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# 1. About Godot Media

Content Marketing is fast becoming the preferred way of reaching out to customers and building a brand. Both traditional and digital marketers swear by its effectiveness and are employing innovative ways to create 'real' engagement with the brand and the company's products and services. According to a recent survey in the US:

- An average company devotes \$152,850 to custom content creation.
- 9 out of 10 organizations already market with content marketing
- 60% of companies plan to increase their spending on content marketing
- 62% of B2B marketers use outsourcing for content marketing
- 77% of large firms outsource some of their content development.

In the words of Marc Andreessen, co-founder of Netscape, and co-founder and general partner of Silicon Valley venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz, "As consumer behavior broadly moves from old media to the web, the opportunity for high-end online content is gigantic...".

Godot Media offers content marketing solutions to clients across industries and in over 20 countries. We work with companies to enhance their online presence through high-impact and targeted content. Our quality content communicates the value of our clients' offerings, and helps them create a strong connect with their customers and build valuable brands.

Visit our website <http://www.godotmedia.com> to find more about how we are changing the way companies engage with customers online.



## The growth of content marketing

Content marketing is everywhere - from printed magazines to emails, websites, webcasts, podcasts, newsletters, etc. Even the articles and images that you see on Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites are forms of content marketing. It has gained so much importance that businesses and individuals are hiring the services of [content writers](#) when they need content for their websites, web pages, social network pages, blogs, etc. This form of marketing has given rise to custom media, brand marketing, branded content, custom publishing and database marketing.

Search engines like Google play an important part in creating online exposure for businesses. As content marketing is based on the idea of sharing information, online marketers must make sure that their content is featured prominently in web searches. This has given rise to a breed of “content engineers” who not only create but also optimize the content for better search engine rankings. Recent surveys have shown that this marketing technique now outranks brand awareness and sales as the leading tool for lead generation.

## How to market with content effectively

First, you must think of the kind of audience and customers you want to attract. Based on this you can decide the content that needs to be created. Make sure to have control over the design, creation and styling processes. Create an online presence with blogs and a website. SEO basics will come in handy, so make sure to include keywords and search terms in the content and optimize the title tags, headers, etc. for search engine algorithms. Set up contact forms and auto responders to provide potential customers and leads with more information. Update the content regularly and promote them through email marketing, social media websites, Google URL builder, etc.

It is imperative that you interact with and engage interested leads using your published content. Make sure to respond to their comments on social media sites and continue this interaction through emails, telephonic conversations and ultimately in face-to-face meetings. To make useful connections on social networks, use tools like HootSuite, TweetDeck, SocialBro, etc. to keep abreast of all the conversations

around your content. Your content should allow you to have a ready audience for future content pieces that you release. Finally, content marketing should be made an intrinsic part of the overall marketing strategy.

It cannot be stressed enough – content is the most important part of this marketing technique. If the content is not interesting, informative, accurate and relevant then it will not gain much visibility. Google algorithms have now been changed to give higher rankings to good content. Before anything else, make sure every single piece of published content is of top quality.

### 3. History of Content Marketing

Some experts say that content marketing started with the caveman as we have been able to find the first forms of custom publishing in the form of cave paintings dating back to 4200 B.C. However, most agree that [John Deere](#) was the pioneering company in content marketing. It launched its first customer magazine known as “The Furrow” in 1895 and it is still running. This magazine is considered to be a shining example of content marketing because instead of just offering advertisements and promotions to customers, it offered valuable content that customers could benefit from.

Another early example of content marketing is the 400-page long guide offered by Michelin Tires for its customers. This guide offered tips on automobile care, travel tips and other vehicle related information and was distributed for free by the company. The guide became so successful that soon the company was able to sell the guides for a profit. Jell-O is another brand that was able to use innovative content marketing early on to not only increase profits but to also make the brand a household name.

When the company was founded, no one knew what Jell-O was and no one ate the product. The brand launched its own cookbook with recipes involving Jell-O. This book showed customers how they could use Jell-O in daily cooking and cook up fabulous desserts with very little time and effort using Jell-O. Other major companies like P&G, Microsoft, Nike, etc. have practiced content marketing over the years, way before the Internet was born.



*[Photo](#) by EHC Red Bull München [[CC-BY-SA-3.0](#)], via  
Wikimedia Commons*

More recently, Red Bull is the brand that everyone refers to when talking about exceptional content marketing. The brand sells only the Red Bull energy drink, but has been able to make itself synonymous with a high-adventure, high-adrenaline lifestyle. Their website and magazine called “Red Bulletin” publishes some of the best images, videos and textual content related to adventure sports. Their content marketing division produces unique content of such high quality that it has been compared to some major publishing and media brands. More importantly, with their content, the brand has been able to attract their target audience and turn them into fans.

[Content marketing is now practiced by many companies](#) and more stick to distributing their content online as it keeps publishing costs to a minimum. Coca Cola, American Express, Google, etc. are some of the major companies using content marketing. Many smaller businesses rely almost solely on online content marketing to market the brand and its products and they have been able to achieve immense success.

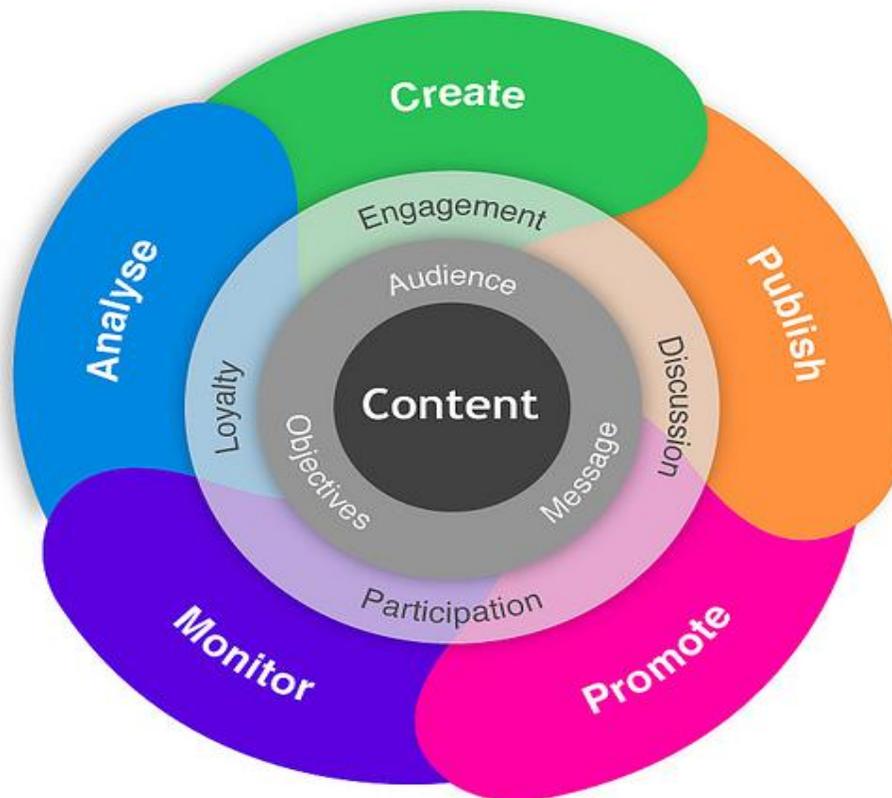
### **What content marketing should be?**

Experts have been able to identify many distinct examples of content marketing even before the advent of the internet, because the brands were able to teach customer and offer content that they found useful with their marketing campaigns. The objective wasn't to advertise or promote the brand, but to help customers solve their problems. Content marketing is subtle promotion of the brand where customers are not thrust with blatant advertising and promotional materials but are in fact guided and helped by the brand.

The goals of content marketing has always been to attract new customers, to improve relationships with existing customers, promote the product by describing and demonstrating its benefits and using storytelling and user-generated content to keep customers interested. Of course the immediate goal of content marketing is to enable the brand to appear at the top of search results of major search engines.

Also, unlike Public Relations or PR, content marketing is not interruptive and aggressive. With content marketing brands can get interested customers and leads to come to them and such interested people have more intentions of engaging further with the brand and to buy products and services. PR is about making news and getting in the face of the customers. Content marketing is more about finding what kind of content people want and are searching for and then delivering such content via the right content distribution channels. This is why social media networks like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn play such an important part in content marketing.

## 4.5 Principles Of Content Marketing



*[Photo by Digital Ralph/ CC license](#)*

There's no denying that Google has come to influence way too much in the online world. So much so that webmasters have to constantly keep in touch with what's Google up to, to ensure that their websites constantly feed on the much needed traffic.

On an average, most websites get about 50-80% of their traffic from search engines (read primarily Google). In such a scenario, it is only natural that Google algorithm updates create quite a stir, having a deep impact on hundreds of thousands of businesses across the world. The search engine giant is a towering influencer and ducking your face in the sand and ignoring the reality would not do much good. So, how do you Google-proof your online presence and traffic to your website?

