea seem more than just another cup of caffeine. It's an experience.

Then instead of listing ingredients, Teavana takes it to the next level by telling us how we'll feel when we drink it. *Guilt-free*, *slimful beauty*? Who doesn't want that?



REPEAT WITH REMAINING PIE SECTIONS.

Follow this same format for all your points.



CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION

This type of article needs a strong close. So make sure you tell your readers why your topic is important and what it means in their own lives.

- *Promise more information.*
- *Make a forecast.*
- *If at all possible, take your point one step further.*

Then, as always, give a call to action.



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP [SYLLOGISM]



If you want to share a new idea, one of the best ways to get people on board is to create a logical argument that leads people to arrive at the same conclusion you have.

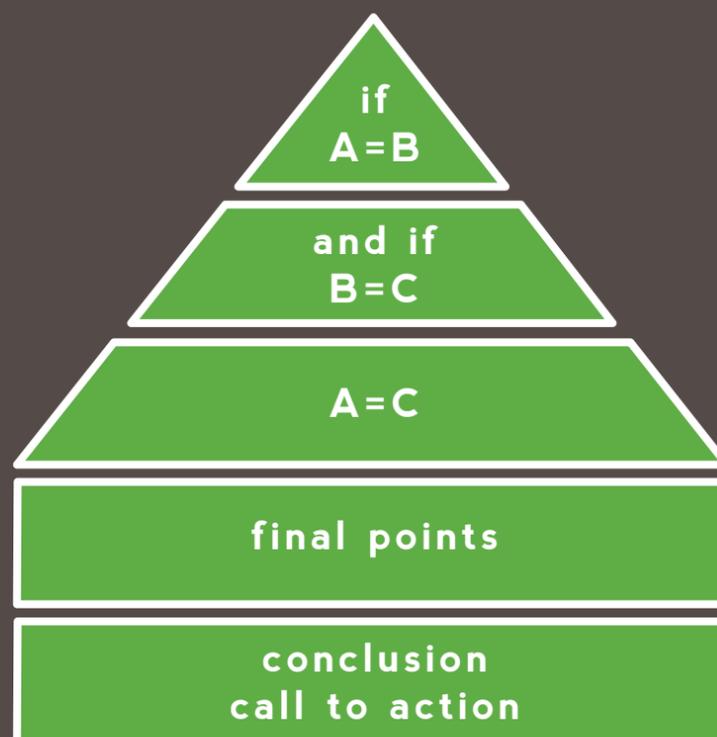
With this type of post, you don't start with your main point. You start with something your readers already know and accept.

Then you build on that idea using the logical framework of a syllogism.

If your first point (A) means *this* (B). And if *this* (B) means *that* (C), then you must consider *that* as a real possibility.

The example below is by from the article, **Marketing Has Changed. Are You Keeping Up** and is available at <http://www.kathrynaragon.com/marketing-has-changed-are-you-keeping-up/>

INTRODUCTION



STEP 1

INTRO

With this type of content, you want to start with something engaging. Perhaps a story, an interesting thought, or a startling statement.

Marketing used to be interruption-style communications: people yelling on the street corner, print ads, radio and TV spots, direct mail, you name it.

Its goal was to scream, "Look at me!" so the consumer would pay attention.

But there was madness in this method.

STEP**IF A = B**

Begin your first section with a topic or idea that your readers already accept. Then tie it to your second idea. Use research, stories, or logic to make a strong connection and back up your ideas.

The balance of power has shifted

The internet, mobile devices and social media let people connect on a different level. Consumers now have a voice, and they know it.

It isn't marketers who control what's being said any more. People direct the conversation, and if they don't like something you've said or done, it can go viral in a matter of hours.

STEP**AND B = C**

In the next section, take your idea one step further. Tie it to your main point. Make it a natural progression of your opening idea.

Social media can transform you into a friend

The most amazing thing about the changes that are taking place is that a business can now be one of the Trusted Ones.

Content marketing and social media have changed things. [Google's algorithm changes](#) are also helping. It all drives more honest, transparent marketing.

STEP**THEN A = C**

Now make your final point. Make it clear that this is a logical extension of the known fact (A) that you started with. If possible, use research or a story to support your statements.

Old-style business worried that if you didn't charge for everything, you were leaving money on the table. But things are different now.

In most cases, [sharing your expertise and knowledge](#) leads to more business, not less. Valuable content proves you know what you're talking about. Social media interactions demonstrate that you're accessible.

STEP**ADDITIONAL POINTS**

You may need some additional discussion to bring home your final point. Now that you're on topic, you can add those thoughts here.

STEP**CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION**

Give a strong conclusion. You now have your readers thinking. Give them something to chew on.

Then give your call to action. It's a good idea to ask for comments after this type of post. Then take the time to respond. People are more likely to engage with you if they know you'll answer their comments.



SECOND MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The inverted pyramid is aptly named. Each successive paragraph gives information that's less relevant to the overall point.

So tell your story from most important facts to least important.

You can keep the middle of the article interesting by introducing a bit of story, a specific example, or interesting news relevant to the story.



QUOTE TO BACK UP YOUR CLAIMS

Include quotes from your key sources.

"The SAE's latest evaluation, combined with years of other extensive testing, leaves no doubt that HFO-1234yf is safe for automotive applications," said Terrence Hahn, vice president and general manager for Honeywell Fluorine Products. "Automakers globally continue to adopt this new, effective solution to comply with new environmental regulation, including the European Union's Mobile Air Conditioning (MAC) Directive."



PRESENTATION OF FACTS IN DWINDLING LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE

As you near the end of the article, your story will dwindle. That's because most of the important information was told in the beginning.

HFO-1234yf was the subject of comprehensive testing conducted by an SAE CRP from 2007 to 2009. That CRP, which was sponsored by 15 global automakers, including all leading German automakers, major suppliers and 18 international, independent research institutes, concluded that HFO-1234yf is safe for use in automobile applications.

SAE initiated the latest CRP after Daimler raised questions about the refrigerant's flammability. SAE said the CRP's latest evaluation was expanded based on Daimler's concerns, but that "the CRP has found that the refrigerant is highly unlikely to ignite and that ignition requires extremely idealized conditions."

You will feel like your article closes with minor facts and story bits. Keep the interest level high by sharing an interesting quote or a concluding thought that is inspired by your news.



BOILERPLATE CLOSE/CALL TO ACTION

Most press releases end with a "boilerplate," or short paragraph about the company or brand being written about.

Honeywell (www.honeywell.com) is a Fortune 100 diversified technology and manufacturing leader, serving customers worldwide with aerospace products and services; control technologies for buildings, homes and industry; turbochargers; and performance materials. Based in Morris Township, N.J., Honeywell's shares are traded on the New York, London, and Chicago Stock Exchanges. For more news and information on Honeywell, please visit www.honeywellnow.com.

Traditionally, the call to action is a link to your website or landing page.

THE INTERVIEW

An interview is viewed as a high-value piece of content. That's because it shares inside information that most people don't have access to.

Most interviews these days include audio or video as well as the written transcript. But you can still publish a written interview without media.

Format it in whatever way suits you and your readers. Do be aware, though, that just posting a video or audio file doesn't optimize your content page. So even if you opt for a video or podcast, add written content to go with your media.



A FEW EXAMPLES OF HOW CONTENT MARKETERS ARE PUBLISHING INTERVIEWS

1 AS A MEDIA POST

This interview, available on Jeff Goins's website, is formatted as a media post. (*That structure is outlined below.*)

You can find it here: <http://goinswriter.com/seth-godin-interview/>

Goins gives a short intro with a picture of the interviewee, then gives the link to an MP3 file. Below that are highlights from the interview and memorable quotes.

This Might Not Work: A Conversation with Seth Godin About Art

by Jeff Goins | 110 Comments | Twitter, Facebook, Google+

It's not every day that you get to interview one of your heroes. In this conversation with the inimitable [Seth Godin](#), I got to do just that. For 34 minutes, we talked about art, fear, and making a ruckus. It was a lot of fun.



The one and only Seth Godin

Listen to the interview

◀ ▶

[Click here](#) download the MP3.

IN WRITTEN FORMAT.

When “writing” an interview, You can approach it different ways.

Highlight the name of the interviewer and the interviewee, with their comments following.

Interviewer: *Tell me how you got into home decorating.*

Helen: *It was an accident really...*

Or, as in this example, from Digital Book World, bold the question and write out the answer below it.

Rivera: You recently closed The Domino Project. If you could do it all over again, what would you have done differently?

You never close a book project, in that the books remain on sale, hopefully forever. We did 12 books, had 12 bestsellers, brought a dozen big ideas to more than a million people—I’m not sure I’d change any of that.

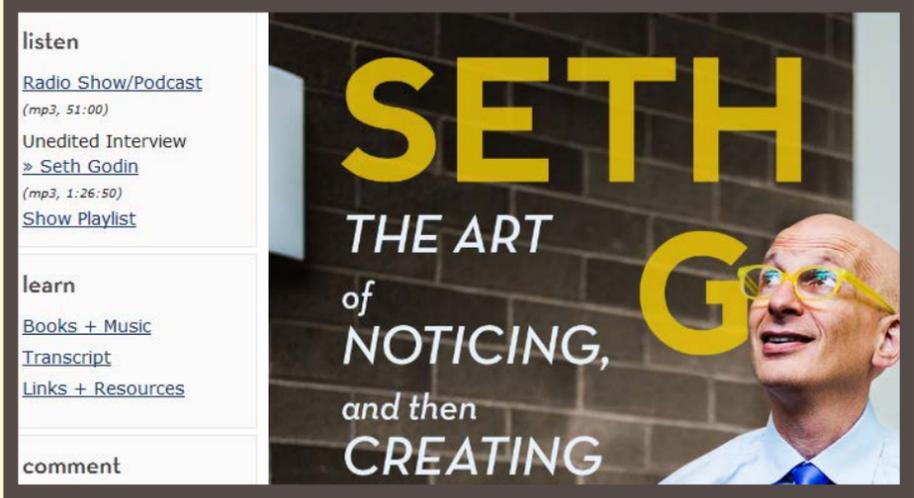
The book industry is going through a massive change, and the reason I called it a project, not ‘the answer’, is because this is a step along the way in a pretty long journey.

<http://www.digitalbookworld.com/2012/interview-seth-godin-on-libraries-literary-agents-and-the-future-of-book-publishing-as-we-know-it/>

COMBINATION APPROACH.

Provide a choice of digital downloads for the live interview. Then present a transcript of the interview for readers.

This example is from On Being does at <http://www.onbeing.org/program/seth-godin-on-the-art-of-noticing-and-then-creating/5000>



Notice that readers can listen to the final edited interview, the unedited interview, or read the transcript. Their choice.

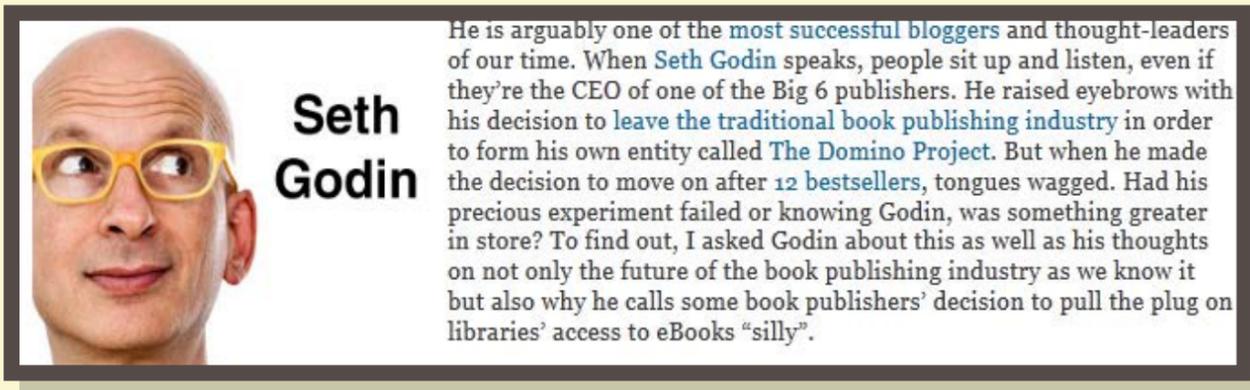
NOTE:

Even if you give a digital download of the interview, you need to provide written content for SEO purposes. So the template we provide below assumes you’ll present the interview in written format.

Don’t be afraid to mix it up. Add media and images to add interest to your page.

STEP 1**INTRODUCE YOUR INTERVIEWEE.**

Open the article by introducing your interviewee. Give background information about him or her. Then introduce the general topic of your interview.

**STEP 2****ASK QUESTION.**

Rivera: You recently closed The Domino Project. If you could do it all over again, what would you have done differently?

If you're going for a written format, pose your question.

- You can put each speaker's name in bold, followed by their questions or comments.
- You can put a big Q, followed by the questions, and a big A, followed by the answer.
- You can highlight the questions and print the answers in normal text.

STEP 3**RECORD THE ANSWER.**

Transcribe your interviewee's comments in full.

You never close a book project, in that the books remain on sale, hopefully forever. We did 12 books, had 12 bestsellers, brought a dozen big ideas to more than a million people—I'm not sure I'd change any of that.

The book industry is going through a massive change, and the reason I called it a project, not 'the answer', is because this is a step along the way in a pretty long journey.

STEP 4**REPEAT TILL DONE.**

Keep listing questions and answers until the interview is done.

STEP 5**CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION**

Wrap up your interview with some kind words about your interviewee, or consider highlighting one of the comments in the interview.

If the interviewee has written a book or created a product, highlight it at the end of your interview and link to it.

End with a call to action.

Some lists are short and some are long — we're talking 30, 50 or 100 long — but it doesn't really matter. People love lists. The longer, the better.



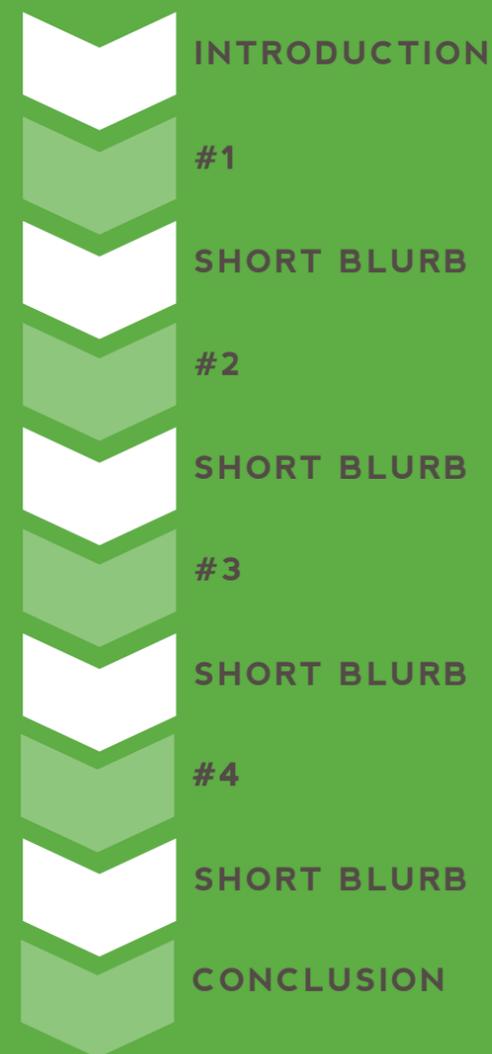
One of the secrets to making lists work is to include the number in your title.

While it's impressive to end with multiples of 5 or 10, don't be afraid of odd numbers. You can get more attention with 7, not 10, or 21, rather than 20 items in your list.



For a bit of fun, put your list in reverse order. Begin with the last item and work your way down to your number-one item.

This article by Cracked.com, is a great example. You can find it at http://www.cracked.com/article_18410_the-12-most-insane-things-you-can-buy-internet.html



STEP 1

INTRODUCE YOUR TOPIC.

A short introduction is fine. Simply tell people what the list is about and why the information is useful. It's okay to be a little tongue in cheek — but only if it's already part of your branded voice.

The 12 Most Insane Things You Can Buy on the Internet

By: [Andre Infante](#) | February 01, 2010 | 3,036,337 views

[Add to Favorites](#) [Send](#)



Many people feel compelled to waste their money on lame things like clothing, food and baby formula. Fortunately, besides allowing us to download porn at the speed of masturbation, the Internet has made it possible for us to buy virtually anything we can imagine, regardless of how ludicrous it may be.



CREATE YOUR LIST.

List all the items in your list. Be creative. Make your list fun to read.



MAKE EACH ITEM IN YOUR LIST A SUBHEAD.

List all the items in your list. Be creative. Make your list fun to read.

#11. A Celebrity

#10. The Man-Lifting War Kite

#9. The Mercenary Autonomous Paintball Turret



WRITE A SENTENCE OR SHORT PARAGRAPH FOR EACH ITEM IN THE LIST.

Add an interesting thought, opinion or explanation.

Consider including pictures. While you don't have to include them, they definitely add interest.

#11. A Celebrity



If you have obscene amounts of disposable income, and a propensity for mistaking your peers' disdain for admiration, the Millionaire's Concierge will rent you celebrities like Pamela Anderson and Leonardo DiCaprio for your private events. The website is the online face of the "private party circuit," a shadow industry that celebrities use to pad their pockets after particularly damaging coke benders.



CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION

After spending time compiling your list, it's easy to stop cold when you're done.

Don't do that. Take a few extra minutes to tell your readers why the list matters. How does it help them? What new thought should they take away from it?

Give them a strong close. And don't forget your call to action.

THE LINK POST [ROUND-UP]

Link posts are a great way to add SEO value to your website. By creating Web pages that link to other pages — whether on your own website or others — you can improve your site's rank.

Here's why...

When you create Web pages that link to other high-value websites, Google may begin to see you as an authoritative site.

And when you link to your own Web pages, you can keep people on your site longer, reducing your bounce rate and increasing your page views per visit.

Do that consistently, and Google may assign you points for Trust and Authority.



INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1

SHORT BLURB

SECTION 2

SHORT BLURB

FINAL POINTS

CONCLUSION

SO WHAT DOES A LINK PAGE LOOK LIKE? HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES:

This one by Copyblogger, at <http://www.copyblogger.com/landing-pages/>, starts with a lengthy introduction:

Landing Pages Turn Traffic Into Money

What is a Landing Page?

A landing page is any page on a website where traffic is sent specifically to prompt a certain action or result. Think of a golf course... a landing page is the putting green that you drive the ball (prospect) to.

Once on the green, the goal is to get the ball into the hole. Likewise, the goal of the copy and design of a landing page is to get the prospect to take your desired action.

Here are a few examples of ways that landing pages are used with various traffic sources:

- Traffic is sent from a pay per click (PPC) search marketing campaign (such as Google AdWords) to multiple landing pages optimized to correspond with the keywords the searcher used.
- Traffic is sent from a banner ad or sponsorship graphic to a landing page specifically designed to address that target audience.
- Traffic is sent from a link in an email to a landing page designed to prompt a purchase.
- Traffic is sent from a blog post or sidebar link to a landing page that pre-sells affiliate products or encourages an opt-in to a sub-list.
- The page you're currently reading is a content landing page designed to organize many related pages around an overall theme.



Then it gives the links:

Nine Landing Page Tutorials That Will Make You Smarter:

Here are nine articles that will help you start creating killer landing pages right away:

1. [5 Landing Page Mistakes that Crush Conversion Rates](#)
2. [10 Tips for Writing the Ultimate Landing Page](#)
3. [5 Tips for Designing the Ultimate Landing Page](#)
4. ["Keep it Simple, Stupid" Applies to Your Landing Pages, Too!](#)
5. [How is an Effective Landing Page Like a Direct Mail Letter?](#)
6. [7 Steps to an Email Opt-in Page That Works](#)
7. [How Crappy Landing Pages Kill Email Campaigns](#)
8. [How Successful is Your Landing Page? The 3 Key Metrics You Need to Know](#)
9. [The 10 Commandments of Landing Pages That Work](#)

Here's a shorter version of the same thing. It's by Chris Brogan, <http://www.chrisbrogan.com/my-best-advice-about-blogging/>

My Best Advice About Blogging

Looking to take your blogging to the next level? I've got some advice and thoughts that might help. Over the last little while, I've written about blogging from lots of different perspectives. Right now, I think of blogging as one of your best possible tools for lead generation, for developing relationships, and for improving your organic search results. Without delay, here is [My Best Advice About Blogging](#)

1. [How to Create Business From a Blog](#)
 2. [If You Intend to Blog Seriously](#)
 3. [Ten Secrets to Better Blogging](#)
 4. [A Sample Blogging Workflow](#)
 5. [Blog Topics for Business-to-Business Customers](#)
 6. [Basic Business Blogging Suggestions](#)
 7. [Make Your Blog Design Work for You](#)
 8. [10 Blogging Tips \(very brief\)](#)
 9. [Conquering Fear of Blogging](#)
 10. [Keeping the Blogging Fires Burning](#)
 11. [40 Ways to Deliver Killer Blog Content](#)
 12. [27 Blogging Secrets to Power Your Community](#)

I want to share my best ideas with you.

Grab a cup of coffee and talk with me every Sunday about growing your business.



CHRIS BROGAN
CEO of Human Business Works

It's Free!

your name

email address

GET UPDATES

Most Recent Blog Posts:

Here there's less intro and more links.

With link posts, length doesn't matter. It's the basic structure that does the job. And here's how you can do it.

STEP 1

INTRODUCE YOUR TOPIC

Tell your readers what information you're sharing and why it's valuable.

Looking to take your blogging to the next level? I've got some advice and thoughts that might help. Over the last little while,



STEP 2

OPTIONAL: BREAK YOUR TOPIC INTO CATEGORIES AND GIVE EACH A SUBHEAD.

If you want to include different categories of information on the same topic, this is a great way to do it.

If all your links relate to one main topic, you don't need subheads. Skip this step.

STEP 3

LIST THE ARTICLES YOU'RE LINKING TO AND ADD LINKS.

Most link pages just give a list of page titles, linking them to their source.

If you are using sub-categories, include a short blurb under each subhead and then paste your links under each.

1. [How to Create Business From a Blog](#)
2. [If You Intend to Blog Seriously](#)
3. [Ten Secrets to Better Blogging](#)
4. [A Sample Blogging Workflow](#)
5. [Blog Topics for Business-to-Business Customers](#)
6. [Basic Business Blogging Suggestions](#)
7. [Make Your Blog Design Work for You](#)
8. [10 Blogging Tips](#) (very brief)
9. [Conquering Fear of Blogging](#)
10. [Keeping the Blogging Fires Burning](#)
11. [40 Ways to Deliver Killer Blog Content](#)
12. [27 Blogging Secrets to Power Your Community](#)

STEP 4

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION

This type of post doesn't always have a conclusion. But it's always a good idea to tell your readers what to do next.

- *Your conclusion may be a normal invitation to comment or share.*
- *You can provide a link to a landing page or contact form.*
- *You can tell them how to learn more about the topic.*

No 8

BOOK REVIEW

Book reviews are a great way to provide thought leadership.

You can essentially be the Oprah of your community, recommending books, curating ideas, and helping people find the information they need to succeed.

As a perk, these activities also give you Trust and Authority status with search engines.

INTRODUCE BOOK

INTRODUCE AUTHOR

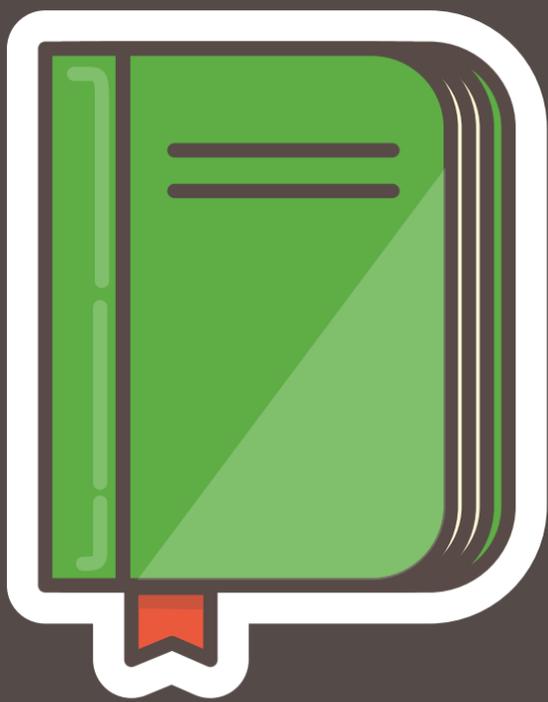
SUMMARY OF MAJOR POINTS

WHAT YOU LIKE

WHAT YOU DON'T LIKE

YOUR RECOMMENDATION

CONCLUSION



SO HOW DO YOU WRITE A BOOK REVIEW?

It's easy.

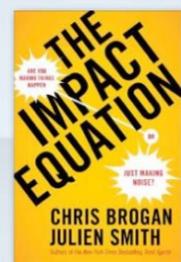
Here's one by Brand Driven Digital, at <http://www.branddrivendigital.com/do-you-need-the-impact-equation-book-review/>

STEP 1

INTRODUCE THE BOOK

You can introduce the topic of the book or the book itself. Simply come up with an interesting introduction that gets people curious about the book.

Do You Need The Impact Equation? (Book Review)



When outlining how brands are built online, we often say that's it's through three things – conversations, content, and community. However, one underlying principle unites all three – platform. Whether a personal or professional brand, those making an impact online have mastered the act of building a channel. A new book from two of the social web's more successful platform architects aims to break this down for the rest of us.

STEP 2

INTRODUCE THE AUTHOR.

In a book review, *who* writes the book is as important as *what* the book says. So do your research. Visit the author's website. Check out his or her social media. Look for an engaging story that elevates the author to celebrity status (*or at least gives your something interesting to say*).

TIP } If you can, combine the book review with an interview.
Get some original quotes from the author to add tons of value to your book review.

The Elevator Pitch

The Impact Equation by New York Times best-selling authors [Chris Brogan](#) and [Julien Smith](#) defies categorization in a lot of ways. In the most simple sense it could be called a sequel to their first outing *Trust Agents*, but that short-sheets it in a lot of ways. Through all of their pursuits — businesses, blogging, speaking, podcasting — Brogan and Smith have set out to explain the human side of doing business in the digital channel. This is no easy task. We give a lot of lip service to terms like trust, reach, and community but what do they really mean?

STEP 3

SUMMARY OF MAJOR POINTS

Provide an overview of the ideas in the book. For example, if the book is divided into three sections, you could create a subhead for each section and share the major point the author makes in each.

Understanding Platform — Perhaps the biggest take-away in *The Impact Equation* is the book's end result. In the communications business — whether on behalf of a celebrity, non-profit, or publicly traded corporation — channel matters. In the early days of the social web we used to say "everyone's a publisher." The more advanced definition offered here by Brogan and Smith posits that the brands that will endure are ones who are able to translate their ideas into a solid online platform.

STEP 4

TELL WHAT YOU LIKE ABOUT THE BOOK.

The biggest draw to book reviews is your opinion as reviewer. So be honest. If the book over-delivers in a particular way, tell your readers.

STEP 5

TELL WHAT YOU DON'T LIKE ABOUT THE BOOK.

As in Step 4, give an honest review. Where does the book fall short? What would make it better?

STEP 6

GIVE YOUR RECOMMENDATION.

Tell your readers whether they should buy the book or not. Be sure to include a link to Amazon or other site where they can get the book.

Again, this is not a paint-by-number social media 101 handbook. Rather, *The Impact Equation* is an advanced recipe book for building a trustworthy, human brand on a channel that by definition reduces our physical closeness to others. In short, if you are ready to get past the headlines and hype and create a more human brand, check out [The Impact Equation](#).

STEP 7

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION

Your recommendation can serve as your conclusion in this type of article. But you still need to give a call to action. As in our example, give people a link to the book and tell them to check it out.

PRODUCT REVIEW

Product reviews are similar to book reviews and are an easy way for you to build authority as a solutions provider for your followers.

For instance, if a new tactic is gaining momentum in your space, and if you find a product that makes it easier to implement, you owe it to your followers to tell them about it.

You can treat product reviews like the book review above. To do that you simply introduce the product and talk about what it does and whether it's worth the purchase.

Or you can combine the product review with a how-to article and add significant value.

Like this article, available at <http://www.kathrynaragon.com/author-rank-plugin/>



STEP 1

INTRODUCE THE PRODUCT

Provide an introduction to your topic. You can do this in two ways:

- 1/ Introduce the problem the product solves.
- 2/ Introduce the product and move straight to a review of how it works.

Author Rank: A Low-Tech Plugin for a High-Tech Solution

by KATHRYN ARAGON on FEBRUARY 18, 2013

+1 Tweet 0

Last week I told you about a [quick and easy way to set up authorship](#) on your website. I also told you why this is a necessary step for you as a content marketer.

Today, I want to tell you about a more techy solution that still doesn't require you to get your hands dirty with PHP or other code.

If you have a WordPress website, hands down, this is your best solution for setting up Author Rank. So set aside an hour or two to optimize your site by setting up this stylish Author Rank solution.



STEP 2

INTRODUCE THE PRODUCER/MAKER.

Introducing the AuthorSure Plugin

[AuthorSure](#) was written specifically for WordPress sites by Russell and Elizabeth Jamieson of DIYWebmastery. It's relatively easy. There's tons of instructional materials on a free membership site. And while there's no support, you probably won't need it.

As with the book review, people appreciate a product more if they know the story behind its production. So introduce the maker and a link to their website.

STEP 3

DESCRIBE THE PRODUCT.

Why was it created? What problem does it solve? How does it do it? Here's where you give all the details about the product.

IDEA: You can turn your content into a hybrid product review/how-to by including your how-to information here. Make each step of your solution a subhead, with images and copy to provide in-depth instruction. (*We'll give you a template for the how-to article in a moment.*)

First, set up your "author indicator."

This tells WordPress where to put the link to your author page on your blog posts.

Author Indicator:

- Byline - choose this option if you have a theme which indicates the author in the byline with rel="author".
- FootNote - choose this option if you want to create a rich snippet at the foot of the post/page that indicates when it was last updated.
- Author Box - choose this option if you want to show the author photo and bio after each post
- Menu - choose this option if you have a single author on the site and you are using WordPress menus which allow you to specify rel="author" on the "About" page menu link.

You have four options for setting up AuthorSure

STEP 4

TELL WHAT YOU LIKE AND DON'T LIKE ABOUT IT.

As in the book review, you need to give your thoughts about the product. Tell your followers what works, what doesn't work, and why.

STEP 5

GIVE YOUR RECOMMENDATION.

Share your opinion. Tell your readers whether you think the product is worth the investment. If you have any tips, share them as well.

STEP 6

CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION.

If you opened your product review with a problem, you can close with the solution. That's an easy way to take your content full-circle, making your readers feel as if they got the whole story.

As always, include a call to action.

How to make Author Rank work for you

The above steps will get you set up. But it's important to remember that configuring a plugin won't improve your Author Rank any more than buying Windex makes your windows clean.

Accept the fact that the digital marketplace is designed for interaction.

Plan on getting involved. Be present. [Engage with your circles in Google+](#).

It's through your social interactions that you gain Authority and Trust points from Google. And ultimately, that's your best strategy for optimizing your site.

What are your feelings about Author Rank? Share your thoughts in the comments below.

NOTE:

Product reviews become high-value content when you compare different products in the same space. For an example of this type of post, take a look at this post by The Sales Lion:

Infusionsoft vs. HubSpot: Which is the Best Marketing Automation Software?

by Rich McElaney

HOW TO

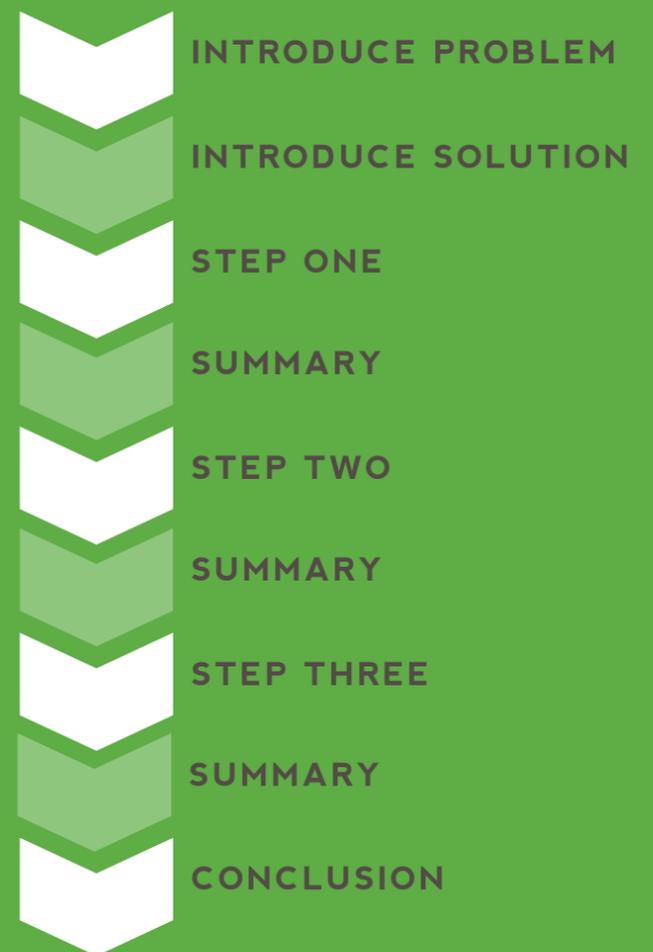
How-to articles are some of the most-searched-for and most-read information on the Internet.

If you have a solution to a common problem, by all means, turn it into content.

