

STAND OUT

CONTENT MARKETING PLAYBOOK



 Ross

 Simmonds

Introduction: The Big Fat Lie

If you build it, he will come....Yeah, that idea might work for Kevin Costner in a field of dreams but it will never work that way in a field of startups.

My family always made a big deal of Christmas and the whole concept of Santa Claus coming to town. On Christmas all the tricks came out, everything from Santa outfits to cookie crumbs and even pieces of red fabric left near our wood stove. I can remember keeping track of all the good things I did throughout the year so I could share them with Santa in my annual letter that could compete with most startups' annual reports.

I loved Santa.

Spoiler Alert

He's not real. If this is news to you, I'm lying. If it's not news to you, you may be able to share a similarity in how I came to this conclusion. It was the winter of '95 and I was snooping around looking for gifts my parents bought me - not from Santa, but from them.

As a good little detective, I found an awesome racetrack along with a handful of new video games and board games. I was ecstatic....yet, nervous at the same time. Because I knew there was a chance that these gifts weren't just from my parents and that they were also from my good friend Santa.

On Christmas day, I ran downstairs as anxious as ever and went straight for the presents from Santa. In a matter of minutes my heart sank as I saw the racetrack I had already uncovered in my earlier discovery. I summoned my inner Denzel Washington and put on the best "I'm so surprised!" performance in history. After my performance, I went downstairs in complete shock, cried a little and came to the realization that my good friend Santa was never real. Santa was nothing more than a big fat lie.

I hadn't felt that feeling again until I launched my first product. A friend and I, created a website called Pizing back in

2009/2010 that was striving to create a unique way for people to socialize in local markets like never before. We invested a couple thousand of our savings into the project with the hope of becoming the next big thing. We believed we had created something great based on our own genius and that when we launched, the world would go crazy. Yet, at launch, the world didn't even flinch.

One of the biggest lies told in business is the idea that "Great products always win." In reality, you can have a great product but if that product isn't wanted or isn't heard about, your product will fail. If your product doesn't have marketing messages to promote it or a story that can easily be communicated – you're doomed.

There are thousands and thousands of great products and businesses launched every year that don't generate traction or put a ding in the universe. These products don't fail because they weren't functionally sound or technologically viable - they fail for another reason.

They fail because their story wasn't something the customers cared about. They fail because their founders and team behind them didn't do enough to make their product stand out.

Sure, the details of their failure is different from one business to the next and some of the issues could include everything from poor planning, poor pricing, poor positioning, and to even a poor

vision. But more times than not, the product, while great, doesn't actually fulfill a need or hasn't been given the chance to shine.

The reality is, there are hundreds of businesses that are having a hard time creating things that people want. Business is hard. Marketing is hard. Telling a story that stands out is even harder.

Everyone who starts a business should start with a belief that what they are creating is something that people will or currently desire. Once this belief is established, it's time to test this hypothesis and see if a desire is actually there and if this product has the ability to fulfill it. As the founder of the business, it's your job to define the desire and pain-points very well. From there, you must constantly test this concept against consumers and see if the pain or desire is actually something they are willing to pay for you and your product to solve.

Sean Ellis established a great approach ([Startup Pyramid](#)) to finding out whether or not this desire is real by suggesting that startups ask their customers how they would feel if they could no longer use the product. If at least 40% of the users say they would be "very disappointed" without your product than you have developed something that people actually want. You have created something that fills a gap in the lives of your customers. This is when you know you have a great product and a story that your customers believe in.

While the product is important, so is your story. The story that Foursquare told was more captivating than the story told by Gowalla. The story told by Radian6 was more captivating than the story told by Sysomos. The story told by Facebook was more captivating than the story told by FriendFeed, Hi5, BlackPlanet, and MySpace. It's the story behind these industry leaders that allowed them to stand out and change their industries.

The product was important in each of these examples but the story was often the differentiator between those who survived and those who thrived. [\(Tweet This\)](#)

It's what I call the product-story fit.

If you have that, you can stand out and win.

This book isn't about figuring out your product; this book is about developing content that is built on the foundation of a compelling story that you, your team, and your customers are passionate about. It's about leveraging your product-story fit and sharing your message with the world. And while I believe that content is one of the most effective and efficient approaches to sharing your story, I'm not crazy enough to suggest that there is a cookie cutter approach that will work for any business.

Not all businesses will find value in being on Instagram. Not all businesses will find value in being on Twitter. Some businesses will find it in both and others will solely find value in blogging. I would never suggest that everything in this book needs to be

implemented for your business without actually knowing your product. Some of the most successful businesses have done so without ever building a presence on Facebook, Twitter, or SlideShare. Some businesses simply succeed because their product and story is so well aligned that you can't ignore them and their goals.

I'm aware that most startups are struggling to put dollars behind marketing efforts. While many of the ideas I share with you will highlight efforts that you can do on your own, some of them will require the resources to do them effectively. At the end of the day, there are two things you can spend when it comes to doing marketing well. You can decide to spend money or you can decide to spend time. If you're willing to make that commitment, you're going to find tremendous value in this book.

This book is packed with information. I've tried to create a simple, easy to follow guide that will help take your content marketing efforts to the next level and stand out. But I need to give a quick disclaimer: This book cannot save a bad business.

If your product sucks, you're out of luck.

If it doesn't, I can promise you this book will change everything. This book will help you drive new business, tell your story more effectively, generate meaningful results, and stand out in a world where blending in is not an option.



**Value Proposition +
Product/Story Fit**

Value Proposition & Key Benefits

"If dogs don't like the dog food – the packaging doesn't matter that much"

– Stephen Denny, *Killing Giants*

First, I'd like to say congratulations. You have taken the first step that too many hackers and founders ignore when they get a good idea. They start to create and think about a product without considering a few key aspects that go into marketing and business as a whole.

The typical marketing strategy for new businesses looks a lot like this:

Step One: Idea

Step Two: TechCrunch

Step Three: Make Millions

– Bad Marketing Strategy

If you want to use the average marketing strategy for startups, there it is. You have it, and can stop reading now. If you want above average - nice to meet you. You've come to the right place.

An average marketing strategy will help you to get a little buzz and it will give you a fuzzy feeling inside. Beyond that, it will even make you feel as if you're accomplishing something meaningful when in fact, that isn't the case. Today, average isn't enough.

On average, new businesses fail. So if you want to fail, embrace being average and continue on your way. Look, I'm not

trying to be mean or sound like a jerk but I sure didn't write this book because I wanted to make friends or shake hands with a few cool people. I wrote this book for the same reason you should be building your startup. I wrote this book to solve a problem.

You can set up a Facebook page. You can send 100 tweets a month. You can advertise. Hire a few sales people, a company blogger, influential spokesperson, and even generate a shit load of press for your business - and still fail.

That's reality.

Over my career, I've worked with hundreds of brands ranging from startups to Fortune 500 companies that are probably in your fridge, closet, and drawers. I've helped companies generate traction through content marketing and I've helped many startups drive revenue in the matter of months. Beyond that, I've helped large organizations drive meaningful and measurable results through digital campaigns and helped kick start many digital initiatives that drive results.

What's also a reality is that this book isn't for everyone. This book is for companies that are solving a problem. If you can't fill in the blanks for the following sentence, come back and read the rest when you actually can. This sentence is going to represent your value proposition.

For a company like AirBnB this sentence would read:

For travelers who are looking for a place to stay or homeowners looking to make extra cash, AirBnB is a marketplace that connects homeowners with extra rooms and travelers looking for somewhere to stay.

For a company like FreshBooks that sentence would read:

For entrepreneurs who are looking for an easy solution to managing finances and invoicing, FreshBooks is a cloud-based accounting platform that helps you manage clients and projects, track time and expenses, and send invoices.

Now it's your turn, fill in the blanks and join me for a game of Mad Libs.

What is Your Value Proposition:

For _____ (Target Audience)
who _____ (Statement of
need) _____ (startup name) is
_____ (Product Category)
that (statement of benefit) _____.

Now if you actually played Mad Libs with me on the last page, you might be wondering what the value proposition is all about. Well, a completed fill-in-the-blank sentence represents your organization's purpose. It's the essence of what you're building and is the reason your startup exists.

That's why it's important that you actually fill it out. It's the first step in figuring out exactly what your product-story fit is.

**Did you fill out the mad libs?
You identified your audience?
Described the pain you solve?**



If you answered yes to each of the above, keep reading.

If you haven't actually filled out the Mad Libs and are just looking for some information then don't keep reading until you actually fill out that statement.

This book isn't about mental masturbation. It's about going from average to remarkable. You don't get a six pack from watching infomercials about P90X, you get a six pack from getting off your couch and putting in the work. Same rules apply.

The definition of a value proposition is:

“A business or marketing statement that summarizes why a consumer should buy a product or use a service.”

This is a crucial part of establishing a sense of product-story fit. It's important that the value proposition is something your developers, designers, product team, sales team, and marketing team can agree with and easily understand. The value proposition is the backbone of your startup's story.

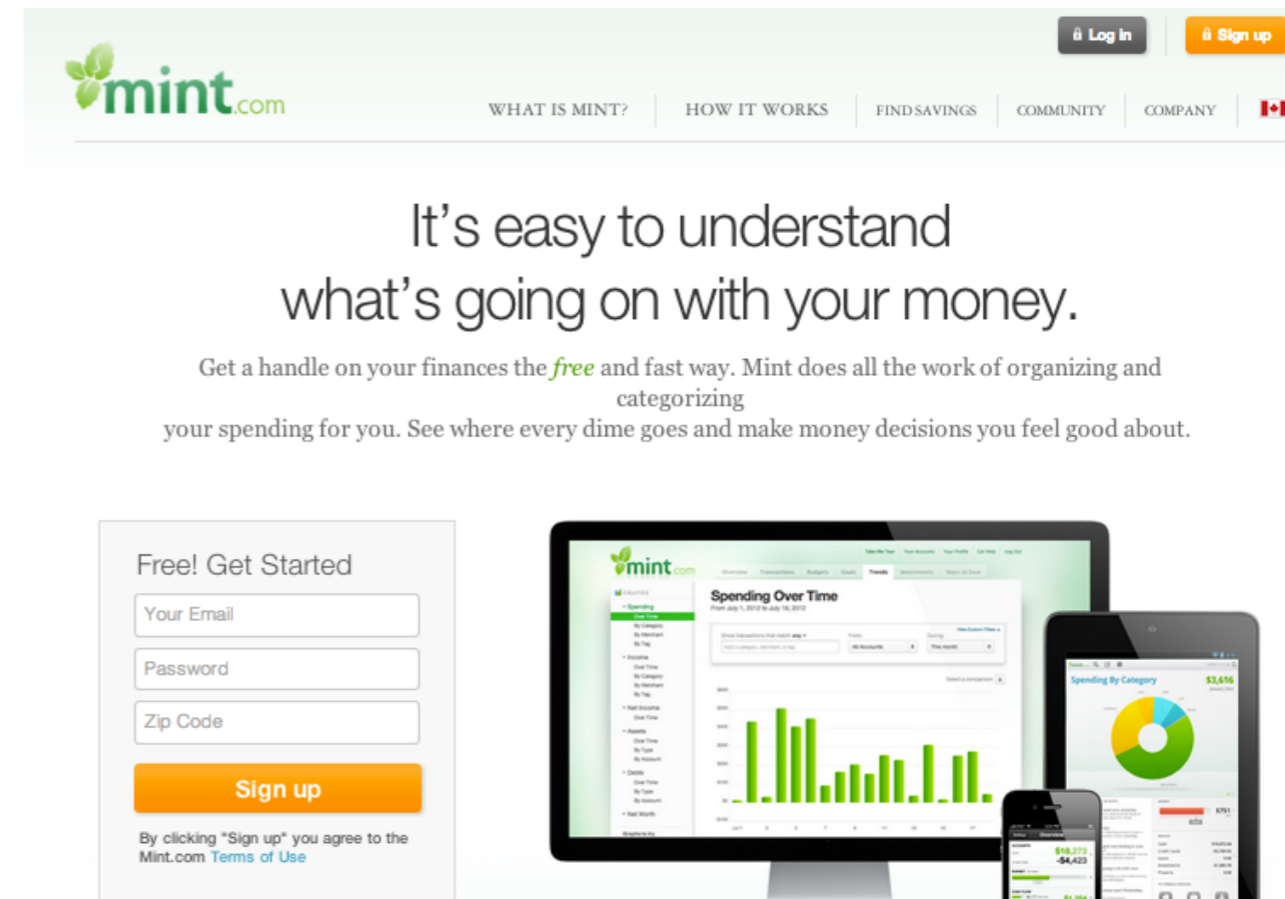
When a customer, stakeholder, or competitor thinks about your business, this value proposition needs to come to mind. It's the key to letting people know in three or four sentences why your business is the best choice for their problem.

The following would be the value proposition for Nike Plus:

For the physically active who want to be held accountable to their commitment to health, Nike Plus is a wrist band that tracks your workouts with data.

Upon reading that statement you immediately know what value Nike Plus provides their customers. Once you have identified your value proposition for customers; you need to ensure that it comes across not only in an elevator or VC pitch. It needs to come across through your messaging in everything that you do. The value proposition needs to be at the core of your business and the story you tell must support it.

Look at the homepage below do you see their value proposition?

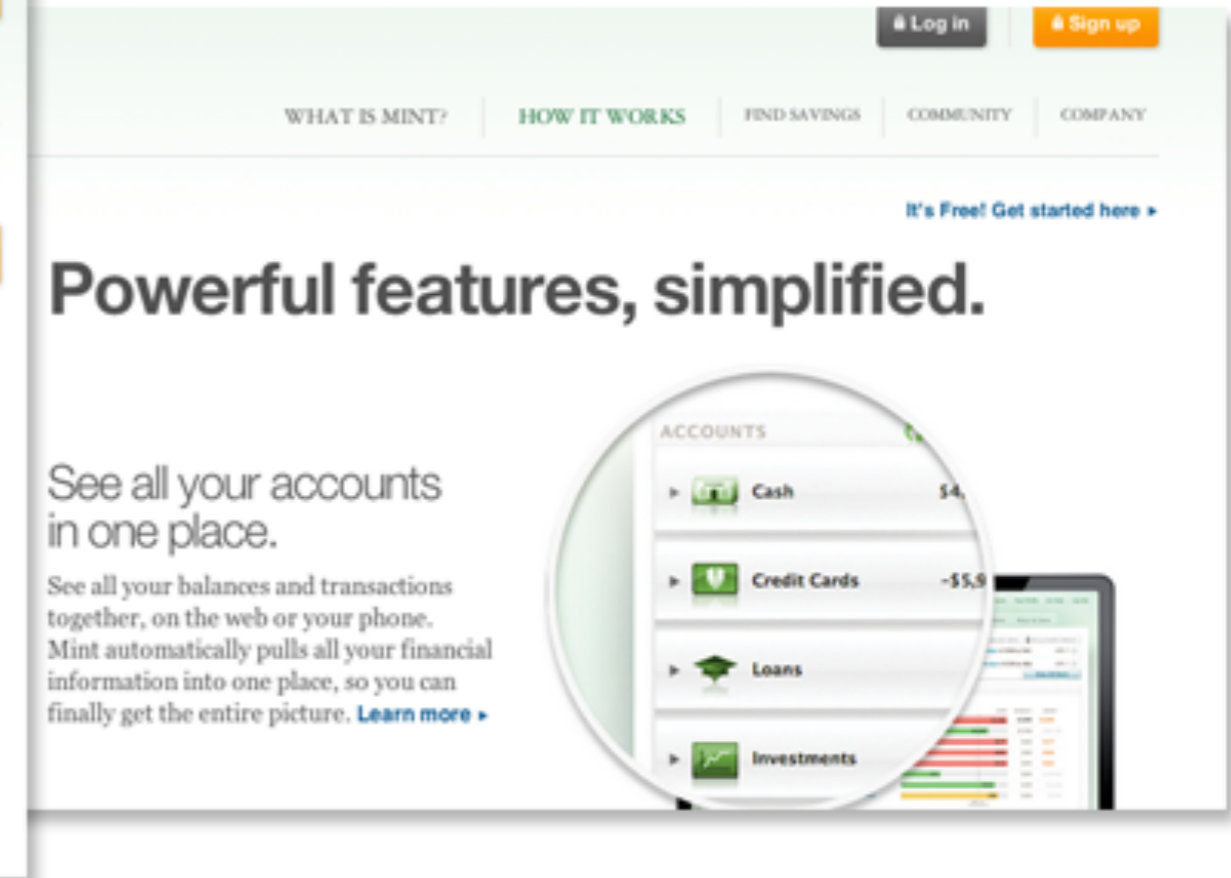
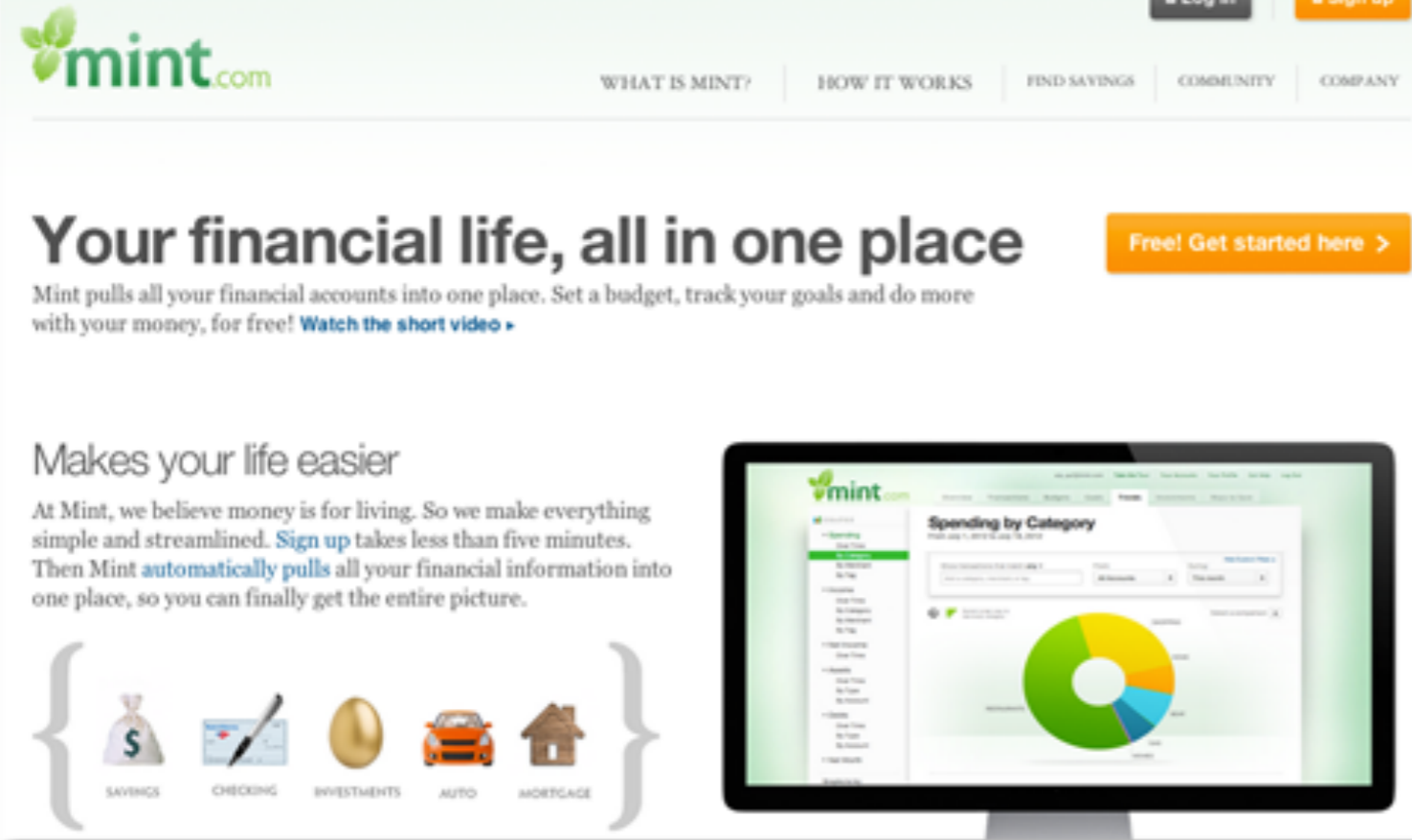


The image shows the Mint.com homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Mint.com logo, a 'Log in' button, and a 'Sign up' button. Below the navigation bar, the main headline reads: "It's easy to understand what's going on with your money." Underneath the headline, a sub-headline states: "Get a handle on your finances the free and fast way. Mint does all the work of organizing and categorizing your spending for you. See where every dime goes and make money decisions you feel good about." On the left side, there is a sign-up form titled "Free! Get Started" with fields for "Your Email", "Password", and "Zip Code", and a prominent orange "Sign up" button. Below the form, it says "By clicking 'Sign up' you agree to the Mint.com Terms of Use". On the right side, there is a collage of images showing the Mint.com dashboard on a desktop monitor, a tablet, and a smartphone. The desktop monitor displays a "Spending Over Time" bar chart, and the tablet displays a "Spending By Category" pie chart.

The first message on Mint.com's website makes it very clear what they offer their customers. Mint is an easy to use, free program for managing your money in one place.

Simple as that.

Mint doesn't just provide you with a reminder of what they offer as a value proposition on their homepage. They reiterate this message throughout a variety of internal pages.



On the left you see the “What is Mint?” page and on the right you see the “How it works” page.

The message within their value proposition is still strong on both of these pages. It’s being told through not only headers but also through a series of visuals and content that brings the entire story together. The value proposition, while found on the homepage, is woven throughout this content and can be found through a variety of assets such as infographics and videos.

Together, the story of “powerful features, simplified” and “Your financial life, all in one place” tells the user that these products are not difficult to use and will make their financial life easier. The

paragraphs beneath the headers further tell the story of how Mint makes “everything simple and streamlined” and “automatically pulls financial information into one place”.

When you’re writing the content for your own website, it’s important to think about what your customers will want to know. In situations where you’re launching a simple game app, the description doesn’t need to be very elaborate. Yet, if you’re launching an enterprise product, your value proposition needs to be reinforced by a series of messages that showcase how your product will help businesses find success.

Mint understands the importance of communicating their value proposition. They also recognize that the needs of their customers are not always going to be the same and they

communicate different stories to reflect that. They understand that some of their audience will worry less about the product features and will be more interested in the products security. This is why when you visit their website you see a wide variety of messages sprinkled throughout that highlight how the product is secure and safe along with messages pushing key benefits.

A lot of businesses get caught up in explaining their features to their customers instead of the key benefit. Always focus on the benefit rather than the feature of your product or service. For example, here’s a list of features and the benefits associated with Mint.com and their software:

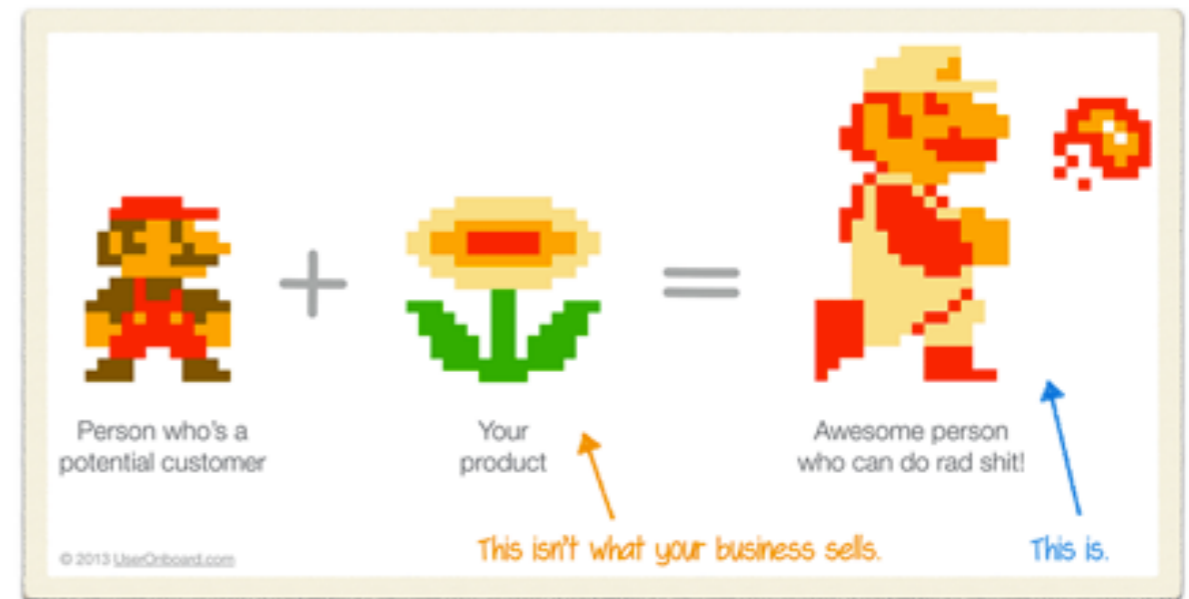
PRODUCT FEATURE	PRODUCT BENEFIT
Mobile Version	Ease of Use
VeriSign Secured	Safety & Peace of Mind
Goal Creation	Personalization
Data Reporting	Easy to Understand

Instead of saying Mint is available on this device and that device; they focus on Mint being easy to use. Instead of saying it’s VeriSign secure, they say that Mint gives you safety and peace of mind. This language, which focuses on the benefit rather than the feature, helps their product-story fit become more real.

As Jason Fried of 37 Signals once said,

"Here's what our product can do" and "Here's what you can do with our product" sound similar, but they are completely different approaches. - @JasonFried

Or better yet, this visual from UserOnboard.com:



The key here is to truly understand your features from the perspective of your clients and potential customers. What do they turn into when using your product? How does your product make them better? What are the benefits of each feature? What do they want from this feature? Why would they want this feature? What is the true benefit of this feature?

Well don't just sit there, tell me!

Ok, I'll make it easier for you.

Think about some of the things you offer (features) and then the benefit someone gets from paying for it or using it in general.

Now fill in the table below:

PRODUCT FEATURE	PRODUCT BENEFIT

The combination of all these different benefits and features make up the brand's value to customers. It's important to share these messages with your audience or they will have no idea what it is you actually sell. This is how you drive conversion on-site.

So what does all of this have to do with content marketing for your business? Well, that's the first part of your entire content marketing strategy. You need to know what you're offering to actually deliver a compelling story. You need to know what makes you special to differentiate from the competition. You need to also have a website that communicates your value in a concise and accurate way so you're not turning potential customers off. This is your product-story fit. Again, I'm not here to fix your product. But if you played Mad Libs with me above, you're one step closer to being able to stand out.

Now it's time to go out and create amazing content.

Content can be created by anyone. We live in a world where more content is created in a week than the total amount of content created between the beginning of time and the birth of The Beatles. We live in a world filled with noise and my hope is that through these stories and strategies, we'll be able to help your brand stand out 365 days a year, 7 days a week.



**Why Content
Marketing Is
King**

Why Content Marketing Is King

"You can create a business, choose a name, but unless people know about it you're not going to sell any products." - Sir Richard Branson, CEO of Virgin

Let's not kid ourselves.

Any marketer worth their weight in nickels understands the importance of digital marketing and social media.

But the hard reality is, the one piece of the puzzle that is still left out in most strategies and plans is the power of content. We talk about how important it is to increase engagement on Twitter or how to go viral on Facebook but rarely do we talk about the role that content planning and a content strategy plays in the mix.

Marketers are racing towards content as they are quickly realizing that content needs to be the backbone for any digital

marketing strategy. People often get confused when I say things like that because they don't understand what content marketing is...so let me explain.

Content is any asset that you develop with the intent of using it to assist in the sale of your product, service, vision, team, or whatever...its main goal is to sell. Whether that's selling an idea or selling a reason why your CEO decided to lay off a handful of people, content is all around us.

It's what you're looking at right now. This eBook is a piece of content that you may have found after stumbling on another

piece of content that linked to the sales page and played a role in how I would ultimately promote it. Whether it was through Facebook, blogging, a tweet, email, Reddit, or a SlideShare - something tells me that it all started with a piece of content.

But why should you care? Why should every startup look at content as a way to generate more awareness with their target audience and ultimately drive revenue?

At the end of the day, you want to succeed. Or at least, I hope that's why you downloaded this eBook. My hope is that you're not going to skim through this

book just for a little mental masturbation and instead will use the ideas and strategies within it to drive real results for your business or clients.

