

Content for Content Marketing

Lesson - 1 - Introduction of Content Marketing

Lesson - 2 - Types of Content

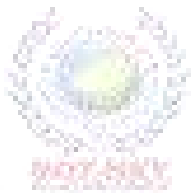
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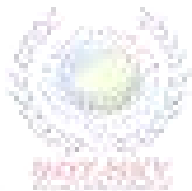
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Lesson no. 1 – Introduction Of Content Marketing

1. WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING



“Content marketing is 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.”

It means that content marketing is a long-term strategy that focuses on building a strong relationship with your target audience by giving them high-quality content that is very relevant to them on a consistent basis.

Eventually, when customers make a purchase decision, their loyalty already lies with you. They will purchase your product and prefer it over competitors' options.

In contrast to one-off advertising, content marketing shows that you actually care about your customers.

Today, more than ever before, people want to feel like you care about them. The world is louder and noisier than ever before, and attention is our most valuable resource.

Keep that in mind as we take a look at some of the different types of content marketing.

2. INTRODUCTION TO CONTENT MARKETING

The phrase "content is king" has generated a lot of buzz among online marketers. While there are great debates to be had over the accuracy of that phrase, the point is that content is a bit *different* than other areas of marketing like social media and SEO, in that many of them are really only around *because* of content.

Think about it.

For one thing, without content, SEOs would have nothing to optimize for search engines. The metadata they add to posts is an attempt to help robots like Google and Facebook wrap their digital heads around the complexities of the content they're indexing. Every link earned by every marketer points to a piece of content, and the keywords that people type into search engines are an attempt to find—yep—content.

Every email, every tweet, every landing page, and every product description—they're all examples of Content marketing.

Content isn't 'stuff we write to rank higher' or 'infographics' or 'long-form articles.' Content is anything that communicates a message to the audience.

Content is the heart of what we do as marketers; we talk to our customers, our clients, and our readers, and what we say to them—regardless of what form it takes—is our content.

So what is content marketing, then? Well, it's pretty simple. Content marketing is the use of that content—any of it—to help meet a marketing goal for your organization. That could be acquisition of potential customers, retention of existing ones, making more people aware of your brand or your products, or really anything else.

Lesson no. 2 – Types of Content

TYPES OF CONTENT WITH EXAMPLES

If you're looking to grow your business, maybe it's time to try mixing things up a little. Below, I've put together a list of over 15 different content types to add more variety to your site and help open up those additional traffic channels.

See what fits your brand and what works for you. However, keep an open mind and be ready for some experiments!

1. Tutorials

The “How-To X” post is a classic in the content world, and for good reason. One of the major motivations for people to use the Internet is to find solutions to their problems. If you can provide such a solution, that's a golden content opportunity.

2. Podcasts

Podcasting is all the rage these days. Big names in the blogosphere like Tim Ferrisnow provide much of their content as audio instead of text.

It's not because it's a fad, either — podcasts are really great as far as content value goes. Podcasts are relatively easy to produce, and the technology is readily available. It's also a very personal way of conveying information, which builds a stronger bond with your audience. Plus, people love to listen to this stuff everywhere they go, from the gym to their commute.

3. News and Curated Content

Newsflash: You don't have to create all content yourself. Sometimes it can be enough to be the person who collects the important stuff in one place for everyone else. Being a hub of interesting and noteworthy news in your industry goes a long way towards establishing trust and authority.

4. Infographics

As the name suggests, infographics deliver information visually. They're among the most effective types of blog content out there. We as humans are hardwired to love them — check out this interactive infographic to find out why.

5. Original Research And Data

While we're on the topic of data and stats, if you can do your own research and present it to your audience, that's even better! Digging up golden nuggets of information that nobody else has is a sure sign of authority.

6. Link And Tool Collections

Collections of links and tools are a very particular kind list post that merits some extra attention. If done right, they represent an awesome resource others will be happy to share and link to.

7. Presentations and Slides

PowerPoint presentations are a tried-and-true way of conveying information to an audience. There's a reason why you have to experience at least one of them at each business meeting. To make this handy, there are services like [Slideshare](#) to help you post this type of content on your blog.

8. Case Studies

Case studies are an ideal way to show off your service, product or content and how it's helped others. It's the ultimate proof that what you're offering actually has merit.

9. Videos

As you might have noticed, both Twitter and Facebook are becoming increasingly visual social platforms. The number of posted images and videos is climbing steadily. Combine that with the fact that YouTube is the second-largest search engine and you have a compelling reason to include videos in your content strategy.

