



Develop quality marketing content A Guide for SMEs

2023 EDITION



What is content marketing?

It's no longer enough to simply tell people through things like print or digital ads that your products and services are great. Rather, you need to show customers why – when they may have multiple options – they should do business with you.

Enter content marketing!

Content marketing is a strategy that involves creating useful, relevant and timely content – such as blog posts, infographics, videos and podcasts – designed to build an audience and persuade them to act (or transact).



Why should content marketing be a central pillar of your business?

Perhaps the biggest reason of all is that content marketing helps you attract, engage and retain prospective customers. According to a 2019 study by [Salesforce](#), about 87% of shoppers begin their buying journey on digital channels. These customers will then consume multiple pieces of content as they go from conducting research to ultimately deciding whether to buy.

Because your customers are looking at multiple pieces of content, it's important that any content you're providing is high quality. Well-crafted, interesting and useful content can help build positive brand awareness and increase your chances of generating – and converting – new leads.

Furthermore, your business becomes more visible within search engine results pages (SERPs) through search engine optimisation (SEO) practices, like [keyword targeting](#).

Finally, good content makes your brand or business appear more trustworthy and authentic – allowing you to position yourself as the clear-cut expert in a sea of other options.

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Where to begin

A great place to start your content marketing journey is **by getting online** and **building a website**. A website not only helps build trust and credibility for your brand or business, but it can also function as a central hub for your content.

To ensure your content hits the mark, you will want to understand more about your customer base. A great way to put yourself in their shoes is by **creating a set of “customer personas”**. These are short, semi-fictional descriptions meant to represent the different audiences you are trying to engage with your content.

For example, a customer persona can allow you highlight your audience’s key pain points, their likes and dislikes, preferred communication channel (e.g. email, social media, etc.) their motivations to buy – and more.

Based on your customer personas, create a list of subjects that might be of interest, useful or answer their main pain points or questions. For instance, if you’re a gardening supply shop, and your customers are struggling with dandelions, a good piece of content might be a downloadable infographic or cheat sheet on dandelion weed control strategies.

Of course, you should always ensure any content you produce is relevant to your audience – but do try to cover topics that are unique to your business and area of expertise.

Overall – when thinking about content, ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ Is what I’m creating original or different enough to what is already out there?
- ▶ Does my content offer practical advice?
- ▶ Is the information useful, accurate and well thought-out?

If you want additional context for your customer personas and content building efforts, tools like **Google Trends**, **UberSuggest** and **Answer the Public** are excellent for understanding the specific keywords and topics your audience is searching for. **Buzzsumo** helps you quickly analyse your competitor’s content.



What types of content can you create?

Great content comes in many forms...so how do you choose which will work best for engaging your audience? Here, we'll look at few of the most common mediums and their benefits:

Blog posts

Blogging is an effective way to showcase you and your brand's unique personality, establish your expertise and – most importantly – build trust with your customers. How? By delivering valuable, useful content that addresses their needs. How often you post, however, is ultimately down to your time and availability.

Other blogging benefits:

- ▶ Any blog content you create can be easily repurposed and re-posted across different social media channels.
- ▶ Blogs can help generate new leads (and conversions) when you include strong calls-to-action. For example, a blog post about the best way to clean grime off bathroom tiles could end with a call to purchase your eco-friendly cleaning products.
- ▶ Blogs help build trustworthy links back to your website and boost your visibility on Google search pages.

Video

Your more visually inclined customers will turn to videos as their primary source for product information and education. Because people are often pressed for time, video helps you get your key messages and content across quickly and efficiently rather than long blocks of text.

Plus, with today's smartphones and easy-to-use editing software, like [CapCut](#), [iMovie](#) (for Apple users) and [ClipChamp](#), it's incredibly easy to film, produce and share your own clips on low or no budgets.

What are some other benefits of video?

