# CONTENT MARKETING SCRIPT

## Video 1: Why your business needs a story

Hi there, I'm Lindsay with HubSpot Academy.

Everyone loves a great story. People want to feel connected to a group, to belong. Stories give you a reason to communicate and relate; stories are stimulating and give you something to believe in; stories make you feel better, smarter, safer, or even loved.

Business storytelling is similar. It's about creating alignment between your business and your prospects and customers.

But telling your brand's story is more than what you write on your website, your blog, or even social media. It's your value and your mission, and how you communicate that consistently to your audience - wherever they are.

Thanks to smartphones and tablets, the average adult spends over 20 hours per week with digital media. Additionally, Google receives over four million search queries per minute.

Four million search queries per minute? Wow! That's a lot of people looking for answers. But, capturing their attention can be difficult. In just one minute...

- 1,388 blog posts are published.
- Facebook users share 2.5 million pieces of content.
- YouTube users upload 72 hours of new video content.
- Twitter users tweet nearly 300,000 times.
- And Instagram users post nearly 220,000 new photos.

All in this one minute.

Content marketers are constantly battling for the attention of their prospects and customers. To help ensure that you're heard, you need to be genuine and tell a story that appeals to your audience.

Your goal is to make a human connection. It's about resonating with people, people that need your help or guidance.

In the world of business, a story helps you create contrast between choices. Stories will help your prospects make sense of decisions they're about to make, whether it's deciding on a needed product or service or making a purchase.

Chances are, you're not the only business that does what you do. To survive in today's crowded informational marketplace, you need to stand out. This is where your business' story comes in.

Stories can make your prospects the main characters, and even change the way they think and feel.

And storytelling is used in all formats of content. It isn't just used in a lengthy ebook. You can use storytelling in blogs, email, videos, case studies, guides. The list goes on and on.

So, what's NOT a story?

A story is not just your history. A story is why you're doing what you're doing, and telling it in a way that appeals to your audience.

không sáo rỗng

It’s also not cliche, it’s not what everyone else is saying. Sure you may think you provide the best customer service within your industry, but that’s not your story. Storytelling is about standing out, not blending in.

là sự nổi bật ra ngoài, không phải hòa trộn vào trong

Many companies play it safe and use data and ROI to attract customers, which is important. But logic very rarely is appealing and remembered. On the other hand, emotion gets remembered. Emotion gets shared. And it’s not by saying we’re the best. It’s more about appealing to the emotional side of your prospects and customers than the logic of what you do.

Stories are how audiences remember. And to help make your audience remember you need to stand out by telling a story with the right context, and create contrast by being consistent and authentic and being conversational to elicit emotion from a specific audience.

As a content marketer, use stories to better engage and, most importantly, teach your audience.

## Video 2: What do you need to tell a great story

Okay, so now that you know WHY your business needs a story, what do you need to tell a GREAT story?

First, it’s all about how you frame the story that you are trying to tell. You need to keep audience and tone in mind, but to really help nail your branding story, you need to understand the golden circle.

Yes, the golden circle. Sounds mysterious right?

Simon SInek says, “people don’t buy what you do, they buy WHY you do it.” Simon Sinek is an ex-advertising executive and author who is best known for his concept - Golden Circle.

The Golden Circle looks like this and is all about starting with WHY.

According to Sinek, most people communicate by starting with the “what” they do aspect and eventually work their way back to talk about “how” and “why” they do what they do.

But companies that are universally identified as unique and successful, think Apple or Google, communicate with an “inside-out” type of thinking. They start with the why and only then do they move on to talk about the how and what portions of what they do.

To keep it simple - WHY is Why are you doing what you’re doing? HOW is How will this help your audience? And WHAT is What are you offering?

So, why does the order in which you communicate the story matter? It has to do with the parts of the brain.

When you’re talking about what you do, you’re speaking to an analytical part of the brain. But when you talk about the why and how, you’re communicating with feelings and dealing with human behavior. And remember, storytelling is all about making that connection.

When you’re planning a story, take time to think through the way you’re choosing to tell it. To really connect with your prospects and customers, express the why of your story. Tap into the emotional side of things and begin to educate or build awareness from there.

The Golden Circle can help you create your mission statement and set the tone for all of your content.

Now that you understand ordering of a story, it's also important to discuss the elements that make up that story.

Regardless of the story you're trying to tell and how you're trying to tell it, storytelling has three essential elements - characters, conflict, and resolution. But how do these three parts relate to storytelling and content marketing?

Let's start first with characters.

With any good story, there will be characters. Every story revolves around at least one character. You need to introduce the people involved. With content marketing, the people that are involved are your readers. Your audience. Storytelling can't happen without valuing and understanding your audience. You should always be listening and respond to your audience's wants and needs.

If potential customers can get the answers to their questions AND see themselves as characters in your story, they'll be more likely to use your product or service and experience the happy ending you offer.

Take a second. Think about a piece of content (maybe a blog post) that you found helpful and really resonated with you.

Are you thinking about it?

Okay.

Why is this piece of content so memorable?

There may be a few reasons why, but some of the most memorable pieces of content (or stories) stick in an audience's mind because of the characters involved.

For the content that you were thinking of, were you the character in the story? Did it resonate with you because you felt like it answered a questioned? Helped solve a problem?

The character is the connection between you, the storyteller, and your audience.

To make sure you're focusing on the right characters, start with your buyer persona. This semi-fictional representation of your ideal buyer can help guide you to understanding the goals and challenges that your character will face.

Is your buyer persona a full-time parent? Well, you might know that time is not on their side and they would describe themselves as busy. You should keep that in mind for your storytelling.

Or is your buyer persona a business owner who is looking for a better way to communicate between her team members? She'll likely see herself as the character if a team is used within your stories.

Or maybe you're an educational organization looking to attract students who want to take online courses. They might want to read about success stories of students that are just like them.

No matter who your buyer persona is, the art of storytelling is making sure you empathize and relate to your audience.

While keeping your buyer persona in mind, you should also determine the point of view that your story will have. Will it be first-person, second-person, or third-person? And there's no right or wrong option. It will depend on your buyer persona, the story you're trying to tell, and the format of that story.

*ngôi thứ nhất, "tôi"*

For first-person point of view, this is when the character is yourself. When you use "I saw this" or "I learned that". Using this type of language in storytelling is more confessional. It can help you establish a personal connection with the reader. You can use this to build authority. Try using first-person when there is a known person, an author, behind the content. This could work for a blog post, video, or even an ebook if the author is noted.

*ngôi thứ hai, "bạn"*

As for second-person, the character in this point of view is your audience. "You will see" or "you will learn". When using "you" language, you need to really understand your buyer personas. Make it personal for them by knowing their pain points. Their goals. Tell the story in a way that shows empathy.

*ngôi thứ ba, "anh ta, cô ta"*

Lastly, can't forget about third-person. This is the "he said" and "she said" type of language. Think back to that buyer persona example for an educational organization. That buyer persona could potentially benefit from a story done in the third-person. Case studies about your customers are a good example of using third-person. Stories for this point of view can be both fictional or nonfictional.

Again, there's no right or wrong when it comes to point of view. Keep your buyer personas top of mind and think through what will work best for them.

You may have noticed that all HubSpot Academy videos use second-person or "you" point of view. That's on purpose. Since this is YOUR training and this content contains key takeaways you should learn and act upon, it's important that these videos speak directly to the intended audience - and that's YOU!

Most importantly, when it comes to point of view, decide on one and keep it consistent. Consistency is key when it comes to content and storytelling.

Once you have an idea of who the character will be for your story, it's important to understand the conflict.

The conflict is the lesson in how the character transforms through challenge. An emphasis on lesson. Remember, when it comes to content marketing and storytelling the power is in what you are teaching.

Conflict helps build developmental and emotional dynamics. It helps make a connection between two entities, and human-to-human connections are the foundation for a successful business.

Remember, you're dealing with people, not machines–your company is providing answers, relieving stress, creating happiness, and making life easier for the end user. The revenue your company makes comes from a well-thought business plan and customers who believe in you and what you do.

If your story lacks conflict, then you're probably not telling a story. Instead you're telling a pitch, tagline, unique selling point, or a plain statement. This approach won't resonate with your audience, and from a content marketing perspective, it won't get you views, shares, conversions, or customers.

Conflict doesn't mean that you should be overly dramatic. Be genuine. The conflict should drive the overall story and affect how characters react. This is what should inspire your audience to engage.

Make sure the conflict fits your prospect's problems, needs, or stage of the buyer's journey. If it doesn't fit, why would they be interested in reading the story? How will they connect?

As important as it is to understand your buyer personas, it's equally as important to understand their buyer's journey and the conflicts that they face at each stage.

What problems are your buyer personas facing in the awareness stage? Those are the conflicts that should be in your story.

Spend the time outlining the problems, solutions, and products or services for the different buyer's journey stages and you'll have a better idea of the conflicts you can use in your content.

Last element is resolution.

Where there's conflict, your audience will naturally want some sort of resolution. But what happens next? How does the story end? How did the character or characters change?

It doesn't always have to be a happy ending. Every good story has a closing, so the idea of the resolution is to provide context and emotion for the audience to relate and process the story.

The resolution should wrap up the story but should also clearly call your audience to action. It fulfills the purpose behind the story.

For content marketing, a resolution could be next steps or even a call-to-action for more content. Either way, don't leave them hanging.

Let's take this storytelling framework and apply it to a business.

Let's choose a market that's saturated with competition, like shoes.

TOMS is a slip on shoe company that focuses on spreading social good; with every product you purchase, TOMS will donate a pair of shoes to a child in need. They've made this a part of their brand identity, by creating a slogan that reinforces who they are and what they're about, "The One for One Company".

Now let's break TOMS' story down into three parts.

Everyone needs shoes to protect their feet.

But not everyone has the money to pay for shoes. While traveling in Argentina in 2006, TOMS Founder Blake Mycoskie (the story's character) witnessed the hardships faced by children growing up without shoes.

TOMS is striking an emotional chord with their audience by raising awareness for an issue that they're passionate about.

The best part is how TOMS ties it all together with their resolution, if you buy a pair of their shoes, then they'll donate a pair of shoes to a child in need.

Now that's a powerful story. And while TOMS started off as a shoe retailer, they've created a much bigger, more emotional feel-good story that makes their customers feel like they're changing the world, by simply purchasing a pair of shoes from them. And just how much success has this brought TOMS? Well, they've sold over 60 million pairs of shoes, which means they've also given over 60 million pairs of shoes to children in need.

Beyond the three elements that make up the story, there are also some best practices to follow and keep in mind.

To help make your story great and resonate with your audience you need to: Use content to create emotional appeal, be consistent and authentic, and keep the story clear and concise.

First, using content to create emotional appeal. Your story needs emotional resonance. Emotion is what will give your story power. Make sure to give your story's character some emotion. Think about the emotional response that you're looking to get from the reader. Is it fear, survival, guilt, energized, amusement, maybe even hope?

To get buy-in from your audience you need to elicit emotion. What's the difference between your story and someone else's story? What's the mission or purpose of your company? Why should your audience care?

Next, your story needs to be consistent and authentic. It's not just what you say through your website or content, but the entire experience that your company has to offer based on your buyer personas needs.

David Ogilvy, one of the most well-known advertisers of all time, once said, "tell the truth, but make it fascinating." You can make any industry, any product, or any service stand out and that's done with providing an experience.

And lastly, you keep things clear and concise.

Everyone can benefit from cutting down a lengthy story. Ever had a friend tell you a story that took them 10 minutes to get through but probably could have taken them under a minute? Even long stories benefit when you whittle them down to just the most important parts.

And be specific. You're not trying to speak to everyone. Your story and experience should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. Communicating with the correct audience niche, and creating that need is just as important, if not more important, than the story you're telling.

So remember, create emotional appeal, be consistent and authentic, and keep the story clear and concise.

Before creating your story, plan out who the character is, the tone of voice you'll be using, what is the conflict, and what is the resolution.

## Video 3: Business storytelling in action

There's a lot of brands that are already doing storytelling and creating great stories. Let's take a look an example.

This is Wistia. Wistia provides professional video hosting with amazing viewer analytics, HD video delivery, and marketing tools to help understand website visitors.

For content, they create a whole bunch of fun and engaging educational videos. They also create other forms of content - blog posts, guides, help articles, and webinars.