Content marketing has the ability to help you stand out instead of blend in. If you're still not sure, here are five reasons why hundreds of brands are moving more and more towards content marketing:

Customers Trust Content, not Ads

So how can you build and sustain a professional sense of trust with your customers? Content.

Blogging, social media, eBooks, and guides are just a few types of content that you will see around the web and that we'll be talking about later. Most marketers will agree with me in saying that the type of content you leverage doesn't really impact the level of trust you have with your audience. In fact, while content might be king – marketers around the world agree that context and relationships are still queen.

Context ensures that the content you deliver is aligned with your audience or customers wants or needs. Relationships ensure that the customers actually like you to begin with and stay loyal.

In the early days of marketing, customers were developing their relationships and receiving information from brands through ads.

Research shows that today, 80% of business decision-makers prefer to get company information in a series of articles versus an advertisement. Additionally, 70% of consumers say content marketing makes them feel closer to a sponsoring company.

While this is great news, we still can't ignore the value of quality relationships and delivering a quality product. At the end of the day, the feelings a user has towards a brand will make or break when they actually use the product. The content you provide is more like a first date, helping the user realize you've got potential and aren't a creep. ([Tweet this idea](#)).

For years, the engagement between brands and the media has consisted of media buying between brands and media suppliers.

Brands have their designers create banner advertisements with the hope of getting a few suckers to click here and then keep their fingers crossed that they convert. It's a method that still works today but the ability to achieve success through this medium continues to become more and more challenging.

In the coming years, brands and media suppliers will start to get more creative with their approach to paid advertising. Brands will begin to double down on content partnerships with media outlets that are built on collaboration and creativity. It's a tactic that has already been rolled out by brands like Bacardi who earlier this year sponsored a post on one of the most popular personal development sites for guys; [ArtOfManliness.com](#).

In this post, the author described everything their readers would need to be considered an "American Rough Rider". The items on the list included things like a hat, knife, belt, gun, and of course, a nice bottle of Bacardi Rum. The integration of Bacardi Rum into this story is a great way for Bacardi to leverage the influence and trust of an existing media outlet to tell their story and achieve their content goals. Through one post, Bacardi is able to build a stronger bond with the readership of this blog and potentially impact their bottom line as the readers aspire to be this 'Rough Rider'.



What makes this post even more compelling is the integration of visual elements, which can be shared through tweets, Pinterest, Facebook, and more.

And it's not just for big brands. Startups like Grasshopper and Shopify both target entrepreneurs and have taken advantage of sponsoring content on Andrew Warner's influential podcast, Mixergy. Using this approach, they were able to get their brands in front of thousands of fans while leveraging an already credible source of information and use the podcast's credibility to improve their own.

Content Marketing Tip: Find a podcast or blog that your audience reads and contact them to chat about the cost to sponsor their podcast. If you find them when they're still in the early stages of growth, you might find a serious return on your investment.

Content Drives Meaningful Results

Just like with any business, cash rules everything. #CREAM

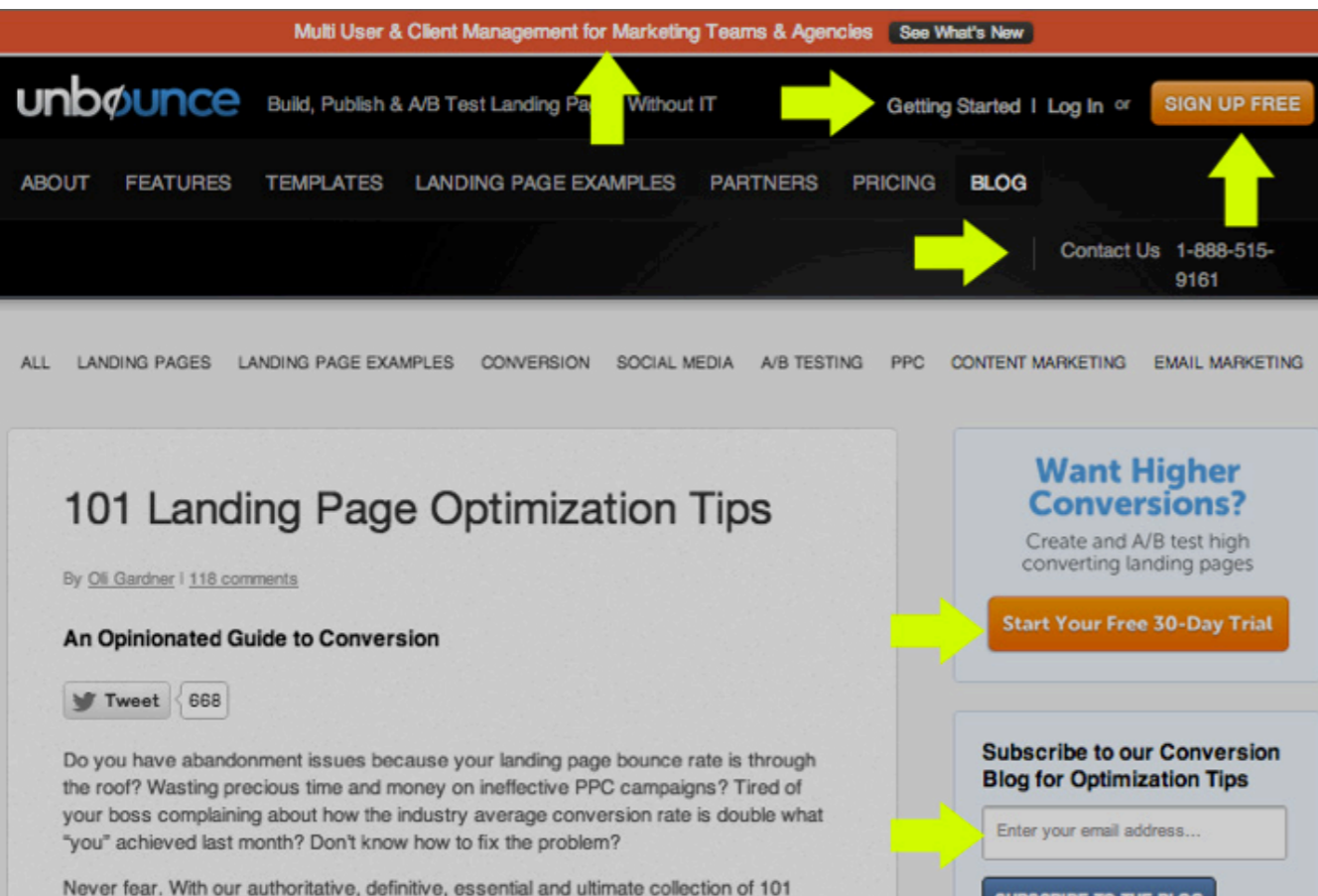
Generating cash tends to be the most important factor for most of my clients. You should test your efforts on a regular basis to see how they are impacting your bottom line.

According to HubSpot, companies that spend more than 50% of their lead generation budget on inbound marketing report a significantly lower cost-per-lead. Meaning the act of generating

content can have a direct impact in the total acquisition cost for driving new leads down your sales funnel.

The logic here is related to the fact that content drives trust and ultimately drives traffic. Brands that generate content that their target audience finds valuable and relevant are able to stand out as a brand that truly gets their customers and understands what they need and want. Once a business creates and delivers this content, they then must promote that content to generate traffic and new visitors.

Once the content is created and distributed, the users will land on the content and read the information put forward. Instead of simply creating and sharing content, the brands should optimize their sites for conversion as seen in the Unbounce page below:



Studies show that pages like these can be extremely effective and can make the difference between a starving and healthy sales funnel. Every time a user lands on a blog post from Unbounce or finds an infographic that they've developed, they are also subjected to a series of call-to-action's found here.

These types of pages are even more important to brands when you realize that organic search leads have a 14.6% close rate, while outbound marketing leads have a 1.7% close rate. It puts things into perspective and demonstrates how effective a simple call to action can be when you create and promote valuable content.

Your Competition Sucks At It

Want a competitive advantage? Look no further than the power of content marketing. Recent studies show that creating original content is seen as the biggest challenge for 69% of content marketers.

This fact presents brands an opportunity to use content to stand out in a variety of industries and verticals around the world. This opportunity is one that won't last forever but is currently presenting brands with a chance to excel and drive revenue while others struggle to stay afloat.

Developing a competitive advantage through content marketing isn't something new. The folks at Mint.com perfected the art and science of content marketing back when they launched their very

first blog sharing tips on financial planning and everything to do with your wallet.

Today, we look at brands like KISSmetrics, BufferApp and OkCupid as brands who stand out for their commitment and dedication to generating quality content. If you want to be a leader in your space, content marketing is a great way to differentiate yourself from the competition and truly own your brand story as well as take control of your industry expertise.

It's the Future of Communications

With all the buzz about Google Glasses and Tesla Motors, people are more excited than ever for what the future will hold. One thing we know for certain is that nothing is actually certain. Yet, we can make good guesses and take calculated risks on what we predict the future will look like. One thing I'm willing to bet on in the future is the power of content.

According to eMarketer, spending on content marketing, video marketing, and social media will increase by 15.1% in 2014 to a total of \$118.4 billion ([Tweet This](#)). And according to Hanley-Wood Business Media, 78% of CMOs agree with me in thinking that custom content is the future of marketing.

As society moves into the future, we must prepare for the future, today. We must work to develop organizations that value the importance of content from the top to the bottom. Whether it's the importance of delivering a well-crafted video from a CEO's

pitch to the development of an infographic to be shared across the web, understanding what types of content we should create is only half of the battle.

I'd love to be able to tell you that content marketing is an easy way for businesses to succeed. I wish I could say that the combination of the stats above and some of the approaches to content we've talked about before are all you need to know.

But the truth is, creating content marketing initiatives that drive meaningful and measurable results requires out of the box thinking. It's not as simple as having the epiphany that an infographic is a great way to drive traffic and then building one.

You need to be willing to go an extra mile.

You need to be able to look at your audience and truly understand what makes them tick. You need to be able to gather insights from social intelligence and use those insights to guide the idea behind your initiatives. You need to develop a compelling story and inject it into every piece of content you create. That's how you win. That's how you succeed.

That's how you stand out.

How To Deliver Quality Content

“Good content is not storytelling. It's telling your story well.” - [Ann Handley, MarketingProfs.](#)

Newsworthiness is defined by timeliness, relevance, significance, prominence, and human interest. News has been a part of society dating back to the days of hieroglyphics. We crave news. It's a way for us to connect with the things outside of our own world and feel engaged with the greater good.

But what is it about the news that sparks our attention day after day? Why do so many people visit the New York Times or CNN first thing in the morning? It's a complex question but one that I've been fascinated by and have spent many years researching and analyzing. One of the greatest studies I came across was one

that came direct from the journalists' and reporters' mouths.

What key hooks do journalists look for when determining whether a story is or isn't worth writing:

1. **Impact:** The significance, importance, or consequence of an event or trend; the greater the consequence, and the larger the number of people for whom an event is important, the greater the newsworthiness.
2. **Timeliness:** The more recent, the more newsworthy. In some cases, timeliness is relative. An event may have occurred

in the past but only have been learned about recently.

3. **Prominence:** Occurrences featuring well-known individuals or institutions are newsworthy. Prominence may spring from the power the person or institution possess like the President of the United States or the Speaker of the House of Representatives. It can also stem from the celebrity the person possesses like the late Princess Diana or fashion designer, Gianni Versace.
4. **Proximity:** Closeness of the occurrence to the audience may be gauged either geographically – events

occurring close by, all other things being equal, are more important than distant ones – or in terms of the assumed values, interest, and expectations of the news audience.

5. **The Bizarre:** The unusual, unorthodox, or unexpected attracts attention. Boxer Mike Tyson's disqualification for biting off a piece of Evander Holyfield's ear moves the story from the sports pages and the end of a newscast to the front pages and the top of the newscast.
6. **Conflict:** Controversy and open clashes are newsworthy, inviting attention on their own, almost regardless of what the conflict is over. Conflict reveals underlying causes of disagreement between individuals and institutions in a society.
7. **Currency:** Occasionally something becomes an idea whose time has come. The matter assumes a life of its own and for a time assumes momentum in news reportage.
8. **Human Interest:** Those stories that have more of an entertainment factor versus any of the above - not that some of the other news values cannot have an entertainment value.

If you craft content that share these attributes, you will increase the likelihood of publishing something your readers will read and share. It's these angles that have helped journalists make their careers, it's these angles that will help your business stand out.

<http://vegeta.hum.utah.edu/communication/classes/news.html>

Understanding the Psychology Of Content

It is the act of developing quality content that will truly allow you to succeed when implementing your content marketing strategy. It's quality content that will help you demonstrate value to potential prospects and it's quality content that will generate enough buzz that the media will pick it up.

The act of creating content is only one half of the battle. In this guide, we're going to spend a lot of time talking about how you can perfect the craft of creating different types of content. Whether it's content for an infographic or content for an Instagram account - we will uncover a series of strategies, tips, and best practices for each of these channels.

For a host of reasons, including ego and cockiness, I was always certain that I knew what it took to create quality content. And yet, even after many late nights, I continued to develop mediocre results for the content I was creating. This was until a few years ago, on a late night working binge, when I came across a psychology paper that changed everything.

Psychology is one of my favorite subjects, besides marketing, because it is so integrated with the ideas behind influence and persuasion. When businesses create content, one of the goals that many of them have is to create content worth sharing. It's a no brainer that shareable content is an effective way to generate word of mouth and that word of mouth is a great way to succeed.

Understanding the psychology around why people share content can help you understand what type of content you should create.

Now, back to that night where my outlook on content creation changed forever. It was a report from Jonah Berger, Assistant Professor of Marketing at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, who studied content to uncover what makes stories go viral.

Over five years, Jonah Berger and his colleagues examined hundreds of brands, thousands of news articles, and millions of purchases. All of this in order to understand why people talk about and share certain content more than others. The results found that that articles, ads, videos, or information that evokes emotion in the consumer are around 20% more likely to be highly shared.

That's huge!

In the study, Berger suggests that feeling fearful, angry, or amused drives people to share news and information. These types of emotions are characterized by high arousal and action, as opposed to emotions like sadness or contentment, which are characterized by low arousal or inaction.

In a nutshell, this groundbreaking study of what type of content gets shared offered these three insights:

1. Deliver inspirational, positive information. No one likes a Debbie Downer. It's why you see so many inspirational quotes on Twitter and Facebook these days. People want positive information. The more positive content is, the more likely that it will be shared.

2. Tap into the emotional side of the brain. Remember how angry everyone was over KONY2012? According to this study, that video would have fallen into the high arousal category for emotion. In Berger and Milkman's words, content that evokes high-arousal emotions (i.e., awe, anger, and anxiety), regardless of their valence is more viral. It's characterized by activation or arousal. Specifically, awe-inspiring (positive emotion) content is more shareable than content that makes us sad (negative emotion).

3. Deliver high quality and valuable content. The reason you're reading this eBook isn't because I'm going to make you laugh. You're reading this book because you want to learn something. If you can make your content practical, interesting and/or surprising it will be more shareable.

Throughout this guide, it's important that you consider each of these points when we discuss the various channels you can use to deliver content. This is important. The best marketers consider what type of emotion they'll be looking to tap into with every Facebook post, every infographic, every SlideShare, and every tweet. It will be challenging to ensure that every type of content

you develop has one of these emotions tied to it but that's what will truly make you differ from the competition.

To help you better understand what type of content people are looking to share; let's consider this content research published by the New York Times. In their study, they analyzed what inspires people to share content on Facebook and there were five key findings that were consistent across the board. When they asked a series of people why they shared content online, the individuals primarily gave the following key reasons:

1. To bring valuable and entertaining content to others

Example: Jaw dropping videos of people doing amazing stunts or acts.

2. To define ourselves to others

Example: TED Talks to show people how smart we are.

3. To grow and nurture existing relationships

Example: 5 tips for professionals, marketers, generation Y, parents, etc...

4. Self-fulfillment, to feel better about one's self.

Example: Take a picture with no make up for cancer research.

5. To get the word out about something they believe in

Example: Sharing a picture of someone who was wronged by the police.

These insights offer us valuable knowledge around the reasons that people share what they find online. As you think about what type of content you're going to be creating for and sharing with your audience, consider these points and how you can leverage them to ensure that the content you create and share is something that your audience will think is worth sharing. No matter if it's a blog post, an infographic, a tweet or an image shared on Instagram – remember these two studies as they should guide your approach to all content.

Ready for a pop quiz?



Missing dog's owners plead for help finding pet before storm
A Nova Scotia family is asking for help to find their missing dog before an expected blizzard hits the province on Wednesday.
CBC NEWS

Like · Comment · Share



How Thinking Works: 10 Brilliant Cognitive Psychology Studies Everyone Should Know — PsyBlog <http://buff.ly/1gcxFjb>
How experts think, the power of framing, the miracle of attention, the weird world of cognitive biases and more...
WWW.SPRING.ORG.UK

Like · Comment · Share

Here are two different posts on Facebook; can you tell why someone would share these posts?

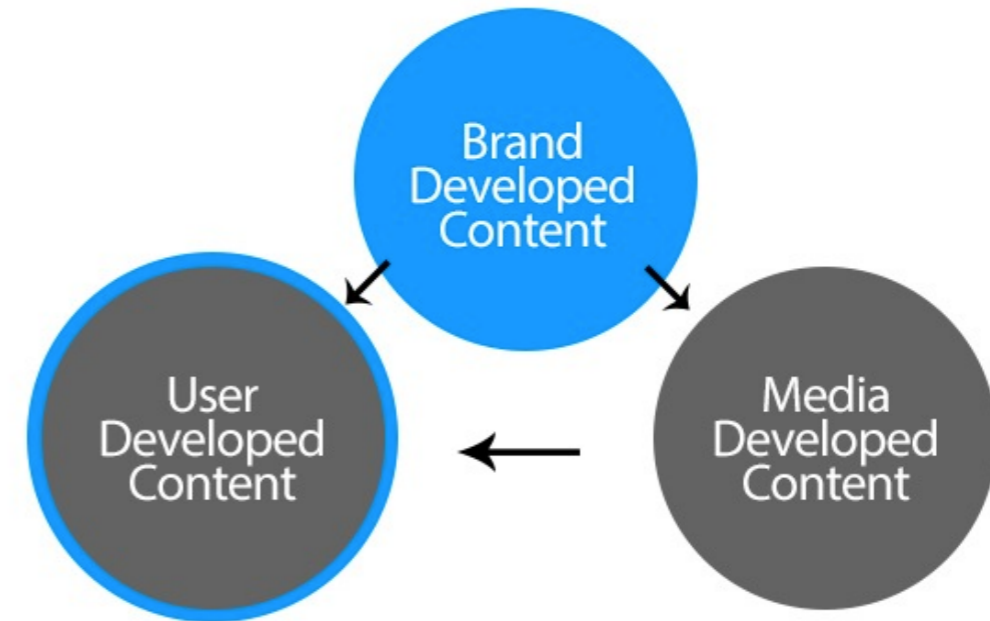
Remember the different reasons highlighted in the NY Times article: to bring value or entertainment to others, to define ourselves, to strengthen relationships, self-fulfillment or get the word out about something they believe in.

Did you take a guess?

What if I told you that the post about the dog crosses more than one of the reasons off the list? Not only is the sharer showing something they care about (point 5) but they are also defining themselves as an individual by showing that they're a dog lover and all around good person (point 2).

The second post is also a cross over as it relates to the intent around why it's shared. The content is both valuable to the people on this individual's friend list (point 1), shows how smart they are (point 2), and also strengthens their relationship with marketers or anyone interested in this type of content who they are friends with on Facebook (point 3).

Now that you understand the emotional side of the story, it's time to learn how to leverage that story to drive results for your business.



The Content Marketing Triple Threat

As you read this guide, you're going to read about three different types of content. It's a trifecta. Or what I call the Content Triple Threat.

1. Brand Content.
2. Media Content.
3. User Generated Content.

It's these three types of content with which the foundation of your plan must be developed. It's the combination of these three types of content that will drive success.

When I work with brands, the first thing they want to talk about is the content that we'll develop as a brand. It's great that they understand the importance of content creation but not thinking about the other types of content is a huge mistake.

Brand developed content includes things like videos, tweets, eBooks, webinars, white papers, blog posts, Facebook updates, and Pinterest pages to name a few. It's any type of content that is created and delivered by your brand. It's this type of content that we will talk a lot about in this guide.

The other types of content are (1) user generated content and (2) media generated content. The goal of brand-developed content is to influence both the perceptions of users and the perceptions of media. It's our goal to craft stories and messages that will resonate with both users and journalists in a way to help further tell our story with our target audience. Whether it's to influence your target audience into liking your product enough to buy it or crafting a story that the media wants to write a story about, content is meant to influence both sides.

Let's talk about each...

User Generated Content

A user commenting on a brand's status update saying it's the best product they ever used, is user developed content. This content has the potential to influence other individuals which is why ignoring user generated content is a mistake. Additionally, user generated content can also be negative, where a customer writes a nasty tweet about your product or service and others believe it. Just ask US Airways about their experience with User Generated Content and you'll catch my drift.

While these conversations cannot be controlled by your business, they can most certainly be influenced. My hope is that through this book you'll understand how.

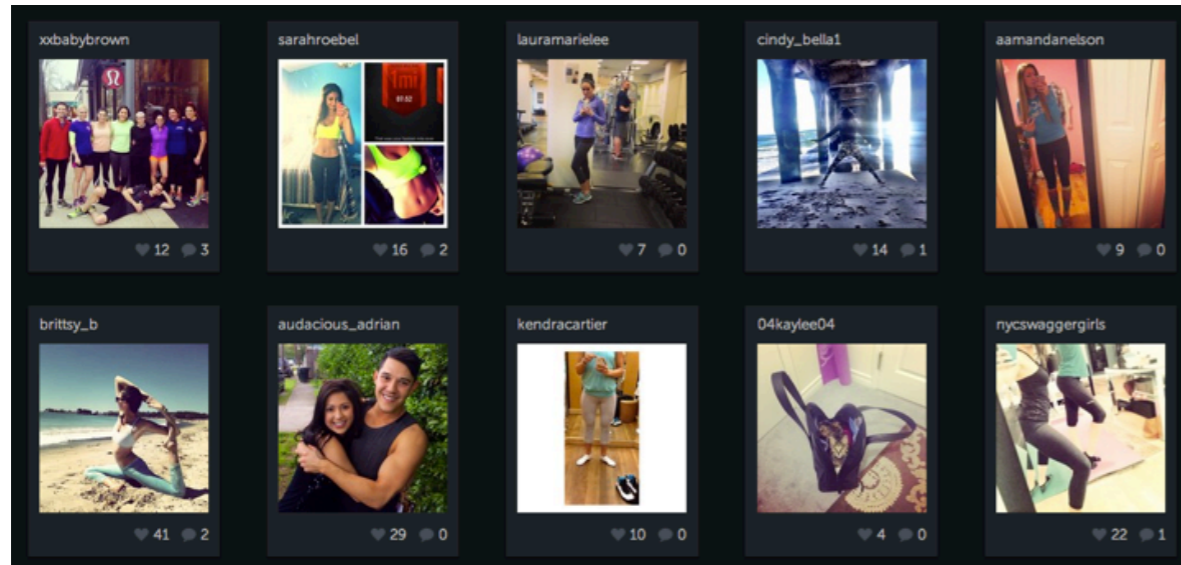
The goal of your Brand-Developed Content is to not only drive users to share but to also inspire users to create. When users create content that is associated with a brand, that content combines with the other stories out there to develop the overarching brand story. This story is your reputation. You must ensure that the story is aligned with the story you're telling.

Depending on your brand, the user-generated content being shared might differ. For example, if you sell a physical product you can expect that the majority of the stories shared will be images or stories specifically highlighting a user to product interaction.

For example, when people interact with a product like Lululemon pants, this group runs to social media to share the story. Whether they're sharing pictures of themselves with the Lululemon bag or pictures of themselves doing yoga poses; Lululemon has developed a tribe.

Lululemon is privileged to have a brand story that has already been established and embraced by their fans. For some brands, their story is just beginning and they can't just sit back and expect people to share their story every minute of every day.

This is an example of the Instagram results of a quick #LuLuLemon search:



One of my favourite up and coming brands that leverage user generated content is Frank & Oak. On Fridays, they tend to run a contest called #NecktieFridays where they encourage guys from all over the world to upload photos in their neckties for a chance to win a Frank & Oak tie. This is a type of user generated content that is directly influenced by the brand but done so in a unique, compelling way.

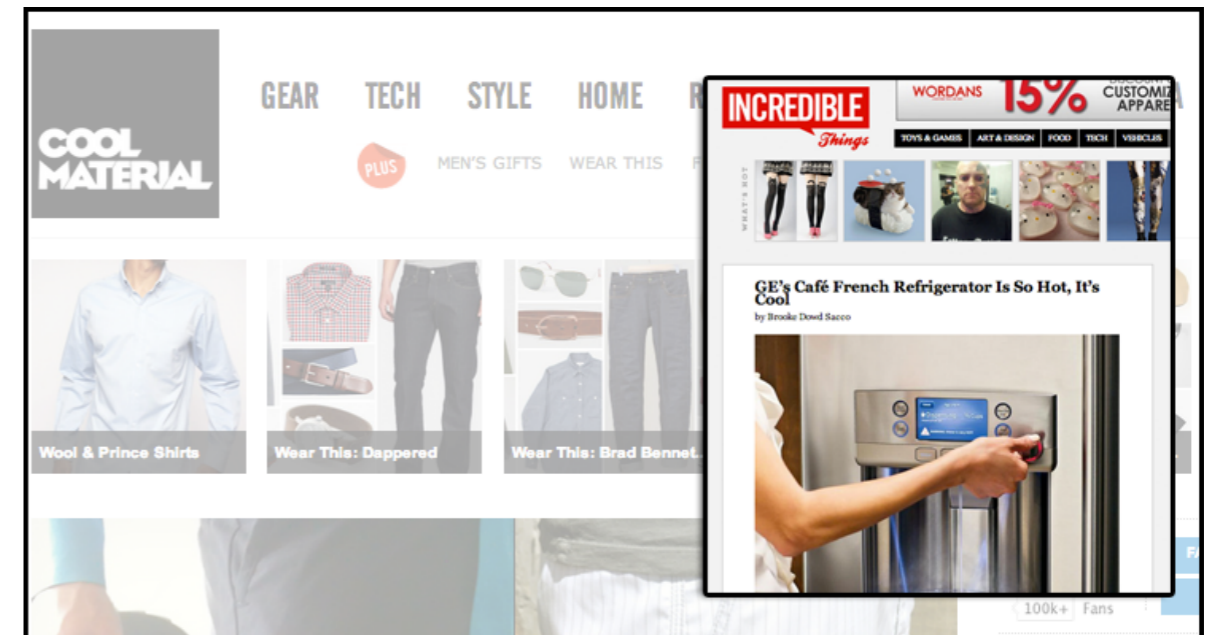
Media Developed Content

As much as we like to believe that consumers control the conversation, it's not actually true. In fact, the media plays a role in influencing our perceptions, beliefs, and an even larger role in determining what stories are discussed at our dinner parties and lunch meetings with colleagues. Remember when the Harlem

Shake meme went viral? Did you think it was just human interest that sent it in a frenzy? According to a many sources, the virality of the Harlem Shake was manufactured.

This isn't new and recognizing this presents you with another opportunity to get closer to your audience.

Identify channels that your target audience is likely to visit and review the content that their editors are publishing. Get a good sense of what their motives are for sharing different pieces of content and what characteristics are found in the various posts. You should use this insight to help inform your own content strategy and use it to your advantage to increase reach.



For example, if you're in the men's clothing industry and are targeting young professionals who read channels like GQ or Cool Material – your content pitch needs to value quality

photography and design. You may want to consider creating content like a fashion guide for the modern man and sending it to their editor for review. If you're a new app targeting eco-conscious females, channels like Good.is and TreeHugger might be up your alley – in this case, you might want to create a SlideShare that highlights a variety of stats and messages surrounding the societal impact of the oil and gas industry.

Ultimately, when looking to generate media content; you need to create a story worth talking about. You need to identify an angle and give them something that will spread. Strive to tell stories that invoke emotion from your target audience and you will be able to stir up some buzz. Whether it's anger, happiness, inspiration, or nostalgia – the most powerful predictor of media success is how much emotion your story evokes.

One of the best examples of a brand that controlled their media presence with their brand story was Red Bull and their Stratos Jump from Space. Red Bull made a commitment to creating a piece of content that was so amazing and so out there, that the media had no choice but to talk about them because the rest of the world was - whether they liked it or not. Media channels connected to the Red Bull live stream and aired it from their stations free of charge.