- ▶ Videos are a powerful way to deliver how-to content or tutorials, as well as customer testimonials. If you're not particularly camera shy, videos allow you to show the real human (or humans) behind your brand or business.
- ▶ Helpful or entertaining videos are easy to share across social channels.





Podcasts

These streamable audio files allow you to speak directly to your audience about topics they genuinely care about – and where you're an expert. In addition, a podcast is an excellent way to showcase your authentic personality while promoting your products or services.

According to statistics from SEMrush, **60% of podcast listeners surveyed** said they searched for a product after it was mentioned on a favourite podcast.

For production, **Audacity** is a great, free and open-source audio editing tool for first-time podcasters. For those looking for something more advanced and feature-rich, **Adobe Audition** may be worth a closer look.

Why else could podcasts be a great fit for you?

- ▶ You're not limited by time or a pre-defined format. A podcast is ultimately what you make it – be that a long-form, in-depth discussion or shorter snippets.
- ▶ Podcasts are extremely cost-effective to produce, and can be promoted and shared via your website, social channels, emails and more.
- ▶ Your customers can listen to and consume your podcast content virtually anywhere such as on their commute to work or at the gym.

E-books

These can be created to provide your customers with longer, more in-depth content, as opposed to a shorter blog post or video. E-books help showcase your expertise in a subject and can be key piece in helping you build credibility. Programs like **ChatGBT** – when used correctly – can be a massive help to time-crunched business owners. One of the most common ways people are tapping into **ChatGPT** is to create informative content, which can be tweaked to your liking.

Other e-book benefits:

- ▶ If it's written well, an e-book will help show your customers exactly how your product or service addresses their biggest pain point(s).
- ▶ E-books are easy and inexpensive to create and distribute.

Other content creation tips:

- ▶ Don't put all your eggs into one content basket, so to speak. Diversity can work in your favour – especially if your audience likes to engage with you on multiple different platforms.
- ▶ Keep in mind how frequently you plan to post new content and budget your time accordingly. Creating a content calendar can be an extremely useful way to organise posting frequency and distribution channels.

Keep in mind: Written content can also be delivered in numerous ways, including white papers and research reports, case studies – and more.

What if I'm pressed for time?

Creating quality content is not an insignificant investment. In addition, keeping up a semi-regular posting schedule or even coming up with new, original ideas can be daunting. But there are a few tactics that can help you work smarter, not harder:



Resurrect and repurpose old content

Do you have a blog post that performed well? Revisit it from a slightly different angle, add new information and updated examples. Great content doesn't have to be "one and done".



Portion out your content

If you have a longer-form piece of content, such as an e-book or an in-depth video tutorial, consider breaking it up into smaller chunks that can be sent out over a longer period.



Reformat your content to fit other mediums

Consider taking the transcript of a podcast episode or video interview, giving it a good edit and then creating a totally new blog post or series of social posts.

Content distribution

Once your excellent marketing content has been created and posted, it's time to think about how you're going to promote it. If we think back to our customer personas, consider carefully how your customers will most likely see your content, access and engage with it.

For example, are they spending a good chunk of their day commuting to their jobs on public transport or working at a desk with headphones on? In that case, a podcast might be a great way to engage them. Put together a distribution plan for your content. You may find yourself using multiple channels, such as:

Social media: This can be broken up into two streams: Organic and paid.

- ▶ Organic social media is the content (photos, videos etc.) you share through your social media feed. Depending on your reach, you can expect a percentage of your followers to see this content – and, potentially, your followers' followers, if they choose to share your content.
- ▶ Paid social media is, in essence, advertising on platforms like X, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc. Here, you're paying for your organic content to be promoted/boosted to targeted audiences, or for unique advertisements.

Email marketing: This can take communication/engagement with your audience a step further by enabling you to deliver personalised messages. With tools like [MailChimp](#), you can segment your emails by audience and even develop "A" and "B" versions of emails featuring different pieces of content. This adds a layer of personalisation and ensures you're serving up the most relevant information. It also allows you to see which approach worked best.

