

Practical Guide to Data- Driven Content Marketing

by SEMrush



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Introduction



Introduction

Content marketing has become an essential part of any successful digital marketing strategy. However, many content professionals are still unsure of the best way to create high-quality content.

At SEMrush, we know this struggle, as we create both educational and product content to help marketers learn how to solve their daily tasks by using our tools. In order to make headway and strengthen our knowledge, we decided to investigate how the content marketing process is organized 'in the wild'. With this goal in mind, our team conducted surveys with experts from around the world (including agencies [Re:signal](#), [Invox](#) and [1min30](#), who we sincerely thank), allowing us to formalize the standard workflow of content marketing professionals.



Based on the insights gained, we understand that the key content marketing goals are to:

- Create content that delivers value to the desired audience.
- Ensure content will help to achieve the set marketing goals.

At this point, we can state with confidence that **high-quality content relies on precise analytics and trustworthy data**. When content is not supported by data, you can never be sure that it will directly hit the audience's pain points and contribute to your objectives.

However, the data-driven approach to content marketing is no easy matter and has specific challenges:

- 1 Gathering data takes a lot of time.
- 2 Big data is hard to analyze and prioritize.
- 3 Data is usually scattered over different tools, reports and documents, which prevents you from seeing the whole picture.

Our research and experience prove that only when this preliminary work, including data collection and analysis, is done, does content marketing perform effectively and take a good aim.

Having learnt this, we created our all-in-one solution – [SEMrush Content Marketing Platform](#) – where content professionals can easily get all the necessary strategy-building data in one place and make data-informed decisions throughout the entire content marketing life cycle.

Using all of this experience, we created this guide to help marketers develop and refine content marketing strategy based on trustworthy data step-by-step.

Who Is This Guide for?

This guide is developed for:



Content Writers — This guide allows you to find out what exactly to focus on while creating content and how to quickly assess the performance of your articles.



Editors — You will learn how to plan and create content that connects with your target audience and make sure it performs well in search results.



Content Strategists — This guide will tell you how to plan your strategy the most efficient way, discover the essential components, and see how data helps to make your strategy more effective and contribute to your overall goals faster.

What is Data-Driven Content Marketing?

More than the simple creation and distribution of editorial content, content marketing encompasses an entire strategic process. It is deployed at all stages of the user journey: it should attract visitors, identify prospects, turn these prospects into customers, and ultimately build their loyalty and integrate them into your community.

To achieve all of these steps in your content marketing, you have to concentrate on the main goal — bringing value to your audience. The data-driven approach allows you to clearly pinpoint exactly what your audience needs, make data-informed suggestions and confirm them confidently instead of moving blindly in several directions.

Data analysis helps you at every step of the content life cycle:

- 1 Researching and planning content — helps you to develop the right strategy, which includes your target audience and market analysis, define goals and plan your activities.
- 2 Creating content — helps you to create content for selected topics that will not only answer your audience's questions, but also contribute to your website's overall visibility.
- 3 Distributing content — helps you to discover the right channels to connect with your target audience.
- 4 Tracking content performance — helps you to assess the effectiveness of your efforts, test different approaches to your target audience and choose the approach that best allows you to achieve your goals by bringing value to your target audience.

Successful marketing no longer involves going after your prospects with a series of one-way messages delivered in bulk. Rather, it's about engaging your audience by offering them a personalized experience that they themselves will seek out and share with their peers.

”

“A data-driven content marketing strategy can make all the difference in the world to your success. In fact, you need data if you want to be able to stand out from the crowd and your competitors. Data can tell you a lot of things that will improve your strategy and your content, from knowing where your audience spends their time online to learning exactly what kind of content they consume, what keywords they use the most and much, much more.

Plus, the more you learn about your audience and their needs and preferences, the easier it will be to create personalized marketing campaigns and personalized content so that you can ultimately convert more people, faster.”



Lilach Bullock

Lead Conversion Expert, Speaker, Content Marketing and Social Media Specialist

It might sound ambitious, but a solid content marketing strategy backed by data is essential to the success of your global marketing strategy. Here are the marketing goals you can achieve with a data-driven approach:

Generate quality traffic

Value-added content that addresses the specific problems or needs of your target audience will improve the flow of relevant visitors, and thus the quality of your leads.

Increase your conversion rate

If you know how to interact with your consumers, address subjects that interest them, answer their questions, or move and delight them; your products and/or services will gain in credibility and popularity.

Build customer loyalty and grow your community

By inspiring your customers, making them smile or keeping them on the edge of their seat, you'll turn them into true ambassadors. Content marketing allows you to create a unique world that your customers want to be a part of.

Improve your online visibility

The level of traffic and relevant content sharing are good quality indicators for Google. The more engaging your content, the better your SEO ranking - and your visibility on search engines!

Boost your brand image

Content marketing gives you an opportunity to stand out and declare your brand's USP. By refining your digital identity, you get closer to your target audience.

Position yourself as an expert in your industry

Creating and publishing content allows you to claim your expertise, your consulting skills, and your awareness of your audience's expectations. This will in turn boost brand awareness and inspire trust in your potential customers.