The answer is uncannily simple - stop worrying about Google and focus solely on engaging your customers/readers. The trick is to go back to basics of marketing in the real world and adapt them to the online reality. Here's how you can do it:

### **Principle 1: Market Online as You Would Market Offline**

There is no reason why online marketing rules should be fundamentally different from offline practices. The online customers ask the same question as offline customers - they want to know 'what's in it for them'. Show them the value in your offerings, dazzle them with exciting stuff and they will ask for more. Similarly, what loyalty programs offline achieve, the same success can be recreated online as well. Be creative, think what would you offer your customers to repeat offline and replicate the same online - if it is useful advice they cherish, then the analogy online would be a powerful [blog](#) which offers valuable information.

### **Principle 2: Remember Word of Mouth is the Most Powerful Online**

Many businesses across the world have catapulted to success because of the good word of mouth they commanded. This phenomenon is faster and more powerful online. With social channels like Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Google+, and many niche communities and networking platforms, you can now spread the word faster and more efficiently. Presence on these platforms is a must, but the buck does not stop here. Investing effort and creativity into popularizing these and getting your audience to participate on them is equally critical. The good news is that these channels are self-feeding to a large extent - once you get the momentum going, they will thrive and contribute majorly to your success.

Bottom line, get the conversations going! It's going to be tedious to kick start, but once done, the rewards will be multi-fold. Search engines like Google have made no secret of how they are reading trends off these social channels - in this line of thought, your popularity on these channels will be the indicator of your importance or growing influence on the Internet - something that may translate into search results as well.

### **Principle 3: Build Credibility and Prove Authenticity**

One of the key problems that Google faces optimizing the results for better user experience is fighting spam online. Link farms, bad content, keyword stuffing and poor value pages are all a part of this problem. Sites and pages with these intentions are shady and created hoping search engines would rank them well, or such pages will pass on the benefit to other intended sites or pages. Such content or pages online do not have the readers or visitors in mind. Google is going beyond this and looking for signals to merge the real and virtual world, and filtering out such spam.

The leading search engine is going great lengths to establish authenticity of websites and businesses, by looking for signals of their offline presence. For example, local business citations (mentions of local address with entity name on the web) have emerged to be an important factor for establishing authenticity of an online venture. It's only natural that the search engine would want to protect the interests of its users and hence give preference in search rankings to those businesses whose authenticity and links to the offline world can be better established. Such signals are also trust building for the audience of the website or business.

Other credibility building measures, such as being participants of some offline events (finding their mentions online as well), having a popular and well-read blog or a being a publisher of a popular [eBooks](#) (etc.) can benefit your Internet marketing strategy immensely. These too will produce natural links from various online properties, which will hold more regard in Google's eyes.

### **Principle 4: Diversify Your Online Presence**

Just like marketing through one channel in the real world often does not suffice, you would need to diversify your online presence too. Get registered on local directories, guest blog on relevant niche blogs, tweet, pin, podcast or market through videos - diversify your presence as much as possible. It's never a good idea to hold all your eggs in one basket. You never know what may click, become viral or get you the exposure that allows you the leap to the next level.

## **Principle 5: Think How You Can Grab More Eyeballs**

Visitors to a trade show are most attracted to the stall that dazzles the most. Same holds true online too. Your website design, content, value proposition, social media presence - everything matters. Just the average won't do - you will have to dazzle, share your dream and find opportunities of standing out. Humble beginnings on smaller platforms may just be the stepping-stones to bigger exposure opportunities.

Keep looking for chances to be found on the Internet and give them an honest shot. It could be becoming a donor or member of a charity or guest blogging/advertising on an ardently followed blog. There are many ways of getting more eye balls - the most important thing is to be creative and never stop innovating.

## 5. Why Google Loves Great Content

So by now, you of course know that you need good content but do you really know why? There's more to it than meets the eye, and understanding these reasons will help you develop your content marketing strategy with confidence and clarity.

If you're not from the marketing industry and are wondering what's causing this sudden interest in quality content, the answer is one word – Google. Since the Panda/Penguin Google search algorithm updates, every online marketing expert worth his salt will tell you that Google will love you more if you create awesome content.



*Photo by Alexis Wilke (Own work) [CC-BY-SA-3.0], via Wikimedia*

*Commons*

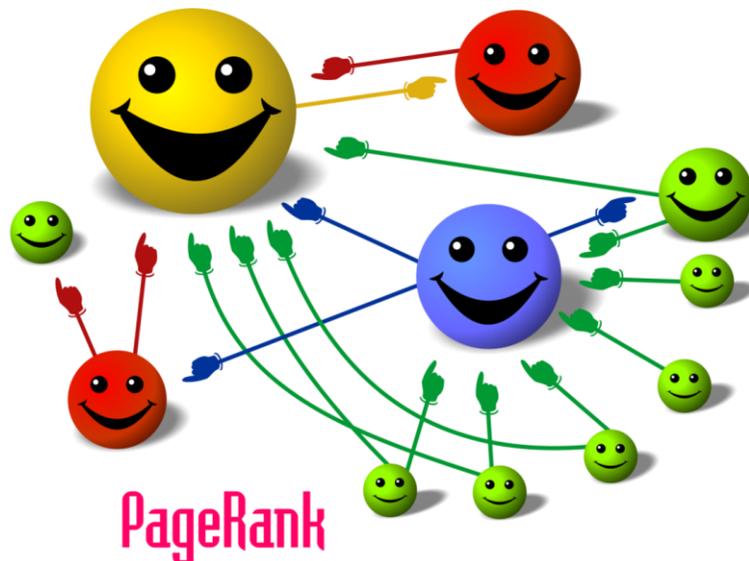
And why does Google prefer great content? There are two reasons – the obvious and the unobvious one.

## The obvious reason – spam, spam, spam, and some more spam

Rewind to circa 2010. Most online marketers would spend a lot of time and effort on creating completely useless content; distribute it on article farms, spammy forums, and lots of other nasty places. These places served no purpose at all, but to be a permanent parking lot for bad content – for which they sometimes even charged a dollar or two. You could find content on almost any topic on these sites, but almost always, it would be so bad that you would never get the information you were looking for. Usually, these were just rhetorical articles repeating the same point again and again, often in broken English.

## Google's Surprise Attack

The problem was that Google's 2010 search algorithm wasn't smart enough to figure out that links coming back from these parking lots had no meaning. The links were just distorting the natural results from the algorithm.



*Photo by Wikimedia Commons/ [CC license](#)*

After several warnings to marketers and website owners, Google decided to take matters in its own hands and launched an all-out attack against spam, under the innocuous names – Panda and Penguin. The two updates shook the online marketing world and led to some serious introspection among SEO

experts. This is when marketers realized that crap content won't cut it and that the content they publish should be high quality, and even more importantly, valuable to the readers.

### **The unobvious reason – good content is the sign of a good business**

When you are shopping offline, you can judge a business by looking at its store, the packaging of its products and the way its representatives behave. This is not possible when you are just searching for a product or service on Google. To bring good businesses higher in its search rankings, Google needs to read as many reliable signals as it can. It cannot use humans to judge every business that has an online presence, so whatever signals it uses must be readable by an algorithm. And one of the easiest signals to read is textual content.

It is a fair assumption that a company that cares to write great content or hire great content writers, will also care for customer service and the quality of its products. This is a much better algorithmic assumption than simply counting the links back to a website.

### **Corollary: Bad content is the sign of a bad business**

In the same way, there is a pretty good chance that a company that does not care about the quality of the content it creates would also not care much about the quality of the products it sells or the level of service it provides to its customers.

A well-managed business shows attention to detail. It will have a good product, an efficient website, engaging and fresh content, and friendly and helpful people.

### **Action Item: Get great people working on your content**

Whether you choose to have your own team work on your content or you choose a writing company is a decision you need to make, taking into account several factors like:

- a. Availability of good writers and researchers
- b. Budget
- c. How much management bandwidth you have to drive in-house content creation projects

Whichever route you take, don't forget why you started creating content in the first place. Use the same quality benchmarks for content that you would use for your products.

Lastly, thank Google for making the internet a more trustworthy place - one where being on the top of search rankings shows credibility and quality, and not the ability to manipulate a system.

## 6. Start-ups Need Content Marketing Just Like Large Businesses

Many startups and small businesses do not bother with content marketing at all. They do not have the resources to set up an efficient content marketing team and they are simply not big enough to make an impact with their content. As a result, most start-ups rely on landing pages and PPC ads to drive traffic to their website. Also, most start-ups focus all their energy on product development while neglecting content marketing completely. However, the assumption that content marketing is not a good fit for start-ups is completely untrue.