10. Reviews

Reviewing books, products or services is another way to share valuable information with your audience. Discuss your favorite gadgets, the books that have taught you the most and how they can benefit your readers.

11. Memes

Some people claim the Internet was created just to give rise to this type of content. Regardless of the truth in that statement, what *is* true is that memes let you communicate your point in a humorous way.

12. E-books

If guides get people onto your list, think of what an entire book can do. Having a fantastic ebook to give away on your blog is an effective way to attract readers and subscribers.

13. Profiles

Most people have one (or several) role models. It's natural to be inspired by others, to try to learn how they live the way they do, and to attempt to apply the same principles to our own lives. As a blogger, you can leverage this by profiling such inspirational people.

14. Interviews

Instead of learning *about* your role models, wouldn't it be even better to learn directly *from* them? If you can pick the brain of an important figure in your field right on your blog, that'll generate lots of respect in your industry.

15. Guest posts

Creating high-quality content takes time. Time that you don't always have. Luckily, there are plenty of people out there who would be more than happy to contribute to your blog for some exposure. Guest posting is an excellent alternative to fill your blog without having to do it all yourself.



Lesson no. 3 – How to write great content

HOW TO WRITE GREAT COMPELLING CONTENT

For effective content creation, find a process that works and follow it step-by-step. This way, you exponentially increase your likelihood to “win”. Below is a 4-step process that you can use to create compelling content for your audience.

Step 1: Create Buyer Personas

The first step to creating great content is: know your audience. You need to learn their language, desires, things that resonate with them, and the things they don't like. The best way to do that is by creating buyer personas.

Buyer personas are semi-fictional characters that represent your prospective customer (or reader). By creating them, you can better understand your audience's worldview and develop relevant products, services, and content.

Buyer personas also allow you to find the places where your prospective customers hang out. This will help you to determine which marketing channels to use to promote your content, a topic for another blog post.

Step 2: Find Your Audience's Pain Points

Once you've developed your buyer personas, the next step is to find your audience's pain points, or problems so you can create the appropriate content.

Remember:, the best content is material that your audience can read, understand, and use to solve a specific problem.

There are several ways to find your customers' pain points. The following three resources are the most effective and least expensive:

- a) Quora: Quora is an advanced forum where professionals constantly post questions about a variety of topics. This site is very useful to find the questions that your audience are asking pertaining to your topic.
- b) Social Networks: Using your social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, Google+ etc., you can ask your followers about their struggles. Not everyone will respond, but even a few answers will provide valuable insights and fresh ideas.
- c) Qeryz: Qeryz is a web-based service that allows you to create “mini interviews” and put them on your blog. By using strategic questions for the interviews, you can learn a lot about what your readers are thinking and their struggles.

Step 3: Create a List of Proven Topic Ideas

Compelling content always starts with the right topic. If you choose a suboptimal topic, your content isn't going to perform well.

Once you've gathered insights from your audience using the recommendations in Step 2, you can then proceed to create a list of topics around that information. An Idea Generator spreadsheet is a great place to brainstorm and save topic ideas. Every time you have a new idea, no matter how small or random, head over to your spreadsheet and save it.

Let's say you run a gardening blog, and you discovered that your audience is struggling with plant care and greenhouse construction. Here's how you can use this knowledge to create content

First, head over to [BuzzSumo](#) and type in your keywords. For your gardening blog, these might be "plant care" or "greenhouse." BuzzSumo gives you the most popular content for that keyword, sorted by the number of social shares. This will show you the types of topics that are performing well in your niche. Then, open your Idea Generator spreadsheet and save all the topic ideas you found in BuzzSumo.

Second, go to [Topsy](#) and repeat the process. Topsy shows you the most popular content for your specific keywords. Unlike BuzzSumo, Topsy also shows you the most popular social media posts. This gives you a deeper understanding of what your audience likes to read and share. Again, go to your Idea Generator spreadsheet and save the insights that you found in Topsy.

Now you have a list of proven content ideas, because you focused on content you know people like to read and share. If you create fresh content around these topics, it's very likely your target audience will read and share your materials too.

I recommend scheduling a meeting with your team to start brainstorming content ideas based on the list that you created. Once you have some topics in place, it's time to jump to the next step.

Step 4: Use the CURVE Method to Craft Compelling Content

At this point you should have a thorough understanding of your audience and a list of proven topic ideas. Now it's time to start creating your content. Don't worry! If you followed the prior steps this will be the easy part.

Whether you're sharing a video, article, podcast, or image, the CURVE method will make your content stand out.

CURVE stands for:

C = curiosity

U = urgency

R = relevancy

V = value

E = emotion

Although this method was originally created to write compelling email subject lines, it also works extremely well when it comes to content creation.