The Benefits of Data-Driven Content Marketing in Numbers

- In today's digital age, your potential audience is almost unlimited. A good content marketing strategy allows you to take advantage of this opportunity by **increasing the number of visitors to your site by up to 55%**.
- The online visibility of websites offering relevant content also benefits: on average, websites gain **+434% on pages indexed by search engines**.
- Quality content makes your site worthy of being visited... and therefore recommended. **Backlinks** are boosted by **+97%**.
- Targeted content means attracting qualified prospects. Exploit your content and **multiply your leads fivefold**.
- Content marketing will generate a turnover of **\$300 billion in 2019...** even though it costs **62% less than traditional marketing!**

Sources: DemandMetric, Contently, Deliate Digital

The Content Marketing Cycle

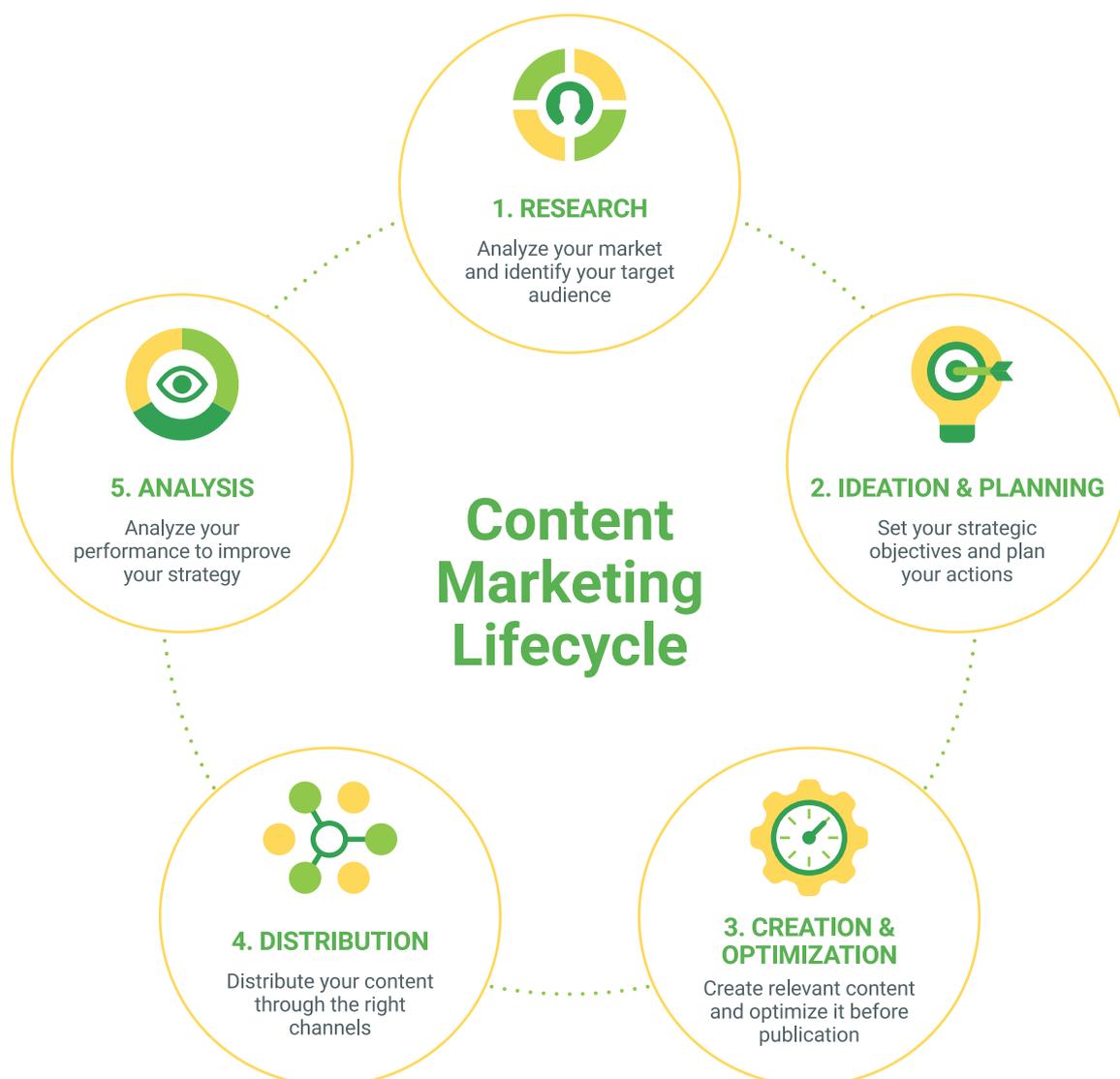


The Content Marketing Cycle

As you can imagine, setting up an effective content marketing strategy takes planning.

While developing the strategy, data analysis allows a content marketer to back up their creative ideas and suggestions with real figures. Using data, you can prevent yourself from wasting time on interacting with the wrong audience, or creating content about irrelevant topics, and be capable of setting reasonable and achievable goals.

Successful content marketing follows a **precise, step-by-step methodology**, composed of five key stages:



1. Research: Analyze Your Market (and Your Competition)

One of the main objectives of content marketing is to offer a unique experience to your audience. As such, your first port of call is to examine your competitive environment. What is your industry niche? Who are its leaders? Its influencers? What are your particular strengths as well as your weaknesses? And how do you transform them into high added-value traits?

” *The most demanding part of a content marketing lifecycle is the research up front. I like to plan out my content in advance and during the research I need to:*

- *Identify/update the personas of the people I want to target;*
- *Research the competition;*
- *Research keywords/topics;*
- *Map out all the content for months in advance;*
- *Map out our lead generation process to generate leads through our content;*
- *Define the promotion strategy for content;*

This work takes a lot of time up front but it makes a content marketers job a lot easier.



[Ian Cleary](#)

Founder of RazorSocial and Marketing Keynote Speaker

The SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is ideal for this first stage.



Divide your internal data into strengths and weaknesses

Start by examining your KPIs (bounce rate, the trend of your new/old visitor ratio, acquisition rate, number of followers, negative feedback rate, etc.) By analyzing these different metrics (detailed in section 7 of this e-book), you'll be able to objectively assess your current ranking, and what you need to do to reach your next objectives.

Classify your external data as threats or opportunities

Observing your competitors' content strategies is essential. Not only will this give you an insight into key market trends, their potential audience and their main influencers, it will help you to anticipate the risks you'll need to avoid.

Pay attention to the different marketing channels your competitors use, as well as their most viral content. The idea is for you to either adopt their best practices or to develop a disruptive strategy that will allow you to stand out from the crowd.

Analyze your content, niche and competition

SEMrush Content Platform helps you to audit the content of your site and assess your online visibility to see what contributes to your overall strategy.

Access various data such as social signals, backlinks, user-experience data, metadata, authors and content length for each URL.

