



MintCopy eBook Series

Affordable Content Marketing for SMBs

CREATING CONTENT THAT CAN PROPEL THE GROWTH OF YOUR BUSINESS

MintCopy Authors
Melissa Rahaman, Sheetal Pinto

MintCopy Editor
Lisa Jackson



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Chapter 1

Transforming Your Brand Into a Powerhouse with Content Marketing

Do you have a creative concept for a new product and a strong work ethic to bring it to market? Thanks to technology, small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) can build a brand and form a client base without having the overhead costs of a brick-and-mortar store.

Did you know you can launch an e-commerce site from your computer for a few hundred dollars? While an online presence means your brand's potential could quickly become global, you're likely in a noisy marketplace teeming with competition. Getting your brand to shine and stand out from the crowd can be challenging when showcasing your business.

Effective marketing is essential to your success. The following tips, tactics, and techniques can help you transform your business into a recognizable brand that will make meaningful connections and evoke loyalty from new and existing customers. Read on to learn how content marketing can help shift your fledgling business into long-term success.

Content Marketing Tips, Tactics, and Techniques for SMBs

SET THE STAGE TO EXPAND YOUR OUTREACH

A primary goal of content marketing is expanding your client base. What is the best way to reach more people? Put yourself out there! Every piece of content you create increases the odds of people discovering your company. But attracting attention takes more than a catchy headline. You'll need content that is relevant, informative, and available in the places where your audience looks for answers. The following framework sets the stage for getting your content in front of the people that are most likely to buy or engage with your brand.



STEP 1 Do Your Research

When developing a strategy for anything you are planning, your most valuable tool is research. Developing a deep understanding of the people you want to attract lays a strong foundation for expanding your outreach.

Start by using a free analytics tool like Google Trends to discover the topics that interest your target audience. Google Trends helps you identify popular terms, keywords, and questions so you can create content that provides answers using phrases people will understand.

Let's say you want to start selling your grandmother's recipe for Greek yogurt. Google Trends reveals that people often ask about Greek yogurt's protein content and health benefits. The insights you glean can help refine your content strategies: you'll want to address protein and health questions *and* share ways your Greek yogurt may be better than competitors' products.

STEP 2 Make Your Plan

The next step is to outline your content marketing strategy. Before you create any content, you need a blueprint. Your strategy should answer critical questions:

- Who will buy my brand?
- What problem(s) does my brand solve?
- Why is my brand the best choice?
- How will I get my content to the right people?
- What types of content will I use to share my brand story?

Your answers will help solidify buyer personas, brand positioning, competitive advantage, channel tactics, and content components.



Stellar content starts with good planning. Take the time to learn about your audience before you start creating content

STEP 3 Create Stellar Content

You will improve your brand's visibility using all the available tools. If you diversify your content to reach audiences across a variety of platforms, you'll connect with people in the formats that resonate with them.

A blog or newsletter generates interest from your customers, but if you only use two formats, you risk fatiguing your readers. Are you wondering about the secret to connecting with a new audience or re-energizing your existing customers?

Explore new areas! You can repurpose a blog into a short video, create an infographic to share on social media, produce online tutorials, or share your brand story through podcast advertising.



USE FOCUSED MESSAGING TO BUILD A MEMORABLE BRAND

You want people to see, like, and remember your brand. Content marketing helps your brand stand out from the crowd by highlighting your brand purpose and point(s) of difference from competitors. Giving your brand a personality elevates your company beyond a source of goods or services. Your brand's story boosts recognition, fosters customer loyalty, and creates a long-lasting impression in the marketplace.

Tactic #1 **Project your corporate values**

When you create a brand, you open a window for customers to see your company. Your content messaging should be truthful about who you are, what you do, and what sets you apart from other businesses. When you're genuine with your customers, trust in your brand will follow.

Tactic #2 **Find your niche**

Large companies have multi-member marketing teams that post content at lightning speed, leaving your content buried on page 12 of a Google search. One tactic to help your brand move up the ranks is choosing a single area or benefit you want to own.