You don't need all five CURVE elements in every piece of content, however, always try to include the last three – relevancy, value, and emotion. These are the most important elements of content that resonate with readers.

Lesson no. 4 – Keyword Research for Content Ideas

1. KEYWORD RESEARCH FOR CONTENT IDEAS

How can you find out what keywords are ideal for your brand?

Step 1: Identify your target market.

In order to identify optimal keywords, you first need to determine who is searching around your industry. Who are your current customers? Are there new markets that you aren't reaching yet? What groups could benefit most from your products/services?

Your target audience should range from current customers all the way to niche markets that you're hoping to enter. These various groups likely have different needs, so it's important to remember these differences later on when creating your keyword list. This will help you focus your content to attract customers you aren't yet reaching, as well as to keep clients coming back!

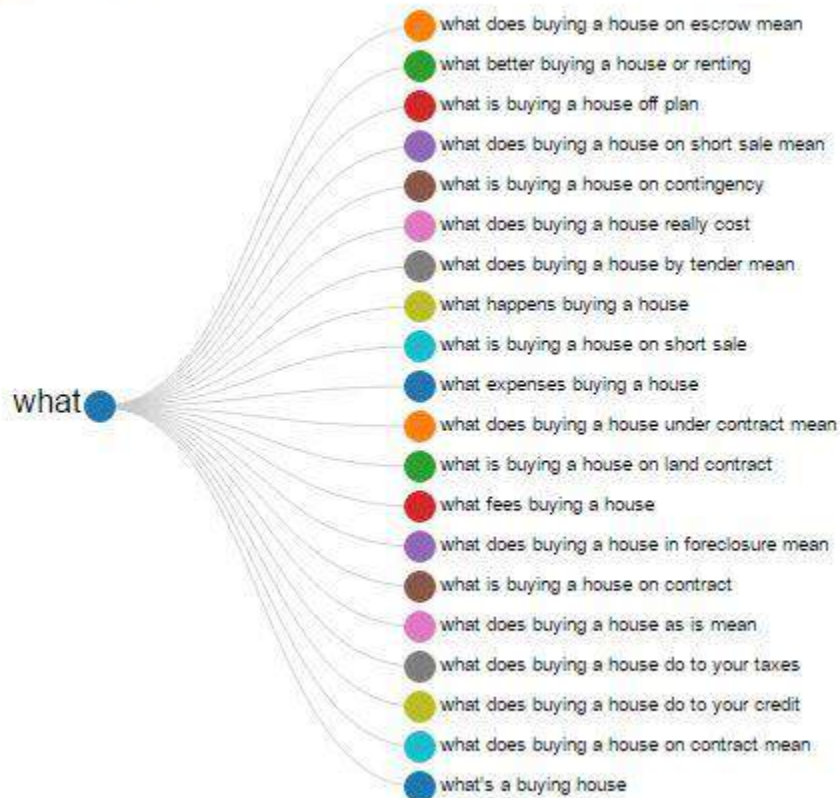
As we go through each step in the keyword research process, imagine you have your own local real estate company, and you're looking to increase traffic to your website. Your target market may consist of first-time home buyers, experienced landlords, and home sellers. You also want to target house flippers, an industry you have not yet entered.

Step 2: Know what questions customers are asking.

Now that you have identified your target markets, you need to know the questions customers are asking so that you can provide the answers through relevant content. As an expert in your industry, you should already be clued in to what your customers are asking. With new markets, though, you may need some help in determining these questions. A great tool that can help you in this search is Answer the Public.

In continuing with our real estate example, think about what questions first-time home buyers are asking. What fees are associated with buying a house? What is escrow? What are closing costs? Is it cheaper to rent or buy? You can also take a look at the results from Answer the Public to supplement this list of questions.

what buying a house



Step 3: Explore popular content in your industry.

Next, it's time to explore your competitors' and industry leaders' websites and content. Look for things you like. How can you emulate and improve on what they're doing? Also, look for things you don't like. What topics should you avoid? How can you make your content stand out?

Continuing with our real estate example, look to industry leaders in the real estate industry such as Zillow, TransUnion SmartMove, and RedFin. Each of them have blogs with tons of content to explore! Read through [Zillow's blog](#) to see what topics they're covering. Check out [TransUnion SmartMove's latest post](#) to get an example of their post layout. Look over the comments on [RedFin's posts](#) to see how customers are reacting to their content.

Remember, it's not just about what content you like or don't like, but rather what resonates with the customer. How can you find the content that's engaging your target market? Just look at social shares! Any time a user shares a piece of content on social media, it shows

the content was relevant and helpful. [Ahref's Content Explorer](#) is an easy way to see what content is resonating with customers for the topic you want to cover.