[Audit your website](#)



Our platform also allows you to analyze what your competitors write about your industry trends and track their brand mentions across the digital space.

Filter results by source and date, and discover new word-of-mouth opportunities for promoting your own content.

[Analyze your competitors](#)



2. Research: Identify Your Target Audience

Another essential step in any content marketing strategy is to know who you are currently addressing, and to define precisely **the target audience you want to reach**. This is essential to the formulation of your message and the direction of your strategy; it will also provide the basis for choosing the most profitable distribution channels and even the format, style, tone and subject matter of your content.

” *I would first say that if you're looking to build a content marketing strategy, your focus shouldn't be on audiences as buyers. Your focus should be on audiences as a group of people who need something. Our job – and the best data you can gather – is to identify the number of needs and wants that our ability to produce content can meet. Then, align those needs and wants with your brand, and the ways your product can solve related problems – and you can begin to prioritize your content strategy.*



Robert Rose

Chief Strategy Advisor, Content Marketing Institute

Talking about “target audience” in the singular is somewhat reductive, because, far from being limited to one profile type, an audience is always plural - whatever your field of activity. These audience segments have specific expectations, to which your content must respond in a sufficiently adapted way. An excellent working method to better understand those segments consists in building and developing a persona, i.e., an archetype, based on an imaginary identity and a behavioral model, for each of the profiles you wish to target. This a crucial step, as you don't **want to tap the wrong persona**, or forget any relevant ones!

To fine-tune your persona, don't hesitate to use demographic, professional, social and geographical data. Use a data-driven approach when identifying your persona by following these three steps:

- 1 Reach out to your sales and customer support teams. They have in-depth knowledge of your customers' profiles, as they meet and talk with them on a daily basis.
- 2 Observe your competitors' interactions on social media. Also check what content they create in their blogs and external media; this can either inspire you or encourage you to adopt a different strategy.
- 3 Monitor what people are discussing on your topics around the web, what articles are most popular, and what headlines get the most resonance – backlinks, comments and social shares.

To create a persona, imagine a fictitious profile and a biography for each of your typical customers by answering the following questions:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Goals and challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their goals - The challenges they're facing - The results they seek - The metrics they use to measure their success | <p>Personal information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age - Gender - Family status - Lifestyle - Education - Hobbies |
| <p>Ways of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their learning methods - The learning channels they use - Their preferred resources | <p>Enterprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industry - Number of employees - Company values |
| <p>Professional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job title - Duties - Typical workday - Tools used | <p>Purchasing behavior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do they go about purchasing? - Where do they purchase? - What drives the purchase decision? |

What is the socio-professional profile of your ideal customer?

- How old are they? Are they a man or a woman?
- What is their lifestyle like (urban or rural, disposable income, hobbies, etc.)?
- What is their family status (single, in a relationship, with or without children, etc.)?
- What is their occupation (industry, status, position, size and values of their company, schedule, etc.)?

What are their goals, their challenges and needs?

- What problems could they be facing, in their personal life or at work?
- What are their desires, their objectives, their needs?
- What answers or help are they looking for?

What is their purchasing behavior like?

- Can they make the purchase decision themselves?
- If so, how do they make that decision?
- If not, how can they influence that decision?

What are their means and sources of learning and information?

- How do they look for and integrate new information?
- What are their preferred resources?
- What channels do they use to get information or to communicate?

Developing an empathy map is another good method of getting to know your target audience better. Focused on consumer emotions, empathy maps are a collaborative tool based on a comprehensive approach: by putting yourself in your customers' shoes and adopting their perspective or point of view, you can step back and improve their experience based on what they think, feel, see or hear.



This research may be too time consuming if not powered by data. Data from social media, forum discussions, and user behaviour on websites can give you essential insights for your content strategy and reduce time spent on analytics.

” Content based on what your ideal audience wants helps your brand in a ton of ways - but here's the one I like best, as a small business: it allows us to focus on writing only the content that our 'tribe' wants. That means we're less likely to waste our time and mental energy on pieces that won't fly. Naturally, you still have to combine data with your own voice and perspective - your brand desperately needs that. But focused, directed content that makes sense for your brand is kind of a no brainer. And tech is making that easier and easier.



[Joanna Wiebe](#)

Co-founder of Airstory and creator of Copy Hackers

Discover the topics that connect with your target audience

SEMrush Content Platform allows you to find trending topics that people are interested in the most, questions they ask on a topic, and articles they pay more attention to.

Filter the topics by popularity, efficiency, difficulty or volume.

Identify engaging topics



3. Planning: Set Your Strategic Content Marketing Objectives

Setting a course is important... but it must also be realistic and sensible! Before you start, check that your objectives have been sufficiently adapted. There are two methods to help you do this.

The classic, but no less effective, “SMART” method, by which any strategic goal must be:

- **Specific:** precise, simple and characteristic of your products.
- **Measurable:** tangible enough to be able to assess its achievement.
- **Achievable:** ambitious, it has to be motivating and recognized by your employees.
- **Realistic:** adapted to the means at your disposal and to the potential scale of your project.
- **Time-bound:** organized according to a precise and sustainable schedule.