Now, think back to the golden circle. Starting with why.

Wistia's purpose is to empower everybody to get more out of video. Of course, their product helps with this, but it only solves a small percentage.

All of their content and storytelling circles back to this purpose.

Let's look at two pieces of content and see how they did with their storytelling.

They created this blog post: Improve Your Audio: How to Reduce Echo in Your Video

Right from the title you can tell what the conflict is - reducing echo in video. A title isn't always going to be about the conflict. Sometimes it might be the resolution and other times it might summarize what the blog post is all about.

But in this case, it's the conflict.

The blog post even starts out with "Bad sounding audio can ruin even the best of videos." Their buyer persona can instantly relate. They're pulled into the conflict and now asking for more.

Let's dig deeper. Who is the character? From the title it appears like the character will be the audience or the reader. Since it's about improving YOUR audio in YOUR video.

As you'll see, Wistia continues to use this point of view throughout the blog post.

And finally, the blog post provides the resolution. Step-by-step instructions on soundproofing for video.

The story is clear and concise and ties back to their purpose - empowering people to get more out of video.

They use language and a funny tone to stay consistent and authentic with their brand. What's the difference between Wistia telling you this information or finding some video on YouTube?

Wistia does a good job at eliciting emotion and really empathizing with their buyer persona. They make the conflict appear as something that needs to be resolved but isn't impossible to do. They teach while telling the story.

This is a simple piece of content, so how does this work for something that's more long-form? You might find that for some of your content, you'll be telling multiple stories within one.

Take this example: Hiring an in-house video producer. Another piece of content that Wistia created. Like the earlier example, you can tell what the overall conflict is.

But the more you look at the content, the more you'll see that there are several different conflicts that come up because there are several different stories.

Within this piece of content, all three points of views are used. Wistia talks about their own experience with this problem. They use first person to relate to the audience. To let a reader know, "hey. We've been there too!" As mentioned before, using first-person is a way of being confessional.

They use the second-person to describe next steps the reader can take to interviewing a video producer. And even use case studies to help get a third-person point of view.

What’s important to note is that within these smaller stories, Wistia is consistent with the point of view.

And like with all of their content, they keep the story clear and concise.

And speaking of in-house video producers. Let’s say hi to HubSpot Academy’s video producer - Hi Stephen!!!

Wistia does a great job at storytelling, but now it’s your turn.

Happy Storytelling!

## Video 1: Why does your business need a content creation framework?

Hello! I'm Abi, and I'm the Content Manager here at HubSpot Academy.

A lot of work goes into creating a single piece of content: research, planning, editing, and more.

Then after the content's done, there's promotion work, reporting...the list goes on. As a content professional, you need to publish a lot of content for each of your buyer personas at different stages of the buyer's journey.

This can feel laborious or complicated—especially if you're working solo.

But a content creation framework that's repeatable, organized, and agile can make the content creation process smoother and more rewarding.

A content creation framework is a structure of processes for publishing content—from the beginning stages to post-publication.

Are you thinking, "A framework for creating content? But won't that hurt creativity?" No.

With a framework in place, your team can foster creative ideas in an organized, scalable manner. A framework strikes that perfect balance between autonomous creativity and long-term content sustainability.

As an example of a very basic content creation framework, let's take a look at HubSpot Academy's User Blog.

The User Blog aims to educate and inspire HubSpot users to reach their inbound business goals with the HubSpot software. We have a diverse group of subject matter experts contributing articles. We also have a variety of editors to make sure the articles are the best they can be before publication.

Then we need to take into consideration the topics we feature, the customers and partners who will contribute articles, and some ad-hoc content to educate our readers on HubSpot updates and news.

That's a lot of moving parts! So to keep things organized, we have a framework. Let's take a look.

This is the User Blog's editorial calendar. It's organized in a Google Sheet. I create each month's calendar one month in advance so that all writers and editors get plenty of notice before their deadlines.

The "Publish Date" and "Publish Time" are documented so that editors know what date and time to schedule their posts for publication.

Then there's the "Due Date" column. This is the date the writer needs to submit their article by. This way, each editor gets a full week to review the article. This is especially important since our editors are either freelance editors with a lot of content to juggle, or they're volunteer editors here at HubSpot who have full-time jobs.

The writer is responsible for writing their article and getting it in on time—so their name is documented in the "Responsible" column.

*example of hubspot*

In the "Blog Post Title" column, writers enter their proposed title or—if they don't have a title in mind yet—they enter a quick blurb on what they plan to cover. Then in the "Description" column, they enter a short sentence or two about what their article will explore.

The next column asks writers to enter a word or two about what HubSpot tools or products their post highlights. This way, I can make sure writers create articles that will educate and inspire HubSpot users. Also, the editor will use these words as tags when they edit the blog post.

The "Status" column reflects what stage in the creation process the blog post is in:

- Pending: The slot may be filled by an article, but the writer hasn't confirmed yet.
- Confirmed: The slot has been filled with an article and confirmed by the writer.
- Submitted: The writer has submitted their article for editing.
- Scheduled: The editor has reviewed the article and scheduled it for publication.
- Published: The article is live.

Lastly, the "Editor" column lists the name of the person who'll be editing each article. This way, the writer and editor can communicate before, during, or after the editing process to make sure everything's in order for publication.

So that's one example of what a content creation framework looks like for content in the short term, planned one month out. You also might want to create a long-term content creation framework, where you plan content up to a few months to a year in advance.

Why would you want to plan content this far ahead?

Well, you need to serve your audience's needs and educate them over time depending on what they're looking for.

For example: I used to be a technical writer here at HubSpot. Our readers were looking for information on how to use their HubSpot tools.

On our team, we needed to create content and publish it quickly to align with product releases. So to make sure we could update our current articles and create new ones on time, I worked closely with our product team to keep track of all upcoming product changes and new releases. These were usually planned up to a few months—and sometimes a year—in advance. So we planned our content to align with those timelines.

We used Trello boards to keep track of how changes were moving through the product team's pipeline. When a change was coming closer to launch, the technical writers had time to collect content for updating and write drafts of new content to educate users about the releases.

These releases also involved product announcements, blog posts, emails, and other forms of content to serve a variety of personas. So we all needed to work together and stick to our long-term content creation framework.

When you're planning your content for a month or even a year in advance, remain flexible to account for the changes that will inevitably come up. Sometimes campaigns, timelines, and personas will need to be adjusted.

## Video 2: How to build a content creation framework

So, you want to create your content in a streamlined manner. Let's jump into the five steps to building a content creation framework.

1. Conceptualizing content
2. Planning a timeline
3. Creating a workflow
4. Reviewing and editing content
5. Organizing and storing content

When conceptualizing content, the first step is coming up with appropriate ideas for your content offers.

A content offer is something you create and publish in exchange for personal information like a name and email address.

Struggling to generate content ideas? Do some online research, like reading blogs related to your industry or checking out content marketing survey results. Another option is to write down frequently asked sales questions or important industry knowledge that would be helpful for your target market to know.

If you're looking for a list of ways to generate meaningful content ideas, check out the resources section below.

As you gather ideas, focus on creating content for every stage of the buyer's journey—awareness, consideration, and decision.

In the awareness stage, a prospect is experiencing and expressing symptoms of a problem or opportunity. They're doing research to more clearly understand, frame, and give a name to their problem. They're looking for educational content to help them answer some of their questions and concerns—think blog posts, ebooks, social content, and how-to webinars.

In the consideration stage, a prospect has clearly defined and given a name to their problem or opportunity. They're committed to researching and understanding all available approaches and methods to solving their problem or opportunity. Create content that positions you as an expert in your industry. Demo videos, case studies, and FAQ articles are great resources to build relationships with readers and establish trust between your audience and your brand.

In the decision stage, a prospect has now decided on their solution strategy, method, or approach. They're compiling a long list of all available vendors and products in their given solution strategy. They're researching to trim down this long list into a short list and ultimately make a final purchase decision—and that final purchase decision could be YOU. So provide them content such as free trials, consultations, and articles that provide education on your products or services.

For more detail about the buyer's journey and creating content for each stage, check out the resources section below.

Now, back to building a content creation framework.

Step two is planning a timeline. When putting together a timeline, keep in mind that you'll want to maintain agility while still having time to execute on your initiatives.

When planning content creation over the span of a quarter, try to have at least two or three content offers you want to create, and organize your content by buyer's journey stages.

Keep your goals in mind here. Is the focus for this quarter improving volume of leads? Is it increasing the close/won rate for your sales team? Is it growing blog traffic?

Use your goals to determine what content you need to focus on. From there, map out what content you need and when it needs to be live. This will give you a sense of the resources you'll need in-house to create this content yourself. You can also use your goals to decide if you need some external help from freelancers.

In addition to planning out your content offers, identify any company-wide initiatives that will need support from content over the next three months. Examples of additional content are posts on events that you'll be attending, rebranding information, and new corporate partnerships.

The third step is creating a workflow. In the context of content creation, a workflow is an intuitive breakdown of the content creation work. It consists of the sequence of steps a piece of content moves through from its initial creation to publication.

Your workflow should clearly identify who will do what. It should also identify if outside influencers or freelancers will be contributing and, if so, in what capacity.

Because there are multiple components involved when creating a piece of content, you'll want to get pretty granular with your steps—even if you're a team of one. This way, as your content grows over time, you'll have a clearly defined workflow to use when adding the resources you'll need to create more content at a fast pace.

For example, instead of having written, edited, and published as the work stages for an ebook, you might have something like outline completed, first draft completed, editing completed, design and formatting completed, final draft completed, and published.

Here's a pro tip: Think about how you created a piece of content in the past before you had a content creation framework. Consider what went well, what roadblocks you hit, and what you'll need to work into your process to avoid those roadblocks the next time around.

Document your thoughts, and create a workflow based on that. You can always change your workflow steps as your content evolves.

This brings us to the fourth step: reviewing and editing content. You need a reviewal system in place so that your content is accurate, well written, and aligned with your brand. Depending on your team's setup, this review process could involve working with an in-house or freelance editor and having an SEO specialist format and update the content.

In the review process, follow these seven best practices:

- Set clear expectations.
- Define roles in the reviewal process.
- Determine a timeline.
- Use a style guide.
- Track edits.
- Manage progress.
- Optimize for search engines.

tips

Let's dive into each of these in more detail.

Set clear expectations: The reviewer should know what they're looking for: grammatical errors, fact-checking, story gaps, wordsmithing, and more.

Define roles in the reviewal process: Each person should know what they need to do and when. Maybe you have a developmental editor looking at your content's overall focus and structure before a copy editor goes in for more detailed edits. Or maybe you have a single editor reviewing everything. Whatever your team looks like, clearly defining who does what will eliminate chaos and keep things on track.

Determine a timeline. With so many people involved in publishing content, set due dates and a high-level timeline so that each person is held accountable for their contribution. In many content environments, one missed deadline affects everyone's work. To keep your team agile and conscious of their deadlines, share a rough timeline with the team, get everyone's buy-in, and then finalize it.

Use a style guide. Your content needs to be consistently authentic, well written, and aligned with your company's brand—even among various writers with different writing styles, skill levels, and voices. A style guide is that common thread all content reviewers can use so that their edits establish consistency across a diverse group of writers.

For information on how to create a style guide, check out the resources section below.

Moving on to the next best practice: Track edits. Whether you have one editor or multiple editors, have your content reviewers make suggestions by tracking changes as opposed to making edits directly. This way, the content creator knows where to make changes as opposed to figuring out what was altered.

Next, manage progress. Use some sort of document, like a project management software, to track progress. This document should reflect the roles, timeline, and deadlines you've determined for your reviewal process. Since you could have a team of people working together on a final product, tracking the reviewal progress provides transparency across the team and keeps all stakeholders on the same page. It also allows for agility so that you can remain flexible and adjust deadlines if need be.

Here's a pro tip: If you're looking for a place to start, consider using Trello. It's free, and—more importantly—Trello makes collaborating with others easy.

And finally, optimize for search engines. You put a lot of effort into creating your content, so you want your audience to find it in their web searches. After your content is created, do some spot edits to search engine optimize your content. This could involve swapping out some words for keywords or maybe having an SEO specialist optimize specific sections.

So that wraps up reviewal best practices.

The sixth step in building a content creation framework is organizing and storing content. Once your content is done, store it in a centralized location where your team can access it—like Google Drive or Dropbox. If you have a content management system, also known as a CMS, then you could choose to store it there as well.

