

Mini E-Book Series

All About Your Audience

Finding and Keeping the Right Online Audience



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ALL ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

INTRODUCTION

The lights dim, the crowd goes quiet, and the curtains open. It is an age-old practice, and one that prepares the audience for the magic of live theatre that is about to occur.

Unfortunately, the presentation of your content online is less ritualistic. Often, your content will be encountered when someone signs into their social media for the third (or sixth or tenth) time that day. So how can you prepare your audience for quality content, set the stage for the experience they will have when they click, 'Like' or 'Share' your messages? Before that, how can you even get them to come out for the show?

Everybody and their grandmother has a website, social media profile, and smartphone these days. Even with so many people online, it can be very challenging to find a steady audience for your online content. You aren't selling tickets, relying on classic plays to draw in crowds, or giving people a night out on the town. Instead, you are just hoping to give them a positive break in their everyday routine, and provide them with some valuable information.

If you are struggling to connect with the right people – or anybody at all – online, it is time to pay more attention to the people behind the profiles and tap into the issues and content that makes your audience tick. You may think of them as one big group, but the reality is, each person who 'Likes' your page has their own concerns. They do share one thing in common though: the desire for enjoyable content! It's time to start giving them what they want.

The content marketing experts at MintCopy Inc. have assembled this mini eBook, "**All About Your Audience**", that can get you reaching, engaging and maintaining the right audience for your company. Understand your audience, gain their attention and trust, and keep them coming back for more with these easy tips to get started.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

They told you everybody was online. So how come it doesn't seem like anybody is on your webpage or social profile?

Finding your audience online can be a tricky and fickle business. It's also crucial to your business success! Taking the time to figure out who you are creating content for, where those people are online, and how you can get them to stick around is key for reaching your business objectives.

Thomas Mann, the author of *Doctor Faustus* said, "A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people."

And that's the toughest challenge for us as writers...writing a piece that is the easiest thing to read. It's just hard (to write), because it must be so easy (to read)!

This mini eBook will take you through these key processes for finding, growing and keeping your audience online:

1. Understanding and Defining Your Audience

It is tough to speak appropriately and develop great content for your audience if you don't know who they are and what drives them. Chapter 1 will get you thinking about and understanding who makes up this fuzzy 'audience' you are after.

- a. **Get to Know Their Problems:** If you can express, sympathize with and, better yet, solve the problems your audiences are facing, you will get their attention and trust.
- b. **Ask Yourself "Who Cares?":** Knowing what drives your audience will give you purpose when posting. Use the "who cares?" and other temperature checks to figure out if your content is going to connect or fall flat with your target audience.

2. Building an Audience

You know who you want to talk to; now you have to get them to talk back!

- a. **Easy on the Sales:** Most people aren't eager to seek out more advertising in their lives, especially online. Offer them value and perspective, not pitches and ad copy.
- b. **Tailor Your Approach:** When you post, keep the people your audience is comprised of top of mind. Give them what they want or pre-emptively provide what they need.
- c. **Go for Guests:** If you need help finding your audience, find other influential bloggers, companies, publications or websites that align with your brand. They likely have a similar audience and you can tap into their existing user-base and trust.

3. **Maintaining Interest: Grabbing Attention with Content Creation**

Now that you understand your audience's problems and have them cornered, you can figure out your own and fix them so you can put your efforts into top quality content creation.

- a. **Your Audience Has No Time For You:** People are busy, so you need to respect that and cater to that with your content. Take any barriers like confusion, extra clicks, or length out of the equation and give people what they are after: short, simple, useful content.
- b. **Figure Out Your Own Problems:** If you want to create consistently good content, you need to have processes in place that allow you to do that. Pinpoint where your efforts are being wasted so that you can channel your time and energy into areas that matter.

Read on for a closer look at how you can reach your target audience and keep them coming back for more.