### Advantages of content marketing for startups

So why should startups spend precious resources, time and effort on content marketing? What are the benefits?

- Content marketing can help create a brand and business identity
- More web traffic can be diverted to the company's website. Once a company starts publishing content on various platforms on the Internet that have ready audience, some of these readers can be directed to a company website with the help of backlinks.
- Sales cycles are shortened with effective content marketing. With the help of effective content you can guide your customer through the purchase funnel.
- Conversions and sales rates can be increased with the help of content marketing. Content marketing helps customers make informed decisions and gives them a sense of empowerment. They will appreciate and trust your brand more, which will help turn them into customers.

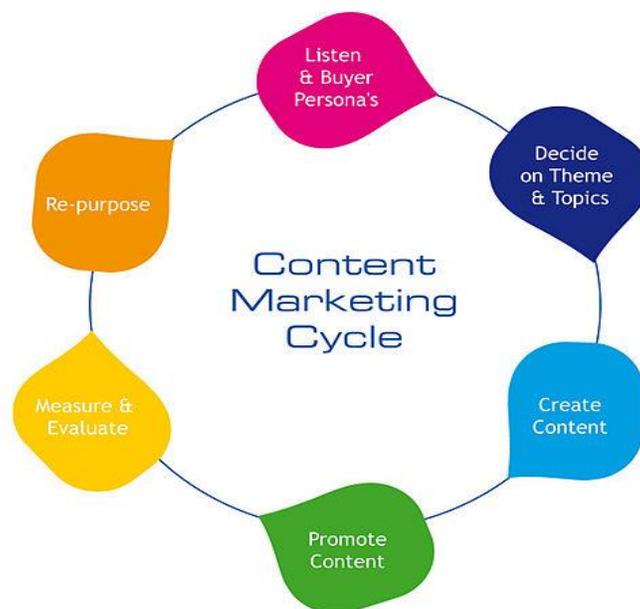


You should preferably use a content marketing editorial software to track content marketing efforts. Using such an application keeps track of the frequency with which content needs to be published, the target audience and the theme of the content that needs to be created. Such software allows you to create visual workflows of the content marketing process.

[Social media](#) platforms are great content discovery platforms and they are excellent channels to get your content to potential customers and leads by sharing your content on these various social media platforms. However, relying solely on social media networks is not wise as there are so many other ways to distribute content. Content discovery networks like Outbrain is one of the best ways to increase the visibility of your content and in turn your brand.

It goes without saying that you need to devote time and energy to the various stages of content marketing – right from the planning phase to the analysis phase, for a successful content marketing campaign.

## 7. Building An Effective Content Marketing Strategy



*Photo by Ingridarcher Ingrid Archer (Own work made by spotonvision) GFDL/ [CC license](#) via Wikimedia Commons*

Are you sure about the effectiveness of your content? Businesses are beginning to realize the benefits of attractive online and offline content. The term content marketing is being thrown around a lot these days but most people do not know how to effectively market their published content.

Content marketing success is becoming more of a hit-and-miss technique as businesses have no expertise in creating good content and in marketing it.

Just having good content doesn't cut it anymore. Hiring the services of a professional [writing company](#) is one way of ensuring the effective marketing of your content. They can deliver good content that can market itself. This will help the long-term growth of the organization by building the company brand.

Content writers for businesses must keep these following tips in mind if they want their content to be successful.

## **1. Build Your Own Content Marketing Strategy – Follow these Steps**

### **Figure out what you want to achieve *with content* marketing campaigns**

This is the first step to creating a content marketing strategy. You need to understand this form of online marketing and spell out the goals and objectives. Instead of having vague goals like increasing sales, you need to have more specific goals like creating more tutorial type content for readers.

#### **Who is your ideal audience?**

After defining the goals of your content marketing strategy you need to figure out the demographics of your ideal audience. This way, there will be no confusion while creating and publishing content.

#### **Create an editorial strategy**

Most companies forget to do this but it is an essential step especially if you have many content writers. You need to decide the tone and style of all your content pieces and make sure that they are consistent. This will help you create a personality for your brand and will help customers connect with your brand more easily.

#### **Process of content creation and publishing**

This is a crucial step where you need to decide who will be creating content and how often. After this, your content marketing team needs to agree on the marketing channels for the content. Good content should be seen by as many people as possible, so make sure to include owned, earned and paid media in your content marketing strategy. Social networking platforms are probably the most cost effective content marketing channels so integrate your content and social media marketing strategies.

## **2. Divide and Rule**

Instead of casting a wide net, divide your audience so that you can attract them with specific content. Keep in mind that you will be marketing to various kinds of people with different interests,

personalities, etc. Customize your content to target each audience segment. Brand messages, content, company announcements and communications will have more of an impact if this approach is followed. This approach will also help you to make leads, connect with people, improve brand awareness, etc., which in turn will improve your business.

### **3. Maintain Consistency**

Companies must monitor their content to make sure that it is in line with their message. Inconsistent content will drive away consumers and will pull down your entire marketing campaign. Your audience must have a clear idea about your brand, so make sure the content is persistent, consistent and not confusing.

### **4. Incorporation**

The content marketing drive must be part of a company's overall marketing campaign. Proper integration of online and offline content marketing plans will boost brand awareness, brand loyalty and sales.

### **5. Focus**

Businesses should set out clear goals for each piece of content that they publish. Knowing what you want to accomplish from your content will help focus your efforts and will reduce vague content that can have negative effects on a brand. Concentrate on the audience segments and focus on getting the most number of consumers from each segment.

### **6. Generate share-worthy content**

Most importantly; your content must inspire people to share it with others. In the age of social networks, people are able to quickly share interesting and useful articles. Informative, engaging and relevant content should be generated to maximize its shareworthiness. Your audience members will

share it with their friends and relatives who will in turn share it with their connections. Imagine the tremendous reach this kind of content can have.

## **7. Use thought-provoking images**

Yes, content marketing usually evokes images of long form textual content in our mind but people now want more visual content. Video content, particularly, is in great demand but you can generate the same buzz and excitement around your brand by publishing images. They are easy to create but to truly stand above the rest they need to be exceptionally creative and thought provoking. One of the brands that is using extremely memorable, clever and lovable images to build its brand reputations is Oreo. The brand always uses simple but very witty imagery where its cookie features prominently with smart taglines that make their content go viral. Who can forget the rainbow colored Oreo cookie in support of LGBT rights?

## **8. Follow the example of publishers**

Instead of thinking of about your content marketing team as a marketing division, think of it as a publishing division. Make sure you create and publish content that even journalists wish they had written. There is always room for original, interesting and unique textual content. Red Bull's approach of using targeted textual content, besides video diaries and live event tweets, has paid off well in retaining the attention of its customer base and establishing itself as a hip brand. Red Bull publishes a magazine Red Bulletin and has a whole website dedicated just to the content its publishing department generates without any promotional material whatsoever about the brand. This has worked so well for the brand that now Red Bull has become synonymous with extreme adventure sports.

## **9. Promote user generated content**

Most brands make the big mistake of thinking that all their content must be created in-house or by content marketing firms that they have hired. However, if you want your brand to connect with customers more deeply and to increase engagement with them, one of the best ways to do so is to ask

users to create content for you. Kraft Foods started content marketing before its competitors even realized that having a website was essential. Kraft customers submit recipes and food related articles, and the website consists of almost entirely user generated content that is extremely popular among customers.

## 10. Consider different types of content

When you start content marketing to build brand awareness, don't just stick to one type of content. Make sure you have something for everyone and every channel of content marketing – if not all at least most of them. SlideShare presentations, Pinterest boards and pins, podcasts, webinars, etc. are just some of the popular types of content that brands tend to overlook.

### Types of content you can create

Step #4 gives a list of many types of content that you need to publish on a regular basis for content marketing success. However, starting off with content marketing can be difficult. So I'm sharing a list below of the type of content you cannot do without.

- [Blog posts](#)
- Facebook and Twitter Content
- Videos, Graphics/Images and other Multimedia content
- eBooks

You may think that you do not have the time or resources to create all these types of content but this is not true. The more content you create, the easier content marketing gets. So when you have a substantial number of blog posts and lists, you can transform them into an eBooks. Or after a webinar, you can transcribe that content in a white paper.



## Critical decisions for targeting an international audience

### Countries to consider

The moment you decide to have an international social media marketing campaign, you need to choose the countries you want to target. It is impossible to target users in all countries as there are so many different [social media](#) networks and your campaigns could become unmanageable. Also, you cannot possibly learn the cultures, languages and societal nuances of every country.

So choose a few countries that matter the most, become knowledgeable about these countries and target their people with your campaigns. Most companies choose growing economies and countries where their services and products have a great demand. Surveys show that people in Russia, China and Brazil are most active on social networks and these countries are also growing rapidly. So it is a wise choice to target these countries.