It was the best example of the power of compelling content I've ever seen. Yes, Red Bull Stratos may have cost Red Bull a couple million dollars to pull off but you can replicate their thinking to

develop a story that will drive an increase in media conversation for your brand as well. It doesn't have to be a crazy story about someone jumping out of a plane; it just needs to have an interesting spin that translates into a story worth reading.

People consume media every single day. Whether it's through the Huffington Post, CNN, SNL, or USA Today – the media plays a significant role in influencing our perceptions vs. reality. As such, it can play a significant role in driving growth for businesses and apps alike. Another great example of a brand that was able to leverage the media to tell their story is the app Tinder.

Sex is one of the oldest yet still attention grabbing elements of our society. For some, Tinder is less of a dating app and is more of an app that gives them a shot at getting laid. This idea of using an app to find a quick match is often where the media goes with their story. It's this kind of story that helps Tinder grow quickly as the media knows that stories like this will drive more people to their site and also drive shares.

Tinder has been written about in GQ magazine with a 4 page spread, covered frequently by sites like College Humor, and has even made an appearance on Saturday Night Live. The combination of these stories continue to boost Tinder's credibility and consumer interest and it's due to their ability to tell a story that will consistently help the media achieve their own agenda and goals. Whether it's a feature story on AskMen.com showing guys how to date using Tinder or a series of clips poking fun at

the app from sites like College Humor - it all combines to drive awareness and new downloads for the app.


During the Winter Olympics, the buzz around Tinder reached an all time high. From the start of the Games in Sochi, the founder expressed that internal metrics indicate that athletes, or some combination of athletes, fans, and volunteers, are using Tinder regularly. Going on record in an interview with the Wall Street Journal to express that Tinder saw a 400% day-over-day increase of new users in Sochi from the moment the Olympics started. As

a result of this type of growth, the media has had a field day writing content.

Things were of course made easy for this buzz when American freestyle snowboarder, Jamie Anderson, told Us Weekly that “Tinder in the Olympic Village is next level, it’s all athletes! In the mountain village it’s all athletes. It’s hilarious. There are some cuties on there.”

Ching. Ching.





**Brand Driven
Content**

Bloggging For Your Business

“I ain’t a player, I just blog a lot.”

Blogs are sexy again. I have friends and family members starting blogs and an inbox filled with people asking whether they should start one. If you care about reaching customers, developing an audience, communicating your vision, building your brand, marketing your product, or building relationships with others in the industry a blog is a great way to find success.

Do I really have to tell you this?

A blog provides you with a chance to contribute value to your target audience and drive demand for your product. As you create content on your blog, you’re

essentially building yourself as an expert in a specific field and elevating your brand with every post. The content you develop needs to be aligned with the needs and wants of your target audience and be filled with quality insights that support your brand’s value proposition.

When done right, a blog provides businesses with a chance to share value with their target audience while driving demand for their offering. As they develop content for their blog they are building a story and the emotions to be associated with their brand. The content a brand develops must be aligned with the needs and wants of their target audience, and

be filled with quality insights that support their goals.

More than anything, the blog posts must drive value for both the brand and the readers. Brands want traffic and customers want content that provides answers or solutions to their needs and problems. With 37% of marketers saying that blogs are the most valuable type of content marketing, it’s slowly becoming clear that it’s an opportunity that brands cannot afford to avoid.

For me, I blog about digital marketing, startups, business, the hustle, and a few of my thoughts on this crazy thing called

life. I do this because as a digital strategist, my target audience is anyone looking for marketing services as it relates to digital marketing and I blog life because....I love living it.

Now would you blog about the same things as I do? Probably not. Instead, you would blog about something specific to your industry and your business. You would write about things that your target audience would be interested in and provide them with as much value as you can through new ideas, stories, guides, and rich content.

How to Create Content That Your Target Audience Wants Or Needs

One of the first things I always ask anyone starting a new blog is, “Whom would you consider your average customer or client?” From there, I wait until they have an answer and don’t proceed further until it’s been identified. And please don’t say everyone or ‘millennials’, you need to be specific.

In blogging, you need to think about whom it is you’re creating content for and who you want to read your posts. You need to think about what it is that these individuals will be interested in reading, consuming, and sharing. Further, you need to be able to identify sites in which they spend time consuming content and use those sites as inspiration for your content story.

It’s important that you sit down and look at your existing customers and evaluate what trends there are between those who spend the most money with you. For example, if you’re in the B2B industry and your target audience has been identified as accountants, you need to think about which types of accounts or what type of organizations your best clients work for. You need to know exactly (or as exact as you can possibly make it) who would be considered your target audience.

Create a persona built around your target audience and write a mini biography around what this individual is like. Geographic, demographic, and psychographic details are the three main ways you can define your target market. These are things you should have researched and understood before getting into business but if you haven’t done this already, now’s the time.

Describe your typical client or customer here:

QUESTION	ANSWER
What’s their social media preference?	
What type of content do they read online?	
What do they like most about your business?	
What question do clients always ask you?	
What does your audience think of you now?	

These insights will provide you with direction that can be used to take your blogging efforts to the next level. The answers to the questions in the framework above are just a start. You should dive deeper into figuring out what type of content they share so you can start building content that you know will peak their interests.

As an example of a brand who knows how to create content for their target audience, the folks at KISSmetrics used their blog to target business professionals in marketing. Recognizing that their target audience is primarily built up of people interested in technology, they created blog posts about tech leaders like the founder of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, and Yahoo CEO, Marissa Mayer.

Once you know who you're speaking to, it becomes easier to gauge what type of content is aligned with their interests. The more insights you can gather about them as it relates to channels they are in and their interests – the better you'll be equipped to create content of interest.

The entire concept of blogging may not be rocket science, but there is still a large component that drives the formula for success. If you want your content to spread, you have to do a few things to ensure that the content is worth sharing. You need to focus on creating valuable content and not making the typical content marketing mistakes. Over the last 5 years I've learned how to successfully create content for both my personal blog and clients. Furthermore, I've learned what not to do and the importance of kick-starting your blogging efforts the right way.

If you're new to blogging or planning to get into it, here are a few things you HAVE TO do.

Have a Compelling Blog Design

“Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.”

— Steve Jobs

There are hundreds of blogs that have horrible designs but have awesome content and still drive thousands and thousands of views every week. That said, when it comes to your business blog, people will judge a book by its cover. That's not groundbreaking information but it's the truth even as it relates to blogging. Your content is important but the design of your blog is important to optimizing your site for reach and success.

A few things that you need to keep in mind when developing your blog is the three most important elements of a blog design. First, you need to embrace the idea of creating a blog that is easy to use and navigate. Blogging has been around for years and people have developed an expectation as it relates to how they consume and receive content.

Second; don't overdo it with too many different fonts and font sizes. It's important that your blog uses a font that is easily legible. If you're creating content with your text in a 10px font,

you'll quickly see that the majority of your traffic is bouncing due to eyestrain. That's not something you want associated with your brand. Aim for a font size around 14 or 15 and have headers that are easy to read.

Outside of these two tips, there are a handful of other things that need to be considered when developing your blog design. How does it reflect your brand and is it designed to drive conversion? Are there forms at the end of each post asking for an email? Are the social sharing links making the blog too cluttered? These questions need to be answered to ensure you have an effective blog design. Not asking these questions or ignoring the answers is a sure-fire way to be met with failure.

If you're struggling to find a blog design, you can find great themes that will do the trick at sites like ThemeForest.net.

Start By Evaluating The Competition

Studies show that companies that blog receive 55% more web traffic and over 70% more leads than companies that don't. For that reason alone, it's important that you evaluate your competitors to see how their blogs are doing or if they're actually blogging. If you put a serious effort into blogging you will be able to stand out in the industry as a leader by constantly providing value to your target audience. You want to review your

competition's content not only to see how they're doing but also to gather additional insights.

The competitor's blog can provide you and your team with insight around their product developments along with their overall progress. Outside of this understanding you can also use their blog content as a benchmark to evaluate what you need to be doing. Review how many shares their blog posts are receiving and look for trends as it relates to what works best and what does not.

Your Blog Content Needs a Strategy

"In real life, strategy is actually very straightforward. You pick a general direction and implement like hell."

— Jack Welch

Unfortunately, many organizations view their communication strategy to be something only talked about when they are going to market with an ad campaign. Instead, a communications strategy should be viewed as a strategic imperative for growth 365 days a year. Marketers and executives need to set the expectation that a brand's story is told 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Conversations about brands and businesses are more out in the open than ever before. The conversations are happening on

social media whether a business likes it or not. That said, while these conversations cannot be controlled by brands or any organization. These conversations can most certainly be influenced. The power of influencing a conversation through your communications efforts is one of the biggest benefits of developing a communications strategy. The other obvious benefits are that you will communicate more effectively, saving time and money. But it gets better than that.

A lot of brands use their blog simply to talk about what they do and what they're doing. It's less about providing constant value to their target audience and more about sharing content that is self-serving and PR centric. Taking this approach is a recipe for disaster. Instead of talking about yourself all the time, think about what value you can add to your target audiences' life. What type of posts would resonate with them and spark their interest? This approach to adding value will be the backbone of your communications strategy.

As this strategy is rolled out and implemented, you can test and optimize your efforts for meaningful and measurable results. You can identify what efforts are working best and what efforts are not. From there, you can modify and adjust your efforts to ensure the results on the other side are plentiful.

In blogging, some posts will generate more traction than others. That's just the nature of the beast. As time goes on and you create and share more posts you will start to identify trends as it

relates to what blog posts are sticking with your audience and which are not.

What Blog Posts Should You Write?

Create Consumer Valued Content

When you understand your target audience, you can start creating content that is specific to their needs and interests. Brands that do this well know direct and indirect stories that their audience will be interested in and create content that provides insights, answers, guides, and thought starters within their audience's realm of interest and intrigue.

Once again, I'm going to go back to the folks at KISSmetrics as an example of a company that gets it. This is an analytics startup that has a deep understanding of providing value to their target audience.

Recognizing their target audience as marketers or those who are in charge of marketing within a startup; they frequently release a wide variety of valuable content through their blog. Some of the most highly valuable content on their site is their marketing guides as they have developed a marketing guide for Quora, Reddit, and even Pinterest.

This focus on generating high quality content has resulted in KISSmetrics building a blog audience of over 350,000 visitors a

month and generating 82% of the sites overall traffic. But that's not what's the most impressive. Neil Patel, the co-founder of KISSmetrics attributes their blog to over 70% of their business leads. Talk about ROI!

Side Note: Remember the Wharton Business School Study on what gets shared? Remember when they that talked about highly valuable content – the development of high quality content is the backbone of the KISSmetrics approach and shows this works.

Identifying the needs and wants of your audience is the first step in creating industry valued content. We've already talked about the importance of knowing your target audience but now it's time to think about what kind of content they would be interested in reading. What type of content would your audience's colleagues be interested in? How about your competition, what are they interested in reading?

The world's most popular CRM, Salesforce, uses their blog to cement their position as leader in the space by creating and sharing thought leadership content that is filled with insights and best practices.

Salesforce uses their blog to discuss everything from customer service and sales to mobile and the power of the cloud. They cover everything and anything within their space and constantly create content that their target audience finds interesting. Instead

of focusing solely on discussing their product (which is a mistake many startups make) they focus on constant value

Tell Stories That Are Timely

People read the news to keep up to date with things that are happening right now. It would be very rare to walk into a room and see someone watching re-runs of CNN from 2009 just for entertainment value. People value content that is timely and related to things happening in the world around them at that moment. While there is value in reading old content for nostalgia purposes; people embrace content that is highly relevant to them right now more than anything else.

The idea behind creating blog posts with real world references is based on the concept of reactive storytelling, which we talked about before. It's the intentional integration of a top of mind story or idea with a compelling marketing message that your audience's find relevant and compelling.

For example, when The Rock returned to WWE a few years ago, Twitter exploded. Recognizing the opportunity I created a blog post about a few personal branding lessons from the icon. It was shared over 400 times on Twitter and is one of my most popular blog posts. It's the power of combining a top of mind story and a message that is relevant to your target audience.

Recognizing the value of timely stories and timely content, as a blogger, you have an opportunity to use this to your advantage. Follow in the moment trends and hot topics to inspire content ideas for your blog.

Imagine for a second that you're in the restaurant industry and you are reading the news during the winter of 2012 and come across a story surrounding the great syrup robbery in Montreal. You just read that 18 people in Quebec were arrested for stealing \$18 million worth of maple syrup. You see, a story like this generates lots of press and is talked about for weeks.

It's these stories that you can leverage to generate more traffic, press, and a little buzz. For example, you might write a blog post called: "*10 Great Recipes for Someone with \$20 Million Worth of Syrup*" or "*What the Great Syrup Robbery Taught Us About Sales.*" It's a simple connection to something topical that will increase the chances of having your story shared. This method can be used for any news stories but must be done with good taste.

Create Data-Driven Content

If you can provide someone with knowledge they didn't have before reading your post; you win. The blog posts that are filled with key insights and data that the general public wasn't aware of previously have an increased opportunity to be shared. People love data. Whether it's data that is heavy or data that is light; if

you can provide people with data to support a fact or discredit a common belief, you will provide them with content worth sharing.

A great example of a data-driven blog is that of the online dating website OKCupid. This blog rose to greatness by sharing content that was provocative and data-driven. They filled their posts with insights and visuals while painting a picture of questions that everyone had but never had the answers for with respect to online dating. Some of their most popular data-driven posts include *How Your Race Affects the Messages You Get* and *The REAL 'Stuff White People Like*. These posts went on to drive not only a significant amount of traffic to the OKCupid blog but also drove backlinks from a series of media outlets that found and republished their findings.

Infographics are another form of data-driven content that can increase your number of readers and visits. We'll dive deep into what goes into creating a high quality infographic later on but keep in mind that it's one approach for data-driven content.

Give Your Customers A Look Behind The Scenes

Customers want to know who you are. My dad has always said that back in his day, you didn't go to a barbershop because they had the fanciest advertisements on TV or the biggest billboard; you went because you had a relationship with the barber.

Customers want that relationship again. They want to feel like a part of your business and have that connection not only with their "sales rep" but also with the rest of the team. It doesn't have to be a relationship in the sense of "I'm going to text the CEO for coffee" - it's a relationship in the sense that they have a deep connection to your business.

Creating a blog that provides a glimpse into what's going on behind the curtain offers transparency. Too often do marketers talk about the importance of being transparent without actually doing it.

The first time I really saw an organization embrace the idea of taking a peak behind the curtain was with the CEO Blog for Zappos. The CEO blog was a blog run and managed by the CEO of Zappos, Tony Hsieh. In 2008, the organization was met with a difficult decision and decided to layoff roughly 8% of their staff. The CEO shared the email he sent to all of his staff directly on his blog. Here's a snippet of what it said:

"Last week was a tough week for everyone, as we went through the process of laying off 8% of the Zappos family . At the same time, it was also heartwarming hearing all the stories of Zappos employees and ex-employees getting together for drinks Thursday night after the layoffs as well as over the weekend.....As part of reducing our 2009 expenses, and to bring us all closer together, we are in the process of moving people so that everyone in our Las Vegas offices will be either in the 2280 or 2290 building,

which are next door to each other. The moving should be completed over the next couple of weeks.....Remember, this is not my company, and this is not our investors' company. This company is all of ours, and it's up to all of us where we go from here. The power lies in each and every one of us to move forward and come out as a team stronger than we've ever been in the history of the company. Let's show the world what Zappos is capable of."

The curtain doesn't get pulled further back than that.

Well, that's what I thought until I came across the team at Buffer. Over the last few years, the idea of transparency has gone from being a buzzword to becoming a way of life at many startups. The team at Buffer has an amazing blogging story that I'll dive into deeper but first, I'd like to discuss open.bufferapp.com.

It's a blog created by the Buffer team and is self-described as 'a blog about culture, working as a team, and transparency with insights into our numbers.' And that's exactly what it is.

On December 13th, 2013, they published a blog post that revealed each of their team members' salaries, why their salaries differ and the formula behind their thinking. It showed how much their founders make, it showed how much their new hires make and it showed why they make what they do. Transparency at its finest.

As a result, the blog post highlighting just their salaries was shared more than 4,000 times and mentioned across more than 20 media channels. It was talked about on social media sites for a solid two weeks straight and was found on the front page of sites like HackerNews, 99u, and more.

That's the ROI of transparency.

How Do I Write A Blog Post?

Unfortunately, I can't write every blog post for you. But what I can do, is provide you with the same guideline that I give writers I work with on content creation for my clients. This is the standard flow for a blog post and one that you can use as you formulate your approach. This is the framework of the standard post:

Headline:

Catch the readers attention and lure them to want more.

Introduction:

Also known as the lead (lede) that gets the reader excited about what is to come and aware that they better read this blog post or they're going to miss out on something great. End your introduction with a transition sentence that tells the reader what you're going to tell them in just a few more sentences.

Quick tip on writing a great introduction:

1. A shocking or startling statement.
2. A surprising but true stat or quote.
3. A personal story about you
4. A reference to something happening in the news or history.
5. A quality metaphor or analogy.
6. Make your first sentence your best. Something like:
 - a. Are you tired of generating 'likes' and not real results?

Body: Deliver on the insights you promised you would deliver.

Be an educator. Teach people what they want to know. Teach them a little something extra, too. Provide value by sharing top quality and well researched links, tips, and information that makes them smarter. Shoot for a 12th grade reading level.

Close: Summarize what you said and link everything back to your overarching idea and headline. Give users a clear understanding of why they just read what they did and how they can use the insights.

Call to action: Tell people what you want them to do. Tweet? Comment? Send an email? Share with friends? What do you want!

So there you have it. Everything you need to create an awesome post. But what if your blogs fall flat? What if no one reads them

and no one is interested in your topic? I thought you'd never ask...

Embrace The Blogging Pivot

I told you I would be diving into the story surrounding the Buffer team and here it is. First and foremost, as you start implementing your content marketing efforts you need to realize that it's important to understand that you might not get it right the first time. You may have to adjust your content marketing strategy and make adjustments to your approach as it relates to your blog, Facebook content, or even Tweets. A great example of a startup blog that had a "Story Pivot" is Buffer.

According to their blog, they originally started with a "niche focus" writing about how to do well on Twitter. Recognizing they were a Twitter app, it was their thought that this was the right approach. A few months later, their focus shifted to social media tips as a whole when they started to roll out functionality that could work on channels like LinkedIn and Facebook. It was a logical next step.

Today, the Buffer blog is completely different. It's highly successful with their average blog post racking up more than 50,000 page views and over 1,500 shares. The focus is now geared towards lifehacks, writing, customer happiness, social media, and business. Posts like "What Happens to Our Brains

When we Exercise and How it Makes us Happier" or "6 Simple Things You Can Do Every Day to be Consistently Happy" have generated thousands of shares and page views.

On top of that, they have the "Open" blog, which is all about transparency and their business. It's this two-tiered blogging approach that has allowed for Buffer to be one of the best case studies for how blogging can drive success for a business. It's through their content that they are able to build a strong relationship with customers and tell a story worth sharing.

As you develop your communications strategy, it's important that you keep your eyes open for new opportunities. Look for trends as it relates to your message and industry as a whole. Spend time talking to your customers and spending time understanding what it is that they're reading online that goes beyond your blog.

PRO TIP: Use Google Trends to determine the quality of your potential as it relates to your blogging pivot. If you notice an increase in the number of searches for keywords that are relevant to your approach, you might be on the right track. If not, you might want to reconsider.

Now that you have the basics, I want you to think of a few blog post titles that you can run with immediately.

What blog posts could you write for your business today that would drive traffic? Here are a couple half completed titles to get you started but I'm looking to you to fill out the rest of the blanks:

CRAFT 5 BLOG TITLES

Ten Reasons Why _____

Everything You Should Know About _____

Four Tips On Writing Great Posts

Ok, so you now know how to craft a standard post but you can take your content to the next level with these few tips:

Develop Long Yet Informative Lists

One of the most popular types of blog posts for brands and media channels online is written in list form. List posts are filled

with titles stating *“Top 10 Reasons”* or *“5 Easy Ways to”* and can be found on a variety of different blogs. One of the most important components of a winning blog posts is that it's providing the reader with useful information. List blog posts present authors with a great opportunity to deliver this value with a few key points that are easy to digest.

reader with useful information. List blog posts present authors with a great opportunity to deliver this value with a few key points that are easy to digest.

Rewrite Your Headlines

The most important part of the equation is the headline. In a world where we make judgments based on subject lines in emails or the text before the link in a tweet, headlines can make or break a story. It's the headlines job to capture a readers curiosity and the content to capture their attention

Keep in mind that all of the things that make headlines meaningful in print — photographs, placement, and context — are nowhere in sight on the web. Headlines have become, as Gabriel Snyder, the former executive editor of Newsweek.com, commented, ‘headlines are naked little creatures that have to go out into the world to stand and fight on their own.’”

As you craft your headlines, don't just write it once and assume it's great. Write a handful of variations of your headline and consider testing them online through tweets to see which one sticks with people. Simply change the language in the tweet and share it. If more people retweet one over the next, consider the more engaged headline as the winner.

Every time you craft a headline you should think about your audience and what type of content they would want to read. Consider how you can give them content that their friends would find interesting and a headline worth clicking.

SIDE NOTE: Research your headlines and compare them to headlines being used on some of the more viral content driven websites such as BuzzFeed, ViralNova, and Upworthy. Use the top headlines from these channels as inspiration to craft your own compelling and viral blog posts.

Wrap it Up with Dialogue

One of the most awkward moments in a conversation at an event is when you try to figure out how to go separate ways. The same way people have trouble finishing a conversation in person, people have a challenge with ending a blog post. Remember how it used to make sense to summarize your thoughts at the end of an essay? Don't do that with a blog post.

Instead, try to end with a little bit of dialogue that encourages the readers to talk with you about your content or add additional insight or feedback. Dialogue of this nature also increases the chance of comments!

Strive to Invoke Emotion In Your Readers

When you think of some of the most successful bloggers in the industry, one thing they have in common is that they know how to build a connection with their audience. Furthermore, you'll find that some of the most successful bloggers like Neil Patel and Penelope Trunk strive to not only add value to their readers' lives but also stir up some emotion. You see, the best bloggers create content that more conservative brands or bloggers wouldn't touch with a 20-foot pole.

Whether it's a blog post about the importance of choosing sex over money in our careers (Penelope Trunk wrote this) or why we should do business like drug dealers (Neil Patel wrote this), the best bloggers know how and when to push the envelope. When a blog post sparks a series of emotions in someone, it sets off a chain reaction that cannot be replicated.

As you think about the content you're going to write, don't be afraid to offend someone or shock your readers. It's okay to speak directly to one group of people on a controversial topic. It's also okay to take sides and stand up for something you believe

in. It's this approach that will differentiate your brand and let you stand out in comparison to the competition.

Your Content Is Only As Good As It's Distribution Channel

According to Forrester Research, more than 85% of businesses publish content, but only 35% feel they're doing it effectively. I'm of the belief that the majority of these individuals having trouble with their blogging efforts are struggling because they don't have the right distribution channels set up.

Startups, businesses, marketers, and bloggers as a whole are flooding the market with content. I'm sure you've noticed the surge in the number of blog posts showing up on your newsfeeds and inbox over the last few months. It's because more web content is being created every year than ever before. Thus, the challenge for you as you promote your brand is not in the actual creation of content but in the ability to cut through the noise and have your content placed in front of the right audience.

Instead of simply thinking about the type of content you'll create, you need to also think about where this content will go. By researching where your audience spends time, you can connect with the right people in the places they're already using to discover information. Too many brands and startups play the waiting game when it comes to content and as a result they don't

reach the audience that they would like. I've already explained how to create great content, now I'm going to explain how to get great content in front of the right people.

Research Your Audiences Consumption Habits

When you start thinking about your distribution channels, you need to start by thinking about where your audience spends time. To do this, you need to take time to research the web for communities that are relevant to them and identify ways to have your content seeded into the respective communities.

One of the best ways to gather insight on where your users or target audience are spending time consuming content is to ask them. Use a site like SurveyMonkey to find out where they are spending time and then use that insight to guide your strategy.

If you're looking for a few great places to start with your content activities, you should consider sites like Reddit as a channel where there are millions of people discussing niche topics. You can also scan channels like online forums as these are also communities where people are very passionate about specific topics.

Let's pretend that you're a startup that is focused on targeting guys who are interested in dressing well.

You offer a service that sources clothing and delivers it to them in an easy way. One of the best ways to gather insight on where your

users or target audience are spending time consuming content is to ask them. Use a site like SurveyMonkey to find out where they are spending time and then use that insight to guide your strategy.

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Let's pretend that you're a startup that is focused on targeting guys who are interested in dressing well. You offer a service that sources clothing and delivers it to them in an easy way.

You've just launched *The Guide To Dressing Well For The Modern Man* and want to get this in front of the right audience - Where do you start?

Talk To Your Customers

The first thing you should do is talk to your customers. You can do this by sending them an email that asks the questions directly or you can use software like Quaraloo or SurveyMonkey to gather insights. Another approach is to simply get on the phone with your customers and ask them questions that will help you better understand where they are spending time when browsing the web and doing research on males fashion.

Conduct Google Research

The next thing you want to do is start searching for communities, forums, and channels that are focused around men's fashion. You would conduct a search for keywords like: "Men's Fashion Forums" to find the following:

[Men's Style - Style Forum](#)

www.styleforum.net > Forums ▾

Sep 28, 2011 - Discuss classic and tailored **men's clothing** and accessories: **fashion**, style, do's and don'ts. Skoaktiebolaget - Carmina, EG, GG, Bonafe - Official Affiliate Thread.

Classic Menswear	4 Jan 2013
FS: Men's Clothing (Archive)	28 Sep 2011
Streetwear and Denim	17 Aug 2011
HOF: What Are You Wearing Right Now - Part III	25 Mar 2011

More results from www.styleforum.net

[A Beginner's Guide to Men's Style and Fashion Forums | Complex](#)

www.complex.com/style/2013/07/how-to-use-fashion-forums/ ▾

Aug 5, 2013 - Take heed of these facts about **fashion forums** before joining, or you will get trolled hard.

[Fashion Forums & Style Forums | FashionBeans](#)

www.fashionbeans.com/forums/ ▾

Men's Fashion, Style & Grooming **Forums**. Discussion & Professional Advice on everything to do with **men's fashion**, style & grooming. Register Today for FREE!

[Clothes Make The Man - Reddit](#)

www.reddit.com/r/malefashionadvice ▾

Discussion: **fashion** broscience and urban legends (self.malefashionadvice). submitted 1 day ago by Paiev · 231 comments; sharecancel. loading... 15.

Analyze The Relevance Of Results

From there, you're going to go into these channels, analyze the relevance, and determine whether or not they are the right fit for your business. Based on the search results, you can quickly see that the Complex.com result isn't going to help you much. The other three sites are all very relevant and could ultimately act as a great distribution channel for you to share your content.

communities and see where your content would fit best. You need to also understand that if this is your first time posting in these communities that you're going to be viewed as an outsider unless your brand carries some weight.

Spend time understanding where the men's fashion guide would fit best in the various sub forums and think about the tone that you should take. Depending on the dynamic of those in the community, you might find more success taking a position of

The image shows three screenshots of men's fashion forums. The left screenshot is from 'styleforum', showing a navigation bar with 'FORUMS', 'CLASSIC MENSWEAR', 'STREETWEAR & DENIM', 'LIFESTYLE', 'GALLERIES', and 'MARK'. Below is a 'MEN'S STYLE' section with two forum categories: 'Classic Menswear' (923 Viewing) and 'Streetwear and Denim' (459 Viewing). The middle screenshot is from 'FASHIONBEANS', featuring a banner that says 'TIMELESS STYLE FOR THE MODERN GENT' and 'leads into CONVERSATIONS'. Below the banner is a navigation bar with 'FORUM HOME', 'FAQ', 'COMMUNITY', 'QUICK LINKS', 'ADVANCED SEARCH', and 'REGISTER'. The main content area is titled 'GENERAL FASHION & STYLE DISCUSSION' and shows two sticky posts: 'STICKY: The "What Are You Wearing Today?" Thread' and 'STICKY: The "Look What I Just Bought!" Thread'. The right screenshot is from the 'MALEFASHIONADVICE' subreddit, showing a list of posts with their titles, submission times, and comment counts. The posts include 'MFA Sticky: Rules, Resources & Info to Get You Started', 'How high end Dr. Martens are made [xpost /r/ArtisanVideos]', 'Anyone know anything about the suit design he's wearing', 'A Critical Review of Copper River Bag Co.', and 'General Discussion - Mar. 2nd'.