Simple solutions make great blog posts or videos. But if your solution is more complicated, consider creating longer content. You can create special reports, ebooks and even multi-media programs to share your solutions.

No matter how long or short, though, you should follow the same basic structure.

This post from Crazy Egg is a good example: <http://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/02/18/awesome-blog-posts/>



STEP 1

INTRODUCE THE PROBLEM YOU'RE SOLVING.

Tell people about the problem. Then let them know you have a solution. Don't forget to tell them how the solution can benefit them. (*It may seem obvious, but people need you to connect the dots.*)

Some blog posts are better than others.

They sound better, rank higher, and convert more visitors than the other posts. They jump out in your Analytics. You know which ones they are.

But what about the posts that are on the edge of greatness? They could do more, but something is holding them back.

They're almost awesome. They just need a little help.

It's easier and faster than writing and promoting a new post. It's also a more certain way of getting results, since your next post might stink.

Two kinds of posts have the highest potential:

- Almost awesome at getting traffic
- Almost awesome at getting conversions

STEP 2

INTRODUCE THE SOLUTION AND BENEFITS OF YOUR PROCESS.

If your solution is complex, you may not be able to cover the topic in an article. Consider creating a long-form piece of content, such as a special report or ebook. Or make a video to show *and* tell.

In this case, it isn't too complicated, but it is a two-step problem, so the problem and solution to each side of the issue are given in separate sections.

Here is the first section.

It's almost a traffic magnet

You likely have blog posts (and web pages) that are ranking in the first or second position ...on page two.

That's not all bad. The top of page two is almost the bottom of page one. A few simple changes might improve your rank a bit and improve your traffic a lot.

Here is the second problem, listed under a separate subhead. Notice the parallel structure. That makes it easy for readers to see how you've organized your information.

It's almost a conversion machine

The other kind of near-awesome posts are those that turn visitors into leads and subscribers, but they don't get many visitors. Here's how to find those hidden gems and put them on display.

STEP 3

LIST EACH STEP OF YOUR SOLUTION.

If your how-to involves actionable steps, consider numbering them. Like this:

1. Go to Analytics and give yourself at least a year of data.
2. Go to Conversions > Goals > Reverse Funnel Path.
3. Filter this report so only blog posts appear.
4. Sort by Goal Completions.

But you don't have to number steps. You can easily just list the action, provide a screen shot or image, and then provide an explanation.

By providing the steps in order, you easily guide your reader through the process.



PROVIDE LOTS OF DETAIL.

You can organize your information as a list, numbering the steps of your solution. Or you can organize it by topic, providing a complete discussion of each problem as you introduce it.

But no matter how you organize your information, provide lots of details. The best how-to content gives step-by-step processes, graphics, and clear instructions.

Enter this data into another column in the spreadsheet. Divide the total conversions column by the pageviews column and you've got your conversion rate for each post. Anything above 1% is considered awesome.

Post	Views	Conversions	Conversion Rate
/blog/email-signup-forms	1470	28	1.90%
/blog/google-plus-guide	2093	25	1.19%
/blog/how-to-research-keywords-tips	558	6	1.08%
/blog/4-step-guide-to-creating-superfans	731	7	0.96%
/blog/content-marketing-tools	891	8	0.90%
/blog/google-authorship-author-stats	781	7	0.90%
/blog/website-navigation	1408	10	0.71%
/blog/content-promotion-strategy	1546	10	0.65%
/blog/blog-criteria	1327	7	0.53%
/blog/how-to-promote-your-website-drive-traffic	2225	11	0.49%
/blog/seo-best-practices	5262	25	0.48%
/blog/website-competitive-analysis-tools	2226	8	0.36%

Surprised? Did you find a few older, almost-awesome posts that visitors love? Already thinking about ways to drive more traffic to these? Good.

If you're not sure how, try these ideas:



CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION

One of the best ways to close a how-to article is to create a final subhead with the bottom-line benefit of your solution. Then tell your readers what they'll gain by taking the actions you've just outlined for them.

Focus on the benefits, and don't forget to include your call to action. In this case, it's a reminder to do it again in six months.

More Traffic + More Conversions = Awesome

This process takes time — it's worth it. Once you're done, set an annotation for today in Google Analytics: "Awesome Day."

Last step: add a reminder on your calendar to do this again in six months: "Increase Awesomeness."



CASE STUDY

Case studies are a great form of mid- to deep-funnel content. They can help people understand the value of your product or service. They can also provide value for customers, helping them get the most from your products.

Few organizations do them as well as MarketingSherpa. So for this example, we'll use one of theirs, which you can find at:

<http://www.marketingsherpa.com/article/case-study/personalized-newsletter-increase-open-rate#>



SUMMARIZE YOUR CASE STUDY

This is an executive summary of the study. Provide a quick overview and what you discovered.

SUMMARY: Newsletters are an often neglected strategy with 46% of marketers reporting their email newsletter as staying the course and 11% having a floundering program, according to the MarketingSherpa 2012 Email Marketing Benchmark Report.

In this case study, read how C Spire Wireless drastically increased engagement by integrating personalization into its daily newsletter program, NEWSLINK.



CHALLENGE

Explain what the challenges were and what you were trying to accomplish.

CHALLENGE

C Spire Wireless launched an email service to deliver the best of the day's news to its subscribers. The marketing team wanted to supply its customers with a reason to interact with, and see, C Spire's name on a daily basis.

Although the team received positive feedback with the selected varied news stories, they decided, "We wanted to enhance it in some way to draw people to engage with it more to add more value to it," said Justin Croft, Manager of Campaigns and Promotions, C Spire Wireless.

Open rates were around 8%, and although the team was happy with clickthrough rates, Croft said C Spire wanted to "drive overall engagement ... and we want to do that through personalizing the content."



SOLUTION.

At this point, you want to share the steps you used to solve the problem. Provide as much detail as possible. It may help to think of this section as a modified how-to article, providing summaries of each step implemented.

In our example, the full solution is summarized under a heading, "Campaign."

Then each step is listed as a subhead:

Step #1. Launch non-personalized version

Step #2. Build a component of the website to support email

Step #3. Build personalization

Each of these sections contains a description of the exact steps implemented.



RESULTS.

Next, itemize the results that were achieved. Be as specific as possible. You may include a few paragraphs of text. But be sure to include percentages of improvement. Like this:

Non-personalized email

- Clickthrough rate: 25%
- Open rate: 8%

Personalized email

- Clickthrough rate: 48%
- Open rate: 51%



GIVE SAMPLES AND CITE RESOURCES.

With case studies, in lieu of a standard conclusion, you can offer more information. For example, MarketingSherpa provides links to source material from their case study.

Sources

[C Spire](#)

[Neolane — C Spire's vendor](#)

Related Resources

[E-commerce Email Relevance: 10% more revenue from 3 personalization tactics](#)

[Email Marketing: Helzberg Diamonds garners 288% sales lift with animated, personalized promo](#)

[Email Marketing: Groupon's segmentation strategies across 115 million subscribers](#)

[PURL Jam: 6 ways personalized URLs can help increase the virality of your campaigns](#)

As always, try to incorporate a call to action. A few ideas:

- *Invite readers to share similar problems or success stories.*
- *Link to a landing page that sells this same solution.*
- *If your case study is published as a special report or ebook, offer a discount on first-time purchase of your product or service.*



MEDIA POST



Media is a great way to add variety to your content and engage followers in whatever way they prefer.

People are so busy, they don't always have time to read your content. But if you provide the same information in a podcast, they can listen to it during their daily commute or exercise session.

The type of media you produce is limited only by your imagination. Popular formats include slide shows, infographics, video and audio.



NOTE:

The biggest challenge in publishing media is SEO — because search engines can't crawl media. So be sure to optimize your content by providing written content along with your media.



INTRODUCE YOUR MEDIA.

Introduce your topic as you would with a blog post. Tell people what information you offer and how it will benefit them.

These masters of persuasion perfected the art of the sales letter starting in the 19th century with copywriters like Robert Collier and Leo Burnett.

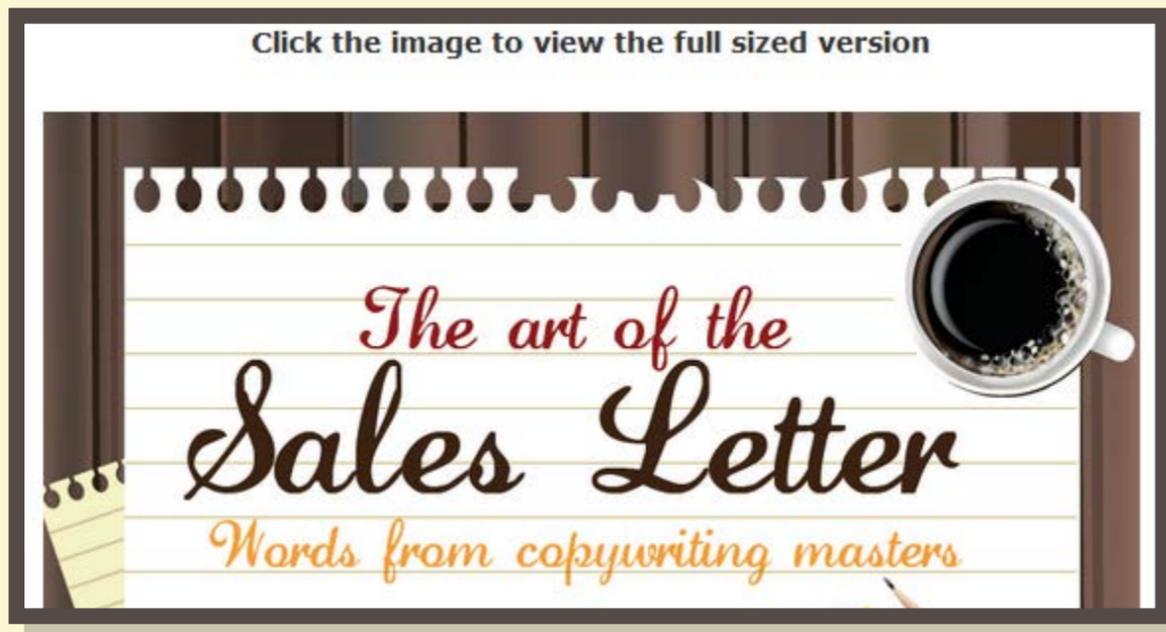
Along came such greats as Claude Hopkins, David Ogilvy and Joe Sugarman to perfect the art of the sales letter.

Hear what the masters of persuasion had to say about crafting a winning sales letter — apply this wisdom to your landing pages and other offers.



EMBED YOUR MEDIA.

Put the media file in your blog post or digital page. This is an infographic available at <http://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/02/13/art-of-the-sales-letter/>





WRITE A SUMMARY OR A TRANSCRIPTION OF THE MEDIA (FOR SEO AND SCANNERS).

You need approximately 400 words of content around your media. So you have a few options here:

- 1/ Provide a written transcript of the media file.
- 2/ List highlights and other important points from your media file.
- 3/ Draw excerpts from the media file, and provide them in written format.

Here are some particularly tweetable quotes from these copywriting masters:

"The consumer isn't a moron; she is your wife." ~ David Ogilvy

[Tweet this quote](#)

"It is not uncommon for a change in headlines to multiply returns from 5 to 10 times over." ~ Claude Hopkins

[Tweet this quote](#)



CONCLUSION/CALL TO ACTION.

As with all other content, make a strong final point and give a call to action.

NOTE:

For a great example of a post that uses media as illustrations, check out this one on Mashable: <http://mashable.com/2013/02/18/best-original-song-oscars/>

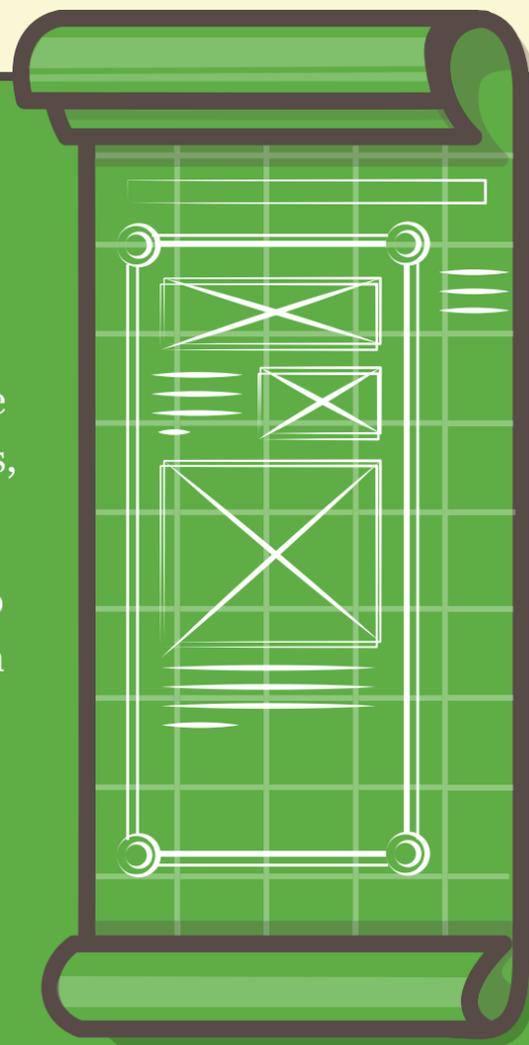
BONUS

HOW TO USE THESE TEMPLATES FOR LONGER FORMATS

As we've already mentioned, the 12 formats provided in this chapter are useful for print content and media. They work equally well in blog posts, special reports, ebooks, and even full-length books.

Regardless of the length or format, you can use these same templates to structure your information — allowing you to speed up content creation and increase engagement levels.

So how do you use these formats in longer content?



STEP 1

ADJUST LENGTH OF EACH SECTION.

Instead of a short paragraph for your introduction, go deep. Introduce all the ideas you'll discuss in your content, then summarize your big idea or major point. It can be one page (for a short ebook) or chapter length (for a print book).

Always remember, when you work with longer copy, break up your copy into sections, each introduced by a subhead. This makes it more readable.

Your process for writing chapters is similar to the creative process we reviewed in Chapter 4.

STEP**2**

ADJUST DEPTH OF EACH SECTION.

You have more space to get detailed in long copy. So you can introduce a topic, break it into sections and subsections, then provide in-depth research for each subsection.

In short copy, to provide the same depth, you must narrow your topic. Or if you want to talk about a broad topic, you must talk about high-level concepts, not details.

STEP**5**

MIX AND MATCH FORMATS WITHIN THE LONG-FORM CONTENT.

The exciting thing about content marketing is that you aren't limited to written content. You are limited only by your imagination.

For example:

- ▶ *Give followers a choice about how to digest your content. Offer an audio version of your written blog posts. Or create an audio book in addition to your print or digital book.*
- ▶ *If your how-to information is too complicated to put into words, create a video that shows and tells. Then write out your steps as a quick reference below the video.*
- ▶ *Combine images, screen shots and videos to illustrate your points.*
- ▶ *Create your ebook, not just as a PDF, but as an HTML file. Then embed videos, audio files and images to enhance its ability to communicate your points.*

Don't think of content only as written words. Think of it as ideas. Then share your ideas in the way that communicates best.

CONCLUSION...

The 12 templates provided in this chapter give you a basic framework for every type of content you are likely to produce.

Each time you start a content project, review the templates and find the best structure. Or mix and match them to create a unique format that's customized to your idea. Then get creative. Don't just say something new. Present your information in a unique way too.

This chapter wraps up our advanced tactics for planning and producing content. Click through to Chapter 7, where you'll find advanced tips for overcoming the most common content marketing roadblocks. You'll learn what to do when writer's block hits, and where to find good content writers if you can't (or don't have time) to write it yourself. In all, you'll learn 10 solutions to major content marketing challenges.

TAKE A LOOK NOW.

**TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER FIVE**



**TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER SEVEN**





The **ADVANCED**



CONTENT MARKETING

GUIDE

WRITTEN BY NEIL PATEL & KATHRYN ARAGON



DOWNLOAD
PDF



OVERCOMING COMMON

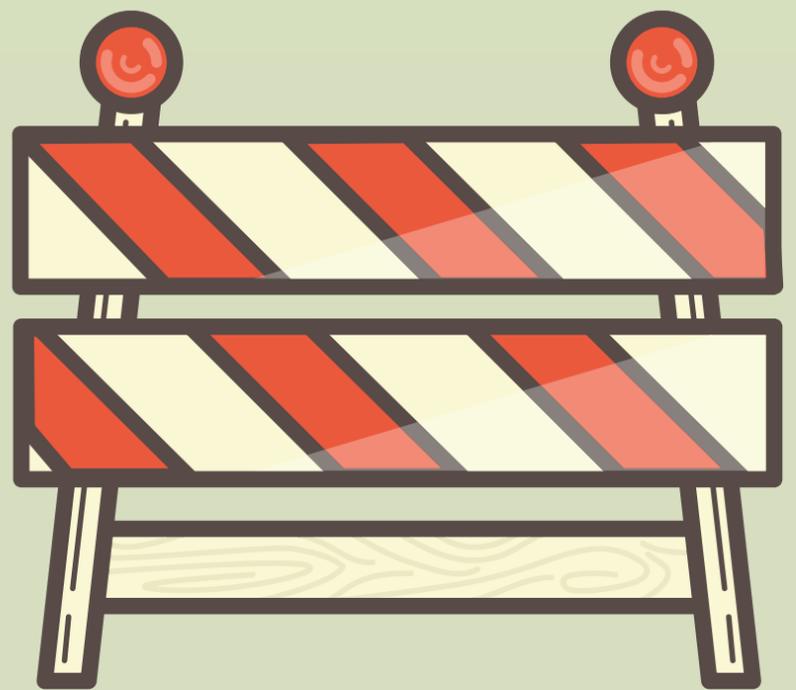
CONTENT MARKETING ROADBLOCKS

Because content marketing involves more than publishing a few blog posts, and because content creation demands a huge commitment of time and resources, there are a lot of roadblocks that can slow your progress.

Some of them are obvious: dealing with writer's block, for instance. Others stem from wrong thinking about what content marketing is and how to manage it.

So in this chapter, we'll talk about ways you can overcome ten common obstacles:

- 1/ OVERCOMING WRITER'S BLOCK
- 2/ FINDING GOOD WRITERS
- 3/ CREATING CONTENT FASTER & EASIER
- 4/ GETTING YOUR READERS ENGAGED
- 5/ RECYCLING IDEAS BY REPURPOSING YOUR CONTENT
- 6/ THINKING LIKE A PUBLISHER



- 7 WHAT TO DO WHEN PROJECTS DON'T COME TOGETHER
- 8 AVOIDING SALESY CONTENT
- 9 MANAGING A CONTENT MARKETING TEAM
- 10 BUILDING YOUR LIST

As you implement the strategies in the rest of this guide, it's likely you'll get bogged down at some point. That's normal. But rather than getting frustrated, check here to see if it's one of these ten. Then try out the tactics we share.

Of course, you can be proactive and put them to work before you get stuck, and you'll reach your goals in record time.

Ready? Here we go...



OVERCOMING WRITER'S BLOCK

Whether you believe in writer's block or not, you've likely experienced something similar at least once.

When ideas don't pop and words don't flow, it's usually because you haven't done enough planning or research, you don't know your main point, or you haven't organized your thoughts.

Here's what to do when that happens.



BACK UP A LITTLE AND RETHINK YOUR TOPIC.

If you have writer's block, it's usually because you didn't complete one step before moving to the next.

So wherever you are in the creative process, back up one step and put more work into that stage of the process. That will usually help you get moving again.

SELECT YOUR TOPIC & APPROACH
RESEARCH
ORGANIZE
WRITE
COOL OFF
EDIT



DEAL WITH PROCRASTINATION

Sometimes it isn't writer's block, but procrastination that stops us from being able to write.

In many cases, this stems from doubt in our ability to create the project we envision. Other times, we dread starting because the project seems too big or overwhelming. Sometimes, it's both.

A good way to overcome this form of procrastination is this three-step process:

- 1/ **Break down the project into individual tasks.**
- 2/ **Give yourself a hard deadline for completing each one.**
- 3/ **Make yourself accountable to someone.**



GIVE YOURSELF REGULAR INTERVALS OF WORK & REST.

The creative process can be more exhausting than you realize. By scheduling work sessions and short rest sessions, you can often keep your creative juices flowing.

Here's how to do that:

GO LOW-TECH WITH AN EGG TIMER.



Set your timer for 30 minutes
(or whatever chunk of time is appropriate for the task at hand).



Close your email and social media, then sit down and work. **Do not get up until the timer goes off.** In many cases, even if you're blocked, sheer boredom will force you to start working, and once work starts, you gain momentum.



When the timer rings, take a 10-minute break. This is your chance to stand up and stretch, check your email, or get a snack.



Set your timer and begin again.

OR USE THE ONLINE RESOURCE: POMODORO.

You can find this program at <http://www.pomodorotechnique.com/>

Here's how it works:



Choose a task to complete now.



Set the pomodoro timer to 25 minutes.



Work on the task until the timer rings.



Check off the task as complete.



Take a 5-minutes break.



Repeat this three more times, then take a longer break.



GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO WRITE BADLY

In most cases, writer’s block results from severe resistance to a project because you don’t think you can reach the level of perfection you imagine.

The only way to overcome this type of resistance is to allow yourself to write badly.

When you give yourself permission to write badly, you remove the blocks related to perfectionism. So you’re more likely to stick with a project — even if you don’t like your first draft.

Here’s why it works: Once you have a draft (*even a bad one*), you can revise and tweak until it’s good. (*Revising is usually easier than writing.*)

TIPS THAT CAN HELP YOU GET STARTED WRITING

1 IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS, HERE ARE SOME TOOLS:

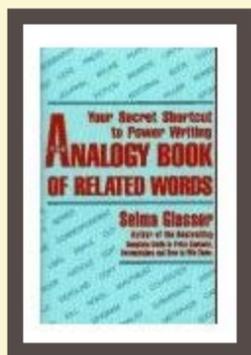
Onelook.com is an online reverse dictionary. It’s great for finding the exact word when the right word won’t come to mind. Simply type an asterisk and colon in the search bar, then the word you want a synonym for.



Click “Search,” and OneLook generates a list of words that have your search term in its definition. If the word you want isn’t in the list, repeat your search with one of the words in this list. Keep going until you find the word you’re looking for

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. get | 26. heir |
| 2. win | 27. hit |
| 3. obtain | 28. pan out |
| 4. follow | 29. reach |
| 5. nail | 30. run |
| 6. come through | 31. work out |
| 7. make it | 32. click |
| 8. succeeded | 33. escape |
| 9. succeeding | 34. luck out |
| 10. after | 35. nail down |

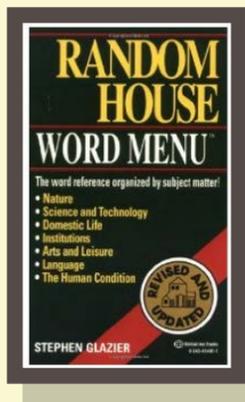
Here are some print resources that can also help:



The Analogy Book of Related Words

by Selma Glasser.

This book offers lists of words that relate to different categories, or topics, such as acting, basketball, or space. Each category provides a glossary of words related to the topic, as well as common phrases and examples.



Word Menu, by Random House

This book offers lists of words that relate to different categories, or topics, such as acting, basketball, or space. Each category provides a glossary of words related to the topic, as well as common phrases and examples.



IF YOU'RE STUCK FOR HOW TO ORGANIZE OR WHAT TO WRITE

If you're stuck in the organizing stage or the writing stage, the prescription is the same: more research.

If you're having trouble organizing your ideas, research will give you more material to work with.

If you're having trouble writing a particular section, research can help you figure out what's missing.

It's common for content writers to flip back and forth between planning and research, or research and writing.



IF YOU CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT YOUR POINT IS...

Generally, if you haven't figured out the main point you want people to walk away with, you'll stay blocked until you figure it out.

One of the best ways to find your point is to write the conclusion first. The conclusion generally gives the bottom line point of your entire piece. So write it first, and you'll be forced to summarize what your project is all about.



IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START...

Few writers start at the beginning and write through to the end. So don't worry if you aren't able to.

Write the body of your content, one section at a time. Start with the section you're most comfortable writing. Then jump from one section to another until you're done.



IF THE BLANK PAGE IS INTIMIDATING...

The secret to getting over this block is to put something — anything — on the page.

That's one of the reasons we suggest copying your notes from the editorial planner into your document before you start writing. And it's why we teach content writers to create the subheads before starting to write each section.

Not only does this give you a rough outline to keep you on track, it also puts words on the page, so it's easier to get started.

No



NOT A WRITER? HERE'S WHERE TO FIND ONE

If you aren't a writer, you can still step into content marketing. You simply need to find good writers who know how to create engaging content in your brand's voice and style.



WAYS TO FIND GOOD CONTENT WRITERS:

AMERICAN WRITERS AND ARTISTS INC. (AWAI).
SAMPLE AD FOR AWAI JOB LISTING.

STEP 1

VISIT THE WRITER DIRECTORY

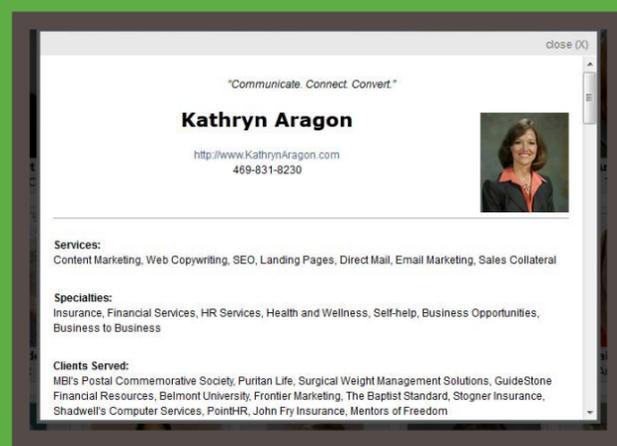
AT [HTTP://WWW.AWAIONLINE.COM/FREELANCER-DIRECTORY/](http://www.awaionline.com/freelancer-directory/).

STEP 2

REVIEW THE LIST OF WRITERS.

If you see a Circle of Success seal on the writer's image, it means he or she has undergone advanced copywriter training.

Click on the writer's picture, and a pop-up appears with their credentials.



Recommendation:

- 1/ Look for an experienced writer with portfolio pieces & testimonials.
- 2/ Visit their website and evaluate their own content or marketing. This will give you a good idea of what you can expect when they



CONTACT THE WRITERS YOU'RE INTERESTED IN.

HERE'S A TEMPLATE FOR YOUR EMAIL:

Subject: I'd like to discuss a project

OR: Are you interested?

*I am looking for a content writer to write
[name the type of content you need here]*

[Tell something about your company or organization—who you are and what you do.]

[Tell what your challenge is and list the specific tasks you need done.]

[If appropriate, give your timeframe for completing the project.]

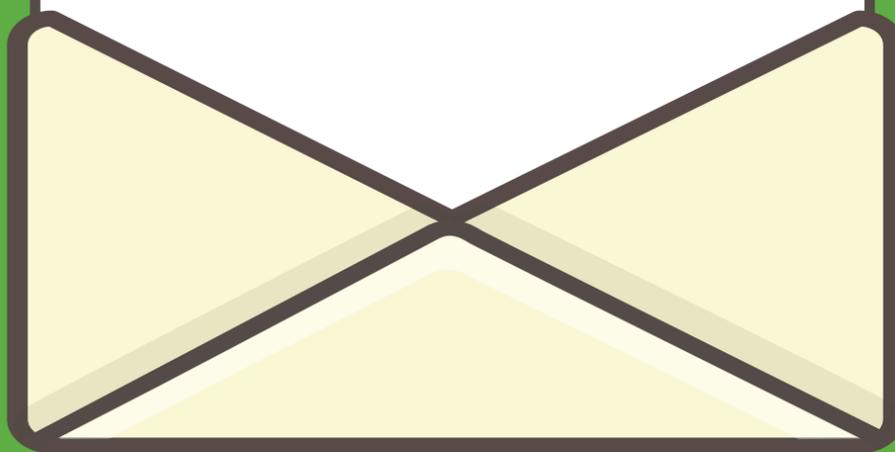
If this project sounds interesting to you, I'd like to talk. Please email with your phone number and times that are convenient for us to talk.

Thanks for your time.

You can reach me at: [yourContactInformation]

Best regards,

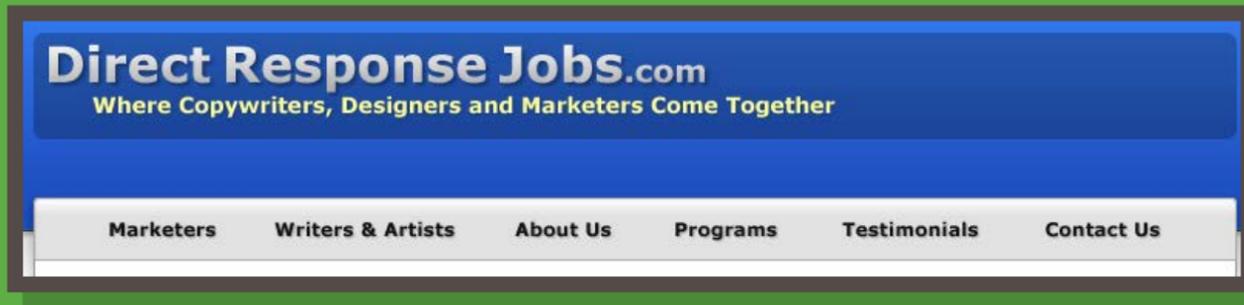
[yourName]



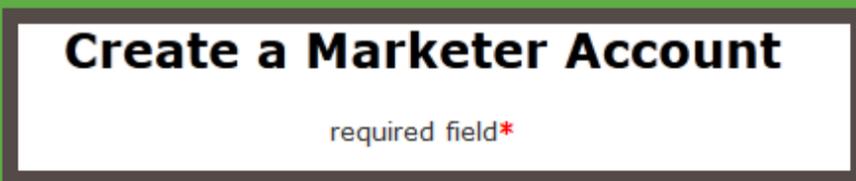
PLACE AN AD IN AWAI'S COPYWRITER JOB BOARD.



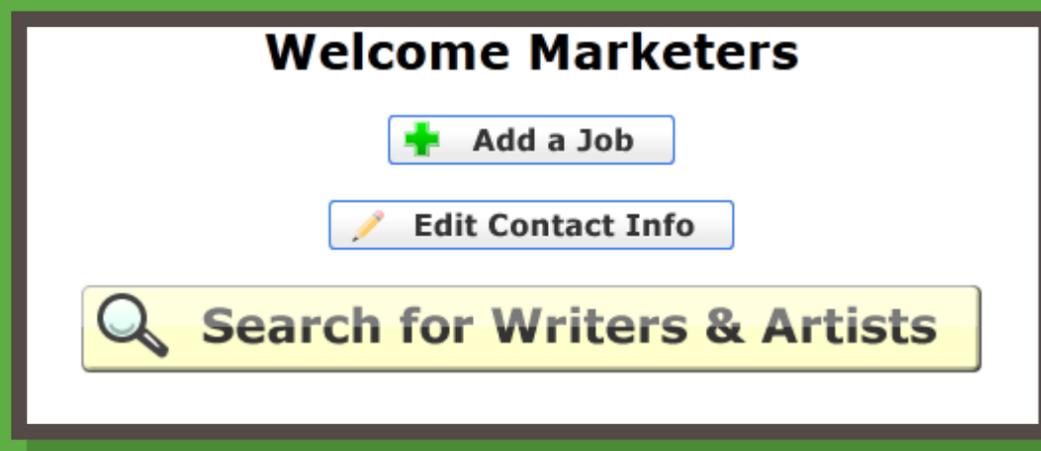
VISIT [HTTP://WWW.DIRECTRESPONSEJOBS.COM/MEMBERS/MAIN/](http://www.directresponsejobs.com/members/main/).



CLICK ON THE "MARKETERS" TAB & "CREATE A MARKETER ACCOUNT."



AFTER SIGNING IN, YOU'LL SEE THIS WELCOME MESSAGE:



From here, you can create an ad for your project (*Add a Job*) or see listings for writers seeking work (*Search for Writers & Artists*).



TO CREATE AN AD, CLICK ON "ADD A JOB"

You'll be taken to a form for providing details of your project.

Job Title*: (this cannot be changed later)

Job Category*:

Work Type*:

Job Summary*:

Location:

Pay:

Qualifications:

Application Deadline: (mm/dd/yyyy)

Other Comments:



UNDER “JOB CATEGORY,” SELECT THE MOST APPROPRIATE TERM FROM THE DROP-DOWN

To find a content writer, select “Blogging” or “Copywriting.”

- Copywriting
- Graphic Design
- Travel Writing
- B2B Copywriting
- Catalog Copywriting
- Christian Copywriting
- Financial Copywriting
- Fundraising Copywriting
- Health Copywriting
- Internet copywriting
- Self-help Copywriting
- Internet Research
- **Blogging**
- SEO
- Social Media



YOU HAVE FOUR CHOICES FOR “WORK TYPE.”

Full-time and **part-time** mean they work at a desk in your office space.

Freelance means you contract them to write one piece of content or to regularly write for you. (*They’ll likely draw up a contract that sets terms.*)

Spec means they write for you, but only get paid if you like the work.

For contract work, **freelance** is your best bet. If you are unsure about a writer, spec may work on your first project, but many of the best writers don’t do spec projects. So if you want an experienced writer, expect to pay the writer’s full rates.



UNDER “JOB SUMMARY,” DESCRIBE THE JOB YOU NEED FILLED.