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINING YOUR AUDIENCE

The easiest and only way to connect with your audience is to find out who they are and what gets them excited. You can't tap into their interests if you are posting blindly and making assumptions. You've got to do a bit of digging and find out who your company is already connecting with online, what their problems are, and how you can help solve them.

Each customer segment will have different goals, concerns and interests. These differences can be overcome by focusing on what has brought them together (or what will): a shared interest in your company and search for a positive, joyful online experience. Find out what makes your product or service useful to all of them, highlight that, and find ways to showcase different concerns while still creating universal and accessible content.

The research phase isn't everyone's favourite part of content marketing. It can seem time-consuming and redundant when you are eager to hit the ground running and click 'post'. Skipping it will cost you in the long run though! Take the time to study your existing audience and/or case your new target audience so that you can reach them in efficient and powerful ways. If you find your new strategy isn't working, you'll be able to make educated adjustments.

GET TO KNOW THEIR PROBLEMS – AND FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS!

Sharing interesting content is great. Sharing useful content is better!

Your research should cover the general information about your audience: their age, sex, location, race, gender, income, and level of activity online. More than that, it should get at what their problems are and how they relate to your company.

Ask the following questions and find ways to make your research come up with answers (or, at least directions):

- What are their pain points?
 - It could be a broad problem or specific barrier to your product or service. The key is understanding what's bugging them so you can provide a fix.
- What kind of decision-making power do they have?
 - Are you interacting directly with the people who will purchase and use your product? Or are you speaking to end-users, middlemen, or secondary decision-makers?
- What do they know about your product?
 - Answer the questions they have and make it easy for them to see the value you offer.

You may be thinking, "That's great information to have, but how will I find that out?" Don't overcomplicate things: LISTEN AND TALK TO THEM!

Social media and other digital channels have opened up communication and made the rules for engagement a lot less stiff than in the past. Try the following techniques for a simple way to get a much greater understanding of your audience:

- Send a quick email survey (with incentive or without) to email lists
- Tweet requesting feedback
- Review of comments and questions on Facebook
- Speak to your sales team about barriers they face
- Survey customer service representatives about common queries or issues

Set up a system for cataloguing problems and you will soon be able to identify the main issues people face either with or before using your product or service. The feedback won't all be positive, so have a plan in place for responding to (or ignoring) public comments.

According to Steven Covey's top-selling "The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People", humans at their core, desire to be understood.¹ Show your customers that you "get it", gain their trust, and offer solutions.

ASK YOURSELF "WHO CARES?"

If you don't care about the content you are posting, why should anyone else?

It isn't easy to create content on a regular basis that is interesting and relevant, but it has become the standard. If there is a lot of inconsistency in the performance of your posts, start looking at what works and what doesn't. It is usually pretty easy to find the common denominators for successes and failures.

People want to find something memorable and fun online. How are you providing that? How are you tracking and making that process repeatable for your team? People want to share content that sparks joy, passion and interest. Find out what does that for your audience.

Are you just getting started or overhauling your approach all-together? Guide yourself with these questions:

- Why should anyone care?
 - You know what your audience is after now, so why should they care about your post?² Does it actually offer them some assistance or value? Or is it just checking a box for a Tuesday afternoon post. Make it quality and make it count, or skip it!
 - What's 'The Big Idea?'
 - Michael Masterson, aka Mark Ford of American Writers and Artists Inc. (AWAI) fame, has his copywriters submit their work along with a one sentence summary of "The Big Idea". If he doesn't understand the big idea from that one sentence summary or doesn't think it is good, he'll tell the copywriter to re-do the work. Not in an obnoxious or rude way, but because if you don't have a big idea, you don't have a piece of content worth reading.³
 - Why should you care?
 - While the focus should remain on providing the audience value, you shouldn't lose sight of business objectives. What is the point of your piece of content? What part of the business plan is it serving? Increased visibility, brand awareness and audience engagement are valuable goals, but be sure your content is serving them in direct ways.
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CHAPTER 2: BUILDING AN AUDIENCE

You spend a lot of time writing, designing, editing and publishing valuable digital content. It's helpful if people actually see it! If you are consistently posting to crickets, try these tips to get more eyes on your content and an audience of humans ready to respond.