S M A R T



Specific



Measurable



Achievable



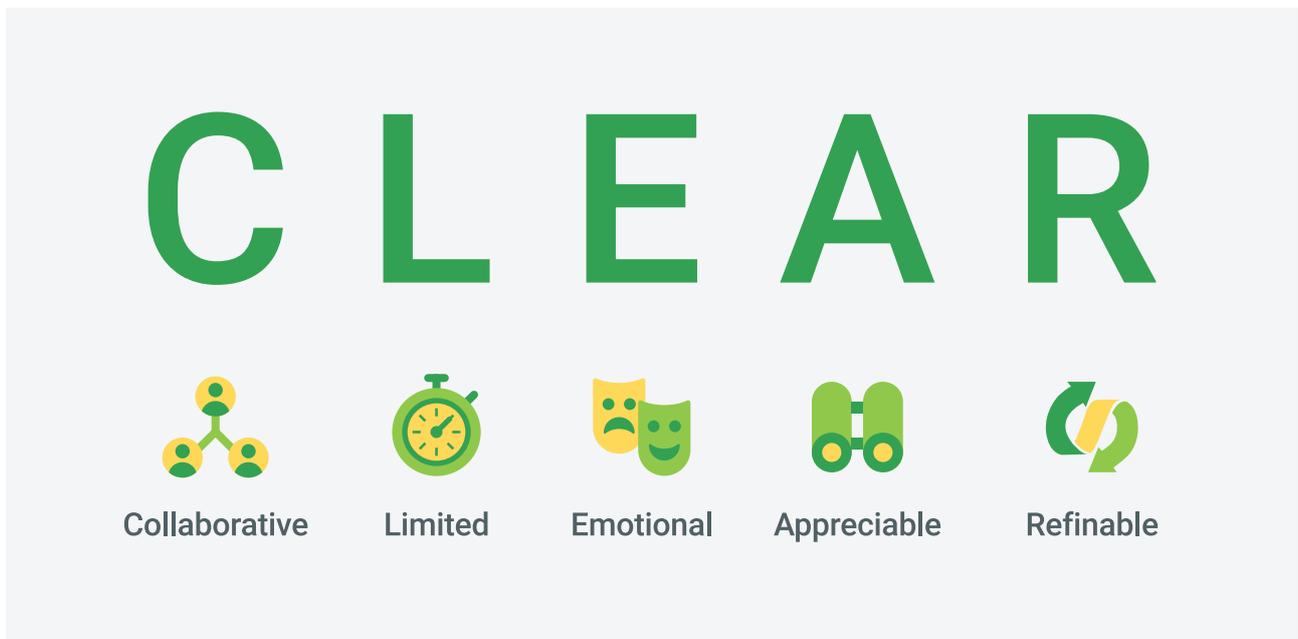
Realistic



Time-bound

The **“CLEAR” method** is also easy to implement. Better suited to agile processes, this method echoes the principles of content marketing. Your objectives are evaluated in terms of their main characteristics:

- **Collaborative:** your objective encourages teamwork.
- **Limited:** in volume and duration.
- **Emotional:** it should inspire and motivate you.
- **Appreciable:** a measurable objective that can be broken down into smaller micro-objectives.
- **Refinable:** a flexible objective that can be redefined according to circumstances and needs.



So, you've checked that your objectives are valid, measurable and appropriate? Now we need to organize them according to their level of priority and degree of operationality:

- **Strategic objectives** are the long-term general guidelines that will be applied to manage your overall content marketing strategy. What do you expect from it, and what should it bring to your business?
Example: Improve brand visibility.
- **Tactical objectives** are those set for a shorter period and correspond to the specific work that will be carried out in the medium term in order to achieve the strategic objectives.
Example: Improve the ranking of your blog articles on search engines.
- **Operational objectives** are those used to support and achieve the tactical objectives. They are set for the short term, for example, for a specific marketing campaign.
Example: Optimize your articles to have them appear in featured snippets.

” There are actually many different objectives a business can employ, from the strategic of developing voice, to the tactical of lead generation. I have even created content for the sole purpose of setting up future pieces of content with context and basic information for reference.

For me, though, there's one underlying objective that I and all my students and customers believe in, which is this:

Create content that strives to educate and engage your target audience, better than anyone else.

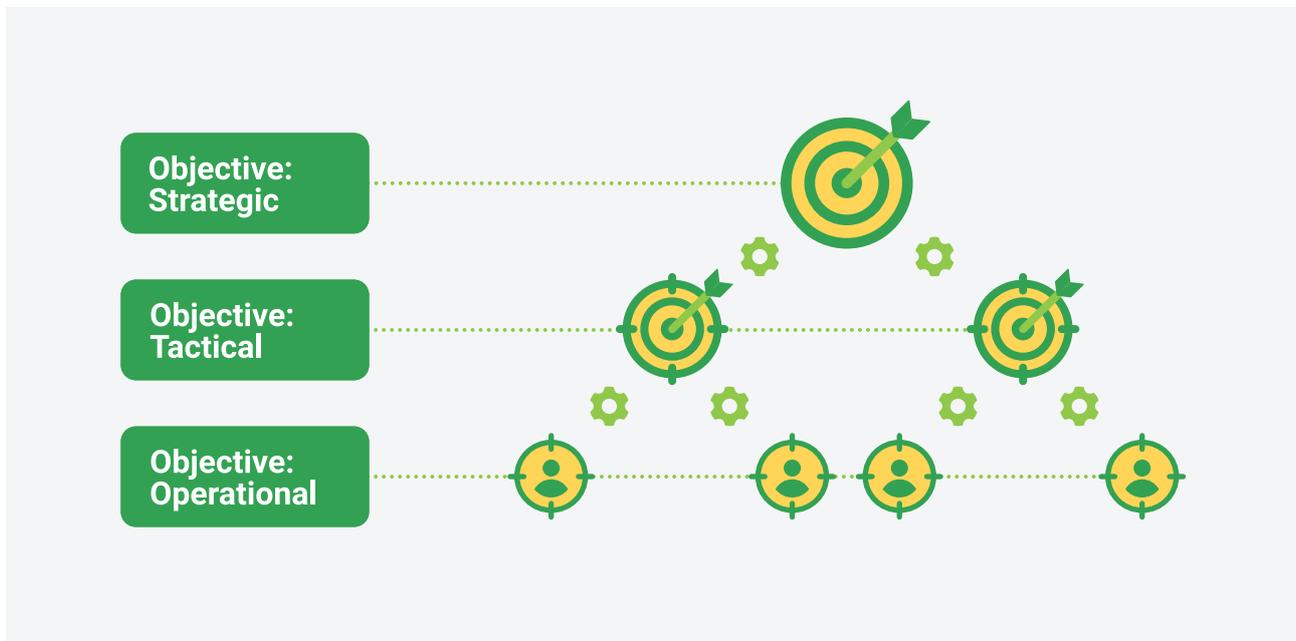
With that as your objective, you will be inspired to create what Rand Fishkin calls 10x content - content that deeply explores key topics and does so in a way that's exponentially better than the other competitors in your space. That is what will set your business apart, as it's not about the content itself, but your treatment of the topic and the care that you take to help your readers.