For instance, for a freelance writer to write two blog posts a month, you might write:

We’re looking for a content writer to create two articles per month, 600-900 words each, on these topics: [list the topics you need covered]. But honestly, anything goes, as long as it relates to topics of interest to [describe your target audience].

You’ll need to be able to work with our managing editor to decide on topics for your articles, then work independently to complete them. After review, you’ll be required to perform edits to the editor’s specifications.

STEP 6

“QUALIFICATIONS” MIGHT LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

Qualifications:

Excellent spelling, grammar and proofreading skills

Ability to deliver content on-schedule

Knowledge about [your core topic]

Citation/links to sources



SUBMIT THE AD AND WAIT FOR WRITERS TO RESPOND.



AS EMAILS COME IN, RESPOND WITH MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE JOB OR A REQUEST TO TALK.

(We'll tell you how to negotiate with a writer in a minute.)

FIND GUEST BLOGGERS ON WELL-WRITTEN BLOGS.

An easy way to find content writers is to browse industry blogs to identify writers who specialize in your core topic.

STEP 1

IDENTIFY BLOGS THAT USE GUEST BLOGGERS.

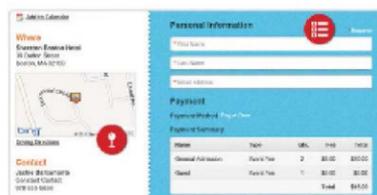
Visit your Feedly stream and check out the articles being published by brands similar to yours. If a website posts articles by different people, it may use guest bloggers (*as opposed to staff writers, who may not have freedom to write for other brands*).

THE DAILY EGG 22 unread articles ✓ ⚙



12 Must Read Analytics Blogs

Are you looking for the best analytics blogs on the Internet? Here (in no particular order) is a list of blogs and sites can help you wrestle analytics into submission. 1. Analytics Talk Justin Cutroni Analytics Talk is the personal blog of 87 by Sharon Hurley Hall... 23 hours ago



Which Email Marketing Service Is Right For You?

In the first article of my 8-part email marketing series, I showed you why email is not only alive and thriving, but essential to the success of your business. This week, we'll review the various email marketing services that are out there and 60 by Jeremy Reeves 2 days ago



Is Hick's Law Damaging Your Landing Page Results?

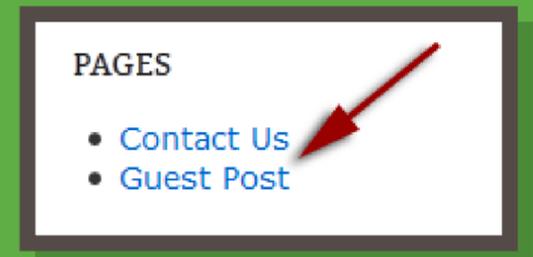
There's a rule of thumb marketers have been using for years. It's called Hick's Law, and whether you know it or not, it has probably lowered the click-through rates on your landing pages. Here's what you probably already know... 51 by Kathryn Aragon 3 days ago

STEP 2

VERIFY THIS BY VISITING THE WEBSITE.

If a website uses guest posts, you can usually find the link in the sidebar, footer, or on the “Contact Us” page.

If you see this link, you know that some of the writers are guest bloggers and may be available to write content for you.



STEP 3

LOOK FOR THE AUTHOR BIO OF THE WRITER

Pick an article you like, then check out the author’s bio. In many cases, it will be at the bottom of the article.

About the Author: *Jeremy Reeves is a direct response sales copywriter who creates sales copy and advanced marketing funnels, adding over over \$10 million in revenue to his clients bottom lines in the past few years alone.*

To check out his fantastic, profit-boosting products and services, visit [Jeremy’s website](#) or grab this free resource: [7 Crucial Mistakes To Avoid When Hiring a Copywriter](#).

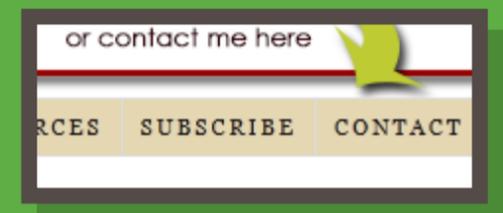
But you may be able to find a author page by clicking on the author’s name.

STEP 4

VISIT THE AUTHOR’S WEBSITE.

Once there, read the writer’s “About” page and review several posts from the writer’s blog. Then contact the writer to ask if s/he is interested in writing for your website.

Use the email template we gave you above.



SEARCH LINKEDIN FOR A WRITER

STEP 1

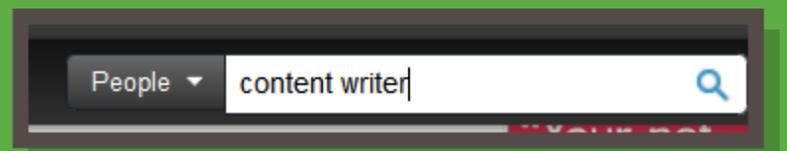
VISIT LINKEDIN.COM.

STEP 2

SEARCH FOR “CONTENT WRITER,” “WRITER,” “BLOGGER” OR ANOTHER RELATED SEARCH TERM.

Related searches for **blogger**

blogging	community manager
writer	public relations
journalist	blog
social media	proofreader



STEP 5

REVIEW THE SEARCH RESULTS

Click on the profile picture or name to review a writer's qualifications.

Click the "Message" button to contact him or her.



STEP 4

CHECK OUT LINKEDIN GROUPS FOR WRITERS.



HOW TO NEGOTIATE WITH A WRITER

STEP 1

PREPARE TO TALK TO THE WRITER

Define the project and your budget before contacting writer.

Also, make time to evaluate the writer up-front, before your talk.

- Visit their website.
- Read some of the Web pages and blog posts to review their skill as a content writer.
- Review the "About Me" page, testimonials and samples.

CHECKLIST

BEFORE TALKING TO A WRITER

- REVIEW THEIR WEBSITE
- FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO
- DECIDE ON YOUR DESIRED OUTCOMES
- CHOOSE A TIMEFRAME
- FIGURE OUT YOUR OPTIMAL BUDGET



BE CLEAR ABOUT THE TASKS YOU WANT THE WRITER TO COMPLETE FOR YOU.

Be as specific as possible, so the writer understands the scope of your project. If possible, nail down what you want to achieve by having this project done. This will help the writer understand the project better.



MAKE SURE THE WRITER IS AVAILABLE TO FINISH THE TASK BY YOUR DEADLINE.

This is especially important if you have a rush job or hard deadline.



DON'T BE AFRAID TO TALK ABOUT MONEY.

Most writers are willing to negotiate a fee that will work for both of you. But it helps, when negotiating, to understand how writers arrive at their fees.

Here's the process a writer goes through as s/he discusses your project:

- 1/ Tries to understand the scope of a job: how many deliverables, how complicated it will be, etc.**
- 2/ Tries to decide if the project can be realistically done as requested (*scope of the project vs. available time*).**
- 3/ Estimates the number of hours it will take to complete.**
- 4/ Multiplies the estimated number of hours by his or her desired hourly rate for the final fee.**

HOURLY VS. PROJECT-BASED FEES

Good writers charge \$50 to \$150 per hour. Less experienced writers charge less, and in-demand writers may charge more. (*Freelancers' rates are higher than on-staff writers because they have to afford their own insurance, businesses expenses, taxes and other overhead. In-house copywriters and content writers earn \$15 to \$30 per hour, but benefits packages typically cost employers 2.7 times the base salary. So in many cases, the rates are about equivalent.*)

NOTE:

Most writers don't charge you by the hour. It's too difficult to track hours and prove that the number is accurate. As a result, you will likely be quoted a project-based fee.

HOW TO NEGOTIATE THE FEE

📢 If you have a budget for the project you have in mind, it can help to let the writer know what that is.

A good way to do this is to give a range rather than a hard figure. For example:

I've budgeted \$200 to \$500 for this this project. Would your fee fit within that range?

YOU

The WRITER may make a counter-offer:

I usually charge a little more than that, but I could probably accept \$500 if you are willing to accept shorter articles.

WRITER

Or the WRITER may accept with no dickering.

Make sure you both are clear about what services will be delivered for the fee that you agree on. A Letter of Agreement can help. More on that in a minute.

2 If the writer suggests a fee that is higher than you had expected, make a counter offer.

Or if the writer is firm and you can't afford the proposed fee, ask for more services at that fee.

I can do that for \$250 per article.

WRITER

Hmmm. I don't usually pay that much. Would you be willing to accept \$125?

YOU

I wish I could, but I've already discounted my fees since you want two articles a month.

WRITER

Well, how about this: I can afford to pay \$200 per article if you optimize them for search engines and provide the meta-data in addition to the article.

YOU

Services that justify a higher fee:

- *SEO.*
- *Longer content.*
- *Well-researched content.*
- *High-quality writing.*
- *Consistently high response rates to the writer's content.*
- *The writer uploads the content in your blog.*
(You will have to provide log-in access.)



ALWAYS ASK FOR A CONTRACT THAT SPECIFIES TERMS

Letter of Agreement

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you on this project. I've enjoyed talking with you and reviewing your project requirements.

This **Letter of Agreement** confirms the copywriting project I am completing for you. Please take a moment to review it, then sign, scan to a PDF, and email it to me for my records.

Most freelancers have a standard contract or Letter of Agreement that they use for each project. If the writer doesn't offer one, ask for it.

A contract protects you and the writer. And it doesn't need to be complicated.

At the very least, your contract should spell out:

- *The exact deliverables the writer agreed to*
- *The proposed deadline*
- *Payment terms.*

OTHER PLACES TO FIND WRITERS AND DESIGNERS



<http://www.serv.io/>



<https://www.odesk.com/>



No



PRODUCING GREAT CONTENT FAST

Having trouble getting your ideas down quickly? Try these ideas.



MAKE A RECORDING



Make a digital recording.



Hire a transcriptionist to type out your words for you.
(*Find one on Odesk.*)



Edit.



TALK IT OUT



Get a speech-recognition software, such as DragonSpeak, available at <http://www.shop.nuance.com>.



Dictate your content through the software.



Edit.

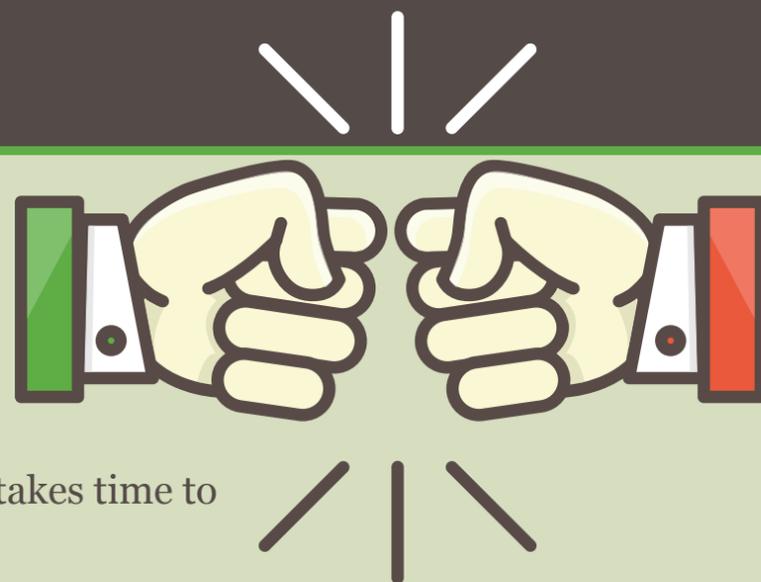
No



BUILDING ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUR CONTENT

No strategy is guaranteed to work straight out of the box. It takes time to develop a strategic plan that works.

Here are six strategies that can help:



1

CREATE A VARIETY OF CONTENT TYPES.

➤ *Social media.*

➤ *Blog posts.*

➤ *Ebooks.*

➤ *Video.*

➤ *Audio.*



CREATE UNIQUE, HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT.

Make this your standard:

- *Unique ideas.*
- *Specific, detailed content (no fluff).*
- *Be original (no duplicate content)*
- *No topic that's been overdone.*

Length isn't a big issue; however, you want to thoroughly cover of your idea. Whether you do that with 400 words or 1000 plus, make sure you produce content that your readers want to consume.

- *Long enough to cover your topic, and no longer.*
- *No grammatical or spelling errors.*
- *One main point per article.*

TIP } While it's acceptable to repurpose and recycle your ideas, you don't want to produce duplicate content. Copyscape (<http://www.copyscape.com>) is a free resource for checking whether your content is duplicate.



ENCOURAGE COMMENTS AND SOCIAL SHARES.



ALWAYS ASK FOR COMMENTS AND/OR SHARES.

At the end of your content, no matter what format you publish in, ask for comments, likes or shares.

Have you implemented responsive email designs in your marketing? If not, what's holding you back? Share your thoughts in the comments below.



ALWAYS RESPOND TO COMMENTS AND SHARES.

People like to be noticed. If their comments aren't answered, they may not comment again.

On the other hand, if you always respond to their comments, they'll enjoy the interaction and will be more likely to comment again on other posts.

Francis Fox

Pardon me for saying so, but I find this a very intelligent, very practical and deftly handled compilation of some great strategies. I will certainly be applying some of the tips I've gained here. Two questions: what is the name of the book alluded to? And do you know a program one can download to edit PDFs and drw arrows and things on them such as you have done with the Brainpower example?

March 1, 2013 [Reply](#)

[Edit](#)



Russ Henneberry

Hi Francis — the program that was used to create those arrows, etc is called SnagIt.



YOU START. ENGAGE WITH YOUR READERS FIRST.

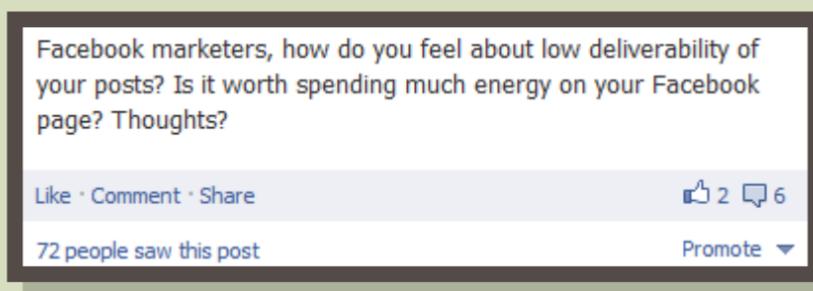
Don't wait for people to decide to comment. Be engaging in your content. Here are a few ways to do that:

INCORPORATE SOCIAL MEDIA INTO CONTENT CREATION.

If you know you want to cover a topic, but aren't sure of what to say or how to develop your ideas, use social media to share what other people think.

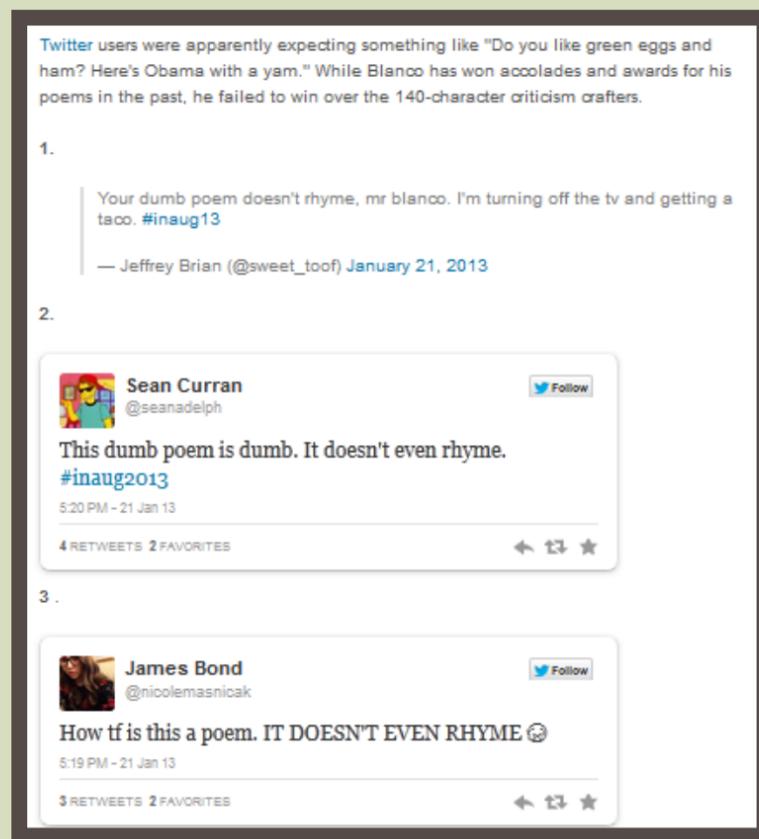
There are two ways to do this:

- 1/ Pose a question in social media, then review your responses. Pull the best answers into a post. Your followers will see that others are engaging with you and will be encouraged to do so themselves.



- 2/ Follow particular topics in Twitter or Facebook, and gather responses into your content.

- *Organize the ideas presented in the posts.*
- *Introduce your topic.*
- *Upload social media posts to illustrate your point.*



This example is from <http://mashable.com/2013/01/21/inauguration-poem/>

Another comes from Content Marketing Institute.

<http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2013/03/tweets-content-marketing-world-sydney-2013/>

CREATE “TWEET BAIT” CONTENT

Don't just write about an idea. Find someone in your social circles who does what you're talking about. Then show them off. When you, be sure to link to their website or social media profiles so people will check them out.

Don't forget to share your content with them so they can link to it if they want.

A great example of this post comes from Crazy Egg.

<http://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/03/06/content-writers-block/>



The Secret to Avoiding Content Writer's Block

by [Kathryn Aragon](#) 03/06/2013 11

Let me guess...

You need content. Lots of it.

But the mere fact that you need it — in high volume and high quality — is enough to create a block.

You've heard of writer's block, I'm sure.

After going live, we posted about it in social media, making sure to tag the people we featured:



Today's post on Crazy Egg talks about how you can avoid the dread Content Writer's Block. It features [+Demian Farnworth](#) [+Ann Handley](#) [+Oli Gardner](#) and [+Johnny B. Truant](#) to offer useful tips for all content marketers.

 **The Secret to Avoiding Content Writer's Block »**

The need for a steady stream of high-quality content can create content writer's block. Here's how to overcome it.

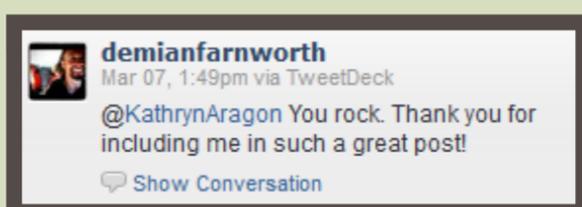
Check out a few of the tweets we got in response:



Kathryn Aragon
Mar 07, 9:30am via Web
Learn to write content like [@MichaelHyatt](#) [@JohnnyBTruant](#) [@BobBurg](#) [@annhandley](#) & [@oligardner](#) | [@CrazyEgg](#) - [ow.ly/fvwxy](#)
2 retweets



Bob Burg
Mar 07, 10:19am via TweetDeck
[@KathrynAragon](#) Honored!! Thank you!! (cc: [@MichaelHyatt](#) [@JohnnyBTruant](#) [@annhandley](#) [@oligardner](#)) via [@CrazyEgg](#) - [ow.ly/fvwxy](#)



demianfarnworth
Mar 07, 1:49pm via TweetDeck
[@KathrynAragon](#) You rock. Thank you for including me in such a great post!
Show Conversation



Michael Hyatt
Mar 07, 9:43am via HootSuite
RT [@KathrynAragon](#): Learn to write content like [@MichaelHyatt](#) [@JohnnyBTruant](#) [@BobBurg](#) | [@CrazyEgg](#) - [ow.ly/fvwxy](#) // Loved this!

Notice that some people don't just respond. They retweet so their followers can see the post as well. That's what twitter bait is all about.



ASK QUESTIONS AND ENCOURAGE ANSWERS.

Engaging writing refers to “you” and “we.” It sounds as if you’re talking one-on-one with the reader. And just like a real conversation, it poses questions and expects an answer.

Make sure you respond to your followers when they answer your questions, and over time, they’ll feel like every post is an invitation to talk.

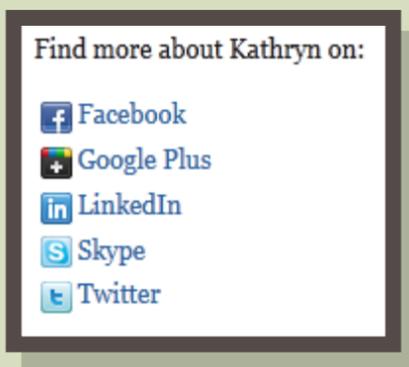
In this post, for example, people who respond to a Facebook post get featured in a blog post.



DON'T JUST PUBLISH ON YOUR WEBSITE.

Get your conversation off your website and join the greater conversation taking place on the Web. Guest blogging and ebook publishing can create more doorways for people to find you. And they help people get to know you better.

You guessed it. When people feel like they know you, they’re more likely to engage with you.



RUNNING OUT OF CONTENT IDEAS? REPURPOSE!

One of the secrets to creating a steady stream of content is to repurpose and recycle your ideas.

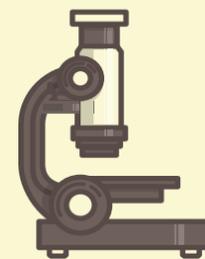
This does not mean you should re-arrange your points and republish. Google reads this as duplicate content.

But you can re-use ideas and refashion them into something original. Like this:

- Take an interesting sentence or paragraph from one post and flesh it out for another.
- Take a chapter from your ebook and turn it into a blog post.
- When you get a question from a customer, after answering that question in an email, flesh it out to make a blog post, webinar, or ebook.
- After an interesting conversation over the water cooler or meeting, turn each person’s perspective on the topic and present them as an FAQ, video, slideshow, or blog post.
- Did you read a book that seemed to connect to topics you write about? Write a book review or blog post. Or use it as research for a special report.



NEW IDEA



RESEARCH



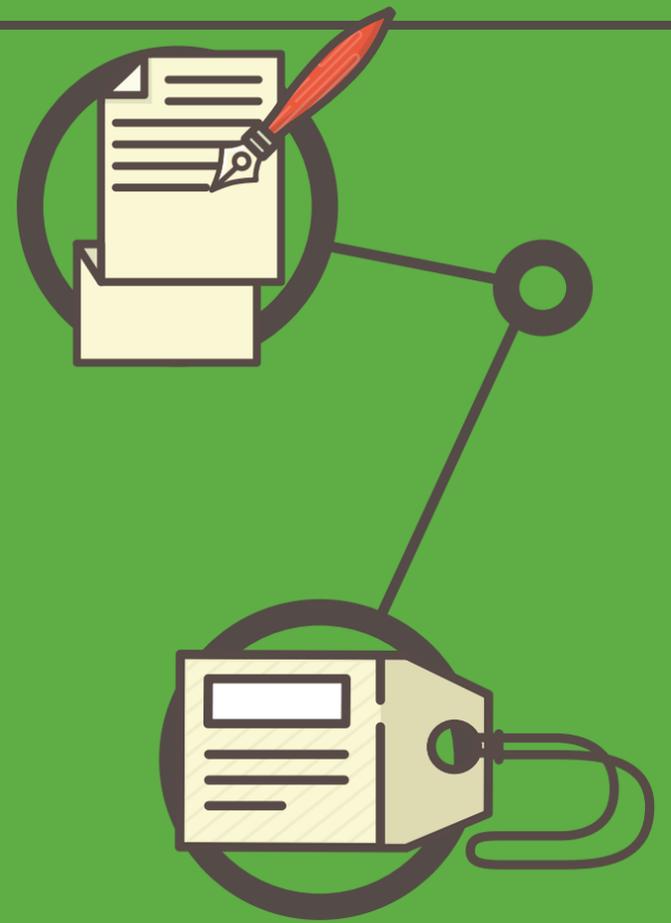
BLOG POST
SPECIAL REPORT
EBOOK
PODCAST

HAVING TROUBLE CONNECTING CONTENT TO MARKETING?

The key is to think like a publisher. Publishing companies have a production system that helps them produce content as cost-effectively as possible. And they strive to develop loyal readers who enjoy consuming their content.

Like a publisher, you need to be clear about what you're trying to achieve, and then track results to make sure the work you do is helping you reach your objectives.

Here's how to do that:



STEP 1

SET BENCHMARKS.

While it's important to track your engagement levels, some metrics are more valuable than others. According to lean start-up expert Eric Ries, you don't need to track "vanity metrics."

What you do want to measure are Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for your own type of business.

KPIs may be different for different types of businesses. For example, a business blog uses different metrics than a retail site. Essentially, you decide what metrics indicate success for your business, and then you track them to measure growth over the long term.

Russ Henneberry, Managing Editor of the Crazy Egg blog, identifies these KPI for a business blog:

- *Goals for most business blogs:*
- *Increase brand awareness*
- *Generate leads for the sales team*
- *Increase eCommerce sales*
- *Increase advertising income*

As a content marketer, you may have similar goals, and would therefore measure similar metrics.

DON'T MEASURE

- ✗ # OF VISITS
- ✗ # OF TWEETS
- ✗ RANKINGS IN GOOGLE

DO MEASURE

- ✓ KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS (KPI)

FOUR METRICS:

For a business blog with the four objectives listed above, these are appropriate KPI.

KPI	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
<i>subscriber rate</i>	<i># of subscribers or unique visits</i>	<i>important for virtually every blog</i>
<i>leads/sales generated</i>	<i># of leads/sales directly attributed to blog referral</i>	<i>important if lead/sales driven model</i>
<i>avg. ad income per page</i>	<i>total ad income/#of pages</i>	<i>important if ad driven model</i>
<i>avg. ad income per visitor</i>	<i>total ad income/unique visits</i>	<i>important if ad driven model</i>

SET A BASELINE BEFORE YOUR MOVE FORWARD

Even if you've been doing content marketing for a while, if you haven't been tracking your results, you need to create a baseline from which you can measure future success.

Here's how to do that for the subscriber rate:

1/ Measure your number of subscribers.



You can get this number from your email provider (*MailChimp* or *AWeber*).

2/ Visit adwords.google.com/analytics for the number of “unique visits.”



3/ Divide the number of subscribers by the number of unique visitors

For the example above, that would be $90 / 520 = .17$

That means that nearly 20% of visitors convert to a subscriber.

TO FIND YOUR BASELINE KPI:

- 1/ Follow this same procedure for all four KPI in the cart above.
- 2/ Then record these metrics as your baseline.
- 3/ Set a goal for improvement.
- 4/ Then decide on web design and content marketing strategies that will help you reach your goals.



STEP 2 TRACK RESULTS.

- 1/ Implement your strategy for improving your metrics.
- 2/ Measure your progress monthly.
- 3/ Record your results.



STEP 3 ADAPT YOUR EFFORTS TO GET BETTER RESULTS.

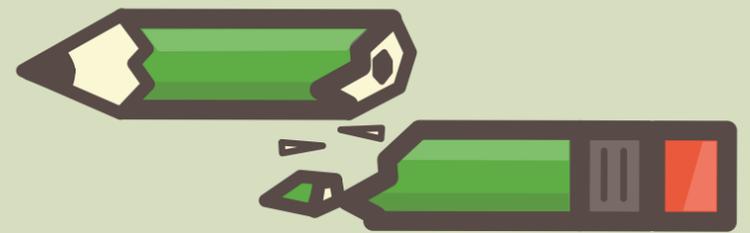
If your strategy is working, keep it up. But continue to try new techniques to see if you can get even better results.

If your strategy doesn't make a difference, re-evaluate your strategy and decide on a new approach for improving results.

No 7

WHEN A PROJECT DOESN'T WORK

Sometimes you are part-way through a content project — or may even have gone live with it — only to find that it doesn't work. Maybe it doesn't meet your quality standards. Maybe your needs have changed. Or maybe it doesn't help you achieve your business or marketing goals.



Whatever the reason, you feel that you've wasted the time and cost of producing a piece of content that isn't usable.

Do you throw it away? No. You can always reuse parts, if not all, of a project that didn't work. Here are a few suggestions:

USE IT AS A VALUE-ADD.

Perhaps the project isn't strong enough to use as a stand-alone piece of content. But it could work as a value-add or premium to another product or offer.

- 1/ Decide whether the project can stand alone or needs additional work.
- 2/ Decide whether the format is good or needs changing.
- 3/ Do whatever edits are necessary to repurpose it as a premium offer, not an end product.

USE GOOD PARAGRAPHS AND SECTIONS THAT DIDN'T MAKE IT INTO THE FINAL DRAFT.

Sometimes you need to remove whole sections from a project because they are off-topic or you need to reduce the word count. However, there's nothing wrong with the copy.

In that case:

- 1/ Cut the copy and paste into a new Word document.
- 2/ Decide whether this content could be crafted into an article, presentation, video or other format.
- 3/ Decide whether it can stand alone or needs additional work.
- 4/ Repurpose the content to fulfill your objectives.

CHANGE THE FORMAT.

If a piece of content doesn't work, take time to evaluate why. It may not be a lost cause. It may simply need to be formatted for a different channel.

- 1/ Review your content to decide whether it's more suited for written formats, audio, or visual.
- 2/ Decide whether the addition of images or a change of format could help.
- 3/ Set new goals for the content.
- 4/ Repurpose it to fulfill your objectives.

No 8

YOUR CONTENT READS LIKE A SALES PAGE...

Remember, content is not the same as sales copy.

Some elements of direct response copywriting are able to cross genres to strengthen your content.

For instance, both sales copy and content need a big idea, or theme, that supports the message.

They also need a call to action.

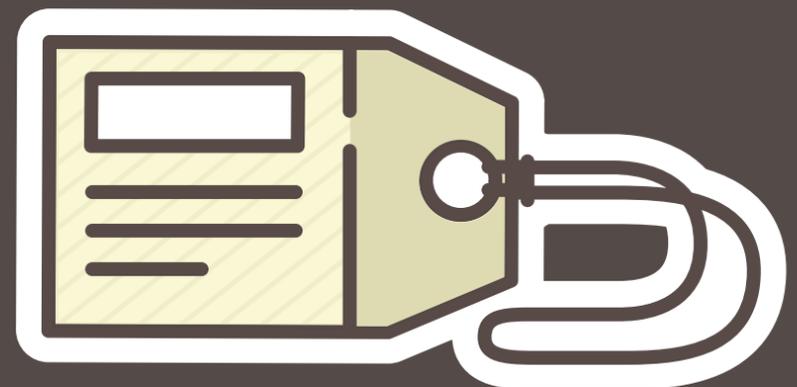
But content isn't the same as a landing page. To work, it needs to be lower key than your sales copy.

So tone it down.

Kill the hype.

Use content to build relationship and your brand.

No hard selling allowed.



MANAGING CONTENT CREATION

If you head a content marketing team, you want to create synergy among your team and have a strong sense of purpose, so you come up with the best content possible. Here are a few pointers:



RULE #1: LET YOUR WRITERS WRITE.

If you place too many restrictions on them, you'll stifle creativity — and you won't like the content that results.

Writers work differently than data entry clerks. You can't tell them to sit down and write and expect award-winning prose. Give them time to think about the topic, research it, and discuss it with co-workers. Don't be surprised if their best writing occurs at lunch time, on break, or after hours.

Here's the best way to work with writers:

- 1/ Give the assignment. For example, the assignment might be two articles on a particular topic per month, with the writer coming up with the topics.
- 2/ Give a deadline. Be clear about when you need the articles to be turned in.
- 3/ Let the writer know what you want. You need to give an approximate word count. And if you want a particular structure or style, let the writer know in advance. If possible, show the writer samples of what you're looking for.
- 4/ Let the writer have his head. Every writer works differently, but they all need time to explore the topic, research, and try out different approaches. Writers can't simply sit down and craft beautiful words. Writing is a process (often a time-consuming one), and you need to give them room to work.
- 5/ When you review the writer's work, give specific comments. Don't tell him he missed the mark. Point out sentences that are wrong, and why. Tell him where it loses focus, and share ideas for fixing it.

NOTE:

Keep in mind that no writer can write what you imagine in your head — unless you take the time to share your ideas, then let him or her organize and write your words for you.

RULE #2: LET OTHER EMPLOYEES CREATE CONTENT TOO.

Some of your best content is inspired by interaction with customers, which means your best ideas may come from the sales team or customer services representatives.

While you can certainly have a team of writers, you might consider allowing other employees create content as well.

After answering a question for clients, for example, a customer service representative can draft his answer as a blog post as well.

If you choose to use this approach, you can maintain quality control by having your content team edit the content and provide stylistic oversight.

RULE #3: DON'T WORRY IF PEOPLE REACT TO YOUR CONTENT IDEAS. (THAT'S A GOOD THING.)

Content marketing forces you to take a stand on issues. Some people will agree and others will disagree. Get comfortable with it: It means people are engaging with your content. So in the long run, those negative comments are a good thing.

RULE #4: DARE TO LET YOUR BRAND BE AN EXPERT IN YOUR TOPIC.

The point of content marketing is to establish yourself as an expert in your area of expertise. So be the expert. Have an opinion. Even if it differs from the rest of the world.

RULE #5: ALWAYS CHECK YOUR FACTS.

Your readers need to be able to trust that what you say is accurate and trustworthy.

Consider appointing someone on your team to serve as proofreader and fact checker.

RULE #6: IF YOU QUOTE SOMEONE OR BORROW AN IDEA, GIVE CREDIT AND LINK TO YOUR SOURCE.

You don't need to give a source for industry terms, common knowledge, or your brand's systems and terms. But any idea or phrase that you borrow from someone else needs to be credited to them.

