



CONTENTWRITERS.COM

The Ultimate Guide For An Effective Content Strategy in 2020



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Not so long ago, you could post two short articles per week and still be a thought leader in content strategy.

Those days are gone.

Today, if you want great content marketing — the kind that delivers powerful ROI — you must build a competitor-crushing strategy.

This ultimate guide includes everything you need to get your content strategy going in the right direction in 2020.

The Big Questions of Content Strategy

When you have a solid content strategy, you can answer the questions that are crucial to producing successful content.

- ◆ Why am I creating content?
- ◆ What goals should my content help me reach?
- ◆ Who is my content geared toward?
- ◆ How do I want my audience to respond to my content?
- ◆ Which platforms will I use to distribute my content?



Answering these questions makes the decision-making process much easier when it comes time to brainstorm, create, distribute, and measure the ROI of content.

So, what does it take to make your reputation powerful?



Your Brand Persona

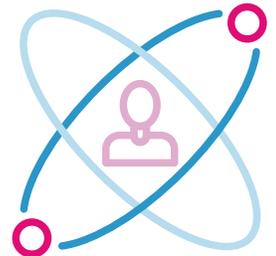
One of the most evident signs of a failing content strategy is a lack of structure. The content isn't cohesive. It doesn't emphasize any particular central themes in any way.

To fix this, you need to start by going back to the element of your brand. In other words, you need to define who you are.

Your content should express your unique image. Before you go any further with content strategy, answer these questions to figure out what kind of content fits your brand:

- ◆ What makes my brand stand out?
- ◆ What's my unique selling proposition?
- ◆ What are my core values?
- ◆ What kind of dialogue do I want to have with my audience?
- ◆ What kind of audience do I want to connect with?

The answers to these questions will help you figure out what kind of content actually fits your brand image. They'll also help you figure out which platforms are appropriate. Be sure to answer these questions before moving forward with your strategy.



Your Purpose

To publish with confidence, you need to set concrete objectives, then fit your content to those objectives. To form your content strategy, you first need to answer these questions:

- ◆ What goal do I most deeply want to accomplish with my content?
- ◆ What smaller milestones are essential to accomplish that?

Once you answer these questions, you can make decisions about what kind of content to create and when to release it.

Your Expertise

Every good content strategy is centered around a small number of main topics. Within the strategy, each piece of content explores those same topics from different approaches. Since most people need to be exposed to ideas more than once in order to remember them, you need to introduce the same message to your audience frequently.

These questions will help you build the body of your content:



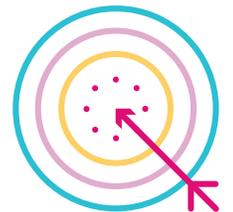
- ◆ What is my brand's core competency?
- ◆ What am I really great at explaining?
- ◆ What unique experiences can I share?

Your Style

Once you have a solid grasp of your audience, your objectives, and main concepts, it's time to determine your style.

Without a clear, consistent style, your content will lack impact. Even if your style isn't 100% perfect, the consistency will make a big difference. Continuity is the key.

While style should stem from the already established strategy, you also need to research your competitors and examine their content performance. This will help generate creative stylistic ideas that resonate with your audience.



Your Platform(s)

When you determine your style, it's also important to decide where and how your content will be posted. This is important because its platform will shape the format and publishing sequence of your content.

Even though there are several platforms to distribute content, the best content creators don't build a separate strategy for each one. It's better to master one platform than be a jack-of-all-platforms and master of none.

Behold, Your Content Strategy!



By the end of this process, you should have the following five elements of your content strategy.

- ◆ A grasp of your brand's identity and core values.
- ◆ The goals of your content.
- ◆ The essential ideas, topics, and expertise your content will carry.
- ◆ The clear presentation you're going to focus on for your content.
- ◆ The platforms you're going to use to distribute your content.

These five elements compose your content strategy—your foremost structure for making decisions about your content.

From here, it's all planning—the specific actions you take according to this structure.

Ultimately, having a powerful body of work is all about producing content that's aligned with the same decision-making structure. Keep putting the pieces together, and you'll see the results.

