

46

EXPERT TIPS
FOR CREATING
ADDICTIVE CONTENT

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What makes content addictive?

The web is overflowing with content.

Every minute

Email users send **204,000,000 messages**

Blog writers post **1400 new blog posts**

Twitter users tweet **277,000 times**

Instagram users post **216,000 times**

Pinterest users pin **3,472 images**

Facebook users share **2,460,000 posts**

We asked 46 successful content marketing & SEO experts, “What makes for good content?”

You can create a piece of content that gets a hundred shares—maybe one or two backlinks—but that ultimately slips out of public awareness after a few days. Or worse, you can create content that goes altogether unnoticed. Whether your content is not on par with content by competitors, or you didn't invest enough time and resources into promoting your content, the result is the same—you know that you wasted time and resources creating something, only to be left stranded with no response from your target audience.

In order for your content to stay afloat, it [needs to be addictive](#). Addictive content calls people back for more, over and over again. Content that generates backlinks, shares, and recommendations from your peers. Addictive content is content

that offers readers value, something solid and actionable to grasp onto and take away with them.

But what constitutes addictive content? A quick Google search will yield many articles, infographics, and more telling you what to do. Before you know it, you're drowning in seemingly endless, often conflicting and dated information. This is especially distressing for small businesses who are looking for ways to drive more organic traffic to their sites but aren't sure where to start.

To help you find some solid ground to stand on, [Venngage](#) has compiled some quick, actionable and reliable tips, right from the experts' mouths. We asked 46 successful content marketing and


SEO experts, “What makes for good content?” and compiled their exclusive answers into this ebook. Although some of their approaches may differ, you will quickly notice some major trends in their advice. We've highlighted those trends in the “Takeaway Tips” section at the end of this ebook.

We hope that this ebook will be your raft to stay afloat in the flood of web content. These 46 expert tips for creating addictive content are invaluable and they work. Use these tips to discover which strategies work for your unique business.



01 NEIL PATEL

Digital Marketer and Co-Founder of [KISSmetrics](#), [Crazy Egg](#), and [Quick Sprout](#)

 [@neilpatel](#)

Every single one of Neil Patel's articles is extremely well-researched and detailed. He says it's important to strive towards a [3000+ word count](#) for your blog posts - and on average, each post on his blog is approximately 5000 words long and contains between 40-60 images and charts. The credibility enforced in each post has made his blog a go-to reference for businesses.

“
Make your content more detailed, more actionable, and wrap it up with a pretty design.”

“Research what all of your competitors are creating and one-up them. Make your content more detailed, more actionable, and wrap it up with a pretty design. If you do that in the long run you will win.”



02 JEFF BULLAS

CEO of JeffBullas.com

 [@jeffbullas](https://twitter.com/jeffbullas)

Jeff Bullas' standard format for his blog posts entails opening with a captivating story to hook the reader's attention, followed by a [list of useful steps and tips](#) to get them ahead in the content marketing game. Actionable steps and tips offer readers something useful that they can then apply to their own content marketing efforts.

“
Our top strategy at JeffBullas.com is to create 1000+ word blog posts that add value to our readers.”

“Our top strategy at JeffBullas.com is to create 1000+ word blog posts that add value to our readers. What we are really wanting to do is then become such a great resource that we get inbound links from other websites and blogs. This then leads to optimizing for SEO.”



03 LEE ODDEN

CEO of [TopRank](#)

 [@leeodden](#)

In order for your content to stand out from everyone else's, it needs to hold the answers that people are actively seeking out. On the TopRank blog, Lee Odden suggests that the goal should not be to create more content, but instead to [focus on creating better content](#). Content that is more useful to the readers than a lot of the fluff content you may often come across.

“
If you create content with empathy for the searcher experience, that's great content.”

“Great content is a subjective term, but to arrive at content greatness on Google means creating highly relevant, useful, visual, informative and entertaining (info-taining) content that's easily shareable and answers the kinds of questions people have relevant to your company, products or services. If you create content with empathy for the searcher experience, that's great content.”



04 GUY KAWASAKI

Author, Speaker, Brand Evangelist, and
Brand Ambassador for [Mercedes-Benz USA](#)

 [@GuyKawasaki](#)

As a serial producer of useful and engaging content, and author of the entrepreneur's bible, *The Art of the Start*, Kawasaki emphasizes the importance of positioning yourself as an expert within your niche and [building a network of brand evangelists](#) who will advocate for your company.

“
Post good shit
and let Google
find it. That's my
entire approach!”



05 CHESTER BRANCH

Transmedia Architect at [MediaShift](#) and Author

 [@storynotes](#)

Dr. Chester Branch's writing focuses on exploring the impact of storytelling on user engagement. By creating an online world and presence that your audience can interact with, you expand the possibility of building a network of engaged followers. He calls this "[creating your own transmedia stories.](#)"

“
The key to creating
addictive content
is through a
compelling story.”

“The key to creating addictive content is through a compelling story. As brands like Share a Coke and Nike Plus shift from story-telling to story-making, they ultimately become transmedia facilitators of a shared user-generated story experience. This is the future of digital media marketing.”



06

MICHAEL KESHEN

Content Marketer at [Hover](#)

 [@MichaelKeshen](#)

Michael Keshen's blog posts for Hover are characteristically free of any "fluff," getting straight to the point with at least one actionable how-to point for readers to take away. He writes multiple posts that cover one general topic, such as [domain name buying](#), and approaches that topic from different angles to produce content that targets specific audiences over and over again.

“
It's better to write one amazing blog post a week than ten that no one will care about.”