Remember our example of grandmother's Greek yogurt? Maybe her yogurt makes smoothies exceptionally tasty. Your research shows that competitors' content doesn't mention use in smoothies, but people often search for 'which yogurt for smoothies.' You can create multiple pieces of content that explain how and why your Greek yogurt is ideal. By targeting a 'niche' benefit, you'll jump to the top of the search results page by emphasizing your brand as the best choice for smoothies.

Tactic #3 **Be easy on the eyes**

If you visit the website of a well-known brand, you will notice that their logo is memorable, their content is enjoyable to read, and their website is user-friendly. Strong branding supplies your customers with an easygoing experience that is memorable, helpful, and concise. Keep your interface and content uncomplicated and uncluttered; you'll make your visitors happy, and they will be more likely to choose your brand.

Tactic #4 **Stay consistent**

Whether your brand is familiar or new, you'll benefit from consistent, honest messaging in your content. Establish and uphold a schedule with your content releases to make it easier for your audience to follow your story and remain interested in your brand.



CREATE CONTENT THAT BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS

If you want your brand to attract new eyes and ears, there are better ways than AI-generated content. People respond to intrigue, energy, and authenticity. When you share your brand story in content, try to incorporate words and imagery that evoke your passion and enthusiasm about your product. You'll establish relationships with your audience as they wait to learn what's next.

You can begin building connections with your audience by following these tips:

Tip #1 **Be approachable**

Show up in your content by projecting *your* voice using open and friendly language that's likable and easy to understand. Content creation doesn't need to be complicated. You can start by introducing yourself in a blog post, an Instagram reel, or a YouTube video.

Tip #3 **Be reliable**

Create honest content that aligns with your business and your brand. Clickbait titles or gimmicky content come across as 'bait-and-switch' tactics, and often alienate people. Producing fad-like or low-quality content might earn you a click, but any gains you have in awareness or traffic may be temporary.

Tip #2 **Maintain an active presence**

Be present on your social channels. Plan to share daily content, polls, and even live Q&As to show your audience that you are available and ready to communicate.

Tip #4 **Show you care**

Demonstrate that your customers matter by being available to answer questions or address their concerns. Being present fosters long-term positive relationships and earns you a more positive rating as a reputable SMB that provides high-quality customer experiences.



Chapter 2

Adding Depth to Relationship Marketing with Content

Technology has forever changed how we communicate. We have so many new avenues to reach people like SnapChat, Teams, WhatsApp, and Line. Advertisers continue to use print, but newspapers and white pages have gone digital with online options that supplement paper. You'll find brands reaching out with visual messages on TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. For SMBs, the evolution of communication pathways requires creative digital marketing to cultivate meaningful relationships.

DISCOVER HOW CONTENT CREATES CONNECTIONS, CONVERSIONS, AND BUSINESS GROWTH

You have multiple channels to choose from for making connections. A one-size-fits-all approach to digital marketing may be quick to implement but less effective than customized content strategies that maximize your chances of success.

Creating your digital marketing strategy takes time and thought. You can begin by taking stock of what is happening around you. Ask yourself questions like: "What types of advertising media get my attention?" and "How did I find the business that solved my most recent problem?" Then, consider using the following content marketing strategies to support the growth of your small or medium sized business.



GET TO KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE'S WATERING HOLES

You've wrapped up a thoughtful marketing campaign that clearly states your brand's points of difference and offers compelling reasons why your brand is the right choice. Internal reviews with leadership confirm your confidence that you'll create strong connections with current and prospective customers. But if you put your message in front of people who aren't interested or ready to listen, you'll struggle to hit the metrics you need to build your brand.

Discovering where your audience goes for information and how they experience messages means you need to put on your lab coat and do some vital research. Here are the three main avenues to explore while learning about your audience.