No. 10

INTEGRATING YOUR CONTENT WITH THE REST OF MARKETING

In marketing, you have two overriding strategies: push and pull. Push marketing is your direct response, sales pages, ads, and promotions. Pull marketing is content, webinars and events.

Both should work together to attract prospects, build relationship, and ultimately, makes sales.

Content marketing is an integral part of this process because it offers value at no cost to your visitors. As a result, it is extremely useful at generating leads, attracting potential customers, and moving them through the sales funnel.

The secret to making this work is to use content to build a list of people interested in your content — which allows you to deliver content, but also allows you to make promotional offers.

STEP 1

CREATE A NEWSLETTER, COURSE, OR EBOOK THAT YOU CAN GIVE AS A PREMIUM TO ANYONE WHO SIGNS UP.

On Kissmetrics, we've found that courses work better than ebooks. So consider developing a course that delivers a short, actionable tip each day for seven, 15 or 30 days.

Here's ours on Quicksprout.com.



Free Course: "Double Your Traffic in 30 Days" + Secret Bonus (Valued at \$300)

This amazing course will teach you, step by step, how to double if not triple your traffic over the next 30 days.

Fill out the form below to start your FREE Course

First name

Email

[Yes, Lets Start The FREE Course](#)

STEP 2

CREATE A SIGN-UP FORM THAT PROMOTES YOUR NEWSLETTER OR COURSE IN THE SIDEBAR OF YOUR WEBSITE.

The form needs to tell people what they're getting when they give you their email address.

Give your call to action in red, green, orange or yellow. Some marketers have reported higher response rates putting blue text on a yellow button.

Ask for as little information as possible: name and email are all you really need.

STEP 3

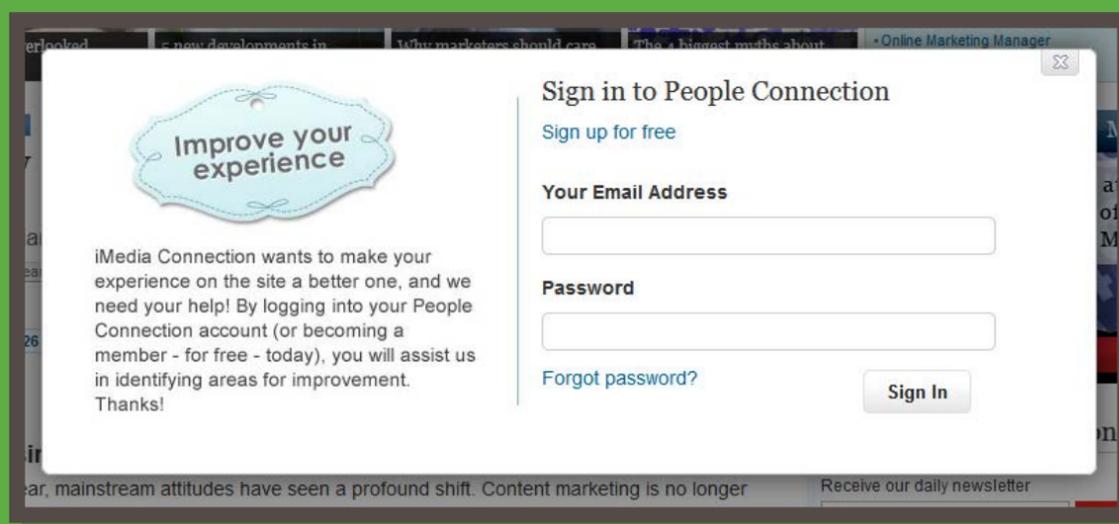
CREATE A POP-UP TO DRAW ATTENTION TO YOUR FORM.

Even if you resist pop-ups, do test them. They tend to drive three times more opt-ins than a sidebar opt-in form.

Pop-ups can be small and non-intrusive, like this one from Inc.



Or they can be big, fading out the entire Web page, like this one from iMedia Connection



Improve your experience

iMedia Connection wants to make your experience on the site a better one, and we need your help! By logging into your People Connection account (or becoming a member - for free - today), you will assist us in identifying areas for improvement. Thanks!

Sign in to People Connection
[Sign up for free](#)

Your Email Address

Password

[Forgot password?](#) [Sign In](#)

Two plugins for placing pop-ups on WordPress websites are:

➤ *Popup Domination*

➤ *Modal Dialog*

The process is simple:

1 INSTALL THE POP-UP ON YOUR WEBSITE.

2 SET THE TIMING FOR THE POP-UP.

It's a good idea to have your pop-up to appear to all first-time visitors within the first five seconds after arriving on your site. We've found that we get 23.5% more opt-ins when the pop-up is shown immediately, as opposed to delaying it by 10 seconds.

3 SET THE DESIGN FOR THE POP-UP.

If you can control the design options on your pop-up (*with Popup Domination, you can*), set the pop-up to place your offer above the opt-in form. We've experienced an 11% increase in conversion simply by positioning the offer first.

4 BUILD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR LIST

Creating and maintaining a newsletter may seem like a lot of work. But once you've committed to content marketing, sending out a newsletter is a no-brainer.

Why? Because your newsletter will build relationship, loyalty and engagement with your followers.

Here are a few tips:

- 1/** Create a newsletter that goes out regularly to your list. Once or twice a week is a good frequency. It keeps you connected to your readers and leaves days open for promotional emails.
- 2/** Keep your newsletter primarily content based. You may include ads and promotional offers, but keep the focus on providing value with no obligation.
- 3/** Treat your list like a VIP group. Offer perks and discounts only available to newsletter subscribers. Use this as an incentive to stay subscribed.
- 4/** Between newsletter issues, you may send out promotional emails. Be careful to keep the ratio of content and promotions at a level that keeps readers engaged. Too many promotions will result in unsubscribes.
- 5/** Invite responses to your email. Then answer people when they respond.

THAT'S IT!

You now know the most common challenges to successful content marketing and some smart strategies for overcoming all of them. Put them to work, and you should have a major head start achieving your goals for content marketing.

Next, we talk about how to optimize your content so it can help you rank better in search engines. SEO has changed a lot over the last few years, but it's still a critical part of your content marketing strategy. So you'll definitely want to check out Chapter 8, "The Other Side of Content Creation: Optimize for Search."

SHALL WE START?

[TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER SIX](#)

[TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER EIGHT](#)





THE OTHER SIDE OF CONTENT CREATION: OPTIMIZE FOR SEARCH

Planning and writing your content is only part of the process. You also need to optimize it so people can find it in search engines.

There are rumors that SEO is dead, especially since Google's Panda and Penguin updates. But nothing could be further from the truth. In reality, well-written, well-optimized content is the best SEO possible.

So in this chapter, we run through the basic tactics you need to use to make sure your content is well received by search engines and readers.

Shall we start?

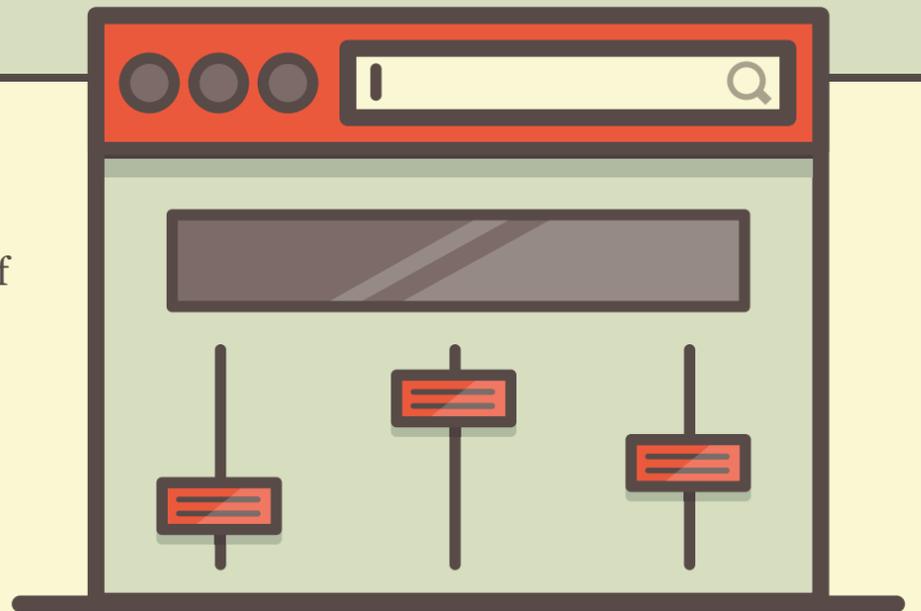


No 1

ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

Generally, we look at optimization in three phases of content creation:

- 1/ The planning stages.
- 2/ When we select keywords.
- 3/ After writing.



Too much focus on SEO *during* writing can tempt you to write for search engines rather than people. And Google has made it clear that they reward useful information (*content that helps people*), not SEO-bait (*content that aims at Google*) when it comes to ranking in the SERPs.

As a result, we assume you'll spend the majority of your SEO efforts *after* writing. Here's how to do it.

STEP 1

DECIDE ON THE KEYWORDS YOU WANT THIS PIECE TO RANK FOR.

In Chapter 1, you selected keywords that you want your website to rank for. Your content should use these same keywords (*and similar ones*) that will drive traffic to your website.

Search Query	1 Month Increase
1 quicksprout	3.74%
2 business quotes	3.71%
3 how to block feedreader from copying my contents	3.63%
4 massive traffic to fan page	3.26%
5 how to write a wonderful blog post	3.14%
6 time spent on facebook vs twitter	2.08%
7 most inspiration business quotes	1.90%
8 inspiring business quotes	1.07%
9 startup promotion ideas	0.78%
10 quick sprout	0.72%

NOTE:

If you want to see what people are searching for when they find your website, check out [Alexa.com](#) or [Google analytics](#).

1 SELECT ONE PRIMARY KEYWORD (OR PHRASE) FOR YOUR CURRENT PIECE OF CONTENT

Based on your final draft for this piece of content, select a keyword or phrase that occurs naturally throughout the content. If it appear in your title, even better.

Leads that Consistently Sell More

Want better results on your landing pages?

It may be as simple as selecting the right type of lead.

A few years ago, copywriters Michael Masterson and John Forde began studying control-breaking sales letters to see if there was a hidden formula among them.

What they discovered is that it all comes down to the first 100 to 600 words after the headline, better known as the *lead*.

In fact, six types of leads consistently pull better and sell more.

What are these leads? Let's take a look.

EVALUATE THAT KEYWORD FROM YOUR READER'S PERSPECTIVE.

Will they search for that term? Or are they likely to use another word or phrase? Select two or three possible keywords.

For instance, will people search for “lead,” which is a technical term. Or will they search for “opening”?

And is “landing page” or “sales page” searched for more often?

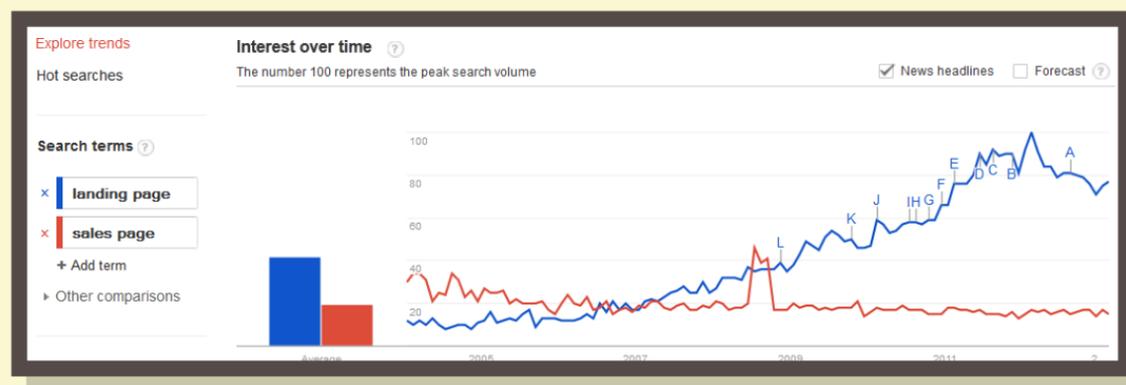
VISIT [GOOGLE.COM/TRENDS](https://www.google.com/trends).

The Trends tool can help you determine which keyword is best for your target audience. Enter the words or phrases you are considering for your content. Click “Explore.”



In this example, the writer is trying to determine whether more people are searching for “landing page” or “sales page.”

REVIEW THE REPORT THAT GOOGLE GENERATES.

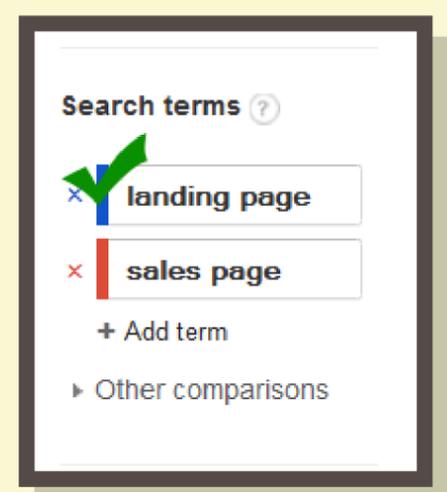


SELECT THE KEYWORD OR PHRASE THAT YOU WILL ASSIGN TO THIS PIECE OF CONTENT.

Notice that “landing page” appears in searches far more than “sales page.” Of these two choices, it makes the better keyword.

Of course, sometimes it isn't this obvious a choice. You may choose one keyword because it aligns better with your brand promise.

Or you could decide to test different keywords, choosing one now and changing it later if it doesn't perform well.



6 RECORD YOUR CHOICE IT IN COLUMN F, “KEYWORDS,” OF YOUR EDITORIAL PLANNER.

DATE	Type of Content	CONTENT TOPIC OR IDEA	TITLE	OBJECTIVE	KEYWORDS
CE	blog	CE - The goal is to get response, right? So provide more ways to respond. (More items are clickable, not more calls to action.)		thought leadership, how-to	landing page, clickable landing pages

You may select your keywords before you start writing, or you may wait until your content is written, as we did here. Either way, make sure you include keyword research in your process.

The Keyword tool may help you find longtail phrases that people commonly search for. Keep in mind that longtail phrases may increase your chances of ranking well for the phrase, but fewer people will search for it — and they may not search for the exact phrasing you choose.

Select a phrase that has the syntax and wording people are likely to use in a search.

STEP 2

OPTIMIZE YOUR TITLE

Include your primary keyword once in the title. More than that may be perceived as “keyword stuffing.”

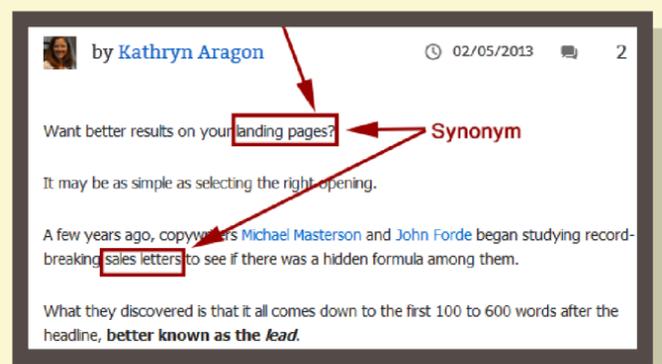


STEP 3

USE YOUR KEYWORDS NATURALLY IN THE CONTENT, BUT DON'T OVERDO IT

Your keywords should appear naturally in the context of your content.

Use the exact keyword and synonyms without stuffing your content with them. Google penalizes over-optimization, so don't overdo it.



STEP 4

LINK TO OTHER RELATED PAGES IN YOUR WEBSITE

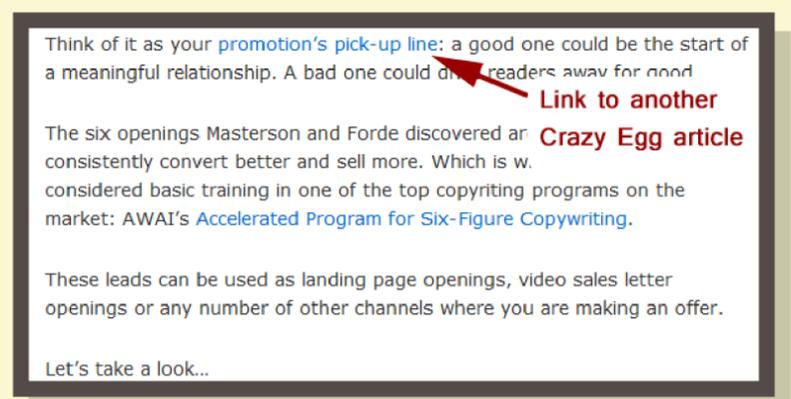
By linking to other pages on your site that provide additional information, you avoid “duplicate content,” which Google penalizes. You also add link juice to the pages you're linking to.

Internal linking lowers the number of people who visit one page and clicking away from your website. This improves your bounce rate, which helps you rank better with Google.

So make the effort to find other pages you can link to.

On-page optimization has little to do with keywords. But if you select a keyword for each page, it can help you stay focused. The key to on-page optimization is to make each page about one topic and to provide as much useful, unique content about that topic as you can. Avoid duplicate content, linking to other pages rather than repeating the information provided.

To truly optimize your content, though, you need to think bigger than the individual Web page. Optimize your entire domain for best results...



BEYOND THE PAGE: MAKE YOUR WEBSITE A HUB



This concept of being a “hub” or “authority” is the reason we asked you to create a core message in Chapter 1.

Google gives rank to Authority sites and Hubs. But in order for them to identify you as one, you must produce a lot of useful content about your core topic. Everything you produce needs be relevant to that topic so Google can easily identify the topic that you have authority in.

This aspect of optimization relates to your domain authority rather than page authority. However, it needs to be part of your overall strategy because your pages will rank better as your website’s authority increases.

Let’s start by defining terms:

HUB V. AUTHORITY

An Authority is a website that other high-value sites link to. It is seen as a leader in its space.

Authority sites have a lot of relevant pages on their core topic(s) and are trusted by their followers.

They generate a lot of inbound links without asking for them.



A Hub is a site that connects people to useful resources in their space, particularly Authority sites.

Hubs produce a lot of content, and people see them as a resource, but they may or may not be recognized as an Authority.

Hub sites have a lot of outbound links to other respected sites in their space.



So how do you develop status as a Hub and/or Authority?

STEP 1

**PRODUCE A LOT OF USEFUL,
RELEVANT CONTENT RELATED TO YOUR CORE TOPIC.**

STEP 2

CONTINUALLY REFINE YOUR INTERNAL LINKING STRATEGY.

When you develop content, link it to other pages that deal with the same topic. Then add a link to your existing pages, linking them to your new content.

By linking related content, you help Google see that you are an authority in a particular topic. Without these links, search engines see only individual Web pages, not a cluster of related content that could signal Authority in that topic.

STEP 3

LINK TO AUTHORITIES.

Try to make your own site relevant to leading websites in your space.

If another brand publishes a study, report on it to your readers.

When you produce content that references other sites, link to it.

Link to high-value sites whenever possible, and only from high-value pages on your own website.

This helps you position yourself as a thought leader in the same space. Your followers will trust the information you share, which will build your Trust rank with Google. It also helps Google see you as similar to the Authority sites you link to.

STEP 4

GET HUBS TO LINK TO YOU.

As your own authority develops, other sites will (hopefully) find your site and link to you. Your goal is to have high-value sites (Hubs) linking to your pages.

Furthermore, this goal should guide your content strategy:

- 1/ **Always develop the highest quality content possible.**
- 2/ **Create content that invites links: book reviews, product reviews, interviews, and evaluations of what the leaders in your space are doing.**
- 3/ **After your content goes live, if you mention an Authority or Hub, send them the link to let them know about your content. They may choose to link to it. (We'll talk more about this in Chapter 9.)**
 - *This gives you an inbound link from a high-quality site.*
 - *It creates a digital connection between your site and a trusted site.*
 - *It builds your rank with Google.*

Alexa Traffic Rank

8
Global Rank

5
Rank in US



AUTHOR RANK AND SOCIAL MEDIA



When Google implemented “Search Plus Your World,” it expanded the concept of search. The idea is that search results should be relevant to you, the individual searcher, not the general public.

But to generate more relevant results, Google needed to get to know you better. And how better than to include your

That may be one of the reasons Google launched Google+. Through its own social media site, Google can track your social activities to know what content is most relevant to you.

As a result, another important way to optimize your content is to set up authorship with Google. This allows you to connect your website and Google+ to deliver strong relevance signals to the search engine.

Here’s how it works:

When you do a Google search, Google doesn’t just look for content that contains your search terms. It also searches your social connections.

Anyone you’re connected to in Google+ can show up on Page 1 of your search results — even if they aren’t a thought leader in their space. Because they’re connected to you in Google+, Google assumes they are relevant to you.

It works both ways.

You will show up higher in searches performed by your Google+ connections.

So how do you leverage Search Plus Your World to optimize your content?

Content marketing: When in doubt, focus on articles.
<http://plus.google.com/.../posts/9M7y9i4NjD3>
 Brad Shorr – Mar 5, 2013 – **Content marketing: When in doubt, focus on articles.** Which **Content Marketing** Tactics Get the Best ROI? - eMarketer

This icon means this person is in one of my Google+ circles

Content Marketing: How to Build an Audience that Builds Your ...
www.copyblogger.com/content-marketing/ Share
 by Brian Clark - in 42,393 Google+ circles - More by Brian Clark
 Do smarter **content marketing** with our free ebook series, helpful tutorials, and ongoing **content marketing** articles.



CREATE A GOOGLE+ PROFILE IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY.

Start engaging with your Google+ connections if you have.

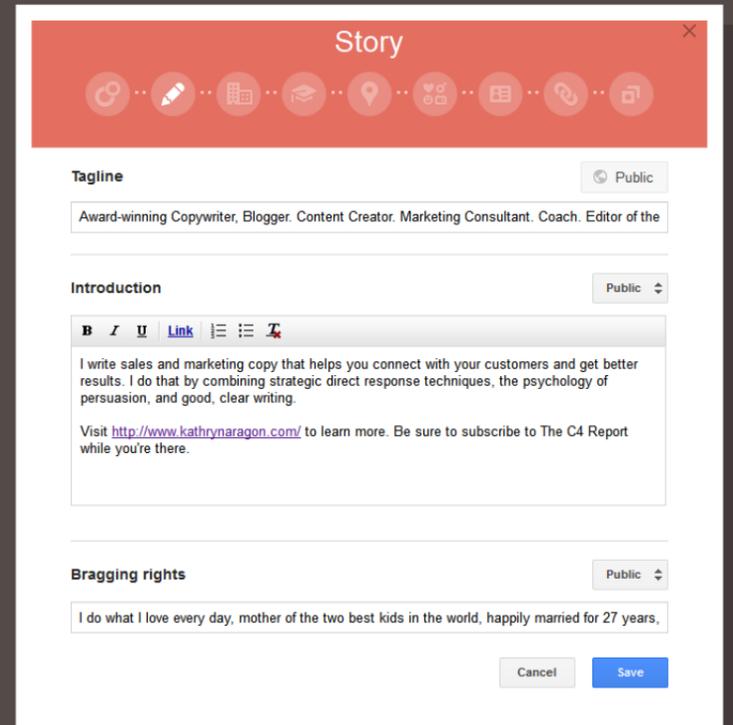
Visit <https://plus.google.com/> and create your profile

You'll be asked for basic information about your story.

Your **tagline** is your elevator speech: a short, to-the-point description of yourself and/or what you do.

The **introduction** is where you get to wax poetic. Think of it as a bio. Give relevant details to help people get to know you.

Bragging rights are the things you're proud of, both professionally and personally. A short list is fine.



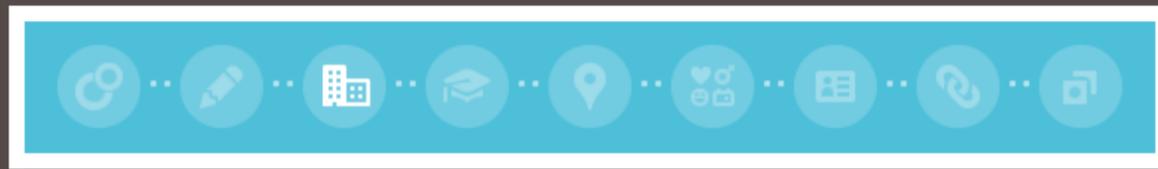
The screenshot shows the 'Story' form with the following sections:

- Tagline:** Award-winning Copywriter, Blogger, Content Creator, Marketing Consultant, Coach, Editor of the
- Introduction:** I write sales and marketing copy that helps you connect with your customers and get better results. I do that by combining strategic direct response techniques, the psychology of persuasion, and good, clear writing. Visit <http://www.kathrynaragon.com/> to learn more. Be sure to subscribe to The C4 Report while you're there.
- Bragging rights:** I do what I love every day, mother of the two best kids in the world, happily married for 27 years.

Buttons for 'Cancel' and 'Save' are at the bottom right.

Click on the icons across the top of the banner, and you can also enter information for:

Work | Education | Places | Basic Information | Contact Information | Links | Apps



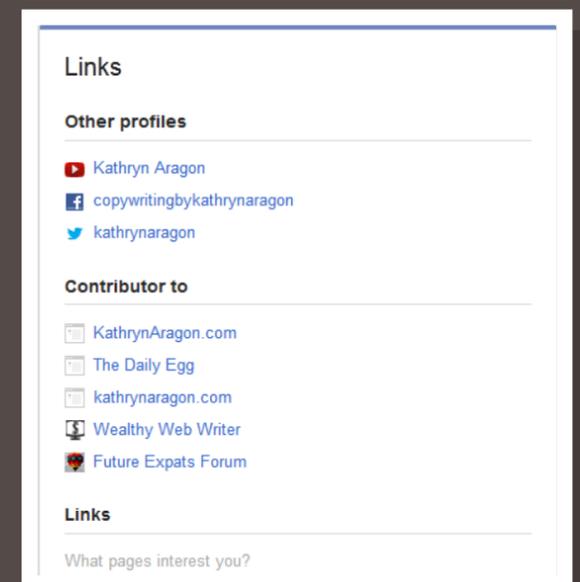
“Links” is where you enter information that helps Google identify your Author Rank:

Other profiles lists your other social media profiles. Adding them here makes it easy for your followers to connect with you.

Contributor to provides Google with a list of sites where your content may be found. (This is the key to Google authorship.)

Google will add your website for you when you use the Google authorship tool. More about that in a second.

And **Links** lists other sites you're interested in.



The screenshot shows the 'Links' form with the following sections:

- Other profiles:** Kathryn Aragon, copywritingbykathrynaragon, kathrynaragon
- Contributor to:** KathrynAragon.com, The Daily Egg, kathrynaragon.com, Wealthy Web Writer, Future Expats Forum
- Links:** What pages interest you?



USE THE AUTHORSHIP TOOL TO CONNECT GOOGLE+ TO YOUR WEBSITE

Once your profile is complete, follow the four steps in Google's authorship tool to add your website to your Google+ profile.

Visit <https://plus.google.com/authorship> and follow the four simple steps.

This will connect Google+ to your website. But you also need to connect your website to Google+.

You can link content you publish on a specific domain (such as www.wired.com) to your Google+ profile.

1. Make sure you have a profile photo with a recognizable headshot.
2. Make sure a byline containing your name appears on each page of your content (for example, "By Steven Levy").
3. Make sure your byline name matches the name on your Google+ profile.
4. Verify you have an email address (such as stevenlevy@wired.com) on the same domain as your content. (Don't have an email address on the same domain? [Use this method to link your content to your Google+ profile](#))

For example:

Submitting this form will add your email address to the **Work** section of your profile, which by default is viewable only by your circles. You can keep your email private if you wish. It will also add a public link to the domain of the email address to the **Contributor to** section of your profile.

[Signup for Authorship](#)



CONNECT YOUR WEBSITE TO GOOGLE+

OPTION 1 (THE TECHNICAL OPTION) – ENTER THE CODE ON YOUR WEBSITE.

If you're good with code, you can do this yourself. Here are Google's instructions, available in Webmaster Tools under the Link your content to a Google+ profile using rel="author" tab:

Create a link to your Google profile from your webpage, like this:

```
<a href="[profile_url]?rel=author">Google</a>
```

Replace [profile_url] with the your Google Profile URL, like this:

```
<a href="https://plus.google.com/109412257237874861202?rel=author">Google</a>
```

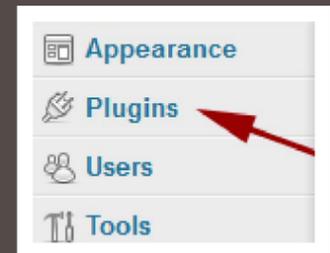
Your link must contain the ?rel=author parameter. If it's missing, Google won't be able to associate your content with your Google profile.

OPTIONS 2 (THE EASY SOLUTION) – USE THE AUTHORSURE PLUGIN

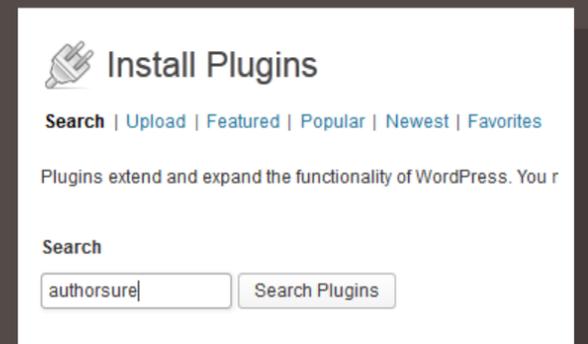
If you don't know code and you have a WordPress website, there is a plugin that will make it easy to set up authorship. It's called AuthorSure.



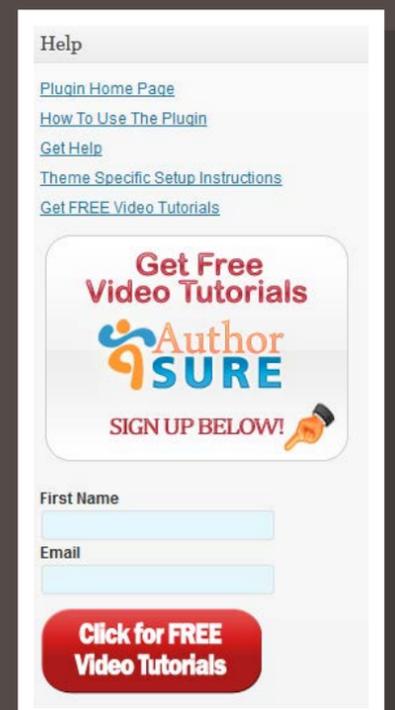
➤ Learn more about this plugin at <http://www.authorsure.com/>



➤ To download, go to the Plugins page of your admin panel. Search for AuthorSure. Then download and activate the plugin.



➤ Look under Settings in your admin panel to find AuthorSure's Options page. Once there, take a minute to sign up for their free video tutorials and setup instructions offered in the right sidebar. The information provided in these tutorials is really helpful and can save you lots of time.



 Now select your options for authorship on your website.

First, decide where on each post you want to link to your author page.

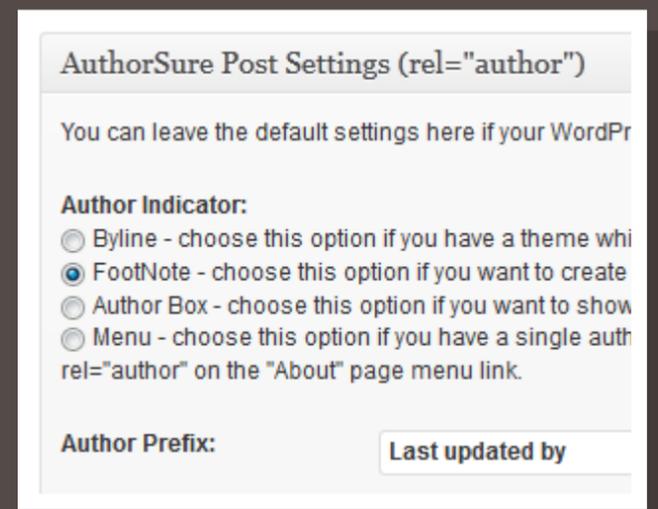
You can select:

- *Your byline, under the title of each article you write.*
- *A footnote saying, “Last updated by [author] on [date]”*
- *An author box with a picture and bio.*
- *Your website’s menu, which links to your “About” page as your bio.*

If you have a Google business page, you can set that up next. It’s as easy as entering your Google page ID.

Then you’ll make some decisions about your Author page. Feel free to test different options until you find the one you like the best.

For the rest of the options, you may simply accept the defaults. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click “Save Changes.”



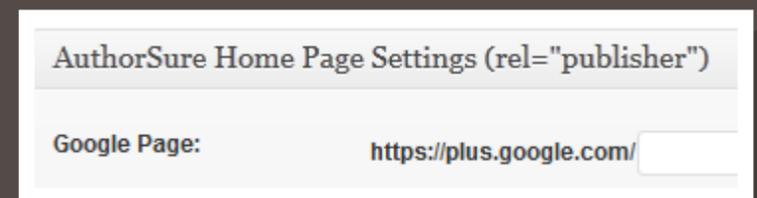
AuthorSure Post Settings (rel="author")

You can leave the default settings here if your WordPress theme already handles authorship.