“While it's important to have buyer personas so you know who your content is targeting, you can't forget that these are real people as well. The Internet is an extremely crowded place now, so your content needs to actually be valuable in order to succeed. It's hard to think of content ideas that have not been done before, so don't worry if you can't think of a 100% original topic. Instead, focus on creating the best content for a given topic.

Find the questions that your audience is asking (I use Quora, Twitter and Hover's awesome support team for that) and answer them. Or if it's an entertainment piece, create stuff that's...you know... actually entertaining. Don't create content just for the sake of content. It's better to write one amazing blog post a week than ten that no one will care about.”



07 SUSAN PAYTON

President of [Egg Marketing PR](#) and Author
at [Small Business Trends](#)

 [@eggmarketing](#)

Coming up with new ideas for content can be difficult. Susan Payton suggests that if you have trouble coming up with new content ideas, you can [recycle ideas](#) by creating visual content like infographics, or breaking a listicle post into separate posts that go into each point with more depth.

“
**What problems
can you solve for
your audience?”**

“The secret to creating content people actually want to read and share is to make it really valuable and irresistible. What problems can you solve for your audience? That’s the ticket to writing content people go wild for.”



 @wooyi

08 EUGENE WOO

Chief Data Scientist and Co-Founder of [Venngage](#) and [Vizualize.me](#)

While Venngage is an infographic software company, their blog doesn't just cover infographic creation. Posts on the Venngage blog also feature [original research](#), using data visualizations created with their [infographic](#) tool. This enters their content into wider conversations, reaching different audiences and demonstrating how their tool can be used in different contexts.

“
I always ask myself, will this content be relevant in 1 year? How about in 10 years? This is the test of longevity and relevance.”

“I always ask myself, will this content be relevant in 1 year? How about in 10 years? This is the test of longevity and relevance. Will this content be a flash in the pan—something that has just enough novelty to be link bait for a few days? Or will the value it delivers live on for a long time?”



09

ANDREW DAVIS

Author of [Brandscaping](#)

 [@TPLDrew](#)

Andrew Davis harnesses the role of “influencer” in his content creation strategy by contributing to multiple publications and participating in different co-marketing campaigns. When it comes to co-marketing, his approach is to form [longer-lasting relationships](#) than can be achieved in just a one-off guest blog post or content swap; he looks for ways to carry the relationship into the future in a way that is mutually beneficial.

“

The new SEO (Social Engine Optimization) is my priority. Good content is content that provides value to your audience.”

“I don’t define good content based on SEO optimization. SEO is ultimately out of your control and Google could pull the rug out at any time. For me, old SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is not one of my top priorities. The new SEO (Social Engine Optimization) is my priority. Good content is content that provides value to your audience. Without value there’s no trust, brand equity, or sales. The key is writing content that is truly helpful and, therefore, valuable to your audience. From there, use a compelling headline, share it on social media and encourage your supporters to do the same.

Don’t forget to contribute to other publications so your brand and message is exposed to other audiences as well. I contribute to Entrepreneur, The Huffington Post and others and it has served me well. Do all that well and you’ll not only get on Google’s radar, but your target audience’s as well.”



10 ERIKA HEALD

Vice President and Head of Content at [Highwire PR](#), Social Media Strategist, Blogger

 [@SFerika](#)

Erika Heald argues that buyer personas aren't useful unless you understand your buyers' journeys. Her content marketing approach is to model content in a way that [influences the buyer](#) to come to a decision you want them to reach. Research and organization are important if you want to produce content that matters to people.

“

Good content starts with a solid understanding of your audience and what you are trying to accomplish through creating content for them. If you are just randomly creating content without a plan, it's impossible to measure the content's success.”

“Good content starts with a solid understanding of your audience and what you are trying to accomplish through creating content for them. If you are just randomly creating content without a plan, it's impossible to measure the content's success. Similarly, if you don't understand your audience's interests and needs, you can create amazing content that they never engage with.

After fleshing out your buyer personas and documenting your content strategy, put together an editorial calendar, a quarter at a time, that provides a variety of content types that will keep you top-of-mind as a useful resource for your audience.”

11

BARRY FELDMAN

Founder of [FeldmanCreative](#), Content Marketing Consultant, Copywriter, Blogger, Podcaster



 [@FeldmanCreative](#)

Barry Feldman does not just stick to one means of getting a message across. Rather, he uses a variety of podcasts, infographics, webinars and [SlideShares](#) so that his content can be consumed in whichever means his audience prefers. In order to make the experience of consuming content fun, you need to be able to present it in different forms.

“

One, make content that solves a real problem you know potential customers grapple with. And two, make the experience of consuming that content fun.”

“Good content is not enough. Your content needs to be great—great enough not just to garner traffic, but to win loyal subscribers. My formula’s a two-parter. One, make content that solves a real problem you know potential customers grapple with. And two, make the experience of consuming that content fun. We’re all misers with our time, so we tend to give it to content creators capable of educating and entertaining us.”



 @ArnieK

12 ARNIE KUENN

CEO of [Vertical Measures](#), Author of *Content Marketing Works: 8 Steps to Transform Your Business*, Speaker

Arnie Kuenn's content creation approach is built around a praxis of solid groundwork. This involves not only researching keywords and crafting click-worthy titles, but also [devising a marketing strategy](#) that takes benchmark assessments, such as traffic and conversion rates, into consideration.

“

When you create your content (blog, article, free guide, video, image, it doesn't matter), do you stop to ask yourself whether or not someone might actually search for this title? If not, you have probably set yourself up for failure—unless you have a marketing budget to specifically promote that piece of content.”

“To me it boils down to creating content that people are actually searching for on search engines (Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.). The fact is, before we buy something new, in-store or online, according to Forrester, more than 90% of the time we conduct a search to research that product or service. Is your content going to be found by that searcher? Just think about the last few purchases you made for your home, hobby or business. Did you go online to do a little research first? I bet you did—and so did your prospects.