Avenue #1 **Top Challenges**

Look at your brand through the lens of the solutions it provides, and the language people use to state their problems. Tools like Google Search, Ahrefs, Moz Pro, and SEO Minion can help you identify the topics, questions, and search terms aligned with your product category. When creating your content, strive to provide information that addresses crucial questions with the words and phrases people use to search for answers. You can move beyond written content to other formats, like infographics or videos to offer explanations, solutions, or demonstrations.

Avenue #2 **Demographics**

Creating generalized content that reaches the maximum number of people may earn you clicks, but without precision, you're unlikely to build lasting connections. To ensure that your marketing makes an impact, you need to cater to the interests of your viewers. Think about characteristics such as age, gender, educational experience, income, employment, family structure, and living arrangements. You can dig deeper to understand how your brand fits within their lives.

For example, if you're a regional bank striving to expand your reach, think about the types of financial support people may want from you. Does your bank serve rural, urban, or suburban customers? Each locale may need different services. Personalized content laser-focused on the needs of your target audience will deliver the experience they desire.



Are you trying to grow a local business? Try using terms, phrases, and anecdotes that resonate with your region. To increase your sales in new or global markets, strive to understand the events and trending topics within that population.



Avenue #3 Platforms




The platforms we use and how we consume media vary between age groups and regions. Some, but not all, adults enjoy long-form content, while many, but not all, young people prefer topical short-form content. When creating your marketing strategy, rely on facts about individual channel audiences and recommended content formats. Look at your top competitors and note the platforms they use most frequently. You can also invest in qualitative and quantitative research with family, friends, and customers to understand the content platforms and formats they use to make purchasing decisions.

MAP CONTENT TO SUPPORT YOUR MARKETING FUNNEL

The time between an internet search and a purchase decision can vary. Sometimes, people buy almost immediately after finding a solution. Or the initial search may lead to additional investigation and evaluation for other buying processes. Understanding how people buy your product – the steps they take between learning about your brand and making a purchase – will help you design content to support their buying journey.

A marketing funnel helps organize your strategy. Ideally, you want to have information that accommodates potential buyers at each stage of the buying process.

Most marketing funnels have content that can be categorized into three categories:

-  **Top of the funnel content**
-  **Middle of the funnel content**
-  **Bottom of the funnel content**



MAP CONTENT TO SUPPORT YOUR MARKETING FUNNEL CONT.

Top of the funnel

The ‘first date’ content that earns and keeps your readers’ attention

Top-of-the-funnel content drives people to your website where they receive a gentle introduction to your brand. The ‘first date’ approach to content strives to address challenges or provide relevant information to people exploring solutions for their concerns. Top-of-the-funnel content only mentions your product or service at the end of the content experience. Your intention with outreach content is to let people know you understand their needs and have answers to their questions.

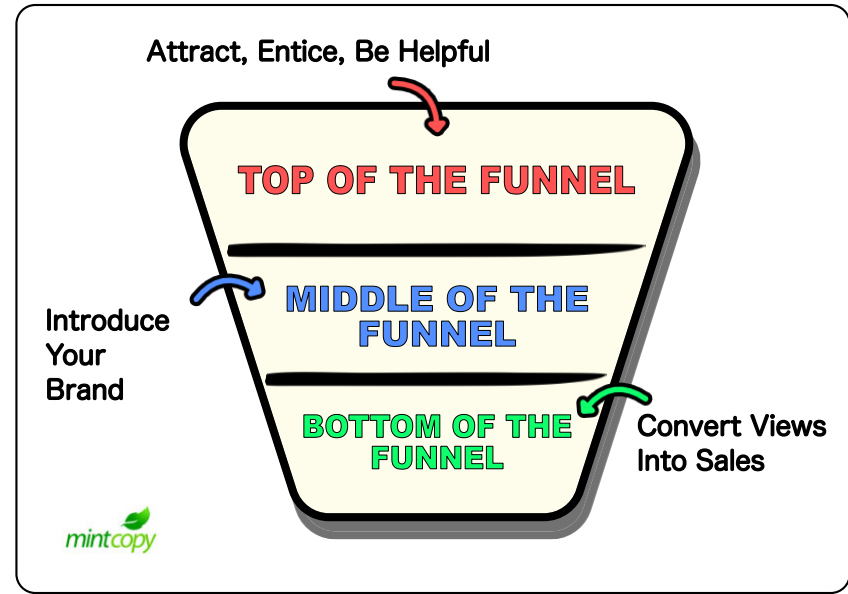
Examples: educational posts, how-to guides, top-10’s, best of’s, FAQs