### Choice of social media channels

Facebook and Twitter are the obvious choices as they are very popular in most countries and have vast user bases. Still, companies should not limit their campaigns to these channels only. Pinterest, [Instagram](#) and other image sharing social media platforms are excellent for showcasing products and services and both these channels have user bases that rival that of Twitter and Facebook.

Visual content is always more appealing than textual content so create videos, Infographics and images and market them through platforms like YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest. Also, after you have chosen the countries you want to target your campaigns at, use the most popular social networking platforms for your campaigns – preferably in appropriate local languages.

### Type of content

No matter what language you are creating your content in, it needs to be relevant, original and valuable to customers. You need to be very careful about the culture, laws and acceptable norms of a country before creating content that is going to be read by its people. Provocative and erotic content can land you in a lot of trouble in certain countries and your content could get banned or censored.

## a. LinkedIn



*[Photo](#) by LinkedIn [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons*

Marketing is a complex and confusing activity, especially for small businesses and start-ups. Most entrepreneurs are looking to make business contacts and attract a more professional audience. LinkedIn is a great platform for this purpose.

It is no longer just a place for recruiters anymore - the “Company Pages” feature can help businesses garner attention as well. This feature helps companies communicate with and reach out to the right kind of customers, prospects, partners, peers, etc. on LinkedIn. A business can post information about job opportunities, its niche market, company blog updates, company news, and much more on its Company Page. Posting company information on LinkedIn pages means that you are making sure the information reaches a target audience. Here are some useful tips to help you set up a great Company Page on LinkedIn.

### **Complete your profile**

This is the first and most basic step to creating a strong presence on LinkedIn. First impressions are important. Imagine the reaction of a prospect when he/she looks at a drab and incomplete Company Page. An incomplete profile shows that you are not interested. Completing your profile will not only make a good first impression, but will also help LinkedIn connect you with like-minded people.

### **Get people to follow you**

This is much easier said than done. One way to increase the number of followers you have is to encourage employees to follow the Company Page on LinkedIn - this will create a buzz on the page and more people are likely to follow suit. Similarly, you can encourage existing customers, peers and other similar LinkedIn users to follow your Company Page on LinkedIn. Having a substantial number of followers on LinkedIn will help your company become an authority figure in your niche market.

### **Post good content**

You can get as many followers as you want by asking them to follow you, but you will have no credibility without [valuable content](#) that is of some use to your followers. After you have created a complete profile, make sure to post useful content that your audience will appreciate. You can post content – textual and visual – about your company, products, future plans, niche market, etc.

## b. Facebook



*[Photo](#) [public domain], via Wikimedia Commons*

The survey also shows that most social media users follow brands on [social media](#) platforms for content. Facebook is the largest social media platform with over a billion active users. Effective content marketing on this platform allows companies to potentially reach a very large and global customer base. So how can a brand or content marketer ensure proper content marketing on Facebook? Here are a few tips that can help companies to improve their content marketing efforts on Facebook.

### **Place excellent calls to action**

[Facebook](#) users and your fans and followers may read your articles and want to engage further with your brand, but without effective calls to action they won't know what to do. To ensure that your fans engage with your posts, you need to tell them exactly how they can do so. Your posts may contain the link to your article but without a good call to action in the post, Facebook users may not follow the link. Use questions in your calls to action and always keep them positive. Make sure that the call to action is informative and that the post includes an image.

For example, if yours is a fashion brand and your article describes winter fashion, the Facebook post linking to the article could be “Do you want to know how to be a fashionista in the winters? Our experts have come up with five tips that will show you how! Share these tips with fellow fashionistas!”

### **Post regularly and frequently**

Posting frequently extends the engagement that fans have with your brand and ensures that they do not forget your brand. It is recommended that brands post at least once daily to expect good customer engagement. Companies that are able to create valuable and share-worthy content should post on Facebook as frequently as possible. If your brand is not able to create a lot of content, then you can share content from leaders and experts in your industry. Keep in mind that the posts should be short and informative so that fans know what to expect from the article by skimming through the Facebook post linking to it.

### **Include visual content**

Visual content like videos, images and infographics is far more attractive than textual content. In fact, people engage more with visual content than with plain textual content. The newsfeeds of Facebook users are crammed with posts from various friends and company pages and your posts must be able to stand out among the flood of posts in newsfeeds. The best way to ensure this is by using eye-catching images and videos in your posts. The company page of your brand must also have relevant cover and profile photos such as the company logo so that fans know exactly who the post is from.

### **Create content that fans find valuable**

Fans will engage more with content that they find helpful. Content that addresses problems faced by consumers and offers solutions is the best type of [content](#). You need to listen to your fans and understand what they need and create content accordingly. The easiest way to find out what fans want is by creating and publishing different types and pieces of content and monitoring the interaction fans have with the content. All business pages can use Facebook Insights to gather statistics and information about the success of each post. Use this feature to figure out user engagement with your posts and create content accordingly.

### c. Pinterest



[Pinterest](#) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Pinterest is not as well-known as Facebook or Twitter but it has garnered a lot of attention in the past year or two [read more here](#) .

The site has been growing at a rapid pace and a number of businesses have started paying attention to what this virtual pinboard has to offer. The terms of agreement clearly state that Pinterest cannot be used for selling products, but businesses can always get creative and increase their brand visibility and value through the site. Here are some of the ways which can help your business leverage what Pinterest has to offer.

#### **Invest some time**

Anyone who has used social media platforms for marketing purposes will tell you that spending time on your campaign is very important. This aspect is even more pronounced in case of Pinterest. You need to build relationships with users who have a reputation for quality 'pins' on the site. When these users are in touch with you, the probability of them posting about your business increases. So, go for those users who get a lot of 'repins' and 'likes'. The repins and likes originate from a common interest and it is easier to then take the conversation to a platform like Facebook or Twitter, where you can build upon

the relationship. Remember, being authentic is very important if you want to build such relationships. In the long run, hiring a company that specializes in [social media services](#) may be very effective.

### **Keep things simple**

One of the reasons that Pinterest has garnered so much success is because it is extremely easy to use. Every user gets a board where they can pin images, which are of the same size. The best thing for a business is to continue with the theme of simplicity at Pinterest and create boards that are clean and clutter free. Also, make sure that every pinned photo has a link back to your site or wherever you want the person to go. Many people have cited Pinterest as a major contributor of traffic in their social media campaigns.

### **Connect your Pinterest page and your physical location**

The relationship between your business and Pinterest should work in both ways. So, not only should you promote your business through Pinterest, you should also try and advertise your Pinterest promotions through your website or through the physical store. One way to do this is use the Pinterest button on your company website.

## d. Twitter



*Photo by David Ferreira [[CC-BY-SA-3.0](#)], via Wikimedia Commons*

Twitter is an excellent promotional platform for branded content. When leveraged smartly, it can drive a ton of traffic to your blog or website. Here are five tips savvy marketers use to grab eyeballs and social shares.

### **Keep it short and compelling**

Short tweets (less than 100 characters) have been found to enjoy a higher interaction rate. Focus on promoting your blog or video with crisp, short and punchy tweets that pique interest. While this is easier said than done, you can get inspiration from those who do it best, such as [Copyblogger's](#) Brian Clark.

Your tweet doesn't always have to be the title of your blog, unless you deem it compelling enough, such as “SEO is Dead: Long Live OC/DC”, a [Copyblogger](#) tweet used to promote a blog by the same name. Or you can try what [Hubspot](#) does so well to generate interest in its blog posts, an example being “Do you

have a good cold calling story?" to promote its post "Tired Of Cold Callers? Add Your Phone Number To The 'Do Not Call' List".

## Use hashtags

Do #Oscars, #Superbowl, #RoyalBaby and #BostonMarathon sound familiar? They were the most popular hashtags of 2013. A [study](#) indicates that hashtag can double engagement by allowing you to connect with not just your followers but other Twitter users as well.

Hashtags operate like a keyword within your tweet. A hashtag is clickable, meaning that clicking on one will bring up a full search of people who are using it to tweet. You can add double or triple hashtags, such as #wimbledon#winner.

## Use @mentions

Twitter mentions enable you to tag other Twitter users in your tweets. You can use mentions to get your tweets retweeted. For instance, if your blog post talks about a company or a prominent personality, you can mention them in a tweet linking back to your post. It wouldn't be unreasonable to expect that your tweet will be retweeted to their followers.