When you create your content (blog, article, free guide, video, image, it doesn't matter), do you stop to ask yourself whether or not someone might actually search for this title? If not, you have probably set yourself up for failure—unless you have a marketing budget to specifically promote that piece of content. Most of us do not have that budget. We are counting on organic traffic. So create content people are searching for, optimize it, keep creating it and be patient. Eventually success will come your way.”



 [@NealSchaffer](https://twitter.com/NealSchaffer)

13 NEAL SCHAFFER

Social Business Consultant and Coach, Social Media Keynote Speaker at [Maximize Your Social](#) and lead author at [Maximize Social Business](#)

Neal Schaffer's approach to content marketing centers on reaching out to others. His book [Maximize Your Social](#) coaches marketers through the creation of a [social media strategy and framework](#), as this groundwork is necessary prior to a company's public launch.

“
My top strategy for creating good content is to focus on the customer and what content they need to be educated or inspired about before they even know it.”



14 CHRIS KUBBERNUS

Marketing Leader, Social Media Listener, Growth Hacker, and Entrepreneur at ChrisKubbernus.com

 [@ChrisKubbernus](https://twitter.com/ChrisKubbernus)

Chris Kubbernus is a social media advocate. In the marketing world, the people who are most active on social media are [marketing influencers and experts](#). Those are the people you want to make connections with, as they are more likely to share your content and participate in co-marketing campaigns.

“

Now flip it around and start creating content for those that do share and you have an opportunity to get it out there through those influencers.”

“My top strategy right now is to NOT make content for my customers. WHAT!? I know, it sounds crazy. But hear me out. Think about your customers for a second. Are they industry leaders? Top dogs? Movers and shakers? Perhaps. Do your customers spend a lot of time sharing content? If they do, great. You’re lucky. But many customers in many industries don’t. So the great content you create never gets out in the world because those that consume your content, don’t share it. Now flip it around and start creating content for those that do share and you have an opportunity to get it out there through those influencers.

Here’s an example: say I’m an SEO specialist and I wanted to create content to help my customers with SEO, to help engage with people on social media, to obtain more business. I’d create content like—‘10 ways to make your website SEO friendly.’ How many local business owners are going to share that? Not many. They share stuff about their own businesses. If, instead, I make content for influencers in my field like, ‘How to better price your SEO services,’ or ‘10 SEO hacks you can do for your clients today,’ it’s more likely to be shared by SEO experts. This helps get better rankings in Google and helps to create social sharing of your content, increasing your reach and your influence.”



15 JAMES REYNOLDS

CEO of [SEO Sherpa](#), SEO
and Google Adwords Specialist

 [@FollowJames](#)

James Reynolds's content marketing strategy involves, first and foremost, ensuring that content is good quality that will position you as an [expert and influencer](#), rather than simply producing content stuffed with keywords. You want people to link back to you as the expert on a particular subject matter.

“

The mark of how good a piece of content is, is its ability at getting consumed and then shared.”

“The mark of how good a piece of content is, is its ability at getting consumed and then shared. There is an overwhelming amount of content on the internet, the vast majority of which goes unnoticed. If your content is to be amongst the elite that actually attracts links and social media shares, I suggest you follow these four steps.

1. Use websites like Alltop or Buzzsumo to find influencers in your niche.
2. Study their websites and social media accounts to identify the content topics those influencer's care the most about.
3. Create content on that topic finding ways to improve on the influencer's content, perhaps by using better design or sharing more in-depth information.

4. Use viral triggers in your content. Triggers that affect your content's virality include:

Content length—Several studies have proven that longer content gets shared more. The standard 500 word blog post will not do, top performing content is typically 2000 to 5000 word lengths.

Calls to action—Use embedded calls to action such as click-to-tweet buttons throughout your content makes it easy for readers to share.

Practical value—People share content that has real practical value or that makes them look good. Consider detailed how-to posts that when followed will provide the reader instant results.”



 @TedRubin

16 TED RUBIN

Social Marketing Strategist and Keynote Speaker at TedRubin.com

Ted Rubin is not afraid to inject personal, real life experiences into his content. His blog touches on content creation, SEO, fatherhood, and growth, both business and personal. The result is content that audiences can [connect to as a community](#). Content marketing isn't simply a matter of speaking into a megaphone—it's a conversation that requires marketers to be receptive of audience feedback.

“

But if good content is king, distribution, syndication and connection is definitely the queen, because she drives the bus!”

“Good content is easy, because it is all about creating content that achieves your goals...not what is ‘good’ and ‘not good.’ There is no prescription for how to create good content. There is a strategy in creating content that works...and that is testing, retesting, and continually observing how your audience grows and reacts.

I like to say the best content is conversation, and empowering that to happen requires being in touch with results, listening...and allowing your team to adjust accordingly. But if good content is king, distribution, syndication and connection is definitely the queen, because she drives the bus!”



17 STEVE WIIDEMAN

SEO Expert at [SEOSteve.com](https://seosteve.com), Speaker, Author, Trainer, Coach, Strategist

 [@seosteve](https://twitter.com/seosteve)

Thorough analysis is at the crux of Steve Wiideman's strategy. To create content that will answer audience questions, content marketers need to know what those questions are. Keyword searches, link analysis and identifying **"eye" competitors** (sites that show up beside yours in search results, even if they're not direct competitors with your business) drive smart content marketing strategy decisions.

“
Start by using question-based keywords, bundled into groups by similar user intent and prioritized by search volume.”

“High-quality content is too vague of a term to help our industry understand how to earn or attract links and continued interest in something we produce on our website(s). Instead, I like to use the phrase *the most helpful*.