Middle of the funnel

‘Building the relationship’ content that entices your viewers to consider your product

When you become a trusted source of information for your readers, they will be willing to spend more time learning about your company and your solutions. Content in the middle of the funnel explicitly links your product or service to a topic critical to your potential customer. You can now emphasize the positive qualities and value of your brand.

Examples: comprehensive guides, case studies, testimonials, introductory videos, free tools, and resources



Bottom of the funnel

‘Let’s partner’ content that drives purchasing decisions

Your bottom-of-the-funnel content is vital in helping your audience make a purchasing decision. You’ve cultivated an interest in your products, but they may need additional information to proceed with a transaction or partnership. Bottom-of-the-funnel content should emphasize the benefits of using your products and mitigate any concern, hesitation, or confusion about your product offerings.

Examples: product pages, comparison tools, spec sheets, price lists

INCREASE YOUR VISIBILITY WITH NEW MEDIA

If your goal is to put your SMB on the map, then go where people are consuming information. Marketing your business in creative and nontraditional ways may give you the boost you need to reach your growth goals. You can connect with an untapped audience by diversifying your content offerings and making your presence known in areas where people like to congregate. Consider these approaches when creating your content marketing strategy.

How to Stay Social

Social media platforms are common areas for kids today. And adults. And seniors. Across the globe. Seriously, everyone uses social media. Building and maintaining your brand's presence on popular social media platforms is an effective tactic for becoming part of conversations that happen outside of your website. To maximize the success of social media campaigns, use these three techniques:

- 🍃 **Post regularly:** In the social landscape, your SMB will face big brands with large marketing budgets. To stay visible among these companies, post regularly, update your profiles, and encourage your team to follow, like, and share your posts to help build your follower base.
- 🍃 **Be genuine:** People may be skeptical about a faceless business with clickbait articles. When creating social media content, remember to emphasize that you're not another spam account. Make your content friendly, creative, relatable, and fun.
- 🍃 **Be interactive:** People are more likely to trust brands that respond to them. Be open to posting content that encourages conversation. Also, take the time to reply to your customer's questions and concerns. Being easy to reach is an integral part of becoming a credible brand.



Use Audio and Visual Mediums

Do you have a long topic to discuss? Or do you want to publish a helpful tutorial? Audio and visual content formats are becoming increasingly effective ways to capture and hold your audience's attention. Sharing content using imagery and sound helps you deliver large amounts of information in an easy-to-understand format. You can also use audio and visual content to reach people who don't have time to sit and read long-form content.



Attaching relevant videos to your written content can boost your website's rankings and increase the likelihood that people will view both pieces of content.

User- (or Follower-) Generated Content

Gaining trust and growing your brand involves something other than marketing magic. Your team doesn't even have to create it. User-generated content (UGC) is created by your customers when they discuss, review, or share pictures of your product. To maximize your UGC, remember to deliver on your brand promises. Customers who are pleased with your goods and services are more likely to tell their friends and family about you.



When you see user-generated content, ask permission to share the review or image on your pages. UGC is invaluable because it increases your brand's credibility for future audiences learning about your business.



Chapter 3

Content Marketing: A Long-Distance Race

Content marketing can be a powerful tool that propels your SMB to sales success. But the impact of your content takes time, so prepare to keep on creating!