Organizing your content in a way that's easy to understand is critical for repurposing, reusing, or even finding that content down the line.

One way to organize your content is to develop a clear naming system. A sample system could include content format, buyer's journey stage, campaign, and year.

For example, let's say you developed an awareness stage ebook back in 2015 to

support a campaign for a new product launch on rock climbing gear. Your name for this content offer could be ebook-awareness-rockclimbinggear-2015.

While you can choose a specific naming convention formula for hosting your files, the goal should be to easily access files when needed.

*content marketing should change and align with market, business's goal*

Keep in mind: Your content creation framework should always be evolving. Your business's goals will vary from quarter to quarter and year to year, so your content creation framework should align with those changes. On top of that, content marketing is always changing. Stay up to date on industry trends and best practices so that you can incorporate them into your framework.

## Video 3: Determining the resources you'll need for a content creation framework

To build a framework for scalable and organized content creation, there are two main types of resources you'll need: your team and your tools.

Let's start with your team.

There are five primary types of responsibilities in content creation:

- Content management and strategy
- Writing
- Editing
- Designing
- Distributing

First, let's cover content management and strategy. This responsibility involves creating a long-term content plan, mapping it to the business needs, ensuring the other responsibilities are met, and analyzing the reports.

This person is the leader of the group and works with everyone involved so that things move along smoothly to the finish line. Most businesses hire a content marketing manager or content marketing strategist to fill this role.

The second responsibility is writing. Typically, a content writer or marketer will do the writing. While many businesses have niche or technical markets, the individuals writing your content don't always have to be subject matter experts. Instead, much like a journalist, they can work with internal and external subject matter experts to create compelling and useful content. While many companies choose to write their content in-house, some choose to outsource that work. Writers from companies like Scripted or Upwork can create tailored content for your marketing campaigns.

And where there's writing, there's editing. Once content has been planned and created, it needs to be edited. Just because a piece of content has been created doesn't mean it's ready to be published. Editing ensures alignment with your business's messaging, your target market's needs, and the goals the content is meant to solve for. An in-house editor or freelance editor is perfect for this. But if you don't have an editor, consider having a teammate with a knack for communication review your content. A fresh set of eyes and a different perspective can make your content stronger.

Next is designing. Once the content has been written and edited, it needs to be packaged in a way that's appealing to readers. Having an attractive, fluid format and design can make all the difference in getting someone to stay on your site and enjoy consuming your content. Effective design also plays a huge role in information hierarchy. You need a high-quality design to structure your content in a way that's easy for readers to understand and navigate.

Think about it: Can you remember a time when you looked at a website or flyer and decided not to read it because it didn't visually make sense?

In marketing, we use the term blink test to refer to the 3 to 5 seconds an average site visitor spends scanning a website visually and then deciding if they want to spend time looking through it. So make it easy for your audience to scan your content, pull out a few important details, and then engage further. A good designer can be the difference between a below average blink test pass rate and consistently getting people to stay on your site.

Try using tools like Canva to step up your content design. If you're not able to do this work in-house, consider a freelancer.

Finally, there's distributing: A content distributor, also known as a social media coordinator or specialist, is responsible for bringing the content to market through a strategic promotion plan. They need to either create or coordinate the creation of promotional content, map it to the available channels, and schedule it for publication. They're also the person responsible for analyzing the results of the campaign.

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Depending on your team and business context, you might have one person fill multiple roles. Just make sure that person isn't strapped with too much responsibility. Have a checks and balances system spread amongst multiple teammates. If your team members are already at full capacity, look into freelancers to pick up the additional work.

Here's a pro tip: If you're just getting started with building your team or looking for resources to help you complete a project, consider hiring a freelancer as your first team member. To learn more about the advantages of using freelancers as well as how to get started with hiring one, check out the resources section below.

So that covers your team. Now let's talk about tools.

To build your content framework, you'll need 3 main tools:

- CMS
- Analytics tools
- Planning and internal communication tools

A CMS is a tool for creating, editing, and publishing digital content. There are different types of content systems—such as HubSpot and WordPress—so you'll need to identify what works best for your company's needs. Whichever CMS you use, be sure you have the ability to edit your website, create and publish content for your blog and landing pages, and optimize content for search engines.

You'll also need analytics tools. Use your analytics tools to understand the impact of your content on your business and identify opportunities for improvement.

Most paid-for CMS tools come with built-in analytics. And any social platforms you use will also have built-in analytics. But if you're looking for an analytics solution with extra insights, then HubSpot and Google Analytics are strong choices to consider. In fact, try using both—the two platforms offer different kinds of insights that, combined, create a complete picture.

To learn about the differences between these two reporting platforms as well as how they work together, check out the resources section below.

Also, consider adding tracking links to all your promotional activities. This way, you can see what's working and what's not. To build a trackable link using Google's campaign URL builder tool, check out the resources section below.

Once you have your CMS and analytics ready to go, you'll need planning and internal communication tools. You'll use these tools so that your team can communicate easily, see any updates, avoid version or draft control issues, and clearly delineate their responsibilities and assignments. You could start off with Google Drive or Trello, then transition to something more robust as your team and content grows.

With these resources in mind, you're well on your way to building a content creation framework. And you're one step closer to making meaningful connections with your audience—at scale.

## Video 1: Why you need a process to generate ideas for content creation

Hi, I'm Guillaume with the HubSpot Agency Partner team.

Humans are always coming up with new ideas. Whether we're just laying in bed, commuting to work, or going out for a run, our minds have a seemingly endless ability to generate new ideas.

But as natural and easy as this process may sometimes feel, it gets tricky when your job depends on it.

In this video, we're going to cover why marketers need a process to come up with content ideas.

A content marketer — or any creative for that matter — doesn't have the leisure to have an "off day." Your content ideas fuel your work. Run out of gas and your content initiatives will stall.

A process also allows you to think of ideas that may not be easily apparent. Some ideas seem to drop from the heavens right into our minds, while others must be wrestled into submission. Those ideas are hard-earned and not easily captured. You have to fight for them. The benefit is that it feels so much better when you finally unleash them into the world.

There are four main reasons why every content marketing professional needs to know how to generate content ideas.

First, your days are busy. You've got blog articles to write, webinars to record, and podcasts to produce. And not only do your content ideas need to be good, but they must also be relevant to your buyer personas and in line with your overall marketing strategy.

A content generation process allows you to come up with a predictable flow of original, high-quality, and relevant content ideas.

Secondly, a content generation process allows you to uncover ideas that you may not have come up with on your own. No matter how inexhaustibly creative you are, I guarantee you'd benefit from having other people help you brainstorm ideas.

Whether it's your colleagues, friends, family, or even your competition, you can benefit from the influence and perspectives of other people.

Thirdly, the reality is that sooner or later you will run out of good ideas. During the first few weeks or months on the job, ideas will come to you like bees to a honeypot. Eventually, "content fatigue" will set in, and you'll find yourself looking at the word processor with nothing to write.

You might be a creative, but you're also a professional. And one of the major differences between the professional writer and the amateur is that the former doesn't have the leisure to wait for inspiration to strike.

Think of a content generation process as your defense against writer's block.

Fourth, content marketing “at scale” requires proven processes so your team can grow responsibly and keep up with the increased demand.

Additionally, having a process in place helps new hires ramp up and start having an impact as quickly as possible, which also helps free up managers' time. And should your top talent leave or be unavailable, the rest of the team has a proven system to fall back on.

## Video 2: Where do ideas come from?

Where do ideas come from? It's a bit of an odd question, isn't it? The Ancients believed that actual goddesses — also known as Muses — were responsible for our creative inspiration. In our day and age, content marketers and creatives need a little more. After all, you don't have the leisure to wait for the gods!

Instead, you can turn to famed advertising executive, James Webb Young. In 1940, Young published the short book, "A Technique for Producing Ideas," which has become a favorite among copywriters and creatives of all stripes.

Young's thesis is that idea creation isn't just about waiting for inspiration to strike — there's a process. And if you can understand that process, then you can build a more efficient ideation process and become a better content marketer.

Young starts with the proposition that "an idea is nothing more nor less than a new combination of old elements."

That's the reason why Hollywood producers will pitch a movie like "Jaws meets dinosaurs" or why entrepreneurs describe their startup as the "Uber for dog sitting" — all ideas are made up of different, seemingly disparate, elements in order to produce something new.

Now, Young's not the first person to have reached that conclusion — other creatives and scientists have said as much. What makes his perspective so interesting is how succinct his description of the ideation process is. He breaks it down into four steps: gathering new material, digesting the material, unconscious processing, and the eureka moment.

Let's dig deeper into each, starting with gathering raw material.

Great content marketers read and consume content from a wide variety of places. They are endlessly curious and fascinated by a wide breadth of topics. All of these make up the "raw material": the facts, concepts, and stories that float in your mind in a sort of suspended animation.

So, be curious. Read whatever you can, whenever you can. Develop an appetite for content and consume it regularly — good, bad, old, new, popular, niche. And not just marketing content either! Consume history, poetry, or science magazines on top of Snapchat stories and industry blogs. Let it all seep into your mind. You might be surprised what will come of it.

It also helps to maintain a repository for all those ideas. The old school term is "swipe file," which was an actual folder where people kept newspaper clippings and other bits of content. But in the digital era, this can be tools like Google Docs, Evernote, bookmarks, or whatever other platform works best for you.

In the second stage, you're going to be digesting the material. The goal is to bring those disparate ideas together and see how they fit. You're looking for relationships, connections, and combinations. The goal is to synthesize those ideas in interesting and compelling ways.

In the third stage, you'll use unconscious processing. Stop trying to bring those ideas together and do something else
15 entirely — listen to music, go out for a run, or watch a movie — anything to take your mind off the process. Let your unconscious take over. Sometimes you have to let your mind rest and organize itself on its own. Even when you're not

actively thinking about a problem, the mind has its own way of processing information and making connections. Leverage it.

And then you have the fourth and final stage: the eureka moment.

Suddenly, and seemingly out of nowhere, an idea will pop into your head. As Young says, "It will come to you when you are least expecting it…" You might be brushing your teeth or simply walking to work, and a fully-formed idea will arrive unexpectedly. When that happens, make sure to write it down. Millions of ideas have been lost by people who thought they would remember them.

This process isn't anything new or terribly surprising. It's how all of us come up with ideas. But as creatives, it's valuable to be aware of each step so you can work on them and improve.

It's especially important to spend time gathering the raw material. Curiosity, and the will to act on it, is a helpful prerequisite for any content marketer. You have to be willing and able to read voraciously and consume content from all places.

## Video 3: How do you generate ideas for content creation?

There are two different ways you can generate content ideas: by yourself or with a group. Experiment with each and soon you'll come up with a process that makes sense for your specific needs.

Let's start with creating ideas on your own.

There are four things you should keep in mind when generating content ideas on your own: What are your buyer personas' reading habits?; What are your competitors doing?; What are people talking about on Quora?; What can you learn from your search engine optimization efforts?

Let's take a look.

First, what are your buyer personas' reading habits?

Put yourself in the shoes of your prospects. Empathize with them. What are their challenges and pain points? What do they read on the web and educate themselves about? Is there a specific blog or website they frequently visit?

If you can, try interviewing some of your best customers by phone or email to find out about their reading habits. You can even include a question on your form that explores visitors' go-to outlets.

Once you have a list of websites or blogs, use a tool like Buzzsumo to see which content has the best social media performance. Just type a domain name, and you'll get a list of the pages, along with their performance on each social media channel.

For example, let's imagine you're writing for a travel company based out of New York. Type "travel New York" in Buzzsumo and check out the top results. You'll find posts about the Finger Lakes in New York being voted the best wine region in the U.S. and the opening of the Museum of the Dog. From just a simple search, you can get a sense of the most talked-about social media posts about New York travel — and get plenty of topic ideas to fuel your content marketing.

Alternatively, you can go to the blogs you identified directly and look at their most popular posts. If a blog offers this as an option, then you'll generally find it on the sidebar.

Next, what are your competitors doing?

Another tactic — especially if you're unsure about your personas' reading habits — is to look at your competitors' content marketing efforts. If you share a similar target audience, it's likely that the content that performs well on their site will also appeal to your prospects. So look at what they're producing and what's really resonating. Here again, use Buzzsumo to quickly scan their websites and see what's performing well.