How do you create the most helpful content for users and for search engines? Simple: creativity. Start by using question-based keywords, bundled into groups by similar user intent and prioritized by search volume. We then find the absolute best experts on the topic to contribute through interview, through help with creating graphic concepts, and through in-person video (if possible).

Each piece of media that goes into a helpful page of content can be optimized

with metadata, structured markup, and even included within sitemaps we provide to search engines within their respective webmaster tools or search console platforms.

Additionally, media can be published, distributed, curated, and shared across the web, furthering the trust and authority of the originating content. The influencer, or expert, is typically the first to share the content itself, which can result in relevant referral traffic and a higher probability of a follower linking the content, which supports long-term SEO.

Content isn't king. Helpfulness is king, content is just the medium used to provide information that solves as many of the user's problems as possible.”



18 JEN VAN IDERSTYNE

Senior Strategist at [Overit](#) and Contributor to [Search Engine Watch](#)

 [@Vanetcetera](#)

Jen Van Iderstyne's content is two things: smart and entertaining. She'll undercut an astute observation with a joke and keep readers moving forward through the article. What makes content valuable is not only the tips and insights it provides, but how enjoyable it is to read. Using a topic that is entertaining, such as [comedy](#), for example, as a framework to deliver information about marketing or SEO will be more engaging than a generic how-to article.

“

If you're going to do video, then production values matter. If you're going to do text content, make sure it's not just a block of text, but scannable and attractive. Graphics should be clear and sized properly.”

“It's really hard to define something as ambiguous as high quality because everyone has different standards for what they consider good content. High quality content can take on many forms, whether it's written, graphic or video, the method of presentation is less important than the substance of what is offered.

However, the quality of the presentation matters. If you're going to do video, then production values matter. If you're going to do text content, make sure it's not just a block of text, but scannable and attractive. Graphics should be clear and sized properly. Quality content should also be as presentable on mobile as it is on a desktop.

High quality content should be based on:

1. Content that represents the brand identity and substantiates subject matter expertise. There must be a legitimate reason why people should engage with the content, whether it's the ingenuity of the ideas explored or the manner in which they are presented.
2. Topics that will be useful enough to return to or interesting/entertaining enough to share.
3. A balance of what people in the space want to talk about or are searching rather than just what the brand wants to say. While it demonstrates thought leadership to present and explore new concepts, you can't always try to direct the flow of conversation, you must respond to what is out there.”



19 LARRY KIM

Founder of [WordStream](#)

 [@larrykim](#)

Larry Kim takes a holistic cross-integrating approach between organic and paid marketing in his strategy. He uses a [one-two strategy](#): attract a visitor pool to your site using SEO and content marketing, then “follow” them with paid ads after they visit your site.

“

Recently I’ve been leveraging the power of paid social media advertising on Facebook and Twitter to make content marketing projects go viral, and in turn, earn links back from high value sites.”

“Good content is not enough. Your content needs to be great—great enough not just to garner traffic, but to win loyal subscribers. My formula’s a two-parter. One, make content that solves a real problem you know potential customers grapple with. And two, make the experience of consuming that content fun. We’re all misers with our time, so we tend to give it to content creators capable of educating and entertaining us.”



20 DANNY DOVER

SEO Consultant at [Intriguing Ideas LLC](#)
and SEO Faculty Co-Chair at [Market Motive](#)

 [@DannyDover](#)


Danny Dover makes the important distinction between traditional marketing and social media marketing, the latter depending on authentic [communication with audiences](#). Putting human faces to your brand and interacting with audiences on their level will elicit more positive responses and a greater following than a typical marketing message that talks at people, not with them.

“
During this transition, your resources are most safely spent on alternative marketing channels like email, social, CRO and PR, and on any efforts that make progress on improving the user experience of your content.”

“Diversify your efforts outside of traditional SEO. Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in particular are already massively disrupting traditional SEO. The factors that we optimize for today—links, on-page factors, etc.—that we have optimized for in the past are quickly going to become irrelevant.

During this transition, your resources are most safely spent on alternative marketing channels like email, social, CRO and PR, and on any efforts that make progress on improving the user experience of your content.”



 [@shane_barker](https://twitter.com/shane_barker)

21 SHANE BARKER

Digital Marketing Consultant and SEO Specialist at ShaneBarker.com and VP of Digital Marketing at [Kamere](https://Kamere.com)

Shane Barker's method of link building outreach not only provides great blog content, but also expands your network of influencer relationships. By getting more influencers linking back to your content, you increase your credibility and your potential for generating even more backlinks. Link building can [contribute to improving your brand awareness](#) as well as maintaining leads. He suggests using tools like Buzzsumo and Topsy to track down commonly referenced influencers.

“

By providing the right content to the right authoritative sites, link building outreach is great for exposure, a back link and is win-win for you, the blog and readers.”

“One tactic that has stood the test of time for me is link building outreach. I know this tactic can be time consuming, as it is more of a manual process, but it has proven to help my rankings and has prevailed over Google's algorithm updates. By providing the right content to the right authoritative sites, link building outreach is great for exposure, a back link and is win-win for you, the blog and readers.”



22 ERIC ENGE

CEO of [Stone Temple Consulting Corporation](#)
and Contributor to [Forbes](#)

 [@stonetemple](#)

Eric Enge looks for the balance between promotional content and content that is relevant for audiences. You want to create [content that audiences love](#)—and in order to do that, your content can't be nonstop promotion. Audiences need to be offered something more than that. This holistic content marketing approach contributed to projects that earned STC approximately 10,000 shares.

“

One of the best ways to get links to your site is to pursue high quality reputation and visibility building. By getting your content featured on the top sites covering your space, you are sending clear signals to users (and Google) that you are one of the top authorities in your space.”

