



2018



# Content Marketing **MATTERS**

—  
These steps could help you overcome resistance, establish a plan, and use the power of content to build your business.



# Introduction

Your company needs a content program. You know that, but the rest of your team doesn't—not yet, anyway. And, frankly, the entire process seems a little terrifying. Relax. You're on the right track just by thinking about it. The steps detailed in this e-book can help you build advocates at the highest levels, develop a strategy, create killer content, and get the most out of all that effort by distributing your pieces wisely and using your best stuff again and again.

## REASONS TO START NOW

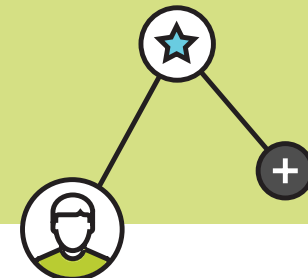
Amid the daily crush, it's easy to put off planning a content program until next month or next year. But keep in mind:



**Potential customers are searching for information online at this moment.**



**Your competitors are already out there making connections.**





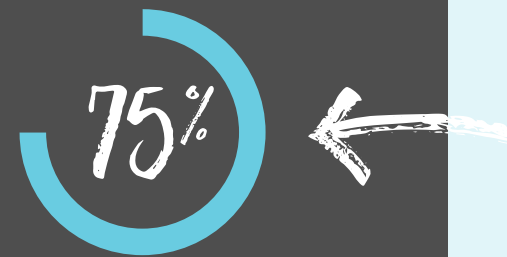
## Contents //

1. **Building Advocates  
(Convincing Your Bosses)** PG 04
2. **Developing a  
Content Strategy** PG 07
3. **Creating Great Content** PG 11
4. **Maximizing Distribution** PG 16
5. **Work Smarter, Not Harder:  
Repurposing** PG 19

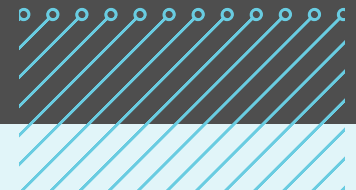
# Part 1

## Building Advocates (Convincing Your Bosses)

Any new venture that costs money and takes time can be a hard sell with leadership. The key is to go in with solid arguments and statistics to back them up. Here are some ways to explain the value of content marketing to your leadership team.

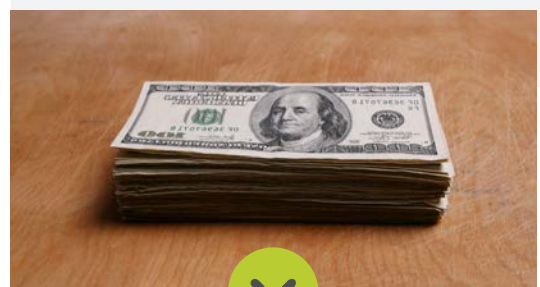


Marketers who say they are increasing their investment in content marketing<sup>1</sup>



# Show Them The Numbers

Evidence grows each year that content helps companies retain customers, forge new relationships, reinforce brands, and overcome consumer pain points. Tell your leaders that content marketing:

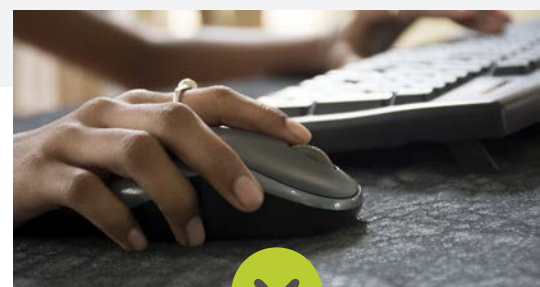


costs  
**62%**

less than outbound marketing and generates

**3x**

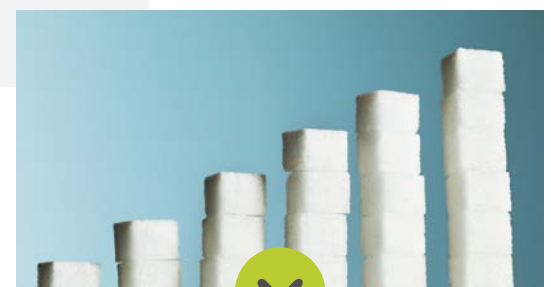
as many leads.<sup>2</sup>



results in nearly

**8x more**

site traffic for companies that take content seriously, versus those that don't.<sup>3</sup>