Study The Community Behaviors

A lot of marketers will make the mistake of looking at the Google results, finding relevant forums, and then simply posting their content. That's the first step to distribution failure. You need to look at the various types of content being shared within the

seeking advice rather than a position of authority. For example, instead of posting and saying 'this is a resource all of you need', you might say, 'we just launched this resource and would love your feedback and thoughts so we can make part II even better.'

Taking the advice route is a great way to flatter the community while still giving yourself both relevant views and potential insight for the future. Your next post would be a Thank You!

You will also want to create your own channels to act as tools for content distribution.

Channels like Reddit are great sites for sharing blog posts that include transparent follow ups highlighting the success of your business and how their community helped you grow. An example of a business that leveraged this insight and opportunity was the folks at the company BeardBrand.

When they launched, they leveraged a series of communities within Reddit including /r/Beards and /r/Entrepreneur. As expected, one of the redds is a community filled with people passionate about beards while the other is a community filled with people passionate about entrepreneurship. BeardBrand leveraged the entrepreneur sub-reddit to gather insight on how they could do business better sharing updates on their product sales, their ongoing strategies, and asked for feedback on how they could make their product, website, and even business cards better. On the flipside, they used the beards sub-reddit to build a stronger community around their brand and share their products. The company is currently sponsoring monthly “Beard Contests” on the sub-reddit as they continue to use Reddit as a tool to build a loyal and dedicated fan base.

On the right you can see some of the figures they uploaded to Reddit as a clear indicator of their success.



As discussed earlier in this eBook, transparency in your figures is something that customers are hungry for. Showing what happens behind closed doors is something that many entrepreneurs are afraid of but is something that can lead to great engagement, loyalty, and trust.

BeardBrand - Reddit Post

We're going to dive a lot deeper into the value of distribution later on but the next few chapters are all about the various social networks you can use to distribute your content. For channels like Facebook, you will definitely create content that is solely meant to live there but you should always be thinking about how your blog posts can be shared on these other networks.

Marketing On Facebook

"People have really gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people—and that social norm is just something that has evolved over time." – Mark Zuckerberg

As the largest social network in the world, it has more than 1 billion monthly active users, with 250 million users logging in on a daily basis. The site has seen more than 140 billion friend connections, 1.13 trillion “likes” and two years ago there were more than 200 billion photos uploaded (265 billion if deleted photos count). That’s the power of Facebook.

Every month, people share more than 30 billion pieces of content including links, news stories, blog posts, photo albums, and notes. With numbers like these, ignoring Facebook is no longer an option. It’s an important part of business that

cannot be ignored. If you do ignore it, the conversations about your brand are going to happen there regardless.

But with 30 billion pieces of content being shared every week, it’s time for your startup to be more strategic and determined to find ways to cut through the noise.

Facebook is a channel where your audience is spending time whether you like it or not. If you’re not active on social media, it can be a bit confusing but in reality, Facebook is a staple.

Facebook offers startups an opportunity to achieve two meaningful and

measurable results. First, it’s a great channel for building brand awareness. You can reach a very targeted yet significant audience through Facebook. Second, it’s a great channel for distributing and sharing your brand’s content. We’ve talked about the power of distribution in the past; Facebook is the king of distribution for many companies.

Pages, Profiles, or Groups

Facebook has three assets that can be used - each of these assets has their own purpose. If you already use Facebook,

you can scroll through this section and go straight to “*Facebook Is Key to Content Sharing*” – trust me, I won’t be offended.

Shortcut -->

Facebook Profiles

Facebook profiles are the standard account required to use Facebook. They are the account you set up to act as an individual on Facebook. This account is where you “add friends” and write on their walls or send them private messages. It’s the account you should use for personal communication with individuals like colleagues, friends, and family.

Facebook Pages

Facebook pages are similar to profiles, but are used for businesses, organizations, and public figures. While profiles require a mutual relationship between friends, pages can be liked by anyone, without a requirement for the page creator to accept a fan. They also don’t have the same restriction on the number of friends/fans they can have, unlike profiles, which are limited to 5,000 friends.

Facebook Groups

Facebook groups are similar to discussion forums but with additional features similar to what pages and profiles have (like a wall). You can create groups related to your industry or product offerings as a way to reach out to potential customers.

Facebook Is Key to Content Sharing

For marketers, the most effective and efficient tool within Facebook is a page. Facebook pages are the simplest, easiest way to get started and it’s free to set up an account. To set up a Facebook page you simply search for the word “Pages” and click the first drop down in your Facebook search.

From there you fill out the appropriate information as it relates to your business or organization.

This is an example of a Facebook Page:



There are a few things you will need to do when you sign up for Facebook and start you very own account.

1. Choose the right page name:

When you create your Facebook page, you will be asked what your business name is. This is not the place where you should try to get creative with your business name. Title your page what the majority of your customers call you so they can find you in search.

2. Upload the right cover photo:

A timeline cover photo is where your businesses branding begins. Putting the right (or wrong) photo up there can make (or break) your brand as it relates to potential customers not pressing the “like” button. Here is what you need to think about:

- **Size** – Facebook says that the best cover photo size is 851 x 315 pixels.
- **Rules** – Facebook prohibits you from posting advertisements, coupons or promotions on your cover photo. Furthermore, they also restrict the use of arrows, call to actions, or any type of price point being included in your cover photo.
- **Ideas** – Creativity can be leveraged here. When you’re thinking about your cover photo think about a captivating image or message that tells your story.

3. Choose the right profile picture:

If you have a logo for your business, use this. If you don’t have a logo, (visit 99designs.com and get one) but in the meantime, you should upload a screenshot of your product that is iconic and easy to recognize. Avoid complex shots and look for something that is linked to your brand’s identity. This photo will be seen more than any other photo on your Facebook page as it will accompany your posts in newsfeeds and comments.

Make it count.

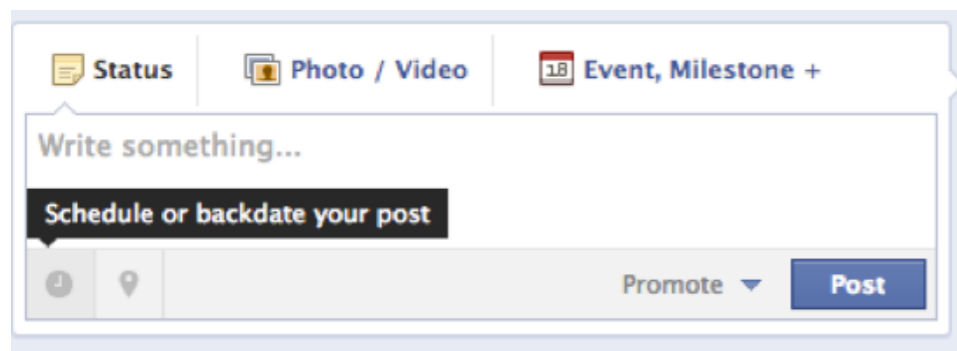
Once you’ve finished uploading your images, it’s time to start filling out the “about this page” information. I’m not going to walk you through how to do this, if you’ve made it this far in my book, you can handle yourself as it relates to setting up your Facebook page. Let’s start talking about how you can use your page to drive real results for your business.

How To Update Posts On Facebook

The act of sharing a status update for a business page is very similar to the way you update your own personal account. You have the ability to share links and videos by simply copying and pasting the links into the appropriate field where Facebook will generate a link preview. You also have the ability to upload photos, albums, or videos, which will then transition to your timeline where you can arrange them to your liking

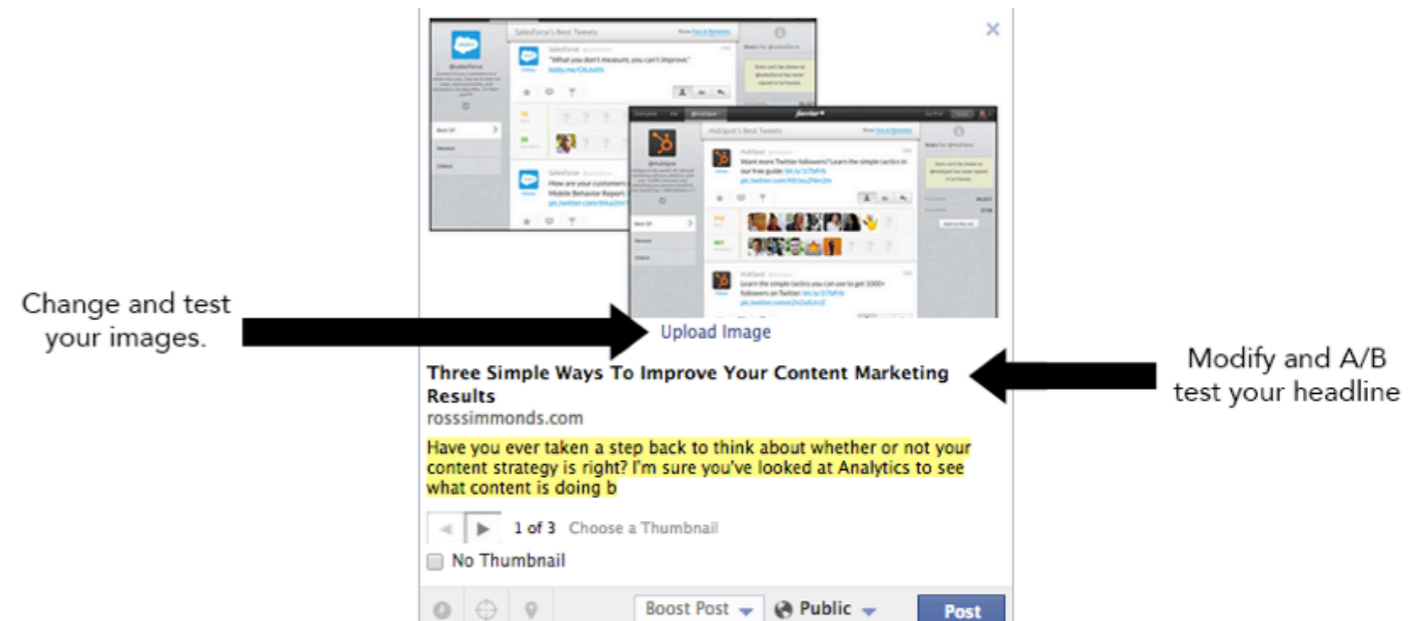
Two features on a business page that you may not be aware of are the ability to (1) post a milestone and (2) schedule posts. If you're looking to announce that you just added a new feature or announce that you just hired a new director of technology there is a "milestone" button that you can select and add key dates to your timeline.

You're able to use the same functionality to set a date in the future and schedule your status updates to go out later on this month, week, day, or year. It's an easy way to save you time. See below:



This can be a game changer for ensuring that you're actually able to spend time building your product and focused on other initiatives. Instead of being plugged in on Christmas or any other special occasion, schedule it in advance using this feature.

When sharing links on your Facebook page, don't make the mistake of assuming that your first headline is the right headline. You should test and modify your content's photos, titles, and abstract:



PRO TIP: When running ads on Facebook that include sponsored posts, backdate your posts so they don't show up on your users newsfeeds in a flood of content. Backdating the content will ensure that users aren't seeing five or six posts from you within a 5 minute span.

What Content Should You Share On Facebook?

The content you share on Facebook should be held to the same standard as the content you share on your blog. The messaging, storyline, and audience is very likely going to be the same and as such, the thinking must be consistent. You must keep in mind the reasons why people share content and consider the elements that make something newsworthy. All of these ideas must guide your approach and be injected into your Facebook content strategy.

The people who like your Facebook page will see what you post as a status update. Recent changes to Facebook has decreased your chances of reaching all of your audience but still gives you the option to reach all of them through paid advertising. Studies are showing that the average post on Facebook is likely to reach somewhere between 25 and 50% of your total fan base.

This makes it important that you ensure the content you share on Facebook is both relevant and compelling to your audience. The more relevant and compelling it is, the more likely the limited number of fans who do see your content will share it. As much as Facebook likes to limit your page's reach in return for ad dollars, organic engagement and sharing cannot be stopped.

Too many startups think that their Facebook page needs to be all about them and they never focus on what their customers or

audience wants. Don't use Facebook to scream out how great you are. Use Facebook to deliver value to the lives of those who are following your page through educational, engaging, or entertaining content.

Here are some ideas for the kinds of things you might want to post on Facebook:

- Links to articles related to your company or your industry
- Rich photos of your product service or experience
- Coupon codes for fans to save on your products
- Emotionally driven content that will drive shares

Again, make sure that your posts are relevant to your brand and target audience. These are an extension of your business so it's important that you put as much consideration into every post as you would with a billboard or brochure.

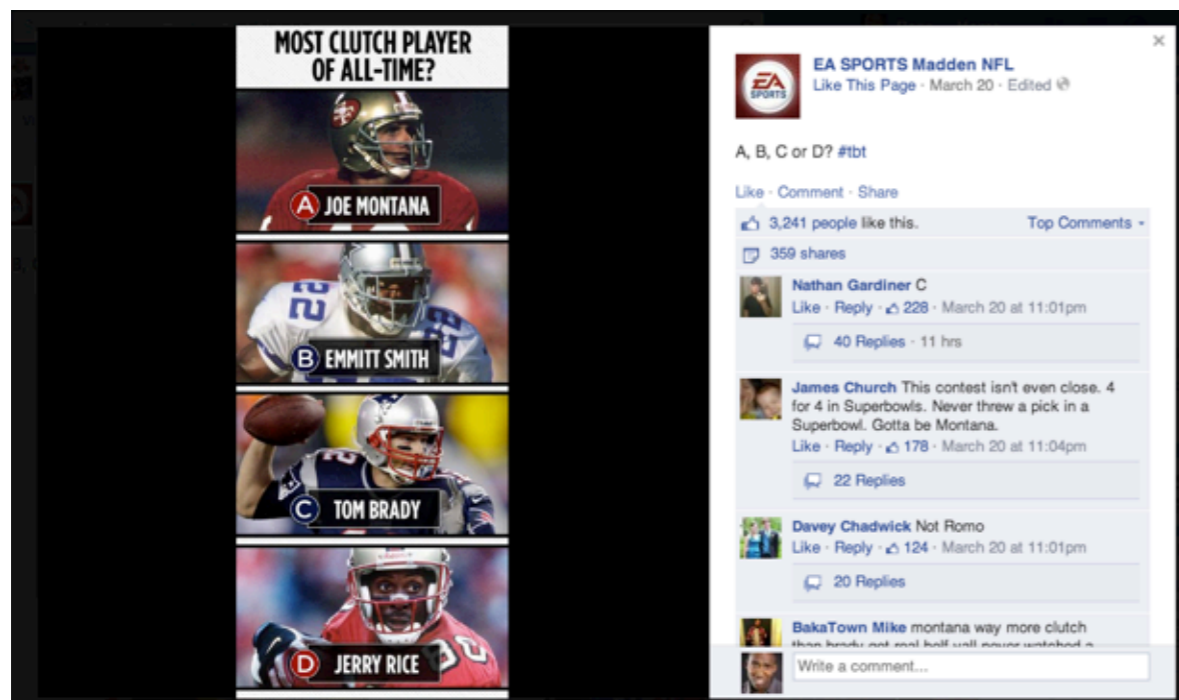
Drive Engagement through Your Posts

Social media is a place where people want to be social. For that reason, it's important that your brand embraces this behavior and strives to be social with your potential customers. Instead of always pushing content at them as if it's a monologue, try to take part in a dialogue with your fans. A simple approach to doing this is by asking them questions.

Getting your fans involved with your page is a great way to inspire loyalty. Asking questions in your status updates gets them involved and on their own terms. What you ask depends largely on your product and your niche, but asking open-ended questions usually garners the best responses. Asking opinions on a new product idea or project can also be a good way to show your fans that your company cares about their opinions.

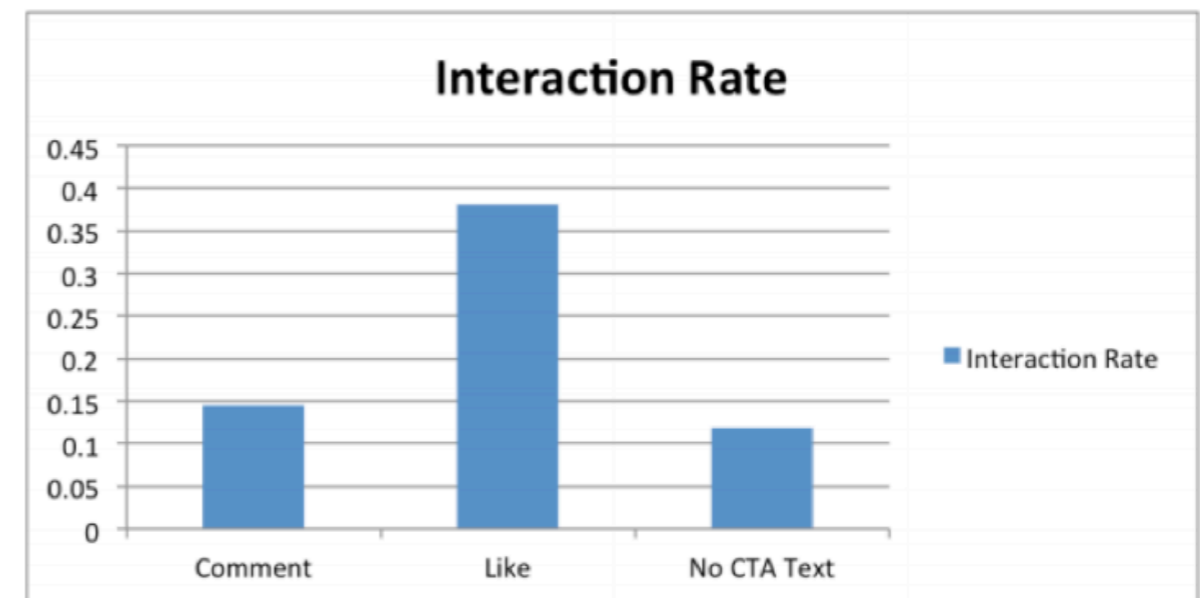
Asking questions is just one piece of the pie when it comes to driving engagement on Facebook. You can also run a series of initiatives through visuals and updates that drive engagement in more unique and interesting ways. Here are a few examples of engagement driven content:

“This Or That” & Multiple Choice On Facebook



It's a type of question but it's more effective than most of the other options. It gives people a quick and easy way to engage and ultimately increase the chances of having your content spread with the masses. In the image above, the folks from EA Sports share a post asking users to type A, B, C or D to pick which player they would consider “clutch”. It's a simple request and because it's so simple, users are likely to engage and ultimately drive this post into the newsfeeds of their friends without even realizing.

Call to Actions in Your Content



According to Momentus Media, not including a call to action in your Facebook interaction is the worst thing you can do for your interaction rate. It's as simple as telling your users to comment or telling your users to like a post that will drive interaction and allow your content to spread.

The ultimate goal for brands using social media is to drive engagement and have their story placed in front of a relevant audience. In posts that have questions, users interact with the post on the basis of the brand's story and the content is then spread. Invite your fans and anyone who comes across your content to share your posts with their friends, subscribers, and fans.

A simple call to action such as "Click like if you agree" or "Share this if you agree" often works well, so long as the content surrounding the request is relevant and aligns with the users worldviews. Asking people to add their comments is good too. But, it's the share that will likely create the greatest exposure for your content. Ask users to share your content, better yet, tell them to!

Use Images on Facebook

Images are powerful. The right visuals can be the difference maker between a Facebook post going viral and a Facebook post going flat. It can dramatically help sell your product and shape your ideas or story online. It is not that text doesn't work but using images with your text always boosts the content to another level. Why do I love images?

Here are a few reasons:

1. We can take in an image so easily! It hits our emotions in milliseconds and takes less time to understand.
2. Through tools like Buffer, sharing images has never been easier!
3. A Hubspot study revealed that photos on Facebook pages received 53% more likes than the average post.
4. Unless you include text, images can be spread to different countries speaking different languages.

Should you use images in every Facebook post? Yes, if possible! If not, you should consider using videos. Later on in this eBook, we're going to talk about Instagram. Many of the items highlighted in that section can be used across both Instagram and Facebook. Don't ignore the power of images or you just might miss out on an opportunity to connect with your audience in a more meaningful and impactful way.

According to Upworthy, the king of viral content, two things that can help your content right off the start is including photos and links with those photos. Based on their research, they found that photo posts to have 3-4 times the level of engagement as normal posts. They also found that links with photos were likely to have 10-30% more clicks than all other content.

That's the power of visuals!

Have Content on Your Website worth Sharing For Facebook

Now that you have a good understanding of how to manage your Facebook page, you need to ensure that your website has content worth sharing. If you haven't realized, this is where the content from your blog comes into play. It doesn't have to be blog content, but if you've made it this far in the guide, I'm sure you know that it's where I'd recommend you start.

Shareable content doesn't have to solely be a blog post though. You could create compelling videos, valuable resources, or even unique web experiences to drive shares for your business. At the end of the day, it's the process of developing content worth sharing that is going to allow you to stand out against the competition. Too many people skimp out on their content and do it as if it's just another thing they have to do. When done correctly, creating shareable content can be a differentiator and ultimately, a game changer.

Ensure Your Content Can Be Easily Shared

When talking about Facebook, the world's most viral website, Upworthy, confirmed that Facebook is their biggest driver of traffic. In most industries and for most businesses, Facebook tends to be a key driver for visits and social media traction. Sites

like Pinterest and Twitter also play a role but Facebook is a huge driver of referral traffic for most brands and businesses today.

When Upworthy was asked about their approach to Facebook, one item they identified as being crucial was the Facebook share button. The Facebook share button is something that all of your content should have associated with it as it allows readers to quickly and easily share content with their connections. Here are a few of the other key points Upworthy gave:

- The "Like" button isn't as effective as the share button
- Sharing is a much stronger signal than liking
- Do the extra work and implement a custom share button using Facebook share dialog.



potential to see your LinkedIn posts, they aren't official network connections. (It's similar to LinkedIn's current model for following LinkedIn-appointed influencers.)

Any posts you **publish on LinkedIn** are tied to your professional profile and **show up near the top of your profile**. This means your thought leadership insights are showcased when someone views your LinkedIn profile.

The first post I published to LinkedIn helped me attract over 200 new followers, and my profile views were up 38% week over week! These stats tell me that the LinkedIn publishing platform is going to be a great place to share longer-form, thought leadership content.

In the rest of this article I give you best practices for making the most of the LinkedIn publishing platform.

#1: Create Valuable, Attractive Content

Before you start posting, have a plan in place. What content is most useful for your audience? Is your post too salesy? Although there's no formal editorial process, LinkedIn makes it clear that sales-oriented content won't be tolerated (after all, that's what the advertising platform is for).

LinkedIn has some [helpful guidelines in their Help Center](#) about what to publish. This is a good reference for understanding how to **frame your content so it resonates with and adds value to both your established audience and your potential audience** (which will now be even greater than your existing LinkedIn network).

How to maintain an engaging Facebook fan page

Now that you've completed the basics, you need to focus on creating a Facebook presence that is active, alive and attractive to potential visitors. Your Facebook page should act not only as a place where you can convert prospects into customers but also a place where previous customers can stay in touch and up-to-date with ongoing changes and things going on within your business.

Here are a few tips to maintain an engaging page:

Post Different Content Frequently – Your timeline should consist of a wide variety of content including status updates, photos, videos, and engaging questions. The key is to balance content and relevance with your audience.

Use Pins and Highlight Posts – Pins are a feature in Facebook that allows you to make specific posts float to the top of your Timeline. Meaning, a post that you shared two days ago can be placed at the top of your timeline and even after other posts are shared, it stays at the top. You should also utilize the highlight function to stretch content across both columns on your timeline and draw even more attention to important posts.

Respond to People – One of the worst things you can do is not reply to messages or wall posts that people send you. Keep an eye on the notifications that you get, and respond promptly. This little effort will reward you with a loyalty from those visitors that could turn into sales.

Test Different Tactics – Try out new types of content, photos, video, and even the angle in which you deliver the message. See if your fans are more likely to engage with content that is funny or serious and make decisions based on the real-time feedback about how you will proceed with your updates.

Facebook Advertising

Facebook offers a fantastic targeted advertising platform, which works great in the tourism industry. They provide you with the ability to target someone based on specific geographic areas, age groups, and even things like relationship status or post-secondary school. Using this targeting, you have the ability to target mothers a week before Mother's Day with a special Mother's Day package.

How Do Facebook Ads Work?

Similar to the layout, Facebook ads tend to change on a regular basis with very little notice as it relates to the updates and changes. Currently Facebook advertising options come in several varieties. You can promote your page, posts on your page, actions users took, or you can drive users directly to an external website. Despite Facebook's increasing focus on native ads and keeping traffic on its site, you can still be successful sending users to your website if you take a similar approach to SEM and direct users to a landing page with highly relevant content.

Facebook ads are targeted to users based on their location, demographic, and profile information. Many of these options are only available on Facebook. After creating an ad, you set a budget and bid for each click or thousand impressions that your ad will receive. The main goal for Facebook advertising is to acquire an increased number of fans and then provide content through status updates to them over the long-term. If you can increase the number of people subscribing to your content you can increase the amount of brand relevant content they see through your status updates.

How to Target Facebook Ads

The number one mistake most marketers make with Facebook ads is not targeting them correctly. On Facebook, you can target users by:

- Location
- Age
- Gender
- Interests
- Connections
- Ethnicity
- Relationship status

- Languages
- Education
- Workplaces

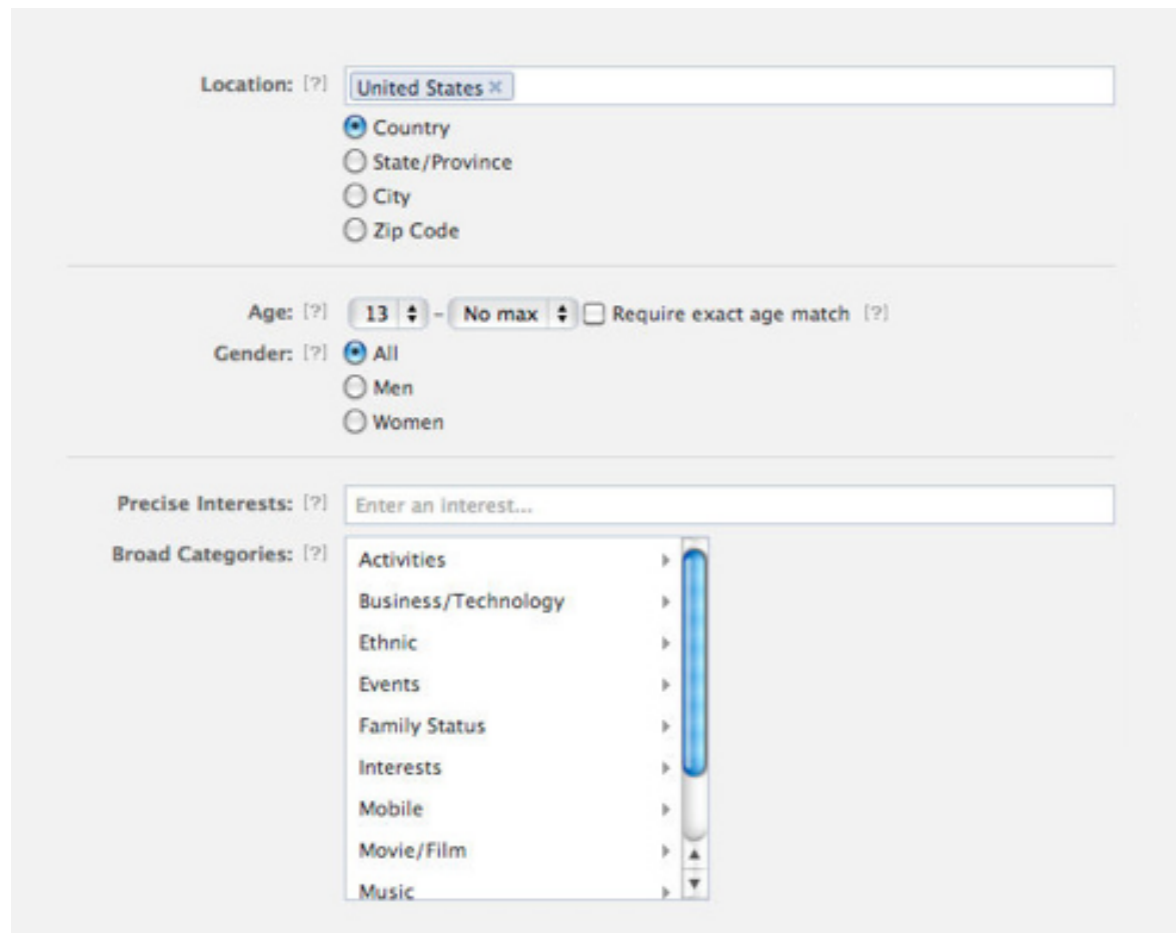
Each option can be useful, depending on your audience. Most tourism and travel businesses should focus on location, age, gender, and interests.