Author Indicator:

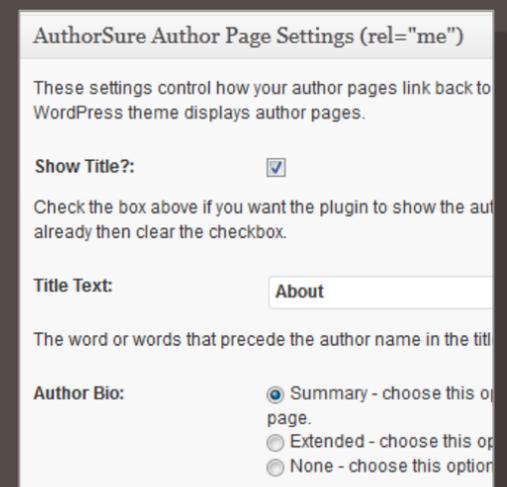
- Byline - choose this option if you have a theme which already handles authorship.
- FootNote - choose this option if you want to create a footnote for each post.
- Author Box - choose this option if you want to show an author box for each post.
- Menu - choose this option if you have a single author link on the "About" page menu link.

Author Prefix:



AuthorSure Home Page Settings (rel="publisher")

Google Page:



AuthorSure Author Page Settings (rel="me")

These settings control how your author pages link back to your WordPress theme displays author pages.

Show Title?:

Check the box above if you want the plugin to show the author name already then clear the checkbox.

Title Text:

The word or words that precede the author name in the title.

Author Bio:

- Summary - choose this option if you want a short bio.
- Extended - choose this option if you want a full bio.
- None - choose this option if you don't want a bio.

 Now it’s time to create your author page. *(You must complete this step!)*

Navigate to Users > Your Profile in the admin panel.

Review and update your profile information.

Then look at the contact information.

Fill in your website, Facebook and other social URLs. The ones that you complete will show up on your author’s page.

The most important field is your Google+ profile URL.

AuthorSure provides data fields for entering your Google+ profile URL, which is how it connects your website to your Google+ profile. So make sure to complete this step.



Users

- All Users
- Add New
- Your Profile**



Contact Info

E-mail (required)

Website

AIM

Yahoo IM

Jabber / Google Talk

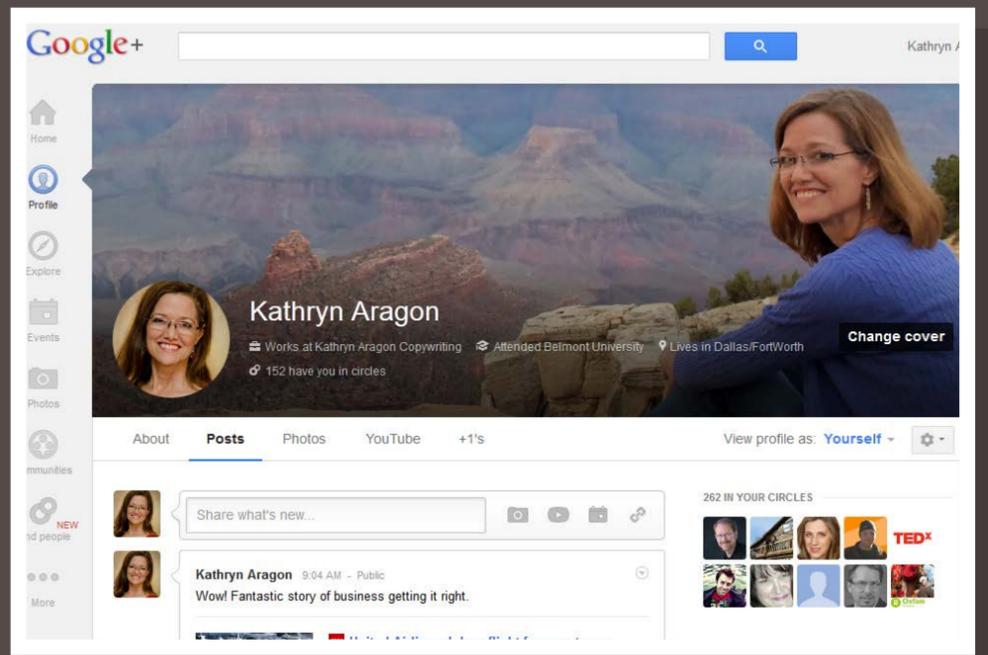
 Facebook URL

 Flickr Profile URL

 **Google Plus Profile URL**

This is the important one

To find your Google+ profile URL, go to your Google+ page. Click on the Profile icon in the left sidebar. You should land on your profile, with your banner and profile picture at the top.



Now look at the URL. You should see something like this:

<https://plus.google.com/a/longstringofnumbers/posts>

Copy the long string of numbers and paste it into the blank beside "Google Plus Profile URL."

When finished, click the "Update Profile" button.



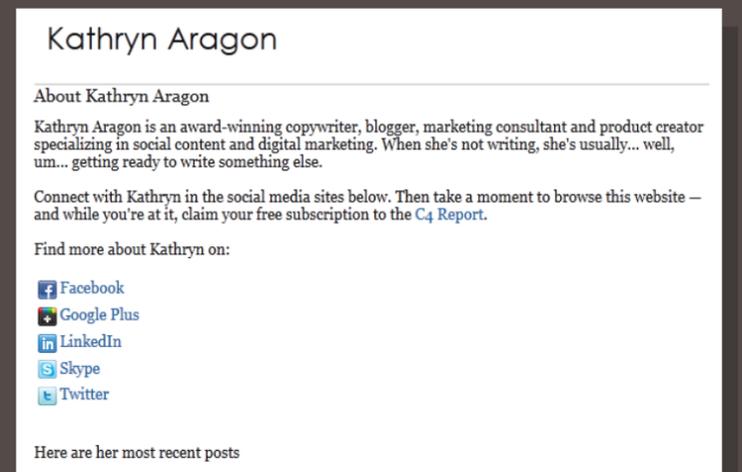
CHECK OUT YOUR NEW AUTHOR PAGE.

You'll find it at:

[http://www.yourURL.com/author/
yourWordPress-username](http://www.yourURL.com/author/yourWordPress-username)

Depending on the selections you made, it should look something like this.

If you want to make any changes, simply return to your WordPress User Profile page to change your setting.

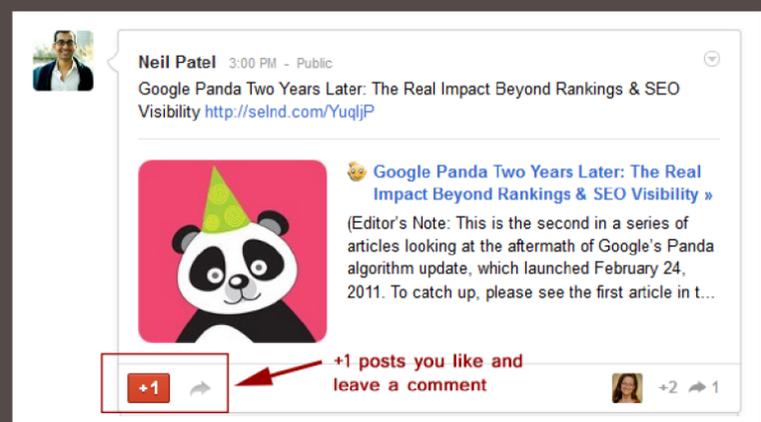


BE AN ACTIVE GOOGLE+ USER

Google+ pays attention to your interactions. So get involved. Here are three simple ways to do that:

1 CONNECT WITH OTHER PEOPLE, POST COMMENTS, AND RESPOND TO OTHER PEOPLE'S POSTS.

NOTE: +1 is the equivalent of a Facebook "like."





POST COMMENTS THAT RELATE TO YOUR BRAND'S CORE TOPIC

As a bonus, because your post will likely contain one of your target keywords, it could show up in the SERPs for that search term.

Neil Patel Mar 6, 2013 - Public
I have no patience for waiting, that is why I hustle. What about you?

Things May Come To Those That Wait...
but only things left by those who hustle.
Abraham Lincoln

This post showed up in this SERP

I have **no patience** for waiting, that is why I hustle. What about you?
<https://plus.google.com/.../posts/2nZgRVuzR6w>
Neil Patel - Mar 6, 2013 - I have **no patience** for waiting, that is why I hustle. What about you?



PROMOTE YOUR CONTENT ON GOOGLE+ AFTER IT GOES LIVE.

By posting it in Google+, you can help it rank better in the SERPs for your followers.

Neil Patel Feb 16, 2013 - Public
Important SEO Habits to Adopt for Post Panda-Penguin Era Survival <http://bit.ly/VkBjgh>

Important SEO Habits to Adopt for Post Panda-Penguin Era Survival - Search Engine Journal »
In a constantly changing SEO landscape, it is important to remain up-to-date with the changing practices and strategies of optimization. Every year, search

This post showed up in this SERP

Important SEO Habits to Adopt for Post Panda-Penguin Era Survival ...
<https://plus.google.com/.../posts/Cdh1vivRqdN>
Neil Patel - Feb 16, 2013 - Important SEO Habits to Adopt for Post Panda-Penguin Era Survival <http://bit.ly/VkBjgh> Important SEO Habits to Adopt for Post Panda-Penguin Era Survival ...

No



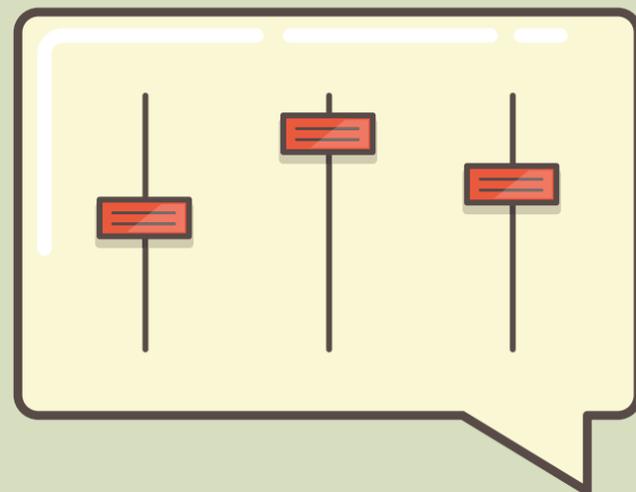
OPTIMIZE YOUR COMMENTS

Most people recognize that leaving comments on posts by other brands is a way to build engagement with that brand.

What they may not realize is how beneficial it can be to optimize comments on your own blog.

Here's how it works: When visitors leave a comment on your website, don't just give a quick response. Instead, include keywords in your comments so you can optimize the page without being accused of over-optimization.

Here's how to do it:



STEP

1

ALWAYS ENCOURAGE COMMENTS.

No matter what type of content you produce, encourage readers to respond. Ask a question or invite additional ideas.

If possible, write posts to encourage comments. For example:

- *Don't try to provide all the answers in your post. Introduce an idea and let your readers contribute their own ideas.*
- *Include comments from your Facebook page or Twitter feed, so your followers have additional ways to engage with you.*
- *Include thoughts from other authorities in your space, and link to them. One of them might post a comment.*



Johnny B. Truant

Cool writeups, and thanks for featuring me! I find it strange that one of my biggest reactions here is indignation that that thing scored me at a 4th grade reading level. I mean, I use words like "indignation." So I'm thinking that arrogance about one's complexity must play into this too, because I apparently have that.

STEP

2

RESPOND TO COMMENTS WITH COMPLETE SENTENCES.

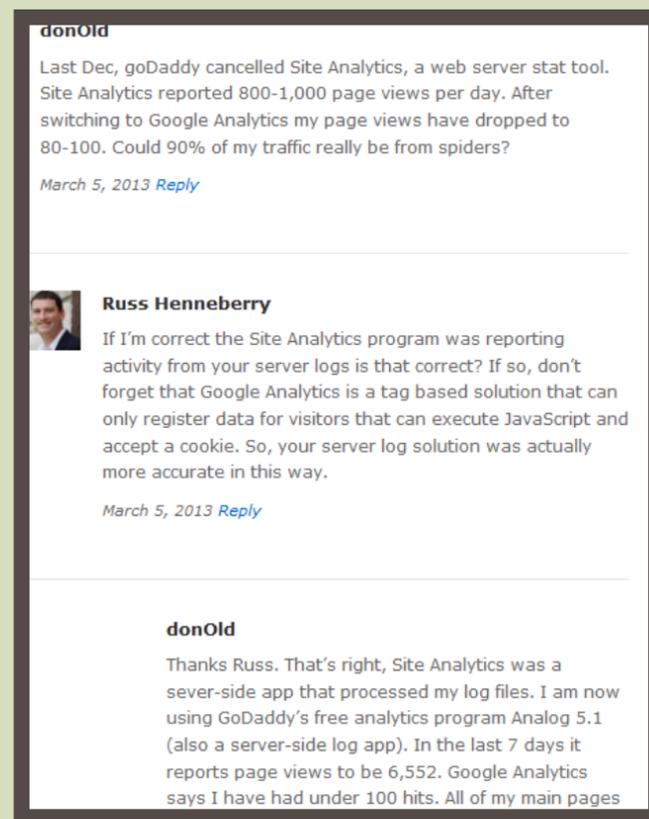
When people do comment, post an answer. But don't simply thank commenters for engaging. Respond to their comment.

STEP 5

INCORPORATE KEYWORDS IN YOUR COMMENTS.

Here's where you can use comments to optimize your Web page. Answer in full sentences, with complete thoughts. And in your comments, include keywords that can help optimize your page.

Don't overdo it, though. You want this to be a subtle tactic, nothing obvious.



The screenshot shows a comment thread on a blog. The first comment is from 'donOld' asking a question about Google Analytics accuracy. The second comment is from 'Russ Henneberry' providing a detailed answer. The third comment is from 'donOld' thanking Russ and providing more context.

donOld
Last Dec, goDaddy cancelled Site Analytics, a web server stat tool. Site Analytics reported 800-1,000 page views per day. After switching to Google Analytics my page views have dropped to 80-100. Could 90% of my traffic really be from spiders?
March 5, 2013 Reply

Russ Henneberry
If I'm correct the Site Analytics program was reporting activity from your server logs is that correct? If so, don't forget that Google Analytics is a tag based solution that can only register data for visitors that can execute JavaScript and accept a cookie. So, your server log solution was actually more accurate in this way.
March 5, 2013 Reply

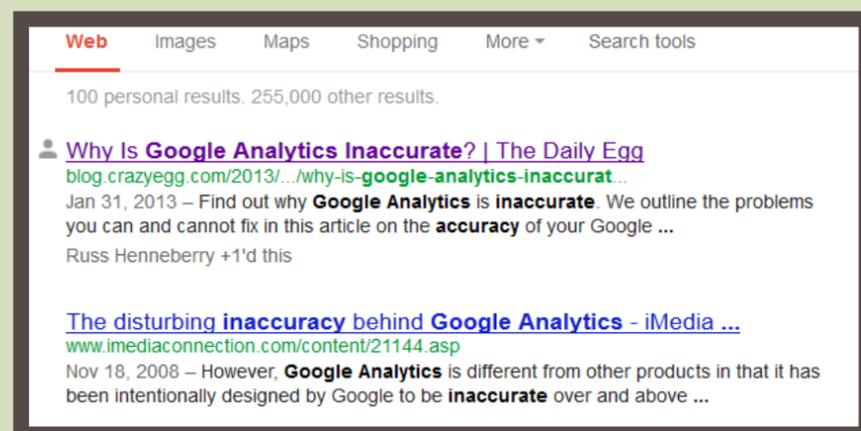
donOld
Thanks Russ. That's right, Site Analytics was a sever-side app that processed my log files. I am now using GoDaddy's free analytics program Analog 5.1 (also a server-side log app). In the last 7 days it reports page views to be 6,552. Google Analytics says I have had under 100 hits. All of my main pages

STEP 4

ENCOURAGE DIALOG.

As in your posts, post comments that invite dialog. Ask questions in your comments, for example, to start a discussion.

Notice here that Russ answered donOld's question with another question... and donOld answered back.



The screenshot shows a Google search result for 'Why Is Google Analytics Inaccurate?'. The search bar shows 'Web' selected. The results show 100 personal results and 255,000 other results. The top result is from 'The Daily Egg' with a link to 'blog.crazyegg.com/2013/.../why-is-google-analytics-inaccurat...'. Below the link is a snippet: 'Jan 31, 2013 - Find out why Google Analytics is inaccurate. We outline the problems you can and cannot fix in this article on the accuracy of your Google ...'. Below the snippet is a small profile picture and the text 'Russ Henneberry +1'd this'. The second result is from 'iMedia' with a link to 'www.imediaconnection.com/content/21144.asp'. Below the link is a snippet: 'Nov 18, 2008 - However, Google Analytics is different from other products in that it has been intentionally designed by Google to be inaccurate over and above ...'.

That helps put more keyword-specific content on your page, which helps it rank better in the SERPs.

It works, too. At the time of this writing, this post ranks number one in Google for the topic.

Because search now focuses on relevance rather than keywords, you can benefit from optimizing all online interactions, in particular, your comments on web posts.

Strategic commenting on your own website can also help optimize your web page by adding more keywords to that page without looking spammy to search engines.

No. 5

GUEST BLOGGING FOR EXTERNAL LINKS



Guest posting on other sites may not seem like an SEO strategy. But with the changes Google has made to search, your authority as an author is critical to your ability to show up in search engines.

Publishing on authoritative sites a great way to optimize your own website because it builds your reputation as an author and creates an identifiable connection between you and the websites you guest post on.

That being said, you need to be careful about which sites you write for:

- 1/ **ONLY GUEST POST FOR WEBSITES THAT COVER TOPICS RELEVANT TO YOUR CORE TOPIC.**
- 2/ **ONLY GUEST POST ON HIGH-QUALITY SITES.**

In addition, be careful about your approach. Google has indicated they don't want unnatural, or manipulated, results and may soon penalize guest posting as a form of "payment" for backlinks.

STEP 1

BUILD A LIST OF POSSIBLE GUEST BLOGGING SITES.

You can do this in a couple of ways.

1 CHECK OUT YOUR FEEDLY STREAM FOR SITES IN YOUR SPACE THAT USE DIFFERENT WRITERS.

They may have a writing staff, or they may use guest writers. You'll have to visit their site to determine which.

A screenshot of a website footer with a dark background and white text. The text includes "Guest Posting", "Affiliates", "Terms", "Earnings Disclaimer", and "Privacy Policy". The "Guest Posting" link is highlighted with a red rectangular box.

Guest Posting Affiliates Terms Earnings Disclaimer Privacy Policy

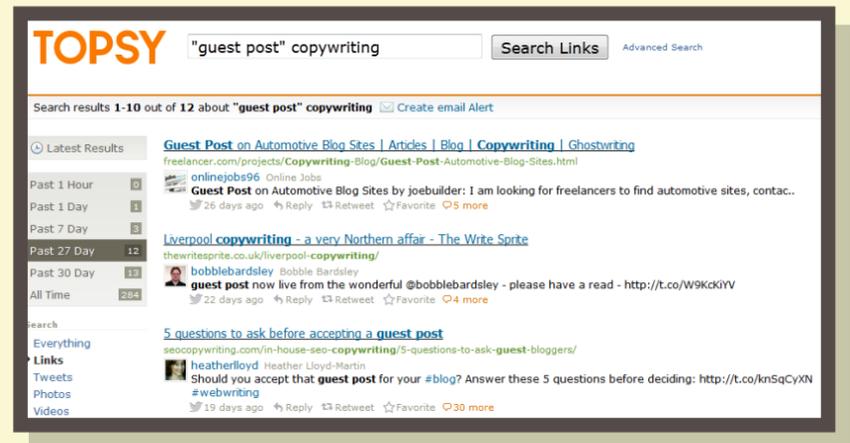
So visit the site and look for a link to guest posting guidelines. It might be labeled:

- *Want to write for this site?*
- *Write for us.*
- *Guest posting*
- *Writer's guidelines*

Click through to the page and check out the requirements.

Topsy is a social media search engine and can help you quickly identify sites that publish guest posts.

In the search bar, type: “guest post” [opic]



The results tell you which sites use guest posts on the topic you want to write about.

REPEAT THAT SEARCH IN GOOGLE+.

The Google+ search has all the power of Google itself. So type into the search bar: “guest post” [opic]



MAKE A LIST OF POTENTIAL GUEST BLOGGING OPPORTUNITIES

Check out each site to see if they have guest blogging guidelines.

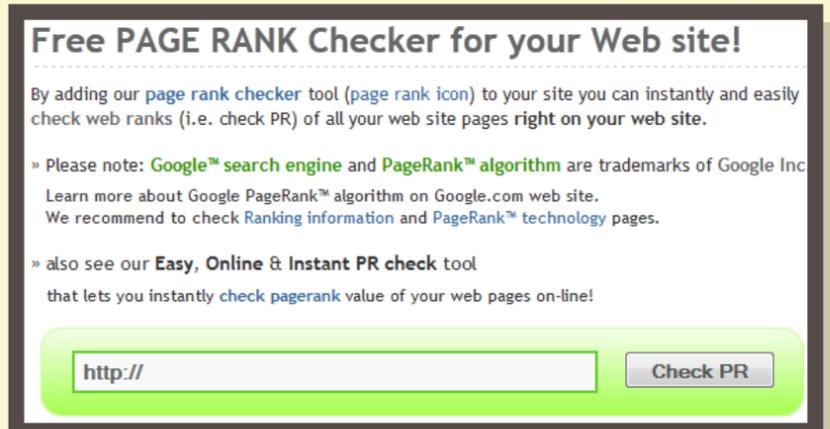
If they do, copy and paste the site URL into an Excel file. (*We recommend adding a tab to your Content Plan document and pasting the information there.*)

How long should your list be? Make it as long as you can, with as many sites as you can find. (*One hundred wouldn't be too many.*)



PERFORM SOME QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SITES YOU'VE LISTED

You need to determine the quality of each site.



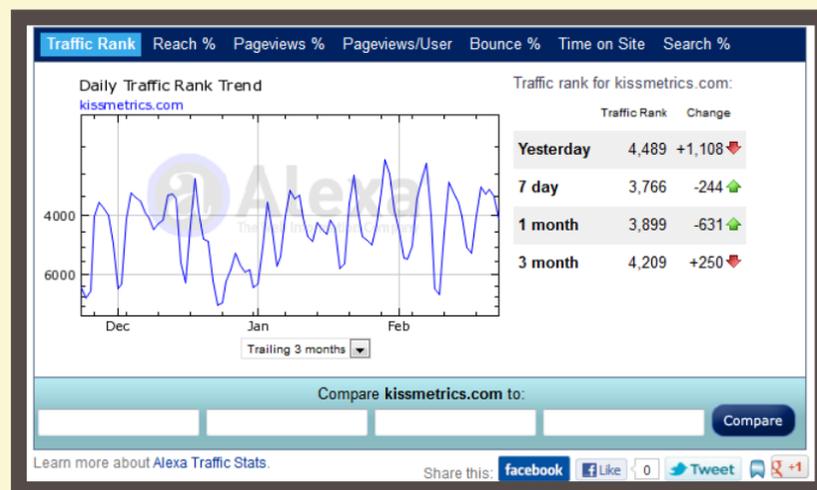
1 LOOK FOR THEIR GOOGLE PAGE RANK FOR YOUR CORE TOPIC.

Use the free tool at <http://www.prchecker.info/>.

This tool ranks a website from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest quality.
Select sites with a rank of 4 or higher.

2 HOW MUCH TRAFFIC DO THEY GENERATE?

Visit <http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo> to evaluate as many as five sites at once. Look for sites with a high Alexa rating or that have a significant number of visitors.



3 EVALUATE ENGAGEMENT LEVELS.

Look at the number of social shares and comments they get.



You don't need to avoid sites with lower engagement, but do be aware that your own posts will get less engagement on those sites.

STEP 5

SELECT 2 OR 3 SITES TO FOCUS ON AT A TIME.

- 1/ Join their mailing list.
- 2/ Begin commenting on those websites
- 3/ Share content from those sites in social media

STEP 4

DEVELOP A LIST OF ARTICLE IDEAS FOR THESE SITES

- 1/ Look for ideas that will appeal to the readers of your targeted blogs and still relate to your core topic.
- 2/ Refine those ideas. Don't just develop a topic. Decide on your angle and list the major points you plan to make.

KA 2/18	blog, podcast	AuthorSure plugin
KA 2/25	Video	Core message = brand
CE 1/26	blog	CE - make people salivate over your product descriptions. Use examples from tea and food sales. Nabisco (oreo and fig neutons), Teavana, senory (aroma, colors, sound, feel) Key: they make you imagine.
CE	blog	CE - The goal is to get response, right? So provide more ways to respond. (More items are clickable, not more calls to action.)

NOTE:

Use the same techniques you use to plan content ideas for your own website.

STEP



PROPOSE YOUR ARTICLE

Pitch your article in the way specified in the guest blogger guidelines for each website.

If they want you to submit a complete article, skip to set 6 below.

If they don't have any specific requirements, try an email like this one:

SUBJECT: HAVE YOU CONSIDERED POSTING ABOUT [INSERT YOUR GUEST BLOG POST TOPIC]?

Hi [Insert their first name],

As an avid reader of [insert their site name] I would love to read about [insert guest blog post topic].. and I think your other readers would as well.

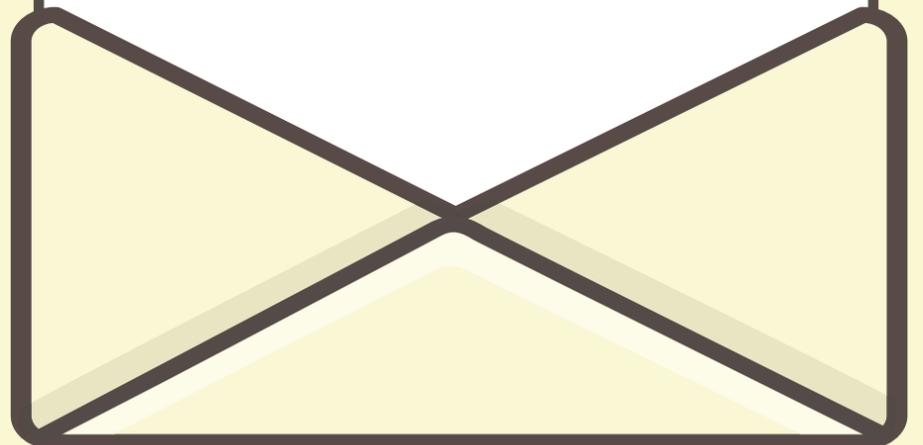
Your content on [insert existing post #1 from their website, existing post #2 from their website, and existing post #3 from their website] are great, but I think you can tie it all together by blogging on [insert your guest blog post topic]

I know you are probably busy and won't blog on it so I'm going to make you an offer you can't refuse. How about I write it for you? Don't worry, I'm a great blogger and have written posts such as [insert blog post URL #1] and [insert blog post URL #2]

Let me know if you are interested. I already know your blogging style, plus I understand what your readers love...as I am one.

Look forward to hearing from you,

[insert your name]



STEP 6

WRITE CONTENT USING ALL THE STEPS YOU USE IN YOUR OWN CONTENT

Refer back to Chapter 4 if you need help remembering the creative process.

In most cases, guest posts aren't for pay. But that doesn't mean you should write lower-quality articles. Your name is on the post, so make it the best you can.

TIP: Keep it informative. A guest post should not be a marketing piece designed to drive traffic back to your site. Focus on adding value to your host website.

STEP 7

INCLUDE A BLURB THAT LINKS BACK TO YOUR WEBSITE.

At the bottom of your article, include an "About the author" blurb.

Generally, you're allowed two or three links.

TIP: Don't always link back to your home page. Be strategic. If you have a page or article on your website that relates to the guest blog post topic, use that URL instead.

Here are a few examples:

About the Author: Rae Hoffman (AKA "[Sugarrae](#)") is a veteran in the affiliate marketing space and the CEO of PushFire, a digital marketing agency that provides [SEO](#) and [PPC management](#) services.

About the Author: Andy Crestodina is the Strategic Director of Orbit Media, a web design company in Chicago. He wrote an (you guessed it) awesome book called [Content Chemistry, An Illustrated Guide to Content Marketing](#) You can find Andy on [Google+](#) and [Twitter](#).

About the Author: Adam Kreitman is an [online marketing consultant](#) who owns [Words That Click](#), a firm focusing on SEM for small businesses. Follow him on [Google+](#)

STEP 8

ADD THIS SITE TO YOUR GOOGLE+ PROFILE

Once you've published on a website, add it to your Google+ profile:

This builds your authority as an author on reputable sites. And now that Google measures Author Rank, that's an important way to add relevance to your own domain.

Contributor to

-  The Daily Egg
-  Copyblogger
-  ProBlogger
-  Social Media Examiner
-  Convince and Convert
-  Content Marketing Institute
-  Tiny & Mighty

No 6

REQUESTING EXTERNAL LINKS

Since Authority sites have lots of external links, if you can secure links to your website from Hub sites in your niche, you can gain Trust points from Google.

Of course, Google frowns on any attempt to “buy” links. So avoid offering a value exchange to secure links.

Instead, request them. If you create a Web page that offers value to another site’s visitors, or if you do a product review of one of their products, the site may be willing to link to your page.

Here’s how to go about it:

STEP 1

DEVELOP SOME CONTENT TO SERVE AS “LINK BAIT.”

Focus on a particular person, company, or product. Then come up with content for your own website that also provides value to that site.

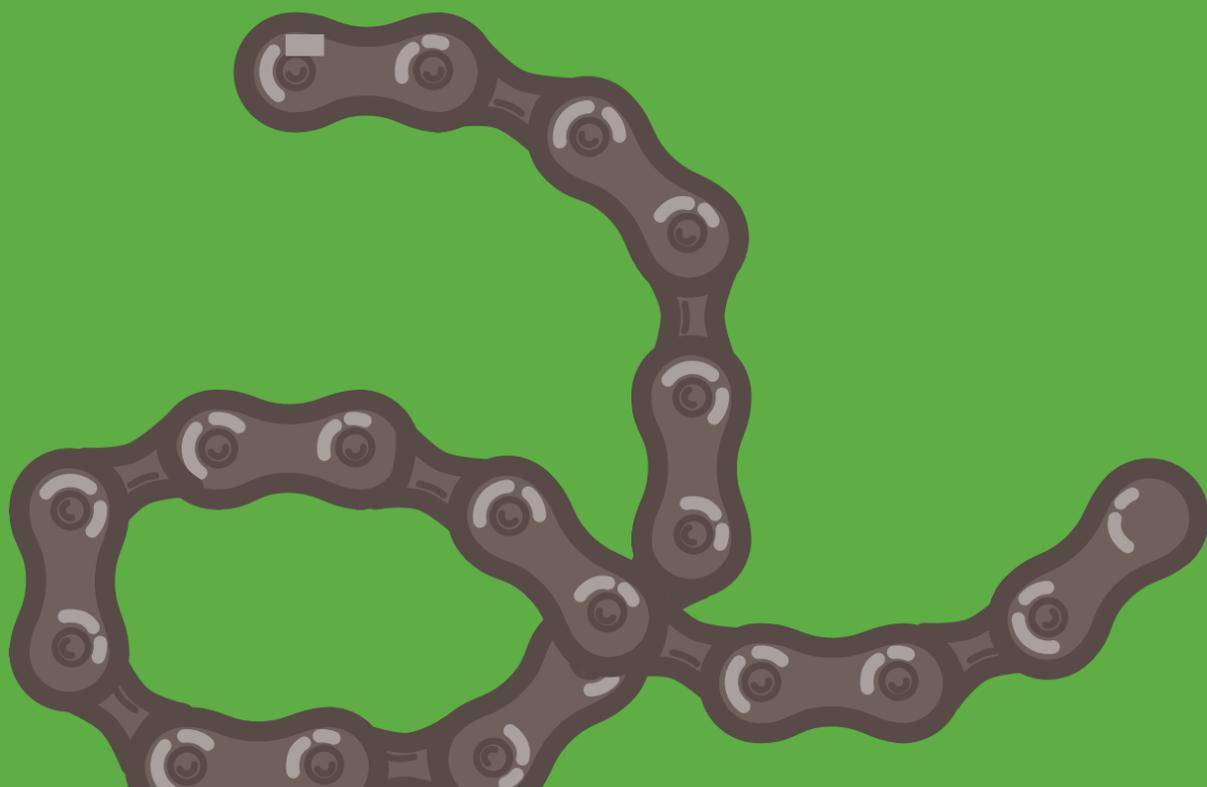
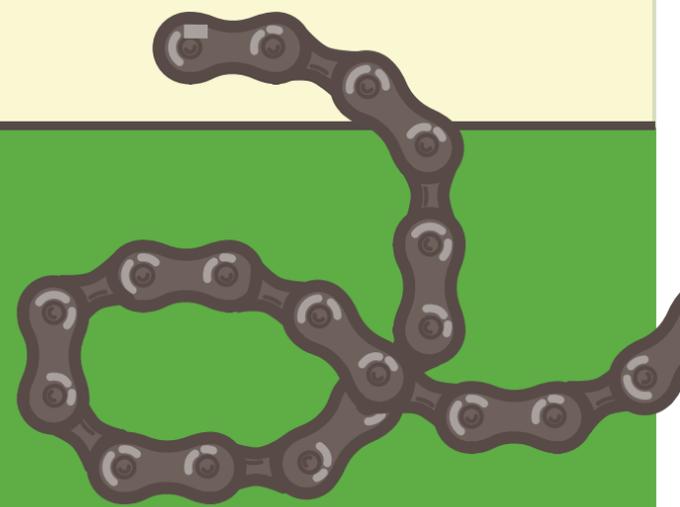
NOTE:

It should also add value to your own followers. Never put optimization above your visitors. Put their information needs first, SEO second.

STEP 2

PUBLISH THAT CONTENT AND PROMOTE IT.

Write and publish a high-quality piece of content. Make sure it mentions your target favorably and that you include a link to that person or organization.