drives nearly

**6x higher**

conversion rates than those of companies without content marketing.<sup>4</sup>

# Answer Tough Questions (Before They Ask)

As you prepare to present your case, make sure you've got solid reasons for content beyond "everybody's doing it." Anticipating pointed questions is your chance to turn skeptics into advocates.



## How will this advance our marketing goals?

Consider what your company's overall marketing seeks to achieve and specifically how content will help.



## Isn't our traditional marketing working well?

Detail how content can complement existing advertising, print etc. as part of a holistic, integrated strategy.



## What will this do for sales?

Find an area your sales team struggles with and address how content can create more traffic and new leads.



## How will we know if content works?

Compare data from a content marketing campaign with a typical product-driven campaign, showing proof of the effectiveness of content marketing.

## Clearly Address the Costs

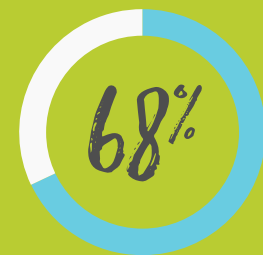
Give some thought to the money you'll need to produce and distribute content, as well as the staff time that will be involved, and the price of getting freelancers to help. While your underlying message is that the upfront costs of content marketing will, in the end, make more money for the company, be open and prepared in explaining the commitment. Otherwise, your conversation may end up stuck in the details.



## Part 2

# Developing a Content Strategy

Now that your senior leadership recognizes the need for content (congratulations!), it's time to pull together all that initial research into a formal plan for success. While strategies vary from company to company, yours should spell out who your audience is and what content you plan to create for them, how many pieces you will create, how you'll distribute it, and how you'll define success.



Marketers surveyed who publish content at least once a week<sup>5</sup>



# The Big Three: Audience, Subject Matter, Voice

While advertising aims to sell a product or service, content builds trust by educating, answering questions, and solving problems. Your strategy should reflect:

**1**

## Your audience.

Ask the customers you value most about the problems and concerns on their minds. Think about whether these people are most likely to respond to detailed articles or quick videos.

**2**

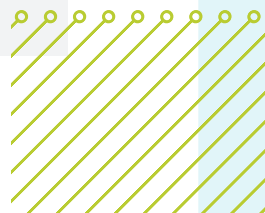
## Your subjects.

Next, think about how your unique expertise can help people solve those problems. This should tell you what subject matter to explore. Each piece needs to demonstrate your expertise in some way.

**3**

## Your voice.

Depending on your history and line of business, you may be refined and formal or down-home casual. Either way, a consistent voice across your content performs the same function as branding.







## Establishing a Cadence

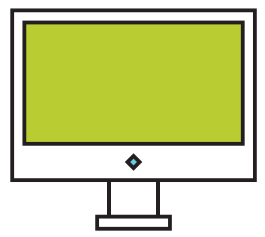
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Few elements of your strategy are as important as a realistic pace that keeps the content coming at a reliable clip without swamping your resources.

- **Create an editorial calendar** with clear deadlines for each phase, from ideas to publication. (See Part 3: Creating Great Content.)
- **Spell out what your team will produce** and what may need to be outsourced.
- **Give yourself some extra mileage** and flexibility by planning to reuse your best pieces (See Part 5: Work Smarter, Not Harder: Repurposing.)