Next, what are people talking about on Quora?

Sometimes you might not be able to find out where your audience lives online. That's okay. Another approach to coming up with content generation ideas is to start with a set of keywords.

For example, let's assume your target audience is people looking to learn video marketing. Now go to Quora, a popular question-and-answer site where anyone can ask questions and get answers from the community. Although anyone can participate, moderators do a great job at limiting noise and keeping quality high.

After searching for "video marketing," Quora will return a series of popular questions that contain the keyword, like, "how effective is online video marketing?" and "what is video marketing?" Without even looking at the answers, this tactic provides valuable insights into common challenges and questions based on this topic.

Lastly, what can you learn from your search engine optimization efforts?

There are a few search engine optimization tools and techniques you can use to generate content ideas. A go-to is the Google Search Console. Assuming it's properly verified with your domain, you should be able to view which queries users typed into Google to find your website, as well as topics you're ranking for, even if your site's not on the first page. This is super valuable intel because you're getting actual keywords people are typing in.

If you want to learn more about how to set up and use Google Search Console, then check out the resources section of this lesson. I've included a link to a helpful article.

Three other quick ways to leverage Google are the autocomplete functionality, "related searches" section, and the "people also search for" box.

Let's review the autocomplete functionality first.

Autocomplete is when Google suggests a query as you type in the search bar. These "search predictions" might uncover ideas around a topic that you hadn't thought about. Let's assume you're looking for content ideas about influencer marketing. Type "influencer marketing" and Google will autocomplete with "influencer marketing platform" or "influencer marketing examples."

Next up is the "related searches" section.

"Related searches" appears at the bottom of the search results page and offers additional suggestions. For example, let's assume you type "how to network?" Google's related searches will suggest, "how to network at work" and "how to network for a job."

And lastly, there's the "people also search for" box.

The "people also search for" box appears in search results when a user conducts an organic search, clicks on a result, and then returns back to the search results page.

Let's say, for example, you're interested in writing more about "inbound marketing personas," so you perform a search on Google. If you want to get some ideas on alternative search queries Google might recommend, then click a listing, then click the back button. Notice how Google offers some alternative searches associated with that listing, like "HubSpot marketing 101" and "what is the consideration phase?"

As you can see, there are many ways to come out with content ideas on your own. But what about leveraging others?

You could host a company brainstorm.

A brainstorm can be an incredibly productive way to generate fresh and creative content ideas. By inviting team members who don't spend their day thinking about content, you'll likely get new ideas from a different perspective.

There are hundreds of ways to format and host a brainstorm. To help you get started, here are a few best practices that all successful brainstorms have in common.

First, pick someone to moderate and set a clear agenda. Agenda items could include items like, "what's the problem we're trying to solve?"; "how long will the session last?"; rules of engagement; and so on. Brainstorms can quickly dissolve into an unproductive group hangout if there's no direction. Make sure someone owns the meeting and that everyone follows their guidelines.

Next, create an atmosphere where people feel comfortable sharing their ideas. It can be uncomfortable to ask coworkers to come up with random ideas, especially those who aren't used to doing so on a regular basis. People easily get self-conscious, so use icebreakers.

For example, run through a basic word association game. The first person says a word — let's say, "fries," then the following person mentions another association, like "French" or "cheese," and on and on until either the first word is mentioned again or a certain amount of time has elapsed. It's amazing what connections people make. This is a great way to get your creative juices flowing.

Next, leverage "braindumps." A braindump is an uninterrupted period of time (typically no more than two to three minutes long) when you jot down all the ideas that come to your mind. The goal is quantity, not quality. Don't overthink your answers or wonder how good they are. Just get them on paper as quickly as possible. *số lượng, not chất lượng*

For example, if you were writing content for an HVAC manufacturer, you could suggest a braindump about all the topics that come to mind when you think about home heating, ventilating, and air conditioning. Suggestions might include "tips to keep your house cool during the summer" or "eco-friendly ways to heat your garage."

Note that this type of exercise works equally well with experts and people who don't know anything about the topic.

Also, use sticky notes, whiteboards, and other visual aids to keep track of ideas. Sticky notes are especially effective, as it's easy to group them together by topic and identify trends and common themes. Try and display everyone's ideas so the process feels democratic and transparent. You want the experience to be positive so people will want to do it again in the future.

You should know that "constraints breed creativity." So make sure to set strict time limits — both for the length of the meeting (no longer than an hour) and the braindumps. You can sometimes let people voice really good ideas after the time is up, but make sure they're exceptions.

Finally, remember that the main goal of a brainstorm is to generate new, unexpected ideas. It might not be the time to refine those ideas or critique them. So if all you get out of them is a dozen or so ideas for you to expand and improve upon — that might be enough.

And there you have it. Now you have a process to help you generate content ideas. Keep these in mind as part of your content ideation process and you'll ensure a consistent flow of ideas to fuel your content creation efforts.

## Video 1: Why blog post structure matters

Hi, I'm Justin with HubSpot Academy.

Think back to the last blog post you read. Did you skim through it as opposed to reading it because the introduction didn't keep your attention? Did the content seem to ramble as opposed to getting to the point in a helpful and practical way? Were you unable to find a helpful next step to continue your journey?

If you answered "yes" to all of these questions, then chances are the author who wrote the blog post didn't pay close enough attention to the structure of their content. And they're suffering the consequences: You, along with many others, stopped reading the post.

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All effective blog posts have a blueprint. You may not easily see it, but it's there, and it's meant to help you, the reader, through your journey to making a well-informed, confident decision– whatever that decision may be.

Here are a list of reasons why your blog posts need structure.

To start, it gives you direction. The last thing you want is to stare at a screen frustrated that you don't know what to write about.

Next, it will make your content creation time more effective and efficient. Using a template creates helpful guardrails. Without it, you could easily spend your time creating content that may get cut out before publishing.

Next, you want readers to easily comprehend what it is you're trying to tell them. If your content is too complicated and unengaging, then chances are readers will abandon it and go elsewhere. There's thousands of blog posts being published every minute, so it's safe to say you're not the only resource out there competing for attention.

And lastly, you want your readers to remember what you write about and feel excited and inspired to take the next step in their journey.

So if your goal is to attract your ideal audience, engage them with helpful, useful content, and ultimately delight them to the point where they become promoters of your brand by sharing your content with their network, then you need to create content that has structure and tells a story.

## Video 2: How to choose a topic and a title for a blog post

Before getting started with a blog post, you need to first determine the direction of the content.

Let's review an effective way to approach this.

To start, choose a topic to write about.

At a high level, write educational content.

I'm not saying you can't write about your business when it makes sense, but in order to attract someone to your blog, you need to answer the questions and problems that they're searching for answers to. Put yourself in the

shoes of your buyer personas. What will they be searching for? What do they want to know about? What will resonate with them? Consider what you know about your buyer personas and their interests while you're coming up with a topic for your blog post.

And when it comes to a topic, make sure to write about your industry, not yourself.

Remember, you're trying to attract strangers to your blog who have never heard of your company before – so they're not going to find you through search engines if you're just blogging about yourself. You have the rest of your website to provide that information.

But don't just take it from me; let's hear what HubSpot's Product Editor-in-Chief, Beth Dunn, has to say.

> *At its core, effective content is relevant and useful to your audience – your reader. It makes your reader, not your company and its revenue targets or goals, your number one priority. Your writing should use your audience's language and show that you understand their pain points, challenges, and goals. It should be produced to help people, not just sell them on your products or services.*

Thanks, Beth.

If you're looking for a place to start with creating content that'll positively impact your audience, then ask your co-workers from other teams like sales and services for some ideas. Here are a few questions that you could ask and they could answer: What are the most frequently asked questions you hear? What do our prospects and customers need help with? What do you wish people knew about our industry? What are industry bloggers, social media, and even our competitors talking about?

Before you write anything, you need to pick a topic for your blog post. The topic can be pretty general to start with. For example, if you provide running shoes, then it might be a good idea to write about the topic of running. Expand off of this topic – in other words, iterations or different ways of approaching that topic to help you focus your writing. For example, you might decide to narrow your topic to "the top ten running shoes for marathons" or "how to create a running routine."

When picking your ideas to write about, do keyword research.

Keywords are the words and phrases typed into search engines. They're the topics that people are trying to learn more about. Which keywords do your buyer personas use? Which are associated with your industry?

Optimizing your blog posts for keywords is not about incorporating as many keywords into your posts as possible. Nowadays, this actually hurts your search engine optimization because search engines consider this keyword stuffing.

It also doesn't make for a good reader experience – a ranking factor that search engines now prioritize to ensure you're answering the intent of your visitors. You should use keywords in your content in a way that doesn't feel unnatural or forced.

A good rule of thumb is to focus on one long-tail keyword per blog post. A long-tail keyword is a very targeted search phrase that contains three or more words. It often contains a head term, which is a more generic search

term, one or two words in length. The head terms you choose should align with the topics that you want your business and website to be known for and build authority around. For example, if you want your business to be known for "content marketing," then a blog post on "Three Steps to Organizing a Long-Term Content Marketing Strategy" is a great example of a long-tail keyword in support of this topic. Or if you want your business to be known for "full-time RVing," then a blog post on "Full-Time RVing | The Benefits of Trying Before Buying" is a great example of a long-tail keyword in support of this topic.

And why should you focus on long-tail keywords for blog post titles? These longer, often question-based keywords keep your post focused on the specific goals of your audience. Website visitors searching long-tail terms are more likely to read the whole post and then seek more information from you. In other words, you'll attract the right type of traffic to your website.

If you're brainstorming ideas to write about, there's a good chance you'll create a long list of ideas for topics you can cover and posts you can create. This will help create a longer-term blogging strategy, making a list of topics that support a specific conversion. For example, if you have an ebook or guide that you want to create and promote, then consider making a list of blog ideas that support this guide's content. This way, if someone finds your blog post and finds the content helpful, that increases the chances of them wanting to click a call-to-action, aka CTA, to access a relevant offer.

If you're looking for assistance with blog ideas, then check out HubSpot's blog ideas generator. This free tool will help jump-start your creative process.

Now, let's talk about creating a title.

Think about how you read things online. You read the title first, before you commit. It needs to catch your interest, especially since it's the first thing that will catch a reader's attention.

Start by creating a working title for your blog post.

A working title is something to "work" off of as you begin to write your post. Start here to narrow your topic down and focus on one angle. A broad term, like "social media," could breed multiple blog post ideas. A working title, like "top social media channels for live video in 2019" is now long-tail and specific.

Once you finish the piece, you'll come back to this title and refine it to be more aligned with the direction you ended up taking in the post.

For almost every piece of content, come up with at least 5–10 different titles. Make it a rule that you spend a minimum of five minutes brainstorming titles. And once you make a list, send to a co-worker to get their opinion.

Also, make the value of the post clear in the title. Your title should help readers and search engines understand what your post is about. Set the right expectations – what is the reader going to get out of your blog post? What information is covered? What format is the blog post going to take?

In this example, the blog post title explicitly tells you that you'll be reading about how to create an infographic. Not only that, but it sets the expectations that it only takes an hour to do, and there's also free templates

included. You know exactly what you're going to get from this blog post – how it's valuable to you and how much information it contains.

When it comes to the art of the perfect blog post title, HubSpot did some research and looked at how our own titles have performed. Here are the consistent principles that were found:

1. The ideal blog post title length is 60 characters.
2. Headlines between 8 and 12 words are shared most often on Twitter.
3. Headlines between 12 and 14 words are liked most often on Facebook.

HubSpot also found that headlines ending with a bracketed clarification – like the earlier example with "15 free infographic templates" in brackets at the end of the post – performed 38% better than titles without that clarification.

If you're having trouble trimming down the length of a title, run it through Moz's title tag preview tool to see how the title will appear on a search engine results page. Google typically displays the first 50–60 characters of a title tag. If you keep your titles under 60 characters, you can expect about 90% of your titles to display properly.

Title too long? That's okay! Make sure to create a title for your reader first. When you have a lengthy headline, it's a good idea to put your primary keyword (aka the head term) at the beginning of the title since it might get cut off toward the end on a search engine results page. In this example, the title got caught off, but the focus keyword, "data visualization," is at the front.

And there you have it, a step-by-step approach to choosing effective blog topics with descriptive titles.