Most Popular Content for buying a house

Filters: Publish date, Languages, Shares, Domain Rating, Referring domains, Organic traffic, Word count, One article per domain

148,142 results | Select all | Who tweeted selected articles | Highlight unlinked domains | Sorted by Relevance | Export

| Article Title | URL | Twitter | Facebook | Google+ | LinkedIn | Pinterest | Total | Median |
|--------------------------|---|---------|----------|---------|----------|-----------|-------|--------|
| How Buying a House Works | home.howstuffworks.com/real-estate/buying-home/house-buying.htm | 1 | 232 | 151 | 18 | 4.3K | 4.7K | 151 |

356 words | 16 May 03

Step 4: Build a list of keywords.

Now the research phase is over. It's time to build a list of keywords that you can use to start planning your content. You'll have to be strategic with the keywords that you choose. For example, "buying a house" will be extremely difficult to rank for since it's a broad topic with a lot of existing content. Instead, focus on long tail keywords – longer, more specific phrases that will be easier to rank for. A long tail keyword you can add to your list could be "buying your first house in Houston" or "what you should know before buying a house".

As you're building your list, remember your different target markets. Make sure to list out specific keywords for each group. There may be some overlap between groups, but it's important that each market has their own exhaustive list. Don't worry if your lists are getting long. The more keywords you have, the more content you can cover!

Step 5: Use a keyword planner.

After you've created your list, you can get more information about the keywords you've chosen by uploading them into a keyword planner. If you have an AdWords account, Google's keyword planner is a great tool to help you organize your keywords and conduct further research. There are also some free versions, like Moz's keyword suggestions, that offer similar functionality with a limit on the number of keywords you can search for each day.

Overview:

how to flip a house



The purpose of a keyword planner is to help you organize, edit, and optimize your keyword list. You'll have access to estimated search volumes associated with a particular keyword, how competitive a keyword is to rank for, and alternatives to the keywords you've come up with. Your list is not static – use this information to make changes and list additional keywords as necessary.

You previously listed “how to flip a house” as a keyword for your new target market, but you've now found that this competitive keyword will be too difficult to rank for. Remove it! It's important to update your list, as search volumes and competitiveness will constantly change.

Step 6: Pick a keyword and write content surrounding this keyword.

It's finally time to start creating content! Focus on one or two keywords to start, and then begin creating content around those keywords. It's helpful to look at the SERPs (search engine results page) of those keywords, to get a better understanding of what is already ranking and what content might be missing that you could create.

When it comes to writing your post, check to make sure you aren't “keyword stuffing”. While it's important to use your keyword and close variants throughout your post, don't sacrifice readability for the sake of SEO. Write for your readers, not webcrawlers.

Once your content is complete, publish it! Get that content out there, and start watching your own results to see what is working for you and what isn't. If your post on “5 Mistakes First Home Buyers Make” isn't ranking, focus on a different keyword for your next piece of content. The more content you create, the more you will learn which keywords will work best for you and your business.

Lesson no. 5 – Optimizing Content for Search Engines

OPTIMIZING CONTENT FOR SEARCH ENGINES



Content needs SEO to stand out in the din of mediocre blog posts clogging up the internet these days, and Google has said that one of the top three ranking factors for organic search is “content.”

Step 1: SEO your content strategy

Too many marketers are still waiting until the end of content creation to bring in SEO as a promotional tool. They try to figure out what they’ve just created, so they can plug in a few keywords and links.

But an effective content marketing strategy should start with keyword and user intent research. Once you know what queries your audience is using, and what kind of content they are looking for, you can design a content strategy that answers their specific questions and helps move them through the funnel.

Step 2: Design good content

Good UX is good SEO. When users are engaged, they consume more content, interact with it and share it. From the overarching structure to the details of the layout, make sure you are designing good content.

There are plenty of philosophies about which characteristics make content “good” — or “sticky” or “thought leadership.” They are all worthy considerations, and every piece of content should cover at least a few:

- a) Simple/Clear/Coherent
- b) Unexpected
- c) Concrete
- d) Credible/Valid/Experienced
- e) Emotional
- f) Entertaining
- g) Inspiring
- h) Educational
- i) Relevant
- j) Deep/Thorough
- k) Practical
- l) Novel/Unique (in value, not just in content)
- m) Trustworthy

And as you continue to design content, keep your audience in mind: you are writing for people, so search engines can also understand — not vice versa.