Location allows you to target users in the country, state, city, or zip code that you service. You can get as specific as cities such as Dartmouth, Charlottetown, or Sackville. This is a great way to generate traction from key audiences for your business.

Age and gender targeting should be based on your existing customers. If women ages 45-65 are the bulk of your customers, start by only targeting them. If they prove to be profitable and generate results you can then expand your targeting.

Interest targeting is the most powerful but misused feature of Facebook ads. When creating an ad, you have two options: broad categories or precise interests. When you're targeting based on interests, you're targeting users based on the things they have liked on and outside of Facebook. For example, if someone has liked a variety of different golf clubs and PGA golfers, you can list "golf" as an interest and target people like them.

The advertising generator for Facebook looks like this:



The screenshot shows the Facebook advertising targeting interface. It includes a 'Location' field with a dropdown menu set to 'United States' and radio buttons for 'Country', 'State/Province', 'City', and 'Zip Code'. Below this is an 'Age' field with a dropdown set to '13', a 'No max' dropdown, and a 'Require exact age match' checkbox. The 'Gender' field has radio buttons for 'All', 'Men', and 'Women'. There is a 'Precise Interests' text input field with the placeholder 'Enter an Interest...'. Finally, there is a 'Broad Categories' dropdown menu with a scroll bar, listing categories such as 'Activities', 'Business/Technology', 'Ethnic', 'Events', 'Family Status', 'Interests', 'Mobile', 'Movie/Film', and 'Music'.

Use Images for Facebook Ads

The most important part of your ad is the image you upload to be associated with the text. It's easy to get caught up thinking that you can upload any old image and find success, but it's important to differentiate yourself with your image from the other ads. Test a variety of different photos and see which one receives the most clicks to truly understand what your audience wants. You can write the most brilliant copy in the world, but if your image doesn't catch a user's eye, you won't get any clicks.

Don't use low-quality images, generic stock photography, or any images that you don't have the rights to use. Don't steal anything from Google images. And unless you're a famous brand, don't just use your logo.

Despite the learning curve, Facebook advertising can be a great marketing channel for the right business. The most important points to remember are: target specific interests, use eye catching images, give users a low-friction conversion, and track everything.

After a week or two of learning what works for your business, you'll be able to generate a steady source of conversions from the world's largest social network.

For more information, download the Official Facebook Advertising Guide: http://ads.ak.facebook.com/ads/FacebookAds/Getting_Started_Guide.pdf

Marketing On Twitter

It's better to have one hundred people that love you than one million who kinda like you.

Most brands typically think of Twitter as a tool for engagement and customer service instead of a channel for content marketing. In reality, Twitter should be seen as a content sharing platform where you put your best thoughts and best content in front of your followers.

Recent studies show that 74% of marketers who use social media use Twitter to share their content with a broader audience. While this is clearly best practice for businesses using social media, it's not the only thing that needs to be considered when using Twitter.

One thing that is clear with Twitter is the importance of first impressions. You have less than 140 characters to share a message worth reading or worth clicking. But before you focus on that, you need to give some thought to your profile when you set it up as this could easily be the first thing someone sees online.

When you first set up your profile there are five key things that you need to ensure are updated to represent your business:

-Profile Picture - Your profile picture should be the logo of your business or something iconic that people will

recognize even if it's shown on its own in a sea of text and blank space.

-Your Header Photo - What you have here is a bit of extra space to tell your brand's story in a visual way. Some brands get clever here and integrate their profile picture with their header photo while others just use a neutral brand colour or gradient.

-Your Background Photo - The background photo is an area that is often used to promote other social media accounts. For example, you would use your Twitter background to promote the URL for both your Facebook, Instagram,

and YouTube to simply improve your chances of gaining new followers across other networks.

-Your Biography - When you set up your Twitter profile you only have a few characters to write and communicate the value of your product. Early on we talked about your value proposition; this would be a great place to include that information.

-Your Twitter Handle - Unless your business has a Twitter name that is unique, it might be difficult to find a Twitter handle that isn't already taken. If you're starting a business and have yet to claim your Twitter handle, stop reading this and go get it.

Now let's make sure you're up to date on understanding the various pieces of functional details for Twitter; specifically, how to actually use it and interact with people. I'm not going to spend too much time talking about this because there are hundreds of tutorials to show you how to tweet or what a retweet actually is. Instead, I'm going to summarize some of the lingo:

Tweet: Message shared from a user.

Reply: Tweet sent from 1 user to another in response to a tweet.

Mention: When another user is referenced like this: @username.

Retweet: Sharing a user's tweet with your followers.

Followers: People who subscribe to your tweets.

Favourites: A star that saves tweets and lets users know you did.

Once you have those basics sorted out, it's time to start creating a plan of attack to deliver unique and compelling tweets that allow your brands story to transcend into a new channel and new platform.

On Twitter, it's all about creating an impactful message within 140 characters. One tweet can be the difference between landing or losing 100's of new followers so you need to tweet smart.

When you're tweeting for a business, it's much different than when you tweet as an individual. As an individual you can share everything from pictures of your coffee to stats on sex, drugs, and rock and roll. In business, you want your tweets to reflect your brand and communicate the story we talked about earlier.

One of the biggest challenges that brands have with Twitter is the inability to recognize that it's not about the heavy sale all the time. Yes, there's a time and place for making a sale on Twitter but it's not something you should solely use the channel for.

So What Should You Tweet?

Focus On Building Relationships

Relationships are the most powerful thing we own in business. It's also the most affordable tool on our belt. On average, it costs companies five times as much to acquire a new customer as it does to keep an existing one. Twitter offers an opportunity to

strengthen your relationship with existing customers and retain them as lifetime customers and brand advocates.

The key to social sales success is understanding the value of building relationships with your customers and turning them into both repeat buyers and customer advocates or champions for your product. Through ongoing interaction and showing that you care, Twitter is great for establishing customer relationships.

Every interaction you have on Twitter should be with the intention of building a relationship with that user. Whether it's making a connection with an influencer, competitor, new prospect, or existing customer – each interaction should serve the purpose of strengthening a relationship.

PRO TIP: Twitter is great for building relationships with existing customers but also with journalists, potential partners, and vendors. Create lists using a tool like HootSuite to keep track of relevant and important individuals who you want to develop stronger relationships with and focus on them. The frequency of engagement will ultimately lead to a stronger bond and increase the chances of a strong working relationship. This is key asset in media outreach.

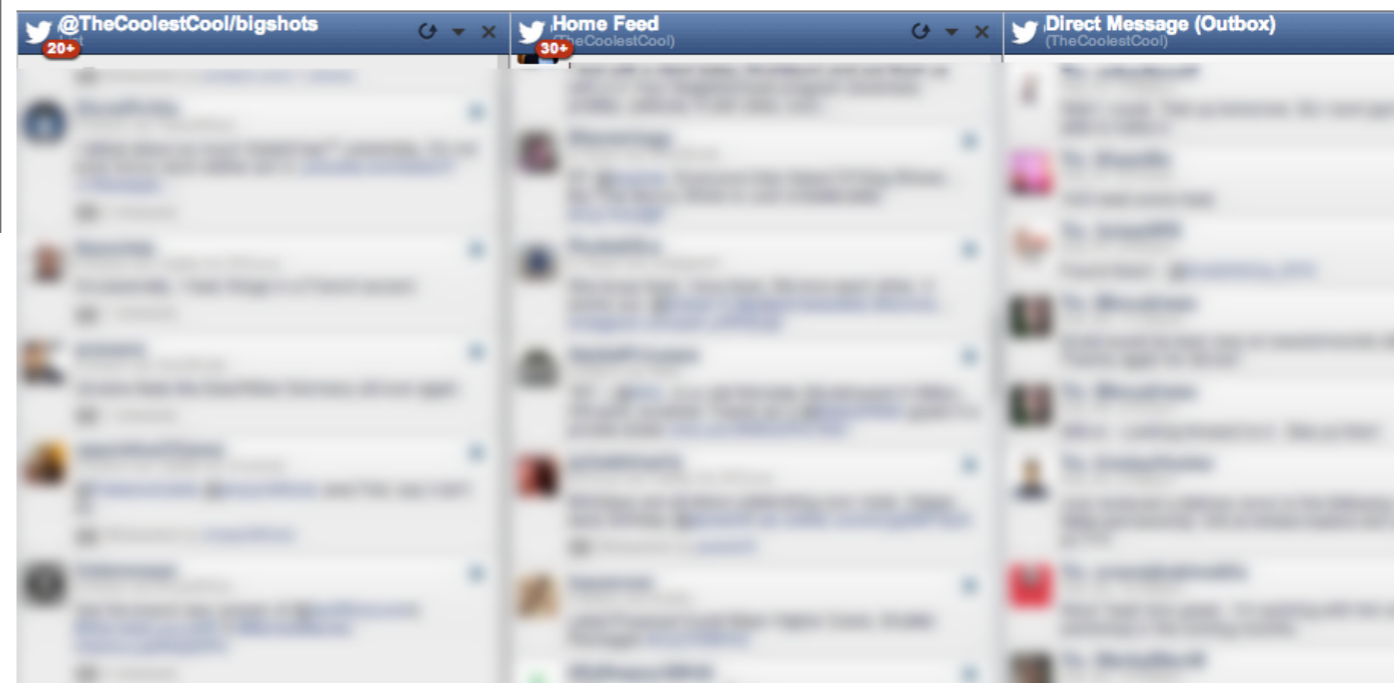
Engage Influencers Frequently to Build a Bond

Authority is the best way to establish trust from your customers and prospective clients. The best way to establish authority is to engage with industry influencers frequently.

Influencers are typically well-connected, vocal, and involved. Generate a Twitter list of influencers and begin engaging with their content and build a real connection with them around issues relevant to your business.

Engage by listening and reading their content on a regular basis. When you find opportunities to reach out, begin by asking questions, retweet and favorite their tweets, participate in Twitter chats that are relevant to your company, and keep the conversation going by mentioning them in your own tweets.

One great approach to identifying and focusing on influencer relationships is through lists and tools like HootSuite. In the



screenshot below, you can see on the left that I've developed a list titled "Big Shots." By doing this, I can spend more time seeing the tweets that these users share and also more time engaging with them in relevant, meaningful conversations. This helps build my relationship with them and ultimately establishing a closer bond.

If you're hesitant to use Twitter, you should at least consider using Twitter as a channel to monitor your brand's story. Using a tool like HootSuite or the basic Twitter search, you can quickly identify anyone who is mentioning your brand on Twitter. Create a search for your brand name as a keyword and see if anyone is sharing your content or mentioning your brand.

Once you've identified someone talking about you, make the move and interact with them. You don't have to respond to every negative tweet or even every positive tweet but sending one or two here and there will do more good than harm. Remember, it's easier to keep a customer than it is to gain a new one. Focus on constantly taking your customer and prospective relationships to the next level.

Retweet Content that Your Audience will find

Relevant

Twitter is more than just a broadcast medium. While it's important to regularly share your own content, there is room to retweet content from other users. In fact, about 15-20% of your tweets

should be retweeted content. Specifically, content retweeted from thought leaders and industry influencers.

You can also use retweets as a way to share testimonials with your existing network. That is, if you find a customer tweeting positively about your brand, you can share their tweet using the retweet function to give that positive mention more reach.

Retweeting is a great way to compliment the original tweeter and also offer relevant and interesting content to your own followers.

Scratch My Back. I'll Scratch Yours.

Have you ever had someone buy you a coffee and then you insist the next time you see them that you'll pay for their cup? As humans, we have a natural instinct to feel obligated to help those who help us. To put it another way, we scratch the back of those who scratch ours.

If you're like most people, the majority of your tweets are centered on your brand and your business. You might inject a few links here and there of relevant content but very rarely do you send a retweet. You're not alone. But it's time to change.

That said, retweeting others is a great way to generate more retweets. One of the pioneers of social media, Chris Brogan, once expressed that he tries to follow a 15:1 ratio where he will promote others' tweets fifteen times for every one of his own self-

promotional tweets. He's giving to get. It's the oldest yet one of the most effective strategies in the book.

Share Content that Adds Value to Your Followers

Value-driven content is the muscle behind social media success. Start by listening – is there a problem or concern that you can solve? Is there a need that you can satisfy?

Once you have an understanding of what your followers want and need you can deliver content that adds value and improves their life in some way. This can be an eBook explaining how to fix a tech issue one of your follower's is frustrated with or an article, blog post, or link with information that will relieve a current pain.

The point is that you're helping your followers solve their problems, satisfy a need, or answer a question. The content you're sharing is making a positive difference in their lives...at least at that particular moment.

Sharing content that supports your business, industry, or brand story is a subtle way to plug your business. Find content that is relevant to your target audience and that they would find useful and you'll start to be seen as a thought leader by association. There's a saying that "You are what you tweet" and that's exactly the case here.

If you're in the fashion industry, share content that highlights things happening in the industry or lists showcasing the best and

worst dressed at the Grammys. If you're in healthcare, share content that highlights the health benefits of coffee and wine. It all

Pro tip: Share tweets from influencers in your industry and mention them when you do. By doing this, they will begin to see your twitter handle in their mentions and over time have no choice but to pay attention. Don't be creepy, but by sharing their content you will develop goodwill and increase your chances of having them share content that you've developed or shared. Here's a template for you:

"Great article from @Influencer on [topic] - Check it out: [link]"

comes back to your overarching brand story and keeping in mind the psychological reasons behind sharing.

Listen for Relevant Conversations around Your Business

It's obvious by now that your customers aren't calling the customer service department with their issues or inquiries. Instead, they're tweeting it to their friends, family, your competitors, and to you.

Listening on Twitter gives you the unique opportunity to find prospects when the timing is right and when they're actually asking for answers you have. This can be the difference between

fostering brand advocates and fostering brand advocates for your competitors.

Schedule your tweets and monitor your interactions and messages, as well as track hashtags, popular searches, and manage multiple accounts.

Engage with Industry Specific Social Leads

Engaging with leads on Twitter is a great way to employ a customer-centric approach to sales that's built on relationships and is mutually beneficial. You scratch their back with content that helps them achieve their goals, and more of your leads will begin moving through the sales funnel, thus scratching yours.

Every single day, thousands of people are going to Twitter for recommendations on products and services. In most cases, their inquiries go unanswered and they are left to make decisions based on information they find online. As more brands begin to recognize this as an opportunity to engage, more businesses are investing in tools like LeadSift so they can engage and ultimately close the deal

Show The World How Great You Are

Did you win an award? Did you just launch a new feature? Don't be shy! Share your great news with the world and watch as your fans and followers join you in celebration.

It's not bragging, it's not boasting. It's simply sharing some good news that your fans, customers and followers would be interested in hearing. Don't go overboard and share it over and over again but don't hesitate to send out a tweet saying thank you to your followers for being with you through this journey and giving them the credit as it relates to always showing you support and that they believe in your story.

Here's an example from my favorite note taking app:



How Do You Generate Retweets?

Sometimes people will favorite your tweets, other times they'll reply and if you're really lucky you might even land a retweet. While each of these interactions is great, the retweet often has more benefit than any other.

You know just as well as I do that generating retweets isn't easy. You can send out as many tweets as you'd like but unless you're an internet celebrity, it's not easy generating a consistent stream of retweets.

Have you ever sent out a tweet and wondered why no one responded? Have you ever wondered why people would favourite a tweet instead of press the RT button?

One thing I've learned since joining Twitter many years ago, is that there's both an art and

science to getting retweets. While it's a complex challenge, it's one that I've studied and hope to shed light on in this very eBook.

Here are four of my own tried and tested strategies that will spark retweets:

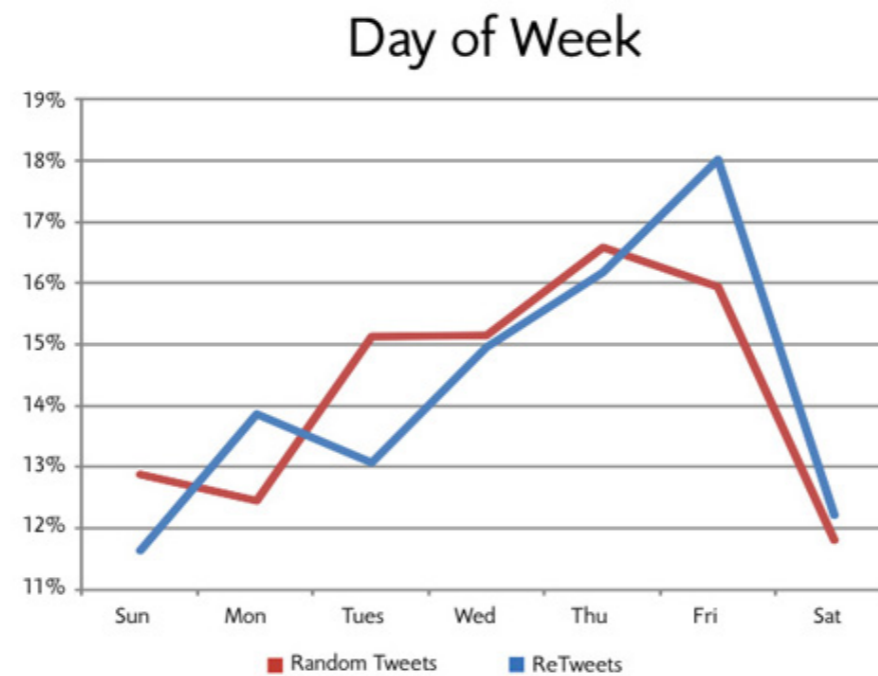
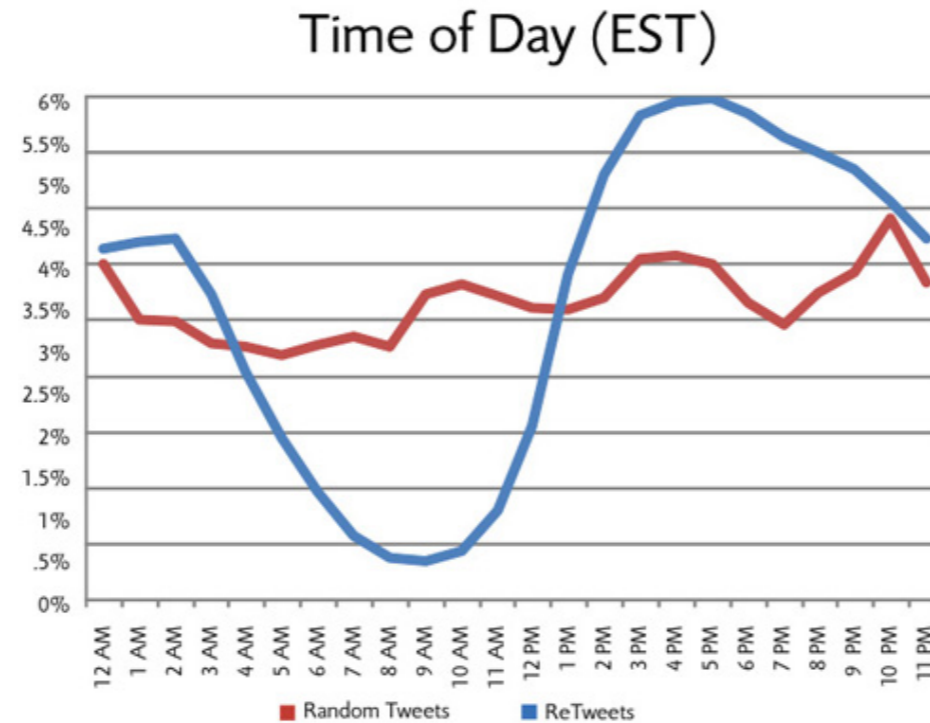
Only Use Relevant Hashtags

Every once in a while you'll come across a marketer who sends out a tweet like this:

Here's my #superannoying #marketing #blog #post on #socialmedia #strategy: [Link]

Have you made this mistake? You know, the whole overdoing it with hashtags thing? If so, this is your chance to be forgiving and to make a commitment to never doing it again. Using too many hashtags is a sure-fire way to be unfollowed by people who once subscribed to your content expecting value.

Instead of using hashtags whenever you can squeeze one into your tweet, use them when relevant (**Tweet this**). There are a handful of hashtags that are relevant within a wide range of industries. For example, if you're a startup that spends its time in the political field, it might make sense to follow and use those specific



Dan Zarrella, danzarrella.com

[Check out his blog here.](#)

hashtags more than it makes sense to just use a random trending topic.

While you don't want to use trending topics at random, you do want to consider using highly relevant and popular hashtags when they are unique to your business or tweet. If you're implementing the strategies of reactive storytelling then using a relevant hashtag makes sense. For example, when I wrote *Life Lessons from Don Draper*, it made sense to share this post with a #MadMen specific hashtag.

At the end of the day, hashtags need to be relevant. If you don't place emphasis on relevant hashtags, you will be more likely to annoy your followers than captivate them.

ReTweet When People Retweet Most

Remember when I told you there was science to generating more retweets? Well this is where the data starts to really come to life and support some ideas that you need to consider. As you can see in the above graph, the majority of the retweets are sent between 2pm and 6pm with the least amount of retweets happening in the morning.

People also tend to be more likely to retweet you at the end of the week rather than the beginning of the week. If you don't have any time constraints to your content, this insight provides you with a

chance to test different times of sharing and to capture your own learning.

So there you have it, that's Twitter in a nutshell. It's really not as complicating as most people think and it can easily be used by businesses looking to take their customer service and brand story to the next level.

If anything, Twitter is one of the most valued content distribution channels you can use. It's a tool that can help you gauge what topics are of interest to your readers and help you ensure that the content you're developing is relevant to your audience. Twitter is a tool that can help business connect with customers, distribute their content and ultimately, stand out.

Marketing On Instagram


“You don't take a photograph, you make it.” — Ansel Adams

Instagram is kind of a big deal.

A recent surge in visual content is sweeping across every network from Twitter to Facebook. As the leader in image sharing apps, Instagram has become a household name in recent months with more than 40 million photos being uploaded daily to their platform. Users are racking up a total of 1,000 comments and more than 8,000 likes on Instagram every second. Additionally, 28 percent of U.S. internet users between the ages of 18 and 29 are using Instagram and that number continues to grow.

As marketers, these numbers show that while Instagram has yet to become a staple in the marketing toolkit, it's definitely something to analyze and consider. Additional thought should be

considered if you're looking to connect with Generation Y or millennials using content marketing as they are using Instagram more than any other market.



65

starbucks =

Starbucks Coffee Freshly brewed instagrams from Starbucks in Seattle, WA. Tag your coffee photos with #Starbucks! <http://starbucks.com>

257 photos	1,275,039 followers	424 following
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The question becomes, how do you use it effectively?

Getting Started: Account Set Up

The first step in establishing your Instagram presence is creating your brand or organization's profile. There are only a few areas that require information and assets which makes set up a pretty simple and easy process. Let's look at the key parts of an Instagram profile that you really can't miss:

Add a Profile Picture

For brands, the profile picture is typically something that is iconic and representative of your organization. In most cases, the profile picture for a brand is their logo as seen above in the Starbucks example. The reason brands use iconic visuals is because overtime, people start to remember your profile picture when scanning through their newsfeed and you want them to remember something that is used in other mediums.

Write a Bio

When you're not as well known as a Starbucks, your bio is definitely the most important step in your account set up. You have fewer than 200 characters to tell the world (1) why your Instagram page is worth following and (2) what you offer as a service or product. Additionally, you have a chance to take an

approach similar to Starbucks and encourage users to share content relevant to your brand using a specific hashtag.

Connect a Website

Adding a URL to your Instagram page isn't rocket science. It's important that you drive your users down the path to purchase as much as possible and your website should be the most obvious place to do so. Additionally, you should ensure that your URL directs users to a mobile friendly site as most traffic to Instagram happens through a mobile device.

Marketing Effectively on Instagram

Once you've created your profile on Instagram, there are some simple things you can do to get the most out of the network for increased brand exposure, consumer engagement, and even online sales.

Use Hashtags On Instagram

As you'll see in a few paragraphs, hashtags provide a great opportunity for keeping track of entries for contests. For those not familiar with the concept of hashtags, a hashtag is a "symbol" that allows web search engines to find and categorize messages, keywords, and in the case of Instagram, pictures. For instance, if you type #dog or #dogs in one of your pictures, any user anywhere in the world looking for "dog" or "dogs" will easily find

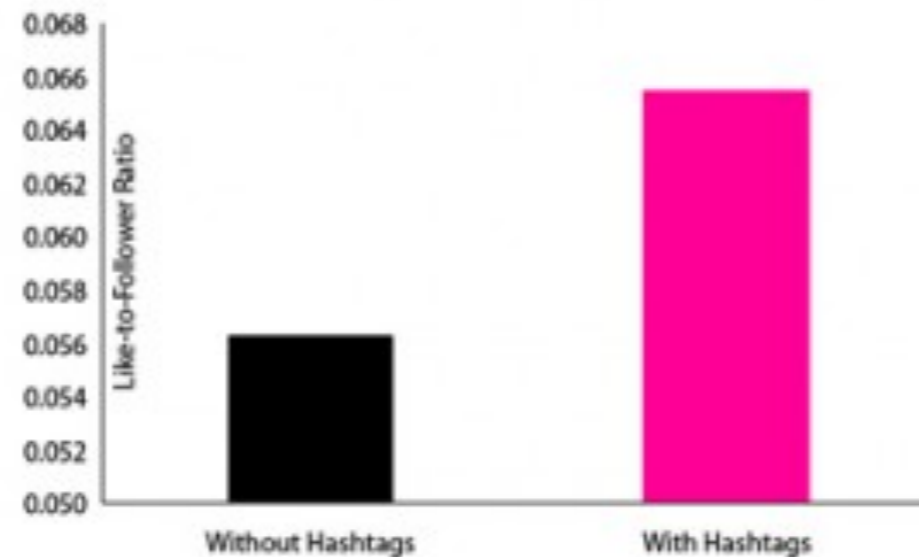
your picture and other user's pictures using the same #keyword.

Beyond contests, hashtags present a great opportunity to broaden the reach of your images. Many users track multiple hashtags on a regular basis to see what pictures people are sharing within a specific topic or interest. Recognizing this, brands need to think about what hashtags are relevant to the different images they share and how they can leverage existing hashtag trends.

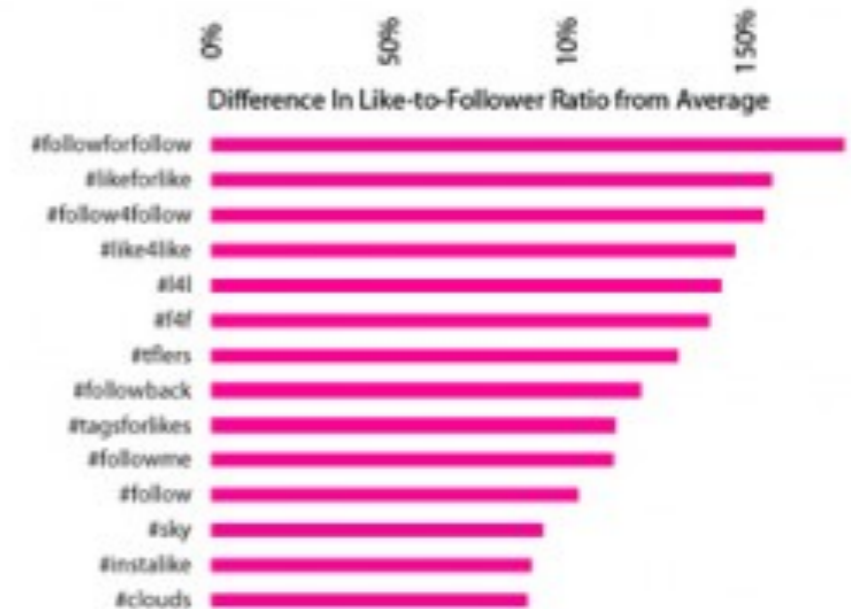
One trend on Instagram is the idea of #ThrowbackThursday which is when millions of users share old photos with their followers. Brands can capitalize on this trend by finding old pictures of their staff, offices, products, or anything brand relevant and sharing it on Instagram with that hashtag.