## Video 3: How to create and structure a blog post

Once you have a topic and title for your blog post, the next step is to create and structure its content.

Let's review how to go about this.

To start, choose a format for the post so that both people and search engines can easily read and understand it.

When writing for your audience, you want to match the attitude of your readers and the subject matter. Consider if your writing should be serious, fun and personable, uplifting, quirky and humorous, or authoritative. Readers might not be able to point out that the tone is what's off-putting about your content and therefore your brand, but it's the little things that can leave a big impression.

Your goal should be to create an interesting narrative with each post that your audience can follow. This all starts with having a solid structure for your post that readers recognize and therefore know what to expect.

One easy structure to use is the List Formula. Start with an intro, list out the main points of the article, and then wrap it all up with a strong conclusion.

The How-To Formula is another easy-to-use and logical format. It begins with an introduction, there's a section on why this matters to the reader that provides more context, and then you provide details on how to do something in a list format.

If you start with a formula for the backbone of your article, it's easier to get started. It will be overwhelming to write an introduction without knowing where the piece is going to go. Start by filling in the main points and save writing the introduction and conclusion for after you've written the piece or created a solid architecture for the post. 36

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When writing an intro, make it captivating. If you lose the reader in the first few paragraphs – or even sentences – of the introduction, they'll stop reading even before they've given your post a read-through. Grab their attention, use humor, be empathetic, or grip the reader with an interesting fact or statistic.

And describe the purpose of the post and explain how it will address a problem the reader may be having. It should be a follow-up to the title that they found interesting. This will give the reader a reason to keep reading and give them a connection to how it will help them improve.

If you read the first few lines of this blog post, would you want to keep reading? What about this blog post? Keep your buyer persona in mind and think about what would entice them to keep on reading.

And what about the rest of your blog post?

The body of your blog post is where your readers will undoubtedly derive the most value. HubSpot did an analysis and found the ideal blog post length is roughly 2,100 words, but that will vary depending on your topic. Always solve for the reader first. Make sure you cover your topic in full and have met the expectations that your blog title promised.

Let's review some formatting best practices to ensure you're creating effective blog posts that are remembered.

Mention your keyword at a normal cadence throughout the body of your post and in the headers when it makes sense. That means including your keywords in your copy but only in a natural, reader-friendly way. Don't go overboard, though, at the risk of being penalized for keyword stuffing. Whenever you create content, your primary focus should be on what matters to your audience, not how many times you can include a keyword or keyword phrase in that content. Here's a pro tip to avoid keyword stuffing: Consider writing the synonyms of your keyword as opposed to keyword stuffing. For example, digital nomad is a main topic I write about often, but instead of repeating that term over and over in my content, I change it up with synonyms like "remote worker" or "telecommuter."

And while text is one of the most important facets of an effective blog post, your content needs to be more than just text. You need to pay attention to how you present the content. Which brings me to my next best practice: Whitespace is your friend.

Whitespace is the empty space on the page. It allows the visitor to focus on the content, not the clutter. Don't write long paragraphs that form into huge blocks of text – this will make your information look dense and hard to read.

As you can see in this example, there's plenty of whitespace on the side margins of the post, around the title and first image, and between the paragraphs of text within the post. The space makes the post more easily digestible – nothing is crammed together, and though the post is long, it doesn't feel overwhelming or hard to read.

You can also break up the text in your blog post by using sub-headers and bullets or numbered lists to highlight your points.

Sub-headers are another on-page SEO element. Sub-headers organize and break up your blog post into different sections to signal to Google (and your reader) what the post will cover.

Sub-headers should be written with H2 tags or smaller – never H1 tags, which signal a title. Use sub-headers to split up sections of your blog post. For example, this blog post has a section on creating ideas on your own. Notice how it offers subheadings within this section as well to continue splitting up content to make it easier to digest. I did this using an H3 tag.

Bolding important text can also help readers quickly understand the key takeaways from the post. Though, don't go overboard with bolding. If the majority of a paragraph is bolded, then it's possible you're reader won't retain the important information you want them to remember. Here's a pro tip: Consider only bolding one sentence per paragraph and possibly just bolding one sentence every few paragraphs. In this case, less is more.

Once you've finished the text portion of your post, don't forget to make it stand out with the use of visuals and multimedia elements to break up your text.

Start by using a featured image. A featured image usually sits at the top of a blog post and is another element to draw readers in to learn more. A featured image is also the image that shows up on social media when your content is shared. The image should reflect what the story is about, intrigue readers, or provoke them. It doesn't need to directly illustrate what your post is about, but they should be loosely related to your content. While most people enjoy a great cat photo, it may not always be relevant to your content.

And throughout the body of your blog post, use multimedia content wherever it's possible to break up the blog post and re-engage your reader. Add images, videos, audio recordings, embedded social media posts, and so on. HubSpot sometimes includes an audio version of the blog post or includes a video on the related topic. It changes it up for the reader but also helps them digest the content in a different way. Changing up the format of your blog post will provide additional value to your reader while making sure their eyes are focused on what they're reading and seeing. See the difference? The blog post without any visual looks a lot less interesting and welcoming.

Before moving on, don't forget about mobile. Mobile users consume more than two times the minutes online compared to desktop users. This means having a blog that's responsive or designed for mobile has become more and more critical. Make sure to keep mobile in mind as you structure your blog post. What would the experience be like if someone were to read your blog post on their mobile phone instead of a desktop computer? Would you format it differently?

And there you have it – the fundamental strategy and best practices for creating and structuring content that attracts, engages, and delights your ideal audience.

## Video 4: How to optimize a blog post

Once you've formatted your blog post's content, you'll want to optimize it for readers as well as search engines.

To help search engines understand what you're trying to communicate, optimize your post accordingly. You already optimized the title and body of your post, but there's a list of other optimizations you should consider as well. Let's review each.

Let's start with the URL.

The URL doesn't have to match the title of the blog exactly. Instead, make it a best practice to shorten the URL without losing context to what the page is about. For example, notice how the URL of this blog post is shorter than the title. This way, I can update the content over time without updating the URL.

Here's a pro tip: Don't include numbers in your URL, like year or steps. This way, if you update the content in the future, you won't have to update the URL. Updating the URL creates a 301 redirect. A 301 redirect is a permanent redirect from one URL to another. Making updates to URLs hurts your SEO, and you don't want that.

Moving on to image alt-text.

Search engines don't just look for images. Rather, they look for images with alt-text. Because search engines can't "see" images the same way humans can, an image's alt-text tells them what an image is about – which ultimately helps those images rank in the image section of search engine results. Consider optimizing your images with different descriptive variations of your long-tail keyword.

Next up is your meta description.

Your meta description is meant to give search engines and readers information about your blog post's content. The maximum suggested length of a meta description is 150–160 characters. Anything longer than that will most likely be cut off.

Keep in mind that copy matters a great deal for clickthrough rates because it satisfies certain readers' intent. The more engaging, the better. In addition to being reader-friendly (compelling and relevant), your meta description should include the long-tail keyword for which you're trying to optimize for. But keep in mind that a search engine may not choose to use your meta description as the descriptive text in search results. Search engines are funny that way.

And lastly, insert links strategically throughout your post.

As you attract more and more visitors to your blog, that increased traffic means an increased opportunity to build a relationship, gain trust, and generate more leads and eventually customers.

Let's review some best practices when it comes to using links effectively in your blog posts.

First, link to external content when it's helpful or supports a stat or claim you're making.

It takes a lot of work to attract someone to your site and gain their trust. The last thing you want to do is send them off your site unless it's something that supports your content. I'm not saying you shouldn't link to content that's not your own, but just do so thoughtfully and make sure it provides value.

Here's a pro tip: When linking to external websites, consider having that content open in a new window. This way, you're being helpful without redirecting people off of your site.

Next, link to other helpful blog posts on your site.

If you find yourself typing a sentence or paragraph that can be explained in more detail on another blog post, then link to it. This helps in two ways: It solves for the reader, allowing and encouraging them to continue bingeing your content; and it solves for the search engine as it communicates to them that there's a cluster of related content on your site. And if search engines deem your cluster of web content around a specific topic as a credible source, then that can help boost your visibility on the search engines.

Which brings me to my last point: Link to important content on your site that supports conversions.

When it comes to deciding on where to insert CTAs on your blog posts, here are four places to consider. Let's review each.

CTA?

First, consider inserting a CTA after the first few paragraphs. To avoid looking too pushy too soon, try including a passive CTA through hyperlinked text as opposed to using an image. It's important to include these passive CTAs near the top, as you can't always count on your visitor reading your entire post to take the next step. Think about it. Do you read to the end of every blog post that you click on? Probably not.

HubSpot performs CTA tests all the time. From image and text CTAs to placement of the CTAs, we're always looking for ways to improve clickthrough rate. Interestingly enough, we found that text CTAs near the top of blogs posts produce the highest clickthrough rates– something you might want to keep in mind and test on your blog posts.

I recommend linking to pillar pages with CTAs at the top of the page as the content is not gated, meaning you're not forcing someone to give you their email address just yet in exchange for something. Instead, you can lead with educational content, which solves for your reader first. Plus, your pillar pages should support one, if not multiple, conversions so that you can help the reader through their journey accordingly while gaining their trust along the way.

Next, include an image or text CTA near the most relevant content in the body of the post. The best time to support a conversion is just after educating someone. For example, Townsend Security, a full-service data security provider, included an image CTA to a relevant podcast download in this blog post. Notice how the CTA content is similar to the content it's paired with.

Next, include an image CTA at the end of each post. If someone reads your post to the end, then you want to offer them a helpful next step. This is a CTA at the end of the same post that was shown earlier. The title of the post is "Data Visualization 101: How to Choose the Right Chart or Graph for Your Data," and at the bottom, there's a CTA for an ebook on how to present data people can't ignore. When it comes to image CTAs at the end of blog posts, I recommend linking to a relevant landing page with a form.

Another option, which brings me to the last CTA placement, is a pop-up CTA that the reader sees as they scroll down the page. This is a great way to have your CTA stick around so that the reader can't just scroll past it.

If you really want to engage your users and have a helpful conversation, then consider offering live chat or a chatbot. A chatbot is a computer program that automates certain tasks, typically by chatting with a user through a conversational interface.

Most bots follow a set of rules programmed by a human via a bot-building platform. It's as simple as ordering a list of if-then statements and writing canned responses, often without needing to know a line of code. The benefit? A bot will guide you, the visitor, through the various options available and help you get from point A to point B quickly. Behind the curtain, the bot is leading you through a series of dependent questions to collect the necessary information to understand your intent, and then deliver the right content to satisfy your needs.

And that's it! Now you know how to effectively optimize your blog post's content. Keep these tips in mind when optimizing your posts, as it will ensure you're getting the most out of your business blogging efforts.

## Video 5: What are some effective blog writing tips?

Hi, I'm Jami Oetting with HubSpot's Marketing team.

Let me start by telling you a little secret: Even for professional writers, writing is hard. It's not a skill that's learned naturally.

Just getting the words down on paper is a great first step. But writing 800 words versus publishing 800 words that will resonate with your readers requires a bit more work. First drafts are sloppy, and that's normal. When you start writing, you don't know what the final piece will look like, and you may not have a good enough grasp of the information you need to include.

Editing requires you to cut out the unnecessary and irrelevant—anything that doesn't support your core idea. It also gives you an opportunity to refine the language to be stronger, more action-oriented, and impactful. Finally, during the editing process, you ensure that the piece lacks any errors that could damage your credibility and the trust that you've built with the reader. Editing shows your audience that you care about their reading experience.

As Truman Capote said, "I'm all for the scissors. I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil."

Before you move from the writing to the editing process, remember to take a break from the words. Work on something else or save the final check for when you can look at the piece with fresh ideas and a new perspective. An even better alternative is to send it to a team member who can review the content before it goes live.

Let's go over ten common grammar and style mistakes you should check for so that your writing hits all the right marks with your audience.

First, use contractions.

Contractions help you sound more conversational—basically, more human—in your writing, so be sure to change your do not's to don'ts and would not's to wouldn'ts.

Let's check out an example of how contractions can make your writing sound stiff and wordy.

In this example, we're talking about landing page best practices:

Don't confuse viewers with too many options on your landing pages. It's better to have one call-to-action that's compelling. Otherwise, you'll risk your prospects being confused about what they should and shouldn't click.