You'll need patience and dedication to increase your exposure and turn clicks into sales. Although some may strive to 'go viral,' the real winning method for content marketing is following a well-planned strategy. When you commit to creating fresh content consistently, you can achieve steady growth that will support your business for the long-term.

Content Marketing is More Than a Project; It's an Ongoing Strategy

GENERATE INCOME WITH YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING PLAN

The business adage “spending money to make money” may seem stale, but it still rings true. When facing resource constraints, you may question whether to continue spending money on content creation. Marketing your business is always a worthwhile investment that leads to long-term success. An effective marketing campaign can generate income by attracting new customers and steadily increasing your earning potential. To ensure your content delivers a positive ROI, focus on the following techniques:





GENERATE INCOME WITH YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING PLAN.


Technique #1

Include a call-to-action (CTA) to increase engagement with your content.

You'll need time to connect with customers exploring the vastness of the internet and the extraordinary amount of content published daily. As people engage with your top-of-funnel and middle-of-funnel content, remember to provide ways for them to get more information or connect with your team.

 **Top-of-the-funnel CTAs:** “Ready to learn more?” or “You may also enjoy” CTAs can drive people to additional content.


 **Bottom-of-the-funnel CTAs:** Ask explicitly for a purchase with a “Buy Now” or “Order Today” button that links to a form or telephone number.


 **Middle-of-the-funnel CTAs:** "If you need more information" or "Do you have questions?" with a link to a Contact Us page or email address that will help interested customers move quickly to purchase.

Technique #2

Watch your metrics.

You can generate significant income for your business by publishing engaging, relevant content. Bottom-of-the-funnel content offers the most direct path for measuring sales impact. To determine if your top-and-middle-of-funnel content is getting traction with your viewers, analyze your website metrics. Review the following information monthly or quarterly to identify gaps in your content strategy and measure performance.

 **Keyword rankings** – Keyword popularity changes frequently, but Google’s Search Console makes it easy to determine if the keywords in your content are actively involved in internet searches.

 Remember to identify the keywords you want to rank for when establishing your strategy. Keyword ranking detail will let you know if your content delivers search results and pushes your brand

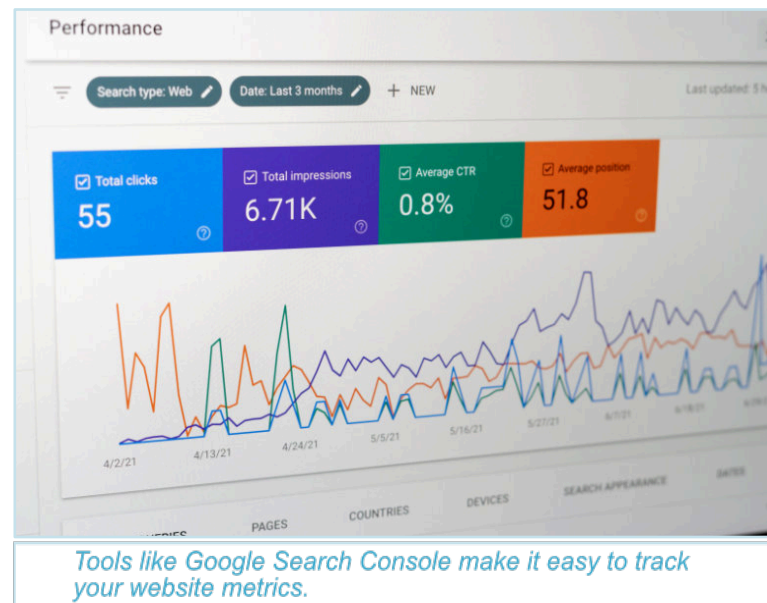


🍃 **Content shares** – If more people are resharing your blog posts, podcasts, and TikTok videos, your business is making an impact on your audience. An annual analysis of your content performance will help you adjust your strategy for the following year.

👉 Which types of blog posts had the highest engagement rate? Which videos had the most views? How many downloads did each e-book generate? You'll have data readily available to optimize your messaging!