Mike Allton

Content Marketing Practitioner, The Social Media Hat

To define the right metrics for measuring your results, analyze your previous activities and their metrics. Try applying them for your future goals.



Your content marketing strategy should help you achieve your **business objectives** and your strategic marketing objectives. Think it through carefully before you define your content marketing objectives!

4. Planning: Plan Your Actions

Having established your objectives and defined your audience, you are now ready to develop your content marketing strategy! Now, it's time to act and turn the resources you will deploy into concrete editorial projects.

Example:

Operational Objective

Optimize my articles for SERP Features

Actions

- Integrate markups
- Optimize the structure of my articles aiming at featured snippets
- ...

” Building an optimal content strategy comes down to a) what's your expertise, b) who are your prospects (aka the audience) and c) what are your goals.

For example, if I want to reach an audience of building owners because I want to sell them elevators, or furnaces or any other products they may need, I need to be able to share content that is highly informational to them way before they are ready to buy. That way I can establish my brand in the buildings market as a thought leader and expert and will be top of mind when they need to make a purchase.



Christoph Trappe

Chief Content Engagement Director, Stamats Business Media

As part of your planning you also need to think about timeframes; your publication schedule should follow a pace that is both sustainable for you and consistent for your target audience.

- **Maintain a sufficiently high and regular publishing frequency** to make it a habitual meeting place for your readers. However, don't forget that quality comes before quantity!
- **Anticipate seasonal marketing campaigns** to highlight your marketing events or specific times of the year, corresponding to the sales cycles of your products.
- **Be mindful of the days and times of publication of your content**, especially on social media: take advantage of peak traffic periods, which are not necessarily always the same depending on the target profile (B2B, B2C, for example) and social medium.
- **Optimize and rationalize your content by taking advantage of your site's internal links:** readability and consistency are more effective than a mass of links to different subjects.

To avoid organizational problems, create (and stick to) an editorial calendar. This tool will help you to plan your actions and direct your team's collaborative efforts!

”

Here are 3 things to focus on while creating an editorial calendar:

- 1. The Process - Tied to an editorial calendar is the process for delivery - who is involved, what they need to do and when.*
- 2. Content variety - When you map out content in advance for months ahead it's easier to ensure you have good variety of content each week.*
- 3. Resourcing - It's great publishing content daily if you have the resources to deliver and promote high quality content. We need to keep quality high so our resourcing is something we need to track.*



[Ian Cleary](#)

Founder of RazorSocial and Marketing Keynote Speaker

Plan your content marketing activities using an online calendar

Are you familiar with the SEMrush Marketing Calendar? This is a powerful editorial calendar to help you plan your various campaigns and marketing actions.

Share your activities with your customers and team in just a few clicks!

Plan your activities now



5. Creation: Create Relevant Content

Keep in mind that, above all, the real strength of content marketing lies in focusing on the needs and interests of your audience, and not on your brand or product! With your well-defined buyer persona in hand, you are now in a position to choose the most appropriate editorial tone, themes and topics.

However, not all customers matching a given buyer persona are at the same stage of their buying journey. To engage as many of them as possible, you should orient your content according to the three main phases of the buyer journey:

Awareness

In this first phase, the consumer faces a problem or has a need. They're looking for information and want to learn more, but they're not yet in a decision-making dynamic. At this stage, they mostly just want to formulate their question or problem.

To get their attention, you might want to offer educational or general content, dealing with the source of their problem and suggesting possible ways to solve it.

Objective: *Confirm your knowledge of the customer's issue, establish yourself as a trustworthy source, and build trust in your brand by starting to introduce your products.*

Types of content you can create at this stage: *blog posts, reports, checklists, infographics, e-books, studies, etc.*

Consideration

After searching for information, the consumer is now seeking concrete solutions. They have already narrowed down their need: at this point, they are comparing different products to choose the one that best meets their expectations.

It is up to you now to provide your prospect with more precise and in-depth information on the relevant subject.

Objective: *Position yourself as an expert in your industry, and show the user exactly how your product can help: What opportunities or solutions does it offer them?*

Types of content you can create at this stage: *research, e-books, white papers, templates, videos, podcasts, online conferences, etc.*

” *There are a many compelling reasons to product content, but of my favorite examples of content strategy to support business objectives is to reduce operational costs.*

A company can greatly reduce multi-touch tickets and support effort, for example, by working with the customer care organization to craft meaningful content that helps solve a user problem. And, there is no shame in placing a CTA at the end of the content pointing the reader to another piece of benefit driven content to help move them through a funnel or orient them to the logical next step.

Start with talking to your customer care team and diving into your help desk data. Both are a gold mine for content strategists and creators!



Kelly Hungerford

Digital Strategist & Marketing Ops Consultant,
MarTech evangelist

Decision

The consumer is finally ready to choose a product, having reached a commitment dynamic. Now, they're evaluating the various solutions they've looked at in order to make a final decision. As such, they're focusing on very specific differentiation criteria (technical characteristics, associated services, delivery or after-sales policy, reputation, etc.).

This is the time to present reviews from existing customers, a detailed analysis of your product, and your strengths compared to the competition.

Objective: *Let your prospect know that your offer is unique, and that they're making the right purchasing decision.*

Types of content you can create at this stage: *case studies, product guides and manuals, comparative tables, etc.*



One of the greatest advantages of content marketing is that it works and impacts on each stage of the customer's journey (Research, Decision and Action) thereby boosting the purchase process.

In any of these phases, it is essential to create content that meets the following characteristics:

- *High quality*
- *Focused on the buyer persona*
- *Interesting and provides value to users*
- *However, the content must be different in each phase of the purchase process to provide good results.*

In the Research phase, we must rely on the educational content that helps users to better understand the need or motivation that has led them to begin the purchasing process. Such content will allow us to attract qualified visitors to the company's website and blog.