If we were to spell out the contractions, the sentence, while not incorrect, sounds more robotic and harsh, when we simply want to provide helpful advice.

Here's how that same sentence would sound without contractions: Do not confuse viewers with too many options on your landing pages. It is better to have have one call-to-action that is compelling. Otherwise, you will risk your prospects being confused about what they should and should not click.

Next, write with simple language.

Using big words makes you appear less credible and confident, according to a study done by the UCLA Anderson School of Management. Making your writing easier to process and understand actually makes you seem more intelligent and capable. No one likes to slug through overly complex writing full of unfamiliar words. Now, simple language doesn't have to be boring. In fact, it can be just the opposite.

Consider this sentence:

The proliferation of social and digital channels have created a catalyst whereby a shift in the production methods by marketers is required to connect with the audience.

That's a tough one to unpack. While a marketer might understand this sentence, it takes extra effort to get the point, and for most, that's when they'll stop paying attention.

We can relay the same message by simply stating:

The increase in the number of social and digital channels now requires marketers to create content that's not only platform-specific but also appeals to the unique audience and their behaviors on that platform.

Next, use the active voice.

When you use active verbs, the subject of the sentence is performing that action. Passive voice is when something known or unknown performs the action of the sentence, which makes your writing seem flat and boring. If people have to trip sentence over sentence, then reading your writing becomes tiresome.

Next, be clear and concise.

This is the ultimate goal of editing. You have to refine the words until the point of each section, each paragraph, and each sentence is focused and clear. Clear writing requires you to have empathy for the reader—the work you produce should leave little chance for confusion or misinterpretation. One way of doing this is by removing extra words, irrelevant ideas and rants, and obvious details.

You should also use words that are familiar to your readers or provide definitions for those that are less well-known. This can also mean including an analogy, metaphor, or example to clarify a complicated topic.

Let's say you have an on-call virtual nurse service and want to explain the benefits for when someone is worried about getting sick. Instead of stating this directly, you could say, "Our nurses step in with health and wellness advice when your mom isn't answering her phone."

It immediately gets the point across in a way that's relatable.

Another way to create clarity in your writing is by putting things in context. It's one thing to share a stat on the growing adoption of a social platform, such as Snapchat, but how does this platform's growth compare with, say, Facebook or Instagram? This type of information helps to enrich the meaning of the original fact or idea.

Next, use short sentences and paragraphs.

Break up long, dense sentences and paragraphs to make your content easier to read and comprehend.

Take for example this introduction from a HubSpot blog post.

These five paragraphs could be condensed into two paragraphs, but the breaks create white space around your writing, giving readers' eyes a rest. Most importantly, these breaks—along with varying the sentence structure and length—create rhythm, making your writing more pleasing to read.

Next, cut fluffy words from your writing.

Words such as "very," "really," "actually," "just," "incredibly," and "in order to" don't add anything to your sentences and can make your phrases sound bloated. You should also be careful of relying on adverbs—words ending in -ly—to describe action or including too many adjectives in your work. These mistakes all make for overly long, complex, and weak sentences. Run your writing through a tool like the Hemingway Editor to see if you can cut words or further simplify your language.

Check out this sentence: Marketers are very anxious to change in order to actually connect with their customers before the next holiday season.

You can cut this down to: Marketers are anxious to change to connect with their customers before the holiday season.

Next, adhere to a style guide.

Whether it's AP Style or the Chicago Manual Style or an internal style guide, use a standard set of rules to create consistency in all your communications—from your product copy to emails to ebooks to advertising. Your style guide should instruct anyone who writes on behalf of your company how to handle punctuation, grammar, voice and tone, industry-specific terms, common mistakes, and any brand-specific guidelines.

Next, use "you" and "your" in your writing.

This helps you sound more conversational, like you've written the content specifically for the reader and you want to bring them into a discussion.

Many people approach writing like they're creating something for an "audience"—a vague term that brings a blurry group of people to mind—when really you should write like your favorite customer or ideal reader is sitting at their desk or on their couch reading your information. Imagine that you're having a conversation or writing a letter to a respected friend. It's a simple tweak that will prevent you from sounding like you're writing an instruction manual.

Here's an example of what this sounds like:

People wanting to improve their overall health should start the day with a well-balanced breakfast that could include whole-grain cereal, yogurt, and egg whites. They should make time in their day to get at least 30 minutes of cardio, and people should do some type of strength training three times per week.

A simple switch to using the second person pronoun, "you," shifts your writing to address the reader directly, making your writing sound more personable.

So let's see how that sounds with a simple perspective adjustment:

If you want to improve your overall health, try starting the day with a well-balanced breakfast that could include whole-grain cereal, yogurt, and egg whites. You should also make time for at least 30 minutes of cardio a day, and try to do some type of strength training three times per week.

*biệt ngữ* *từ viết tắt một cách tiết kiệm*

Next, avoid jargon and use acronyms sparingly.

Jargon plagues the business and marketing world. Words such as ideation, paradigm, uplevel, holistic, disruptive, game-changing, revolutionary … I could go on. In addition, remember that not everyone understands the meaning behind the acronyms you rely on, so always spell them out at least once, and try to avoid littering your content with three- and four-letter abbreviations. For example, take this sentence: "The CMO spoke to the CTO about the long-term SEO strategy to improve PPC metrics such as the CPC and CPL ASAP."

Did you get that? Probably not.

Next, don't be snarky.

Critical and sarcastic writing has its place, but for most businesses, this type of tone comes off negatively. Be confident, and showcase your expertise, but above all, be friendly and straightforward. Sarcasm can make you look petty.

And lastly, use spell check.

Add this to your pre-publishing checklist. It's always a good idea to double-check for spelling mistakes. Even small errors can have a negative impact on readers' perception of your brand.

And there you have it—ten grammar tips to creating effective blog content.

Hi! I'm Matthew Howells-Barby, HubSpot's Director of Acquisition.

## Video 1: How Does HubSpot Use Blogging to Rank #1 on Google?

How does HubSpot use blogging to rank #1 on Google?

Here at HubSpot, blogging is our primary source of traffic. In fact, a SIGNIFICANT percentage of HubSpot customers first stumbled upon our brand and our website through our blog – usually by searching for something on Google and clicking on one of our blog posts.

Why is this true? After ALL these years, how can our BLOG still be a top source of business? And how can YOU use blogging to increase YOUR traffic, leads, and customers, too?

To understand how HubSpot uses blogging to rank in search, we have to first understand how blogging helps ANYONE rank in search. Here's the gist of it: Blogging on topics that are relevant to your business will do two things: It will help you build RELEVANCE, helping you rank for MORE search queries.. And, it will help you build AUTHORITY on those topics, helping you rank HIGHER in search engines.

Think about it this way: Every time you publish a new blog post, you're adding ONE MORE indexed page to your website. This translates to one more opportunity to show up in search engines and drive organic traffic to your website. It's also one more cue to Google and other search engines that your website is active – and that they should be checking in frequently to see what new content to surface.

Blogging ALSO works well with social media to improve your SEO. Every time you write a blog post, you're creating content that people naturally want to share on social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, which can then boost your SEO ranking – not to mention helps expose your business to a new audience that may not know you yet.

Our blogging team at HubSpot does a whole lot of work behind the scenes to help improve our blog posts' chances of ranking high in search. But there are three MAJOR things we do that have led to our biggest SEO improvements that we want to share with you. These three things are: building topical relevance; optimizing existing blog posts using a process called "historical optimization"; and optimizing featured snippets.

Let's talk through how our team at HubSpot uses these three tactics to improve our search ranking, and how YOU can use them to improve your own search ranking – no matter how many – or how few – blog posts you've published.

## Video 2: Building Topical Relevance

One of the most important evolutions in search in the last few years has been the shift from keywords to topics.

Years ago, people used to enter pretty fragmented keyword queries into search engines when they wanted answers to their questions. But times have changed. Nowadays, most people are comfortable posing complex questions to search engines – and they still expect the search engine to return an accurate result.

Thankfully, search engine algorithms have evolved WITH the searchers – and now, they're smart enough to recognize the CONNECTIONS across different queries. They understand the TOPICAL CONTEXT behind the searchers' intent, and they can tie it back to similar searches they've encountered in the past to give us an accurate set of results. If you've ever tried to search something like "movie with the golden snitch" on Google, then you know what I mean ;).

Building topical relevance means creating content across TOPICS, instead of specific keywords. What's the difference between a topic and a keyword? A KEYWORD is one word or phrase that someone uses to describe what they need in search. A TOPIC is just a group of keywords. Examples of keywords would be things like "writing skills," "blog post topics," "content creation tools," and "brainstorming techniques." A TOPIC that would cover all those keywords might be "content marketing."

To build topical relevance, the first thing you need to do is figure out what topics you want to be known for. If your business sells pet food, for example, then one topic you might want to be known for is "dog food."

Next, you'll want to publish lots of blog posts that answer EVERY question about those topics. Going back to the dog food example, what would your target customers want to learn about that's related to dog food? Maybe they want to know about proper nutrition for their dogs, how to take care of their dogs – maybe even what to do if their dog eats chocolate. (Thousands of people actually search that question every month.)

By writing about your target topics regularly on your blog, you'll bring in more relevant traffic. Combining content creation with building links to your content from websites that are relevant to the same topics can also make a positive impact on your search rankings.

As you create blog posts on your target topics, link them to one another to make it easier for search engines to understand how your posts fit together around that topic. This can help grow your authority on that topic, which can help you rank higher in search for related queries.

## Video 3: How HubSpot Builds Topical Relevance

In the last few years at HubSpot, we've evolved our approach to content creation on the HubSpot Blog along with the evolution in search. We used to create content only around specific keywords; but now, we create it around BROAD TOPICS to build topical relevance. In fact, in several cases, we've built topical relevance around topics we didn't have a product for yet – but knew we would in the future. That's the story on topical relevance I'll share with you today.

More than a year before HubSpot ever had a customer service product, we started building topical relevance around the topic of customer service. We weren't ranking for ANYTHING related to customer service at the time, but we knew we'd eventually want to be known for that topic, and that it would take time to build relevance.

When we started, we were ranking lower than position #500 for ALL our target topics. It took several months for us to move the needle on our search ranking, but by using BLOGGING to BUILD TOPICAL RELEVANCE, we were able to capture a spot on the first page of Google for five of our ten target topics! We also saw a massive spike in beta requests for our customer service software as a result.

Here's an overview of what we did to make this happen. Our very first step was to identify which topics we wanted to be known for that we weren't known for already. To find these topics, we started by identifying topics that were closest to the bottom of the funnel and moved our way up. Bottom-of-the-funnel topics for US were things like "customer feedback software" and "help desk software" – topics that had high purchase intent.

We started here because, at the end of the day, we wanted to center our strategy around getting people to sign up for our software product. From there, we expanded with more middle- and top-of-the-funnel topics, like "customer feedback," "customer satisfaction surveys," and "NPS."

Once we had a list of topics, we prioritized which of these topics we wanted to rank for, where we wanted to rank, and by when. Like I said, when we started, we weren't ranking for anything – not even in the top 500.

Let's take the topic "customer feedback software" as an example. This was one of the BOTTOM-of-the-funnel topics we wanted to rank for. The first thing we did was build a product page for our upcoming customer service software – which we said was "Coming Soon," and provided an email field where someone could sign up to be notified when the product was ready. That way, by the time the product launched, the sign-up page would already have gained search authority.

Next, we wrote a long, canonical piece of content – which we call a "pillar page" – on the related topic "customer feedback." We hosted this on a site page titled, "Customer Feedback Strategy: The Only Guide You'll Ever Need," and linked it to our product page to give it some SEO juice.

Our next step was to break down the topic of "customer feedback" into questions that our target customers might ask about that topic. Here are a few questions we came up with: "How should I go about asking for feedback from customers?"; "How can I improve my customer feedback survey?"; "How do I measure customer satisfaction?"; and "What should I do with the customer feedback I get on social media?"

Then, we turned EVERY ONE of these questions into blog posts. We prioritized which ones to write first according to search volume, and we linked every one of these blog posts back to that pillar page to help build topical relevance and boost that page's search authority – AND our product page's search authority.

To make our blog posts more attractive for OTHERS to link to, we added what we call "linkable hooks" to these posts. "Linkable hooks" are things like original charts and images, unique data and research, quotes from industry experts, and pros-and-cons tables, which we find people like to link to.