CASE STUDY:

A Lesson in Listenomics

by KATHRYN ARAGON on JUNE 17, 2011

Like 0 +1 0 Tweet 3

Your customers are talking. Are you listening?

When you tune in to your customers and respond to their needs, you can win their hearts. But the opposite is also true. Remember the “Dell sucks” and the “Comcast Must Die” campaigns several years ago?

Listenomics is based on an old idea that the customer pays the bills. So we need to stop talking long enough to let him tell us what he wants and needs. By listening and responding, we can improve our product, create positive word-of-mouth and strengthen our brand.



This post uses a snafu with HootSuite as a case study for listening to your customers.

The post gives an honest account of the event and then applauds the company for listening and responding.

You can read the entire post at:

<http://www.kathrynaragon.com/a-lesson-in-listenomics/>

After it was published, HootSuite left two comments on the post, both complimentary. Here's one of them:

Daniel R. (from HootSuite) June 24, 2011 at 1:22 pm [edit]

Kathryn, thanks again for your feedback about our recent Publisher release. We continue listening our users and have just announced an update to the dashboard including the return of the Pending Updates stream.

The Publisher and Pending stream are now interchangeable allowing you to schedule and manage with your preferred tool. In most cases, your previous Pending Update streams will also re-appear.

While we were at it, we increased the limit on Batch Scheduling to 200 per social network (in batches of 50) and improved support for international character sets.

Please take a spin and let us know what you think: <http://owl.li/5oj2e>

DaveO from HootSuite @daveohoots Jun 18, 2011
@KathrynAragon Hurrah posted! awaiting moderation ... i hope i pass the audition :) Also did i say thanks? #thanks

DaveO from HootSuite @daveohoots Jun 18, 2011
Hello @KathrynAragon - thanks for your post about the HootSuite publisher tool and listenomics - alas, my comment didn't post :(

The post was then linked to from a roundup article on HootSuite's website, available here: <http://blog.hootsuite.com/publisher-news-roundup/>

Opinions about #HootSuite's Publisher & Pending Tools ~ News Roundup

June 24, 2011 by Ashley Jane Brookes

2 SHARE



At HootSuite HQ, we continually work to keep the dashboard on the leading edge of social media tools. Indeed, constant innovation and refinement keeps the 1.85+ million fans of the dash happily Hooting to their friends and fans via all the social networks supported in the tool.

Last week's **Publisher** release is the latest evolution of the dash with new scheduling and permissions features designed to aid the workflow for campaigns.

Today's **News Roundup** is dedicated to the user feedback on this important development... Including the return of the improved **Pending Updates stream**.

Kathryn Aragon – A Lesson in Listenomics

Businesses that don't listen can't respond. Our world has become so social that you can't ignore your customer's voice. No response is considered a negative response.

But that's not all. Because of social media, you no longer control your story. You, along with your customers, create your story every day.

What story are you creating? Do you listen for your name and respond to questions and comments up-front? Do you engage your customers — or just hope they'll go away.

Sadly, that's the message consumers are getting from many companies. And they're happy to oblige. Don't shut down your customers. Listen to them, and engage.

Kudos to HootSuite for a job well-done."

This one post got engagement and a backlink — simply by giving a favorable review to a new update by HootSuite. Not bad.



CONTACT THE PERSON/ORGANIZATION AND TELL THEM YOU HAVE IT.

In the case study above, HootSuite found the article on its own. But if the person you feature in your article doesn't find your content, it's acceptable to let them know about it.

Your best bet is simply to mention that you published something that their readers could find valuable. Then ask if they'd be interested in linking to it.

Your email (or direct message) might look something like this:

SUBJECT: YOU WERE FEATURED IN A BLOG POST TODAY

Hi [nsert name here]

I just wanted to let you know that you were featured today in my article, [nsert name of article]

I'd be honored if you'd take a minute to visit.

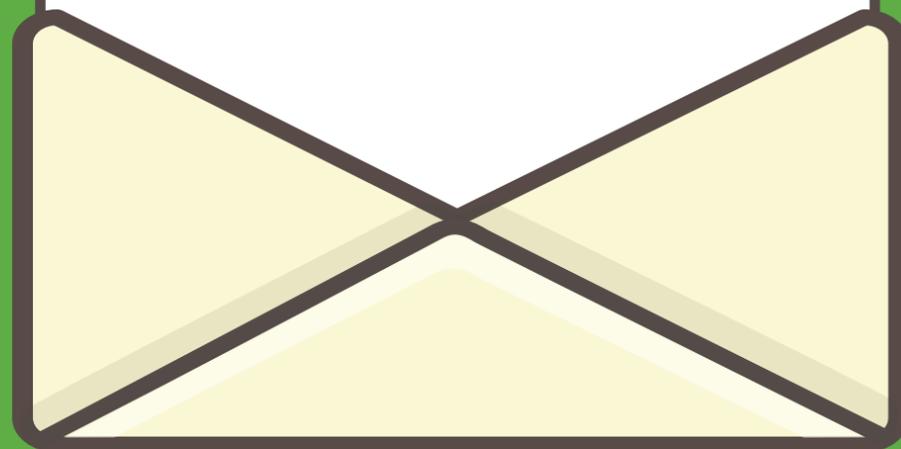
[nsert link here]

And if you like it, I'd be doubly honored if you'd mention it on your own website or promote it to your followers.

Thanks for all your effort making [nsert their website here] such a fantastic resource. I continue to be one of your biggest fans.

Cheers!

[our name]



One other option: Just ask

Here's our template:

SUBJECT: [INSERT FIRST NAME OF WEBSITE OWNER], I THINK I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU

Hopefully I didn't freak you out by my subject line, but I'm really in love with you. Don't worry. It's not in a creepy way. Mostly I'm in love with your website, [insert their website name].

You probably get tons of people every day who are in love with [insert website name], so I won't bore you with my reasons. Instead I thought I could show some appreciation by giving you some feedback on how you can improve your website.

- [Insert suggestion #1]

- [Insert suggestion #2]

And if you are wondering how you can repay your biggest fan, feel free to link to my website [insert URL].

Ah...just kidding, you've already done enough for me by making [insert their website name] so awesome!

Cheers,

[Insert your name]



Three rules for asking for external links:

- 1/ Be very, very respectful.**
- 2/ Make it favorable to them, not yourself.**
- 3/ Be careful not to upset the Google balance. (Don't trade value for the link.)**

SEE HOW OPTIMIZATION IS CHANGING?!

Notice we don't put a lot of emphasis on keywords. The strategies that get the most bang for your buck focus on building authority and social connections.

Certainly, perform some on-page optimization. But don't overdo it.

Then use these new strategies for building your online reputation:

- 1/ **Create lots of content on your topic.**
- 2/ **Set up and develop Author Rank.**
- 3/ **Optimize comments and Google+ posts too.**
- 4/ **Guest blog for authoritative sites.**
- 5/ **Request links (or write content that invites them).**

As you can see, SEO has changed. Google rewards high-quality, useful, relevant content. So the best optimization is to get really good at creating and promoting content.

You already know how to create high-value content. So now it's time to cover promotion. Chapter 9, "Promoting Your Content to Increase Traffic, Engagement, and Sales," will tell you everything you need to know.

TAKE A LOOK...

TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER SEVEN

TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER NINE



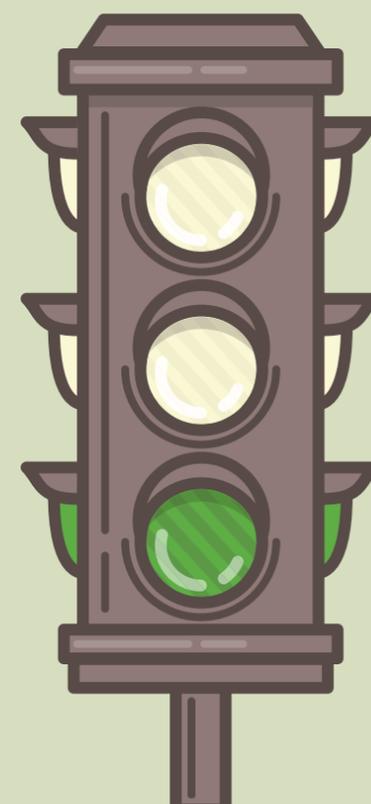


PROMOTING YOUR CONTENT

TO INCREASE TRAFFIC, ENGAGEMENT, AND SALES

The secret to content marketing boils down to three things: creating great content, making sure it gets found in search engines, and promoting it to your followers.

You've learned the secrets of creating great content and making sure it ranks well in search engines. Now let's talk about ways to promote your content.



THE DAY CONTENT GOES LIVE

On the day your content goes live, you want to announce it to your list so it can generate traffic to your site.

Here's a basic plan for getting the word out:

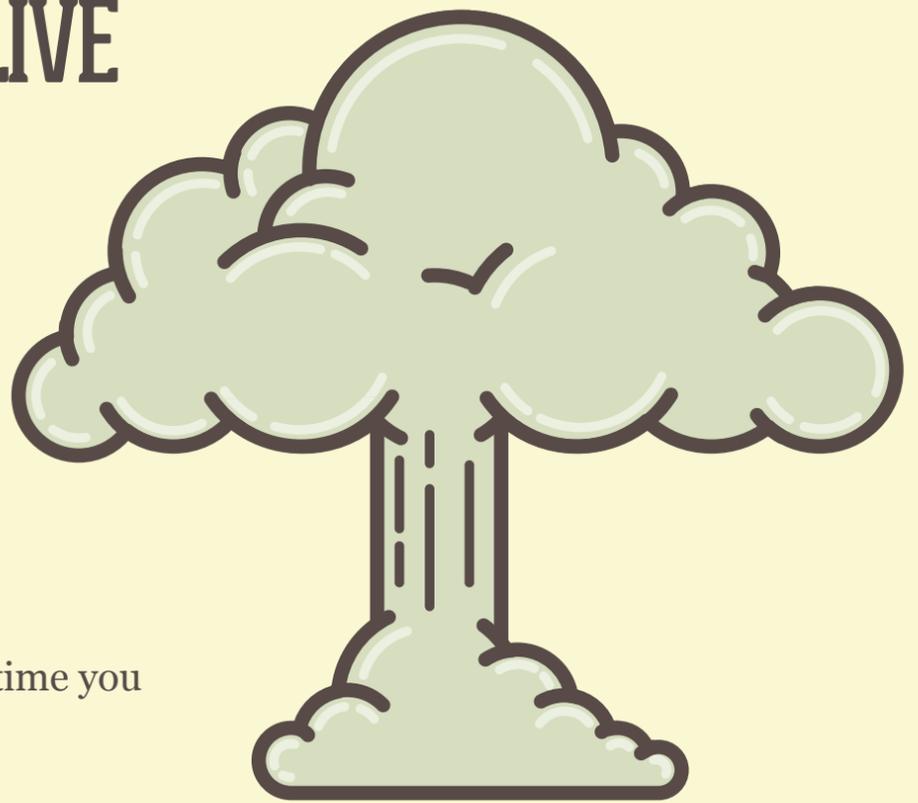
EMAIL IT TO YOUR LIST.

OPTION 1 - NEWSLETTER

As a content marketer, you need an email list. Each time you publish, notify your list that the content is available.

A few ways to handle this:

- *Newsletter with full article and, perhaps some ads. Readers may read the content without clicking through to your website.*
- *Newsletter with blurbs to several articles and "read more" links. It may or may not have ads since readers must go to your website to see the articles.*
- *Email from you, introducing the article and linking to it.*
- *Automatic email with title and link.*
(Sent from your email service whenever you publish to your blog.)



NOTE:

Automated emails tend to get lower engagement. If you can, write a personal email to announce your content. It takes more time, but the results are worth it.

OPTION 2 – PROMOTIONAL EMAIL WITH LANDING PAGE

If your content is a special report or other long-form content, consider creating an HTML email to promote it to your list.

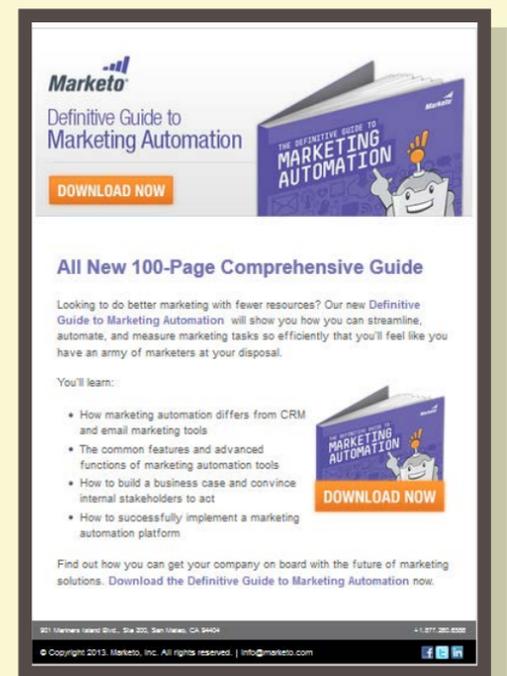
In this example from Marketo, the subject line is:

New Content | The Definitive Guide to Marketing Automation

The email includes a picture of the report, a short description and bullets highlighting the information it provides.

Click through, and you arrive at a landing page with an opt-in form.

This type of promotion leverages your existing list to gain even more followers.



100-Page Guide to Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Marketing Automation!

You've heard that marketing automation can change the way your business operates - now get all the facts, including:

- Why marketing automation is so hot right now
- How marketing automation differs from other technologies like CRM
- The common features and advanced functions of marketing automation
- How to build a business case and convince internal stakeholders to act
- And much, much more!



DOWNLOAD TODAY!

Fill out the form to receive the newest Definitive Guide from Marketo.

First Name: *

Last Name: *

Work Email: *

Job Function: * Choose One

CRM System: * Choose One

Company: *

[Download](#)

* Required. Your privacy is important to us.

NOTE:

Be sure to include share buttons in your email (and on your landing page too) so your followers can share your content with their connections.

TWEET ABOUT IT THREE TO FOUR TIMES

If you are active on Twitter, plan to tweet about your post in the morning, midday, and evening on the day you publish. You may also post a fourth time, late at night.



Experiment with the times that work best for your audience. The hours that get the best responses will be different, depending on your audience.

NOTE:

Only 20% of your posts should be about your own content. So if you tweet once or twice a day, you should only promote your content once on the day it goes live.

Make sure that 80% or more of your tweets are non-promotional.

POST ONCE IN GOOGLE+

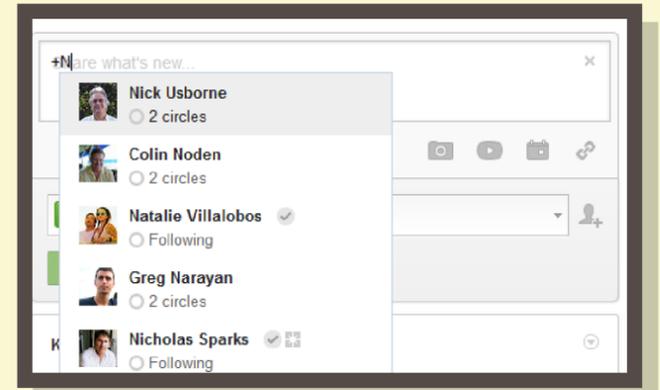
It's a good idea to include a comment introducing your post. If you do, you can optimize the post to show up in SERPs.

Include hash tags (*as in Twitter*) with keywords. And if you mention an influencer in your post, tag them in your comment.

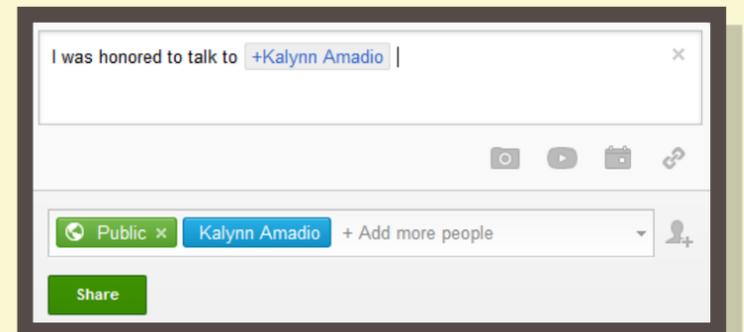


To tag someone you mention in your comments, type a plus (+) and their name.

As soon as you start typing after the plus sign, a drop down will appear with people in your circles whose names begin with that letter.



Select the one you want, and s/he appears in a light blue box. His or her name also appears in the “Share with” box, and s/he will be notified when you click “Share.”



Of course, you don't have to leave a comment with your Google+ posts. If you are in a hurry or if the title of your post says it all, you may simply post the article with no comment.



Generally, one post in Google+ is plenty. Any more than that could be perceived as spam.

NOTE:

When you post content, be sure to set your privacy setting to “Public.” This will help you rank better in Google.

POST ONCE IN FACEBOOK

As on Google+, just one post per piece of content is usually sufficient.

You may include an introductory comment — or not.



No

2

THE WEEK CONTENT GOES LIVE

You may continue to post about your content throughout the week. But don't overdo it. Your followers want to see more in your social streams than posts about your own content.

Here are some tips for promoting your content on the days following publication.



TWEET ABOUT YOUR POST SEVERAL MORE TIMES THROUGHOUT THE WEEK.

Don't retweet the same post all week long. On Day 1, you probably posted the title of your content. Here are a few ideas for tweeting without mentioning the title:

- *Tweet a quote from your content.*
- *Tweet your thoughts about the post.*
- *Tweet the big benefit of reading your content.*
- *Tweet a comment about how well it's being received.*

Here's a sample schedule for tweeting during the week:

- *Twice on Day 2: morning and afternoon at your peak response times.*
- *Once on Day 3: at your morning peak response time.*
- *Once on Day 4: at your evening peak response time.*
- *Once on Day 5: at your afternoon peak response time.*



Kathryn Aragon

Love content marketing but hate writing? This post tells you how you can create content when you aren't a writer. <http://lnkd.in/Mja423>



How to Write Content When You Hate Writing

kathrynaragon.com • How do you write content when you hate writing? It's as simple as writing like you talk. Here's how.

SHARE ON YOUR LINKEDIN STATUS UPDATE.

SHARE YOUR POST IN RELATED LINKEDIN GROUPS.



Heather
Unfollow

Ever plagued with self doubt about your writing skills? Here's how to turn it around!
It's all too easy (and common) to get down on yourself and second guess your career choice as a writer. If you're in a writing funk, ...



You are a writer seocopywriting.com

Are you struggling in your freelance copywriting career? Maybe all you need is an attitude change! Learn how to own your writing brilliance!

posted 6 days ago

SHARE YOUR POST IN OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA SITES YOU BELONG TO.

If you're active in a social channel, share your content with your followers.

Just be careful to follow the accepted rules for sharing in that channel.



RESPOND TO SOCIAL SHARES

Like or +1 shares in Facebook and Google+. Respond to mentions and retweets in Twitter with a friendly thank you.

Always reward social interaction with more interaction. It is social media, after all.

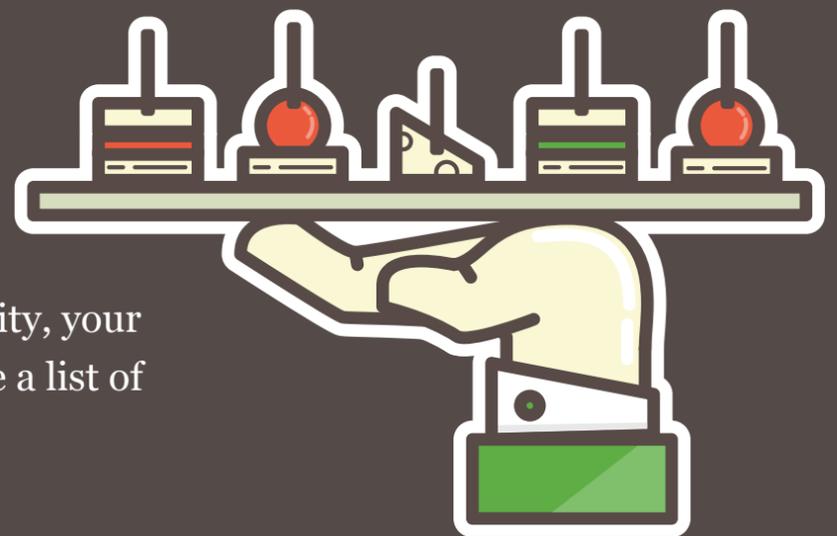


ONGOING PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Promotion isn't all about increasing your numbers. It's about finding and connecting with a community. And true promotion is reciprocal. So if you mention others, they may start mentioning you too.

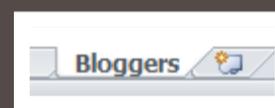
But if you don't create a strategy for building a community, your efforts may be haphazard at best. So it can help to create a list of people you would like to develop relationship with.

Here's how to do that:



1 CREATE A LIST OF INFLUENTIAL BLOGGERS AND TWEETERS IN YOUR INDUSTRY.

Add a tab to your Content Planner and call it: Bloggers



Create tabs across the top:

Blogger | Brand | Website | Expertise | Twitter | Google+

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Blogger	Brand	Website	Expertise	Twitter	Google+

Then build a list in influential bloggers, brands, and tweeters in your space.

Your goal is to generate anywhere from 50 to 500 people who blog or talk about your core topics. You want to find people with influence in your space.

Include people who:

- Are already engaging with and commenting on your content.
- Well-known bloggers and reporters in your space who haven't discovered you yet.
- Are already members of the community you're trying to join.
- Are on the fringes of the community you want to join.

CRITERIA

ACTIVE IN SOCIAL MEDIA
LOTS OF FOLLOWERS
HIGH ENGAGEMENT LEVEL
GOOD CONTENT
MARKETERS

Once you've created your list (we'll cover how you do that in a moment), select 10 to 20 people on that list to be your targeted high-value influencers. Place these people at the top of your list.

OBJECTIVES

NAME RECOGNITION
INTERACTION
INCLUSION IN THEIR COMMUNITY
RELATIONSHIP

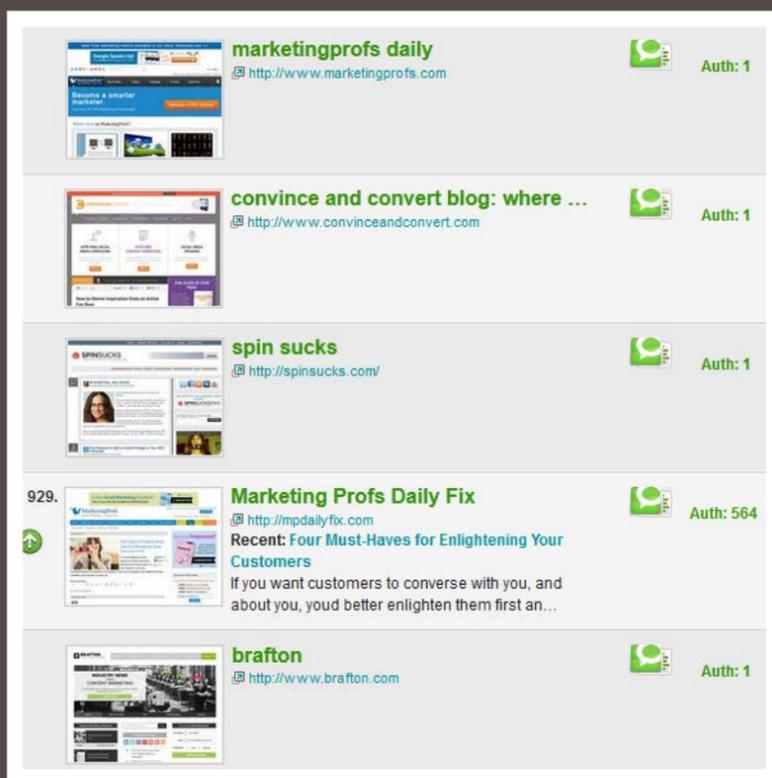
How do you find bloggers for your list?

Technorati.com is a great resource for finding blogs in your space.

- 1/ Click "blog" at the front of the search bar, then enter your search term in the search bar. Click the magnifying glass icon to begin your search.



- 2/ Review your search results.



Click on the name of a blog to review its stats.

Convince and Convert Blog: Where Social Media and Email Collide [Site details](#)



<http://www.convinceandconvert.com>
Hype-free social media strategy, case studies, and advice.

TOP 100 SMALL BUSINESS

This site's authorities across Technorati:

Technorati Authority: 568	Rank: 885
Entertainment Authority: 68	Rank: 15191
Business Authority: 613	Rank: 168
Small Business Authority: 656	Rank: 43
Technology Authority: 1	Rank: 10982

Tags: digital marketing, email, email marketing, internet advertising, internet marketing, jason baer, jaybaer, online advertising, online marketing, public relations, social media, social media marketing, social networking

Writers:  jaybaer [Report this blog as spam](#)

Look for blogs that are related to your own core topic and that list writers you can connect with.

Copy and paste your favorites into your Blogger List.

	A	B	C
1	Blogger	Brand	Website
2	Ann Handley	marketingprofs daily	http://www.marketingprofs.com
	Jay Baer	Convince and Convert	http://www.convinceandconvert.com/
3			
4		Spin Sucks	http://spinsucks.com/
5	Marcus Sheridan	The Sales Lion	http://www.thesaleslion.com
6	Brian Clark	Copyblogger	http://www.copyblogger.com
7	Sonia Simone	Copyblogger	http://www.copyblogger.com
8	Russ Henneberry	Crazy Egg	
9	Jon Morrow		
10	Chris Brogan	BusinessWorks	
	Damien Farnworth	Copyblogger	http://www.copyblogger.com
11		Copybot	

Enter the name of the blogger in the first column, the blog or brand in the second. Copy and paste the link to their website/blog in the third column.

If there are multiple writers at a blog, create separate entries for each blogger you want to connect with.

Remember, you can't connect with a brand. Only with people. So emphasize "bloggers" rather than "brands."

Take a look at the blurb under the blog's URL.

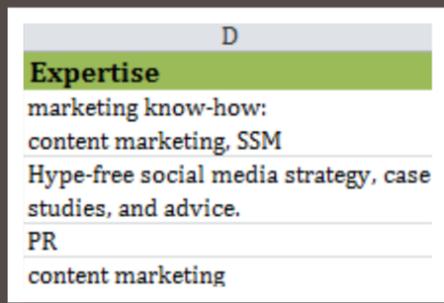
This is the brand's description of what they do. In other words, it's their expertise.

MarketingProfs Daily



<http://www.marketingprofs.com>
MarketingProfs provides marketing know-how to over 190,000 marketing professionals

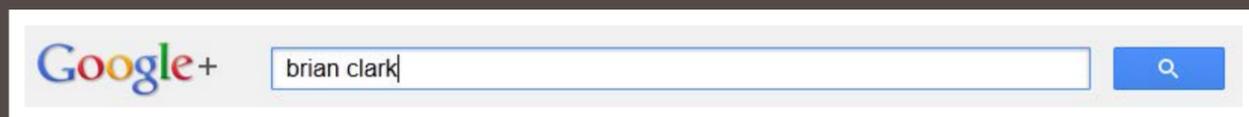
- 6/ Take a look at the blurb under the blog's URL. Copy and paste some or all of this description it into your blogger list under Column D, "Expertise."



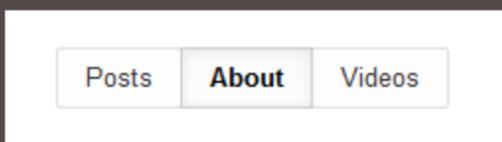
Now find the bloggers' social media profiles.

The easiest way to do this is with a Google+ search.

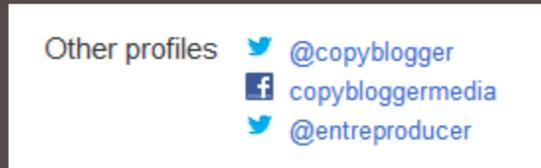
- 7/ Enter the blogger's name in the search bar.



- 8/ At the blogger's profile, click the "About" tab.



- 9/ Scroll down until you see their social media profiles.



- 10/ If the blogger is on Twitter, his or her Twitter handle will be here.

Copy and paste it into your blogger list. (*Excel doesn't like the @ symbol, so leave it off.*)

Then copy and paste the blogger's Google+ URL into your list.

E	F
Twitter	Google+
marketingprofs	https://plus.google.com/115918125306643310533/posts
jaybaer	https://plus.google.com/110720576611232766643/posts
thesaleslion	https://plus.google.com/106581449983074168940/posts

If you find email addresses, add them to Column G.

If you have an email for the people in your list, it will be easier to communicate with them. Unfortunately, it isn't always available. Well-known people don't always make their email address public.

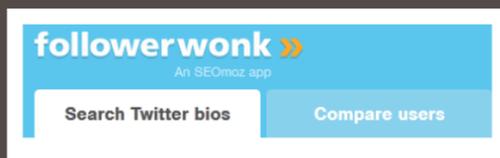
It's not the end of the world if you can't find an email for the people on your list. If you have their twitter handle or Google+ profile, you can still communicate with them through direct messages.

Followerwonk.com is a useful resource for finding Tweeters in your space.

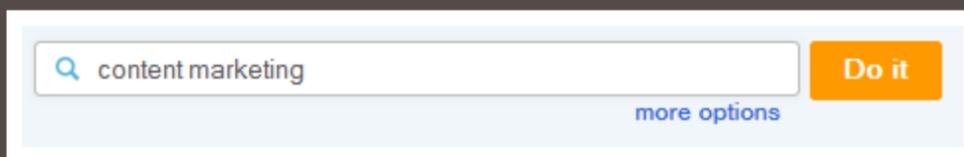
In addition to collecting bloggers' names, you can find tweeters who are influential in your core topic.



➤ Click on the “Search Twitter bios” tab at the top of Followerwonk.



➤ Enter your keyword in the search bar. This indicates the expertise of people you want to connect with.



➤ Review your results.

	tweets	following	followers	days old	Social Authority
 Jeff Bullas @jeffbullas Social Media Marketing for Business, including Blogging, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+, Search, SEO and Content Marketing	127,383	125,809	139,172	1,533	73
 Harrison Marketing @chefpaul9828 We are an internet marketing , content management company in Maryland, that specializes in internet marketing , social media campaigns and business development.	5,422	32,189	134,525	1,384	45
 Brian Clark @copyblogger Content marketing , online publishing, and copywriting advice from the editorial team at Copyblogger Media.	21,283	99	130,065	2,318	69
 iPlus Marketing @iPlusMarketing We specialize in Social Media Marketing , SEO, Content Creation, Reputation Management, PPC and Much More.	7,593	8	83,381	1,240	36
 Jeff Herring @JeffHerring Article Marketing - the keys to the kingdom for content creation, online visibility, traffic generation, list building, & product creation. Start here =	17,232	81,862	75,301	1,774	31

Notice in the left hand column:

➔ A blue arrow indicates you already follow this person.

➜ A green arrow indicates that they follow you back.

⊘ A red circle with a line through it indicates that you don't follow them or they don't follow you.

 When you don't follow them, you'll find a follow button.

➤ Add the people you already follow to your list of bloggers. Put their name in Column A and their Twitter handle in Column E.

👉 Click on people's name in Followerwonk, and you'll be taken to their Twitter profile. There you find their website.



👉 As you did above, search Google+ for additional contact information.

2 CATEGORIZE YOUR LIST

When your list is complete, segment it according to that relationship's value to your business.

Rank bloggers into an A, B, or C category.

A = High-value contacts that you want to target for relationship-building purposes.

These people have a high level of influence and are accessible. They often share links to good content, and if you tweet or mention them in a Google+ post, they respond.

There should be 10-20 people in this list. No more.

A = High-Value
name
name
name
name

B = Valuable connections, but you aren't targeting them right now.

These people may have a high level of influence but are not prone to interact. They could have a medium-level of influence or be up-and-comers.

This list may be 200-300 long.

B = Medium Priority
name
name
name
name

C = Lower-priority connections that you still connect with.

These people are likely less influential than the people in your A and B categories. They may be people who cover your topic, but not as their core topic. They may have little influence but actively share your content. They could also be people who aren't well-known but are fun to interact with.

This list may be any length.

C = Low Priority
name
name
name
name

Start recording your interactions with these people

In order to build connections with the people on your list, you need to get to know them. And to do that, you need to keep track of who you reach out to, who responds, and what the results are.

When you reach out to someone, either by email or through social media, put the date and the connection made.

If they respond, put the date and whether they liked your idea, whether they responded favorably, and other details that could help future interactions.

12/13 - Pitched article about TOPIC
1/5 - They liked the idea. Sent the article.
3/20 - Heard back. They lost my email and only just found it. Like the article and will use it.
3/25 - Post goes live tomorrow.
3/26 - Tweeted the post 3 times: FB, T, G+. They posted 3 times too. Good response. So far, 3 comments and 64 tweets.

TIP } If you don't have time to create this list, try hiring someone to do it for you. ODesk is a good place to do that.



LINK TO THE BLOGGERS IN YOUR LIST.

Now it's time to start leveraging your list to promote your content. The name of the game is:

- Name recognition
- Credibility

Connect with the bloggers on your list and begin following their work.



SEND A PERSONAL EMAIL TO HIGH-VALUE CONTACT.

When you create content that could be of interest to one of the bloggers on your list, send them an email to tell them about it.

Use the “Expertise” column of your blogger list to decide whether the article is relevant to them.

Only send them information you feel will be particularly interesting to them, and only about subjects that are relevant to them.

NOTE:

This email is similar to the “Link Bait” email we told you about in Chapter 8. But when dealing with your high-value bloggers, **don't ask for a link.**

This is very important. Your objective here is relationship. So don't ask for anything. Treat this email as a courtesy, not a request, and you'll get it right.

