



Content is Still King.  
Period.

# “Content is king.”

Marketers have heard this phrase so often over the last 5-7 years the phrase is dangerously close to becoming a cliché. But do you know why clichés become clichés? Because they're usually true.

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Put simply, content marketing is a way to provide value to your readers, in hopes of ultimately turning them into prospects. It's how you can tell them about your deep expertise and knowledge base. If done correctly, visitors will turn to you for education, opinions and advice, because you've proven your company to be a thought leader in your industry or niche.

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And it makes sense, because content marketing can encompass blogs; white papers; webinars; videos; social posts; the list goes on. If it's relevant to your audience, it's content that can generate considerable ROI for your business, regardless of industry or vertical.

# Savvy companies employ content marketing

Content marketing does a great job of educating potential buyers and driving brand awareness. Brand-aware consumers often come back to your website to continue their research, but all too frequently, company websites tend to be sales-focused, rather than customer-centric. This comes from a lack of [content strategy](#).

While only [35% of companies](#) have a documented content marketing strategy, this 35% is more effective in all aspects of content marketing than the remainder. Your company needs to be smarter than the other 65%.

Companies that are smart about their content marketing make each visitor's experience across their

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marketing channels relevant, and speed up purchase decision processes by recommending the next best action for each visitor to take, based on how they previously engaged with marketing content.

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## But creating content is *hard*.

We know. That's why many companies skimp on it. A solid content marketing strategy requires research above and beyond what most companies are doing.

The first step in developing a content strategy framework is understanding your company. Not just the top-level offerings. Not just the bottom line. You'll need to have to have granular, expert-level understanding of the following:

- **Your core offerings and value propositions**

In other words, how does the company bring in customers? Is it solely based on products and services, or does the company make customer connections through other channels? Knowing this will help determine the right balance of sales-vs. information-focused content for your site.

- **Reaching (and growing) your target audiences**

This goes beyond just understanding the company's existing customers. Of course, you want (and need) to continue nurturing existing relationships. But one of the key benefits of a solid content plan is expanding the reach of your messaging past existing barriers.

Your content might resonate with a good percentage of your audience, but revisiting your content strategy will allow you to impact them more deeply, possibly leading to greater per-sale totals, more frequent purchases, or simply getting customers “on the fence” about bigger buys to commit.

We would never encourage you to compromise your core value propositions to gain new market share, but we also know your message can reach new audiences, simply by expressing all facets of your brand identity through content. If you feel like your brand is losing ground across your marketing channels, you’re probably right.

Maybe it’s time for a check-in: what are your competitors doing? How are they doing it?, This valuable information can help you reach those

potential audiences, but also grow beyond them. A good balance of curated and original content is recommended for social reach and the establishment of thought leadership.

And definitely don’t forget about SEO. A few years back, it was commonly believed the rise of content marketing would spell the end of traditional SEO marketing, but in reality, good content IS SEO marketing (or at least, a more-evolved version of the same concept).

If your content is offering relevant information that answers the most common long-tail Google searches, you’re bound to generate search traffic.

(Bonus points: if you’re smart about using related keywords, targeted landing pages, and the like, your traffic will only improve.)

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# Embracing the human factor

Content marketing, above all else, is about creating and sharing content with a specific goal in mind. Although the purpose may depend on your industry, the goal will always be about the same: acquire new customers and retain the ones you already have through relevant material.

Seems pretty simple, right?

It's a simple process, but it takes a lot of research, planning, and time to develop the right strategy for your business.

Thankfully, digital is enabling customers to connect with brands faster and easier than ever, and—because your customers are individuals with unique tastes, values, personalities, desires, and needs—they want to engage with brands that relate with those same ideals.

In fact, [82% of consumers feel more positive about a company](#) after reading custom content. Through effective blog posts, brands can easily convey value proposition and core ideals. Though simple to perform, these efforts immediately let prospects and customers know

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your company is aligned with their values...and perhaps stands for something more important than the market or industry.

For example, if your company is vocal about green manufacturing practices, or discusses how it contributes regularly to local charities, your content isn't just driving SEO, it's aligning you with something bigger—usually something people believe in strongly.

These types of emotional connections have proven to have significant effects on long-term relationships. When a consumer has

an emotional connection, they are more likely to be passionate about sharing it with others.