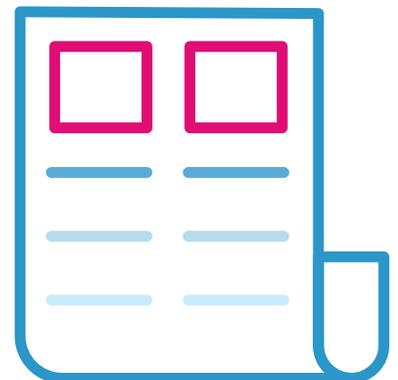
The Strength Of Long-Form Content

Short-form blog posts allow companies to provide functional information to their audience without requiring them to spend too much time reading.

While there's still a demand for concise content, progressive brands are recognizing the need to level this with long-form pieces, which often perform better when it comes to SEO as well as conversion rates.

With this competition for your readers' attention, it's become necessary to create content that is valuable. Because of this, creating content that's much longer is necessary.

From a content marketing perspective, long-form content is definitely more work. But, it can pay off significantly.



Long-Form vs. Short-Form Content

Content around 1,200 words or less is usually considered to be short-form content. This often includes social media posts, short blog posts, and product descriptions. Short-form content can be used to convey important information concisely.

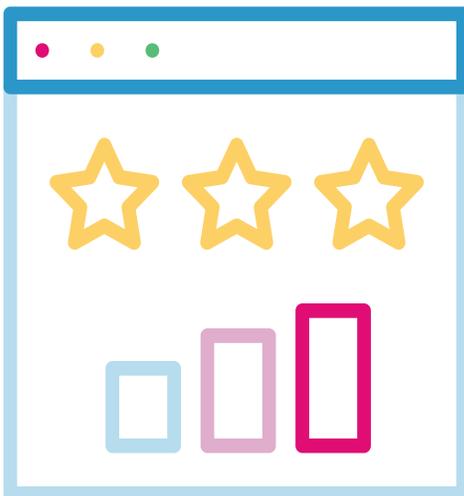
Long-form content includes anything over 1,200 words. Long-form content includes resources such as e-books, whitepapers, and curriculum courses. Long-form blog posts can be 2,000 words or more.

Long-Form Content Ranks Better In SERPs

A 2016 study by [Backlinko](#) that analyzed one million Google search results found that longer content tended to rank higher in organic search results. The average length of content that appeared in first-page results was around 1,900 words.

Part of the reason that long-form content tends to rank better is that it naturally gives you more opportunity to include important SEO elements, such as evidence and supporting facts from authoritative entities.

Long-form content also encourages users to stay on your site longer, which could indicate to Google that they found your content useful.



Long-Form Content Gets Shared More Often

An analysis by [BuzzSumo](#) found that long-form content such as case studies, infographics, and white papers is shared more than short-form content.

In fact, the longer the content, the more shares it received.

Content between 3,000 and 10,000 words received the most social shares.

The same study found that there were **16 times more short-form content (less than 1,000 words)** being published than content with 2,000 words or more.

This reveals that a lot of companies aren't making the effort to create long-form articles, which opens up an opportunity for those who are willing to do so. Writing valuable content that's at least 2,000 words long can make it easier to stand out from the competition.

Long-Form Content Positions You As An Authority

Long-form content allows you to take the reader from beginner to advanced information in one article. It can also position you as an influencer in your space, producing the type of content they crave.

Using your industry expertise to provide this type of comprehensive information shows your readers that you're an expert in your field while boosting your SEO.



Long-Form Content Leads To Better Conversion Rates

An article on [Search Engine Land](#) demonstrates how companies managed to increase their conversion rates by more than 37% when they tested long-form content on their website.

Creating long-form content may seem daunting at first, but if you make it a regular part of your content marketing strategy, you'll soon see that it's an under-utilized strategy that can help you increase your website traffic, generate more leads, and stand out from the competition.

As you start to see the results of your long-form content, you'll begin to develop a better sense of when to use long-form content and which topics warrant more attention than a standard blog post.

3 Reasons Why Blogging Is Essential For Businesses In 2020

1. A Blog Is The Focal Point Of Every Marketing Strategy

OptinMonster reported that marketers who prioritize blogging are 13x more likely to have a positive ROI on their efforts.

At the center of every content marketing strategy is a blog. The company blog serves as the home for all forms of content, ranging from captivating instructional videos to informative blogs detailing the latest industry advancements.