# Defining Success

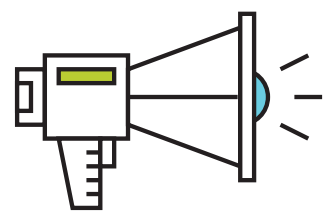
Today's analytics tools lend powerful insight into content performance. First, you need to decide what you hope to achieve. Adjust the tools to highlight how each piece performs according to criteria most important to you, such as:



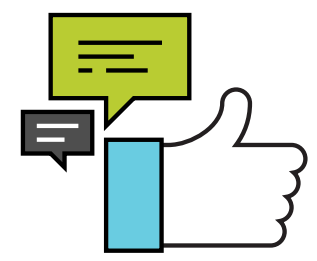
Website traffic



Sales leads



Brand awareness

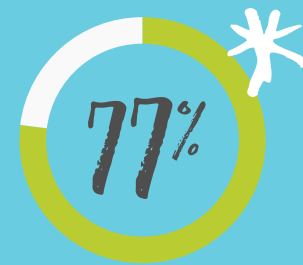


Social followers and engagements

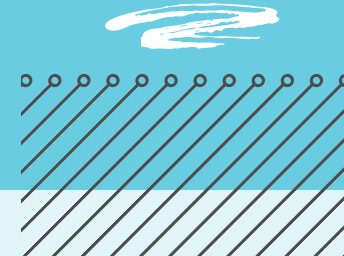
## Part 3

# Creating Great Content

With a solid strategy, you're on your way. The next step—creating quality content—can be more challenging than it appears. It takes honing good concepts into unique, specific ideas, then researching, organizing, writing, editing, and designing them into pieces that will captivate your audience. Fortunately, you can get help, both human and online.



Internet users  
who read blogs<sup>6</sup>



# Helping Hands

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Depending on your in-house expertise and the size of your staff, you may need freelance expertise. Thanks to the new “gig” economy, finding skilled help creating content shouldn’t be hard. In fact, 56% of B2B marketers use outsiders for at least part of the process.<sup>7</sup>

## LOOK FOR FREELANCERS WHO:

**HAVE DIRECT EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH COMPANIES AND SUPPORTING BRANDS.**

**HAVE A TRACK RECORD OF ADAPTING TO CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES.**

**USE CONTENT TO SUPPORT THEIR OWN BUSINESSES.**



# Getting Inspired



There's nothing like *eureka!* moments when a great idea pops fully formed into your head. Yet a content program won't always wait. These resources may help:



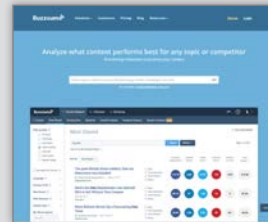
## Hubspot's Blog Idea Generator.

Enter keywords that you want to focus on and receive potential titles.



## Portent's Content Idea Generator.

Similar to Hubspot's Blog Topic Generator, this allows you to type in your subject matter and generates headlines that get you thinking.



## Buzzsumo.

Get inspired by the most appealing existing titles for a given topic. What you learn could help you write attention-grabbing headlines.



## Daily Page.

Daily prompts to get you into a writing habit and keep you motivated, along with stats and scores on your writing.