They also often develop a sense of loyalty to the brand. This builds lasting business relationships with consumers that end up buying products because of devotion to brand values. For retailers selling consumable items that must be purchased repeatedly, this loyalty is especially beneficial.

Today, brands aren't embracing content marketing because it's a buzzword; they're doing it because it's what their customers want and expect.



## But, how will all this benefit sales?

Content is extremely important to your [sales funnel](#) because it represents many opportunities to introduce potential customers to your knowledge base, and demonstrate your expertise in your industry—all depending on what, when, and how your customers will access or desire that information.

In other words, people will be more likely to trust you because your content has established your brand as a credible one. And, with an ongoing commitment to thoughtful, innovative content and thought leadership, those initial buyers become brand loyalists.

Another major benefit for sales is the sheer scalability. Your sales teams can quickly and easily find out which content resonates best with certain audiences, allowing them to craft campaigns around those key messages. In turn, content that doesn't seem to impact your audience still offers sales teams information they need to adjust and adapt before spending money and resources on irrelevant campaigns.

Even better is how content marketing seamlessly integrates with other strategies. Highly resonant blogs, for example, can quickly be mined for quotes to drive social conversations, excerpts to structure email campaigns, and more. You already know the material was effective—now get it out to everyone who can benefit from it.

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# So, how do I start a content marketing effort?

As we covered earlier, effective content creation starts with research—we can't overstate how important this is. Identifying these key elements not only shows you where to start, it also helps to drive sales and marketing strategies across your entire business by giving you understanding of:

- Demographics
- Market trends
- Competitors
- [Customer journey](#)

While quantity matters, quality rules above all.

Attention spans are short and consumers are looking specifically for digestible content that provides real value. Doing your due diligence during the research phase will help you figure out what kinds of content will resonate with your target audience, and when in the customer journey, those pieces will be the most effective and deliver the most value.

In the end, your ideal content mix will be [dependent on your industry, business size, region, and customer needs.](#)

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## And what exactly should my “content” be?

While there are no hard and fast rules about what you should be doing (it is largely dependent on your company, your industry, and your specific content goals), most companies find success with a combination of the following:

### Blog posts

Articles that talk about issues related to your core message and secondary messages. They can range anywhere from 100 words to 2,000 words, depending on the format you choose and what your readers prefer. Articles that are more in-depth tend to rank better on search engines than articles that aren't thorough. (This one, for example, is 1844 words!)

### Social media posts

Potential customers aren't asking whether or not you're on social media, they're asking, “what's your Twitter username?” and, “do you Instagram?” (if relevant, of course). It's necessary to maintain the real-time connection required by today's customers. Depending on your audience, a viable [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#) presence is helpful. In turn, if your business is largely visual, you can add Pinterest, Tumblr, and [Instagram](#) to the list. A lot of work? Sure. The best way to engage audiences at minimal cost? Absolutely.

Your ideal social media mix can vary, depending on what your business is currently doing, and what it's trying to do. [There's value in a wide range of platforms](#), both new and established.

### Video

Your channel on YouTube or Vimeo provides another access point to your business. Some content marketers upload videos to YouTube, then repost to their blog. Others create a vlog (video blog) that lives solely on YouTube.

### Podcasts

Podcasting is rising with renewed popularity for people who don't have time to read, but are able to listen to articles while during their daily commute or other activities.

### Webinars

You can present information to a live audience during webinars and teleseminars, then use the recording and slides as content on your website, in newsletters, and in email campaigns.

### White papers

People want useful information that helps them make better decisions. That's why white papers, special reports, and other research-based assets make great premium content. You can periodically offer these as a value-add to your followers, or you can offer them as an incentive for signing up to your email list. (You can download this one below, by the way!)

## Conclusion

The biggest problem with content marketing today is that most companies think they're doing it well. However, a few blog posts here and a few Tweets there don't cover your bases or meet the needs of your audience.

In reality, a proper content marketing strategy requires in-depth, ongoing research, and a dedicated commitment to maintaining regular, consistently awesome material. It's a lot of work, but with the proper strategy and guidance, content can turn your company from a market "participant" into a genuine industry thought leader.

To learn more about how Lucid Fusion's content marketing approach can turn your brand into a trusted authority in your industry, [contact us](#) to get started!