EASY ON THE SALES PITCH

Most people aren't seeking out more advertisements online. They see enough of them all day, so your content should feel different.

Consider these factors to draw your audience in:

- Provide value
 - Your post should offer your audience joy, solutions and above all else, value! If they have a hard time connecting your content to their own lives, it probably won't entice them to 'follow', 'join' or 'sign up' today... or ever.
- Be transparent – without being obvious
 - Honesty and authenticity are key online. People will avoid companies that seem dishonest or dodgy online, so building trust goes hand-in-hand with building your audience. That doesn't mean you have to be straightforward all the time though! Be creative. If your end goal is a sale, you don't have to announce "BUY THIS!"

TAILOR YOUR APPROACH

Remember all that research it was important not to skip over? Use it!

Don't spend your time casting a wide net. Instead, track and aim for your target audience. That doesn't mean you have to isolate your customer segments or ignore their differences, but focus instead on uniting them and finding common threads between them. You'll be able to spend your time talking to the people who are interested and who can benefit from your product or service. You'll also make it a lot easier for them to find you!

- **Keywords:** Research relevant keywords and use them. That doesn't mean needlessly oversaturating your content. Instead, create valuable content that will highlight these keywords and actually provide relevant information about them.

- Audience profiles: Consider outlining audience profiles or personas that can help you tailor your content. If you find there are three main customer types your product or service helps, define who they are. Keep your targets human and always produce material that suits their needs, interests or problems.
- Trends and timing: Stay up-to-date with current events and issues that are relevant to your audience. Find that your target audience overlaps with a lot of sports fans? Tap into that connection and use timely events to become a part of the conversation. Your company will immediately seem more relatable and you can attract more attention while topics are trending.

Go after the audience you want and let them know you understand what's important to them.

GO FOR GUESTS!

You don't have to do it alone. Once you have found out what motivates your audience and what their interests are, you can tap into these ideas to find other avenues to reach them.

Guest posts are perfect for building your subscriber base. Find other companies, influencers, websites and/or publications that align with your company.⁴

Keep in mind:

- Who is your audience already interacting with?
 - Identify the most impactful people or companies to align yourself with. Make sure their audience is actually your target and don't just aim for big numbers or names when looking for guest contributors.
 - Do your values align?
 - Positioning your product or service alongside a racy or unsavoury personality or brand when yours promotes family values will probably cause more confusion than anything. Stay in your lane and connect with companies or people who share most or at least some of your brand's identity.
 - Does your audience trust this guest?
 - You are capitalizing on their existing influence, but also the trust they have built. Reflect on how they have established this trust and keep it in mind for your own posts.
 - What is a unique or interesting angle?
 - Try finding ways to highlight your solution in creative ways. Guest posts are an opportunity to go outside the box a bit, so consider linking different products and finding ways for your product or service to connect with a whole new audience.
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CHAPTER 3: MAINTAINING INTEREST - GRABBING ATTENTION WITH CONTENT CREATION

You may think you are out of the woods. You have done the hard part: you've built an audience base! Now the trouble is, you've got to maintain their interest and, if you are really ambitious, even try to grow your audience!

The way to keep your audience engaged, coming back for more, and maybe even telling their friends about you is to publish quality digital content. Whether it is original or curated, your approach to content will make or break the hard work you have done to find your audience.

YOUR AUDIENCE HAS NO TIME FOR YOU

Count to 8. That didn't take long, did it? Today, people are said to have an 8 second attention span.⁵ That means they are scrolling past fluff and repetition and only taking time to pause for something that really grabs their attention. Make them pause for your content!