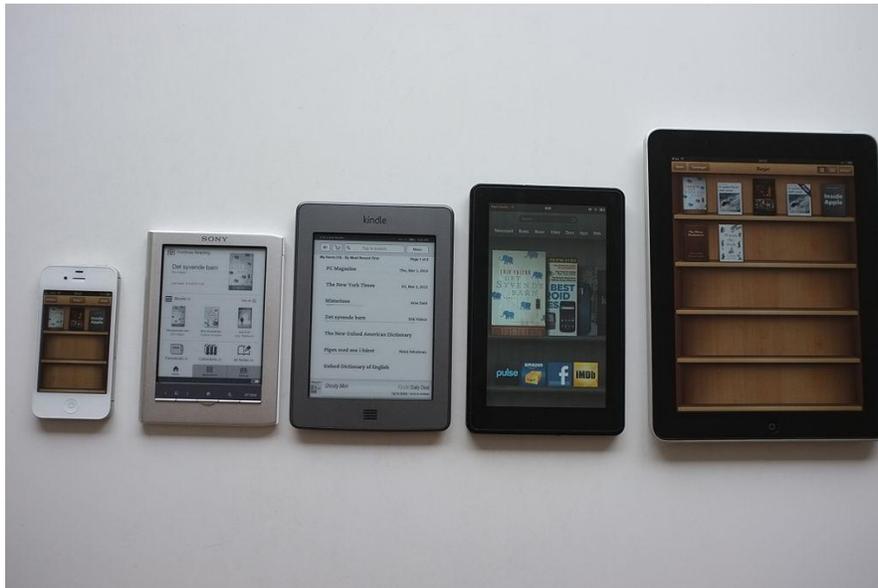
## Include statistics and quotes where possible

Numbers and characters sometimes have more impact than words. [Mia Farrow's](#) "Over 500 human rights defenders are imprisoned in #Iran" is one among many examples. [A tweet with a quote](#) can get you 54 percent more retweets. Quotes from famous people seem to be irresistible for some reason, a behavior you can exploit to increase retweets and promote your content. A good example of a tweet with a quote is [Godot Media's](#) "Time wasted enjoying is not wasted – John Lennon".

## Take part in Twitter chats

A Twitter chat allows you to share your insights, tips and suggestions, gain new followers, get tips for future content and understand the type of information your new followers seek. It is a reputation and credibility building exercise that can generate more interest and trust in your blogs and other branded content.

## e. eBooks



*Photo by Per Palmkvist Knudsen (Own work) [[CC-BY-SA-3.0](#)] via Wikimedia Commons*

Most businesses are now realizing the importance of eBooks in their overall marketing strategy. Unlike the short content that is published on blogs and social media platforms, eBooks can be very useful in increasing brand awareness as they can help you reach a wider audience.

eBooks are generally published to be read on e-readers and. Many people are now moving from desktops to hand-held devices like iPads and tablets that are perfect for such long form documents. There are several [eBooks writing services](#) available in the market today to help companies come up with excellent content for their books and publish them in the correct formats.

## Benefits of Publishing ebooks

### Lead Generation

All businesses need to find new customers and leads every day. eBooks have proven to be extremely successful when it comes to lead generation. Unlike in online articles and blog posts, people can place highly detailed content and images in books which are guaranteed to pique the interests of potential customers and leads. Also unlike online articles and posts, these books are downloadable. This allows potential leads to download such material and read them with more attention, at a leisurely pace, later on.

eBooks help you establish yourself as a credible source of information in the industry. People will trust your business and the information you provide. Any content that your business releases in the future will have a ready audience. Some businesses allow users to subscribe to company mailers through their eBooks. These mailers allow interested customers to get constant updates about the company via email.

### **Entice Potential Customers**

eBooks are very effective in generating back-end sales. Create eBooks with content that will make your customers buy your products once they have read your eBooks. These books should clearly explain your products and services in a simple manner. Most eBooks are distributed for free as companies seek to benefit from the back-end sales that they create rather than generating revenues from the sale of these eBooks.

### **Make New Connections**

eBooks are inexpensive to create and distribute and can easily be made available on the Internet. Make sure to keep the eBooks free of cost or at reasonable price so that more people are encouraged to download it. Businesses must also ensure that their eBooks have attractive graphics and designs to capture the attention of potential leads and customers. eBooks with interesting content are bound to be posted on various websites, blogs and forums. As the eBooks contain vital information, it is a good way to make new connections with peers within your industry. Use these eBooks to build your Rolodex as it were.

## Tips to Create an Effective ebook

It takes time and effort to create eBooks and ensuring that interested people can download them for free is critical to the success of an ebook. Pack these books with other content formats that draw attention, like Infographics, graphs, stats and tips. Many creative content marketers have even created podcasts and videos with eBooks. The content in these documents should be relevant to your target audience and should make them want to download and share these documents.

Good content should not be restricted to company websites. It should be distributed to potential customers and leads via eBooks. [eBooks writing services](#) can help growing businesses create attractive and informative eBooks that can directly boost company revenues. Several successful businesspeople have outlined the ways to successfully market your brand and products using eBooks.

### Share Content that Adds Value

Most importantly, the content of your eBooks must be accurate and enlightening, because your target audience can pick out good eBooks from bad ones based on the content. eBooks should have content that gives its readers confidence in the brand. The content should also be targeted towards different types of people based on geography, profession, culture and other such factors. Customers will treat you as an authority on the subject if the content is solid. This is where the services of good [eBooks writers](#) are essential. They will help you create useful and relevant content for your eBooks.

### eBooks Should be Informative

Make sure that you understand what the customer wants. Scan your social network pages and interact with clients and customers to figure out what questions are asked the most and to identify the topics that need to be covered. Only after this analysis should marketers create eBooks. If your eBooks answer the burning questions that your customers have, it will undoubtedly be very successful. Make sure you provide information that is relevant to your customers and potential leads in these eBooks.

## **Use Digital Bookstores**

Imagine the number of times your eBooks will be downloaded if they are placed in reputed eBooks marketplaces. Instead of placing eBooks on company websites and waiting for customers to download them, fill eBooks with relevant content that will help them get listed in digital publication marketplaces. It is also possible to submit your eBooks to these eBooks distribution websites. Such listings will help you market your company to a much larger audience.

## **Adopt Reasonable Pricing**

There are no shipping, printing or storage costs for eBooks. As they are distributed via the Internet, it is an extremely cost effective method to boost any marketing strategy. As a result, they can be distributed to others for free or at a reasonable price. This will enable a worldwide audience to obtain your eBooks, which will in turn expand the reach of your marketing strategy.

## **Place a Call-to-Action**

Businesses create eBooks with the intent of using it as a marketing tool. The readers of these eBooks must be excited and ready to be a part of the company. The eBooks must keep readers in anticipation of your next media offering. Make sure that the eBook has a call-to-action so that potential leads and customers know what to do or expect next. Place client testimonials and your contact details in the content of your eBook. A call-to-action will trigger a domino effect making your marketing strategy a greater success.

## **Ensure Compatibility with All Devices**

The sudden growth in demand for eBooks can be attributed to the various devices that allow users to read books, articles and brochures on hand-held electronic devices. iPads, iPhones, Amazon Kindles, Android devices, Nook readers are some of the many devices that can be used to read eBooks. To ensure maximum share-ability, businesses must make their eBooks compatible with all these different devices. eBooks should be made available in different file formats and must be compatible with all digital screens. Also, care must be taken while designing graphics and text fonts for eBooks in ensuring that readers are able to read the eBooks without difficulty.

Although your brand may implement effective email marketing campaigns and exceptional social media marketing strategies using Facebook, Twitter and other popular platforms, the lack of an eBooks marketing strategy is an important marketing opportunity that will have been missed.

## f. Blogs



*[Photo](#) by Cortega9 (Own work) [[CC-BY-SA-3.0](#)], via  
Wikimedia Commons*

Does your company or business have a dedicated blog of its own? Do you update the blog regularly with fresh and intriguing content? With the increasing importance being given to blogs, as depicted in this video, it is extremely important for your business to have a well updated and informative blog. Blogging has become one of the most reliable and widely accessed sources of information, and as such, it has become one of the best ways for your company to gain recognition. However, as the popularity and significance of blogging increases, the value of having engaging, interesting and accurate information increases as well.

In the modern competitive market, every small feature counts as important and can be just what your company needs to gain an edge over competition. This video outlines the importance and benefits of blogging for any business. It provides you with hard facts to summarize how popular blogging has become and how it can help your business thrive. Whether it's lead generation or establishment as a trustworthy source of information for consumers, the benefits of a regularly updated blog are wide-

ranging and numerous. See why your business needs to hurry up and start creating captivating content to be delivered on its blog. The following video shows the [benefits of blogging](#) based on statistics that clearly show how important blogging can be for a person/business.

## **How to Choose the Perfect Blog Platform for Your Business**

When it comes to blogging, the manner in which you use this tool and the blogging platform you use, both impact your success rate.