If the topic is relevant to the blogger:

SUBJECT: WANTED TO SHARE...

Hi [insert name here],

*I've been following your work for a while now.
And I have to say, I'm a big fan!*

Actually, that's why I'm emailing. I just published a [type of content] about [topic], titled, [insert name of article]. Because you talk about the same topic, I thought you might be interested.

If you'd like to see it, you can find it at this link:

[insert link here]

Just wanted to let you know... and to thank you for all your effort making [insert their website here] such a fantastic resource.

Cheers!

[your name]

If you featured the blogger:

SUBJECT: YOU WERE FEATURED IN A BLOG POST TODAY

Hi [insert name here],

I just wanted to let you know that you were featured today in my article, [insert name of article].

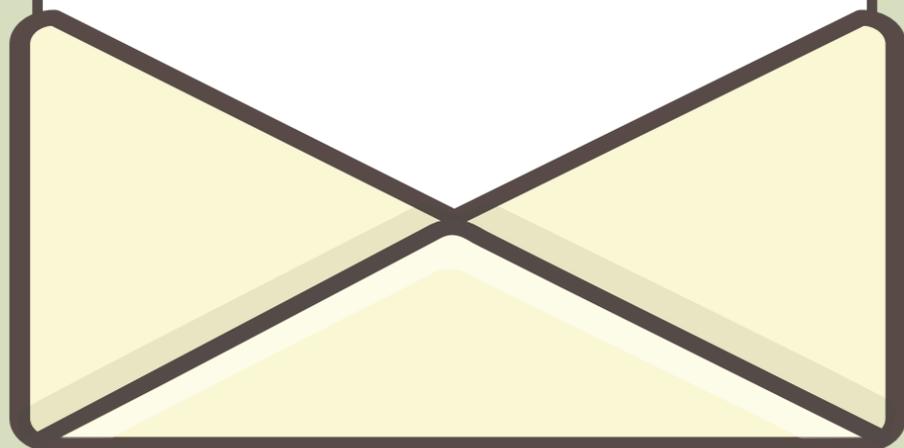
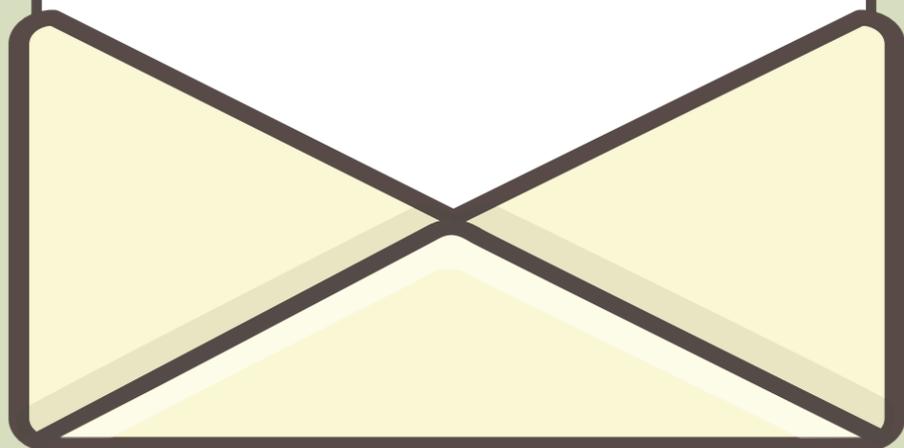
If you'd like to see it, you can find it at this link:

[insert link here]

Just wanted to let you know... and to thank you for all your effort making [insert their website here] such a fantastic resource. I continue to be one of your biggest fans.

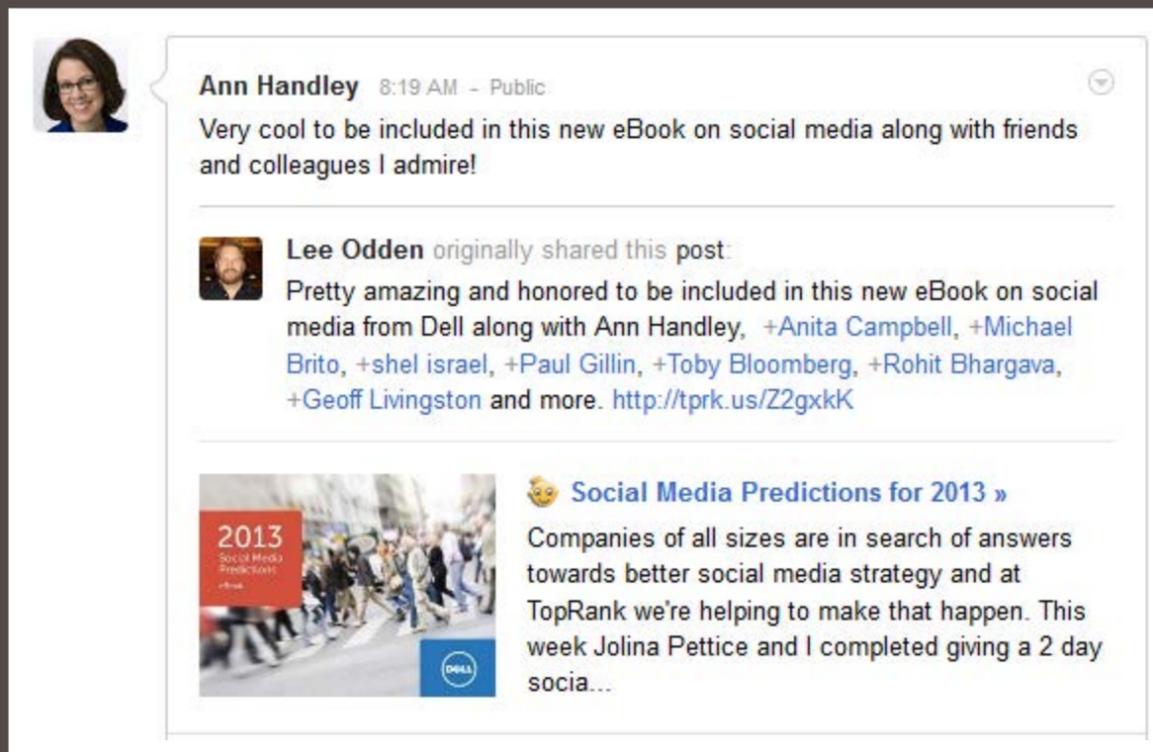
Cheers!

[your name]



Does it work?

Yes, if the content is valuable. Take a look at this post:



A few tips:

Don't email too frequently. (*That's one of the reasons to keep a record of your interactions.*)

If you do this too much, you'll come off as a stalker (*at best*) or a spammer (*at worst*).

Neither will help you reach your goals.

Only alert your A-list to well-written, high-quality content. If you don't think it's the best content you've ever created, hold off.



ASK FOR TWEETS

If you create some content that is relevant to people in your blogger list, notify some of them and ask them to tweet it to their list.

Here's a sample tweet you could use:

I'd love it if you'd tweet my post to your followers. [nsert link] Let me know if you need a tweet from me.

Be aware, most people will not do this. When we've done it, we've seen 3-8 tweets for every 100 requests.

As an alternative, you can promote them in a tweet to your own followers:

Learn [opic] from the best: @twitterhandle @twitterhandle @twitterhandles. [nsert link to article]

This may generate a retweet by the people you promote.



EMAIL WEBSITE OWNERS TO ASK FOR A LINK.

First, write a blog post that could be of value to the blogger or brand.

Second, send them an email alerting them to it.

Third, let them know you're a fan and would appreciate a link to your post.

The email could look like this:

SUBJECT: THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE THIS...

Hi [nsert name here]

I've been following you for a while now, and I notice that your followers really engage when you publish [topic or type of content]

I thought you might be interested in a [type of content] about [topic] called [title]

You can find it here: [insert link here]

So far it's gotten a lot of response from my followers.

Number of shares

Number of tweets

Number of comments

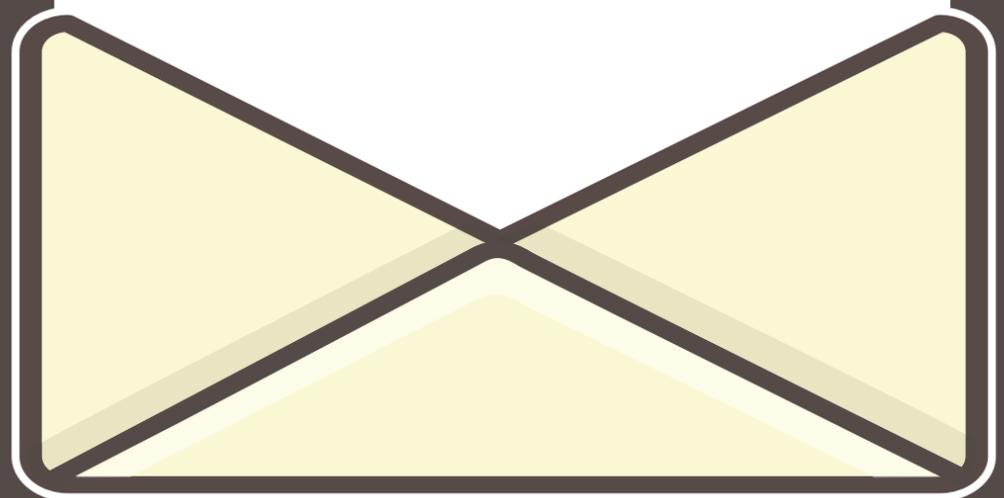
And I wondered if your followers would like it too.

If you think so, feel free to share it with them... either in social media or a link on your website.

No pressure, of course. I just thought it might be of use to you.

Thanks, and have a great day!

[your name]





LEAVE COMMENTS ON OTHER PEOPLE'S BLOGS.

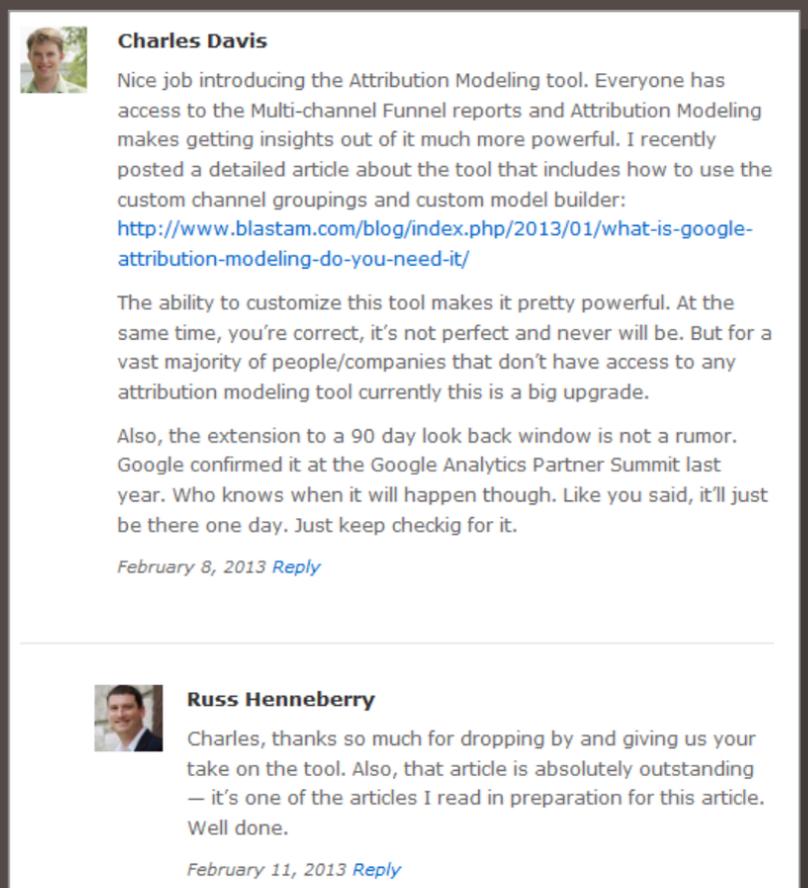
In Chapter 8, we talked about using optimized comments to help your blog posts rank better. Here we're talking about comments you leave on other websites — in particular, you're A-list bloggers.

Your objective in commenting in other people's blogs is not to gain back-links or to generate traffic. Your objective is to add value to the post you're commenting on.

When you do this, you will get noticed by the blogger whose posts you're responding to. You'll also get noticed by others who read the comments. And because you have no ulterior motive (*other than adding value to your target blogger*), you'll leave a positive impression that could cause people to look for your website to learn more about you.

Here's how to do it:

- 1/ Read the article carefully so you fully grasp what it's about.
- 2/ Select one point in particular you like, or one question you'd like answered.
- 3/ Write a thoughtful, interesting comment that responds to that one point or asks your question.
- 4/ You may add ideas or dispute points, but be very respectful of the writer.



The screenshot shows a comment by Charles Davis on February 8, 2013. He thanks the author for introducing the Attribution Modeling tool and provides a link to his own article: <http://www.blastam.com/blog/index.php/2013/01/what-is-google-attribution-modeling-do-you-need-it/>. He also mentions that the tool's customization capabilities are powerful and that Google confirmed a 90-day look back window extension.

A reply by Russ Henneberry on February 11, 2013, thanks Charles for his comment and praise for his article, stating it was one of the articles he read in preparation for his own.

Again, your goal is to add value to the content.

Here's an example of a comment that does just that. It responds to the article, then adds a link to one of his own posts on the same subject. Ordinarily, if your objective is to add value, you don't leave a link. However, in this case, the additional information is received as a value-add because the commenter responds to specific points made in the post.

HIGH-POWERED PROMOTION STRATEGIES

STEP 1

CREATE AN ANNUAL "TOP 100" LIST.

You already have a list of bloggers and content creators in your space. Put it to use by creating a "top 100" list and publishing it on your website annually.

1 CREATE A BADGE.

2 PUT THE 100 PEOPLE ON YOUR LIST.

3 CONTACT THEM AND LET THEM KNOW.

4 IN YOUR EMAIL, GIVE THEM THE CODE FOR THE BADGE TO PUT ON THEIR WEBSITE.

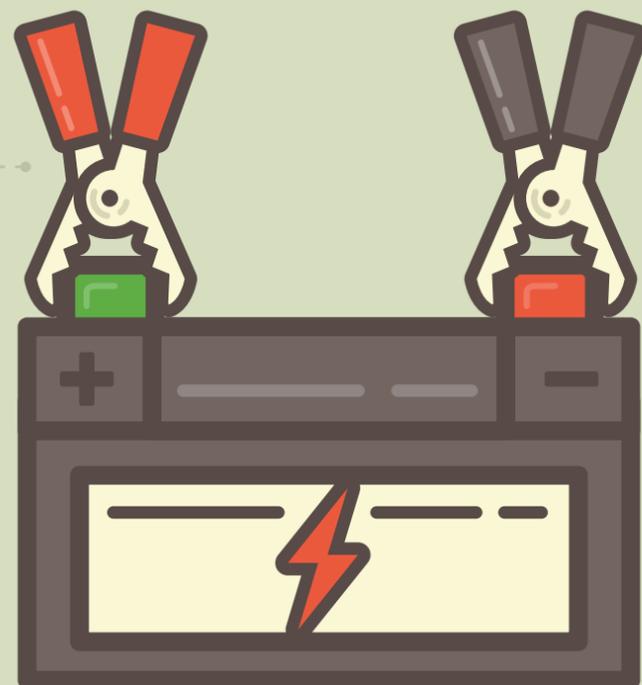
In that code, include an "href" back to the "Top 100" post on your website.

```
<a href="http://yourdomain.com/your-top-100-post/" target=" blank">
```

Want to see how other Top 100 lists are done? Check out these sites:

<http://adage.com/datacenter/marketertrees2012/>

<http://topsitesblog.com/top-100-websites/>



STEP 2

CREATE AN ANNUAL BENCHMARK REPORT OR SURVEY

A survey or annual report on a particular aspect of your industry can give you instant status as a thought leader in your space.

It needs to be data that is helpful to people and that they often ask themselves.

It needs to be thoroughly compiled, with graphics and results clearly discussed.



Here's how you can do it.

1 COMPILE A LIST OF DATA OR INFORMATION THAT WOULD BE USEFUL TO MEMBERS OF YOUR COMMUNITY.

2 CREATE A SURVEY AND SEND IT TO EVERYONE IN YOUR LIST.

3 COMPILE THE INFORMATION.

4 PRESENT YOUR FINDINGS IN A SPECIAL REPORT.

5 PUBLISH AND PROMOTE THE SPECIAL REPORT.

Repeat annually.



CREATE A CERTIFICATION PROGRAM IN YOUR INDUSTRY

If you're the brand that trains people to do what you do, you have built-in authority and trust. As a result, all your content will be perceived as higher value — which will cause people to seek out your content and engage better.

NOTE: We aren't talking about a free course for sign-up, such as this one, which we use to build our list.

We're talking about a training program that requires payment for enrollment and a test to complete.

Free Course: "Double Your Traffic in 30 Days" + Secret Bonus (Valued at \$300)



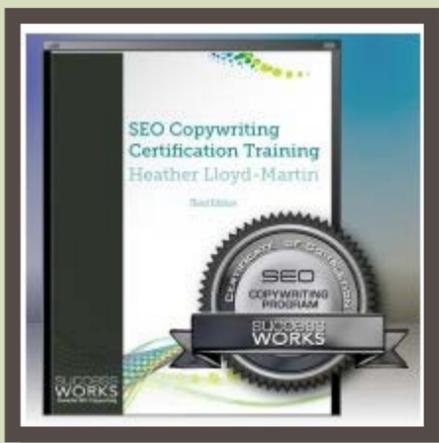
This amazing course will teach you, step by step, how to double if not triple your traffic over the next 30 days.

Fill out the form below to start your FREE Course

First name

Email

An example of this type of program is Success Works' SEO Copywriting Certification training.



Certification is achieved by completion of the training modules and passing the test.

After completion, the participants get a badge to put on their website.

While it takes a lot of work to prepare this type of program, if you already create content, you have the skills to do it. We'll cover this more in-depth in Chapter 10, but here's the short version:

1 CHOOSE A TOPIC.

2 DESIGN YOUR PROGRAM, INCLUDING DELIVERY AND FORMAT.

3 PREPARE YOUR SALES MATERIALS.

4 CREATE YOUR MATERIALS.

5 UPLOAD YOUR MATERIALS.

6 TEST THE PROGRAM.

7 EDIT YOUR PROGRAM AND SALES MATERIALS.

8 PROMOTE YOUR PROGRAM.

When it's all done, you can add to your bio that you're the creator of the industry certification program. This type of authorship is an incredible clout booster. If the program is well-received, it gives you instant credibility as an authority in your field.



WRITE A BOOK

Another way to build authority in your space is to write a book. It could be an ebook like this one... or it could be a print book or a digital book sold on Amazon or your website.

The creative process for writing a book is the same as for shorter content. But it does take more time to complete. If you don't have time yourself, consider hiring a freelance writer to co-author it or ghost-write it for you.

See Chapter 7 for tips on finding writers.

As with a certification program, the content in your book needs to be of the highest quality.

Follow the same steps for creating a certification program:



1 START WITH YOUR BACK-PAGE COPY.

2 DO MORE THAN YOUR AVERAGE AMOUNT OF RESEARCH.

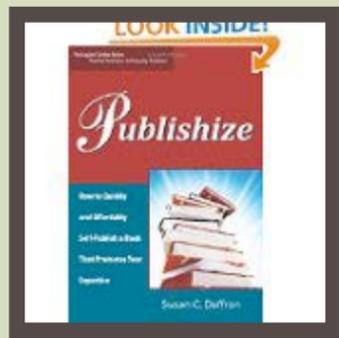
3 WRITE YOUR CONTENT ONE CHAPTER AT A TIME.

4 PREPARE AN INTRODUCTION AND A CONCLUSION, AND ANY APPENDICES YOU WANT TO INCLUDE.

5 EDIT, EDIT, EDIT. IT ISN'T UNUSUAL FOR A BOOK TO REQUIRE TEN OR MORE ROUNDS OF EDITS.

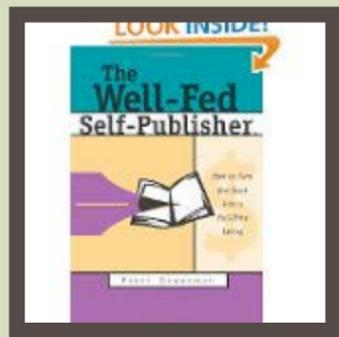
6 HIRE AN EDITOR FOR THE FINAL EDIT.

Some good resources for writing and publishing your book are:



Publishize: How to Quickly and Affordably Self-Publish a Book That Promotes Your Expertise

by Susan C. Daffron (Nov 12, 2008)



The Well-Fed Self-Publisher: How to Turn One Book into a Full-Time Living

by Peter Bowerman (Aug 1, 2006)

We realize that developing industry-recognized programs and writing books don't seem like promotional activities for your content. And it's true. They don't drive traffic to a particular blog post or Web page.

However, after reading a well-written books, people often search for the writer's website, subscribe, and follow him or her in social media.

As an author, you are considered an expert in your topic, and you gain Authority with Google, your peers, and followers. So indirect or not, it's one of the most powerful forms of promotion available.

If you have an idea and the time to write a book, it's definitely worth the effort.

MAKE PROMOTION A DAILY ACTIVITY

In this chapter you learned direct and indirect ways to promote your content.

Direct promotion involves sharing the content with your followers through email and social media.

Indirect promotion depends on your ability to build relationships with influencers in your space and your ability to develop name recognition and credibility.

Both work. But they work best if you implement both strategies. And you need to do it on a daily basis.

Make it a habit to perform all these promotional tasks — promoting your individual pieces of content and building your authority as a thought leader — and your content will get noticed, engaged with, and ultimately, help you grow your business.

Growing your business is the bottom line objective with content marketing. And promotion is a great way to ensure your content leads to growth. But there's one more thing you need to do to gain all the benefits of content marketing, and that's monetizing your content.

Learn all about it in Chapter 10, “Driving Business Objectives with Content: 5 Simple Strategies for Monetizing Your Content.”

Sound good?

LET'S START ...

[TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER EIGHT](#)

[TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER TEN](#)





The **ADVANCED**

CONTENT MARKETING

GUIDE

WRITTEN BY NEIL PATEL & KATHRYN ARAGON

WRITTEN BY NEIL PATEL & KATHRYN ARAGON



DOWNLOAD
PDF

DRIVING BUSINESS OBJECTIVES WITH CONTENT

5 SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR MONETIZING YOUR CONTENT

It's easy to get sidetracked by all the tasks of content marketing — planning, writing, publishing and engaging — and forget the bottom-line purpose of doing it. The ultimate purpose of content marketing is to market your business, resulting in higher website traffic and sales.

The optimization and promotion tips we've shared in the last two chapters can make a big difference in your traffic levels. But once people are on your site, you need to convert that traffic into sales.

In this chapter, you learn five methods for monetizing your content without advertising. Not all of them will work for every business. But all of them are valuable strategies that are being used successfully by other content marketers.

Read through them all, then pick the methods that could work for your business. Test them out, and then create the unique mix that's right for you.

BEFORE YOU START

While monetizing your website is a great idea, there's a reason we saved this chapter for last. Your first priority is to create high-quality content that people love to read. If your content isn't good enough, you'll struggle to monetize it.

That said, you don't need to wait until your traffic and engagement levels are at some magical level before you start monetizing your site.

If you provide good content but people don't know you exist, you can still pursue the strategies we talk about in this chapter. You likely won't sell a lot — simply because you don't have a lot of visitors. But you can experiment with different strategies as you grow, and by the time your website gets lots of visitors, you'll know what works and what doesn't.

Remember, work on the quality of your content first. Then try out these strategies to see what works for you.

Ready to start monetizing your content? Let's go...

No 1

MEMBERSHIP SITE

The key to creating a great membership site isn't finding the right paywall, but getting the concept of membership right.

Before people are willing to pay for content, they need to see the value of paying for it. In other words, the focus needs to be on value received rather than cost of membership.

If a membership site sounds right for you, start thinking about the benefits you can offer members behind the paywall.

Members need to feel like they are gaining:

- *Elite status*
- *High-value information*
- *VIP treatment*
- *Network opportunities with other members*
- *Insider access to the owner/director of the site*
- *Members-only forum or private Google+ group*

Develop a content strategy that offers as many of these benefits as possible.

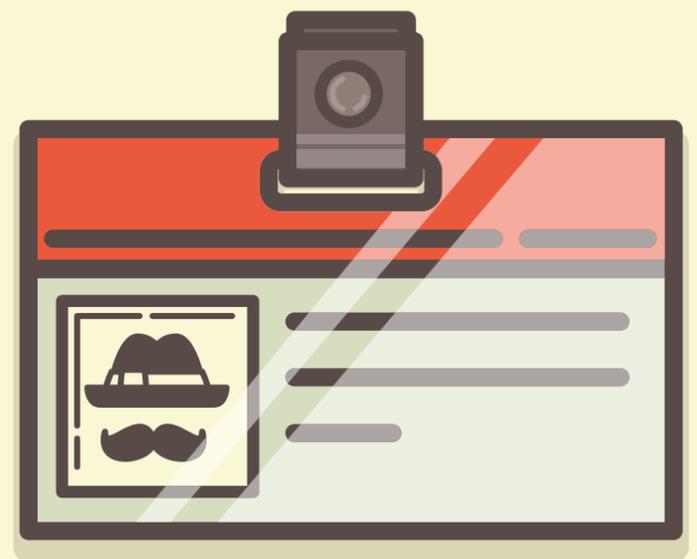
3 MODELS FOR PAID CONTENT

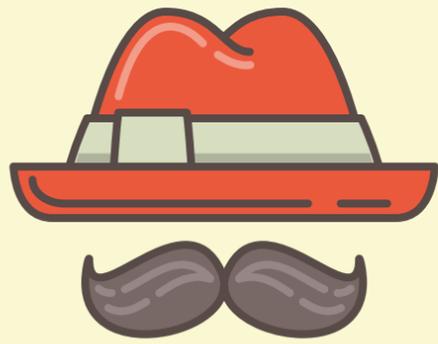
Before asking people to pay for your content, you need to find the right model for your business. There are three ways to handle paid content:

SUBSCRIPTION OR PAYWALL

Users subscribe to your membership site for a monthly or annual fee. For that fee, they have access to all content (*and benefits*) until their subscription runs out.

When you use this model, you don't generally use advertising. Once members have paid their fee, they have free access to all content in their membership level.





USER

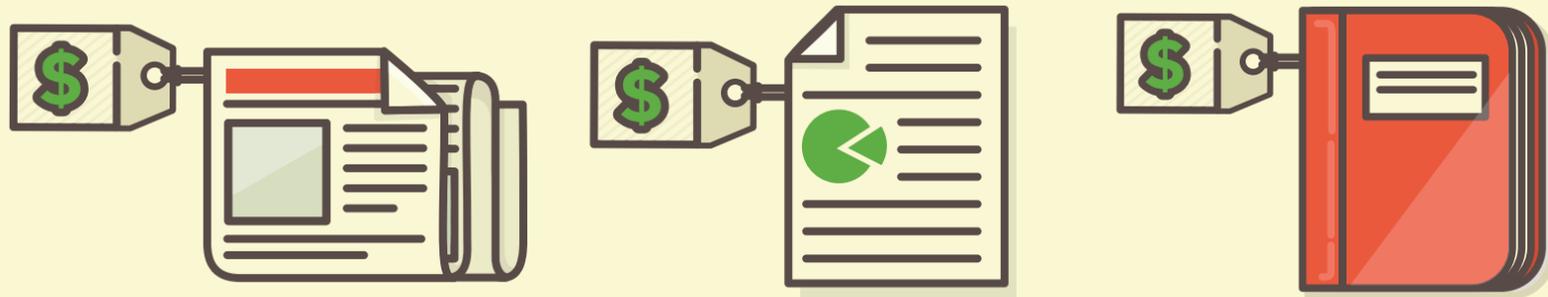


HIGH VALUE
CONTENT

TRANSACTION

Individual pieces of content, such as training programs, audio or video downloads, or special reports, are sold separately. People may purchase as much or little information as they need, when they need it.

With this model, you can upsell repeat customers by offering a VIP membership level. Payment of a large, one-time fee provides lifetime access to all products, past and future.



METERED

Content is free until a user reaches a certain threshold, such as number of articles or videos viewed, or based on the amount of time spent on your site. Newspapers have been experimenting with this model and are finding that it works well.

This model allows free access to low-volume users, which can actually be a good strategy. It allows them time to read some of your content before deciding to pay for full access.



MIX AND MATCH TO FIND THE RIGHT MODEL FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Membership sites ask users to create an account and pay a membership fee before they can access certain pages of the website. You can set it up in one of three ways:

- *All or most of your content is behind a paywall.*
- *A certain number of pages or paragraphs are free, but full access to the content requires membership.*
- *A combination of free and paid content.*

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO SET IT UP:

AUTORESPONDER CONTENT, DRIPPED OVER A PERIOD OF TIME.

This method of delivery is common for free and paid training courses and gives you a way to control the frequency of content delivery.

For a free course designed to build engagement, it might be delivered daily. That way, you can get people used to hearing from you, building name recognition and relationship at the same time.

For a paid course (*like the certification program we talked about in Chapter 9*), each module may be delivered weekly or monthly.

This allows you to keep an entire class moving through the course at the same speed so you can provide additional value, such as weekly or monthly calls to review that module's material.

A training series may also be tied to a renewable membership site. For example, during the course, a membership forum is free. Afterwards, there's a monthly fee to continue having access.

RENEWABLE SUBSCRIPTION, EITHER MONTHLY OR ANNUALLY.

Most membership sites have three or more levels of access. So silver members may have access to articles and special reports. Gold members may also get free webinars and training calls. And platinum members may get coaching time as well.

Decide in advance how many membership levels you'll offer and how much value you'll give each level.

Prices for entry-level membership typically range from \$27 to \$99 per month, and we've seen annual memberships begin at \$98/year.

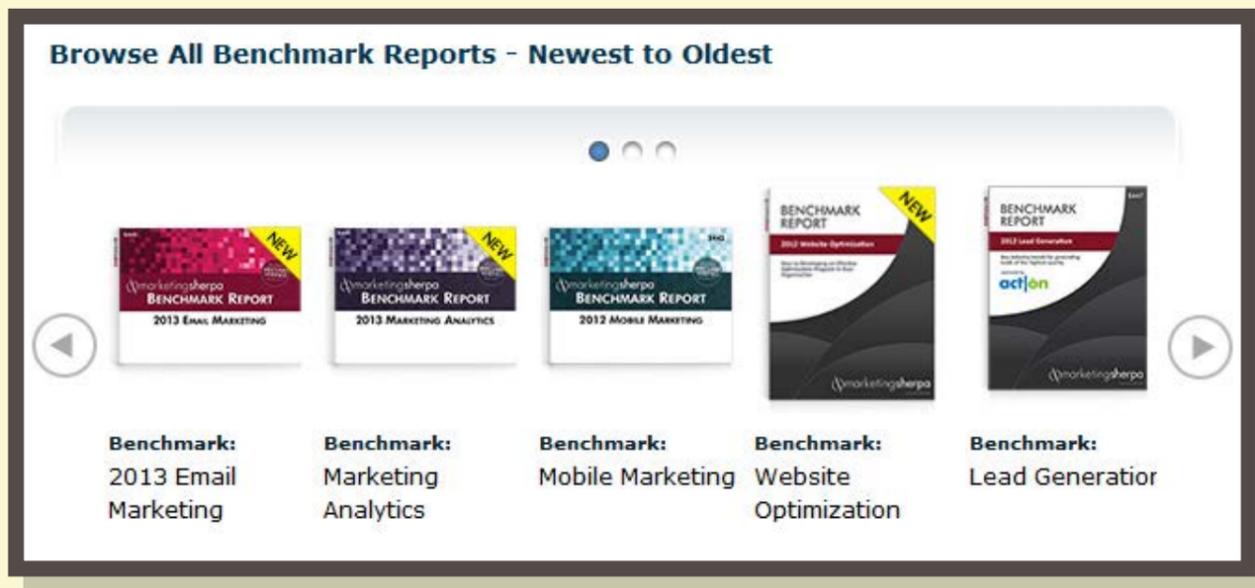
Your price should be based on the value you provide and your members' ability to pay. (*For example, stay-at-home moms may require a lower membership fee than stock brokers.*)

PAY-PER-POST

This option is great for people who want to purchase access to one piece of content at a time. In essence, you treat each piece of content as a single product.

Usually this is done with longer content, such as reports, ebooks, and surveys. But it could be used for individual articles too, if your content is perceived as high-value and if you set the price right.

After payment, access to the content may be permanent or expire after a period of time.



LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

If your site starts out with free content and you suddenly change to a paid model, you could lose as much as 50% of your following. People rarely like to pay for something they've never paid for before. So how can you make the switch? Here are five ideas.

- 1/ **Create your paid model separate from your free.**
Domain.com may have your blog and free content. Set up Domain.net to be your membership site.
- 2/ **Continue to provide free content on your blog, but make it shorter and less specific.**
Save the highest-value, in-depth information for members. In this case, the free content is designed to create a taste for your paid content. It must still be high-quality material, but for in-depth content, you must pay.
- 3/ **Grant access to an article's introduction for free.**
To continue reading, ask for membership sign-in.
- 4/ **Continue to offer free content on your blog.**
But open a members-only forum with access to you (and other perks).
- 5/ **Continue to offer a free blog.**
But also create information products, books, and courses for a fee.
(We cover this strategy next.)

