

# CONTENT MARKETING FOR LEAD GENERATION



# WHY IS CONTENT MARKETING IMPORTANT?

Content is the foundation of your lead generation efforts. The Content Marketing Institute defines content marketing as “the marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience—with the objective of driving profitable customer action”.

Think of content as the fuel for all of your marketing campaigns—from email to social to event collateral.

Marketers have come to rely on content to engage prospects and customers in today’s new buyer landscape. You must create content that educates, inspires, and begs to be shared. It should help leads overcome challenges and achieve their aspirations. If you are able to do that, leads will flock to you, and you’ll gain their trust. Trust is ultimately what creates customers out of leads.

“Customers are now smarter, more connected, more informed, more influenced and influential socially, and less likely to respond to campaign-bait. Marketing has to create content people actually want.”

– **Tim Barker, Chief Product Officer, DataSift**



### What Form Can My Content Take?

Content is more than just ebooks. It can come in many forms, so think outside of the box!

- Articles
- Blog posts
- Case studies
- Cheat sheets
- Checklists
- Ebooks
- Email
- Infographics
- Kits
- Large definitive guides
- Podcasts
- Reference guides
- Slideshares
- Surveys
- Templates
- Videos
- Visual content
- Webinars
- Whitepapers
- Workbooks

# WHY IS CONTENT MARKETING IMPORTANT?

When used effectively, content marketing can:

- Shape a brand preference and influence future purchases
- Generate social media shares and inbound links
- Put customers in the driver's seat
- Help fuel search engine optimization (SEO) efforts
- Increase brand awareness
- Generate quality leads for less money (when compared to more traditional marketing)

### Ask the Experts:

## What is the biggest mistake marketers make in their content marketing strategy?



"A lack of formal business strategy around content. Right now, most marketers are filling content buckets, and lack a true business objective (such as revenue, cost savings, or customer loyalty) behind their content initiatives."

Secondly: patience. Most brands still call content marketing a campaign, which implies there is a stop date. Content marketing is a marathon, not a sprint. We need to take a longer-term view of how we communicate with our customers."

– Joe Pulizzi, Founder, Content Marketing Institute



"The biggest mistake is to create content that your boss or client loves, but your customer doesn't. If your customer loves your content, that means it's meeting the needs of the people you are trying to reach, which your boss or client will love by default. But the inverse isn't true. If your boss/client loves it, but the customer hates it...well, who cares? Ask yourself: What would your content look like if your customer signed your paycheck?"

– Ann Handley, Chief Content Officer, Marketing Profs



# THOUGHT LEADERSHIP VS. PROMOTIONAL CONTENT

At the outset of your content planning, it's important to make a distinction between promotional content and thought leadership. Thought leadership demonstrates a deep understanding of your prospects' and customers' pain points, and guides them toward solutions.

Any vendor can publish feature-focused brochures and other product-related content. But the trusted vendors—the ones that rise above the noise—are those focused on helping their target audience. Buyers naturally gravitate toward these vendors.

At Marketo, we create content that is simply meant to help people become better marketers. We also try to create assets that educate our audience about marketing automation as a platform, and how it can help marketers be more effective at their jobs. Instead of constantly pushing sales messages to our leads, we want to teach people the benefits of investing in marketing automation.

So while we are talking about our core competency—marketing automation—we are educating our audience with thought leadership, rather than pushing our solution.

### Content Marketing CTAs

That said, even educational content should have a strong, clear, call-to-action (or CTA). What is a CTA? It's the part of your marketing message that should persuade people to act. Your standard CTA might ask the reader to subscribe to your blog, download another ebook, or to sign up for a demo.

Regardless of what your ask is, your CTA must:

- Stand out
- Clearly define what you want the lead to do
- Create urgency
- Be positioned in a prominent area



ASK THE EXPERTS: CONTENT MARKETING

# WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF CONTENT MARKETING HOLD?



“Marketing departments will continue their transformation into mini-publishers. Analytics and data will be critical, but knowing more about our customers’ consumption habits will create a more complex need for useful content. The majority of journalists will be hired by non-media companies. We will start to see non-media companies buy up smaller, niche content titles in both digital and print form.”