Step 3: Create correct content

Is there anything as unsettling as a typo in an otherwise great piece of content? No. There isn't. While there is no evidence, at this time, that grammar is a ranking signal, it's a UX/credibility concern.

Additionally, citing sources and linking to other authorities is good technique, but it's also good SEO — those outbound links demonstrate to search engines that you know your stuff, and that you're associating with the right crowd.

Step 4: Check your keyword usage

You started with keywords and user intent research, of course, so this is *not* about figuring out which keywords apply to the piece of content in question. This *is* about examining how that keyword is being used in said content.

It's true that keyword stuffing is very, very out. It was never cool in the first place, but now — thanks to Google — it's also ineffective (if not dangerous). It's also true that Google is very savvy about keywords. None of that, however, means that keywords are "dead." It just means SEO needs to use them better.

(It is also worth noting that users look for keywords. Google is smart enough to recognize common synonyms, but when a user types in a keyword, he/she is looking for that bolded keyword on the SERP.)

Lesson no. 6 – How to Market your Content

HOW TO MARKET YOUR CONTENT

Here are seven content promotion tactics you can use to get your website noticed.

I. Send an email broadcast

Your email list is (hopefully) composed of people who signed up because they're interested in your brand and want to receive your latest updates. According to Campaign Monitor, you're six times more likely to get a click from an email campaign than a tweet. That's a great audience to promote your content to because they're already engaged and much more likely to share.

Once a new piece of content is published, send a message to your list. Include a short teaser of the content to encourage them to click through, and be sure to include a call to action asking them to share it.

Five days after you send the first broadcast email, check your analytics to see who didn't open it. Send the broadcast again — with a different subject line — to this group. You will be surprised at how many clicks you are missing by only sending the broadcast once! (Thanks to Adam Franklin from Bluewire Media for this trick.)

If you create a lot of content, how often you use this strategy will depend on your audience. For example, if your subscribers signed up for a weekly newsletter (nothing more), then stick to that.

AdRoll sends a regular newsletter highlighting several recent posts from its blog. You could do something like that as well.

AdRoll Blog Newsletter <resources@adroll.com> [Unsubscribe](#)
to courtney ▾

Nov 10 (6 days ago) ☆ ↶ ▾

To view this email as a web page, [click here](#)

AdRoll

THE LATEST FROM THE BLOG



Wednesday, November 9, 2016

How AdRoll Has Helped HubSpot Customers Supercharge Their Purchase Funnels

Try AdRoll and HubSpot's integration today It's been just a few months since we launched our integration with HubSpot, and we now have more than 700 joint customers—doubling since the

II. Engage with your community

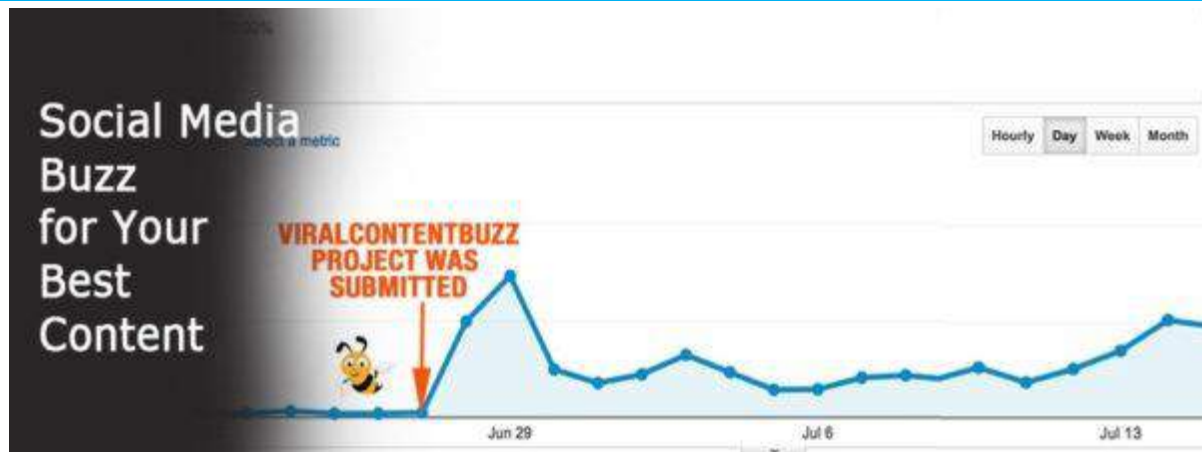
Plenty of tools and platforms will help you join your industry's conversation and give your content more reach at the same time. Here are some options:

a) *Social media groups*

Facebook and LinkedIn groups are great opportunities to dig deeper into a social platform and target your niche audience. Join groups that your content is relevant to, join the conversation, and suggest your content naturally. You can also join and contribute to specific boards on Pinterest.

b) *Content promotion networks*

You can also get more reach on social media with the help of content promotion networks, such as Viral Content Bee. This platform connects you with other people wanting to promote their content. Share their posts and you receive credits that you can then use to promote your own posts.



