

11 TYPES OF CONTENT YOU SHOULD BE CREATING FOR SEO RIGHT NOW

Simple Ideas to Help Kick

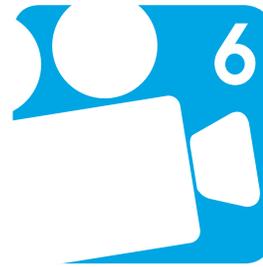
YOUR CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY INTO HIGH GEAR



A white paper for business owners or anyone who wants to learn how to make content work to their SEO benefit.

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executive summary

Getting in front of the right audience is one of the biggest marketing challenges any business will face, especially given the fractured media landscape and niche communities that people inhabit online. The role of search engine optimization is to marry comprehensive market research and best practices to target those diverse communities and funnel them back to your website.

The days when their customers were neatly funneled into just print, radio and TV are long gone, and yet some firms still treat those channels as the basis of their marketing. Those media are costly to advertise in and their power to reach a diverse audience is diminished in many ways, especially in younger age demographics.

Each section of this paper lays out the specific benefits of different types of content, plus some tips for using them successfully. A lot of these are a good starting point for fledgling marketing efforts, while others are probably better to try as your content marketing matures or you decide to invest in more resources and talent. These are all proven methods for connecting with your audience and raising your visibility in search results for your most valuable keyword searches. Generating engaging content that makes sense given your industry and your audience is a smart SEO strategy for the long term. Next, we'll explain how.

Paul Sanders is a Content Strategist with SEO.com. He helps strategize and develop material for clients' SEO and content marketing campaigns. He also develops best practices and training for some of SEO.com's other content strategists.



In this paper, you'll learn about:

- Blogs
- Images
- Video
- Podcasts
- SlideShare Presentations
- Newsletters & Email
- Online Polls & Surveys
- Whitepapers
- Online Tools
- Case Studies

But even as available marketing channels have multiplied, so has the number of powerful tools allowing companies to connect with their current and potential customers. To make your marketing strategy work, a company needs to find marketing vehicles that engage potential customers. A variety of sensible content vehicles to fuel that engagement is essential to any online marketing effort because content is the core of good SEO practice.

This white paper highlights 10 of the most successful types of content that savvy companies are using to drive traffic to their websites, build online communities and establish themselves as thought leaders in their industries.

Highly relevant, keyword-rich content that engages readers has tremendous value in any serious SEO strategy. Search engines like Google and Bing are not just looking at the content on your site and the keywords that it contains; the algorithms they use to rank websites consider user interaction, social sharing and natural linking patterns that occur only around really good content. The better your content, the more engagement it will generate, the more activity search engines will notice on and around your site, and the better your search rankings will be.



Share this eBook!



blog

One of the smartest places to start with content marketing is with a blog because, well, words are cheap. Publishing just a few blog posts a week takes very few resources or specialized technical skills. If your web developer can set up a simple [WordPress](#) blog (the popular, free blogging software platform), you can be up and publishing on your existing website in short order.

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING YOUR COMPANY BLOG

There are right and wrong ways to manage a blog and the content that goes on it. These tips should help you get started on the right foot:

1

Keep a regular blog schedule, at least three times per week. Ideally, you want to post multiple times per day. If people keep coming back to your site, and don't see new content, pretty soon they'll stop coming back. Content freshness also has implications for your site's SEO efforts. Frequent updates mark you as more relevant than competitors.

2

Maintain a high level of quality and relevance to your readers. Bad, boring and off-topic writing will not help you reach the right people; data-rich, well-researched posts by industry experts at your company will.

3

Place your blog on the same web domain as your main site (e.g., <http://www.seo.com/blog/>), or on a sub-domain (e.g., <http://www.blog.seo.com>). Having it on a separate domain only separates the branding value and search relevance that you build up there from your main site.

4

Implement a comment management system (like [Disqus](#)) that allows users to sign in and comment with their Facebook, Google+ or any number of other social platform accounts. A management system will also help you to combat spam and moderate discussions that your posts generate.

5

Make your blog imminently shareable by including social share buttons on every post. Let people to spread content they like with just a few clicks.

Your blog, like the rest of your content strategy, will evolve over time. People who write for your blog will become better writers with time, and your audience will grow. And if you are writing on topics that people respond to, you'll start to drive traffic to your blog and the web properties to which it points.

Once your blog gains some maturity, it will become a significant channel through which you communicate with customers, the press and your industry at large. Concerted effort here can reap dividends later on in search-engine visibility, brand authority and growing web traffic.

Most of the content on this list could be accessed through your blog, or at least linked to from it. It's the perfect home base from which to execute the rest of your content marketing initiatives. A blog is also the logical place where return visitors will check for news on your products and services, or just to find more great content.

Write relevant articles that attract readers and help build your site's relevance for search engines, and then direct those readers to the pages on your site that are optimized for conversion.

People may link to relevant articles as well, which is a good signal to search engines that your site is an authority.



(<http://www.seo.com/blog/how-to-boost-your-traffic-with-pinnable-images/>)

PRO TIP: Don't just link back to your own site or other blog posts; link to relevant sites all over the Web to help your audience identify your blog as a nexus of curated resources.