– Joe Pulizzi, Founder, Content Marketing Institute



“I think it’ll look less like a separate thing—‘content marketing’—and more like, well, marketing! The future of all marketing is in programs that are useful, honestly empathetic, inspired, and based on data or creative insights. To quote my friend Tom Fishburne: ‘The best marketing doesn’t feel like marketing.’ And that’s the place where I think all organizations will eventually end up.”

– Ann Handley, Chief Content Officer, Marketing Profs

# THE CONTENT PLANNING PROCESS

Like any element of your marketing, you shouldn't dive into content marketing without a strategy. Content marketing isn't about creating content for its own sake—it's about engaging prospective buyers. To do that effectively, you need a plan that reflects your goals, an understanding of your target audience's top concerns, content ideas that align to these concerns, and a calendar for developing content on an ongoing basis.

### Creating Your Personas

The first step is to create your buyer personas—most brands will need more than one. A buyer persona can be defined as a representation of your ideal customer. Personas are developed based on customer demographics and behavior, along with your own understanding of their motivations and challenges.

Buyer personas help you:

- Determine what kind of content you need
- Set the tone, style, and delivery strategies for your content
- Target the topics you should be writing about
- Understand where buyers get their information and how they want to consume it

### Conducting Interviews and Research

To create your buyer personas, you should conduct interviews with customers, prospects, and members of your sales and customer service teams. You can also send out surveys and do your own research.

Focus on the following topics when creating each persona:

- **Background:** Basic details about your ideal customer and his or her company
- **Job details:** Key job responsibilities, likes and dislikes about job
- **Main sources of information:** Where your persona does his or her research
- **Goals:** Persona's primary and secondary goals

- **Challenges/pain points:** Your persona's challenges, and the emotions which accompany those challenges
- **Preferred content medium:** How your persona likes to absorb content
- **Quotes:** Bring your personas to life with actual quotes gathered during interviews
- **Objections:** The objections you anticipate from your persona during the sales process
- **Role in purchase process:** Persona's influence in the decision making process
- **Marketing message:** The messaging that speaks directly to this persona