Some recommended formats for the Research phase are: blog articles, templates, ebooks, interactive videos, checklists, podcasts, webinars, etc.

In the Decision phase, the content should be used to demonstrate that the solution offered by the company is the one that perfectly meets the customer's needs. Content should not be commercial, but also not as educational as in the previous phase. You can use formats such as: calculators, comparative tables or statistical studies.

Finally, in the Action phase, the content must have a more commercial focus, as its mission is to convince a user to purchase the company's product or service. You can opt for the following formats: success stories, product demonstration videos or testimonials.



Marta Torné

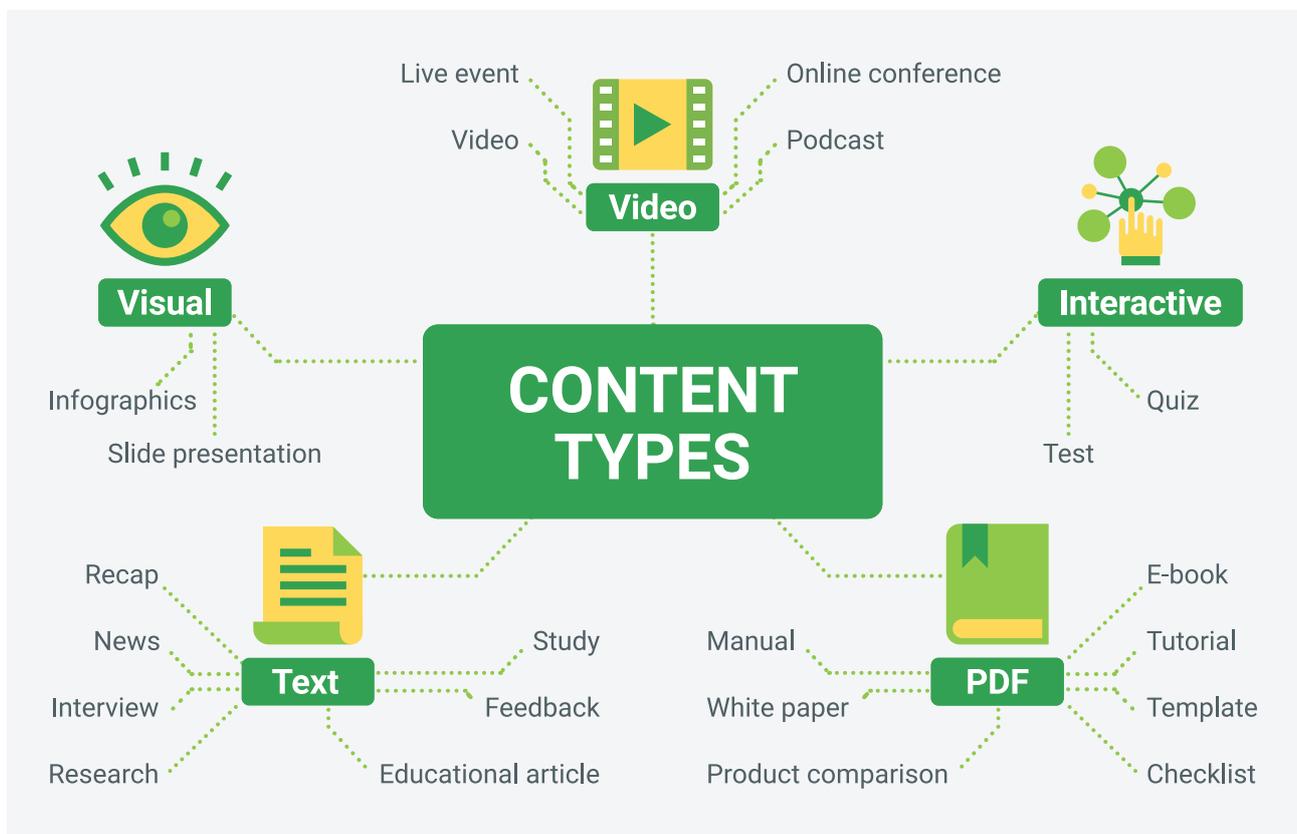
Inbound Marketing & Content Manager, InboundCycle

Choose a suitable format

In general, it's very important that you vary the type and format of your content to engage your users and reach a wider audience. Beyond its basic quality, diverse content formats avoid tiring your audience, helping to arouse their curiosity.

By choosing a format adapted to your readers' preferences and your distribution channels, you'll improve your visibility and strengthen your brand's presence.

You can also reuse your content by presenting it in different formats. This will allow you to save time and resources.



So, what have been the must-use formats for 2018?

Video

Internet users increasingly prefer to watch videos rather than read text. Video drove 73% of Internet traffic in 2016 - a rate that will reach 82% in 2021! (source: [Cisco](#)). Analyze your consumers' intentions and opt for "How-To" videos, webinars or interviews, which can provide practical solutions to their problems. Lean toward shorter formats to ensure that users don't skip to the end... and don't forget to subtitle them so your users can watch without sound, for example at work or on public transport.

Interactive content

Ninety-one percent (91%) of consumers enjoy interactive content such as quizzes, surveys or questionnaires (source: [TheDrum](#)). These types of content are very effective when it comes to improving your visibility, allowing you to engage your consumers through professional, educational, cultural or just fun topics. Interactive content allows you to create a positive brand-associated user experience that combines entertainment with information.

PDFs

This type of content, which includes white papers (82%), case studies (73%) and e-books (67%), has a significant influence on B2B purchasing decisions (source: [DemandGenReport](#)). PDF documents are a very effective format for presenting your product in more detail, boosting your credibility, weighing in on the purchase decision, and generating leads.

Short on ideas for your content? Here's a solution!

The SEMrush Content Platform allows you to find the most resonating headlines, frequent user questions and trending topics in your industry.

