

What Is Content Marketing?

When you encounter content marketing in the form of a podcast, blog, or print magazine, sometimes you might not even realise that you're looking at branded content. This is often a sign of effective content marketing.

Providing valuable and relevant content can excite consumers to support and share your brand with others. For example, Airbnb's user-generated neighbourhood guides are full of great suggestions from locals.

Creating articles, podcasts, videos, infographics, and other media types to engage and retain potential customers is all considered content marketing. This article will define content marketing and outline strategies to elevate your brand.

What is content marketing?

Content marketing is creating and distributing valuable, relevant content to attract and engage your brand's target audience. It often signifies expertise in a particular area and helps promote brand awareness. Consumers want to feel connected to a brand that aligns with their identity. By putting effort into producing content that serves a purpose to existing and potential customers and delivering valuable advice, an organisation can develop and nurture relationships.

Content marketing can include blog posts, videos, podcasts, infographics, emails, newsletters, magazines, courses, webinars, social media posts, templates, quizzes, and more.

Some leading examples of helpful content include:

- Canva's Design School is a collection of short courses to help customers use Canva to its fullest.
- Sk Rafiqul Islam's blog features advice and examples of content marketing strategies.
- "Speakeasy" with Dheeraj Sinha offers a podcast covering digital marketing and branding.
- John Deere's The Furrow magazine started in 1895 and is still in print today. As one of the oldest examples of content marketing, its goal remains to tell enjoyable stories and provide operational knowledge.

Even before John Deere, Benjamin Franklin promoted his printing business in 1732 with *Issuance of Poor Richard's Almanack*, an annual book with weather forecasts, household tips, and puzzles.

In the 16th century, Portuguese traders introduced printing press technology to India, bringing the technology to Goa. The first Indian-owned printing press was established in Calcutta in 1780.

In 1888, Johnson & Johnson published *Modern Methods of Antiseptic Wound Treatment* for doctors who used bandages, and in 1900 the *Michelin Guide* was launched, with its earliest versions offering advice on car maintenance and travel.

The importance of content marketing

Content marketing has many benefits. Early content marketing initiatives from John Deere and Michelin have endured for more than a century. For brands, content marketing is crucial because it:

- **Creates genuine engagement:** Consumers who read a brand-sponsored blog or newsletter and resonate with its content are more likely to develop a positive association and continue to support the brand.
- **Delivers value:** A podcast on productivity from a content management software company creates brand reputation, so its value to the customer translates into loyalty and sales.
- **Offers versatility:** With digital tools, you can target prospective customers. From free kantha embroidery patterns to blogs on user experience (UX) design, you can find plenty of approaches for brands considering content marketing. The same brand can also use different mediums to reach new audiences. One example is how Lakmé Cosmetics connects with customers by sharing makeup and skincare tips on YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook.

Content marketing is a core business strategy for 81 per cent of marketers [1]. In 2022, 82 per cent of marketers actively invested in content marketing, according to HubSpot's 2022 Marketing Statistics, Trends & Data - the Ultimate List of Digital Marketing Stats [2]. SEMrush reports that 89 per cent of companies surveyed rely on organic search as the most effective distribution channel [3]. This is important because if Google searches are how a potential customer discovers a brand, the content they're clicking on must be high-quality and useful.

How content marketing works

To become familiar with a brand, product, or service, customers undergo the stages of awareness, consideration, and commitment. Each stage requires different types of content that can attract and retain customers.

Awareness: During this time, the emphasis is on building customers' knowledge of your brand and what you offer. Providing content that illuminates and potentially alleviates their challenges, or elicits desire by forming an identity connection, can draw attention to your brand because it is useful and relevant.

These can be in the form of social media posts, emails, blog posts, and videos.

Awareness Examples

- Nestlé's website features a recipe section highlighting the company's products.
- Amazon now offers sponsored ads to Indian businesses.

Consideration: At this stage of brand awareness, the consumer has heard of the brand and is choosing between brands. This is a crucial time for brands to sway opinions one way or another, so it should incorporate an element of marketing. Not

only is the content useful, but it also encourages you to choose their brand over others.

These can be accomplished through articles, quizzes, and guides.

Consideration Examples

- Jaipur Fabric's guide to choosing bedsheet fabric or Ravel's quiz on finding the best hair care products to suit your hair type.
- Shopify's blog post *Your 24/7 Salesperson: How to Create a Product Buying Guide for Your Store*

Commitment: The consumer has committed to buying your product or service, so this is the time to seal the deal. They may already subscribe to your newsletter or emails or follow you on social media, so it's time to convince them you are the best choice. After the purchase, customers might share these types of content (like tagging a friend in an Instagram post) if they feel it aligns with their identity.

Common examples include newsletters, FAQ guides, research or impact reports, and social media posts.

Commitment Examples

- Flipkart's Flipkart Stories blog features stories of how the company's products and growth benefit its employees, customers, and communities.
- Content marketer Digital Pratik sends a weekly email newsletter to subscribers who want to keep up with trends and research in content marketing.

Creating high-quality content that targets your intended audience is essential because search engine algorithms are getting smarter. Only the best content wins.

Key elements of a content marketing strategy

When creating a content marketing strategy for your brand, consider your target audience and the touchpoints to engage with them. These are the four main elements of a content marketing strategy: brand positioning, value proposition, measuring ROI, and developing a plan.

1. Position your brand.

First, define your brand, values, and positioning. If you are selling chocolate, are you an artisanal chocolate bar that sources its beans from South America, or are you marketing Amul candies? Whilst a chocolate lover may purchase both, the two types of brands appeal to different consumers.

Consider demographics and location when positioning your brand, thinking about your competitors to strategise delivering a unique brand experience.

2. Identify your value.

Once you have defined your brand and positioning, you can identify what value to deliver with specific types of content. You can sustain relationships with customers through channels, such as emails or social media presence when they follow your brand for recipe tips, aspirational lifestyle photos, links to life hack blogs, and more. Your content offering should make sense for your brand and convert into sales.

3. Consider your return on investment (ROI).

With your positioning and value in mind, create a compelling case for the content to drive your business forward. Avoid wasting time and resources to produce content that does not help your organisation achieve its goals. Develop a business case that assesses your content strategy's benefits, risks, and budget. Your organisation must be convinced that implementing this strategy has a high ROI.

4. Define your plan.

After estimating the potential ROI, you can create a plan that addresses how, when, and where (consider channels and mediums, as well as regions) you'll implement your strategy. Your plan should align with your business goals and integrate any other marketing and sales plans. With these four parts in mind, you can create a solid content marketing strategy to propel your business forwards.

Elevate your brand

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