# THE CONTENT PLANNING PROCESS

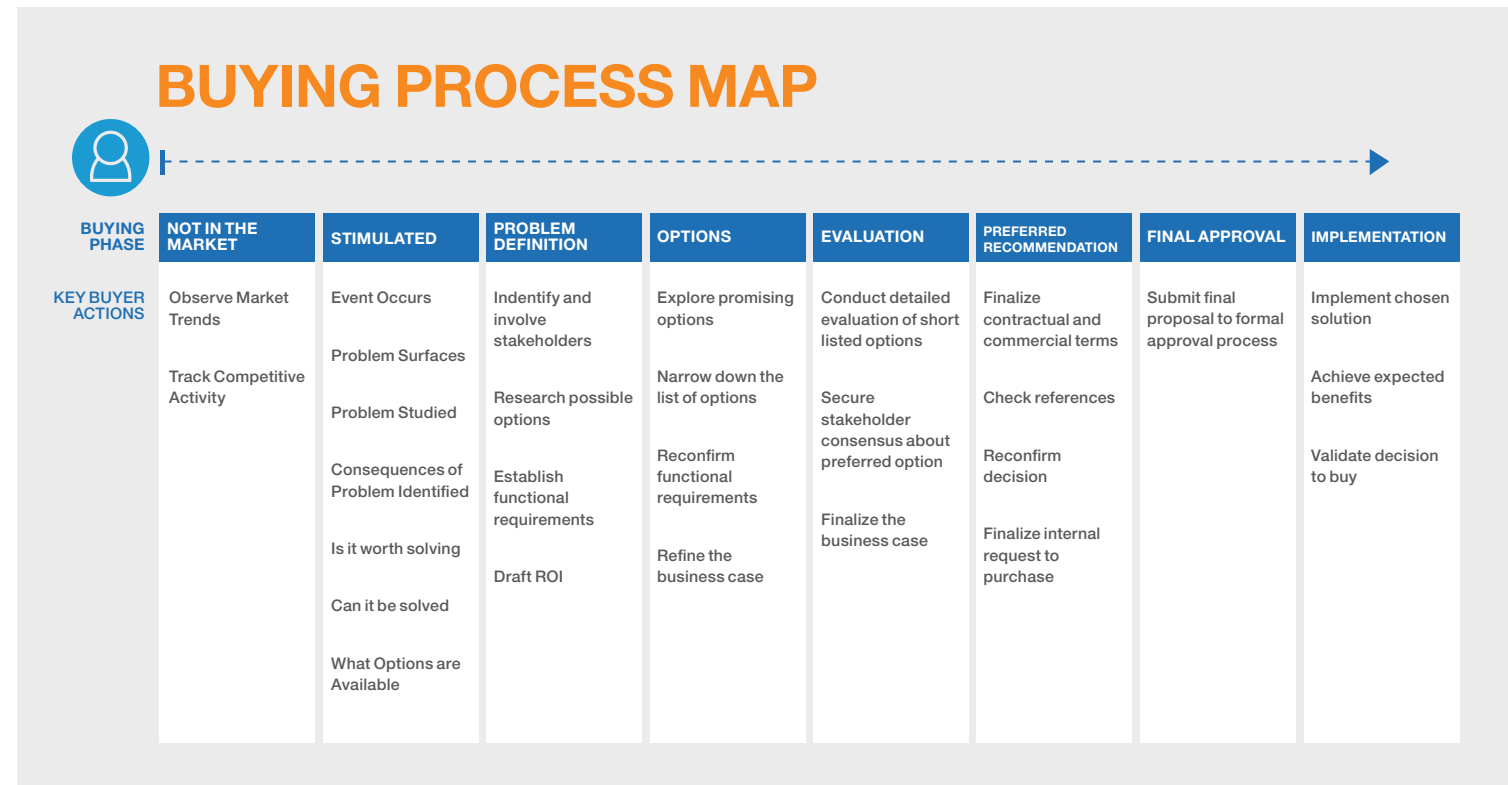


## Mapping Your Buying Stages

Now that you've defined your personas, you need to create a buying journey that will convert these personas into customers. A buying journey maps a buyer's decision making process during a purchase. Mapping this allows you to:

- Understand the process your buyers go through when considering your product or service
- Develop a content strategy that speaks directly to buyers, regardless of their stage in the buying journey

Here's a great example of a buyer journey template, created by Sales Benchmark Index:



Sales Benchmark Index Buying Process Map

# THE CONTENT PLANNING PROCESS

To map your own persona buying journeys, create a spreadsheet with a separate tab for each buying phase, and fill in the following items:

Buying Phase					
Actions & Questions	Buyer Action	Buyer Doing (Y/N)?		Questions Buyer Asks	
Key Buyer Actions	Event Occurs		Event #1		
			Event #2		
			Event #3		
			Problem #1		
			Problem #2		
			Problem #3		
	Consequences of Problem Identified				
	Consider Alternatives for Solving the Problem				
	Phase Exit Criteria				

Questions for each buying phase of a persona's buying journey



# CONTENT MARKETING

# VISUAL CONTENT



As content marketing is more widely used, readers are becoming inundated with text. That's why visual content is such an important way to engage. At Marketo, we've found that good visual design can make even "copy-pasta" content stand out.

## Make Every Piece Visual

Whenever possible, take your content to the next level with a visual element. You don't have to create custom illustrations for every ebook—just think about creating visual interest, whether it's with a custom cover or interior graphics.

Take a look at an example from a Marketo ebook on budgeting. Our topic—common marketing budget pitfalls—could have potentially been dry, but we jazzed it up with a compelling (and fun) design. With over 20,000 views, this content piece has done particularly well.