“SEO boils down to 3 different things:

Relevance – your pages can only rank for things to which they are relevant.

Findability – of course, they can only rank if Google is able to locate those pages.

Importance – once you are relevant to a query, Google must determine where you should rank. In other words, why should you rank higher than the tens of thousands of pages competing for ranking on the very same term?


This last factor, importance, is driven largely by links. In fact, Google's recent ranking factors study still shows link-related factors as the top two drivers of ranking.

For that reason, obtaining links is a big deal. To me, one of the best ways to get links to your site is to pursue high quality reputation and visibility building. By getting your content featured on the top sites covering your space, you are sending clear signals to users (and Google) that you are one of the top authorities in your space. This may seem like a lot of work, but it is fundamentally the best thing you can do to win in SEO in the near term, and to set yourself up for longterm success.”



23 SIDDHARTH BHARATH

Content Marketing Consultant at [Thinkific](#)

 [@siddharth87](#)

Siddharth's process for creating great content comes down to researching what many people consider to be difficult concepts and articulating them with concrete examples and data. What's more, before you even begin writing, you need to make sure that someone who is willing to link back to your content actually exists. Find bloggers and [establish a relationship first](#), then pitch them your idea.

“
**Good content is
when your readers
leave having learned
something new.**”

“Good content is when your readers leave having learned something new. That means your content needs to be deep and actionable. The reason top posts are usually 2,000 words long is because it's hard to teach a new concept in shorter pieces. Whenever possible, you need to present your readers with data, case studies, real examples, and step-by-step instructions to achieve something so that when they finish reading, they have an action plan. This is the type of content that gets bookmarked, shared, referenced, linked to and read multiple times.”



24 BRENDA STOLTZ

Founder and CEO of [Ariad Partners](#)

 [@BSStoltz](#)

Brends Stoltz is a master planner. Her strategy begins with a well thought-out plan and purpose for content and content platforms. A blog for the sake of having a blog will not accomplish what a [blog with a specific focus will](#). Similarly, blog posts should serve a specific, information-rich purpose.

“
Map the questions a prospect would have at each stage of the buying process.”

“My top strategy is to write what your prospect wants to read. How?”

1. Have a solid buying persona.
2. Map the questions a prospect would have at each stage of the buying process.

3. Give them the content that maps to the stage they are at. For example, if someone comes to your site where you sell CRM software and downloads your offer ‘5 Questions to Ask CRM Vendors,’ you know they are in the beginning of their buyer journey and you can then nurture them with emails and offers that answer questions you know they would have at this point in the process.”



25 OLI GARDNER

Co-Founder of [Unbounce](#)

 [@oligardner](#)

Make sure people not only want to read your content, but want to link back to it. Oli Gardner is a great example of someone who not only knows how to repurpose great content in multiple forms, but he is also able to let his personality shine through in his writing. Give your [writing a voice that demands attention](#). Play with your audience and engage them with witty and playful language.

“
Reuse, reuse, reuse—turn it into an ebook, infographic, webinar, guest blog post on sites with similar followers, Medium, Slideshare, podcast, speaking topic.”

“I don’t believe anyone should create good content. Good may as well be average, decent, good enough. Every piece of content you create should be exceptional. How do you create exceptional content?”

Fifth, reuse, reuse, reuse—turn it into an ebook, infographic, webinar, guest blog post on sites with similar followers, Medium, Slideshare, podcast, speaking topic.

First, tell people what you’re going to do to build some peer pressure.

Sixth, write a follow up post with new/contrary/controversial/opposing views.

Second, find the best similar content and kick its ass by comparison.

Seventh and finally, when you are writing, learn to be ridiculous, extreme, offensive, hilarious and delightful. Then have a trusted editor or colleague reign the content back in to be within brand and editorial guidelines.”

Third, make it long. Massive content isn’t always read, but it is always linked to, which helps your SEO.

Fourth, obsess over distribution.



26 BRAD HESS

Senior Digital Marketing Manager at [Ceros](#),
Demand Generation and Inbound Marketing Pro

 [@fresholdidea](#)

Creativity is a necessity for Brad Hess's content strategy. Because although data-driven marketing is important, connecting with your audience is what will garner long term success. His approach [blurs the lines between marketing art and science](#) by finding creative approaches and analyzing content performance metrics.

“
Be unique. There is nothing worse than regurgitated listicles and how-to articles.”

“Be unique. There is nothing worse than regurgitated listicles and how-to articles. Sure, you are going to inevitably publish those types of posts, but your unique voice is most important. If you're creating content just for the sake of creating content, then you've already lost. Plus, in the grand scheme of things, who wants to live in a monotone world? Get in touch with your unique voice and make sure that you are always adding value.”



27 IAN CLEARY

Founder and CEO of [RazorSocial](#),
Contributor to [Entrepreneur](#) and [VentureBeat](#)

 [@IanCleary](#)

Ian Cleary uses a wide range of content types within his articles and blog posts. Every one of his posts has at least 5 images, each one offering the reader deeper insight into the topic. He states that rather than spending short periods of time writing multiple articles a week, content creators should focus on a topic and make sure that the content is quality stuff your audience cares about—even if that means [modifying your blog strategy](#) to accommodate less frequent content.

“
People get more engaged with video, imagery and interactive content than text so you need to have a mix.”

“Content that answers the questions of your audience is good content, however, it’s more likely that detailed content will get more links and, therefore, get more traffic. But when you do get visitors to your site, your job is not over. You need to engage them. People get more engaged with video, imagery and interactive content than text so you need to have a mix.”