PAYMENT PROCESSORS

If you have a paywall, you also need a payment processor. Here are a few options:

SOCIAL-INK.NET STRIPED MEMBERS WORDPRESS PLUGIN.

social-ink.net

\$80 for single license (individual)

\$110 for single license (corporate)

Striped Members

MEMBERSHIP & SUBSCRIPTIONS WITH THE STRIPE PAYMENT GATEWAY

-  Easy payments using the web's best payment processing system. Stripe
-  Native integration with WordPress systems
-  Protect your most valuable content
-  A turnkey system for payments and subscribers

Another WordPress plugin from Social Ink 

POWERPAY WITH AUTHORIZE.NET.

ipowerpay.com

With this option, you use two services: PowerPay as the merchant account, with Authorize.net as the payment gateway. This solution gives you credit card processing of all major credit cards and the Authorize.Net seal for your website.



PAYPAL.

paypal.com

Inexpensive and simple to use.



HOW TO SET UP YOUR PAYWALL

There are lots of options for setting up your paywall. Here are a few that we like:

PREMISE

(available at GetPremise.com)



Premise is a combination landing-page platform/membership gateway that you build yourself, thanks to smart integration with the authentication and user access management protocols, plus easy digital product listings and check-out pages.

- *Build different levels of membership within WordPress*
- *Take recurring payments with automated access management (you'll need an SSL certificate)*
- *Automatically drip content out over time*
- *Securely sell ebooks, apps, and other digital downloads*
- *Confidently create private forum areas with vBulletin**
- *Quickly set up password-protected content libraries*
- *Easily build check-out pages for PayPal and Authorize.net*

CLEENG.COM

A diagram illustrating the Cleeng Content Monetization process. On the left, there is a cartoon illustration of a computer monitor with a smiling face, set against a globe background. To the right of the monitor, there are four numbered steps: 1. Protect your content (Part of any page or post, or any media), 2. Define your offer (Pay-per-view, Daily passes, Subscriptions), 3. Sell (In-page sales. Safe & Secure.), and 4. Collect \$\$ (No explanation necessary!). A large curly bracket groups steps 2, 3, and 4. At the bottom, there is a green banner with the text "Cleeng Content Monetization" in white.

1. Protect your content
Part of any page or post, or any media

2. Define your offer
Pay-per-view, Daily passes, Subscriptions

3. Sell
In-page sales. Safe & Secure.

4. Collect \$\$
No explanation necessary!

Cleeng Content Monetization

This is a free plugin for Wordpress websites that hides portions of your content behind a paywall.

With Cleeng you can sell any individual piece of content directly from your own website. It allows you to sell content or digital products in 3 different ways:

- 1/ Sell single items
- 2/ Provide a 24-hour daily pass
- 3/ Give access to all your content via membership subscriptions
(weekly, monthly, annually)

PIVOTSHARE.COM



Pivotshare is a video platform designed specifically to monetize your videos.

It provides a fully branded, high-quality media channel with no up-front cost to you.

Revenue is based on how much your community interacts with your content, and

Pivotshare takes a small percentage if that income.





SELLING CONTENT



If you aren't ready to set up a paywall yet, you can still create a stream of income from your content by creating content for sale.

The key is to provide high-value content that people want.

DECIDING ON PRODUCT IDEAS

If you already know the topics your followers are interested in, you have a head start. Just create your content and run with it.

But if you aren't sure whether people will respond to your product idea, don't invest too much time or money until you get a feel for people's interest level.

You can do this in two ways: test your idea before producing them, or produce short versions of your final product to test responses.

Test your idea first

This is like dipping your toes in the water before jumping in. To do it, you have to present your ideas and see if anyone responds, or point-blank ask people what they want to learn.

OPTION 1

TEST TITLES OR IDEAS IN FACEBOOK AND TWITTER.

Post titles as status updates and see how many likes or retweets you get. Or post a comment and see how many people respond.



OPTION 2

WRITE A BLOG POST.

Write a blog post that talks about the topic you'd like to cover in your product. If the blog post gets good responses, you can assume your product will do well too.



Alternatively, write a blog post that point asks people to comment with their greatest need about a certain topic. This works well if you have a high-traffic site. The comments can be used as a source of ideas for all types of content, but especially for paid products.

OPTION 3 SEND A SURVEY TO YOUR LIST.

You can also send an email to your list, asking them to fill out a survey. The survey should have as few questions as possible and still give you the information you need. The key is to ask this question:

*If I could solve one problem for you and make your life 100% better,
what would that problem be?*

CREATE A SHORT VERSION OF THE PRODUCT FIRST

If you still aren't sure about the viability of your idea, consider creating a small version to see how people respond to it.

For example, rather than creating a full-blown training course, produce a webinar on the topic. If your attendance is high and people engage well, you know you have a good idea for a product. In addition, you can use the questions asked in the webinar as a guide for the information you need to include in the course. And you can include the webinar recording in your course, which makes it a higher-value product.

CREATE FRONT-END AND BACK-END PRODUCTS

Generally, information marketers have one entry-level product that provides basic instruction or information about their core topic. Because it doesn't provide high-level solutions, it can be priced to sell.

Then they create back-end products that provide higher-level information or solve other problems their customers are likely to run into.

It doesn't matter what type of business you run, you can add an information marketing element that generates another stream of income.

Think about the questions your customers always ask. Then consider how you could produce a piece of content that answers one of those questions and provides useful solutions and information.

Your goal is to create such a good experience with your flagship product that customers want your other products and services as well. Simply by creating one product at a time, you can develop a library of products that keep customers coming back for more.

Here are the types of products you can produce:

LOW-END, ENTRY-LEVEL PRODUCTS

These products are inexpensive and easy to digest, such as short ebooks that provide simple solutions to everyday problems or high-level discussions of challenging topics.

These might sell for \$19 to \$99. They usually consist of one or two of the following:

- *Ebooks*
- *Special reports*
- *Entry level training*
- *Audio or video download*

MID-LEVEL PRODUCTS, FRONT-END OR BACK-END

Mid-level products provide more in-depth information, such as training programs or longer ebooks.

These might be priced at \$200 to \$500 and include several if not all of the following:

- *Instructional material in ebook format*
- *Audio or video recordings*
- *Worksheets*
- *Access to membership forum*

HIGH-END, BACK-END PRODUCTS

These are more comprehensive programs that offer a lot of value.

Cost may range from \$600 to \$1,200 and include:

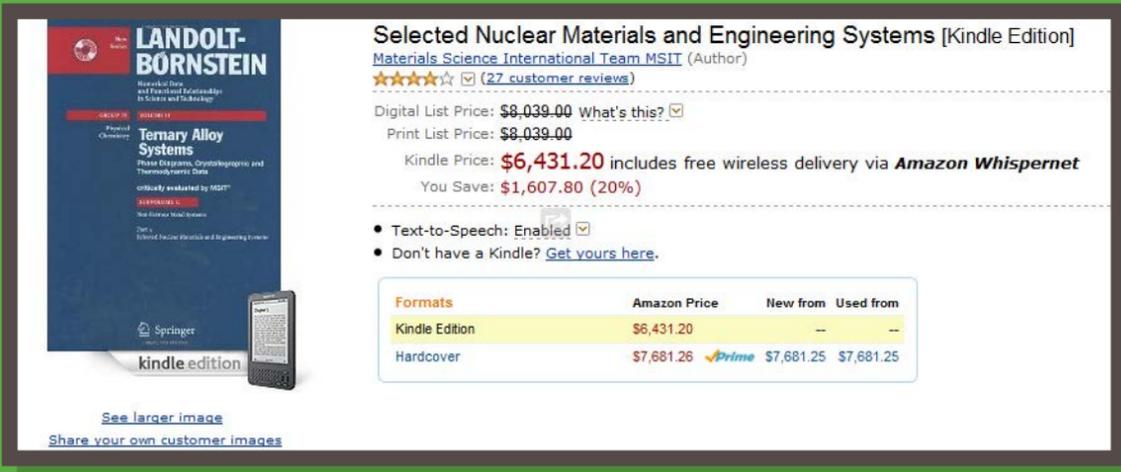
- *Instructional materials*
- *Audio, video, or seminar component*
- *Monthly group coaching*
- *Some personal coaching component*

PREMIUM PRODUCTS

These products promise the highest level of value. They provide in-depth, often personalized, solutions and can sell for \$1,500 and up. They include:

- *Instructional materials*
- *Audio and video materials*
- *Worksheets and resources to facilitate learning*
- *Personal coaching*
- *Seminar or retreat component*

If the information is good enough, it can sell at this level even without the personalized components that usually add value. Take this ebook, for example:



Selected Nuclear Materials and Engineering Systems [Kindle Edition]
Materials Science International Team MSIT (Author)
★★★★☆ (27 customer reviews)

Digital List Price: ~~\$8,039.00~~ What's this?
Print List Price: ~~\$8,039.00~~
Kindle Price: **\$6,431.20** includes free wireless delivery via **Amazon Whispernet**
You Save: **\$1,607.80 (20%)**

- Text-to-Speech: Enabled
- Don't have a Kindle? [Get yours here.](#)

Formats	Amazon Price	New from	Used from
Kindle Edition	\$6,431.20	--	--
Hardcover	\$7,681.26	\$7,681.25	\$7,681.25

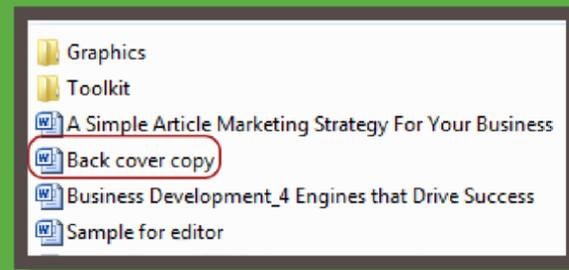
[See larger image](#)
[Share your own customer images](#)

10-STEP CHECKLIST FOR PRODUCING HIGH-VALUE PRODUCTS

If you create content, you already have many of the skills you need to create products. In fact, it's an easy thing to repurpose much of your content into high-value programs, ebooks, and more.

STEP 1 START WITH THE SALES COPY.

The secret to creating high-value content is to work backwards. Write your sales copy first. Then create a product that lives up to it.



To create a landing page and ads, you'll need to focus on the program's unique selling point (USP) and your offer. You'll also need to create bullet points itemizing the benefits of the program and what students will learn.

Start with your order page and a landing page for each product. Then use the selling points you promise to create an outline and decide what types of content to include in your product.

STEP 2 USING THE CREATIVE PROCESS TAUGHT IN CHAPTER 4,

Create your modules and training materials using the same techniques you learned in Chapter 4.

Use your landing page copy as a guide.

Make sure you spend lots of time researching the topic so your information is accurate and timely.

Hold nothing back. Make this the highest-quality content in your repertoire.

5 STEPS TO WRITING CONTENT

1. List the ideas you want to present
2. Turn each idea into a subhead
3. Flesh out each section
4. Write an introduction
5. Write a conclusion

STEP 5 REFINE YOUR SALES COPY BASED ON THE FINAL PRODUCT.

After your content is complete, go back to the sales copy you wrote in Step 1. Edit the benefits, descriptions, and your offer to match your final product.



REFINE YOUR SALES COPY BASED ON THE FINAL PRODUCT.

Will you launch the product with a webinar or videos? Will you create a free autoresponder series about the topic, then pitch the product in the last email?

How will you follow-up the sale to add value and develop relationship with your customers?

Start these projects now.



CREATE ADS TO PLACE ON YOUR SITE AND IN YOUR NEWSLETTER

Create your ads with the colors and style used in your product and sales page. Design textual ads, banners, and space ads for your website and newsletter. If you plan to advertise in Facebook or through AdSense, create those ads too.



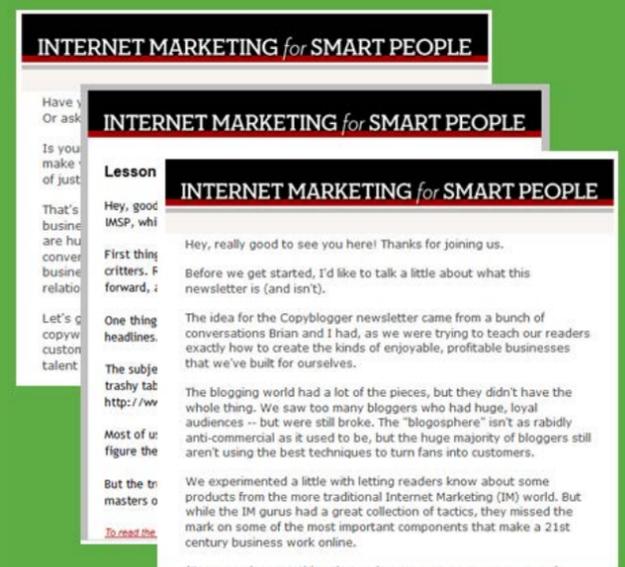
WRITE THE AUTORESPONDER (DRIP) EMAILS THAT YOU'LL USE BEFORE AND/OR AFTER THE SALE

Before the sale, you can offer a free promotional “course” that teaches high-level concepts related to the topics you cover in your product. Offer it free for sign-up, then deliver one email per day, each touching on a different “lesson.” Any length from five to 30 days is acceptable. Your final email should promote your product.

It’s a good idea to develop an autoresponder series for after the sale as well. Your emails should answer questions that people may have, offer additional training, and promote other back-end products.

To create your autoresponder series, brainstorm the topics you’d like to cover in your emails. Each email should talk about one topic or answer one question.

While you can make them any length, in many cases, these emails offer “quick tips” that can be read and digested in just a few minutes.





WRITE PROMOTIONAL EMAILS FOR YOUR LIST.

Design an email campaign to sell your product to your subscribers. Create a series of emails that introduces the product, gives features and benefits, and addresses any objections that may arise.

Consider giving a discount to people on your list if they respond by a certain day.

Your email can be simple, like this one:

Imagine doing \$462,000 in sales in just 1.5 months on Amazon. Matt Clark & Jason Katzenback did it, and are making over \$100,000 PROFIT *per month* by selling real products on Amazon.

[See behind the scenes here](#)

They've just released a fantastic 3rd video that breaks down the business model and how they run the day-to-day operations of their booming business.

It's amazing how Amazon handles **everything** for them. They even explain how they don't have to see the actual products they are selling by the 1,000s...

[Watch this today, you'll be glad you did](#)

Or it can be html like this one:

Having problems seeing this email? See it on the web here.

POWERED BY
DirectMarketingIQ

Copywriting for Boosting Direct Mail Response

Dear Kathryn,

Recently, we dealt with the strategies and tactics that will boost direct mail response in part I of Direct Mail Response Boosters. In part II, it's time to focus on copywriting.

Wielded properly, this creative piece of the tool box can significantly improve response. We at Direct Marketing IQ went to the top copywriters in the world, and asked for their very latest best practices on copywriting techniques, letter writing, envelope teasers, order card creation, format suggestions and component mixes ... all in the name of boosting response.

[TAKE A LOOK HERE!](#)

Copywriting for Boosting Direct Mail Response will answer all these questions and then some:

- What are the keys to the new direct mail letter?
- How are copy drivers leveraged properly?
- Should you use fascinations?
- What formats deserve consideration?
- What are the best ways to get your envelope opened?
- Analysis of 7 top cross-channel retailers

In addition, you'll also get an in-depth look into four case studies about successful direct mail campaigns, along with many full-color examples of response-boosting mail from our Who's Mailing What! Archive, the most complete library of direct mail in the world.

Learn up and then start boosting!

[Order now!](#)

Best of luck,

STEP 8

WRITE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS TO PROMOTE YOUR AUTORESPONDER SERIES AND/OR LANDING PAGE.

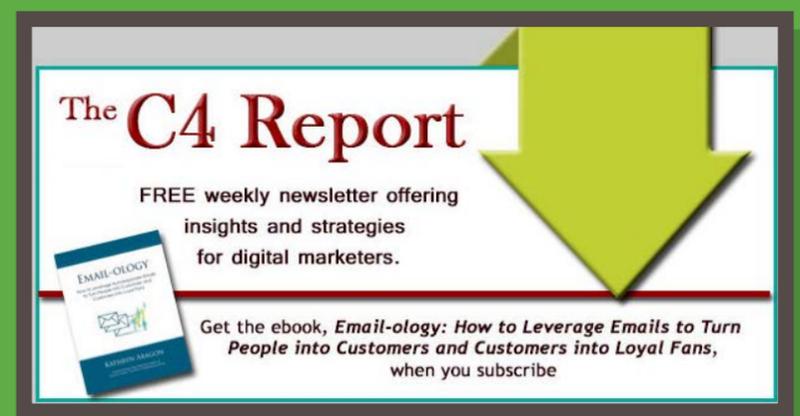
As part of your campaign, create social media posts for Facebook, Twitter and Google+. Then set a schedule for posting them so they coordinate with your emails.



STEP 9

CREATE THE ARTWORK AND OPT-IN FORM FOR YOUR WEBSITE.

Once you have your sales pitch and ads created, all you need to do is adapt that artwork for your opt-in form. This can be as fancy or simple as you like.



STEP 10

CREATE BLOG POSTS AND OTHER CONTENT TO TALK ABOUT THE TOPIC IN YOUR NEW PRODUCT.

Plan a series of blog posts, videos and podcasts that generate interest in your product. At the bottom of each, place an ad that take people to your sales page.

<http://drivingtraffic.com/dont-waste-traffic-free-landing-pages/>



If you are active in Pinterest, create original graphics for your content that can be pinned in Pinterest. These pictures will link to your content, which will bring more traffic into your sales funnel.



UPLOAD EVERYTHING SO IT'S READY TO GO.

Create a zipped file for customers to download your product or create a microsite for your training program. Then start promoting your product.

TIPS FOR SELLING

Before people will buy your information products, they need to know, like and trust you. So much of your content marketing and social media efforts have one major objective: build trust.

Once you've secured people's trust, it's not hard to sell high-value information products to them. Here are a few tips:



GET TESTIMONIALS TO USE IN YOUR SALES COPY.

OPTION 1

Send samples of your near-finished product to peers and friends for review while you're finalizing your product.

What I'd like is for you to read it over and mark anything that's confusing, awkward, unclear... you get the point. If you want more information about anything, let me know. Feel free to mark it up as much as you like. I promise won't get my feelings hurt. I genuinely want your edits, opinions about what works and what doesn't, and thought about how valuable this program is. ANY comments about ANYTHING are appreciated.

Thanks!

OPTION 2

If you're writing a book, email thought leaders to ask if they'd be willing to review a chapter of your new book. Don't ask for a review of the entire book (*few people have time to read and respond quickly*). Just ask for a review of one chapter in their area of expertise.

TIP

It's a good idea to connect with and follow these people before you begin asking favors. Most of them are incredibly busy, and lots of people ask favors from them, so your request can get lost in the pile unless they recognize your name.

Consider a request like this:

Hi [name]

Do you have time to give a quick review of my new book?

I've written a book about [topic] titled [give the title of your book] Since that's your area of expertise, a statement from you would be invaluable for helping it sell.

I know you're busy, though, so if you like, I can send just one chapter for your review.

You might be interested in one of these three chapters:

Give one chapter name.

Give a second chapter name.

Give a third chapter name.

Would you be willing to do that?

If so, please let me know which one you prefer, and I'll send it over.

Thanks!

OPTION 3

Run a beta test of your program. Send invitations to your list (*this is one of the perks for subscribing*). Offer a 50% discount for testing out your new program — with the requirement that they also give you a testimonial when it's done.

The conference calls will be held on Thursday (still working out the exact time.)
They will also be recorded
You will receive one lesson a day. It could be in the form of something to read. Or something to watch. Or something to do.

And here's what I ask if you're part of the beta group:
You provide feedback - what you love, what you'd like to see
You provide a testimonial at the end of the training (video or written.)
You're able to ride with whatever glitches happen... 'cause there will be glitches. :)

Once this is up and running, the program cost will be around \$1,500. Beta folks will receive the training for \$550 - so it's about 1/3 off! Remember, there are only 10 slots available.

Want to sign up? Just send an email with the subject line, "I want to sign up" to heather@seocopywriting.com, and please cc carla@seocopywriting.com. While I'm on vacation, Carla will send out a PayPal invoice. Once you've paid, you're in - and I'll be sending additional details when I'm back.

OPTION 4

Tap into your social media connections. Offer your product for free in return for an endorsement or testimonial.



PROVIDE LOTS OF FREEBIES OR PREMIUMS WITH PURCHASE.

Premiums can add a lot of value to your product.

In fact, sometimes people place such a high value on the premiums, they pay your purchase price just to get the freebies.



OFFER ACCESS TO YOU AS ONE OF THE PREMIUMS.

This can work well if you have a large community of loyal fans. You can structure it any way you like. For example:

- ▶ *Email or call with any questions free for one month after purchase.*
- ▶ *Included in your downloads is a private email address that's only for customers of this program. Use it to get priority answers to your questions.*

P.S. **CampaignMaster** is the only program of its kind. You won't find anything similar online or in book stores. And I hold nothing back. You'll get every tool I use to manage my own marketing — so you can feel confident that you're getting everything you need to succeed.

Not only that, I give you a full month to ask whatever questions you may have as you begin using this powerful program.

No 5

AFFILIATE PRODUCTS / JOINT

If you haven't had the time or resources to develop your own products yet, you can still sell products on your website.

By becoming an affiliate (or sale rep) for another brand's products, you earn a commission for each sale made. If you're just starting out monetizing your website, this option may be right for you. But it's not only for beginners. Some businesses focus primarily on selling affiliate products — with great success.



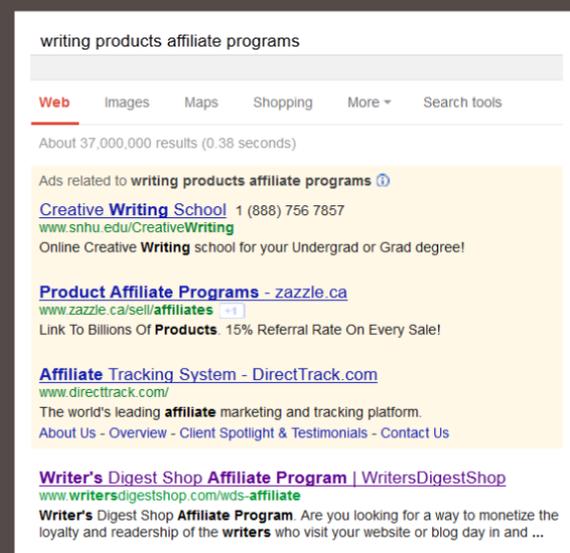
TWO RULES FOR SELECTING AFFILIATE PRODUCTS

- 1/ The products you sell must be related to your core topic or product.
- 2/ The fact that you sell them is an endorsement. Make sure they're high-quality products.
- 3/ Finding affiliate products.

To find affiliate products that fit your brand and marketing plan, use one or more of these five techniques.

1 GOOGLE “[YOUR CORE TOPIC] PRODUCTS AFFILIATE PROGRAM.”

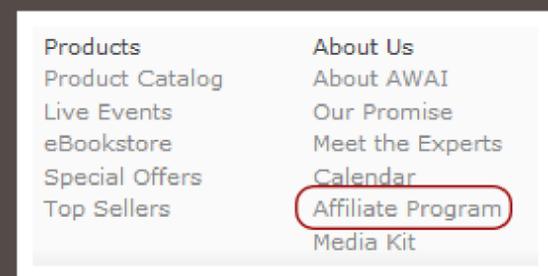
Visit the links and check out their programs. Each affiliate program is set up differently, so you'll need to make sure it will work for you. For instance, the brand may require a minimum number of sales before you get paid.



2 BECOME AN AFFILIATE OF PRODUCTS YOU'VE PURCHASED IN THE PAST.

When you buy a product that you like, check the vendor to see if they have an affiliate program. Since you've tried the product, it's a no-brainer to sell it as well.

If there is an affiliate program, you'll find a link like one of these:



3 CHECK OUT AFFILIATE NETWORKS.

An affiliate network is a middleman that helps connect publishers like you to merchants that offer an affiliate program.

Some of the most common are:





SET UP LINK SKIMMING ON YOUR WEBSITE.

Skimlinks.com converts links and product references in your blog posts into affiliate links. So it's affiliate marketing, but automated so you don't have to think about it.

In their words: "Unlock the cash in your content."



SET UP INFOLINKS ON YOUR WEBSITE.

Infolinks.com provides in-text advertising that isn't subtle and verges on annoying. But, it has a proven track record of generating revenue. So you might want to check it out.

HOW TO SELL OTHER PEOPLE'S PRODUCTS FOR A COMMISSION

Selling other people's products is no different than selling your own.



1 CREATE CONTENT

Write blog posts and create other content to talk about the issues or topics surrounding your affiliate products. Then, as with your own content, place an ad with the content and encourage click-through.



2 PROMOTE THE PRODUCT TO YOUR LIST

Draft promotional emails to send to your list. Consider creating a special offer in which you offer a premium from your own content to anyone who buys before a particular date.

This is one sale you don't want to miss. ProBlogger's 10th-anniversary sale ends Friday.

<http://bit.ly/QJKJC9>

Save anywhere from 50-90% on:

- 31 Days to a Better Blog
- ProBlogger's Guide to Your First Week of Blogging
- ProBlogger's Guide to Blogging for Your Business
- BlogWise: How to Do More with Less
- Copywriting Scorecard for Bloggers
- The Blogger's Guide to Online Marketing

<http://bit.ly/QJKJC9>

I'm loving the ones I purchased! I bet you will too.



CREATE ADS.

Sometimes, the affiliate or joint venture partner provides ready-made sales materials. All you have to do is place ads on your website, send emails to your list, and post occasional social media recommendations.

Other times, you have to create your own artwork and sales copy. If you know how to use Photoshop, create ads just as you would for your own products. If not, use text ads, in which you hyperlink the words when you mention the product.

The idea is to incorporate these ads into your normal marketing. For instance, the marketer who sent out this newsletter creates her own products and sells affiliate products. This issue of her newsletter has an ad for both types of products.



MONETIZE THE COMMUNITY THAT BUILDS UP AROUND YOUR CONTENT



One final way to monetize your content is to create community around it. People develop strong loyalty to the people who invest in their success.

If you can identify a problem that your customers tend to struggle with, and if you can create a forum or event that helps them network and develop relationship with people who have similar goals and struggles, you can often generate a strong sense of community.

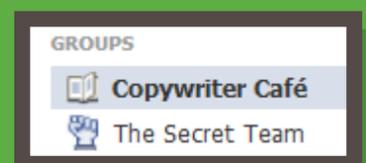
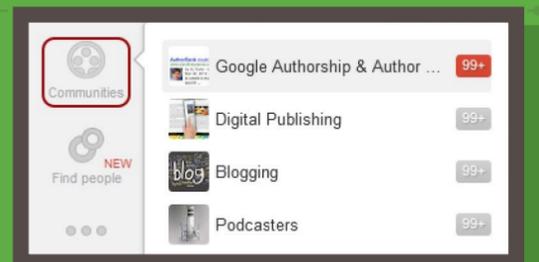
This, then, allows you to sell training programs and personal coaching, as well as live and digital events.

HOW TO DO IT



CREATE A FORUM FOR YOUR COMMUNITY.

Create a facebook group, Google+ community, or place a forum on your website.



STEP 2

CREATE A CAMPAIGN FOR MEMBERSHIP.

- *Send invitations to people on your list.*
- *Notify your social media followers.*
- *Include a mention in your newsletter.*
- *Create a landing page on your website.*



Steve Roller

Thanks for the great response so far. I took the liberty to add people, and will be adding more, but feel free to invite people who you think might benefit.

On The Menu

The Copywriter Café offers four levels of membership, with a fifth to be announced in 2014. À la carte menu also available. Choose the level that fits your needs now – you can change at any time with a simple email message.

STEP 3

CREATE A CAMPAIGN FOR MEMBERSHIP.

Be the guru, but let others get involved as well.

Think of yourself as the host at a big party. Help people get involved and have a good time.



Steve Roller

Thanks, Tanya MarCia, for adding members and taking care of things while I was in isolation for a few days knocking out a 20-page promotion. If I ever go to prison for anything I'm going to make a very prolific writer.



Steve Roller

I'll be acknowledging a number of new members here in the Café soon, but wanted to welcome my good friend, Lori Leibold VanNatta and a fellow Madisonian, Beth Turner.

STEP 4

CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Recognize people's successes. Mention people on their birthdays and other special days.

Megan Jenifer-Harris says:
01/25/2013 at 11:22 am

Massive Steve! Thank you so much for being in all of our lives!



Reply

Steve Roller says:
01/30/2013 at 3:58 pm

You're welcome, Megan. Glad to be here!



Reply



USE THE FORUM TO GET A FEEL FOR PEOPLE'S STRENGTHS AND STRUGGLES.

Then create events and products around those needs.

HOW OTHERS ARE DOING IT

CONFERENCE

The Self-Publishers Online Conference is a brain child of authors and business owners, Susan Daffron and James Byrd.



The annual conference is sponsored by their three core businesses: Logical Expressions, Self-Pub U, and SPAWN. It generates an additional stream of income and directs business back to these businesses.

A conference is a great way to use live delivery of content to grow your business. It does take a lot of work to put on a conference — whether digital or live — but it can build credibility better than any other format for delivering content.

TRAINING

Steve Roller created **Copywriter Café** to serve as a gathering place for new and developing copywriters. His goal is to offer training and coaching services, but rather than starting with a business launch, he created a membership site that puts people first.

One of his training events is the Ultimate Writing Retreat™. He travels to different locations around the US to meet with members of his community and hosts a 3-day writing retreat in their location.

The event is popular because it allows people who have been interacting online to meet face-to-face.

As a content marketer, your primary focus is on building relationship first, then leveraging that trust to sell your products and services.

A unique type of training event that does this well is a retreat. It allows you to offer training in a variety of ways.

- Programs
- Hangouts
- Inner circles with private forums.
- Webinars
- Meet-ups

But if, like Steve Roller, you focus on helping your customers, it doesn't matter. People attend simply to connect.

Steve Roller

Coming soon to the Copywriter Café ... a detailed description of services offered. It will include ongoing teaching, training, and accountability in a group setting, professional copy critiques, one-on-one personal training for aspiring copywriting rock stars, and access to clients (small business owners) from the Big Ideas Café who need a copywriter.

Plus ... the Ultimate Writing Retreat, a transformative, three-day gathering of high-achieving, like-minded writers in an beautiful, inspired setting (five locations to be announced early 2013), sure to take your writing business (and your life) to new heights.

I've been working with some of you already, and look forward to connecting with more of you once everything is established. I'm in the process of wrapping up some client projects so I can put my focus on the Café for the rest of the year.

Thanks for hanging out in our version of the 1920s Shakespeare and Company bookstore. Big things will be happening soon, just like they did on the Left Bank then.

Steve Roller ▶ **Copywriter Café**

Finalizing details on the Santa Fe Ultimate Writing Retreat™!

I'll have the landing page up with all the information on March 6, but you can get a preview and register now to secure your spot:

<http://www.copywritercafe.com/writing-retreats/>

The Santa Fe Ultimate Writing Retreat™ will be limited to 15 writers (based partly on the location I've selected.)

Ultimate Writing Retreat is a 3-day life-changing writing event.
www.copywritercafe.com
 Ultimate Writing Retreat is an intimate 3-day life-changing, business-building, income-producing event in an inspired setting

COACHING

There may be no better example of coaching than the Glazer-Kennedy Insider Circle



Most coaching programs provide three basic tiers: in this case, gold, diamond and luxury. But coaching programs can easily add other levels by removing or adding features, making it accessible to everyone's needs.

Coaching can be delivered one-on-one or in a group setting. It's a great way to add another stream of revenue. Because it is personalized, it is perceived as a high value product.

Best of all, members develop a sense of community that makes it easy to promote products to them.

PICK THE MONETIZATION STRATEGY THAT FITS YOUR BRAND AND PERSONALITY

It doesn't matter which option you choose. In fact, you can mix and match them to create a unique business model that reflects your own personal style.

The key is to focus on solving your customers' problems, not selling to them. Your underlying motivation comes through loud and clear. So be genuine about your desire to help your community. Then try out the different models we've covered here:

- 1/ Membership site
- 2/ Product development
- 3/ Affiliate sales
- 4/ Sponsorship
- 5/ Events

As you incorporate monetization strategies into your content marketing strategy, you'll find that it gives focus to your content production and helps you reach your overall business objectives.

That being the case, as soon as you feel confident in your content marketing skills, it's time to start monetizing.

I HOPE YOU'VE ENJOYED THE ADVANCED GUIDE TO CONTENT MARKETING!

Our goal in writing this Advanced Guide To Content Marketing is to help you become insanely successful and prosperous on the Web. That's why we filled it to the brim with tactical, immediately actionable ideas that you can implement in your own business.

Put these steps to work, and you'll be amazed at how easy it is to build a community of fans and followers, increase engagement and traffic to your website, and drive sales.

NOW TAKE THE FIRST STEP...

When learning a new skill, it's easy to get so caught up in learning that you forget to put your knowledge to work.

We hope that's not you!

Believe us when we say you know more about content marketing than many of the marketers on the Web. You definitely have enough knowledge to start implementing changes in your current strategy.

So get to work.

Take one step at a time, and before you know it, you'll have a content marketing strategy in place that rivals anything the Fortune 500 companies are doing.

Be sure to keep this ebook handy and refer to it often. When you hit a snag or need some guidance, dig back in. The simple process of doing it is education in itself.

If you're new to content marketing, don't worry about building your strategy in a day. Start with one action item and grow from there.

GOOD LUCK!

**TAKE ME TO
CHAPTER NINE**

**GO BACK TO
THE START!**