Generate the most
engaging headlines



Optimize your content for search engines

Unfortunately, it isn't enough for your content to answer the exact questions your audience is asking - your future prospects have to find you first for the magic to happen! This is why any good content marketing strategy needs to be backed up with SEO-friendly dynamics.

There's no real secret to achieving this: you simply need to choose your keywords well and perform a precise analysis of your prospects' search intentions, all of which will work to position you at the top of the search results.

Here again, preparing your strategy in accordance with the three main stages of the buyer's journey will help you to categorize your keywords:

Informational keywords

These are the keywords that yield very large search volumes, used by the audience in the "awareness" stage. The user doesn't have an intention to buy; they are just looking for general information or even ideas. As such, they often formulate their queries in the form of a question.

For example: *"where to travel in March," "how does an mp3 player work," "what Christmas gift to buy for a teenager"*

Transactional keywords

At this point, the prospects are already making a selection from several different products that may suit their needs. However, they are still hesitant. To help them decide, they compare the products' general features, the conditions offered or any promotions available.

For example: *"cheap plane tickets," "samsung s6 features," "100% cashmere sweater"*

Commercial keywords

These are terms used to address a future customer, ready to move on to the purchase: their product choice is made. Here, the corresponding keywords have a very high conversion rate.

For example: *"order online pizza in lyon," "reservation hotel europark barcelona"*



If you're a one-person business busy with client work, you don't have much time to blog so, I try to focus on the essentials:

- Knowing the topics and keywords that I want to use in my articles making sure I don't put up random content on my website but follow a strategy that helps me reach my goals.*
- Knowing what I'm going to write about next and when it's due to block some time for it in my calendar and hold myself accountable.*
- Knowing why I'm creating the next blog post (for ex., to get links, to get new client inquiries, to start a discussion, etc.).*
- And last but not least: Having a clearly defined process of where I'm going to promote my newest post and when.*



Gill Andrews

Copywriter & Web Consultant

Use a powerful tool to find the best keywords for your content

The SEMrush Keyword Magic tool gives you millions of keyword ideas to develop a profitable content marketing campaign.

Discover “long tail” keyword options for rich content and estimate the traffic they will bring you by determining their click potential with real-time metrics.

Collect the best
keywords to target



So, you've got your carefully chosen keywords. However, you still need to use them in key parts of your content to ensure optimal impact in terms of ranking. It goes without saying that you should use them in your Title tag, but that alone is not enough to guarantee you the best SEO performance. Consider using them in the following areas:

- **Meta Description tags:** Even though search engines don't use them directly to rank results, their quality contributes significantly to increasing your click rates. Limit yourself to 150 characters and try to engage your potential readers as much as possible.
- **Heading (H) tags:** A single H1 and 2 to 5 subtitles, depending on the volume of your subject.
- **The body of the text:** Calculate the repetition of your main keywords so that they'll impact your ranking without penalizing you (2-3 times in short content, 4-6 times maximum in longer content), and round them out with your long-tail selection.
- **The URL:** Integrate your keywords, making sure to remain very explicit and not to exceed a maximum of 3 to 5 words.
- **Your images and videos:** These need SEO care too! Search engines may have difficulty referencing image and video files if they do not have precise Alt file names and tags.

Improve your content visibility

The SEMrush Content Platform provides you with a template for optimized content based on your top ten results in search results.

Get related keywords to feature on your page, the length and readability of your text, relevant backlink sources, and metadata optimization.

Get your future content template



Our Platform also checks how well your text is optimized right in your Google doc or WordPress account in real time.

All the metrics are interactive, so you can track your progress while you edit the text.

Ensure your content is optimized before publication



6. Distribution: Distribute Your Content Through the Right Channels

A good publication should be followed by good deployments for maximum visibility. The challenge is to select the most effective channels based on your objectives, your audience's profile and your content formats. To overcome this challenge, analyze where your competitors usually publish their content and what other sources write about the topics you want to target.

In all cases, the key is to focus on variety – after all, there's no lack of options for distributing quality content!

Social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.):

Blending content marketing with your Social Media strategy is a winning combo for visibility and brand image! It also gives you an opportunity to stretch the lifespan of your content by republishing it at the right time.

Video platforms (YouTube, Dailymotion, Vimeo, etc.) are nowadays ubiquitous. YouTube has become the second most used search engine and the third most visited site after Google and Facebook. To get the most out of it, work on the titles of your videos, add consistent descriptions... and, obviously, a link to your site!

Emailing: This is still a particularly effective way to distribute valuable content, such as newsletters or downloadable files. Thanks to automated marketing solutions, you can program scenarios to automatically send personalized messages based on the profiles and behavior of your prospects.

Events, conferences: It might seem like it sometimes, but not all social networks are digital. Seminars, conventions and workshops are also opportunities to share and promote your content with people who happen to be particularly interested – after all, they made the effort to show up! Use these events to produce new original content: interviews, live videos, slideshows, etc.

Press releases: Used wisely, a press release helps to strengthen your credibility and helps you to stand out from the crowd. New product launches, rebranding, partnerships, studies and exclusive events related to your brand offer opportunities to play the game and provide relevant content to influencers and the media.

Guest blogging: This is now a common practice in the blogosphere, and one based on a win-win relationship. Thanks to guest blogging, you can create a community of experts around your brand and gain more credibility and user engagement.

Link building: By gaining a link on a reputable website redirecting to your content, you'll improve your ranking on search engines and attract referral traffic. Link building is an extremely powerful tool to boost your visibility!

Partnerships: Red Bull and GoPro, Ikea and DreamWorks... Co-marketing is in vogue nowadays, and it allows you to ratchet up your distribution campaigns while reducing your production costs. Partnerships aren't for major brands only; you can also tap into them.

Distribute your content the right way based on trustworthy data

Our Platform allows you to manage your online reputation by tracking your brand mentions and those of your competitors across the digital space.

Find new opportunities for promoting your content, and create buzz marketing around your product or service.