28 CASSANDRA JOWETT

Content Marketing Manager at [Influitive](#)

 [@cassandrajowett](#)

At Influitive, Cassandra Jowett leverages audience participation to turn customers into [content advocates](#). Audience feedback is useless if you don't do anything with it—rather than just asking your audience if they would refer a friend to your brand, ask questions tailored to their region, products they use, or their seniority, and offer them something in return for their feedback like points or special access to features on your site.

“

Too many content marketers operate in a silo, completely isolated from their customers. Start by asking them what kinds of content they want you to produce. You will get more amazing ideas than you'll know what to do with!”

“The best way to create engaging content is to get your customers involved in the content creation process. Too many content marketers operate in a silo, completely isolated from their customers. Start by asking them what kinds of content they want you to produce. You will get more amazing ideas than you'll know what to do with!

Then, ask them to contribute their thought leadership and best practices to the pieces that you move forward with. You can also collect their feedback on titles, designs and formats. They love that! You'll create better content and help your company build stronger relationships with your customers at the same time.”



29 RYAN HOOVER

Founder of [ProductHunt](#), Blogger

 [@rrhoover](#)

Ryan Hoover's [personal site focuses](#) on Product Hunt Radio, a podcast series where he chats with various companies about startup life, new products and growth. Since his podcasts often focus on new products, he articulates what others are not talking about. This offers audiences new value, insight, and brings up questions that are being asked in the media.

“
Be authentic. Say what others aren't saying. Add value to the conversation.”



30

MERYL K. EVANS

Content Maven at [Meryl.net](https://meryl.net)

 [@merylkevans](https://twitter.com/merylkevans)

Meryl K. Evans uses stories to connect with her audience on a personal level. Many of her blog posts on Meryl.net [begin with an anecdote](#) that she then connects to marketing. Offering your own stories engages people on a personal level and builds up their trust in you, and that what you are saying isn't geared only towards selling something.

“


No one can replicate your stories. They're more memorable and let your target audience get to know one of the company's most important assets: its people.”

“A top strategy for creating valuable content is to tell stories. No one can replicate your stories. They're more memorable and let your target audience get to know one of the company's most important assets: its people.”



31 ALINA BRADFORD

Contributing Writer at [CNET](#) and
Tech Writer for [MTV](#)

 [@alinabradford](#)

Alina Bradford's [approach](#) to content marketing is a pragmatic one: whether through text, video or images, the goal of content marketing is to get eyes on your business. Page rank is not the be all, end all of content marketing—if people are attracted to your business through social media or by word of mouth, you have still succeeded.

“
**Make sure your
content is something
people are actually
searching for.**”

“Make sure your content is something people are actually searching for. Type a couple keywords into the Google search bar to see what auto-populates. Putting keywords into the Google Keyword planner can also give you good ideas.”



32 SCOTT STRATTEN

Unmarketer at [Unmarketing](#)

 [@unmarketing](#)

Scott Stratten believes that [brands shouldn't just have a presence on social media](#)—they should be present. Scheduling tweets will save businesses time, but there is no community currency being made this way. You must be there to receive content from other people. A business that takes the time and effort to engage with the community in real time will set itself apart from the many others that don't.

“
Creating content is sometimes about finding the stories to tell customer experiences, and also employee stories.”


“We tell stories and we share emotions. We relate to things. Creating content is sometimes about finding the stories to tell customer experiences, and also employee stories.”



33

MICHAEL BRENNER

CEO of [Marketing Insider Group](#) and
Head of Strategy at [NewsCred](#)

 [@BrennerMichael](#)

Going against the common opinion, Michael Brenner argues that you do not need a unique voice in your content creation strategy. Rather, you should set yourself apart by how helpful your content is to your audience. It's better to focus on the quality of your content than the quantity. Quality entails creating content that is not too overtly promotional—which can create trust issues with your audience.

“
You just have to identify and answer your customers' top questions and address their biggest challenges.”

“The secret to creating great content is much simpler than most people realize. You just have to identify and answer your customers' top questions and address their biggest challenges. If you provide the best answer consistently, then you will rank for the search terms your customers are using.”

34

LAUREN MOON

Content Manager at [Trello](#)



 [@elmoonio](#)

While virtually every post on the Trello blog mentions their service in some way, their posts still include real people stories, and are long and thought out enough that it doesn't feel disingenuous. Businesses need not be afraid to talk about their products in their content as long as it offers some [real value](#) to readers.

“
Creating good content is about educating your users on subjects they actually care about, rather than always trying to sell them something.”



35 CHRISTINE WHITE

Co-Marketing Manager, Demand Generation
at [HubSpot](#)

[@christinew603](#)

The focus of many content marketers is on SEO, social media and publishing quality content. These things are important, but Christine White notes that there are **other factors** that should be taken into consideration when measuring the success of our content strategies, such as performance metrics, mobile-compatibility and security.

“
Repurpose your content because what may start out as an ‘ok’ ebook may end up doing better for lead-gen as a SlideShare, blog post, or webinar.”



36 LEO WIDRICH

Co-Founder/COO of [Buffer](#)

 [@LeoWid](#)

Leo Widrich and the Buffer team follow an [80/20 approach](#) to content marketing, where 80% of their time is spent creating content and using tactics that they know works, and 20% is spent trying something new. By taking this approach, Buffer was able to eventually guest post to enough places that they built a reputation allowing them to then shift their focus to creating one “killer,” high quality post on their blog a week.

“**Every single piece of content is the only one that matters. We give it all of our attention.**”

“Every single piece of content is the only one that matters. We give it all of our attention. We want to make it excellent, and we have a slight feeling of vulnerability and discomfort when we get it out because we think it might be too edgy or that it might fail. That is, however, what also creates the volatility of the piece, the opportunity for it to rise above everything else we’ve written so far and stand out and attract everyone’s attention.”