What's more, many company websites suffer from a lack of textual content, which blogs supply plenty of. More keyword-rich text can help Google recognize your site as relevant for the right keyword searches. The best thing about blogs is that they are versatile platforms for publishing all sorts of content:

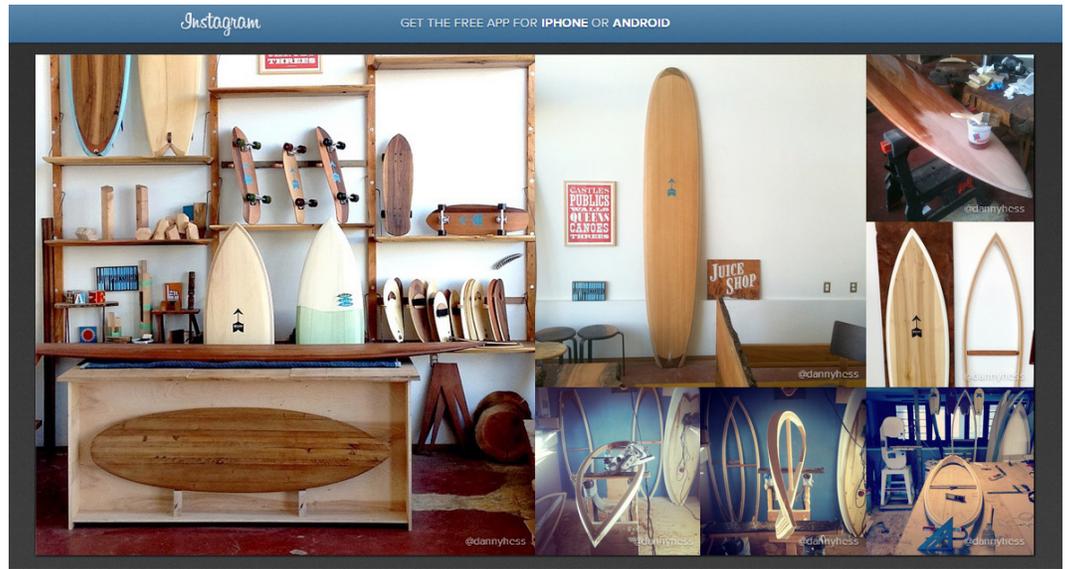
- Tutorials and How-to Guides
- Industry News
- Expert Opinion
- Company Announcements or Promotions
- Video and Images
- Infographics
- Interviews
- And more

images



When you arrive at a webpage, whether it's a blog post, an ecommerce site or a news article, your eyes naturally flit to any visual elements of the page before proceeding to the text. A single image sets the tone for whatever else is on the screen.

All too often, though, high-quality images are an afterthought. Editors will throw up a mediocre stock photo for a blog post, web copy and other content that doesn't inspire. But images (like the one above from Danny Hess's [surfboard company](http://blog.instagram.com/post/39653267066/the-making-of-dannyhess-surfboards-the-making)) can actually be the main event in and of themselves.



(<http://blog.instagram.com/post/39653267066/the-making-of-dannyhess-surfboards-the-making>)

Social sharing sites like [Pinterest](#) and [Instagram](#) are popular precisely because users love to collect and digest massive amounts of visual content, and then share photos they like with just a click. What better way to find relevant, high-conversion traffic for your site than by seeding niche communities like these with your own photos?

CREATING IMAGES THAT WORK FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

PRO TIP:
Photograph seemingly mundane processes of your business, like manufacturing or design phases. Images of these aspects of your company give the public an insider look.

Every brand can find visual elements about their products, services or even workplace culture that can act as subject matter for both onsite use and social sharing. You simply have to be creative about finding ways to market images that are in your target audiences' wheelhouse.

For example, consider [this Pinboard](#) titled Cooking with Beer by Four Peaks Brewery, an Arizona beer company. It's full of custom, high-quality images that foodies (a highly relevant demographic for the microbrew industry) will be repinning to their own boards and even their home websites. All those repins generate links and get their product in front of even more users in the same content sphere online. Most of these images aren't even their own images; they're curated from other pinboards.

Your social accounts can operate in a similar way, placing your own images in the mix, and seeing how far they go.



OPTIMIZING IMAGES FOR PINTEREST

Simply uploading whatever images you have on hand to your Pinterest or Instagram account will not get the best results. Here are some best practices to follow when optimizing images for websites and social media:

MAINTAIN IMAGE QUALITY. Low-quality or pixelated images won't get spread, and bad photos can increase abandonment rates. Learn to [check image quality](#) before uploading anything to the web.

MAKE THE INTERESTING. Generic image content is boring no matter how high the quality. Stock product photos aren't enough; take pictures of your products in action.

USE REASONABLE RESOLUTIONS. High-resolution photos take a long time to load, which can hurt your website's load time and force search engines to miss scanning important pages.