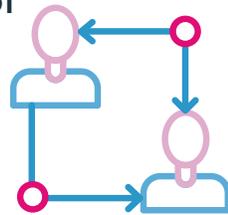
Each approach relies on creating valuable and influential content that resonates with an audience and drives them to take an action, such as a purchase. In fact, a **Demand Gen** report discovered that 47% of buyers viewed 3-5 pieces of content before engaging with a sales rep.

2. Blogs Build Relationships With Potential, Current, And Past Customers

For companies without the ability to develop in-person relationships with their customers, a blog serves as the vehicle for relationship building.

Through your blog, you are able to share valuable insight and information with consumers. As a result, this builds a level of trust and a connection with the customer.

To generate trust from first-time and returning customers, always think about what the consumer is looking for and how you can deliver that content or value while maintaining your brand's voice and purpose.



3. Blogs Provide Your Company With a Voice

Throughout your blog content, your brand voice must be consistent and refined—never wavering from the tone of voice customers have come to recognize. Your blog’s voice must be steady throughout each piece of content you create.



In addition, your blog gives your company the opportunity to share your voice and thoughts on crucial industry topics. From reporting on the latest industry advancements to discussing new developments, your company blog provides your brand with a platform to speak up about everything and anything going on in your industry.

How We Increased Our Blog Traffic by 80%

We were convinced that our blogs were underperforming. Our quality-intensive approach to creating content surely meant that we could just set it and forget it. In other words, “build it and they will come.”

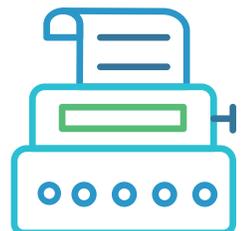
We didn’t realize it at the time, but given the constraints we were placing on producing our content, our blogs were performing about as well as they realistically could.

Here’s what we were doing wrong:

Our blog posts rarely exceeded 500 words.

Technical SEO topic? That’s 500 words. Content marketing trends for 2018? Yup, that’s 500 words.

No matter what the topic was, we decided that 500 words was enough.



According to [Search Metrics](#), the average word count of top-ranking content (on Google) is between 1,140-1,285 words.

When you eschew any sort of customization, your work is going to suffer. Especially when it comes to creative endeavors.

Add more engaging photos!

The images you select need to compliment your content, not supplement.

We decided to add photos that actually illustrate our points and assist in telling the story of the content.

In addition to custom graphics, we used branded content from the companies we examined to provide holistic evidence of their marketing tactics.

Update any old information.

As more data and information became available to us, it made sense to add it to the article so that we can be as up-to-date as possible.

This bumped up the post from about **500 words to just under 1,000**. And it wasn't that difficult.

We had some specific data that was outdated from **2 years ago**, so we replaced it with the most current data.

Update any meta information.

Now that your article is ranking for certain keywords, it's time to update your meta information.

Specifically, you'll want to update your meta description and your H2 tags.

Once the scope of the article changed, it was time to change information for search engines to let them know that we meant business.



The Results!



With these simple changes that anyone can do, this one blog post now gets over **80% more organic traffic** than it did before we made these changes.

We also started ranking significantly higher for keywords pertaining to the refreshed blog post.

With these best practices in mind, you are not only prepared for optimizing articles, but also for unique eCommerce content such as product descriptions.

Here's how to incorporate top notch writing to increase conversion and build credibility for your online business.

High-Quality Writing: The Key to Successful eCommerce

High-quality content writing is one of the most important tools for eCommerce businesses. The text on your website is how search engines will identify your products and recommend blog posts for potential customers.

Here are some things to keep in mind when it comes to the impact of high-quality writing on successful eCommerce operations.

Persuasive Copy

The content you use on your eCommerce website should be incredibly persuasive.

Generic descriptions of a product as supplied by your vendors won't do. Too many other eCommerce websites rely on vendor-provided product descriptions for recognition.

You need 100% original written copy that matches the tone and style of your company's brand.



If multiple companies sell the same or similar products, it is important to clarify why customers should buy from your company rather than competitors.

This might be because your company is an industry leader, has been around the longest, or has the lowest prices.

Describing your company's position in the market is key to being able to convince customers that they should buy from your company specifically.

Answer Sales Questions

The highest quality eCommerce copy answers common customer sales questions and moves them through the sales process without the need for a sales rep.

The more upfront information you provide customers to answer their questions and overcome common obstacles in the sales pipeline, the less work your sales and customer service teams will have to do.