37 EVAN LEPAGE

Content Marketer and Blog Specialist at [Hootsuite](#)

 [@EvanLePage](#)

Evan LePage emphasizes the importance of [getting to know your audience](#) in order to create content catered to them. Creating an audience profile or a buyer persona can offer you direction when it comes to creating content that targets a specific audience—what do your buyers look like and what kind of content will reel them in?

“
You just have to identify and answer your customers’ top questions and address their biggest challenges.”

“One of the most effective content strategies is to simply analyze what is already ranking at the top of Google searches for terms you would like to rank for. Perform your own searches, read the top posts and identify the holes in their content. You’d be surprised how much great content can be created simply by seeing where the top-ranking posts are falling short.

By filling the gaps you provide a valuable service to people searching for this content and can easily distinguish yourself from the pack. By building on the substance top-ranking posts, you also increase your chances of ranking highly for SEO.”



38 NADYA KHOJA

Director of Marketing at [Venngage](#), and
Founder of [This Is Nadya](#)

 [@NadyaKhoja](#)

Even articles covering formal topics can be imbued with humor. Nadya Khoja's [P.E.A.C.](#) approach to content creation ensures that your content offers not just practical value to your audience, but also emotional value. A good piece of content will be useful; an exceptional piece of content will be useful and entertaining.

“

Most people look for content that offers practical value (is useful to them or teaches them something new), that is entertaining (is amusing in some way), is awe-inspiring (makes you go “wow” or “OMG”) and is credible (is well researched and backed with concrete proof).”

“Before even beginning to tackle any form of content, it’s important to ask yourself why anyone will even bother reading it. Most people look for content that offers practical value (is useful to them or teaches them something new), that is entertaining


(is amusing in some way), is awe-inspiring (makes you go “wow” or “OMG”) and is credible (is well researched and backed with concrete proof). P.E.A.C. content is good content that people actually want to read.”

39

PRATIK DHOLAKIYA

Co-Founder of [E2M Solutions](#)



 [@DholakiyaPratik](#)

According to Pratik Dholakiya, at the heart of your [content creation strategy](#) should be a question that you intend to answer. This will engage your audience by indicating upfront that your content offers them value. He suggests “test asking” your questions on sites like Quora to see which questions draw the most people, as this will keep your content relevant.

“

Even if I focus on the topics that are not fresh, I share some tips/ideas/strategies that are very new and in general would help users think from a different perspective.”

“I focus on creating content that talks about latest/advanced information in Search and other areas as well. I’ve experienced that the posts that say the same stuff again and again tend to get much less user interest, or are ignored altogether. Even if I focus on the topics that are not fresh, I share some tips/ideas/strategies that are very new and in general would help users think from a different perspective.

For example, I recently did a post on Search Engine Land about ‘Mistakes SEOs Still Make With Links & Content.’ If you look at the content and the points, there are no unique points but if you read the content, you’ll find that those are really the mistakes that everyone still makes but ignores.”



40 MELISSA LAFSKY WALL

Co-Founder and President of [Brick Wall Media](#)

 [@Lafsky](#)

Melissa Lafsky Wall's [content creation strategy](#) involves some careful reflection: what topics can your business talk about with authority, how can you translate them into content that will interest readers, and where should you put that content so people will see it? These questions aren't always easy to answer, which is why you might need to bring in an expert to spearhead your content creation strategy.

“

At Brick Wall, we customize our definition of good content for every client, for the simple reason that good content is a different thing for every market, product, and audience. Good content for one of our clients isn't good for another.”

“At Brick Wall, we customize our definition of ‘good content’ for every client, for the simple reason that good content is a different thing for every market, product, and audience. Good content for one of our clients isn't good for another.

To identify what is “good” and what is just ineffective, we look at a number of factors including target market, audience (B2B or B2C, etc.), the client's current brand strength, brand tone and voice, and more. We take all of these factors and create a

profile of content that will best achieve the client's business goals. Sometimes that means launching a microsite, sometimes it means having a great newsletter.

Unfortunately, there's no ‘one size fits all’ when it comes to creating good content. But with the right help, brands have the ability to define what it means for them, and then focus their efforts on creating and optimizing that type of content, rather than spreading themselves too thin with little to no results.”



41 KEVAN LEE

Content Crafter at [Buffer](#)

 [@kevanlee](#)

Kevan Lee and the Buffer team take an approach of [acute attention to detail](#) when it comes to their content strategy. Social networks should be carefully chosen, social media profiles should be filled out completely, attention should be given to specific tone and voice, and painstaking consideration should be given to post timing and frequency.

“
My hunch is that when things are actionable—when people leave with something new to try—there’s likely a lot of positive emotion that comes with that, which will end up leading to shares, traffic, promotion, etc.”

“Good content, for me, comes down to a couple of things: is it actionable or entertaining? These are the types of articles that I most enjoy, so they’re what I aim to write, too. We often aim more for the actionable side with the Buffer blog, and what that basically boils down to is this: will the reader be able to finish this article and go out and do something to make a difference for his or her social media success right away?”

My hunch is that when things are actionable—when people leave with something new to try—there’s likely a lot of positive emotion that comes with that, which will end up leading to shares, traffic, promotion, etc.”



42 DANNY ASHTON

CEO of [NeoMam Studios](#)

 [@dannyashton](#)

It's important to have a good understanding of what content works for your audience and what doesn't. Along with seeking feedback on your content, Danny Ashton suggests [following a similar approach to publishers](#) by finding the top sites they visit and tracking trends in their highest performing content. That way, you can publish content that you know will appeal to your audience.

“

One approach we take in our process is to test all our infographics on Imgur before we ever publish them on our clients site. We get valuable feedback from a large audience that we can then use to improve our content and design.”

“Sadly, creating great content takes experience and time. As with most things in life, there is no magic bullet.