🍃 **Check impressions** – Impressions data measures how often your content appears in users' search results. Use Google Search Console to track impressions when you publish content. You'll see patterns identifying the information generating high (and low) interest.

🍃 **Send a traffic source questionnaire** – When a visitor enters the bottom of the funnel and makes a purchase, consider sending a “traffic source” questionnaire to determine how they discovered your business. By including answer options such as 'advertising,' 'website,' or 'e-book,' you'll gain valuable insight into the types of content that is working to influence conversions.




DRIVE INNOVATION WITH CONTENT MARKETING


Competition is fierce with advancing technologies, thousands of innovations, and a steady supply of content for people to access. Long-lasting success requires an agile, responsive, and forward-thinking approach to content marketing. When you curate a dedicated online presence, you'll have a steady supply of resources generating revenue that you can invest in new products and services. A well-strategized content marketing plan can achieve more than a break-even ROI; your content marketing 'salesperson' gives your business fuel to fire up future growth.

Marketing for long-term success

You can build a stable and long-lasting online presence when you develop content that withstands the test of time.

 **Evergreen content:** Creating content that stays relevant over a long period is essential for your brand's longevity. Evergreen content is search-engine optimized and includes subjects and historically proven popular topics. When evergreen content is part of your content strategy, you'll experience positive long-term results.

↳ **Evergreen topic examples:** How-to's, tips and tricks, 'top 10' lists, FAQs, reviews, testimonials

 **Seasonal content:** A timely release of content related to trending topics effectively draws attention to your business. The measurable impact of seasonal content is shorter than evergreen content, but the 'buzz' of on-trend, seasonal information can attract significant numbers of new viewers. Being first on the scene with seasonal news can also help propel your content to the top of search engine rankings before larger businesses can reach your audience.

↳ **Seasonal topic examples:** current events, viral trends, breaking news, holiday topics



Be open to new marketing strategies

As you reach your business goals, you may think pulling back on content production is reasonable. Marketing avenues for reaching people continue to evolve, and therefore, being agile with your content strategy will ensure you stay relevant and connected. If your viewer numbers have stalled or you are running out of content ideas, you can try one or more of the following tactics for your SMB.

Tactic #1 **Add a platform**

If you've maximized your success on your favorite forum or are satisfied with your website rankings, take a chance and branch out. New platforms are entering the marketing landscape daily. Watch for trending platforms that align with your brand goals so you can join the conversation and meet new people.

Tactic #2 **Reach a new market**

Dream big! If you want your small business to reach its full potential, consider broadening your audience. Use your content to target viewers in a new city, region, or continent. That's the beauty of the Internet world—the only walls are in your head!

Tactic #3 **Watch your competitors**

It's always wise to monitor your competition or established brands that you would like to emulate. If you need help with what to do next, you can often find inspiration by reviewing the marketing activities and content that is working for them.



SMB Content Marketing Success Is Not a One and Done Effort

Content creation is essential to supporting and growing your SMB.

When you share engaging, effective, and expressive content, you leave a lasting impression on your audience. Small businesses focus on new products, sales growth, and customer satisfaction. Content can enhance each area of your business and be a constant source of fuel that helps you reach your full potential.

An effective marketing plan aligned with your content strategy will push your business further than you may expect. Your small business is your passion project made real, and by sharing your solutions with the world, you'll foster and nurture lasting connections.

Build your brand by establishing relationships with others through your blog posts, videos, and infographics. Keep your brand consistently approachable with a living website and digital content that is relevant, user-friendly, concise, and noteworthy. Your customers want transparency, quality, and reliability; show that you hear them by creating content that addresses their needs.

What do they want to see? What questions do they want you to answer? What topic piqued the most interest? By evaluating what connects with your audience, you can create impactful content and gain traction with the people most likely to invest in your products or services.

Success results from continued growth. You can create a powerhouse brand and long-term success by developing effective marketing and content strategies.

Let's get started!



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