Choosing the right platform becomes even more important when you are blogging for your business. Surveys reveal that Wordpress is the number one blogging site that internet users read, with Blogger coming a close second. But these are definitely not the only platforms you should use to blog for your business successfully. The answers to the following questions will help you find the ideal blogging platform for your business:

### **What is your blogging objective?**

This is the first question that needs to be answered when you are deciding on a blogging platform for your business. If your blog is to be used as an extension of your business marketing efforts, you may decide to include ads. Ask yourself if you will be able to sustain blogging in the long run. Remember that some blog sites are more suited to professional blogging while others are for those who blog as a hobby. This question will let you choose the right blog platform type among the two.

### **How much are you willing to spend?**

When you start blogging you may have to pay for the blog platform, the domain name or to host the blog. Some or all of these may be available for free depending on the platform. For example, with a Wordpress.com blog, you get the domain name and platform free as well as the hosting service. But some platforms, (like MovableType) charge you depending on the purpose of your blog and the number of blogs you have. Your budget is an important deciding factor in your blogging platform selection.

## Where are your competitors blogging?

When it comes to your business, it always pays to know what the competition is doing. If a rival business is using a blogging platform with immense success, he has probably found the right one. You can simply follow his lead and use the same platform. But ensure that your blog has something more and something better to offer to the same niche audience. Otherwise, you simply cannot match his blogging success.

Keep the answers to these questions in mind when researching different blogging platforms for your business. The one that is in sync with your answers is the right one for you. A professional [blog writing service](#) can not only identify the best blogging platform for you, but also blog successfully on your behalf.

## Blog Topics Businesses Must Avoid at All Costs!

Blogs help businesses attract more web traffic and establish companies or employees as thought leaders or experts in their field. But most business bloggers get too caught up in promoting their companies and products, forgetting that their audience wants more than just promotion from the blog! The rush to produce a large volume of content for blogs also sometimes pushes content writers to churn out poorly written blog posts on irrelevant topics.

Writing on the wrong topics can put off your readers and can in turn harm your content marketing campaign. So how can a content writer figure out what kind of topics to avoid when writing business blog posts? For starters, here are five types that every business blog writer must avoid:

### Topics that have already been covered

When a company blog has been in existence for a few years and has a huge archive of blog posts, writers can get lazy and be tempted to repeat topics and content. This is a complete no-no! Repeating content is not only a bad [SEO](#) practice, it can also irritate your loyal readers. Your readers will definitely

recall the original article and will be discouraged to continue visiting your blog for lack of new and interesting information.

### **Company press releases**

There is no doubt about the fact that press releases are important for any company. Press releases let customers know what they can expect from your company and about new changes. However, press releases should never be published on company blogs. Press releases are purely promotional and they need to be distributed via appropriate channels. On a company blog, press releases can make readers think that the company blog is being used only to promote the company. Readers want valuable insights and information from company blogs, so don't turn them away with press releases.

### **Same topics used by competitors**

People almost always look for more than one source of information and your readers will definitely read your competitors' blog posts too. If you are writing and publishing blog posts on the same topics as your competitors, readers will get the impression that you are copying topics and content from your competitors. You need to fill your blog with valuable, original and relevant content that cannot be found on other sites. Having such content is bound to give you an edge over your competitors.

### **Premature announcements**

Many businesses make this mistake. When they enter into new partnerships or acquire big contracts, they make the mistake of announcing the news too quickly. Sometimes the news is announced when the deal is still being hashed out. If the deal falls through, then such businesses are forced to retract their announcements which can only make the companies look unprofessional. As a small business owner, you must make sure that all parties involved are okay with you making the announcement on your blog and announcements should be made only after everything is finalized.

### **Highly controversial or political topics**

Even highly popular and established bloggers have faced severe backlash when they dared to tackle scandalous and political issues. People love discussing politics and almost anything can be blamed on

the current political state of the nation. Stray away from giving your personal political opinions and blaming politicians. A lot of people have very strong political views and are very sensitive about the parties they support and an off-hand comment might stir-up a huge and ugly debate in your comments section. Unless you are a well-known political analyst, it is best to steer clear of political and controversial topics.

## **No Traction on Your Blog? Here's the Remedy**

This fact can hardly be disputed – blogging is an essential content marketing strategy. It is especially important for small and growing businesses that need to build their brands, improve credibility and attract customers and leads. Both large and small companies need to maintain effective blogs to make announcements, inform their customers about changes in the company and to keep them coming back for more. Content is king nowadays and people want to read blogs that have been written by authority figures. SEO techniques can only get you so far, blogs will only be ranked highly if they have relevant content. As a result, many companies are hiring blog writing services to create posts and to maintain their blogs.

Sophia, our head of business development, is a blogging expert as the company has created thousands of successful blog posts for its clients. The internet is littered with failed blogs and how do you make sure that yours doesn't join them. Here are some tips about how to make a blog stand-out.

### **Q: Why do so many blogs fail, even though they have excellent content?**

Most bloggers are knowledgeable about the topic they are writing on but they fail to make the posts attractive. They must make sure to put a captivating heading for each post that is eye catching and will prompt casual visitors to read through the article.

### **Q: Is this enough? How does one follow-up on a killer headline?**

This is a problem that many bloggers face. They often combine excellent blog post headlines with irrelevant or insipid introductions. Bland introductory paragraphs can instantly put-off any reader.

Bloggers must maintain the momentum gained from the headline in the first few lines of the blog post. This will lure the readers deeper into the content. Not to forget – it will prompt them to read other posts on the blog.

**Q: And what do you think is the easiest way of creating a great opening?**

The easiest way is to ask a question to which the reader will answer yes and then follow it up with the value proposition of your blog post. For example, if you're writing a post about advice on working from home, the opening of the post can be 'Most people would like the option of working from home. But how do you ensure you do not take a big hit on your income to exercise this option? The opening displays empathy and creates a connection with the reader. But at the same time, it shows that there is some valuable advice to follow. This is bound to make the reader read the blog.

**Q: Is this the only fail-safe way? Are there other methods that bloggers can use to open their posts with a bang?**

A quote or an anecdote is the best for the opening few lines. Quotes and stories are interesting, it makes the reader think and even laugh. It goes without saying that they must be relevant to the topic covered in the post. A thought provoking post from a well-known person or authority figure instantly adds credibility to the post. Some successful bloggers also use statements like “picture this” or “imagine if” to engage their readers. Another way to create a great opening is to state a shocking statistic – something that is quite contrary to popular belief.

**Q: How do I close?**

Apart from the opening lines, bloggers must also pay special attention to the last or the closing paragraph of the blog posts. One way to close a post effectively is to refer back to the opening statements. The last few lines must tie up the loose ends or summarize the points discussed in the body of the post.

## g. YouTube



*[Photo](#) by Youtube [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons*

People are clamoring for more visual content and what can be better than creating videos for fans, followers and potential customers. Videos also have more potential to go viral than textual content and are much more share-worthy and attention-grabbing. YouTube is probably the best place to publish your videos. There are millions of channels on YouTube and standing out from the rest can be difficult. The easiest way to give your YouTube channel an edge is to redesign your channel page. Here's how:

### Channel name and description

The channel name and description not only appears on the homepage but also in search results conducted on YouTube. They also appear in search results on major search engines like Google, so they have to be excellent. You need to ensure that the channel name is appealing so that people want to click on it. The channel name also needs to be informative and hint at the kind of [content](#) people will find on your channel. Similarly, the channel description should also be to the point and mention your best videos. The channel URL and channel name are not the same and the name can be changed without affecting the URL.

### Icon

Unlike Facebook or [Twitter](#), there isn't too much space for channel icons or images on YouTube. The picture that you chose should be of good quality. It is best to use a company logo or something simple and bold as the channel icon.

### **Publish a channel trailer**

Just like a movie trailer, a channel trailer can pique the interest of people and is a great way to inform viewers about your page. Instead of writing long descriptions about your page, why not create a catchy video to show people what your channel and brand is all about. With the help of video trailers, you can also ask viewers to subscribe to your channel subtly.

### **Publish videos frequently**

Videos are much harder to create than textual content but your YouTube channel needs to be updated with fresh content frequently. Subscribers and followers can only be kept entertained with new videos and they will want to come back and engage with your YouTube page regularly if they are expecting new videos. You should also engage with other YouTube channels and videos and share videos from other sources.

### **Stunning channel art**

The background of your YouTube channel is a great place to display stunning images you can hire excellent graphic designers to create unique backgrounds for your channel. Companies make the mistake of using the company logo as the channel art but this can be boring. You need to make sure that your channel art looks good in large resolutions so that they don't look blurry. The artwork should also look good on all browsers – desktop and mobile.

## 9. Case Studies Of Successful Content Marketing By Companies

The Internet has turned marketing strategies on its head. It has leveled the playing ground and has crowded the market. It is much tougher to stand out in the current markets as there are so many companies fighting for breathing space. Brands now have to attract audiences on their own – without the help of big advertising companies or PR firms.

Although less than 21% of technology companies are maintaining blogs, content marketing is being embraced by leading companies and is showing very impressive results. So how can you get your perfect content marketing strategy? Learn from these brands that have managed to stand out.