Quuu is a tool that automatically curates content for people to share. Sign up to promote your content and select the relevant categories. Then your posts can become a part of the curated content queue.

c) *Online communities*

There are plenty of other platforms where you can discuss topics related to your niche. Join Q&A sites like Quora or Yahoo Answers, and you can suggest your content as a resource to answer people's questions. Just make sure you actually engage in discussions on the platform so it's not all about promoting your content.

TIP: If you create content about marketing-related topics, Inbound.org and GrowthHackers are two content curation and promotion communities to take advantage of.

III. Pay to promote

Advertising your content is a fairly new concept that can work well, especially compared to traditional direct-marketing tactics. Pay per click or by number of impressions to help your content get more reach on a variety of platforms.

a) *Facebook Ads*

Facebook makes it possible to create targeted ads based on all kinds of criteria, including demographics, location, and specific interest categories. If you know your target audience well, you can take advantage of these features for your content promotion.

b) *StumbleUpon*

StumbleUpon offers a paid discovery feature with a pay-per-click model. Its users are mostly college-age millennials so if you have content relevant to this demographic, look into it.



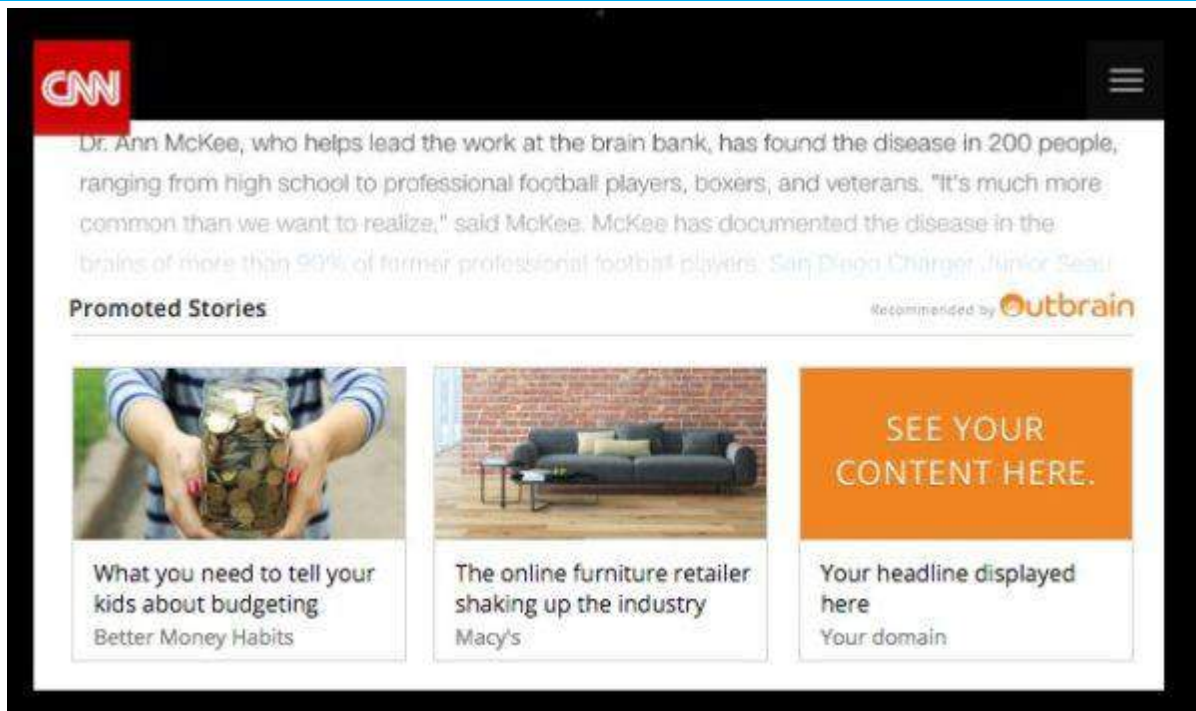
c) *Reddit Ads*

Reddit is another platform full of millennials, but not exclusively. Reddit Ads are an inexpensive option to get more reach for your content on the crowdsourced platform.



d) *Outbrain*

Outbrain is a promotion network that displays your content on relevant blogs and news sites. The “related content” section at the bottom of a lot of web pages is usually full of promoted content from Outbrain or one of its competitors.