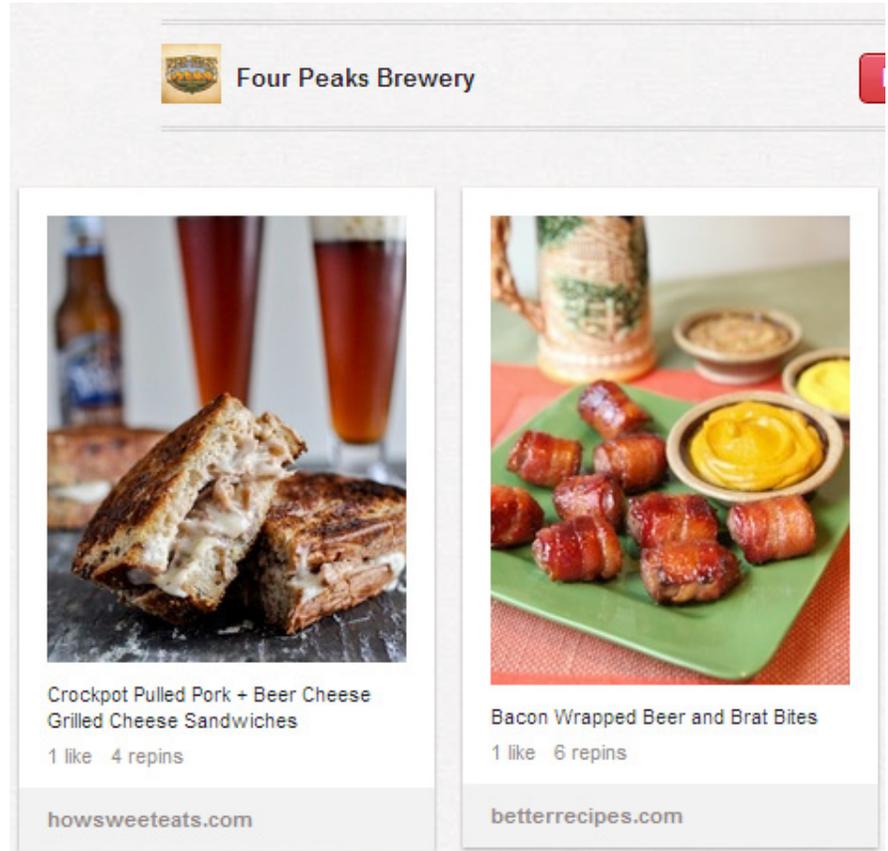
ADD SHARE BUTTONS. If all the photos in your site's image gallery, on blog posts and other site sections have [social share links](#) on them, it's easy for visitors to spread them to Pinterest and Facebook for you.

OPTIMIZE THEM FOR SEARCH. Google has its own [image-publishing guidelines](#) that may help your photos show up more prominently in their Image Search. Good image search results can correlate with success in regular search results, too.

DESCRIPTIONS: For sites like Pinterest, write relevant, compelling descriptions for the images to help people find them when searching for relevant topics. If you don't write a description when pinning a photo, for example, Pinterest will use the image "alt" tag text by default.

It can take some work to get images ready for the Web, and even more to make them searchable and shareable. But the benefit they provide to your content marketing efforts is worth the effort.

Simple photos aren't the only images you should be thinking about, though. Infographics (discussed later on), micrographics, charts and other visual content can be just as compelling and shareable as photography, if not more so. Images are critical to nearly everything else we'll talk about in this paper, so it is important to know how to generate high-quality visuals from the very start.



(<http://pinterest.com/fourpeaksbrew/cooking-with-beer/>)

videos



Will It Blend?
PRESENTED BY BLENDTEC

Don't try this at home!
Below you will find a collection of videos that are NOT safe to try at home. Click any of the videos to see what the Total Blender can do in our test lab, as we ask the question, Will It Blend?

Will It Blend - iPhone 4S (New iPhone App) Share More info

Will it Blend? Home
Don't Try This @ Home
Try This @ Home
Friends of Will it Blend
Will It Blend Store
Suggest Stuff To Blend
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Blendtec Home Blenders
Blendtec Commercial Blenders

(<http://www.willitblend.com/>)

Audio and video production can seem intimidating as a content venture, but the [costs of audio and video production](#) are not as heavy as you would expect. You can build your own affordable studio for video and audio production from which you can produce picture and sound that doesn't make your audience cringe. With some novice editing skills, you can create marketable content for distribution.

There is a wrong way to create audiovisual of content. Many companies fall into the trap of producing only promotional content for their products and services because they think of them as Web versions of TV commercials or infomercials. That seems a natural step from traditional marketing, but video consumption on the Internet is something else entirely. People want more than just an ad, which is why those videos rarely get shared.

Building Shareable Video Content

To get spread, either on blogs or through social media, a video has to provide some value to those people sharing it. Shareable videos are well-produced, informative and often just fun. You can hit those marks with different types of videos:

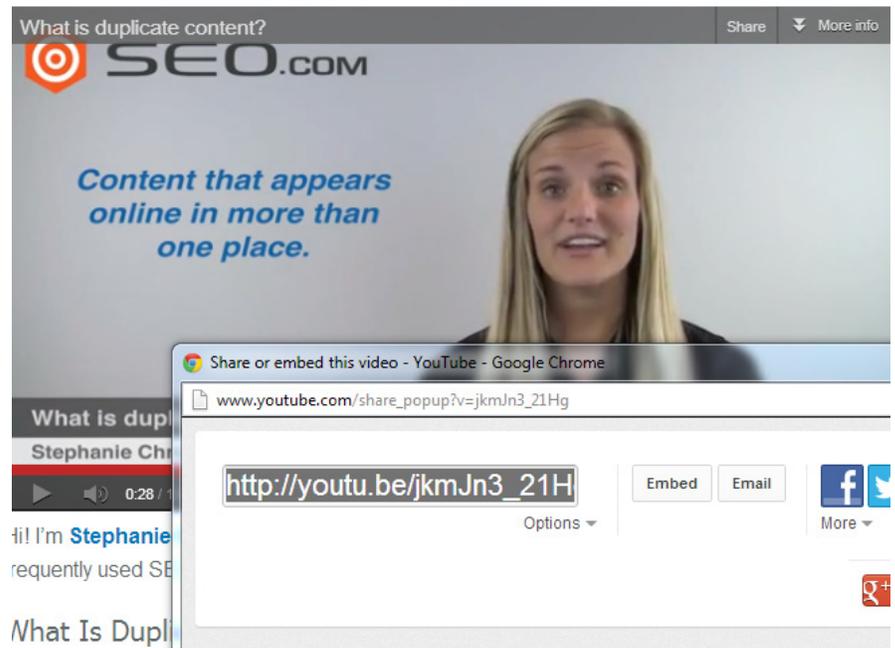
- Product demonstrations**
- Video tutorials and screen-casts**
- Recorded webinars**
- Corporate culture videos**



People are finding creative ways to feature their brand and products through video all the time. Because of the interactive nature of the Web, online video is more versatile than anything that's currently on TV, and the financial barriers to entry are much lower.