# CONTENT MARKETING

# VISUAL CONTENT

## Repurposing Content to Make it Visual

For a quick win, repurpose content you already have into something more visual. For instance, use content from an ebook to create an infographic or a slide deck. You might find that the visual asset is more shareable and easier to consume.

We took content from one of our ebooks, *Amplify Your Impact: How to Multiply the Efforts of Your Inbound Marketing Program*, and created a visual slide deck to promote on SlideShare.

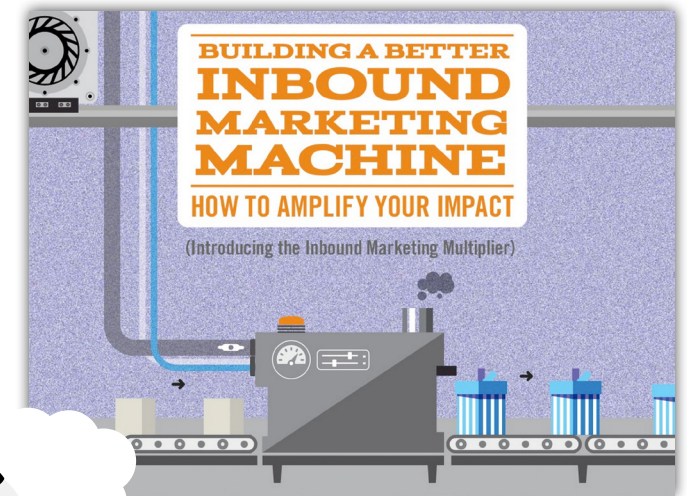
As you can see, while the ebook got 13,000 views, the slide deck got a whopping 339,000 views on SlideShare!

13,000  
EBOOK VIEWS



VS.

339,000  
SLIDESHARE VIEWS



Standard collateral vs. visual content

# CONTENT MARKETING

# COMPANY BLOG



Your blog is a great resource for generating leads. Just remember that someone reading your blog may not want to immediately sign up for a demo—they may not even know what your product is—so aim for less ambitious calls-to-action (CTAs). Ask your readers to subscribe to your blog, or to follow you on social channels.

By opening the door to further conversation, you are taking the first step towards generating a quality lead. A well-executed blog will keep your readers interested, encourage them to come back for more, and eventually spark their curiosity about your company.

“Don’t focus on having a great blog. Focus on producing a blog that’s great for your readers.”

– Brian Clark  
Founder and CEO, Copyblogger



## The Top 3 “Do’s” for Starting a Great Blog

Brian Clark, Founder and CEO, Copyblogger

- 1. Do** understand who you’re trying to reach. Start by thinking in terms of audience archetypes. This keeps you focused on quality content, which begins the sales cycle but doesn’t make the customer feel “sold” to.
- 2. Do** uniquely position your content. Think media first, not marketing. You’re basically creating a digital magazine, but you’re using a different business model than other media companies—you’re selling your own products and services, not advertising.
- 3. Do** create an initial content strategy and editorial calendar. You’ll naturally adapt and revise both based on the real-time feedback you get, but you need a “best guess” approach based on your research. And don’t forget you’ll have to hustle to get attention until you’ve built an audience that will spread the word for you.

## Marketing Software. Easy, Powerful, Complete.

Marketo (NASDAQ: MKTO) provides the leading cloud-based marketing software platform for companies of all sizes to build and sustain engaging customer relationships. Spanning today's digital, social, mobile and offline channels, the Marketo® svvolution includes a complete suite of applications that help organizations acquire new customers more efficiently, maximize customer loyalty and lifetime value, improve sales effectiveness, and provide analytical insight into marketing's contribution to revenue growth. Marketo's applications are known for their breakthrough ease-of-use, and are complemented by the Marketing Nation™, a thriving network of more than 190 LaunchPoint™ ecosystem partners and over 40,000 marketers who share and learn from each other to grow their collective marketing expertise. The result for modern marketers is unprecedented agility and superior results.

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