IV. Reach out on social media

Social platforms are crowded, so there's no guarantee interested people will see and share your content. To improve your content's visibility, target interested people directly.

Use a tool like [BuzzSumo](#) to find social media users who share content like yours. Just take a keyword from the content you want to promote and type it into its search bar.

You'll see a list of popular content related to that keyword ordered by most overall shares. Find the most relevant content post and click on "View Sharers" — you'll want to target this list with your content.



Targeting influencers with a lot of followers is important, but only if they're likely to engage with your messaging. Make sure you select people with a high retweet and reply ratio (detailed in their BuzzSumo profile).

Connect on a social platform using an @ mention of your influencer to ask for opinions on your content or suggest that his or her audience might like it.



V. Connect with influencers outside of social

Social media isn't the only place you should target influencers. Email is another option likely to capture more attention, especially if your influencer has a busy social profile. A cold email to a previously identified influencer can help you with a lot of things — building links, getting comments, or encouraging sharing. Consider this template:

"Hi (Name),

I was doing some research into influencers in the (Industry) space and came across your name. I've got a lot of respect for the brand you have built for yourself on Twitter.

The reason I'm reaching out is because our team recently put together a helpful resource about (topic), and I think your audience could get some great value from it.

I know you're busy, but if you have two seconds I'd love you to share it around... Here's a clickable link:(insert clickable link)

And here's the original article: (insert article URL and name)

Thanks and have a great day.

Regards,

(Your name)"

VI. Ask to include your content

Getting your content to appear in roundups is a great way to get more reach and build backlinks at the same time. You can find relevant link roundups to target with the help of Google. Include your niche keyword and one of the following in your search:

- a) Roundup
- b) Weekly
- c) Monthly
- d) Best of
- e) Top 10
- f) Link love

Once you've found some relevant roundups, reach out to the roundup curator to suggest your blog post be considered for the next entry.

VII. Write for others

Attract people from the web to important pages on your website (e.g., a squeeze page or sales page) by quest posting or blogging. Create amazing content and pitch it to other sites. If they let you, include links in the content and your author bio to key pages on your site.

There are tons of guest post opportunities, and finding them is easy. Most serious blogs will have a guest post submission page. Use Google to find them:

- a) (Niche keyword) + "guest post submission"
- b) (Niche keyword) + "write for us"
- c) (Niche keyword) + "contribution guidelines"

TIP: Install a plug-in like Alexa on your browser. When you visit a blog you want to pitch to, you can see important traffic stats with just one click.

Lesson no. 7 – Content Marketing Tools

Best Content Marketing Tools

Content Ideas

[BuzzSumo](#) is a great, if not a must-have, tool for content marketers to identify what content and keywords are working well, which platforms and channels are driving social sharing and engagement, and who the key competitors and influencers are in your space. The results you get are also a great source of inspiration for content ideas.

[Feedly](#) lets you find and read content in less time by organizing them into collections which appear in your feed. It's a great tool to stay up-to-date on the latest news in your industry and to see how much social sharing each piece of content is getting. With a Pro account, you can easily schedule and share posts with Hootsuite or Buffer.

[Quora](#) is a fantastic online community for content marketers to use and find out what kinds of questions their target consumers are asking for blog inspiration.

[Twitter](#) is another great tool to see which topics are trending and hashtags that are relevant to your industry and target audience.

[DrumUp](#) is a content marketing tool that pulls up recommended content based on the set of keywords you set up on the platform. You can also add RSS feeds to get content from the websites you regularly visit. DrumUp is also a social media management tool that lets you schedule and share content via the platform.

[Flipboard](#) curates and showcases content from various trusted sources and websites based on the topics of interest you follow. You have the option to save the content you like and the tool presents it in an online magazine format for you to view.

Image & Graphic Creation

[StockSnap](#) is one of the best places to find free, quality high-resolution photos which you can use, modify and distribute without attribution, even for commercial purposes. The site allows you to sort by date, views, number of downloads and favorites as well as which images are trending. Hundreds of new images are added every week.

[Pexels](#) is a repository of over 10,000 free, quality hand-picked stock photos, with at least 1,500 new photos added every month. Like StockSnap, all photos can be used and modified without asking for permission and attribution.

[Unsplash](#) has over a hundred collections of beautiful stock images donated by various photographers around the world, which you can use with no copyright restrictions.

[Iconmonstr](#) is another repository which has over 3,400 free icons you can use without copyright restrictions.