Blendtec is one of those companies who caught on very early. Their [Will it Blend?](#) videos feature Tom Dickson, the founder, chopping up things like iPads, DVDs and books in their blenders. Every video is a perfect blend of humor, product demonstration and company personality. Audiences are entertained by this glimpse into the personality of the founder and his company, and Blendtec gets their product's capabilities in front of millions of eyes.

Your videos don't have to go viral to see decent distribution, though. Nor do they need to be elaborate productions. This [simple video tutorial](#) from Dave Dugdale at Learning DSLR Video is simply him in front of a matte backdrop. The real content of the video is the expertise he is sharing with his niche audience. The setting merely makes the video



(<http://www.seo.com/blog/what-is-duplicate-content-video-faq/>)

feel personal, like you're getting one-on-one help from an expert instead of just watching a video. You can do something similar.

Both these types of videos keep people coming back to your site. They spend more time there, interacting with your brand and exposing themselves to your products. What's more, videos can show up prominently in search results, making them valuable assets for SEO purposes.

PRO TIP: Write blog posts for guest features on prominent industry sites, and include company videos as bonus content. You're more likely to get published (and get valuable back-links) with related multimedia content.

LEARN TO EMBED VIDEO. Blogging platforms like WordPress make it relatively simple to publish video, but you'll want to learn to embed them directly onto your web pages using HTML code, too.

ENABLE SOCIAL SHARING. A lot of video players, like Flash Player and Vimeo, have social share options built into the player itself. This allows users to share directly to their social accounts or grab embeddable HTML code for their blog. That code links back to your site, making video a good vehicle for gaining links from a variety of places around the Web.

OPTIMIZE YOUR VIDEOS FOR YOUTUBE. Start your own channel on the world's largest video sharing site. Add descriptive titles and tags to help people find your video and let it show up in relevant Web searches. Even though people will watch it on YouTube, they're still being exposed to your brand and may follow links on your channel back to your site.

OPTIMIZING VIDEO FOR THE WEB:

podcast



Fewer companies get into the world of podcasting, or Internet radio, possibly because they have fewer ideas about how to use it to their advantage. But podcasting, like video, can be a terrific way to entertain or inform people while acquainting them with your products or services.

PODCASTING HAS DISTINCT ADVANTAGES OVER VIDEO:

Portability: Podcast audio files download quickly to your smartphone, tablet or MP3 player. And they aren't as data- or bandwidth-heavy as big video files.

Persistence: Listeners typically work their way through a back-catalog of archived shows, opening them up to more interaction with your brand.

Production cost: Quality voice recording is surprisingly affordable, and you don't have to worry about lighting or visual effects like with video.

Building an Audience

Your company can find similar ways to employ podcasts. Even if it isn't a weekly show, your podcast can engage in stimulating conversations on industry news, interviews, debates over related topics, content repurposed from other marketing efforts and special series on any subject relevant to your customers.

Building an audience takes time, though, so you may want to start with an indefinite recording and publishing schedule to test the waters. See what type of response you get from a handful of podcasts, and then invest more in production when you're successful. Combined with video and other content, podcasts can pull in interested listeners, expose your brand to niche communities you'd otherwise miss and encourage greater engagement on your main website.

Look at the Discovery Channel's wealth of podcasts on the How Stuff Works network. The casual and snarky [Stuff You Should Know](#) podcast is a short weekly show that explores subjects like "How Vampires Work" or "What was America's first terrorist threat?" Thousands of people download their half-hour/hour-long shows each week. The show has become so popular that they crossed over to an actual TV show on the Science Channel in January 2013.

Discovery is able to target curious, knowledge-seeking listeners who are also likely to enjoy their other shows. Their podcasts can cross-promote shows on the cable network and help grow their audience. Because podcasts are portable, people consume them in a way that isn't as easy with video content. In this way, they increase their brand visibility (or audibility, in this case) through a medium that carries distinct advantages over their fixed network programming schedule.



slideshare presentations

Slideshows have a bad reputation for being boring, but [they don't have to be](#). Lackluster and uninspired slide presentations deserve that reputation, but SlideShare presentations are something different.

You can upload public or private SlideShare presentations, embed them on your blog or website and share them via social media or email. People can download them, view them online and share them with friends. Presentations also show up on Pinterest in full form, so they can be spread much like image content in that way.

A well designed SlideShare can be used as a tool for showcasing a product, making announcements or introducing people to your company. But they are most powerful as a non-promotional content vehicle.

What's more is that you can include tags and even audiovisual content in your presentations to make them more than just a succession of animated bullet points and still images. Those design elements make them much more effective and engaging. Plus, you can embed links into slides that lead viewers back to your website. This is a great way to tease content on your site and pull people into closer interaction with your brand.



(<http://www.slideshare.net/merlinmann/broken-meetings-and-how-youll-fix-them>)

PRO TIP:
Make your slides primarily visual. Don't crowd the space with more than short a sentence or two.



Content that Works on SlideShare

The primary appeal of SlideShare presentations for readers is the design. The images you use in them will set the tone for whatever the actual subject matter is, so spending time on the appearance is essential.