You never know how many people choose to shop elsewhere because they're wasting time or effort calling your sales team with questions. Addressing common questions in your copy will only make your written copy better.

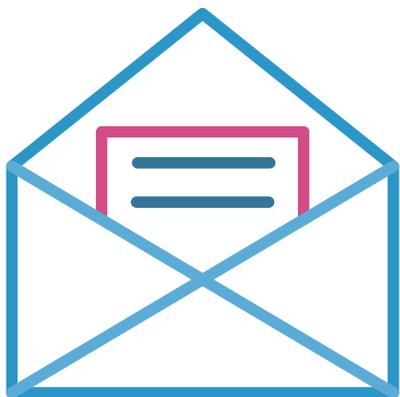
Build Credibility

High-quality writing also helps build credibility for your brand. Typos, other errors, and a lack of written copy hurts credibility. In many ways, your eCommerce site's written copy is the first impression that customers will have of your business.

When you think about your own experiences with low-quality writing from businesses, consider whether you would buy products from those companies as a first time buyer. If your written copy is sloppy, customers may perceive your business that way too.



Keep In Touch



One of the keys to being successful in eCommerce is to maintain contact with potential customers.

For most people, eCommerce transactions are short, one-time interactions. However, there's a big opportunity for repeat business if you can cultivate an ongoing relationship with customers.

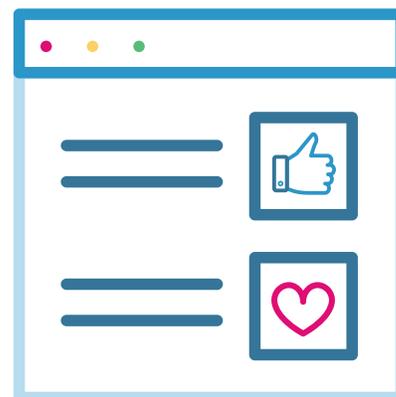
Email campaigns are an effective means of extending conversations with customers. A well-crafted campaign serves several functions, including generating interest among customers, weeding out bad leads, and funneling good leads.

Many companies use email campaigns and see meaningful returns. They also use email campaigns to provide extra value by educating customers about their company products and services.

Catch Social Media Attention

For eCommerce businesses, social media is an incredibly cost-effective way to reach new customers.

Whether you're generating quality content for your business' social media page or investing in paid advertising, it's still typically less expensive to engage in social media marketing than other forms of online advertising.



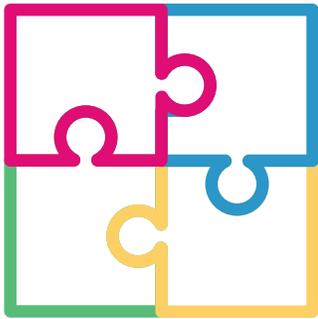
When creating a social media post, you have a limited number of characters or words you can use. To make the most of limited space, it's imperative that you only use the highest- quality writing.

If you simply share links without a text-based message or have badly written social media posts, you lose an opportunity to grow your business and direct new people toward your eCommerce site.

Have A Detailed Plan

The effect of having high quality writing extends past your company's website and social media accounts. There's real benefit in having effective copy in other parts of your business.

For instance, your eCommerce website's business plan should be well-written.



Having a clear, concise business plan can help secure funding, get new partners, and solidify your standing as a real business. Many eCommerce websites don't have formal business plans, especially drop ship businesses that are further removed from order fulfillment.

Not having a well-written business plan makes it more difficult to grow or sell the business.

Advertise New Product Launches

Sending out press releases and creating blog posts about new products gives you the best chance of success. Without adequate advertising, a product may fail to find its audience.



Creating the highest-quality marketing campaigns, typically in the form of press releases and blog posts, can help to spread the word about your newest products.

In fact, writing about new products should be a regular part of your product launch process.

The Key Takeaway

These are just some of the ways that high-quality writing can help online businesses thrive in a very competitive environment. Building credibility is important, as is maintaining the correct brand image.

Sometimes partnering with an experienced content writer can make all the difference in how your website performs.



So, there you have it. A successful content strategy can bring loads of traffic to your website, which you can then convert into paying customers.

By following this ultimate guide, it won't be long before you're getting more out of your content than ever before in 2020.

