

# MARKETING CONTENT THAT NURTURES AND ENGAGES

BEST PRACTICES AND VALUABLE WRITING TIPS FROM A CONTENT EXPERT



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# HOW TO CREATE MARKETING CONTENT THAT GETS NOTICED

Content is King, distribution is Queen and context is essential. Before you get down to the business of writing, make sure your message is engaging, targeted and relevant.

## CONTENT

- Your content should create an emotional connection.
- Customers engage when your message is interesting, consistent and valuable.

## DISTRIBUTION

- To reach your target, you must use the right channels, or your customers won't get your message.

## CONTEXT

- Understand the backstory and be relevant, empathize with problems and get rid of pains.
- Frame your message in a way your customers understand.
- Educate and inform, find out what matters and provide answers where your competitors don't.



# WRITING YOUR OWN CONTENT

You need to create compelling content to match marketing personas and bring customers closer to your brand.

Whether you create your own content, use an in-house writer or contract a freelancer, it's important that you understand content best practices and the writing process.

Discussion, interviews, research and source documents all play an important role in producing clear, targeted, enticing messages that nurture prospects, create leads and result in meaningful customer engagement.

Before you start to write, ask yourself some key questions:

## WHAT ARE MY STRENGTHS?

Play to yours and engage others for their expertise.

## CAN I AFFORD THE TIME?

Spend it wisely, where you can make the most impact.

## ARE THERE HIDDEN COSTS?

Just because you're doing the writing, doesn't mean it's free. Don't miss valuable business opportunities by taking on too many roles.

## WHO'S THE EXPERT?

You need compelling, engaging content that resonates with your audience—that gets read by the people you want to reach. Whether you're curating content from multiple contributors or creating it yourself, consider using an expert to give your message pace, interest and common voice.



# WORKING WITH A CONTENT WRITER

Working with an experienced writer is a collaborative process that requires your business knowledge, expert sources of information and the writer's talent to add value to your content.

Make sure you can clearly articulate the purpose of each piece, and how it fits into the sales process. Are you creating an educational document like a whitepaper, industry brief, eBook or guide? Are you nudging a customer towards a purchase using a case study, or maybe keeping an existing customer engaged with a newsletter?



## RESEARCH, WRITE, TEST, REVISE AND PROOF

Discuss each stage with your writer and build in time to accommodate each one. Engaging a writer is more than a simple handoff, so make yourself available when questions need answering.

## A CLEAR BRIEF IS ESSENTIAL

The better you brief, the sharper the results. Make sure that you're clear about your message and the sources of information to support it. Take time to describe detailed target personas, and nail down your key messages.

## EDITING ISN'T A QUICK FIX

Editing can often take as long as creating content from scratch. A writer still needs to understand your business, your audience and the purpose of your message.

# IDENTIFYING CUSTOMER PERSONAS

If you don't know who you're talking to, and what's on their mind, you will be wasting your time, energy, money and message. Guesswork is no substitute for research.

## GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE YOU WANT TO REACH

Ask your peers. Survey the market. Speak to employees, partners, suppliers, clients. Visit websites, chat forums, seminars, tradeshows.

## WHAT DO THEY FEAR, AND WHAT DO THEY LONG FOR?

Tap into fears and aspirations, so you can align your products and services with emotions.

## CAN YOU DESCRIBE THEIR PAIN?

Before you can heal it, you have to feel it.

## DO YOU KNOW THEIR GOALS?

Are you both heading in the same direction?



## WHAT ARE THEIR CHARACTERISTICS?

Use different content to engage researchers, influencers and decision-makers.

## WHERE ARE THEY FROM?

Don't talk global if your market is local.

## CARRY ON THE CONVERSATION

When you speak to your target audiences in language that really resonates, and you've built value into your content, you'll get the privilege of continuing the discussion.

# MAKING EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS

B2B buying decisions can be just as emotional as retail purchases. Use your content to create a meaningful connection that allows you the opportunity to keep talking.

## ASK CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS

Being inquisitive leads to conversation, and maybe a long-term relationship. Use surveys for discovery. Create content that invites comment.

## COMPARE PAINS

Case studies are a great way to show customers that other people share their problems. The perfect opportunity for you to demonstrate how you healed the pain.

## REVEAL YOUR PASSION

Don't be afraid to say how you feel. It's good to do business with people who share enthusiasm.