Your slides can work in much the same way as other forms of content, but the format forces you to be brief, cutting your ideas down to their essential elements. It takes skill to communicate effectively this way, but that also means people can quickly experience and spread your presentations.

Visual presentations allow you to dip your feet into multimedia content design in a controlled way, with linear storytelling and rich visual design. The ease of spreading them via social media and their embeddable nature make them terrific ways to build links for SEO purposes, too.

SOME IDEAS FOR SLIDESHARE CONTENT:

DATA AND RESEARCH:

Statistics and data analysis are often the real substance of any content, especially if you visualize it in a compelling slide.

TIPS AND TUTORIALS:

A presentation format like this is ideal for simple how-to guides and helpful tips.

BLOG FEATURES:

Multimedia content in a SlideShare, highlighting main points from the blog post, makes the piece much more compelling than the unadorned text alone.

REPURPOSED CONTENT:

Adapt presentations that you have already created. Pare down a blog post into some slides. Your existing images and videos are ripe for use in a SlideShare, too.



newsletters and email

The old-school marketing email is still an effective communication tool, but only if you do it correctly and avoid abusing your email list. You cannot expect to bombard your subscribers with marketing messages alone and not see it marked as spam. Every communication with a customer needs to have a compelling value proposition.

ONE CLEAR VALUE YOU CAN OFFER IS THROUGH TARGETED DEALS, WHICH PEOPLE EXPECT FROM EMAIL MARKETING:

- 1 Coupon codes
- 2 Exclusive sales events
- 3 Contests and giveaways
- 4 Highlighted products
- 5 Customized product recommendations
- 6 Rewards club offers

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You are receiving this newsletter because you are signed up for it. Not interested anymore? [Unsubscribe](#).

(<http://bookboon.com/>)

The obvious pitfall is that these offers can become too frequent. And while it's always a good idea to allow people to adjust their email preferences, people will often just mark them as spam, reducing the value of your mailing list. To get people to accept a higher email volume from you, it helps to add content-rich newsletter emails to the mix.



EMAIL GUIDELINES

Since email is an outbound marketing method, people are much less forgiving when it comes to the quality and relevance of messages you send them. Here are some best practices that should guide your email strategy:

GET PERMISSION: Make the opt-in for your email list clear, whether as part of an order, an email form or other process. Make unsubscribing or adjusting email settings easy, ideally at the bottom of every email.

DIVERSIFY YOUR EMAILS: Different customer personas should be targeted with different email designs, frequencies and content. Test different email designs with various tracking listings to find what works.

BEWARE IMAGES: Don't place critical info in your email images. Gmail and other services stop them from loading to prevent users from being assaulted with inappropriate spam content.

FOLLOW THE LAW: Know what [email marketing laws](#) apply in your country.

DESIGN FOR EVERYONE: Allow users to switch to a plain-text version so they can view it even on mobile devices with slow download speeds.

DO QUALITY CONTROL: Always remember to test your emails before sending them out. A simple design mistake should not be duplicated in thousands or hundreds of thousands of customers' inboxes.

Well-crafted email campaigns can drive high-converting, valuable visitors to your site. And while that's only somewhat related to your search engine optimization, it's a critical outlet for promoting your content marketing efforts.

Emails as a Content Delivery System

The reason that many people will sign up for your mailing list is that they already find useful, entertaining or informative on your site. Emails and newsletters should tease content that will draw them back in. You're not delivering full-length content in an email, just enough to remind them why they like your site in the first place.

PRO TIP:
You can include tracking information within email links that allow you to track performance of your various email campaigns in Google Analytics.

Content re-caps of the best blog posts, videos, news articles and other content from your site are some of the most successful forms of email. They act as a sort of menu for what can be found at your site, and showcase your content for people who are likely to be interested.

People typically scan when they read email, so your email design only has a moment to engage them. Give snippets of popular blog posts or infographics, with links back to the full content on your site. Large blocks of text are likely to get skipped, so keep it brief and make sure your calls to action are clear.



online surveys

People are incredibly hungry for hard data. They also want to give their input on topics that matter to them. Both of these impulses can be satisfied when you conduct online surveys and display the results in various forms of content.

Your surveys have to be more than just a data gathering tool for your marketing and sales departments. If you want people to consume and share the results of a survey, it has to be relevant to them. Choose a compelling topic to gather data on. It can be controversial, [informative](#) or

just useful, but your audience has to relate to it in some way. That's how you get people to type in their email address or fill out a leads form just to see your content.

Even if it's only a single-question poll, make it an interesting one that makes people want to get feedback and engage in discussion surrounding the data and results. When people are engaged, they'll link to the survey, share it on social networks and bookmark the page to check developing results later. All of this activity does great things for SEO.

POLLitico >>

Drawing the line
What do you think of the NRA's decision to bring the president's daughters into the gun debate?

- I'm OK with it -- It is a legitimate way for the NRA to make its point.
- I'm not OK with it -- The kids should be off limits, period.
- I'm not sure.