## Help me write.

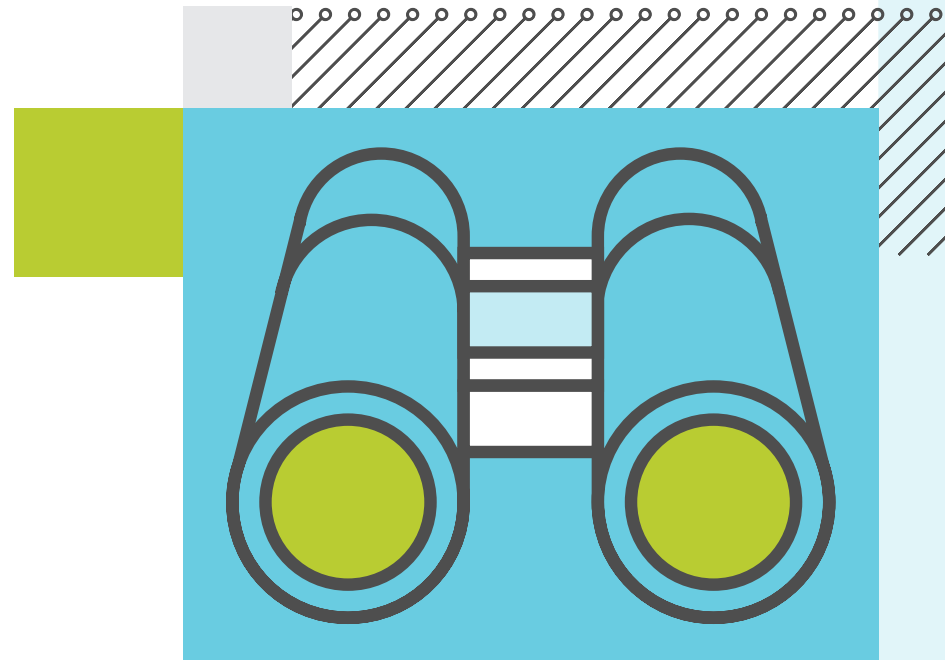
Submit content ideas (or completed pieces) and get feedback from other users, via crowdsourcing.

# Sourcing Your Pieces

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**As experts in your business, your team will likely generate a lot of source material internally. For supporting research, Google and other search engines are invaluable. But be sure to give credit and cite reliable sources such as:**

- Government agencies
- Nonprofit organizations
- Major media outlets
- Research conducted by reputable companies
- Academic studies

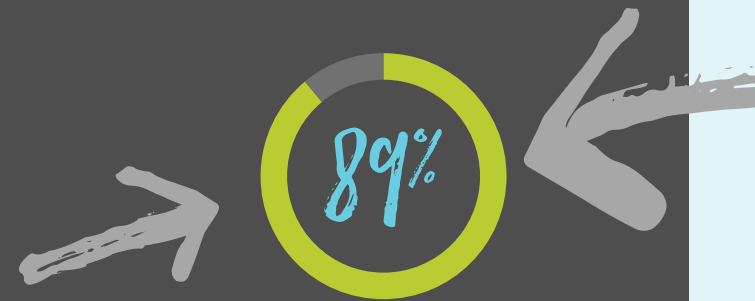




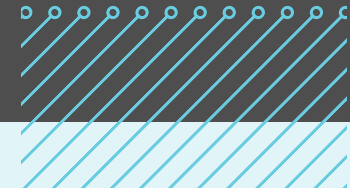
## Part 4

# Maximizing Distribution

Even great content can't achieve your objectives just sitting on your website. Effective content promotion requires a dynamic mix of inbound (letting customers find you through searches) and outbound (paid promotion) strategies.



Customers who search online before making a purchase decision<sup>8</sup>





# Optimize Your Content

When customers start their search, increase the chances they'll find you by:

- **Working with a premium publisher** to help you choose the best channels, including native advertising, to connect with readers and elevate your brand.
- **Researching keywords** to discover what your audience is searching for, and using those keywords within your pieces.
- **Sharing content across social media**, to increase the chances that people will link to and share it.
- **Using tailored advertising** to “remarket” your company to people who read your content and visit your site without making a purchase.

## Finding Mobility

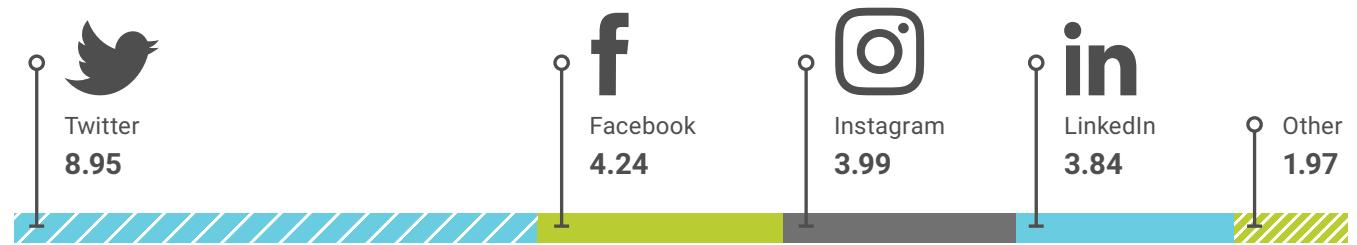
Does your website look just as good on a smartphone as it does on a full-size screen? If not, you may be losing potential customers who restlessly roam the Internet with phones in hand. Studies show that just 42% of marketers have a mobile-optimized website.<sup>9</sup>