Earned content distribution: This can take a variety of forms – but generally, we're talking about third parties interacting with your content. This could be customers submitting reviews of your products or services, fellow bloggers sharing your content or linking back to it from their own pages.

Another major avenue of earned content distribution is traditional news media. If what you offer is particularly interesting or noteworthy – it's entirely possible to generate media interest via journalists interacting with your content and following up with you directly for interviews.

Content marketing lead generation and measurement

Another key component of every successful content marketing strategy is being able to measure how your content is performing, who is interacting with it and whether you can convert those views into leads and sales.

Ideally, the lead generation should come at every stage of the content marketing journey – whether it's a marketing email you've sent, or video tutorial posted to one of your social feeds. The idea is to constantly meet your customer's needs by serving up relevant information that solves a pain point.

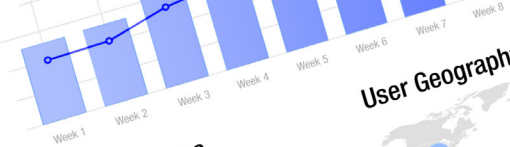
One of the most common methods of collecting customer information is having your content drive users to a landing page with an interactive form. You might consider providing access to an e-book, for example, in exchange for the customer providing their email and/or subscribing to your marketing emails. But bear in mind, landing pages where users have to input information to view the content can sometimes be seen as an obstacle.

As already mentioned, it's important to measure your content's performance across all your platforms. For example:

- ▶ **Google Analytics** – allows you to measure things like page views, how much time a visitor spent on a specific web page (housing one of your blog posts), or how many times your e-book was downloaded.
- ▶ Social media monitoring tools, like **Hootsuite**, can help track your content's performance (e.g. views, clicks, likes and shares) across all the major social media platforms.
- ▶ Most email marketing platforms will include at least one analytical tool that provides you with basic information on email open rates, how many people clicked through to content, unsubscribes and more.

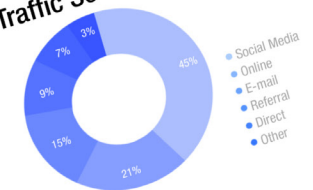
Analytics

Performance Overview



Marketing
behaviour
Reports
Settings

Traffic Sources



User Geography



New Users



Visits



Page Views

Beginner and advanced examples of content marketing strategies



Beginner example: A small music shop that sells new and vintage guitars along with in-person and online lessons.

Scenario: The shop wants to boost traffic to their e-commerce site, increase instrument sales and encourage customers to purchase lesson packages.

Content marketing strategy in action: To begin building their content library, the shop may start with quality photos and compelling descriptions of each instrument in their inventory.

Then, to take things a step further, the shop creates an Instagram account (or YouTube channel) that features fun, engaging videos of store staff playing well-known tunes on unique and vintage guitars. They also provide short playing technique tutorials and guitar care tips as part of their content repertoire.

Each Instagram video contains a clear call to action to visit the shop's website and sign up for a virtual lesson package. Any videos that are created for the Instagram and/or YouTube accounts can be easily repurposed for their e-commerce site and shared on other social media channels.



Advanced example: A medium-sized national lawn care product retailer with a healthy marketing budget and staff of 50 to 100 people.

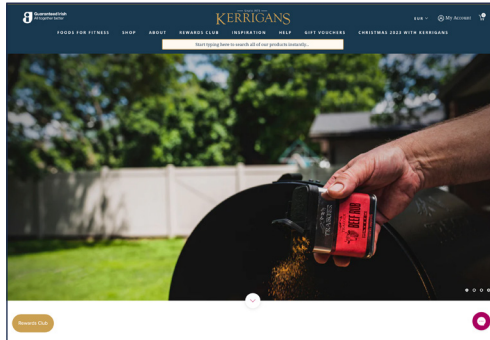
Scenario: The lawn care product retailer has a well-developed social media presence, and is active on Instagram, X and YouTube.