VOTE

[Reference Story](#) | [View Results](#) | [Archives](#) >>

(http://dyn.politico.com/polls/poll_resultsTop10.cfm?ml=ll)

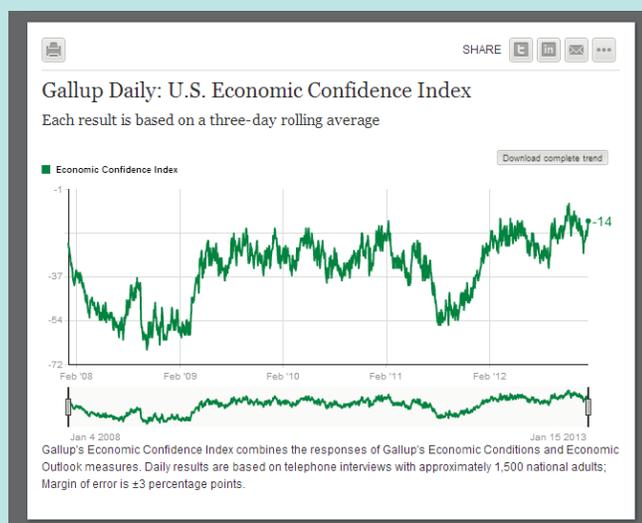
PRO TIP:
Visitors are more likely to complete surveys if you provide an incentive, like the chance to win in a contest or giveaway.

ATTRIBUTES OF EFFECTIVE SURVEYS:

- QUESTIONS ARE NOT OPEN-ENDED.** Open-ended questions don't lead to easily quantifiable results.
- KEEP THEM SHORT.** The longer your survey, the less likely someone is to complete it. Single-question polls see lots of responses, especially if users get to see instant results.
- OFFER INCENTIVES TO COMPLETE.** People are more likely to invest the time in a survey if they feel like they're doing some good or getting something in return.



TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING SURVEYS



(<http://www.gallup.com/poll/151550/gallup-daily-economic-confidence-index.aspx>)

There are a number of simple online survey tools that let you build custom questionnaires and do interesting things with the results. Sites like [Survey Monkey](#) have both free and paid options for implementing a survey. You can also [make your own survey](#) using tools in Google Drive.

The key to getting good data is to write [good survey questions](#) that are non-leading and unbiased. Then you can develop a survey on a topic that you feel will appeal to your target demographics.

PUBLISHING SURVEY RESULTS

Even a great poll can lose its value if the results aren't easily digestible. Don't simply post a table of the results and percentages. People do want the raw data, but you should also visualize the data you've collected in some way, whether it's a simple pie chart or something more creative like an infographic.

Presenting that information visually is not enough, though. Often data requires context that only an expert can provide. This is where your company's expertise can help in providing analysis that other companies do not or cannot generate. Content that contains hard data and analysis gets shared with niche markets and cited by authorities in your industry.

It's important to get the most use out of data you collect by repurposing it for multiple types of content. If you create a chart of the results, publish it to your blog, spread it through your social media channels and tease it in your marketing emails. Discuss the analysis of those results in a video or podcast. Do a webinar on the implications of the data you've collected.

Data-hungry customers will consume and share all of that content, and you'll see a better return from the resources you invest in such content if you can spread it to a diverse number of publishing channels. More forms of content help allow sharing in different online spaces and generates a wider array of natural links. Really popular data-driven content can even outrank your homepage in some instances.

white papers

White papers are versatile documents, long-form content meant to be more educational and rigorous than a blog post or long article, but not quite as heavy as an e-book. They target a certain type of reader, one who is interested in delving deep into a subject.



Invent the future: the new normal for hotels in 2010 and beyond

1 Introduction: Turbulent Times



The hospitality industry has never been a static business environment. Over the last 18 months, it has seen unprecedented change.

But the turbulent economic conditions of the last 18 months have simply brought into focus the fundamental changes the industry has experienced throughout the last decade.

Satisfying guests, property owners, property developers, shareholders and staff has become steadily more complex. So too, has selling and delivering services in emerging markets, adapting swiftly to Web-based sales channels, and gaining brand-wide views of activity in near real-time and then acting effectively on that knowledge.

And achieving targets has never been more difficult, from engaging staff to meet guest performance expectations, to achieving revenue and profit goals.

Against these changes, the limitations of crucial portions of the

(<http://www.burns-htc.com/articles/docs/Amadeus-White-Paper-10.pdf>)



You will notice a common theme in the examples above: they are all factual, substantive and concrete types of content. White papers are not meant to be opinion pieces or marketing brochures; they are meant to be resources with actionable data or analysis that people can use.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD WHITE PAPER?

The value for a reader is the quality of the information they will get out of this form of content. That information is an incentive that you can use to achieve certain conversion goals, but the data, insight and analysis the paper delivers has to be worth it to the reader. People who hand over their email and personal information to gain access to a substantive paper will be let down if what they really get is a company brochure. Really good white papers are:

DATA DRIVEN:

People want to see concrete evidence to back up conclusions you come to in a paper. Survey results, ROI data, financial projections—facts and figures, rigorously obtained.

TARGETED:

The audience you're going for needs to be well-defined and the topic you choose highly relevant. White papers are often aimed at decision makers and strategists in specific industries.

INFORMATIVE:

This is related to the point about data. Nobody wants to read anything (especially 10 pages or more) that does not inform them or help enhance their decision-making ability.

Distributing White Papers

Most often, white papers are distributed as downloadable PDFs. You can place a white paper behind a pay-wall, require users to fill out a lead form to download it, attach it to an email or simply place download links on your website or blog.

PRO TIP: You can help your white paper show up in search results pages by editing the document's metadata or special information points attached to the PDF. Including a title, author, subject or keywords helps search engines know what the paper is about.