Next, we prepared an outreach strategy to help build links to these posts. We identified blogs and communities relevant to our topic, and reached out to them using link building tactics like offering to write a guest post on their blog. When it came to actually DOING the outreach, we found it was easier to get backlinks from companies that were tangentially related to our target topic – like survey tool companies, for example – rather than businesses that were borderline competitors.

After just a few months, our product page was ranking in the #3 spot on page 1 of Google for our target topic, "customer feedback software" – before the product had even come out yet. Our pillar page on "customer feedback" was also ranking in the #2 spot for "customer feedback".

So there you have it. This process is effective, straightforward, and most importantly, repeatable. We've done it for other products and tools and have seen great results, too. The key to success with this approach is the move past short-term thinking and put a lot of work into building a thoughtful strategy, building key relationships that will help you build links, and create great content with linkable hooks.

## Video 4: Optimizing Featured Snippets

As Google gets better and better at understanding search intent, it wants to give searchers an IMMEDIATE answer to their questions – an answer so immediate, searchers won't even have to browse through the search results to get it. That answer comes in the form of a featured snippet.

What IS a featured snippet? Let's ask Google …

Google says, “A featured snippet is a summary of an answer to a user's query, which is displayed on top of Google search results. It's extracted from a webpage and includes the page's title and URL.”

Wait a minute ... featured snippets show up ABOVE the #1-ranked spot? As if it wasn’t hard enough to rank #1! :)

But it’s a bit more complicated than that. Google pulls featured snippet answers from one of the pages that ranks on page one of search results, but the page that wins the featured snippet ISN’T NECESSARILY the #1 result. This leaves the door wide open for content that ISN’T in the #1 spot to actually appear ABOVE the #1 spot.

That means it pays to know how to optimize your content not only for search, but for the newer organic search features like featured snippets.

There are three reasons you should care about featured snippets. For one, featured snippets show up for a lot of the terms your target customers are searching for. Google tends to serve up featured snippets for “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How” queries, which are the types of queries your online content tries to answer. They also tend to show up for high-traffic terms and overarching topics.

For two, featured snippets often show up first for voice search results. In fact, 71% of search queries that triggered featured snippets on desktop led to the featured snippet result showing up first in voice search results. This is important because voice searches could become 50% of all mobile searches by 2020, a prediction reported by both Google and Bing.

Three: If you don't have an effective strategy for capturing how customers are changing the way they search, you will fail to attract them. Search is evolving, and the featured snippet feature is now taking significant organic search traffic on desktop, mobile, and voice search. As your customer adapts, so should you.

So – how can YOU optimize your own blog content for Google’s featured snippet?

Your best chance at capturing the featured snippet is by optimizing blog posts that already rank in the top five positions in search results. Google tends to pick content from those spots over other spots further down on the page, making these the lowest hanging fruit.

So the first thing you’ll want to do is to use Google Search Console to figure out whether any of your current blog posts rank in positions one through five for any significant keywords. Make a list of these high-ranking posts along with the keywords they rank for.

Next, open up a new incognito window in your browser and search for that keyword to see if Google serves up a featured snippet in search results. You want to prioritize the posts that are ranking for keywords that serve featured snippets, so put a checkmark next to the ones that do. But even if there ISN’T a featured snippet showing up for that query, keep in mind that Google is adding new snippets all the time, so you may want to check back in the future.

Next, optimize these posts for the featured snippet. Google favors content that best answers the search query in a simple, concise format. In fact, FORMAT is the most important factor here. Google uses an algorithm to extract content for snippets, so if the text isn’t formatted cleanly, it won’t understand what’s going on and will skip that result.

If the keyword your post is ranking for is serving up a featured snippet in a LIST-BASED format, make sure your content includes a list that is clearly labeled with headers. You might even add a short list version of your larger blog post at the top of the page to make it even easier for Google to identify it for a snippet. List seven steps or fewer if you can – Google will cut you off at eight steps in the snippet anyway.

You can do the same for a featured snippet in a PARAGRAPH format: Write a short answer to your target query and put it in a module above the rest of your post. Google tends to prefer when featured snippets are fewer than about 50 words. As for what to write in there, take note of the content that's winning the snippet right now to get an IDEA of what the search engine is looking for – but don't copy it word-for-word. Instead, try and IMPROVE on what's already in there.

Once you've made these changes, submit the URLs to Google to be re-crawled. Measure the results by the number of clicks from the results page, the change in click-through rate, and the impact on the blog post's organic traffic. Keep in mind that because snippets are an algorithmic feature by Google, results will vary from day to day. We recommend you track your new snippets every day for around four weeks to account for appearances, disappearances, and content switching.

*tính năng nổi bật*

## Video 5: How HubSpot Optimizes for Featured Snippets

At one point in time, the blogging team noticed that the organic traffic to HubSpot's blog had stalled, and in some cases decreased, without us changing anything about our strategy. What was causing such a negative impact?

It turns out that one of the culprits was featured snippets. More specifically, it was the rapidly increasing number of featured snippets that were showing up in Google search results and taking clicks away from other results on page one. We found that featured snippets show up more than TWICE as often now as they did several years ago.

The first thing we did was dig in to the data. I gathered almost 5,000 different search queries where hubspot.com ranked between #1 and #5 on page one of Google search results. All these queries contained either "how to," "what is," "how do," or "how does" so that I'd only get question-based queries where it was much more likely that a featured snippet would be present.

Then, I scraped the results pages for each of those queries to see if there actually WAS a featured snippet present. Of the queries I was looking at, 29% of them had a featured snippet present, and the remaining 71% either didn't have a featured snippet, or they did – but it was an unlinked "definition" box.

Once I had the sample of queries that displayed featured snippets, I scraped the search engine results pages AGAIN to see which websites owned the featured snippets, what the content of the featured snippet was, and what the URL of the featured page was. Of the pages where HubSpot ranked between #1 and #5 on page one of Google, we only appeared in the featured snippet 33% of the time. For us, that meant a lot of opportunity to optimize.

Next, we ran a few experiments that uncovered some key findings. The most relevant experiment answered this question: Does the clean formatting of the headers (h2s and h3s) in a post cause us to win list-based featured snippets?

In short, yes. Let me explain why, and what you can do about it.

Google is able to pull list snippets from headers on a webpage for their featured snippets. Typically, it pulls h2s as the snippet title, and h3s as the list items in the snippet. This was great news for us, since our blog has a lot of list blog posts – but sadly, Google STILL wasn't picking up our list posts as Featured Snippets. Why?

What we found is that FORMAT MATTERS – a LOT. Since Google uses an algorithm to extract content for the snippets, if something isn't formatted cleanly, it won't understand what's going on. For the lists that we were winning featured snippets for, the formatting of the featured snippet looked as if Google wasn't able to identify NUMBERS in a header as a list item. Take a look at a current snippet we own. Even though we own this one, Google is clearly confused about the numbers, the header content, and the information hierarchy.

So, we set out to test whether the FORMATTING of the headers in our list posts impacted the amount that is pulled into snippets. To do this experiment, we identified 62 high-traffic blog posts that were ~~NOT~~ ranking in positions one through six – for a search query that HAS a list featured snippet in the current results, which we did not own. We randomly split these blog post URLs into two equal groups. We didn't change the control group at all so we could use them as a baseline.

For the experiment group, we cleaned up the header format and the code. To do this, we made sure the post's hierarchy had the h1 as the overall page title, the h2 as the sub-header, and the h3 as the list items. Many of these posts didn't have an h2, so we added one in. We also changed our header list format from 1) (one-parenthesis) to 1. (one-dot). Finally, we cleaned up the code by removing any extraneous or unnecessary tags from the headers, like span tags. Keep in mind: We did NOT ADD ANY CONTENT to this post – all we did was change the numbering of headers and the HTML tags.

After submitting the experiment group URLs to Google for re-crawling and measuring the results daily for ten days, we found that we won ten to fifteen percent of the featured snippets for posts where we changed the formatting, compared to the normal win rate of 0-5% for the control group. These results were significant – we actually saw a net increase of traffic for posts where we moved into the featured snippet.

Try this yourself for posts that are ranking in the top 5 spots in search results to see if cleaning up the formatting gives you a boost.

## Video 6: Why is Historical Optimization a Key SEO Play?

What if I told you that making a few key changes to blog posts you've ALREADY WRITTEN could dramatically improve your rank in search results?

I know – we were excited, too. Optimizing old blog posts for search engines is among the most efficient ways for blogs that have been around for a few years to grow their organic traffic.

One quick disclaimer here is that historical optimization works best for blogs that have already been around for several years. It's meant for blogs that have tackled all the basic blog growth tactics, are generating a significant amount of organic search traffic, and have a solid subscriber base. If your blog has only been around for a year or two, I'd recommend prioritizing the basic blog growth tactics first, and THEN trying historical optimization.

Alright, back to the topic at hand. What exactly IS historical optimization, and why is it such a key play for improving your SEO, and how can you implement it yourself?

Historical optimization means optimizing your old blog posts so that they're fresh, up-to-date, and can rank higher in search results – thereby generating more organic traffic than they already do. By "old posts," I just mean posts that already exist on your blog – usually ones that are at least six to twelve months old.

The goal of historical optimization is to improve the search rankings for posts that have "page one potential." That means posts that rank on page two or three of search results already and could be pushed to page one with an update. Page one on Google gets 71% of all clicks, while page two and three only get 5.59% of clicks – so boosting a post to page one can significantly impact your organic traffic.

You might be wondering, Why does updating and republishing old blog content lead to better search rankings? There are three main reasons.

One, Google rewards freshness – and so do searchers. Google introduced a freshness factor into its ranking algorithm in 2011. Google wants to surface high-quality, valuable content that's fresh and up-to-date for searchers.

Two, you're building off the existing search authority that the post has already accumulated. In other words, you're starting with a post that already has some degree of page authority instead of starting completely from scratch.

Three, the surge of new visits you get from re-promoting your updated post to your blog subscribers and social media followers will naturally lead to new inbound links and social shares, which are both important ranking factors.

Remember: Historical optimization should be a piece of your overall blogging strategy, not the WHOLE strategy. The old content you're optimizing now was once brand new – so make sure you continue publishing new content that could one day be another SEO success story.

## Video 7: How to Get Started With Historical Optimization

Want to take advantage of the many benefits of historical optimization? Here's an overview of how to get started.

First, you'll want to identify the blog posts that are worth updating. These will be posts that are outdated or can be improved in some way. They're also posts that have the potential to rank higher for topics and keywords with high search volume.

The easiest way to identify these posts is to export a list of all your existing blog posts and sort them by organic traffic, with the highest organic traffic posts at the top. Then, use Google Search Console to see where the posts at the TOP of that list rank right now. Pick out the posts that currently rank on page two or three of search results, because it's THOSE posts that have "page one potential" if you make a few key optimizations.

When you're figuring out which posts to start with, you'll also want to think about the monthly search volume of the topics those blog posts are about. Look up the monthly search volume of the topics your posts with "page one potential" are about using your favorite keyword tool, and prioritize the posts about topics that have at least 1,000 monthly searches. You'll also want to prioritize posts that are at least six to twelve months old as a benchmark.

Now it's time to to update the CONTENT of the post with the hopes of achieving three goals: accuracy, freshness, and comprehensiveness. In general, you should try to make enough NOTICEABLE improvements to a post that it's worth it to republish it as new. Improvements can be things like adding new sections to the post to make it more comprehensive, adding list items to a list post, adding detail to different sections, and updating outdated information, like statistics and examples.

Next, optimize the post for your target topic using on-page SEO tactics like including your target keyword in the post title, including that keyword again in the headers in the post itself, and adding internal links with keyword-based anchor text to improve the keyword rankings of other posts you're trying to boost.

Before you publish, consider adding an editor's note to the bottom of the post, like this one. This makes sense especially for posts with old comments that might cause confusion.

Finally, you're ready to publish your updated post as new. Make sure you change the publish date so it's featured as a brand new post on your blog. Then, promote it like you would any brand new post – email it to your blog subscribers, promote it on social media, and leverage any other promotional channels that work for promoting your content.

## Video 8: How We Do Historical Optimization on the HubSpot Blog

If you're not sure whether historical optimization has a place in your blogging strategy, let me tell you a story about how our focus on historical optimization came to be, and why we realized it was such a game-changing tactic.