Recent studies also support the idea of using hashtags. According to a recent study from the folks at HubSpot, images

Effect of Hashtags on Instagram Likes



Most Liked Instagram Hashtags



that are shared on Instagram that are accompanied by hashtags, generate more engagement. In this study they also identified the most “liked” hashtags:

Another great way to leverage hashtags is to use them to find relevant and potential customers. It will highly depend on your business but if you're selling a product to people who are active or involved with yoga – a quick search for #Yoga will give you thousands of passionate yoga Instagrammers. You should start liking and commenting on their photos to drive awareness!

(Instagram Visual & Stats from Dan Zarrella of Hubspot)

What Types of Images Should You Share

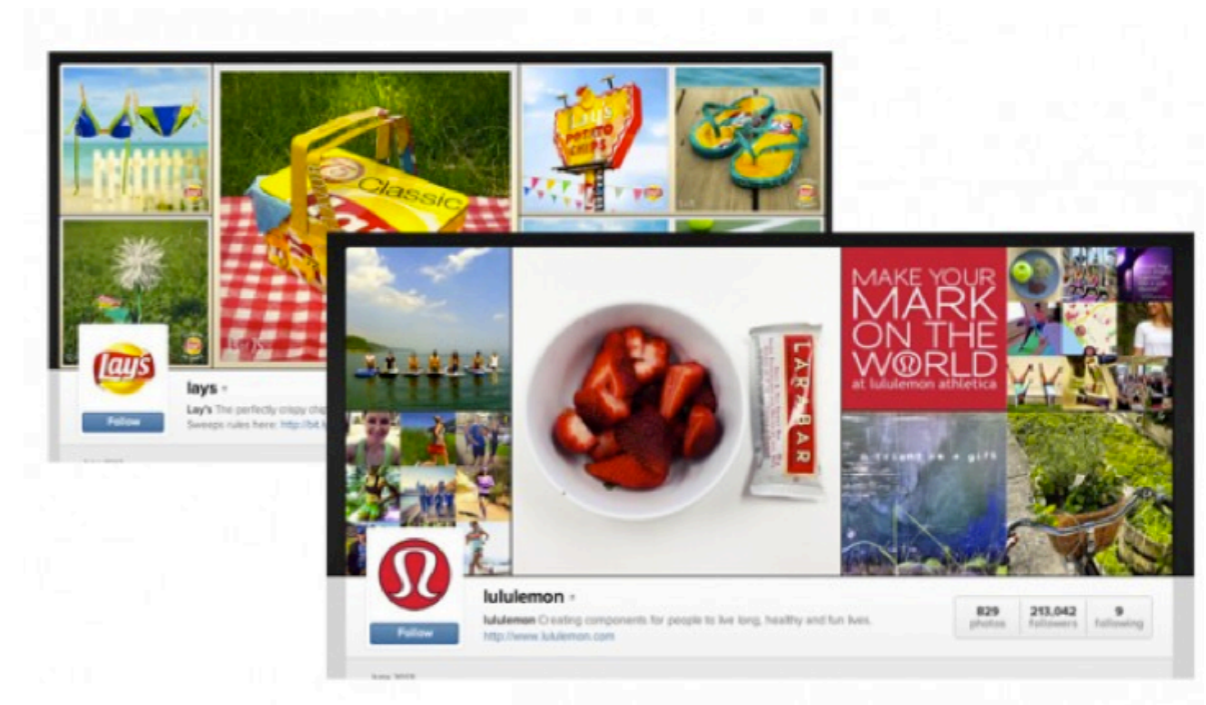
Before you jump on Instagram you need to know what type of photos will help you find success. To do that, you need to understand the interest of your target audience and think about the story your brand is trying to tell. Once you've done that and have a clear understanding of your audience's interests and how that lines up with your product, you're half way there. The next step is to think about how this lines up visually.

Instagram is built on the backbone of quality images. The wonderful world of developers are making it easier to hack Instagram through amazing photo editing apps that go beyond the normal Instagram filters. Yes, there are lots of images on Instagram that are of poor quality but those that go viral and generate significant engagement tend to be those that have high quality. In a world where 91% of US citizens have their mobile phone within reach 24/7, there has been a surge in images taken from camera phones and uploaded to Instagram.

As a brand, it's important to care about quality photography. That's the medium in which Instagram operates, so you need to cut through the high quantity of poor photos and provide high

quality images that spark emotion, engagement, and brand awareness. Here are a few types of posts you should share:

Brand-Centric Content



Images have always been an easy way for brands to connect with an audience. The saying “a picture is worth a thousand words” is cliché but it's cliché for a reason. The underlying fact is that as humans, we're hard-coded to make judgments and develop emotions as soon as we see something. As such, the power of using a visual in marketing makes for a very effective approach to communicating a compelling and complex message to consumers.

Brands who use Instagram understand the importance of brand storytelling. Whether it's through photos of their products or photos of the results of their product, businesses using Instagram effectively recognize the importance of showcasing what they have to offer. Not showing your product or the benefits on Instagram is a missed opportunity.

In the Lay's & Lululemon Instagram examples above you can clearly see how these brands are telling their story in different ways. Lay's is focused on using a heavy branding approach with images and visuals covered with their logo and color palette. On the flip side, Lululemon is focusing less on showing their product and brand logo and more around the ideas and feeling associated with the brand.

Reactive Storytelling

Reactive storytelling is the combination of a top of mind idea and a compelling marketing message. When a business uses reactive storytelling they are able to leverage a human truth, timely event, or unique insight to generate immediate feedback from their target audience. Some of the most popular brands like Oreo, LEGO, and Telus have used reactive storytelling to create viral sensations that have generated press and captured the hearts of fans.

Brands that use reactive storytelling tend to use references that are either meme based (we'll talk about that shortly) or pop

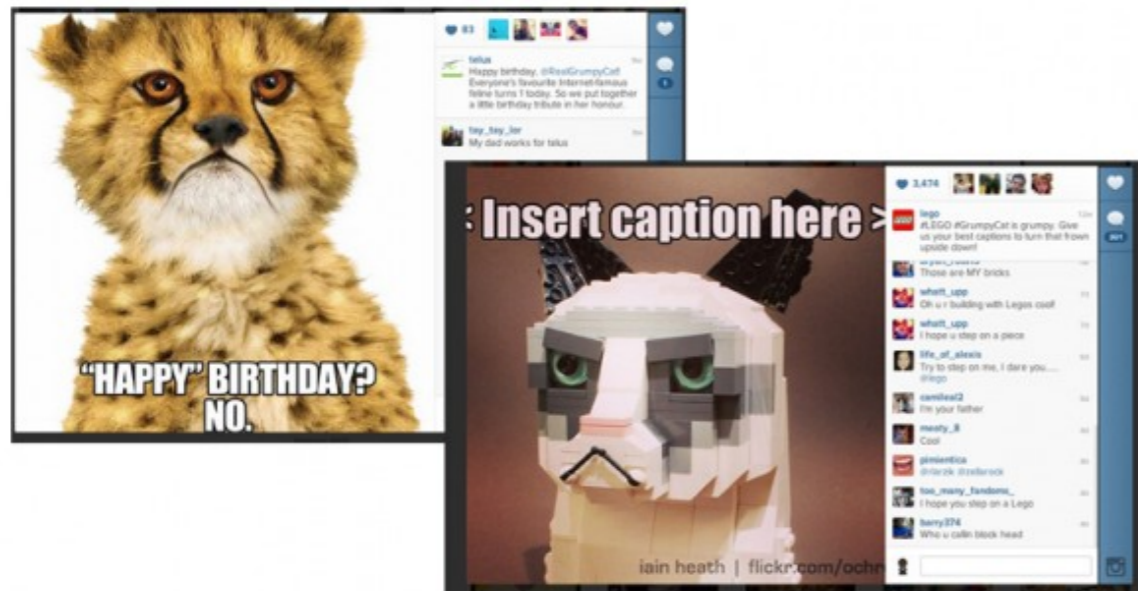
culture based. The third type of reactive storytelling is brand based but it's rare to find these situations as they require something involving the brand worth responding to. An example of reactive storytelling from a brand based situation is a light hearted exchange between Oreo and AMC theatres about sneaking snacks in a theatre:



Meme Based Reactive Storytelling

For Instagram, meme based and pop culture based storytelling is king. Both approaches are an easy way to generate buzz and ultimately spark conversation about your brand when done correctly.

Meme based reactive storytelling is when brands leverage a popular meme and use it to communicate a brand-relevant message. A meme is described as an image that has gone viral using different stories from one network to the next. Whether it's using the Dos Equis guy or the now famous "Hey Girl" meme, even the most boring brands can succeed using meme based reactive storytelling to stand out. Here's an example of two meme based Instagram posts from Telus and LEGO that are a tribute to the infamous Grumpy Cat meme:



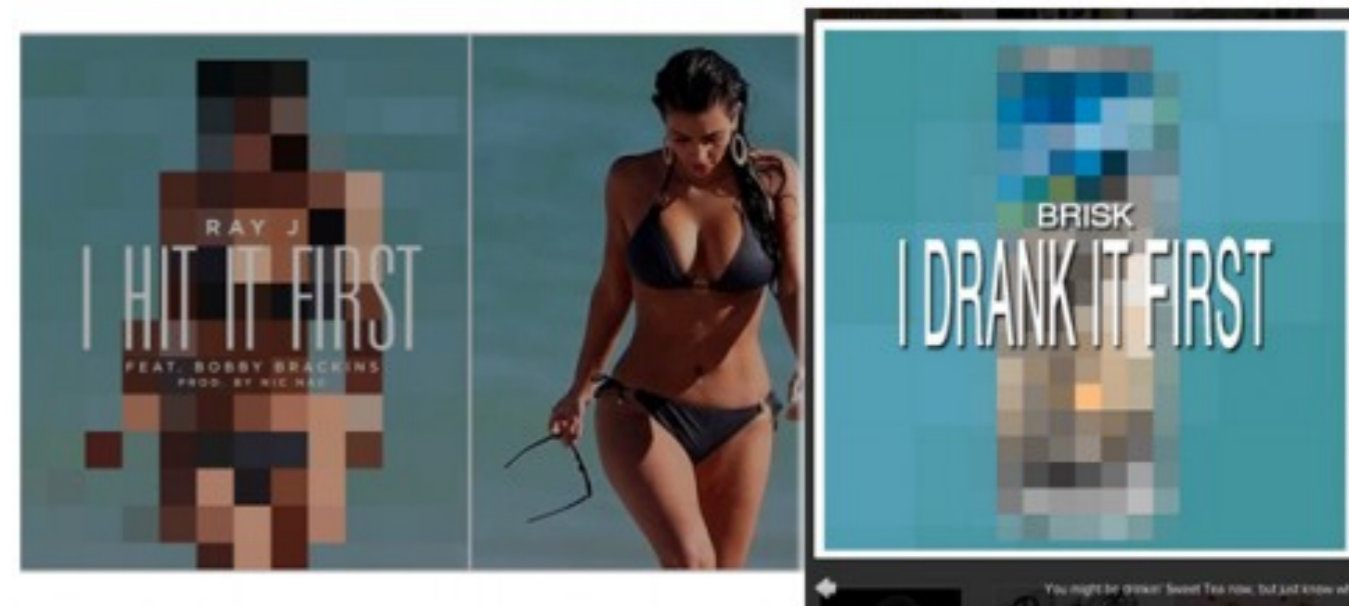
Pop Culture Based: Reactive Storytelling

Our society has always been captivated by pop culture. Whether it's a new hit series on television like Game of Thrones or a new album from Justin Bieber, pop culture is a driving force for media and for the attention of consumers. Our obsession with pop

culture is the reason why businesses like TMZ and BuzzFeed are generating millions of visits on a regular basis.

Leveraging pop culture presents a great opportunity for brands using Instagram. It's an easy way to connect with your audience using something top of mind and that they are either passionate about or able to relate to. When I wrote a blog post about business lessons we can learn from Don Draper, I was doing it because I knew other Mad Men fans would enjoy my perspective.

It works the same way for Instagram, share content that references pop culture and you'll drive engagement. A few months ago, the R&B singer known for being Brandy's little brother and making an infamous sex tape with Kim Kardashian, launched a single called "I Hit it First" referencing his relationship with Kim. The internet went crazy. In response to the single's cover art that blurred out Kim Kardashian, Lipton Brisk Iced Tea reacted with this brilliant execution:



Behind the Scenes Content

Another type of content is anything that shows the inner workings of your organization. People are looking for transparency and an inside look at how things are built or done within your organization. For years, brands and organizations have built their businesses on the promise of 43 secret herbs and spices instead of giving the inside scoop.

Today, the internet has made secrets a thing of the past. Brands are now looking at how they can be more transparent and more authentic as it's what consumers are asking for. Victoria's Secret is one brand that has done this well for the last few years. Instead of simply shooting beautiful models and giving us the end result of these models in their lingerie, they are snapping live shots of the photographer, the makeup artists, and even the models during outtakes.

Another great way to demonstrate authenticity with your customers is to show the making of your product or the inner workings of how you do business. We live in an age where everyone wants to know everything. Steam Whistle Brewing out of Ontario and TechCrunch both recognize this and use Instagram as a way to show their employees to their customers and build a stronger connection.

Inspirational & Motivational Quotes

Sparking emotions in your customers or target audience is the most effective way to drive shares, likes, comments, and any sort of connection to your brand. Studies show that the more powerful the emotion, the more likely the end user will react to the content that sparked the emotional reaction.

Quotes from iconic people are an easy way to drive emotion. One of the most frequently used hashtags on Instagram is #Quotes and as such, brands should consider using it to their advantage. Inject quotes into your updates and stir up emotions of inspiration and motivation in your audience.

Brands like Lululemon and Ford have been using this tactic effectively and driving significant results because of it. The key is to recognize what quotes will resonate with your audience and then delivering them in a beautiful way:



How to Take Your Instagram to the Next Level

The tactics and tricks above are easy ways to start creating and sharing better content on Instagram. Implementing the items we've discussed will allow your brand to develop and strengthen its relationship with your audience. You will see a spike in the levels of engagement, as users will be more inclined to like, comment, and share your images. But how can you take it to the next level?

Here are a few ways a brand can truly stand out:

User Generated Content Contests

The hope with your brand-developed content is to not only drive users to share but to also encourage users to create their own. When users create content that is associated with a brand, that content combines with the other stories out there to develop the overarching brand story. While marketers have no control over what content customers put out there, they can most certainly influence it to ensure that the story is aligned with their messaging.

As I mentioned above, one of my favourite up and coming brands is Frank & Oak. Self described as an online clothing shop for men who are looking for the extraordinary; it's a startup that is trying to change the way men shop. They specialize in quality fashion and have an amazing selection of everything from pocket squares to neckties.

On Fridays, they often run a contest called #NecktieFridays where they encourage guys from all over the world to upload photos in their neckties for a chance to win a Frank & Oak tie.

The screenshot shows the Frank & Oak website header with navigation links: FRANK & OAK, READ, SHOP, HUNT CLUB, SHARE & EARN, CART, and a user profile icon for ROSS. Below the header is a large banner with the text "MAY THE DAPPEREST MAN WIN". Underneath the banner, it says "Every Friday gets you another chance to win a free tie from Frank & Oak. Snap a picture of yourself sporting your favorite neckwear, and share it on Instagram or Twitter with #necktiefriday and @frankandoak." Below this text is a smaller line: "Got what it takes to make it to the winner's circle?". At the bottom of the banner, there are four small images: a striped tie, a blue bow tie, a pair of brown shoes, and a pocket square. In the bottom left corner of the banner, there is a red square with a white dog logo and the text "@frankandoak".

When a user uploads the photo they will include the #NecktieFridays hashtag with their update which then pushes the content in front of their own following along with those who have been following the actual hashtag. This type of user-generated content is directly influenced by the brand but is established using a unique, engaging, and compelling execution.

Have Call to Actions on Images

This is a trick I've only recently started to see but it's one that I fully support. On Facebook, there's this concept of brands creating "like-bait" which is when you ask your fans to "like this status update if you love Fridays!" You know these images will



drive interaction in some way and as such, they are easy wins for community managers and brands.

On Instagram, there is a new type of "like bait" making strides in being an effective approach to sparking engagement. Instead of making the call to action in the text description that is associated with the image, many brands are including the call to action directly in the visual. Another approach for driving interaction is giving users a 'this or that' choice and then asking them to "like" for this or "comment" for that.

Instagram isn't for everyone but it most certainly can drive results when used appropriately. It's important to identify and analyze your overarching digital plan and determine whether or not Instagram is a good fit for your audience. From there, if you determine that Instagram is a good fit and that you can connect with your audience using this channel, it's time to plan.

These tips and tricks will help you in the planning stage but constantly push yourself to be innovative and think differently. Aspire to create content and decline the concept of accepting what others have done as best practice. In reality, best practice is a one-way street to mediocrity and accepting the status quo. Instead, strive to create your own path and use Instagram to best engage and connect with your audience.

Marketing On Slideshare

Slideshare is a hidden gem for content marketers. It's not the sexiest strategy in the toolkit but with the right approach; it can be the most effective.

Most businesses don't realize that tweets and blog posts aren't enough to cut through the noise. For brands looking to cut through the noise they need to embrace content marketing beyond the status quo. And while everyone has heard about the power of content marketing on channels like Facebook and Twitter, many marketers ignore a quiet giant.

Enter the world of SlideShare.

SlideShare is a community for sharing presentations. Individuals or organizations can upload and share PowerPoint, PDF, or OpenOffice presentations. Anyone can find presentations on their topic of

interest. Users can tag presentations, and download or embed them into their own websites or blogs. Furthermore, SlideShare is a channel that over performs while being underutilized.

It's currently one of the Top 150 sites on the web generating 60 million visitors a month along with 3 billion slide views. Numbers like these make you wonder why you haven't been included SlideShare in your own marketing mix. With thousands of pieces of content being uploaded to SlideShare every month, how do you stand out and market your business on the world's largest professional content site?

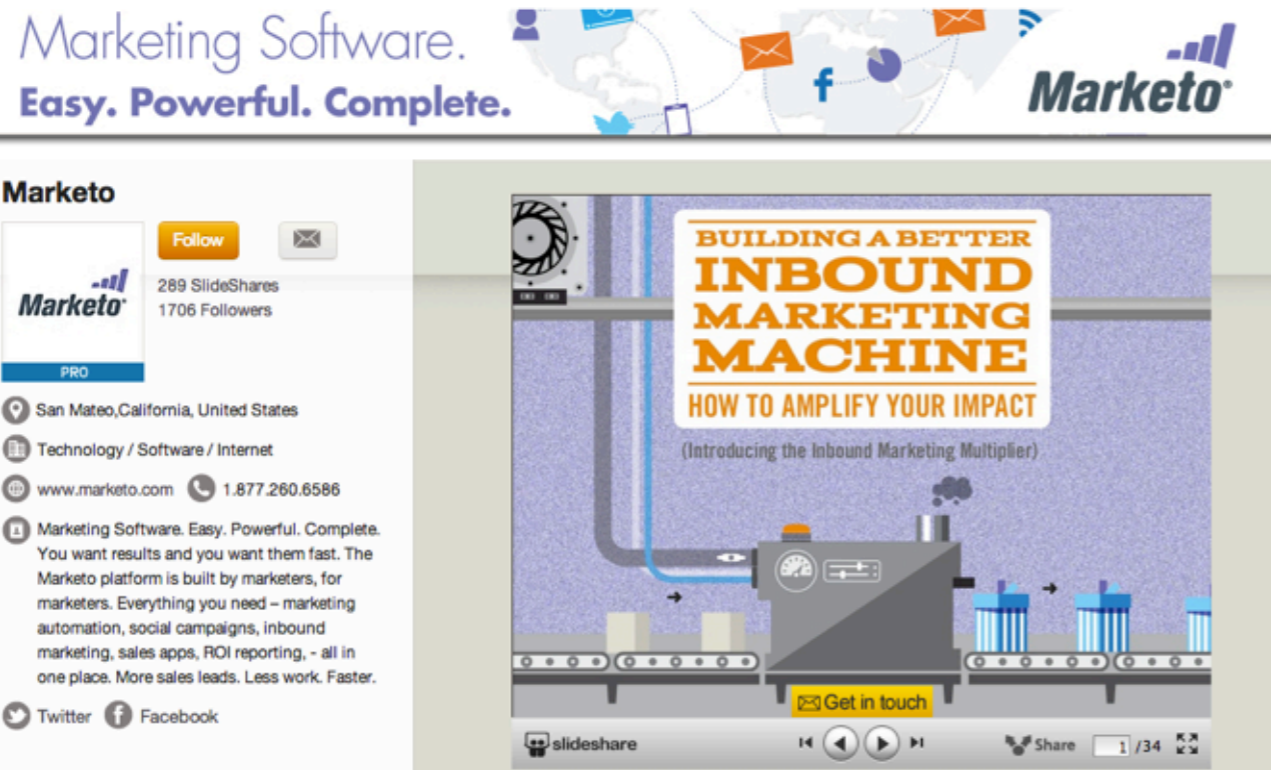
This guide will provide answers to those questions while providing insights that will take your efforts to the next level.

Whether you are a SlideShare beginner or a design pro, this information should serve as an in-depth guide for marketing on SlideShare.

Getting Started: Understanding Basics

Similar to most social networks, you start out on SlideShare by filling out the standard information about your business. In the example below, you're looking at the SlideShare page for the

marketing automation software, Marketo. In their page you can see a few key pieces of information that they were required to fill



out to complete their profile. Here are the things you'll be expected to do at launch:

- **Decide Between Standard & Pro:** I'm a huge fan of SlideShare for organizations that are playing in a B2B space. If your business falls into that category then paying for a Pro account is probably a good idea. A Pro account gives you a wide range of customization as seen in the Marketo page above along with perks that will drive new opportunities directly related to business acquisition.

- **Identify Your Industry:** There is a wide range of content on SlideShare. Select the industry that is most relevant to your business so it's easier for users to find your content when doing research or looking at similar content.

- **Website & Social Media Links:** It's all about driving conversion in B2B. This isn't a groundbreaking idea but it's one that marketers tend to ignore and put on the back burner. SlideShare allows for integration with your site to cross promote other channels.

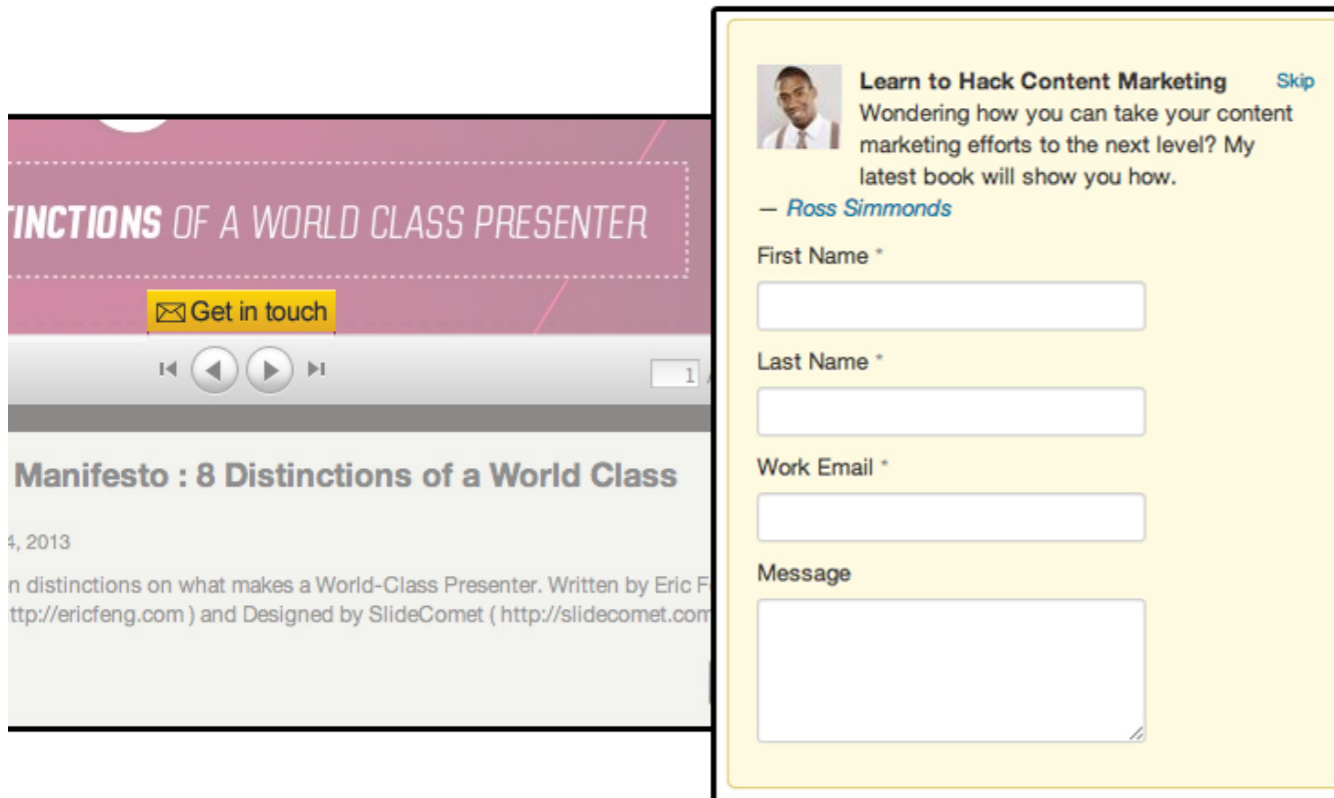
- **Tell Your Story in Your Description:** In a paragraph or two try and summarize in a few sentences what your brand represents and what your value proposition is. Within this, ensure that you reference keywords that are related to the content that will be found in the presentations you will be uploading to SlideShare.

The Power Of Slideshare PRO

Lead Capture Campaigns

For me, this is where SlideShare really separates itself from other visual channels. The folks at SlideShare recognize that the B2B industry is all about generating relevant and qualified leads and they've integrated functionality to allow businesses to do just that.

SlideShare offers a few different ways to generate leads. First, you can easily capture a significant amount of leads by driving traffic directly from your presentations to your website or landing pages. You can do this by adding links throughout your slides or simply including a URL when you set up your account. This is the



This form will appear at the end of any slides that I've uploaded to SlideShare once the user has reached the end of my deck. Additionally, if a user is anxious and clicks the "Get in Touch" button, it takes them directly to a form, driving conversion.

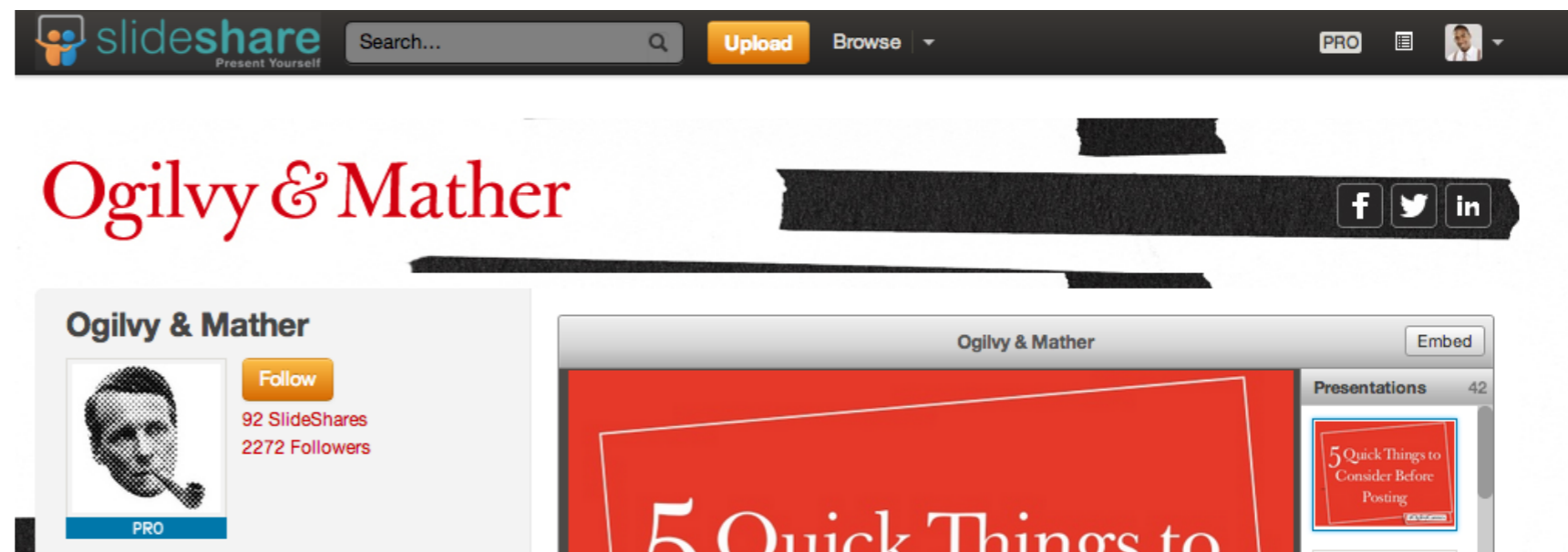
On-Page Branding Capabilities

Outside of the background image, brands also have a chance to upload a custom banner at the top of their Slideshare. As you see in the visual above, these are great ways to inject your brands story into your Slideshare profile with something as simple as a logo. Additionally, this area is also privileged to HTML customization which gives you another opportunity to drive users to secondary channels like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Once you have these things sorted out and your account is armed and ready to drive results, it's time to start uploading content. But what content should you share? What content goes viral on SlideShare? I thought you would never ask...

expected.