Try keeping these elements in your content to grab attention and not get lost in the crowd:

- **Timing:** Time your posts so that they don't get buried at the bottom of your audience's news feeds. 6 AM posts probably won't get a lot of traction, even if the content is amazing. Lunch breaks, the commute home, and Thursdays or Fridays are popular days for more activity.⁶ International audience? Don't forget about time zones. Look at your own metrics and see what works for your audience!
- **Simplicity:** Get to the point so people can gather valuable nuggets and easily share within their circles. Nobody is slowing down for overly complicated or convoluted messaging they have to de-code.
- **Surprise:** Shake things up to grab your audience's attention! Tell a joke, mix in a new format, create a game or use your guest posts to ignite a new discussion. People want to find value online but they also want to escape a bit. Give them the best of both with surprising and unique content.

Human nature makes us want to share what we enjoy. Social media has given everyone a way to amplify their voice when sharing memorable, fun, or useful experiences. Make your content and company one that is fun, memorable and shareable to interact with in-person and online. The effort will help you connect with more potential customers and clients and will get your audience doing part of the work for you!

FIGURE OUT YOUR OWN PROBLEMS

You have figured out what your audience is struggling with and how you can provide the solution. But have you taken a look at how your content strategy may be causing you problems? It's time to turn the microscope around, zoom in and see where you can improve.

If you aren't working to your strengths and focusing your energy, it is tough to keep your audience engaged. Figure out where you are wasting your time on content marketing so that you can avoid wasting your audience's time!

Focus on the following:

- Time wasters: Map out each step of your production process for digital content. Be realistic about timelines and identify which steps take the longest.⁷ Are your approval processes too lengthy? Is your editing software outdated? Get rid of them or think of other solutions that can streamline your process.
- Idea generation: Many teams struggle to come up with fresh ideas, or get stuck on executing them. Identify where your team falls on that spectrum and consider how you can remedy the issue. Instead of lengthy brainstorming sessions, try pitch emails for writers. If you have too many ideas, shift your focus from idea generation to research, content analysis, or social data.
- Broad strokes: If you are spreading your team and resources too thin, it is wise to take a step back. If your audience is not on Pinterest but your team is spending hours making graphics for the platform, it's time to rethink your approach. You don't have to be on every social network. Focus on what works for your audience and put your resources and energy where it counts.
- Imposters: Is your strategy based too much on others? If your goals and activity change based on what the flavour of the week is, it's time to take a pause and find your voice. Scrambling to match the competition or be something you are not will be evident to your audience. You don't have to be all things to all people. In fact, you shouldn't be! Find what makes your company unique and marketing team strong, and push that to its limit in new and exciting directions.

Remember that the process of digital content marketing is constantly evolving and changing. What works for you now may change as your team grows or other technology becomes available. Schedule reviews to check-in and make adjustments. Your strategy isn't set in stone, but it will keep you on a clearly defined path toward success. That's a path your audience can follow along without needing a compass!

CONCLUSION

Don't get stuck behind the screen when it comes to content marketing. Place your audience at the centre of your decisions and remember that behind every "Like", subscription, and share that makes up your data, there is a human being. They have concerns, motivations and interests! Find out what makes them tick and start connecting your company with the people that can benefit from your products and services today.

Start by understanding who they are and what their problems are. Create your content with an emphasis on meeting their needs and solving their problems. Don't get caught up publishing without purpose.

Build a base of loyal customers online by easing up on the sales pitch. Provide value that is tailored to your audience and tap into the other influencers they are already relying on for quality content.

Once you've got their attention, keep it by respecting your audience's time, being strategic, and identifying your own weak spots. Work to your strengths and keep your posts honest, fresh, fun and engaging.

MintCopy offers SEO copywriting, web content, articles, blog posts, news releases, email marketing pieces, newsletters that are easy to read and wonderful to share.

If you would like help finding and keeping your online audience with better marketing content, the copywriting experts at [MintCopy](#) have the solution. We can help you develop an online audience and keep them coming back with [quality content that converts](#). Target the right people, at the right time, in the right places with tailored digital content.

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