Twitter's short-message format and the ability to link back to content on your site make it a popular channel for business. But be aware that different audiences favor different social media channels, and target your posts accordingly.

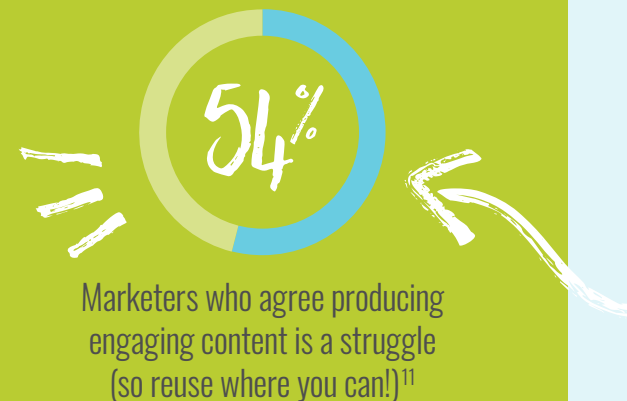
Here's how often businesses post on social media, in average times per week:<sup>10</sup>



## part 5

# Work Smarter, Not Harder: Repurposing

You worked hard to gather all that information and produce and distribute those original pieces of content. Why not pull a little more life out of them? This isn't about reruns and leftovers—a concerted repurposing plan can expand your reach and build on great ideas, all while making your content program as efficient as possible.



# Different Levels for Different Needs

Depending on the situation, your budget, and time frame, repurposing can mean any of the following:

- **Reuse as is.** A good option for "evergreen" pieces that stay fresh over time, reusing can be a quick, inexpensive solution.
- **Update and edit.** You love that blog post, but some facts and ideas have changed. A little work brings it back into shape.
- **Take the idea and run.** A piece is really resonating with audiences. Now, think of all the ways to build on that. It's a bigger time commitment, but could result in an entire suite of pieces.

## Giving Old Content a New Life Can Help You...



### Reach new audiences.

Repurpose across a variety of channels and mediums to reach people who get information in different ways.



### Learn what works best.

Measure results for the same piece in multiple channels to discover which works best.



### Please your readers.

Give them a second look at pieces they loved.



### Gain visibility.

Create multiple pieces from a single idea to increase the chance that people searching that subject online will see your content.

# 8 Ways to Build on 1 Great Idea— A Hypothetical Journey

Your blog post, “10 Steps to a More Organized Life,” is getting all kinds of traffic. Terrific! But don’t stop there.

1

Select **images with a quote or stat** for each of the 10 steps, and share one per day on social channels.

2

Create **short, snappy videos** for each step, for sharing on social channels and elsewhere.

3

Add fresh details and expand on each step, creating **10 longer blog posts**.

4

Combine these longer posts, with an introduction and conclusion, into an **artfully designed e-book**—“An Expert’s Guide to Organizing Your Office.”

5

Convert that e-book into a **slide presentation**.

6

Create a **themed e-newsletter** highlighting three or four of the blog posts. Link to your website’s resource page where people can read more.

8

Take the slide presentation and add a **longer video**. Put them together and you have the makings of a great **webinar**.

7

Use the slide presentation as a guide while recording a **podcast** about organizing one’s life.

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- Custom Branded Videos
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- Thought Leadership
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## ENDNOTES

1. <http://www.curata.com/blog/content-marketing-statistics-the-ultimate-list/>
2. <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2016/08/content-marketing-stats/>
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11. <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/content-marketing-challenge>