How SlideShare goes above and beyond is with the lead generation form integrated directly into their slides. In the visual above you can see that there is a form that is specifically talking about my upcoming book, The Entrepreneurs Guide to Content Marketing.



Slides Demonstrating Thought Leadership

Thought leadership is the differentiator between content that blends in and content that stands out ([Tweet this](#)). A lot of people like to believe that thought leadership and content marketing are one and the same but while that should be the aim, it's far from reality. Most content consists of ideas and stories that have been shared in the past and are simply being told in a different way. Thought leadership is rare which is why it's so valuable.

When you conduct research to gather insights and data that have not been shared in the past and lead to groundbreaking thoughts, you achieve thought leadership. At the same time, when you curate information from around the web and communicate it in a way that is unexpected or sometimes contrarian to the norm, that too, is thought leadership. Essentially, thought leadership is any type of content that is so valuable that it requires your attention. Here's an example of a slideshow from the co-author of Venture Hacks and a co-maintainer of AngelList; Naval Ravikant:

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Here's an example of a slideshow from the co-author of Venture Hacks, and a co-maintainer of AngelList, Naval Ravikant:



These slides were shared thousands of times and drove significant awareness of AngelList among entrepreneurs interested in learning about what makes certain startups fundable and others not. At the same time, this slideshow further demonstrated the knowledge and expertise carried by Naval in an engaging way. One of the key benefits of SlideShare is the ability to embed slideshows in blog posts and other areas of the web.

This presentation was shared on a wide range of blog posts and media channels to further increase the spread of these ideas and slides outside of the SlideShare domain. That's the power of thought leadership.

Create Industry Valued Content

Similar to the reason you're reading this guide, people have a thirst for learning new things. We're hard-wired to be curious and as such, we're often on the hunt to find new things and acquire information that will help us grow. Whether it's information that helps us grow as individuals or helps us grow as professionals, we often push ourselves to constantly seek out content that fills our minds with insights and information that we didn't know before.

In many cases, the content we look for isn't necessarily thought leading ideas. In fact, the majority of these pieces of content that we embrace and spend hours reading are simply the stories of others and the lessons they learned along the way. Sometimes all it takes is a personal touch or a unique spin on a heavily discussed topic to make something relevant and worth reading ([tweet this](#) ideas). It's the difference between a piece of content that falls flat and one that is truly compelling.

An example of this being done on SlideShare is the folks at Firmex who created a slideshow sharing *10 Weird Finance Facts*

which has more than 86,000 views. The presentation is filled with facts like "JP Morgan's Uncle, James Pierpont, wrote "Jingle Bells" in 1857" and they end the slideshow stating that "If you invested \$100 in Microsoft in 1986 it would be worth XXX today – Click here to find out." This call to action drives users to the Firmex website where they move potential leads further down the funnel and into a channel where their contact information can be more easily acquired through a landing page specific to them.

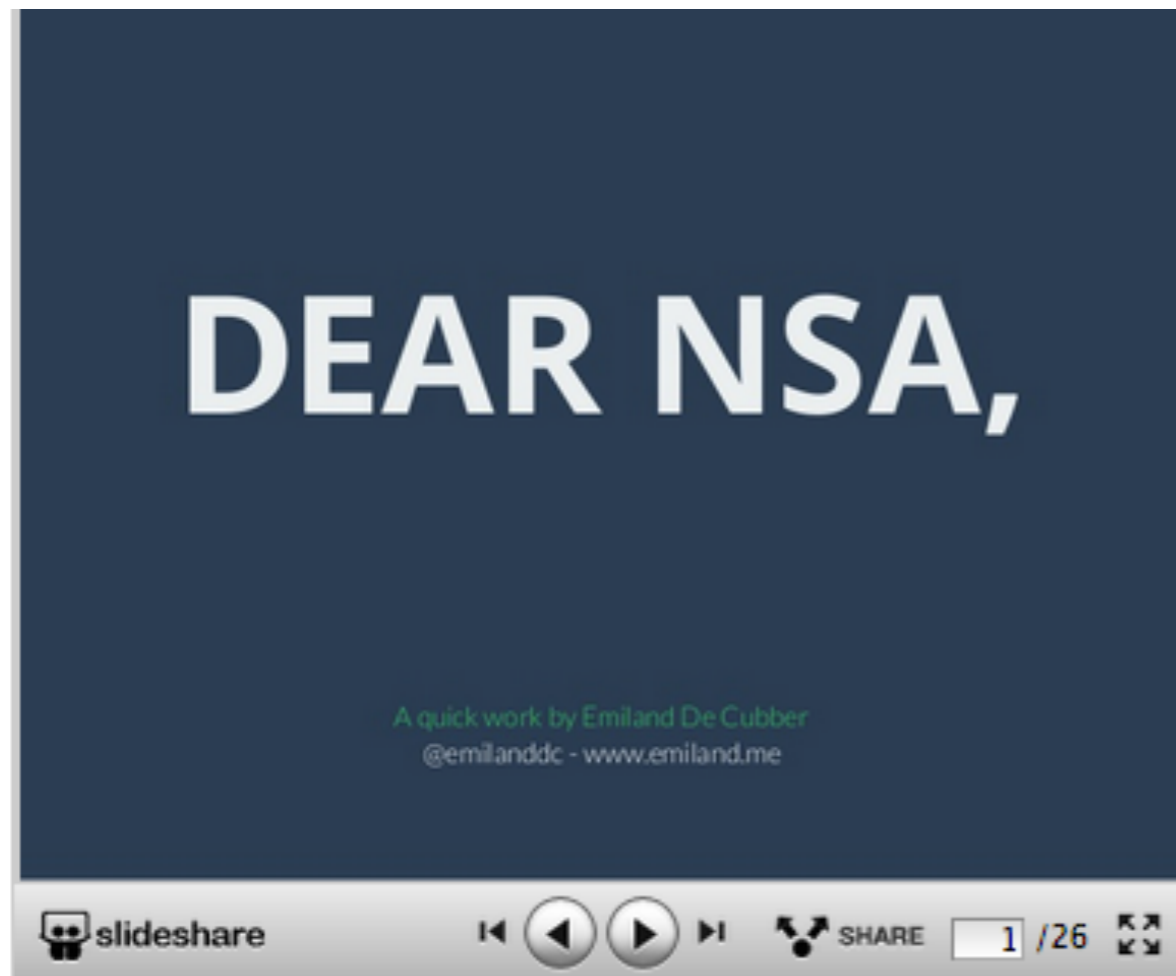
Content that is Reactive yet Relevant

Reactive storytelling is an approach that is driving results for brands day after day. It's the combination of a top of mind idea or concept combined with a highly relevant marketing message. For example, when Prince Harry went to Las Vegas and was caught dancing naked, the Las Vegas Tourism department took a reactive storytelling approach when they created new ads that promoted the concept of "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas, right Harry?"

On SlideShare, there is also an opportunity to utilize reactive storytelling. Yes, it's challenging but when done correctly, reactive storytelling is an effective way to generate viral content. Emiland De Cubber is already known on SlideShare as one of the best presentation and slide designers after creating hits like Seven

Tips to Create Visual Presentations and Presenting Like an Artist. But his most recent slideshow has truly gone viral.

When the world heard of a leaked NSA slide-deck claiming that the NSA has “direct access” to servers at Google, Apple, Facebook, Skype, Yahoo, and many others – the media and the internet went wild. The slides were shared on the National Post, CNN, Boing Boing, and almost every other credible news outlet. As expected from a government agency, the slides were actually quite hideous and hard on the eyes. That is, until Emiland De Cubber took the slides and redesigned them for the world to see.



The final slides in this put the icing on the cake. He takes an extremely topical story and ties it back to how he can help anyone with their slides. It’s brilliant.

Check it out here: <http://www.slideshare.net/EmilandDC/dear-nsa-let-me-take-care-ou>

Transparent Updates on Your Startup

Another opportunity for brands using SlideShare is their ability to give people a closer look behind the scenes. Furthermore, it gives brands an opportunity to be more transparent with both investors and customers and develop a sense of community. One brand that does this extremely well is the flash deal site, Fab.

In recent years, Fab has used SlideShare to provide updates on everything from Big Fab Announcements to a look back at annual results and successes. The slides they share are always well designed and tie well together as they truly communicate the essence of the Fab brand. Beyond that, these slides allow them to foster a relationship with their customers beyond their inbox. On the right you will find what they described as their 2011 journey from zero to hero.

In this SlideShare, they take a journey through their startup’s culture and history as they uncover the various milestones they’ve met along the way. Whether we’re talking about raising their first Series-A of \$8M or their first day of achieving cash flow positive;

it's all highlighted in this transparent deck that would typically make an organization cringe.

Yet, in today's world, it is things like this that build trust and establish a deeper connection between brand and consumer. As such, it's important that you consider how your startup can talk less and show more when it comes to transparency.

As you can see, the slides here aren't your boring basic corporate slides. From one slide to the next you're met with a beautiful design along with some key lessons to increase the value a reader gets from looking at the deck. Slides that have value are the differentiator between slides that achieve success on SlideShare and those that don't. When you can inject value into your presentations, you win.

No matter what social media channel you choose for your content marketing efforts, you need to identify whether it will help you achieve results. So instead of just trying to jump on the bandwagon of every social network, think about your target audience and identify whether you think the channels you're using will allow your message to get in front of them.

If you are using SlideShare now and driving results, good for you! You are a rare breed. Most brands and businesses are ignoring this quiet giant and as a result missing out on a chance to truly maximize their return from social media. While there may only be a handful of B2C case studies that show the power of SlideShare, it's without question one of the biggest opportunities for businesses looking to market in the B2B space.

The image shows a SlideShare presentation deck. The main slide is titled "Design Sales Site Fab.com Hits 350,000 Members, Raises \$8M To Celebrate" and is dated July 26. It features a large "350,000 Members" and "\$8M Series A Fundraise led by Menlo Ventures". The slide includes social media sharing options (Comment, Like, Tweet, Share) and a bio for Robin Wauters. The background shows a blurred screenshot of the Fab.com website. The right sidebar shows a list of other presentations by Jason Goldberg, including "5 Big Fab Announcements | April 30, 2013", "The Fab Way - January 2013", "18 Months Of Fab", "The Fab Story After 9 Months - London Web Summit April 19, 2012", and "21 things we're learning at Fab.com - October 2011". The bottom of the slide shows navigation controls and a page number of 19/39.

Reach Is Still Very Important

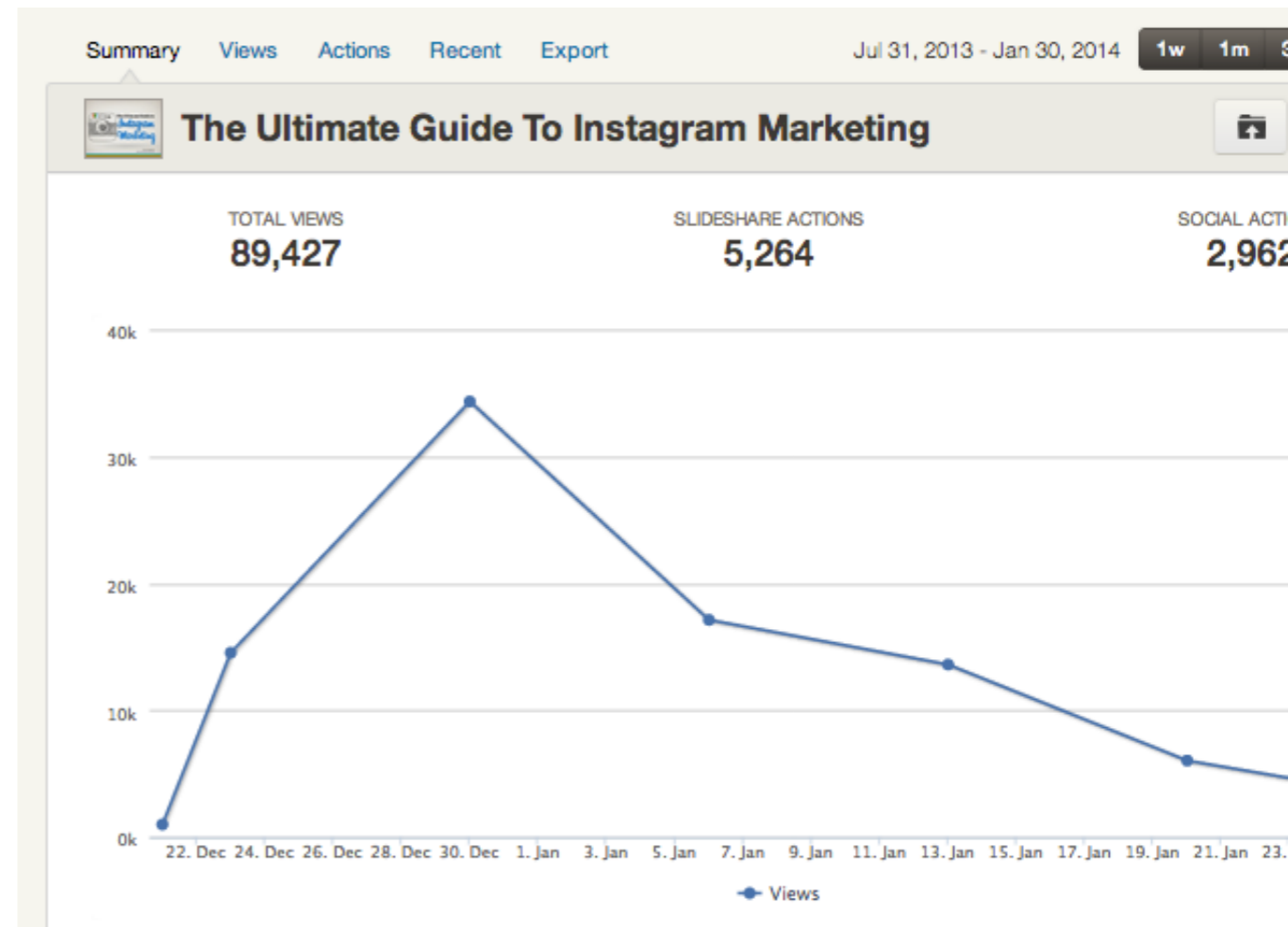
If a tree falls in the woods and no one is around, does it make a sound? If a SlideShare is published and nobody reads, it was it worth creating? My answer is no.

In business, you need people to see your content for it to matter. If you're creating slides as a hobby or as a class project then you can be satisfied with 50 or 100 views. In business, your slideshow presentations need to reach thousands of people for them to be worth the effort. So how do you make your slides spread?

If you've followed the ideas that have gotten you this far in the book, you already know what type of content stands out. You understand that educational, entertaining, and engaging content will allow you to cut through the noise. That's step one. The second step is to leverage existing channels and networks to seed your slides to the right audience.

In December 2013, I launched *the Ultimate Guide to Instagram* as a test SlideShare presentation. I wanted to see how many sign ups I could generate for this eBook and better understand how SlideShare can work for business. Upon launching the SlideShare, the results were far from impressive. But then, I decided to release the blog posts in a series of two guest blog posts that would be featured on two awesome blogs: *Social Media Today* and *Steamfeed*. The impact that these two guest posts had on my SlideShare's number of views, downloads, and

shares was amazing. *The Ultimate Guide to Instagram* quickly became the SlideShare presentation of the day, was in the top 5% of most frequently shared SlideShares for that month and doubled my number of signups for the standout guide.



The two spikes that you see in the graphic here (Dec. 24 & Dec. 30) are the two points in which I pressed published on these guest posts. The traffic on these two days was higher than every before and shows the value of reach.

Furthermore, this goes to show that reach really is the second most important aspect of creating a successful slideshare campaign. The educational aspect of the deck was a given, the reach was something I had to work for.

PRO TIP: So, this is something I learned the hard way. When you're using SlideShare, a Pro account is more important than you might initially think. You see, when I released the Ultimate Guide to Instagram on SlideShare I was using a Silver Pro account which is \$19/month. What I didn't realize was how effective SlideShare was for lead generation - within the first 2 days of this guide's launch, I had maxed out the number of leads (30 leads) I could capture. I increased my limit to Gold and within a week, maxed out the number of leads I could capture again (75 leads). I then tried to increase my limit once more and was met with a response from Slideshare that platinum packages were being shut down.

Infographics, Ebooks and More...

“Evergreen content is so valuable is because it continues to work for you long after you publish it” - @Pamelump

An infographic is a visual narration of information, statistics, analysis, details or knowledge. Infographics are often used by brands and businesses looking to explain complex data to a desired customer or audience. In many ways, infographics are simply a more entertaining and unique way to share information and it allows for your thoughts and ideas to stand out amongst a world filled with text.

Contrary to the belief of some marketers, infographics are not dead. There is simply a higher demand for quality infographics than there was when they were first developed. Over time, there has been an

increase in the number of businesses and blogs creating visual content. As the volume increased, the quality decreased and people started tuning out to infographics being shared throughout the web. As a result, it's important that you cut through the expectation and elevate your brand by ensuring that you're delivering rich and unique content.

When done properly, infographics can elevate a startup's brand through a beautiful and captivating design.

Infographics are not only great for brand development initiatives but also provide startups with the ability to achieve:

- (1) An increase in backlinks for SEO
- (2) Convey a complex idea very simply and
- (3) Spark ongoing and consistent social media shares. They can play a key role in your content strategy.

One mistake that many businesses make when it comes to infographics is over or under branding. I know, it sounds simple but you can go to one or two extremes when it comes to infographic branding. If you forget to properly brand your infographic and it's being shared frequently; you will generate little benefit outside of a random backlink. On the flipside, if you create an infographic that

is overly branded, people are simply not going to be interested in sharing your content as they'll feel it's more of an ad than anything. Most people don't want to share ads with their friends; they want to share cool content.

Enterprise startups like Unbounce and KISSmetrics do a great job at developing and delivering rich infographics. These infographics are tied directly to their brands essence and fully supports their value proposition. For example, KISSMetrics created an infographic describing how colour impacts purchasing behaviour and it went viral. As a marketing company, they recognized that this piece of content was something that marketers would be interested in. In doing so, a relevant audience shares this post with their network and drives potential leads directly to their site.

Additionally, they have created a handful of marketing specific infographics:

These infographics really helped kick-start the success of the startup KISSmetrics. This team has created more than 50 infographics and these efforts have driven some seriously impressive figures.

Consider the following:

- 2,512,596 **Visitors**
- 41,142 **Back Links**
- 3,741 **Unique Referring Domains**

The power of infographics doesn't stop with B2B startups. There are hundreds of businesses using infographics to deliver a captivating and visual message through infographics.

One of the pioneers of infographics were the folks at Mint.com who launched a wide range of infographics showcasing things like *“Talking Turkey: Thanksgiving Facts & Figures”* or *“The Rich Index: How Much Money Do You Really Need To Be Considered Rich”*. In these, they offered up a handful of stats and insights that were readily available but never delivered in a compelling way. Mint took these figures, added a compelling narrative to the facts and figures, and then shared it with the world.

Studies show that visuals are easier for people to process than text and numbers. As a result, it's content assets like infographics

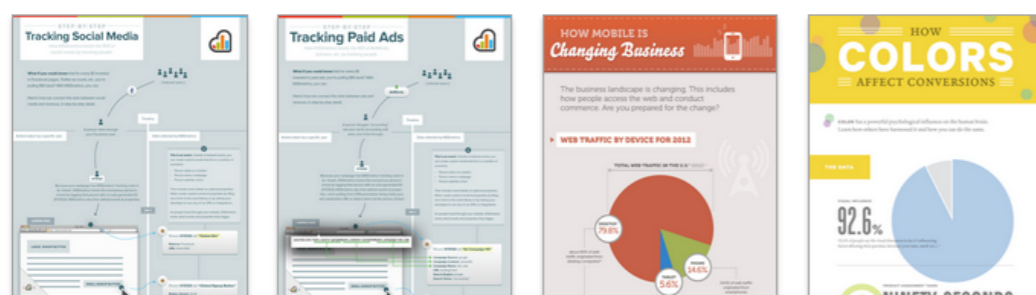
 KISSmetrics

Learn What Google Analytics Can't Tell You

Free!
Infographics

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2013



324

Like

1,488

Tweet

109

8+1

83

Buffer

that have helped brands go from startups in a college dorm to million dollar businesses. If you can build a high quality infographic, people are likely to share it with their friends and colleagues and some are even likely to print it off for the world to see. I'm not kidding... When I was working in the advertising industry, I walked past a colleague's desk and noticed four printed out infographics stapled to his cubicle. On the bottom corner of those infographics were the logos of two startups: Radian6 and Marketo. As it stands today, one of those companies were acquired by Salesforce for more than \$100M and the other is considered a billion dollar company.

eBook & White Paper Development

As soon as I talk to a founder (mainly developers) about the opportunities associated with the development of an eBook their first response is something along the lines of “wait a minute!? I'm no author.” And my response is always the same, “You don't have to be. You're not writing the next Harry Potter series and definitely not writing the next 50 Shades of Grey.”

You see, when it comes to creating eBooks or White Papers for content marketing you don't need to be a fiction writer. You simply need to create a piece of content that will inform people of something they didn't know before reading it. If you're putting together a piece of content to download, it needs to do one of these four things:

1. Provide Value to your Target Market
2. Is Full of Insights and Examples
3. Worth Reading More than Once
4. Answers An Important Question

Take for example this eBook created by the folks at Unbounce called ***The Smart Guide to Email Marketing Conversion***. The following is their landing page, it tells you exactly what you're going to get from submitting your email and a bit about the book itself:



What's in the ebook?
Email marketing evolved. That's what this guide is all about. It's how smart marketers are combining email campaigns with targeted landing pages to increase their conversions.
As we'll learn, the real crux of effective email marketing is based on the principle of sharing, not selling. You do this by leveraging your expertise through content marketing.

1. Why Email Marketing Loves Landing Pages
2. Growing Your Subscriber List the Smart Way
3. Building Mindshare with Great Content
4. Converting Your Subscribers Into Customers

Get the ebook with your email address
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Get the ebook

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Georgiana Laudi
Director of Marketing
Expert in content, social and email marketing strategy.

Unbounce describes itself as a platform that allows businesses to build, publish & A/B test landing pages without IT. For many organizations, this is a great service and one that is

specifically targeted towards individuals leading a company's marketing department.

Recognizing that their target audience is someone who would be interested in things like email marketing; they created a book about it. Further, they talk about the key insights and takeaways one will get from this eBook such as conversion and growing a subscription list. These key attributes are things that marketers are constantly looking for and as a result, Unbounce is able to fulfill a need that will be sought upon more than once.

The most important part of writing an eBook is ensuring that the content is valuable. If you can develop an eBook that meets the criteria shared above, it's going to provide you with meaningful results. Once you've met the items on this checklist it's time to ensure that it's easy for your target audience to find the content and be converted. Conversion for eBooks is typically when you're able to capture data about the person downloading the book; email, phone number, name and/or company. This information should then be sent to your sales team who can add them to the CRM to move them down the sales funnel.

How to write an eBook or White Paper Worth Writing

If you've been blogging for some time now, you can easily string together some of your best content to deliver an interesting

eBook. If you haven't developed a series of blog posts and articles to pull from, don't stress – you can bring in a copywriter or start from scratch yourself. While it sounds challenging to write an eBook, it's not as hard as most people think.

The data shows that White Paper's are an effective tool for B2B startups trying to stand out in an increasingly crowded market. If you're working in the consumer space, it will depend on your audience and how captivating the information is but high value content tends to drive serious results.

The biggest challenges as they relate to White Papers are their difficulty to develop and the research that needs to go in them. They require a deep understanding both of the organization's product or service along with its application in solving real-world business problems. The key is to use the White Paper to highlight the key real-world business problem the startup's business solves and show thought leadership within your industry.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when developing White Papers:

- Similar to writing a blog post, the title of your White Paper is one of the most important pieces of generating success from your content marketing efforts. The key to a successful White Paper title is to avoid buzz words and shock your audience by clearly identifying a need they have along with an answer. For example,

AdAge launched an eBook in 2010 called *New U.S. Census to Reveal Major Shift: No More Joe Consumer or 47 Stats for Remarkable Holiday Marketing in 2012* by HubSpot, an inbound marketing company.

- Start with an abstract, an interest, and a problem. Share an abstract at the beginning of your White Paper and follow that up by clearly introducing the problem and interest as it relates to your target audience.

- Make sure that the topic you choose not only aligns with your brand but also aligns well with the wants and needs of your main target market. The development of truly engaging and informative White Papers requires a huge amount of effort from your content marketing team and research analysts. If you cannot identify a topic that will spark the interest of your target market then you shouldn't put the effort into this document.

- When you develop your White Paper or eBook, you must ensure that its key value is in providing people with new yet educational content. The content must be delivered in a format that is easy to digest. I always recommend that if you're creating a B2B White Paper that it should leverage things like market overviews, key trends, projections, thoughts on market evolution, relevant findings from third party research papers, historical data, and expert advice. If you can place all the right pieces together you will be able to present your target audience with the perception

that you have proprietary expertise.

- One thing that a lot of businesses make the mistake of doing with their White Papers is making them static text and nothing more. When you develop your White Paper, integrate the content with rich creative ranging from diagrams to actual photographs. Use sidebars, pull-out quotes, text boxes, bullet points, bold text, headers, and lists to emphasize key points. All of these tactics will help strengthen your argument and make the content easier to digest.

- Wrap up the White Paper with a powerful conclusion that leaves the user itching for your next White Paper. Be sure to also wrap things up with a conclusion that highlights the implications for the reader. It's always a great idea to write a point of view on how your target audience can use their new knowledge to achieve their business goals and objectives.

Now that you have all you need to start developing a White Paper worth reading, you can start writing this piece of work. And when you are writing it, don't forget to think about how you will use this content to drive conversion. Make sure that you ask people to submit their email to have it mailed to them and have a handful of links throughout your networks and website that drive more leads to this page to submit their information to download. From there, it's all about sharing the story and

getting the message out there around your new piece of content.

Give Your Audience What They Really Want

Too many businesses are creating content because they think it's interesting or unique when it's actually boring as hell. Too many marketers are using their content to show how smart they are without taking into consideration the content needs of their audience. Take some time and think about the people who are going to read your eBook. Is this topic going to be over their head? Is this topic going to help them do their job better? Or is this topic simply going to make them overwhelmed and never read another piece of content from you again?

As we discussed before, think about your customer's needs. Think about the topics they currently read and identify what type of content they would be interested in downloading. We're talking about your customers giving you their most valuable resource - time. You gave me your time to read this eBook and I'm extremely grateful. I hope that the content in this book has taught you something and if not, I hope the pages coming up do. Your readers are also giving you their time. Don't waste it.

Leverage Case Studies to Drive Success

When entrepreneurs who work in the B2B space ask me what type of content they should use to kick start their marketing efforts, I always

consider the development of a case study. To achieve success through content marketing you need to inspire your customers to share your story. In the enterprise, it's challenging to consistently have your customers talking about your product so I strongly recommend that you capture their story and share it for them.

If I use an app that makes finding great music easy, I'm going to tell all my friends. If I find a coffee shop that has a great atmosphere, I'm going to tell all my friends. If I find software that gives me a competitive advantage over my competition, I'm going to tell no one. Businesses want your product to be their little secret in their back pocket helping them win new business and be successful.

