

# **Content Marketing Tips, Strategies, and Best Practices**

**- SPECIAL REPORT -**

Content is what “makes the web go around.” By that, we mean that content is the driving force that motivates many people to visit a website, and then to *stay* on that website.

Think about how you discover new websites and brands. Most of the time, it will happen when you’re searching for the answer to a question that you have, or when you want information about something. You’ll click on the content that comes up in Google, and if you enjoy the experience of reading, then you might make a note of that brand so that you can come back to it later.

Alternatively, you might discover content when someone shares it with you on social media, or when you see it in your homefeed. You’ll click because it sounds interesting and engaging, and again: you’ll come back to that site if you think it has more to offer.

It is content that attracted you to the website in both cases, and it content that will make enough of an impression to bring you back.

And note as well, that it is content that Google used to *index* the website and therefore know to show it when you searched for a relevant term!

So content is crucial. The next question is how do you get your content *right*? A good content marketing strategy should bring more people to your site, but it should *also* help you to develop authority and leadership in your niche.

This is important. Most websites don’t have a traffic problem: they have a conversion problem. You can make a LOT of money from

a small number of visitors, as long as they value your brand and trust your expertise.

So what makes a good content strategy? How do you get to that point? Here are some key things to consider.

## **What to Write**

The most important consideration when developing your content marketing strategy is knowing *what* you want to write about. In other words, what value are providing from your site – and who is benefiting from that?

This amounts to “knowing your why.” In other words, you need to understand the reason your website exists, you need to have a mission statement, and you need to have an ideal customer (a **buyer persona**).

This is where we see a lot of websites going wrong.

A blog about fitness that is clearly just trying to make money will be filled with posts like:

- How to get six pack abs
- 10 Pec exercises for a killer workout
- How to lose weight in 30 days

None of these offer anything original or exciting. There is no clear target audience (other than “nearly everyone”) and as such, the site won’t get shares, or free links. It *certainly* won’t generate true fans.

The most successful websites have strong branding. They have a message, and they appeal to a particular type of person.

This starts by focussing on the buyer persona. What *kind* of fitness enthusiast will visit your site? Someone who is just interested in getting into basic good shape? Or someone who is wed to the gym and loves “pumping iron?”

Maybe someone who loves spending time outdoors and who believes in Paleo Fitness?

Or maybe an athlete?

Knowing this is crucial, because it will allow you to target the right kind of person with something they will find genuinely useful, interesting, and exciting. It lets you generate *novel* content. And it lets you create a lasting emotional impact on that person that will make them want to follow you.

## **How to Write Well**

A content strategy doesn't work without high quality content!

Good writing can be explained fairly simply. Good writing means that you are communicating efficiently. Writing like anything else has a purpose, whether that is to teach, entertain or inform. At any rate, there is a crux that you need to convey and this is the ‘purpose’ of what you’ve written.

A very straightforward way to judge a piece of writing then, is to ask simply how well it performs that job. Efficient writing means

that your visitors will need to invest less time into reading but will still get the most information and value possible.

This is why it is a mistake to use flowery or flamboyant language most of the time. This is particularly true when writing for business, where the temptation might be to use jargon or big 'clever' terms. I once worked with a company that was trying to sell an EPOS system, but rather than focusing on conveying what that was or why it was useful for small businesses, all the brand wanted to do was show off with words like 'cloud enabled', 'synergy' and 'strategy'. This was meaningless, it wasted the visitor's time and it meant most people would leave without reading more, let alone buying.

On the other hand, if you can quickly and effectively communicate what it is you want to say, then you will find that people stick around and that very often, they are eager to buy from you.

This is also true with writing designed to be informative or entertaining – especially in an age when everyone is in a rush and few people have time to stick around long enough to read a whole passage of text.

This is also why it is a good idea to use the right structure and layout for your content. Specifically, you need to break it up with lots of images, you need to use lots of different paragraphs and you need clear and bold headers. Make your content skimmable.

This is what will make your content stand out and it is what will ensure that people stay on your page long enough to read it (kind of important, right?).

So, does that mean your content is going to be forever 'light' and fluffy? Or that it will simply be functional and personality-less? No...