Find distribution opportunities



Using Social Media Poster you can create, plan and schedule posts, find ideas for your publications and analyze your performance across all major social channels.

Distribute your content efficiently and save your time and resources!

Distribute your content



7. Performance: Analyze Your Performance to Improve Your Strategy

Ideally, performance analysis should be carried out on an ongoing basis so as to regularly adjust your objectives and actions, as well as to identify your progress margins at the right time. Analytics allows you to correct your strategy on the fly, understand what works better for your target audience and select the most effective approach to achieve your goals.

First of all, you need to select the most significant KPIs that you're going to monitor, depending on the characteristics of your project. With a wide range of metrics available, it's a question of choosing those that will best reflect your performance, based on your target, your competitive environment and your strategy.

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*There are two metrics in the math of digital marketing:
traffic x conversion rate = demand.
Those are the two most important numbers.*

But there are dozens of KPIs that contribute to those numbers. Some metrics are very visible and easy to report on (shares, likes, followers), but these tend to be the less useful, less important metrics. Others are harder to find (conversion rate per traffic source, sales qualified leads, net promoter score), but they are critical to business success.

This is the irony of marketing metrics. I call it Julian's Law: There is an inverse correlation between the visibility of a metric and its importance.

In the end, you want to measure the impact of your actions. If your efforts were about driving traffic, measure the outcome. If you were working to improve your conversion rates, measure that outcome. Use your analytics for analysis, not just reporting!



Andy Crestodina

Speaker, content marketer, co-founder of Orbit Media

Metrics related to user behavior

These indicators can help you gauge the quality of the user experience you provide to your audience. How much time does the user spend on each of your pages? How many separate pages do they consult during their visits? But also, where do they come from? All pieces of information that you must absolutely pay attention to.

Examples of metrics:

- **Pageviews:** This indicates the number of views for a particular Web page, giving you a general idea of your content's performance.
- **Unique visitors:** This shows how many visitors your content attracts - useful for determining the size of your audience.
- **Pages per session:** This is the average number of pages (content) viewed by a single user during a single session on your site. It helps you assess your internal linking.
- **New and old users:** This shows the capacity of your content to attract new users while retaining existing ones.
- **Average time on page:** This shows whether visitors spend a significant amount of time reading your content, or whether they just browse it quickly.
- **Page depth:** This shows the average number of pages that users visit per session.
- **Bounce rate:** This indicates the percentage of users who left a particular page without visiting any other pages on the site.
- **Traffic sources:** This helps discover the best marketing channels for distributing your content.

Engagement metrics

Your community is growing day by day, but what relationship do your followers really have with your brand? Analyzing the engagement generated by your content helps you answer this question. Through these metrics, you can also evaluate the effectiveness of your distribution channels.

Examples of metrics:

- **Likes:** These show what type of content appeals to your audience on social media.
- **Shares:** These indicate your content's level of visibility on social media.
- **Comments:** These help identify the content that raises the most engagement and that generates discussion among your audience.
- **Mentions:** These allow you to understand what your community thinks of your content; useful for managing your online reputation.
- **Republishing:** This shows that your content is valued not only by users but also by bloggers, media and experts.
- **Requests received:** These indicate whether your content is capable of generating marketing partnership opportunities.

SEO metrics

Search engine optimization of your content shouldn't remain static. On the contrary, it must constantly adapt to the evolution of your audience's search intentions, your competitors' strategies as well as the new opportunities offered by SERP features. To stay one step ahead, you must always keep an eye on your organic traffic, the ranking of your keywords and your link-building trends.

Examples of metrics:

- **Organic traffic:** This indicates the number of visits your website receives from search engines. As such, it shows what content has good SEO potential.
- **Dwell time:** This indicates the average time a visitor spends on the page before returning to their search results.
- **Backlinks:** These are a measure of your content's virality, showing whether your content is appreciated by other experts and if it resonates with your community.
- **Keyword rankings:** These indicate the current position of your page among search results for a specific term on which you are trying to position yourself.

Sales metrics

These indicators give you a sense of the real impact of your efforts. The idea is for your audience visits to generate qualified leads, but some other key metrics can help explain your ROI's evolution. How many leads does your content generate? What is your ratio of natural vs. paid leads? How many are converted into buyers?

Examples of metrics:

- **New leads generated:** This indicates the number of new users who have shared their personal information in exchange for your content.
- **Existing leads touched:** This indicates the number of existing leads that have interacted with your content, helping you assess and develop your leads' growth.
- **Cost per acquisition:** This measures the cost of acquiring a paying customer as part of your content marketing campaign.
- **Conversion rate:** This indicates the percentage of visitors who performed a desired action (click, registration, download, etc.) after having interacted with your content.
- **Return on investment (ROI):** This measures the return on investment related to your content's cost: creation and distribution.

Analyzing these various types of data will allow you to objectively evaluate the relevance and performance of your content. As such, your content marketing dashboard must be updated and consulted regularly.

To complete your analyses, consider carrying out an [in-depth site audit](#) once or twice a year. This audit compiles a detailed inventory of your publications and adjusts the broad guidelines of your content marketing strategy.

Analyze your content performance

The SEMrush Content Platform allows you to audit your website content based on social signals, backlinks, user-experience data, metadata, authors and content length for each URL.

Audit your website content



The Platform also lets you quickly and efficiently track your external publications by their backlinks, keyword rankings and social shares.

Track your publications' performance



Conclusion

Effective content marketing is not based on luck, it relies on strategic analysis and ongoing assessment built upon data at each step of the content marketing life cycle.

Using a data-driven approach, content professionals can precisely forecast the results of their marketing efforts. Their strategy is not a guessing game anymore – they set goals on reasonable grounds and accurately analyze the results.

With this in mind, the SEMrush Content Platform was created to simplify the data gathering and analyzing process for content marketers, so they can focus on delivering value to their audience and make data-informed decisions.





We love your feedback!

Was this guide helpful? Is there something else about content marketing that you are interested in? Drop us a line at **content-analyzer-feedback@semrush.com** and share your ideas!