If users think your content is worth it, they will jump through those hoops to get it and hopefully engage with your website or products and services as well. Google can also scan PDFs for keyword-rich content and other information. And people linking to your download pages helps improve your site's search value.



infographics

Data visualizations like infographics are an imminently shareable type of content. But unlike photos, an infographic can't get by on aesthetics alone; what people really want out of them is the information. There are [good and bad infographics](#), and the good ones all have several things in common:

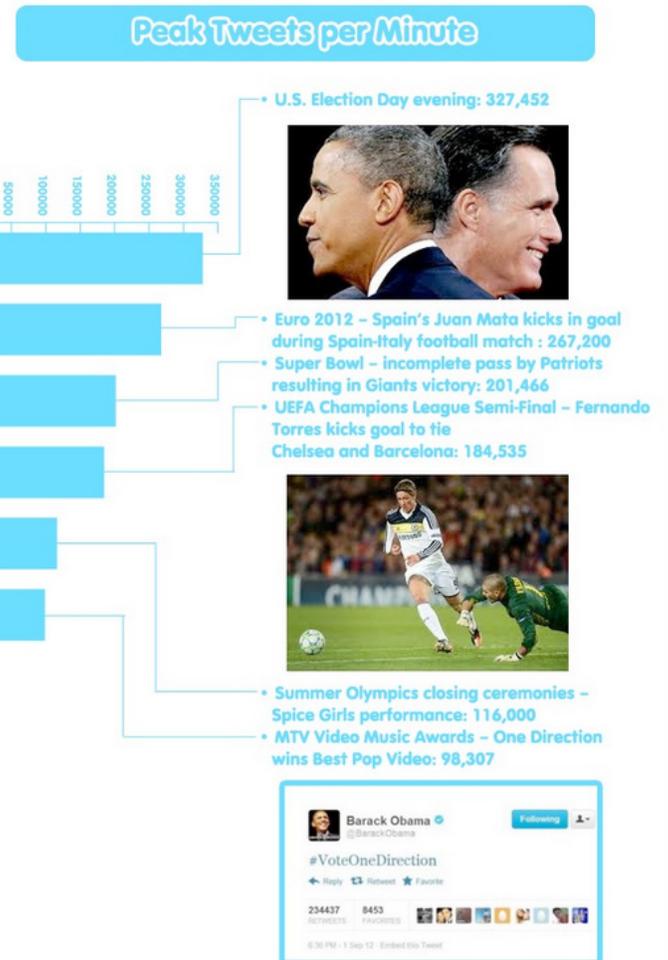
- 1 Intriguing subject matter
- 2 Abundant statistics and facts
- 3 Smart data visualizations

An individual graphic can still be successful if it doesn't hit all of these marks, but it certainly will not succeed without at least one of them.

You can spot a lot of ugly, amateurish infographics by their uninspired graphic design. But there are plenty of graphics made with competent design principles that nonetheless fail because they have too little data to support the size of the graphic. In that case, it can be better to create a micrographic, which is smaller and more densely packed with information.

BAD INFOGRAPHICS ALSO TEND TO CONTAIN COMMON SIMILARITIES:

- Lack of hard data and statistics
- Lazy or uninspired visualizations
- Topic doesn't fit the medium
- Boring subject matter



(<http://www.seo.com/blog/what-peaked-our-interest-in-2012-infographic/>)

One of the biggest mistakes made by marketing teams is to force content that isn't data-centric into an infographic form. A top-10 list, frequently asked questions or a simple collection of related facts is not an infographic; it's a blog post or an article. A graphic must have real data, visualized in some way, if you want to engage a reader enough for them to share it.

PRO TIP:

People will spread your infographic for you if you make the HTML embed code for it easy to copy and paste onto their blog or website. Make sure you have social share buttons enabled on the image as well.



THE GOAL OF GRAPHICS

CRAFTING INFOGRAPHICS WITH RICH DATA

Find a topic related to your industry in general, one on which you can find a lot of relevant, well-documented research and statistics. (Research you did yourself would be ideal.) The topic doesn't necessarily need to be tied to your products or services. Again, an infographic isn't supposed to be promotional; it's meant to entertain, inspire and inform, all elements you want to associate with your brand, if only obliquely.

Designing an infographic on your own may be beyond your in-house marketing team's ability, so seriously consider outsourcing to another design firm. At SEO.com, we have created many infographics for clients who either do not have in-house designers, or could not fit the infographic work into their workload.



(http://www.mrsfields.com/incoming/holiday_treats_guide/)

Data visualizations can do a lot of work in your content marketing campaigns. Including them with other forms of content (blog posts, white papers, slide presentations and videos) is a good way to engage a diverse audience. Graphics also spread well through social networks, especially photo-sharing sites like Pinterest, Tumblr and Instagram.

Aside from showcasing your brand with a slick piece of graphic design, a primary benefit of spreading an infographic far and wide is the number of links it can generate back to your site. Spreading through social spaces can drive qualified traffic back to your site as well.

Always post embeddable HTML code on the page which hosts the graphic, and mark it with social share buttons to make it easy for people to share. A wide distribution can mean a large volume of links from a diverse number of sites, which has tremendous SEO value and drives valuable Web traffic to your site.



online tools

The best type of content is interactive, and the Web is the perfect platform for creating an application that visitors to your site can actually use again and again. It does not need to be a full cloud-based software solution; you can offer a simple online tool that people will use and tell others about.

Solve a simple problem for someone, like finding the right tire for their car or calculating retirement savings or [mortgage interest](#) over time. These things get shared, linked to and even reviewed if you have a really unique tool.

An application take can take a certain amount of developer muscle, depending on the application you want to create. Some are [nearly full-blown software tools](#) running in the cloud, and some are simple apps that run entirely in a user's browser. But if you can offer a tool that fulfills a real need for one of your key customer segments, this type of content will generate high-value leads and Web traffic. They are also evergreen linking incentives that keep generating traffic and visibility in search results.