[Canva](#) makes graphic design simple and quick for everyone. You can use the online program and its huge collection of free templates and graphics to create everything from blog and social graphics to presentations, flyers, posters and infographics.

[PicMonkey](#) is a great online photo editing tool if you are looking to make basic editing or special effects, like cropping, resizing, color adjustments and filters.

[GoAnimate](#) allows you to easily create animated videos yourself, without the big price tag that comes with creative agencies or if you don't have the internal resources for it. The online platform allows you to drag and drop characters, props, backgrounds, styles, sound effects and even voice record audio files to go along with your animated videos.

[Life of Pix](#) is one of my favorite sources of free, high-resolution photos donated to the public domain by the Leeroy ad agency with no copyright restrictions.

[Gratisography](#) is another favorite of mine that offers free high-res photos from Ryan McGuire. New pictures are added every week. Some of the photos are a little quirky which is fine by me. Images are free of Copyright restrictions.

Content Sharing & Management

[Hootsuite](#) is still my top choice for social media scheduling and sharing. You can manage all your social media accounts, monitor hashtags, track and respond to mentions all in one place.

[Sprout Social](#) is a social media management platform that allows individuals and businesses to manage social sharing, engagement and communications across Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Google+. Like Hootsuite, the platform also offers social media analytics tools to help you measure and report on your performance.

[Spredfast](#) is another social marketing and engagement platform for scheduling and sharing content, social listening and analytics.

[Buffer](#) is a social media scheduling tool that helps you find your most optimal times to share content throughout the day so you can get the most out of every post. With the paid plans, you can add RRS feeds to find and mark content you want to share and add them to your queue.

[Outbrain](#) is a [content promotion tool](#) that promotes your content across a wide network to help you to reach your ideal audience, and an analytics dashboard allows you to track and optimize campaigns.

Analytics, Keyword Discovery & SEO

[Google Analytics](#) is one of the must-have tools content marketers should include in their toolbox. You can track everything from your website traffic to visitor demographics to help you improve your pages.

[Google Search Console](#) is another must-have tool for checking how often your website appears in Google search results and test if Google can successfully “understand” your content, to help you improve your site’s SEO and search performance.

[MozBar](#) is a browser extension that generates instant SEO metrics and insights into keywords and other page elements based on the websites you are visiting.

[Screaming Frog SEO Spider](#). If you are looking to do a content audit of a larger website, you can download this small desktop application to “spider” your websites’ links, images and more from an SEO perspective. This video offers a quick overview

[Google Keyword Planner](#) allows you to search for keywords and get their historical search volume statistics or traffic forecasts for specific lists of keywords. It’s a great resource to have in your content marketing toolbox to help you create content around commonly searched keywords and terms.

[Google Trends](#): I’m on this site almost every day just looking at the trends of various keywords, especially for our customers. You can also look at what’s trending if you want to do a “What [current event] means for [your target keyword]” type post such as this one.

[Keyword Tool](#) gives you 750+ long-tail keyword suggestions based on the term you search for. You can also look at the questions related to your keyword users are searching, which can be used for content marketing topics. With a Pro account, you’ll also get additional insights into the search volume, CPC and AdWords competition for the keywords you search.

[Keyhole](#) also allows you to track any keyword, hashtag or url as well. It shows the top posts, influencers and users for a sampling of data.

[Hubspot Website Grader](#) allows you to gain insights into how well your website is performing, including SEO, mobile and security, and the areas you could improve to optimize your performance.

[SEMrush](#) is a great tool we use to track keywords across organic search and paid campaigns, you can also use the tool to measure the performance of your website and get insights into your competitors' digital marketing strategies. Keep in mind that free users only get 10 queries though.

[Keyword Finder](#) helps you find long tail, low competition keywords to guide your content marketing plans.

[keywordtool.io](#) is a great resource because it allows you to enter your keyword and see top related searches. But it also allows you to view questions and also to see top keywords and questions on YouTube, Bing and across mobile app stores.

[Uberflip](#) (formerly Snapapp) is an interactive content marketing tool that can help you scale your ABM initiatives across various accounts.

Content Management Tools

[WordPress](#) is what we use on this website. WordPress powers nearly two-thirds of all websites around the world and is free. You still need to design your site but with various templates, hundreds of thousands of plug-ins and so many developers, you can pretty much do whatever you want with WordPress. Some other options include Drupal, Magnolia, Hubspot, Adobe, Sitecore and Episerver / Optimizely.

[DivvyHQ](#) is our tool of choice for managing calendars and workflows across our various clients. It offers much more functionality than the generic project management tools. Divvy helps move your content marketing strategy from an idea into accountability across your content planning and writing with real deadlines and deliverables.

