

8 Keys to GREAT Content MARKETING

Real content marketing isn't repurposed advertising, it is making something worth talking about.

...I think that [real content marketing is] human, it's personal, it's relevant, it isn't greedy and it doesn't trick people. If the recipient knew what the sender knows, would she still be happy? If the answer to that question is yes, then it's likely it's going to build trust.

—Seth Godin

Content marketing is less about marketing and more about establishing relationships with customers—through online content that provides value to your customers and helps establish your brand.

BRAND

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Content Marketing Is All About the CUSTOMER

Somewhere along the way, marketing (advertising) turned into a game—to trick customers.

But lately marketing has returned to its roots—serving customers. Why the return? Internet commerce and Google search.

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Rise of Internet COMMERCE

The internet has transformed the relationship between companies and customers. Customers don't vet companies through phone calls and meetings anymore; they do it through online research.

The internet has created a whole new level of competition among companies. Customers aren't limited to companies in their area; they can do business with companies all over the world.



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EARLY SEO GAMES

Quick Timeline:

1. Online search replaces the Yellow Pages
2. A couple different search engines emerge (Google, Yahoo)
3. Google takes over online search (around 90% of all online searches go through Google)
4. Search ranking algorithms rely very heavily on keywords and links
5. Black hat marketers develop keyword stuffing and link stuffing techniques
6. Content farms and link farms emerge



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Striving for NATURAL SEARCH

Meanwhile, Google's end goal was always to make online search as natural as possible:

- High-quality sites rank highest
- Low-quality sites rank lowest
- High quality content means well-written, authoritative and valuable information from experts in their field
- Keywords fall in content as they naturally would in a conversation
- Valuable links are those from legitimate sites

Content marketing has to be natural. It has to convey information the way one person would naturally convey information to another person, whether in writing or conversation.

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Messaging Should Be for Customers, NOT YOU

It's not about you, it's about your customer. Frankly, customers don't care about us; they care about what we can provide them.

Forget boasting about your products, experience, services or great staff. Instead, write for your customers.

The goal is to provide as much value from your content marketing to as much of your target audience as possible.

— Forbes

As brands, we need to kill promotional marketing messages and start providing customer-centric information that is helpful to our target customers.

— Michael Brenner, VP of Global Marketing at SAP

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Valuable Content ONLY

With increased competition via the internet, there's only one real differentiator anymore: value provided

The most popular content on the internet typically has no commercial slant... Somehow, some way, a company needs to connect their content back to the underlying purpose and philosophy that guides their business. Otherwise, content marketing doesn't make sense.

— Moz

A strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing **valuable, relevant** and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.

Go back and read the content marketing definition one more time, but this time remove the **relevant** and **valuable**. That's the difference between content marketing and the other informational garbage you get from companies trying to sell you stuff.

— Content Marketing Institute



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WHAT GOOGLE LIKES

Google's algorithms are some of the most advanced on the planet. They're also some of the best hidden.



We know that Google spiders use at least 200 variables to establish internet search rankings. These are the most important for content marketing...

1. Quality and length of content
 - a. Content that is expert, well-researched and well-written
 - b. Content written for humans, not computers
 - c. Content that is lengthy (1,000+ words)
2. Content update frequency
 - a. The more you post good content, the more often Google spiders your site (e.g., Google spiders media websites multiple times a day)
3. Authoritative outside links
 - a. Links from other authoritative websites

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Social Media Is a COMMUNICATION TOOL

The general public uses social media as a platform for narcissism. Businesses should never use social media as a platform for narcissism.



Use social media the way you would use the telephone or email—as a tool for communicating genuine messaging to your customers.

Why? Because customers use it.

How should you use it? To communicate with customers and guide them to the valuable content you're creating and publishing on your website.