Firstly, you *can* use your broader vocabulary but only where it serves a purpose. This should:

- A) Provide some additional detail or subtext, or subtly alter the tone of what you're saying
- B) Allow you to say more with fewer words

What's more, is that you certainly *can* be very deep and well researched with what you're saying and with what you're writing. In fact, this is incredibly important if you want your content to do well. The best kind of content is content that Google calls 'resource posts'. Resource posts are highly comprehensive and detailed discussions on a certain topic. These posts have a lot of value because they provide a source where an audience can learn all about one topic. These are highly sharable on social media because they let someone teach another person by sharing a single link. And they also do very well in terms of SEO because a long, in-depth, 1,800 word post will have a lot of natural keywords and 'long-tail keywords' (strange phrases that occasionally get

typed into Google but which aren't really worth ranking for specifically.

Making sure that your content has value is very important in general in fact and this is only one way that you do this.

## **Content Should be UNIQUE**

Another way that you make sure your content is valuable, is to give it something that is unique – to give it a USP (Unique Selling Point).

This should be something that people won't have seen before and that will really stand out to them. For instance, how about a post that combines two unusual niches? A post that uncovers some interesting, brand new scientific research that's relevant to your niche? Or a post that looks back in time to some old, forgotten technique.

Your content should have an emotional hook and it should offer something that your audience won't find elsewhere and won't have read a thousand times before.

One more MASSIVE tip? Write in a narrative format wherever possible. That means you should be aiming to write content that is phrased in a way that is naturally like a story. Think about something personal you can say about the matter, or just try to give it a beginning, a middle and an end.

Stories work wonders because the human brain is naturally evolved to enjoy stories. We've been listening to stories for thousands of years and we can't help but to put ourselves in the story and thereby relate and emote. This makes it very hard to stop listening to a story before the end, and it makes it very easy for us to get caught up in a narrative and stirred by it.

Stories hold attention but they are also highly persuasive.

Another tip?

Either write the content **yourself** or find a writer that has a genuine passion for the subject.

Here's something that might surprise you:

*It's better to hire an expert who is an okay writer, than it is to hire an amazing writer with no interest in the subject.*

How can you become a *thought leader* if your content is written by a novice? All they *can* do is to recite and reword other articles!

## **Packaging and Selling**

You might not think of an article or blog post as being "packaged," but in fact the website that publishes the content, the choice of fonts, and the images on the page are all examples of packaging.

This is really important, as it is what will help to convey the desired emotion and achieve the intended impact.



If your article is sharing *secret ways to make BIG money online*, then the image should be something that evokes that same emotion. It should be something that looks dangerous, exciting, and elite.

It's not enough to find a generic stock photo – either pay for something high quality, or take something new.

I highly recommend spending some time taking high quality photos *or* signing up to a paid stock images site as part of your content plan.

Great packaging will then help you to achieve great marketing.

Here's another key tip: you should think of *every single post as a product*. That means you should market it **like a product**.

If you're writing an article, you should start out by researching if people are likely to be interested in it. You should know *where and how* you will market it first. If it's an exclusive interview with a high profile figure in your niche for example, then you can market to their fan page.

Likewise, make sure to tease the content to your own social media and then share it there. Do everything you can to generate buzz and get your posts to the right people.

## **8 Tips for Better Content Strategy**

To recap on what was said here, and to provide just a few extra nuggets of info, consider these 8 tips for better content strategy.

## **1 Write longer posts**

Longer posts have been shown to perform better on Google and even to get shared more. People like in-depth content, so make sure you're giving them that.

## **2 Go multimedia**

Content doesn't just mean writing. Get on YouTube, create some infographics and get creative.

## **3 Network!**

Networking will help you to build contacts that you can use to get guest posts and more.

## **4 Make your content unique**

The problem with lots of posts is that they're generic and derivative. Make something unique that's actually interesting and ask yourself: would *you* read that?

## **5 Have a mailing list**

Mailing lists are crucial for taking your readers and turning them into loyal subscribers and eventually paying customers. If you don't have a list, then you're wasting a lot of potential on your blog.

## **6 Learn to write great headings**

A lot of people will like and share a post without even having read it. What do you think they base that decision on? Don't write clickbait but *do* learn how to get people intrigued in what you have to say.

## **7 Write Evergreen**

Write content that will be relevant 20 years from now, and it can continue generating profit and traffic *for 20 years!*

## **8 Be true to yourself and your brand**

This sounds like a Disney motto but it's true. Sometimes we can work so hard to chase after 'in vogue' topics or titles we think will perform well that we forget our USP. Stick with what you're doing and consistency will pay off for you.