## DESCRIBE A BRIGHTER FUTURE

If you can demonstrate how tomorrow will be better, your audience will absorb your optimism and want to know how you can solve their problems.



# CASE STUDIES + SUCCESS STORIES

Everyone loves a good story, and B2B buyers are no exception. This is the perfect way to showcase your products and services using testimonials from clients who already love what you do. Writing compelling case studies and success stories takes careful planning:

CONFIRM YOUR GOALS: What strengths do you want to showcase? What action do you want the reader to take?

GET EARLY APPROVAL: Will your client allow you to tell the story and provide you with testimonials?

DO YOUR HOMEWORK: Before the interview, talk to people in your organization. Their insight and experience may take your story in a different direction.

MANAGE THE INTERVIEW: Prepare notes that will keep you and your interviewee on track. Remember your goals, and bring the conversation back to base when it wanders.

ASK OPEN QUESTIONS: Some people talk too much and you'll need to summarize. Others are busy and distracted, so feed them suggestions. Ask questions they can't answer with a simple "yes" or "no."

WRITE LIKE YOU'RE TELLING A STORY: Introduce the characters, outline the problem, summarize your solution, emphasize the benefits, describe the future.

INCORPORATE TESTIMONIALS: Use call-out quotes to highlight your key messages, and repurpose them in other pieces of content.



# WHITEPAPERS, INDUSTRY BRIEFS, EBOOKS + GUIDES

These are effective tools to collect leads, nurture prospects, establish thought leadership, show you understand the marketplace and move prospects through the pipeline. Create educational content using the format that best matches the reader's attention span and thirst for knowledge.

DO THE RESEARCH: Probably the most time-consuming part of the job. The reader is looking for an education. Make sure you get your facts straight.

CONSULT THE EXPERTS: If your subject matter is highly technical and not yet widely discussed, consider an expert to draft your document and an editor to turn it into an engaging narrative.

CREATE AN OUTLINE AND GET APPROVAL: Don't wait to the last page to find out if you're on the right track.

SUMMARIZE YOUR CONTENTS: Give C-levels the opportunity to skim your document.

INCLUDE THIRD-PARTY VALIDATION: People are more likely to believe you if they hear it from someone else.

USE SCREENSHOTS, DIAGRAMS AND TABLES: Keep your readers turning the pages by making good use of graphics to illustrate your key points.

# WEB CONTENT

When you write digital content, the message doesn't change but the method and speed of delivery does. Serve your audience consistent content, with digital, print and verbal communications sharing a common voice. Use marketing collateral, presentations and speeches to drive audiences to your online content, where they can explore information in greater depth, according to need.

## WEB CONTENT SHOULD BE RELEVANT, LAYERED AND CONSTANTLY REFRESHED

- Content is critical. Search Engines see words, not graphics.
- Short-form or long-form content? Some attention spans are longer than others. Experiment to find out what works best.
- Use bullets, headlines and subheads, so site visitors can skim key messages.
- Link to other sources of information.
- Add new content frequently.

## OPTIMIZE YOUR CONTENT

- Search engine spiders and humans read differently. Write for both.
- Do your research and incorporate keywords and phrases as you write.
- Bite-sized portions are more digestible.



# 12 THINGS ABOUT WRITING GREAT CONTENT

1. DO YOUR RESEARCH + PLAN BEFORE YOU WRITE
2. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE
3. USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE + WRITE LIKE YOU TALK
4. ENGAGE READERS USING WE + YOU, NOT COMPANY + CUSTOMER
5. KEEP YOUR WORDS, SENTENCES, PARAGRAPHS SHORT
6. USE ACTIVE, NOT PASSIVE VOICE
7. CHOOSE VERBS THAT GIVE CONTENT ENERGY
8. EXPLAIN ACRONYMS, AVOID JARGON + CLICHES
9. SUMMARIZE CONTENT IN HEADLINES + SUBHEADS
10. BREAK UP COPY WITH BULLETS, WHITE SPACE, IMAGES, GRAPHICS
11. BE CONCRETE INSTEAD OF ABSTRACT
12. PROOF FROM PRINT, NOT YOUR SCREEN



IF I COULD TELL YOU JUST ONE  
THING, I'D SAY, "WRITE LIKE YOU'RE  
HAVING A CONVERSATION."

# CONTACT

Find out how my expertise as a strategist, project manager and freelance B2B writer can help you nurture and engage your content readers.



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