### 1. General Mills: Perfect content marketing recipe



*Photo by CoolKid1993 at en.wikipedia.  
Later version(s) by Kalel2007 at  
en.wikipedia, from Wikimedia Commons*

[General Mills](#) is one of the biggest food brands in America but they have kept their content marketing strategy simple – provide family friendly recipes to customers. The company maintains a separate site for content marketing known as [“Tablespoon”](#). This site has a massive collection of fun, family recipes

that not only look good but are very easy to make. The homepage is not cluttered with text but is filled with attractive, mouth-watering photos of food. Users can click on the images to view the recipes. As an added bonus, all Tablespoon content can be easily shared on Pinterest and other social networks.

## 2. Kate Spade: Stylish digital experience

The logo for Kate Spade New York, featuring the brand name in a serif font with 'NEW YORK' in a smaller, all-caps serif font below it.

*Photo by Kate Spade™.Shrek05 at en.wikipedia  
[Public domain], from Wikimedia Commons*

The [Kate Spade](#) Company is known for its designer handbags, apparel and accessories. The company has placed its [blog](#) at the heart of its content marketing initiative. Instead of telling readers what they should wear, this blog tells them how to wear items of clothing and what are the current trends. This strategy has been a huge success for the brand. To enhance the digital experience of readers, the blog and website includes multimedia content like music.

## 3. Instagram: Pictures tell a thousand words

Recent legal disputes and Twitter wars aside, the brand has turned simplicity into a billion dollar company. The function of [Instagram](#) is simple – it lets users add filters to pictures and share them easily. Users can create beautiful, Polaroid-style images using their smartphones.



*Photo by Karl Nilsson/ [CC license](#)*

Instagram uses similar images to fill its blog with beautiful visual content. The brand does not promote itself. Instead it allows its users to share their stories via images. The [blog](#) features the most breathtaking pictures from its user base and also includes tips on how to use the product more effectively.

#### **4. Patagonia: Keeping it clean**

We featured [Patagonia](#) in our “Top 5 Corporate Blogs that Make Us All Look Bad” and its blog was rated as the best. The company sells sporting gear and clothing and started content marketing way before anyone else did. Its blog is named [“The Cleanest Line”](#) and shares the stories of athletes and environmentalists. The blog is filled with music, images and videos from various contributors. Through its blog, Patagonia has managed to bring forth its commitment to the environment and promoting outdoor activities.

#### **5. SEOmoz: Creating valuable content**

[SEOMoz](#) is one of the leading providers of search engine optimization tools. This brand shows that you can have immensely share-worthy and valuable content without including flashy multimedia components. The company creates and publishes content that is essential for any company or individual wanting to learn SEO techniques. The Beginner’s Guide to SEO that the company has

published is legendary. The brand publishes the widely-read [Daily SEO blog](#), user generated [YouMoz Blog](#) and Whiteboard Fridays posts from CEO Rand Fishkin.

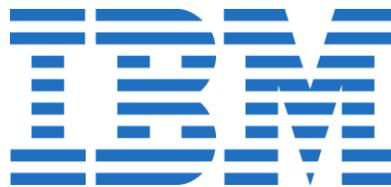
## 6. GE: Cater to all



*Photo by General Electric Company  
(w:File:General\_Electric\_logo.svg [Public domain],  
via Wikimedia Commons*

[GE](#) is one of the biggest companies in the world and creates products that are present in every household. Its products span various industries – health, technology and heavy machinery and GE ensures that there is more than enough content for each. So much so that the company maintains three blogs – [Healthyimagination](#), [Txchnologist](#) and [Ecomagination](#) to promote sustainable and green living that goes hand in hand with economic growth. Each of these three blogs has highly original and attractive content that is shared through separate social network accounts. The fact that GE is able to create content for diverse readers - makes us rank its content marketing strategy as the best.

## 7. IBM - Futuristic marketing



*Photo by Paul Rand [1] [Public*

[IBM](#) is already one of the best content publishing companies and its blog is one most visited blogs on the Internet. The IT services giant is able to produce high quality textual content for its blog by allowing employees to contribute and manage the blog. However, the company is in this list because of its excellent content marketing campaign that was so engaging and innovative that it was able to reach people in over 130 countries around the world. IBM went and created a game for its campaign – something that very few other companies have tried, and made it into a global success.

The game was titled “[CityOne](#)” and this Sim City style game asked players to solve problems in the banking, energy water and retail sectors. This game was created to help players understand the real-world implications of business decisions and their effects on the future of the planet.

IBM managed to use online gaming technology – rarely used by content marketers – to promote its brand and to get user engagement. People are always looking for new and innovative marketing campaigns and this one hit the spot. This just shows that if you want to stand out, you need to be brave. Use new marketing channels and techniques and people will appreciate it.

## 8. Red Bull – Adventure is out there



*Photo by MediaPhoto.Org  
(mediaphoto.org Own work) [[CC-BY-3.0](#)], via Wikimedia Commons*

[Red Bull](#)'s content marketing strategy is so successful that most people know them for their excellent adventure-packed videos and images than for the energy drink that the company manufactures. Why is it in the list you ask - because the company promotes a lifestyle and not its energy drink. Go to their website and you will see a “[Just Epic](#)” tab where one can find HD videos and images about extreme

sports like parkour, surfing, sky-diving, etc. without a single mention of the energy drink. The company logo can only be seen on the clothing or sporting gear of these athletes – subtle yet effective marketing of the energy drink!

Their most effective content marketing strategy - the [Red Bulletin](#) magazines that the company publishes for sports lovers. The company is a publishing brand as much as it is an energy drink manufacturer.

Most companies may not have large marketing budgets like that of Red Bull but we can all learn some important lessons from their campaigns. Red Bull is one of the few companies that have been able to tell stories effectively. Red Bull gets behind an event – such as the 24 mile jump by Felix Baumgartner – and then weaves a story behind the event by creating websites, social media pages and blog posts about the people, history and technology associated with the event. The Red Bull Stratos was one of the most successful content marketing events and their live broadcast of the jump got millions of views worldwide.

## 9. Oreo – Pop Culture Marketing



*Photo by Robbgodshaw / Oreo (Own work) [CC-BY-SA-3.0] Public domain*

You think [Oreo](#) is so popular only because it is a delicious bite-sized snack that you can dunk in your glass of milk? Nope. Oreo is a hugely popular brand on the Internet because of their content marketing strategy. Unlike other food brands that cultivate family values, Oreo has managed to become cool and

hip. This is because the company – or rather its marketing team – is able to create campaigns around the most talked about events. Also, they don't come out with long articles or eBooks – one high-impact and whimsical image is enough to get them thousands of likes, shares, comments, etc. on various social networking platforms.

One of the most talked about Oreo campaigns was its cheeky Super Bowl ad “You can still dunk in the dark”, which took a jab at the unfortunate power outage at the game almost in real-time. Another popular Oreo campaign that sealed its image as one of the coolest brands is the gay pride ad, where the brand posted an image of an Oreo cookie with rainbow colored filling.

Oreo is a brand that is not afraid to be controversial. Take their gay pride campaign that came out at a time when there was a huge debate about homosexual rights in America and around the world. It is also able to spot the most talked about topics and convert it into smart visual content that immediately strikes a chord with anyone who sees it. Perhaps the most important lesson is that Oreo exclusively uses images that are extremely creative and packs a punch.

## 10. Celebrities And Content Marketing

### 1. Gangnam Style – Psy



*Photo* by Korea.net / Korean Culture and Information Service [[CC-BY-SA-2.0](#)], via *Wikimedia Commons*

[Psy](#) became a household name in the remotest parts of the world with his kick-ass and super-catchy '[Gangnam Style](#)'. One of the most striking things about this viral phenomenon of epic proportions was that it was unexpected in many ways. For one, Psy isn't your usual pop star - if you were to spot him on the streets, you wouldn't even remotely suspect him of being a pop musician. Not only are his looks deceptive, but also his video is a complete anti-thesis of what you would expect to see. Keep all these thoughts aside for a moment, and you realize that 'Gangnam Style' is a brilliant example of smart viral and [content marketing](#). And there are important lessons to be learnt:

#### **Don't hold your content or brand too dear - share and let it grow**

The key factor in the success of Gangnam Style's viral campaign was the song's share-ability. As the song did not intentionally carry a copyright, once it became popular, numerous parodies sprung up and

the audience continued to multiply. In today's world where information is easy to access and in many cases free, being restrictive and uptight about your content may not be the smartest move as a content marketer. Using licenses like creative commons and opening your content to interpretation and modification, can often take the content much further and allow it to be distributed more freely. Content marketing is to a large extent gathering of goodwill and brand building through great content - being restrictive will only limit the content's reach.