A case study is a client success story. It tells how you and your product solved a problem for your client along with the results. While almost any company can generate success from the development of case studies, several studies have shown that it's one of the more underutilized aspects of content marketing while also being one of the most effective.

The Content Marketing Institute and the Direct Marketing Association recently implemented a study that found that 68% of B2B marketers found case studies to be the most effective form of content marketing. An effective case study makes the reader want to learn more about your product and reap the benefits that your other clients had. It's a soft-sell proposition designed to convince leads that you're the right solution for their problem.

While case studies may not be the sexiest tool in your marketing

toolbox, they are certainly one of the most effective. Here are some of the key benefits that come along with case studies in B2B industries:

They Help Your Sales Team Close Deals

It's a well-known fact that leads are more likely to be converted when they see or hear that a solution works from a third party. It's the reason why infomercials always show people who achieved amazing results from various products. So just as TV reviews can help to sell their products or services, so too can case studies for enterprise startups.

Case studies help your sales team use handpicked success stories that are customized based on key target industries. The development of case studies targeting specific needs that various customers have makes it easier for your sales team to communicate value.

You're Able to Amplify Your Relationship with Key Clients

As you start building your case studies, you need to think about clients you've done great work with and reach out to them. First and foremost, the client should be an existing brand evangelist who loves what you have delivered and is happy with the results. Once you've identified this client, reach out to them and let them know that you would like to use them as a case study. Furthermore, if you want to add icing to the cake, after they agree, give them something special like a month free.

You Spread Content Across Different Channels

After you've developed a series of case studies, think about the multiple platforms to which you can share this content. You can use Vimeo and YouTube for videos, SlideShare.com for presentations and PDF files, and your website to promote them.

Another great approach to sharing case studies that many startups overlook is directly on their sites. The case study is a crucial part of your sales process, especially in B2B industries. For B2C industries, the case study is replaced by on-site testimonials talking about how your product or service helped a customer fix their problem.

Twitter does a great job communicating the value of their various advertising options. The content for their case studies are very similar to any other brand but are communicated in a very compelling and unique way. At the top of the case study, they clearly layout the essence of what they accomplished:

Filter:

All Success Stories

By industry

By tactic

By product

By goal

By company size

Challenge

Engage Twitter users over 21 in real-time conversations to drive brand awareness and social responsibility on New Year's Eve.

Solution

Created an innovative campaign that combined Twitter's age screening technology with a Promoted Trend and Promoted Tweets to connect with the right audience and drive earned media.

Results

- Highest Promoted Trend engagement in 2012 by an alcohol brand: 13%
- +369% increase in positive brand mentions
- Over 751M potential earned media impressions

Produced and distributed by spirits company Diageo, Ciroc Ultra-Premium (@Ciroc) is one of the world's only vodkas derived entirely from grapes. @Ciroc creates their vodka through innovative cold maceration, fermentation and storage practices that are typically only implemented by the top fine wine producers. @Ciroc works with a variety of lifestyle ambassadors

Tweet



CIROC Ultra-Premium
@Ciroc

Followers must be 21+ to follow. Check e-mail for age verification requirements. Reply within 1 hour.

The key here is communicating the client's challenge, how you offer a solution and then the result of your product or service. This is the standard approach to case studies and is one that buyers have come to expect from their suppliers and partners.

Their solution

On December 31, @Ciroc ran the #CirocTheNewYear Promoted Trend to shape and influence the high volume of conversations about New Year's Eve celebration on Twitter. Leading up to and during the Promoted Trend day, the brand used Promoted Tweets to help tease the #CirocTheNewYear hashtag and spark engagement, targeting search terms related to NYE including "best of 2012," "party," "midnight" and "Times Square."



The design and powerful images from Twitter help communicate the value of their offering even further. I know this isn't a design guide but it's important that you craft your content with a design state of mind. Design the content experience in a way that differentiates from your competitor. Design your case studies so they don't blend in – they stand out.



**Developing
Content
Distribution
Channels**

Your Content Is Only As Good As its Distribution

‘Content Is King, But Distribution Is Queen.’ - [Jonathan Perelman](#)

According to Forrester Research, more than 85% of businesses publish content, but only 35% feel they’re doing it effectively. I’m of the belief that the majority of these individuals having trouble with their blogging efforts are struggling because they don’t have the right distribution channels set up.

Startups, businesses, marketers, and bloggers as a whole are flooding the market with content. I’m sure you’ve noticed the surge in the number of blog posts showing up on your newsfeeds and inbox over the last few months. It’s because more web content is being created every year than ever before.

Thus, the challenge for you as you promote your brand is not in the actual creation of content but in the ability to cut through the noise and have your content placed in front of the right audience.

Instead of simply thinking about the type of content you’ll create, you need to also think about where this content will go. By researching where your audience spends time, you can connect with the right people in the places they’re already using to discover information. Too many brands and startups play the waiting game when it comes to content and as a result they don’t reach the audience that they would like. I’ve already explained how to create

great content, now I’m going to explain how to get great content in front of the right people:

Leverage Guest Blogging to Share Your Content with A New Audience

Guest blogging is something that marketers have used for years to develop back links to their site and have their story told in front of a new audience. It’s still an effective way to impact SEO but more than anything it’s an effective way to

reach a new audience and increase the chances of having your story shared.

Guest blogging is the act of writing a blog post and publishing it on the blog of another relevant industry leader or organization. I've written guest blogs for industry sites like CrazyEgg, Salesforce, and friends such as Mike Allton and the folks at Steamfeed.com. Sharing my content with their audience gives me a chance to have my story told in front of a new audience which gives me the opportunity to drive new readers and followers.

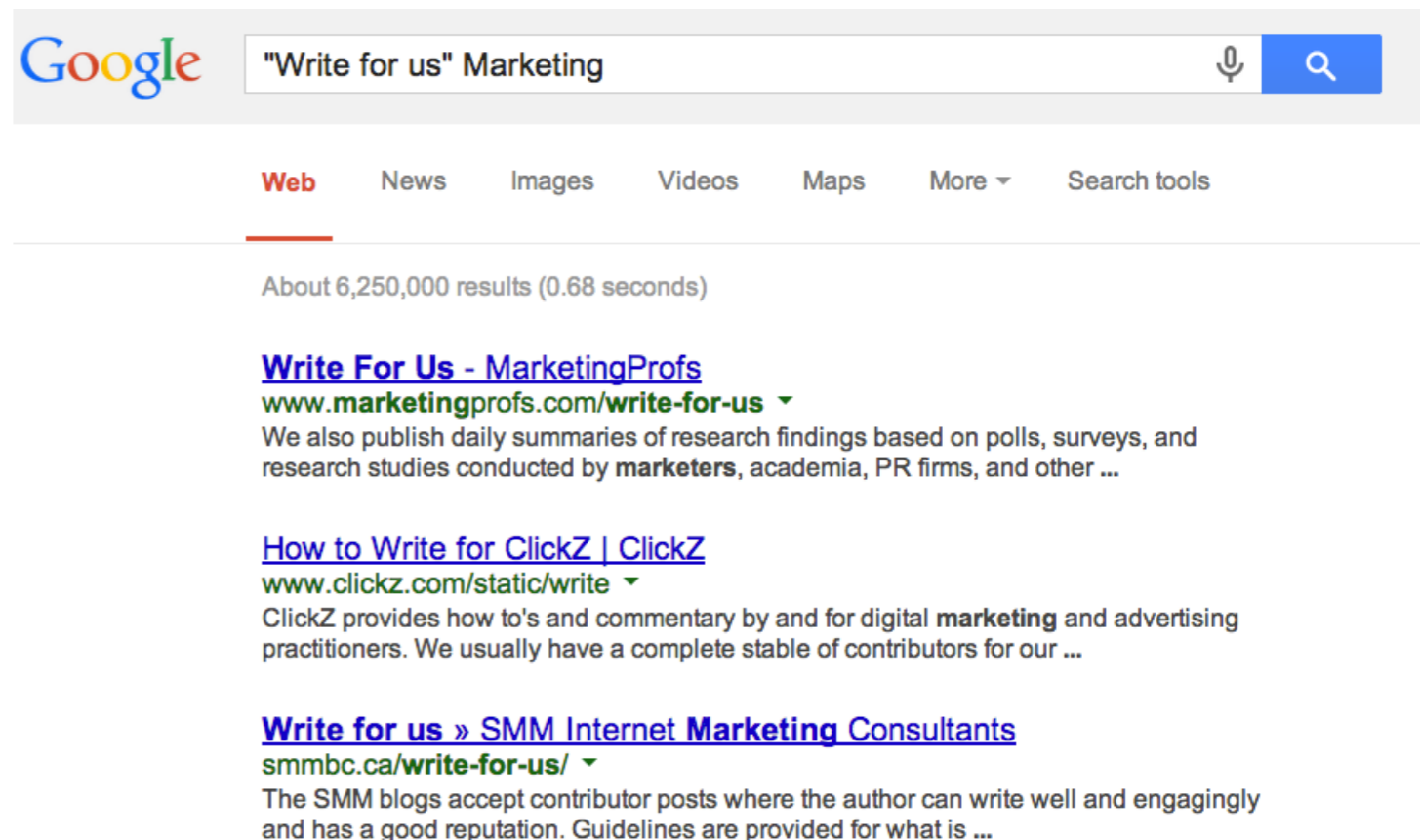
How to Find Guest Blogging Opportunities

Before you start writing a handful of guest blog posts that can be contributed, you need to consider where you'll be looking to publish this content. There tends to be three effective approaches to identifying and landing guest blogging opportunities. In this section of the book, I'm going to share with you three strategies that I've tried and tested and found great success for both my clients and myself.

Google Search & the Cold Submission

Blogs are thirsty for quality content. We've talked about how challenging it is to constantly push out quality content before and this challenge is what's driving more and more people to be open to having writers submit guest blog posts to their websites.

If you're looking for opportunities, the best place to start is with Google. You can quickly conduct a search like you see below with phrases like "Write for us" or "Blog for us" in quotations for an exact match along with a keyword relevant to your industry to uncover blogs that are looking for new content.



The image shows a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "Write for us" Marketing. Below the search bar, there are tabs for "Web", "News", "Images", "Videos", "Maps", "More", and "Search tools". The "Web" tab is selected. Below the tabs, it says "About 6,250,000 results (0.68 seconds)". There are three search results listed:

- [Write For Us - MarketingProfs](http://www.marketingprofs.com/write-for-us)
www.marketingprofs.com/write-for-us ▾
We also publish daily summaries of research findings based on polls, surveys, and research studies conducted by **marketers**, academia, PR firms, and other ...
- [How to Write for ClickZ | ClickZ](http://www.clickz.com/static/write)
www.clickz.com/static/write ▾
ClickZ provides how to's and commentary by and for digital **marketing** and advertising practitioners. We usually have a complete stable of contributors for our ...
- [Write for us » SMM Internet Marketing Consultants](http://smmbc.ca/write-for-us/)
smmbc.ca/write-for-us/ ▾
The SMM blogs accept contributor posts where the author can write well and engagingly and has a good reputation. Guidelines are provided for what is ...

Follow the link and you'll be taken to a detailed page highlighting requirements and instructions on how to submit or apply to contribute a guest blog post. Some of these blogs won't be the right fit but others will be the perfect place to feature content and share your story.

Through Nurturing the Right Relationships

Have you ever gone to a networking event and met a guy who insists on getting your business card before even knowing what you do? This is what I call the case of someone looking for quantity over quality in their relationships.

They are hoping that by collecting business cards as if they're baseball cards from the 90s they'll be able to meet more people and build more relationships. But in fact, that's not going to happen.

As blunt as this might sound, that's a stupid strategy. It's also a stupid strategy when you're running a business and are looking to make connections with people online. That's why I put effort into individual relationships I have with people instead of trying to have more connections than the next guy on LinkedIn.

When you're looking for opportunities to submit a guest blog, relationships matter. In fact, guest blogging opportunities that stem from a meaningful relationship tend to serve both parties better than the other approaches. It's because both sides want their contact to feel as if they got something out of allowing them to guest blog. The guest blogger wants to ensure that the content is of high quality and the site owner wants the blogger to see traffic, comments, and shares.

Hi [Blogger Name]

I absolutely loved your latest blog post on (Topic) – I have seen a lot of content on this very topic over the last few months but yours takes the cake. It really hit home and drove some insights that I didn't think about before.

I'm the owner of [Company] and we [Value Proposition]. I'm not pitching you on why you should sign up, I'm wondering if you would be interested in me submitting a guest blog post for your readers. I've followed your blog for quite some time and think I could deliver high quality content for your audience that they would enjoy and appreciate. Here's a blog post I was thinking would work:

[Title Of Blog Post]

If you're interested, I'll start writing this and send it for you to review. Let me know what format is best. In the meantime, here are a few blog posts I've written in the past:

[Blog Links]

I look forward to hearing from you – have a great one!

Your Signature
Website, Phone, etc...

Don't Be Afraid To Ask

Once you've built relationships with people who have blogs, it's time to ask them for an opportunity to publish on their site. When you do this, the best approach is to start by giving them a sample of the type of content you would be looking to publish on their blog.

I've used that exact template to land guest blog posts on sites that have doubled my newsletter list in one post.

Don't be afraid to ask.

Content Is an Asset, Not an Expense

By now, you should know how to create some serious quality content. It's time to start understanding the value of this content. (This is where you start driving long-term results.)

Remember the ideas you came up with for what types of blog posts or eBooks you could put together? Or maybe the images you're going to design and distribute on Facebook or Instagram? Every single piece of content that you develop, design, distribute, and create is going to be an asset for your brand.

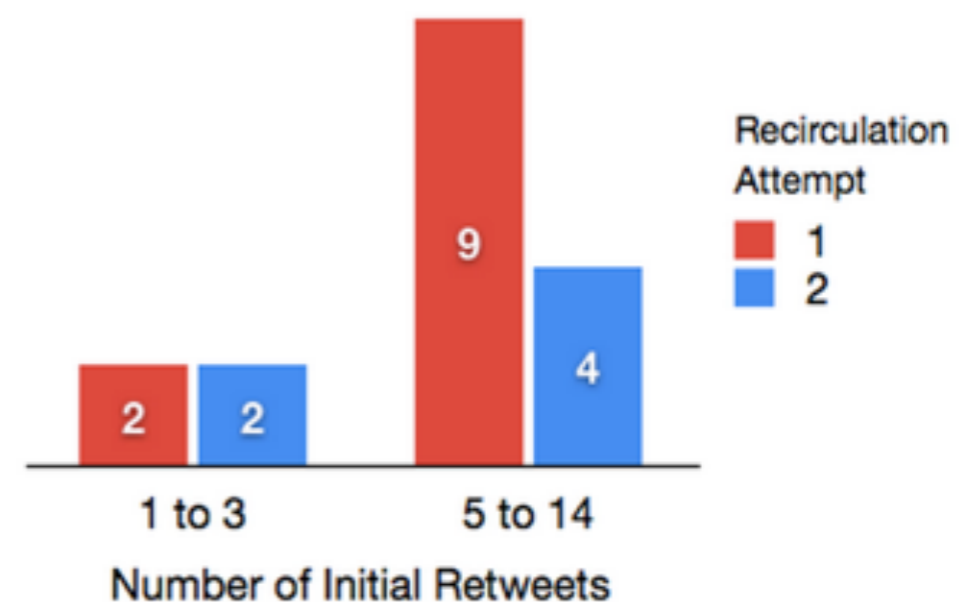
Assets are defined as a useful or valuable thing, person, or characteristic. Content should be considered an asset because the value it brings your brand doesn't solely exist on the day it's

first shared with the public. It's an asset that can be shared and leveraged for time to come.

Content that you develop should be shared multiple times on social media. It should also be used as a tool to distribute to your mailing list and potential prospects if you work in the B2B industry. Studies have already shown that reposting the same content can drive results for brands and organizations.

When Tom Tunguz, Venture capitalist at Redpoint Ventures did an experiment on his own blog to show how reposting the same content helped him to boost traffic, the numbers spoke volumes in regards to the impact of reposting. Based on these figures, it's clear that people were still engaged with his content even after already sharing it once before. As such, the content likely was

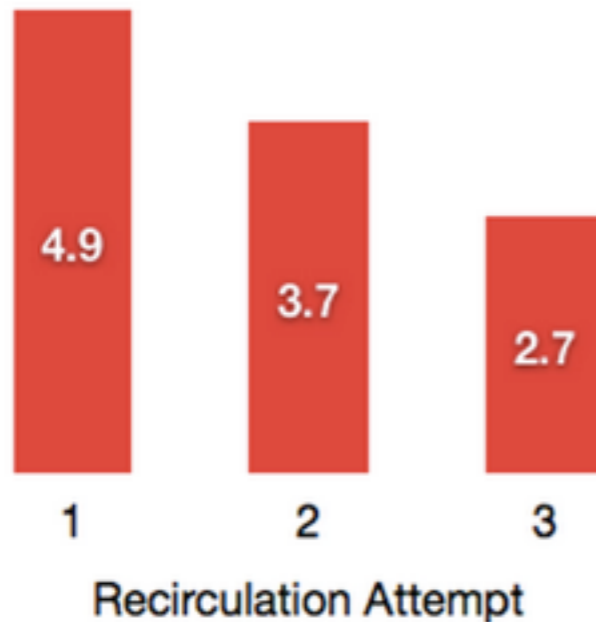
Average Number of Retweets by Segment



clicked by more people and drove more traffic due to the reposting.

As you think about your content, also consider how it plays a role in the buying cycle for your customers. A blog post that you write about your product may be someday found using Google and ultimately convert a lead from a prospect into a customer. Furthermore, an eBook that you publish could be shared with a prospect via email to help nurture an existing relationship. All of this demonstrates the value that content has long term. It's this longevity of your content that makes it an asset more than an expense.

Average Number of Retweets for Recirculation



Create Your Own Channels of Distribution

Social Media Presence

We've already discussed what it takes to create an effective social media presence. You should now have the insights and knowledge required to build a strong community. Once you've built this community, you will want to leverage it to share your content and tell your story. You will want to share your infographics on Twitter and blog posts on Facebook. One of the primary benefits of increasing your audience on social is that it increases the chances of having your content consumed and ultimately shared with more people.

It's important to keep in mind the power of Facebook and Twitter as content distribution channels. Sure, they can offer you great opportunities to build relationships and handle customer service but one of their primary benefits is in the ability to have your content shared with an already engaged audience. Every follow and like on these networks are people opting in for your content.

Give it to them.

Email Marketing

I'm so tired of hearing people say that email marketing is dead. It's not dead; it's just different from what it once was. It now requires more than just a list of emails and names to drive success. Marketers now need to be more strategic in their approach to subject lines and more ethical in their approach to list building.

For years, marketers have given a tainted reputation to email marketing. As a result, many people automatically think of email marketing campaigns as spam. Sites like Groupon and other deal sites didn't help the cause as people reached email fatigue in the matter of just a few short years.

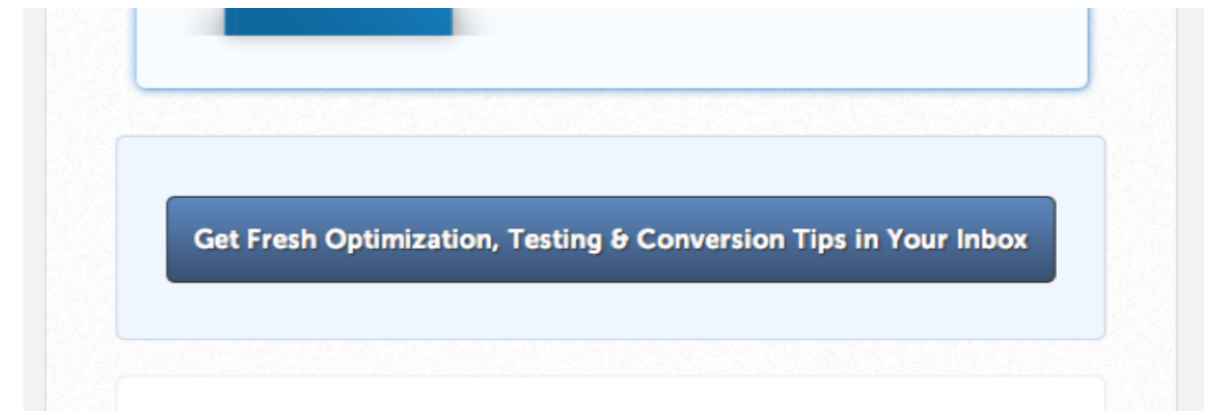
I'm talking about doing email marketing right.

I'm not talking about buying email lists or sending campaigns to people who haven't even heard of you before. I'm talking about sending email campaigns to a relevant audience with relevant content. I'm talking about building a list over time through compelling and interesting content that your target audience wants to open.

If you're unsure where to start with developing an email list, the first thing you need to do is set up an email list provider. Here are three options that I've used for clients and my own blog in the

past and have found each to be quality products: AWeber, MailChimp, and ConstantContact.

The next step is to create a place on your website where users can actually submit their email to be a part of your email efforts. Here's an example of how the folks at Unbounce promote their email marketing:



That call to action is placed at the bottom of each and every blog post they publish on their site. You should ensure that every blog you publish also has a call to action for your newsletter as the users who are reading your blog are going to be more likely to subscribe if you've held up your end of the bargain by offering quality content. It doesn't have to be a button; you could simply end with text reading:

"If you enjoyed this post, I'd love to hear from you in the comments! If you want more great content delivered directly to your inbox, click here and sign up for my weekly newsletter today!"

Give Away Quality Content to Capture More Emails

Coming up with even more content is hard. As content creators, we often underestimate the gaps that still exist beyond our writing. We often think we've covered everything there is to cover and very rarely do we go back and look at the other content we've developed and written in the past.

Start looking through your old content and identifying gaps in the knowledge you've published. If you look closely and have only been at this for anything less than two years, you will definitely find something to talk about.

Once you've identified something worth talking about, it's time to take that content and turn it into something of high value. This content needs to be something more than a blog post as it will be used as a tool to capture emails from people.

Here are a few ideas you can leverage to drive emails for your list:

- Host an online webinar and collect emails for signups.
- Launch an eBook and have a landing page that requires an email before a user can actually download or read it.
- Conduct a study on your industry and offer users some high quality insight and information that will help them or entertain them.
- Host an event and require an email to attend.

Do whatever it takes!

Remember the strategies we discussed earlier that were embraced by BeardBrand and the fictional mens fashion company? Those strategies cannot be overlooked! It's a combination of all these strategies that will help you stand out in comparison to your competitors.



**To Stand Out.
You Have To
Hustle.**

To Stand Out, You Must Hustle

#HustleHard

When I first started writing this book, it was September 2013. Since then, Facebook has acquired Instagram, Snapchat is starting to take off, Google has changed their search algorithm, and Twitter announced a redesign. I think it's fair to say that we live in a world where change is constant and that marketing is getting harder.

We have no choice but to stay on our toes. Marketers have to be aware of the changes happening in the market and how they impact their organizations. The fact that technology is changing so quickly reaffirms the idea that you need to be willing to hustle to succeed.

Marketing is no longer just about putting up a pretty billboard or airing a TV spot for 30 seconds and walking away. It's now about creating content that will cut through the noise and live beyond the 5 minutes of fame. It's about reaching out for guest blogging opportunities and staying up on trends that will help shape your story. It's about being smart enough to embrace the hustle.

When I talk about the hustle, I'm not just talking about late nights and several cups of coffee to meet a deadline. I'm talking about being smart with your efforts and strategic with your priorities. A hustler believes and recognizes that they need to have a core advantage over their competition. This

advantage is not in their ability to work hard but instead in their ability work smarter.

For years, there have been books published and seminars given promoting different methods to persuade and influence people in marketing or sales. One of the most common suggestions found in these recommendations includes the idea that you should "Make 500 calls and sell 5". Meaning, if you're willing to work harder than anyone else you'll have a slight advantage. And by slight, I mean one additional sale. What these folks are missing is the idea behind smart work trumping hard work.

Smart work is only possible by studying your craft and understanding your audience. In this eBook, you have already uncovered the psychology surrounding why people share content and what stories they are likely to write about. You've already studied the different types of content that will help you connect with your audience and you now know how visuals can help you stand out. It's this knowledge that will give your business a competitive advantage and an opportunity to go beyond the status quo.

Your business is your hustle. You need to love it. You need to believe in the idea behind it and believe that what you're doing every day is going to change an industry, the world, or help your customers. If you're honestly not obsessed with what you're selling or the problem you're trying to solve – all the content in the world will not save you.

Good content won't fix a decent business idea and great content won't sell a bad product. All the hustle in the world will not allow you to retain customers who don't see value in your product.

If your product sucks, this book won't help you.

It's not enough to have a great blog.

It's not enough to have a quarter million likes on Facebook.

It's not enough to be mentioned in Forbes or TechCrunch.

All the media in the world won't save a product that is mediocre.

So don't just set out to build something that is good – strive build something that is great. Whether it's your product, a tweet, a blog post or an ebook - Greatness is what you need to strive for. Because good content blends in, great content - stands out.



Resources

On Site Content – Product-Story Fit:

<https://www.mint.com/how-it-works/>

<https://www.mint.com/what-is-mint/>

Features vs. Benefits

<https://twitter.com/jasonfried/status/400733165964099584>

www.useronboard.com/features-vs-benefits/

Content – Sponsored:

<http://www.artofmanliness.com/2013/08/01/outfitted-equipped-american-rough-rider/>

Product Market Fit:

<http://www.startup-marketing.com/the-startup-pyramid/>

<http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/>

KISSMetrics: <http://blog.kissmetrics.com/>

(Custom Content Council, Apr 2011). 70% of consumers say content marketing makes them feel closer to the sponsoring company.

<http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/Global-Digital-Advertising-Spending-Projected-Increase-151-1184-Billion-2013-1746856.htm>

<http://blogs.salesforce.com/company/2013/06/content-marketing-stats.html>

<http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/2013-inbound-marketing-stats-charts>

<http://unbounce.com/blog/>

<http://blog.okcupid.com/>

Jonah Berger, Assistant Professor of Marketing at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania: <https://marketing.wharton.upenn.edu/files/?whdmsaction=public:main.file&fileID=3461>

New York Times, Why People Share: <http://nytmktg.whsites.net/mediakit/pos/>

Dan Zarella – Power Of Retweets:

<http://danzarella.com/infographic-how-to-get-more-clicks-on-twitter.html>

According to eMarketer, spending on content marketing, video marketing, and social media will increase by 15.1% in 2013 to a total of \$118.4 billion - http://www.contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/B2B_Content_Marketing_2012.pdf

<http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Digital-Account-One-Five-Ad-Dollars/1009592>

These types of pages are even more important to brands when you realize that organic search leads have a 14.6% close rate, while outbound marketing leads have a 1.7% close rate. - http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/53/blog/docs/ebooks/the_2012_state_of_inbound_marketing.pdf

Recent studies show that creating original content is seen as the biggest challenge for 69% of content marketers. - <http://www.poweredbysearch.com/creating-content-people-love-content-marketing-ideas-infographic/>

Instagram Search Tool - statigr.am/instagram-search-tool

Cool Material - <http://coolmaterial.com/>

Call To Actions In Your Content: <http://momentusmedia.com/blog/?p=819>

Red Bull Stratos - <http://adage.com/article/special-report-marketer-alist-2013/red-bull-stratos-space-jump-helped-sell-a-lot-product/243751/>

Tinder - <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/celebrity-news/the-alist/let-the-games-begin-olympic-athletes-using-tinder-app-to-hook-up/article16848076/>

Scientific times to share on Twitter: <http://blog.bufferapp.com/best-time-to-tweet-post-to-facebook-send-emails-publish-blogposts>

Story Pivot - <http://blog.bufferapp.com/5-key-lessons-we-learned-from-pivoting-our-blog>

UpWorthy: www.slideshare.net/Upworthy/upworthy-10-ways-to-win-the-internets

Evernote Twitter: <https://twitter.com/evernote/status/344248588257353729>

Infographics, Ebooks, and More – KISSmetrics stats: <http://www.quicksprout.com/2012/10/22/why-content-marketing-is-the-new-seo/>

Anatomy of a Fundable startup: <http://andrewchen.co/2011/06/21/video-the-anatomy-of-a-fundable-startup-by-naval-ravikant-of-angellist/>

Instagram Data from Hubspot: <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/pinterest-instagram-visual-content-data>

Firmex Slideshare: <http://www.slideshare.net/FirmexVirtualDataRoom/10-weird-finance-facts>

Case Studies: <http://www.marketingcharts.com/wp/online/uk-content-marketers-say-case-studies-research-reports-are-highly-effective-27825/>