Content marketing strategy in action: Any content that is created by the retailer – be it photos, video or blog posts – is repurposed and adapted to fit each social media platform. The retailer's employees create instructional "how-to" content in video form, then repurpose the video into blog posts and website content.

The retailer also encourages its customers to tag them in photos of their pristine-looking lawns on social media, thereby creating a growing source of user-generated content.

On the earned media front, several of the retailer's in-house experts are actively sought out for their expertise and lend their voices to other gardening industry publications. The retailer has an email marketing system set up that leverages their blog and video content, while also promoting new product offers and sales to targeted lists of customers at key points in the season.

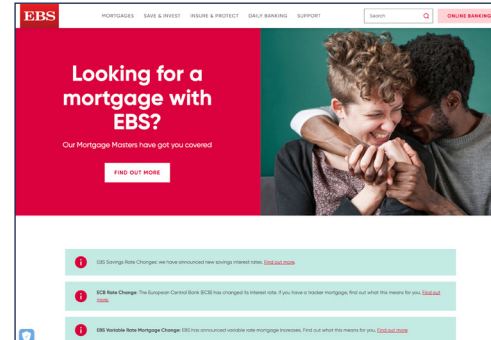
Real-world examples of content marketing done well



Kerrigans

Not only does Kerrigans deliver quality Irish meat to your door, but they also serve up prime content (pun intended) in the form of [in-depth recipes](#), and [meat education](#) infographics, as well as an entire [blog section](#) on fitness and healthy eating.

Kerrigan's fitness and healthy eating content also covers more general topics, like the importance of proper sleep that appeals to the interests of their target audience, but takes things a step further with [fitness cooking](#) content that positions their food products as part of health-conscious recipes for a wide variety of dietary needs, including low-saturated fat, high protein, gluten free etc.



EBS

This Irish financial institution creates multi-channel content that makes complex topics, such as mortgages, loans and investments far more engaging, approachable and understandable.

For instance – helpful resources like the EBS [first time buyer guide](#) – takes customers through the entire mortgage application and homebuying process step-by-step. Plus, they offer other useful tools, like a [payment calculator](#) that helps customers quickly come to grips with how much they can borrow.

Bringing your content marketing strategy together

Getting your content marketing plan off the ground and running will require plenty of care and maintenance – especially if you're starting from scratch.

That said – with the right tools and structure in place (as well as a little creativity), your well-crafted content can help boost your long-term business results, giving you the platform to build lasting relationships with customers and position you as the go-to, trusted expert over your competitors.

Unlock the power of the internet with a trusted Irish .ie online identity

It's trusted

Every **.ie** applicant's identity is checked and validated at the point of registration. Consumers will have confidence in your business as **.ie** is a well-established and trusted domain. 77% of Irish consumers prefer a **.ie** website when buying online, instead of a **.com**.¹

It's unique to Ireland

The official Internet country code for Ireland is **.ie** and is the only online address that is Irish. A **.ie** tells the global community that you are Irish and tells the Irish community that you are local. You can even register an Irish language name if required, fadas and all.

It's more likely to be available

There is a wider choice of available **.ie** domain names compared to **.com**, as significantly more of those names are already registered.

It lets your customers find you online

.ie addresses rank higher than **.com** addresses on Irish based search engines like Google.ie. Irish consumers are more likely to click on local website addresses.

It's the preferred online address for business in Ireland

91% of Irish consumers associate **.ie** websites with Irish businesses over other websites like **.com**.¹ The **.ie** domain accounts for the majority of hosted domains in Ireland.²

It protects your brand

Securing your **.ie** online address strengthens your brand and protects your online identity. All **.ie** domains are registered on a first-come, first-served basis.

¹ .IE Consumer Trust 2020

² HosterStats

.IE

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