### **Stand out and provoke!**

Attention spans are small these days - the usual pitches and regular stuff doesn't work half as well. People are constantly on a look out for something that makes them jump out of their seats. Gangnam Style did just that - the funky, provocative tune and moves from the 'guy-next-door' were too much to turn your eyes away from and ignore. It was in your face, hilarious and completely chilled out. As a content marketer, if you wish to catch your audience's imagination, give them something unexpected.

### **Forge the connection with the audience**

What made the song so sensational was the fact that anyone could get in its groove, and have fun. Nothing made it belong to a world region, a certain segment of people or a particular line of thought - it was transcending. The way Psy achieved it was through a brilliant combination of humor, the free human spirit and very 'next-doorly' feel. It was an instant connection - the whole 'take nothing too seriously and have fun' connected easily with everyone. For a successful content strategy, you also need to do the same. Find the smaller, simpler things that will connect you to your audience, and pull those strings in the content you create. You'll find that whatever you are selling - be it an idea, product, advice or a service - it'll be much easier to do so with this intent.

### **Collaborate socially for innovation beyond your thoughts**

Another lesson to learn from the rise and rise of Gangnam Style is that the most fun ideas may not just be there in your head yet. It's ok to involve a larger community to help develop these ideas. The 'invisible-horse-dance' in case of Psy's song was a product of crowdsourcing from the Korean dance community. In your case, the idea contributors could be your customers, your readers or simply your

extended professional network. Not everything that'll come out will be gold, but then that's the case with all other ways of ideating too. Polls on social platforms, community discussions and feedback are all good ways to find out pre-emptively as to what may work and what may not. Content sharing should not be a monologue, but a dialogue that takes the thought further.

### **Your audience can be much bigger than you believe**

The online world gives you access to a global audience, and in many unexpected cases, several online ventures found out that their offering had a larger or a different audience. Adaptability is crucial when it comes to online ventures and marketing - if you are too rigid, you can run the risk of missing out on audiences and opportunities that existed beyond your imagination. For Gangnam Style, the audience turned out to be much bigger outside Korea despite the fact that the primary language of the song was not English. The nature of content for marketing should have a global appeal - it should open doors, not close some!

## **2. Kardashians**



*Photo by Eva Rinaldi from Sydney Australia (Kim Kardashian Uploaded by russavia) [[CC-BY-SA-2.0](#)], via Wikimedia Commons*

Love 'em or hate 'em, you just can't ignore them. If the massive popularity of Keeping Up With the Kardashians wasn't enough, the feisty family also has an enviable presence on social media. And they're grateful for the role that new media has played in keeping them firmly in the spotlight, a fact they admitted to at NBCU's Power of the Purse event. To get a perspective, consider that Kim Kardashian has over [18 million followers](#), while her sister Khloe and mum Kris have around 8 million and 3 million followers respectively.

It certainly helped that social media became a huge deal about the time the Kardashians launched their show. And the family jumped on the new media bandwagon with gusto. Back in 2011, Forbes called Khloe Kardashian the queen of social networking for her relentless twitter activity aimed at staying in constant touch with her fans.

The family has learnt that having an active presence is just as important as saying the right things on social media. Regardless of the reasons and the shock value for which the Kardashians have stayed in the public eye, they aren't using social media to send out meaningless posts. Kim says that many of her posts solicit opinions and suggestions from followers on product creation and marketing. Her fans helped her zero in on the perfume bottle for one of her first line of fragrances. The Kardashians also have self-branded clothing and make-up lines.

That's not all – thanks to their celebrity power, the family's opinions on products and issues in general are almost always embraced and disseminated across the media. Kim has already lent her voice to the anti-bullying cause, along with fellow celeb Demi Lovato, who is also a powerful influencer on social media with 17+ million Twitter followers. Kris says she would like Kendall and Kylie to rally against bullying on social media as well. That the Kardashians stay on the pulse of social issues and actively express their views, can boost their star power and make them seem more human and aware as opposed to opportunistic and artificial, as their detractors believe them to be.

### 3. Miley Cyrus



*Photo by C. Todd Lopez; Photo Courtesy of U.S. Army [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons*

Well there is no doubt about the fact that Miley Cyrus is as far from her erstwhile Disney image as she can possibly be. While other Disney stars like Demi Lovato and Selena Gomez are still finding it hard to break away from their good girl image, Miley Cyrus was able to do that quickly and with a bang. Anybody who is able to use the Internet has heard of or seen the buzz around Miley Cyrus' new haircut – where she chops off her brown locks in favor of an edgy short blond look. Apart from that, her overly sexual appearances in music videos of other artists and in the videos of her own songs have created controversy.

However, one thing cannot be denied – everybody is talking about her. Her PR campaign was crafted perfectly and it paid off. So what can marketers learn from Miley's latest and very successful PR campaign?

#### **Don't be afraid to change**

If your SEO and online marketing efforts are not getting the kind of results you expected, then change them. Also if you have been using the same online marketing methods, with the same mediocre results,

it is time for a drastic change. when Miley wanted to change her Disney princess image and move onto a more edgier and adult image like Rihanna or Lady Gaga, she didn't just start wearing sexier clothes she changed her entire style with a brand new haircut.

### **Shock value always works**

Love it or hate it, there is no denying that Miley's new hair cut has generated a lot of buzz because it was so shocking. The moment she debuted her look, social media networks were filled with news and opinions about her and her new haircut become the stuff of headlines for online publications. Even her latest music video for her single "We Can't Stop" shocked viewers and generated a lot of opinions and controversy, but it was also one of the most viewed videos on YouTube and broke all kinds of popularity records. However, brands must be a bit more careful about unveiling a new shocking image. They should take care that the new image is still relevant and hints at what the companies are looking for in the future.

### **Social media is the best channel to unveil changes**

Social media has become the first platform for groundbreaking news and with millions of users glued to Facebook and Twitter for long periods of time, social media channels are the best ways to unveil new changes. Instead of calling a press conference or unveiling her new look in a photoshoot, Miley did so on Twitter with selfies. If you want to generate a buzz online without too much money or effort, [announce news on social media channels](#).

### **Involve your followers**

Miley didn't just upload a picture of her brand new look, she announced its imminent arrival and gave fans live updates as her look progressed. She made sure to involve her fans in her life changing new image. This was not only a great way to connect with fans but to also keep the buzz going for a while. In fact, her step by step approach is the reason why her images and tweets went viral. Brands should give their followers a behind the scenes look when unveiling new changes and should make sure they keep customers engaged and involved.

# 11. Content Marketing Check-list



*Photo by Pixabay/ [CC Licenses](#)*

## Basics

- ✓ Do you have a website?
- ✓ Do you have an on-site blog
- ✓ Are the key social media accounts set-up (Facebook, Twitter, Google+)?

## Content and quality

- ✓ Is the content on website and blog 100% unique and original?
- ✓ Is your content high-quality and engaging?
- ✓ Is the content written in grammatically correct English with few jargons?
- ✓ Does your website content have a good call-to-action in the end?
- ✓ Is your blog updated regularly (at least twice a week)?
- ✓ Are you sharing interesting content externally such as in the form of guest posts or similar?

## Social media and bookmarks

- ✓ Are you posting share-worthy content on social media platforms?
- ✓ Are you updating your social media accounts regularly (at least once a day)?
- ✓ Are you cross-promoting the content created across channels?
- ✓ Are you occasionally using images, videos or infographics in the posts?
- ✓ Are you linking the posts to other reliable and high-value sources?
- ✓ Are you sharing your content through social bookmarks on popular sites?

## Content Marketing Planning

- ✓ Do you have your industry specific content marketing strategy?
- ✓ Do you have a monthly content production and distribution plan?
- ✓ Are you tracking your efforts?
- ✓ Are you using analytics data to optimize your content strategy?
- ✓ Are you promoting the content on your blog?
- ✓ Are you sharing updates and news about your company on various channels regularly?
- ✓ Do you make the maximum use of the content created by sharing it in multiple forms including text, videos, infographics, memes?
- ✓ Are you building an industry network to share content through their web properties and publications?

## Search engine optimization

- ✓ Are your website page titles are of appropriate length (70 characters or less) and descriptive?
- ✓ Are your web pages and posts internally linked?
- ✓ All links on your website work and don't give a 404 error?
- ✓ Have your researched your keyword list carefully?
- ✓ Is your content optimized for keywords?
- ✓ Does your content have meta-tags and meta-descriptions?
- ✓ Do all images have alt tags?
- ✓ Have you promoted your site externally and have back-links from high-quality sites?

## Analytics

- ✓ Do you regularly analyze data from Google analytics or similar tools?
- ✓ Are you regularly updating your keyword list based on analytics data?
- ✓ Are you analyzing traffic sources and working towards optimizing for it?
- ✓ Are you making changes to your website's elements based on user click data?