Mortgage Calculator	Mortgage Payment Calculator
Mortgage amount:	\$ 165000
Mortgage term:	30 years or 360 months
Interest rate:	7 % per year
Mortgage start date:	Feb 7 2013
Monthly Payments:	\$ 1097.75
<input type="button" value="Calculate"/>	

(<http://www.bankrate.com/calculators/mortgages/mortgage-calculator.aspx>)



(<http://web.colorotate.org/>)

PRO TIP:
Give your online tools their own dedicated static pages on your website. They'll lose visibility on your blog once they move off of the first page.

ONLINE TOOL BEST PRACTICES

When developing any project that requires specialized talent, it's important to scale your expectations to the resource you have available for the project. The more complicated your tool's features get, the harder it will be to design and implement, not to mention maintain. Keep these principles in mind when developing your own online tools:

KEEP IT RELEVANT. The tool should fulfill a need for your relevant demographics, not just attract the general public. Trying to make your app everything to everyone usually results in it not being very useful to anyone in particular.

MAKE IT EVERGREEN. The less maintenance you have to do, the fewer resources your tool will eat up over time. If it needs to be constantly updated, it isn't evergreen.

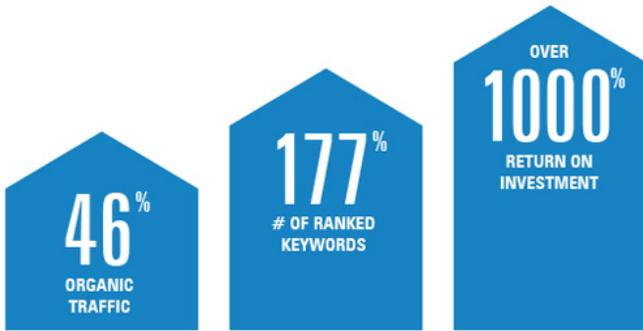
OPTIMIZE FOR CONVERSION. Your tool should be a great lead-in to your products and services, with a prominent call to action on the tool page or in the tool itself.

When you do invest significant resources into an online application, you want to get as much out of it as you possibly can. Optimizing the landing page for conversion is really only part of it. Make sure the launch of the tool receives robust exposure through all of your marketing channels, and give it ongoing support through mentions in blog posts, social media, webinars and other communications.

case studies



THE RESULTS



(<http://www.seo.com/case-studies/dell-computers/>)

Case studies are often overlooked as part of a content strategy, but they can be instrumental in moving customers into your conversion funnel.

On SEO.com's website, we prominently feature case studies from our star clients. Since search engine optimization is a data-driven industry, we use hard numbers in our case studies to show boosts in traffic, the increased search rankings for their campaigns and (most importantly) the return on investment they experienced.

A WELL-WRITTEN CASE STUDY CAN:

- 1 Build authority
- 2 Showcase products
- 3 Demonstrate ROI

But even industries that are not data driven can develop case studies that people find compelling. Highlight customer testimonials, photos of the services you provide, stories of particular challenges that you faced with a client and how you solved them. Present what matters to your customers and how you satisfy those needs and wants.

WRITING COMPELLING CASE STUDIES

This type of content can be hard to get right, and a lot of case studies wind up being just a brochure of company products and services. That isn't what the audience for this type of content is looking for. They'll listen to your pitch, but they really want to see how you helped customers succeed.

A good case study does several things:

PRESENTS THE PROBLEM. Defining the challenges facing your client helps the reader define similar challenges for themselves.

OUTLINES THE SOLUTION. After itemizing aspects of the problem, you can match them with the actions you took to address them.

DETAILS THE RESULTS. Results are what case studies are all about, and readers will notice a lack of concrete detail. Be specific.

SHOWCASES HAPPY CUSTOMERS. Get quotes and testimonials from customers who want to sing your praises.

The case study client is a proxy for the reader. When you outline a solution for another client's problem, your reader gains confidence that you can help them, too. That type of trust converts leads into customers.

PRO TIP: Visualize data points from your case studies prominently on your site's landing pages. A clever chart design, backed by impressive numbers, can help boost conversion.

This type of content is usually designed specifically for conversion and sales purposes. But a truly in-depth case study can be the subject of a white paper, and infographic, a video or other forms of content. Don't be afraid to repurpose them to drive traffic and build links as well.



summary

The important thing to remember when starting any new content marketing strategy is that you are planning for the long term. Building an audience, and the authority that comes with it, will not happen overnight.

Take a look at your current marketing goals, your budget and your existing content creation efforts. Ask yourself what type of content your current resources can support. Start with a blog, establish a publishing schedule, and build from there. Create a white paper, craft an email campaign or start contributing to photo-sharing sites. Then move up to bigger content, like video, infographics and online tools.

The online activity that great content initiates has tremendous SEO value, driving links, traffic and constant interaction between visitors and your website. Rankings rise, leads increase, and the ROI for your online activities becomes clear as you learn how to target content to the right audience and measure engagement.

You'll be surprised at the way people do interact and the results for all of your online advertising will impress you even more. Content always has been, and always will be, the core of every marketing plan. These ten vehicles are just some of the forms that content can take.

ABOUT **SEO.com**

A premiere search marketing firm, SEO.com is dedicated to bringing greater visibility and profitability online to their clients. Using data-driven methods and cutting-edge knowledge of the industry, their search engine optimization experts are driving serious result in organic website traffic, brand awareness and increased revenue.

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