Being able to take feedback and improve is key to getting success quickly with content.”

The one tip I would give to someone starting out is to make sure you get feedback as quick as possible. One approach we take in our process is to test all our infographics on Imgur before we ever publish them on our clients site. We get valuable feedback from a large audience that we can then use to improve our content and design.



43 HANA ABAZA

VP of Marketing at [Uberflip](#)

 [@HanaAbaza](#)

Uberflip keeps their content relevant by personalizing it and making sure that it's displayed to the right people. Hana Abaza suggests that companies starting out at personalized content try [segmenting their audience](#) using buyer personas, then narrowing it down more and more as time goes on. The more personalized your content is, the more it will resonate with each member of your audience.

“
Bottom line: relevance. Great content comes down to truly understanding your audience and creating content that they care about.”

“Bottom line: relevance. Great content comes down to truly understanding your audience and creating content that they care about. Every time you create content ask yourself why they'll care and whether or not they'll care enough to share it with others. This doesn't have to be complicated, there are a lot of ways to figure out what want, but before you put the proverbial pen to paper, this has to be your first step.”



44 SARA MCGUIRE

Creative Content Specialist at [Venngage](#)

 [@sara_mcguire](#)

Sara McGuire's content creation strategy emphasizes the importance of being mindful of fundamental principles of writing and design. Each piece of content should have a carefully thought-out premise, with attention to elements like tone, rhythm, style, grammar and punctuation. This means that your digital content requires the same level of [editorial attention](#) as traditional media.

“
Back up your points with concrete examples in the form of images, links to articles, and case studies.”

“Back up your points with concrete examples in the form of images, links to articles, and case studies. This classic writing rule rings true: show, don't tell.”



45 ANN SMARTY

SEO Consultant and Founder of MyBlogU.com

 [@seosmarty](https://twitter.com/seosmarty)

Ann Smarty is an expert guest blogger and she argues that when it comes to guest blogging, **it is best to keep it personal**. This means that you should not outsource your guest blogs—rather, you should write them yourself or hire in-house talent. This enters you into the community and builds your relationship with bloggers. Building a solid network of contacts will be more beneficial in the long run.

“
My definition of high-quality content is basically the content that you, the creator, the publisher or the content marketer, find good enough to share on your own Facebook wall.”

“My definition of high-quality content is basically the content that you, the creator, the publisher or the content marketer, find good enough to share on your own Facebook wall. You won’t believe how much content doesn’t pass this test and yet goes out online.

(mentioning related and neighboring concepts and different points of views, citing many reputable sources), well-structured and original (don’t confuse with unique! Original means NOT covered before in exactly the same format and angle).”

In a broader meaning, high-quality content should be well-researched



46 ADAM CONNELL

Founder of [BloggingWizard](#), Marketing Director at [UK Linkology](#), Co-Founder of [Purcus](#)

 [@adamjayc](#)

Adam Connell argues that it is better to [write blog posts less often](#) in order to allow more time to promote them, rather than producing regular posts for the sake of having content. Without sufficient promotion, your content will likely never reach a wide audience unless you already have a big following. Focus your time and energy on creating fewer but higher quality blog posts.

“
When it comes to SEO,
high quality content
will help, but it’s no
substitute for learning
the basics of SEO.”

“I’d disagree with the idea of good content being king. The truth is that the web is full of good content, so your content needs to be better. It needs to be more detailed, more useable, more engaging and readability needs to be a high priority. When it comes to SEO, high quality content will help, but it’s no substitute for learning the basics of SEO.”

Takeaway Tips

When it comes to content creation and SEO strategizing, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. You will have to see what works for your business through trial and error. But you are not totally without direction! There are certain trends that can be gleaned from these pieces of expert advice. Let these five Takeaway Tips be your compass to guide you towards content creation and marketing excellence.

1 Strive to create content that offers real value to readers.

What is quality content? Many experts stress that quality content is more than simply content for the sake of content—it's content that is linked back to again and again because it offers real value to readers. Value not only means actionable tips and advice, but also entertainment, storytelling and a genuine connection with readers. Remember: if it's not good enough to post on your own Facebook wall, why would it be good enough for others to post on theirs?

2 Longform content is better for SEO and offers more value to readers.

There are millions of short fluff pieces created to generate backlinks, but there are far fewer carefully researched, well-structured and in-depth posts. Longform posts tend to range between 1000 and 3000 words. The longer your content is, the more opportunities there are for backlinks. The more researched your content is, the more practical value you will offer readers and the more you will establish yourself as an industry authority.

3 To create valuable content, you need to know your audience.

How do you create content that offers real value to readers? You have to do a fair amount of research beforehand, but the work will pay off. Preempt your audience's questions throughout the buying process so that you can focus your content on answering those questions. You can preempt their questions by maintaining an ongoing conversation with your audience through social media, email and other avenues for feedback. If you ask your audience outright what kind of content they would like to see, you will be able to create content catering exactly to their needs.

Takeaway Tips

4 Keep your content fresh.

The saying goes, *there is nothing new under the sun*. You should strive to create new content that hasn't been done before, but that can be incredibly challenging when certain topics have been covered so many times already. Even if you're writing about a generic topic, you can still find a new angle and contribute new information based on your own unique experience. Look for ways to offer readers new insights, tips and examples.

5 Repurpose your content to get the most out of it.

It's not enough to just throw your content out there and expect it to stick. You need to repurpose your content so that it travels across multiple platforms. Content that does moderately well as an ebook may do exceptionally well as a SlideShare; [a blog post can be repurposed into an infographic](#) to be shared across social media sites. Content can be expanded or condensed depending on where you want to put it, so don't be afraid to recycle content when an opportunity to use it arises.