Here at HubSpot, our blogging team has been using historical optimization for several years now to generate MORE traffic and leads from our existing blog content. We've seen huge results from historical optimization and have been able to get way more value from content we've published in the past.

In the first nine months of implementing historical optimization on our blog, we more than DOUBLED the number of monthly leads generated by the old posts we optimized. We also increased the number of monthly organic search views of old posts we optimized by an average of 106%.

It all started when one member of our team ran an attribution analysis on our blog posts to see which ones were the most influential. She found that 76% of our monthly blog views came from "old" posts.

The approach we found worked best was to focus on the specific keywords people were using to find those high-traffic blog posts. First, we pulled our top blog posts for organic traffic. Then, we used keyword research to make an educated guess on which keywords they were ranking for.

We started by updating and republishing a few posts per week. Our blogging team was happy because the updated post took the place of a net new post on our editorial calendar and was often less work than writing a whole new post.

To measure the success of the updates, we used organic search traffic as our primary KPI. That's because if the keyword ranking for these posts improved as a result of the update, it would manifest as an increase in organic search views, which is easier to measure.

This chart shows a sampling of six blog posts we've updated and republished. We waited for 30 days in between the "before" and "after" time frames to give Google some time to improve the ranking of the post based on the update. You'll see that in every case, we improved the number of monthly views these posts generated from organic search. In each of these posts, we can also dig into the individual keywords they're ranking for and see how these rankings have improved as a result of the post update.

Based on this initial success, post updates became a regular part of our blogging editorial strategy – and have been for years now. We've incorporated two or three post updates per week since we started scaling this project – which have REPLACED new posts, instead of being added as a new workload.

In addition to this more formal updating and republishing process, we've also scaled our historical search engine optimization even further by doing some on-page SEO for some of our old posts without completely updating and republishing them as new or doing any promotion. We've found this is a great approach for posts that are too recent to update and re-publish but that you think have an opportunity to rank better for certain keywords. We've noticed some nice lifts in organic search traffic from posts we've on-page optimized, even without the additional promotion.

Try historical optimization for your own blog for posts that are ranking on pages two or three of search results to see if it gives you a boost.

# Transcript: Extending the Value of Your Content Through Repurposing

tái sử dụng

## Video 1: The benefits of repurposing content

Hi, I'm Justin with the HubSpot Academy.

Creating consistent content is often a challenge for most businesses. In fact, 50% of B2B marketers have an issue creating content on an ongoing basis.

But, you don't have to create content day in and day out. "You just have to work on getting the content you already have in the hands of more people." (Derek Halpern, founder of Social Triggers)

Imagine you're a content creator tasked with writing blog posts, content offers, video scripts, and so on as part of your daily job function. That's a lot of content to create.

Repurposing content allows you to extend the value of your content by changing it to serve a different purpose, like transforming the messaging of several blog posts to create a guide or reusing content from your guide to help you create an educational video series. The messaging is the same, but the channel or format in which it's consumed is different.

In this video, we're going to talk about the benefits and advantages of repurposing content.

First, it gives you another opportunity to rank on a search engine's results page. Content is just a theme that can be showcased in many different formats on various distribution channels like YouTube, SlideShare, and your blog. Repurposing your content into new formats that fit these channels will help you secure more search engine rankings.

Second, it allows you to reach a new audience. "Multi-channel marketing provides the content our audiences are looking for, in all the places they search." (Michael Brenner, CEO of Marketing Insider Group) Not everyone consumes content in the same manner. Reformatting your message for a different distribution channel can get you in front of someone who cares about what you have to say but wouldn't have seen it otherwise.

Third, it supports the consistency of your message. Ideas and concepts that stick aren't just said once — they're repeated over and over. Usually buyers won't trust you the first time they come in contact with your message. The Rule of Seven marketing concept states that a prospect needs to see or hear your marketing message at least seven times before they take action and buy from you.

And fourth, it helps your content marketing team create content on a more consistent basis. Repurposing content reduces the burden of "what should I write about" situations.

So if you or your team are looking for a solution to stretch the value out of your content efforts, consider looking at what you already have through a new lens. Chances are you'll be able to identify several opportunities to recycle it.

## Video 2: How do you republish content?

Not every piece of content you or your business create will be a top performer. And that's okay. That's normal. In fact, "20% of HubSpot's content accounts for 93% of our leads." (Dharmesh Shah, co-founder of HubSpot)

Once you have a quality piece of content in your possession, do everything you can to increase its exposure. Because chances are if it performed well on your website, then it'll perform well on other websites too. This is where content republishing becomes an efficient and effective solution.

Content republishing is the act of reposting your content, mainly blogs, on other websites with proper credit given to the original author. This approach allows you to focus on creating meaningful content that you can promote on other websites besides your own.

Here are some best practices to consider when republishing your content.

First, there are hundreds of websites where you can republish your content. Strive to choose reputable sites to partner with that align with your business. Chances are there are niche republishing sites within your industry. You may just need to do a little digging to find them. If you're looking for a place to start then consider sites like Forbes, HuffingtonPost, or Business Insider.

Sites like these can be difficult to secure a spot to be featured. However, it's possible with the right approach. I've included a link in the resources section below that gives step-by-step guidance on how to make yourself standout.

Additionally, there are sites where you can republish your content and manage it, like LinkedIn and Medium. These sites make it easier to control messaging and timing of posts.

Second, don't republish all of your content, just top performing content. Not all of your content is going to produce high results. Once you find a piece of content that performs well, then consider how and where you can republish this content to continue getting value out of it.

Third, take the time to update the headline of each republished piece of content. This will help each post stand out on a search engine results page.

When marketer and entrepreneur, Ryan Battles, publishes a blog post, he republishes it to LinkedIn, Medium, Reddit, and other relevant channels—maximizing the reach of his content. But here's the kicker: he alters the headline of the republished articles to differ from the original blog post.

Notice Battle's blog post headline on his website, "Finding Your Customer's Pain Points," then see how the content is republished to LinkedIn and Reddit with the headline, "Nailing Your Audience's Pain Points."

Fourth, wait at least two weeks before you republish your content. You want to give search engines enough time to index the original piece of content so that it ranks higher than the republished content. Plus, waiting at least two weeks before republishing your content will give you a sample size to determine whether or not this content is worth republishing.

Fifth, include links throughout your republished post. This will allow readers the opportunity to learn more about what other content you have to offer, whether it be content on your website or a distribution channel like YouTube.

Notice how when you click through to Battle's post on LinkedIn, there's a link in the first sentence titled "knowing your audience." When clicked, it takes you to a relevant article on his website.

And six, make sure you include a call-to-action within your blog post. Remember, blogs are a great tool to convert visitors into leads. Not including a relevant call-to-action is a missed opportunity.

Scrolling down Battle's post, you'll notice he uses a hierarchy of helpful calls-to-action.

And that's it. A list of best practices to get the most out of your content republishing efforts. Keep these tips in mind when looking for ways to increase exposure of your top-performing content.

## Video 3: How do you repurpose content? ***the important and long lesson***

Experienced content marketers have their own tips, tricks, and processes to how they recycle their content to provide new value and meaning. It really is an art form, one that can be learned and adjusted to meet the needs of you and your business.

Before diving in, recycling content isn't as simple as copying and pasting material from one content format to another. If you want to get the most out of your recycled content, then you'll want to use the ACE method, which stands for Adjust, Combine, and Expand.

To start, you may need to adjust content to make sure it provides a good user experience. Ask yourself, "What needs to be added, removed, or reworded?"

Next, you may be able to combine related or unrelated content to provide new value or meaning.

Lastly, is there an opportunity to expand on something you've already done in order to dig deeper into that topic? Think comprehensive big-picture view.

Keeping these three things in mind, let's review a proven method on how to repurpose content, one that I've been using religiously for years. Please note this is not the only way to go about repurposing content. This method is especially helpful for lean content creation teams that want to get the most out of their time.

When recycling content, think from the ground up, like the growth of a tree. Every healthy tree has three things: roots, trunk, and a crown, which is made up of multiple branches.

Think of your roots as a series of short-form content, like blog posts, social messages, and videos.

The purpose of roots is to form connections — bonds with other roots that grow into a tree, which produces a trunk. Think of the trunk as a long-form content offer, like a guide or ebook. And what grows from the trunk? Branches. Think of each branch as an extension of your content offer into a new format, like a webinar or infographic.

Your content marketing plan should be filled with a forest of trees that have strong roots and branches.

Interesting concept, right? But how do you do it?

What you need is an end goal, something that can be grown into. If you have an end goal, like a comprehensive guide, then weekly content creation activities like social media and blogging can serve a much larger purpose to supporting your overall content marketing plan.

Don't create content just to create content. If your goal is to attract, engage, and delight your potential prospects into valuable customers, then you should look to the buyer's journey for all of your buyer personas. Think of each content idea that provides value to your buyer persona's journey as a seed. This seed is something that can be planted. And if you consistently nurture that seed, then it will sprout and start to develop a foundation of roots that grow into a healthy sapling. And if you continue to nurture it, that sapling will go on to develop into a mature tree with strong branches. Simply identifying content in the buyer's journey will cultivate strong seeds for your content creation efforts.

To better understand this concept, let's build a comprehensive guide by identifying the seed first.

To determine your seed, you need to have an idea that you care about, something that you're willing to nurture and help flourish. Here's an example of how I did it.

My wife, Ariele, and I are wanderers. In three years, we've traveled over 50,000 miles while working full time from the road. Through our journeys, we've learned how to repurpose everything in our lives to reduce clutter, including our truck.

Meet our truck, George. George is a 2009 Ford f250 Super Duty work truck. George may look like your average work truck, but looks can be deceiving — he's much more than that.

Ariele and I decided to repurpose George into a storage unit that doubles as a camper. We know we're not the only individuals trying to live this alternative lifestyle, so our goal was to help other like-minded minimalists by documenting our experience and creating an in-depth, step-by-step guide to help them convert their vehicle into a functional living space.

Here's how we created a 76-page guide over the course of two months using Instagram, YouTube, and our blog.

Step one, identify a content format and topic.

We know our audience is made up of do-it-yourselfer project enthusiasts. Keeping this in mind, we knew we wanted to create a step-by-step do-it-yourself guide on how to convert a truck into a truck camper. This is the overarching idea or the seed for the tree we want to produce. We had to identify this first before planting it and developing the roots.

Step two, make a list of supporting subtopics.

The important thing to consider here is choosing subtopics that are strong enough to provide value by themselves, but also complement the other subtopics that align with the specific topic we're writing about.

These are our roots. We need these to grow into a strong, compelling offer.

When identifying supporting subtopics list as many ideas as possible. The more subtopics you can identify the better: it's only going to strengthen your roots.

Which brings me to step three, choose the strongest supporting subtopics to recycle into your content offer. If you have extra subtopics, then you can use these down the road for potential content ideas in support of the overall theme.

Here's a pro tip: If you already have content created for one of your subtopics, then consider choosing that as a subtopic to repurpose into your guide. However, if it doesn't make sense, or if there's a subtopic that's yet to be created that would be more relevant, then don't include it in your repurposing plan. Remember, always solve for your audience first, not your business.

Notice how we identified "building a rooftop deck on your vehicle" as a subtopic, but decided not to include it in the guide — I attempted multiple variations of the rooftop deck build, but just couldn't get it right. Instead of letting that subtopic bog down progress, we decided to leave it off the list and do it later.

Alright, here's the outline for our guide. We identified a topic for the content offer we plan to create. And to help us get started, we identified a series of subtopics that we could create a blog post for first. Then, once all of the blog posts are created, we repurpose that content into chapters within our guide. This approach allows us to focus on creating content for each subtopic as opposed to thinking about the entire guide, making the process more manageable and less overwhelming.

Moving on to step four, create content for each subtopic.

Before we started writing each blog post, we worked through each project and documented our progress via Instagram. We chose Instagram to document our journey because this is our primary social media channel where we engage with our audience. You should choose the social media channel your audience uses most.

Here's a pro tip: When doing research for the content you're creating, jot down interesting things you think would be valuable to share via your social channels. These could be things like stats, quotes, or anything else that you can explain within a limited character limit. This is a great way to keep a consistent flow of interesting, helpful content published to your social channels.

Once we had the content we needed for a given subtopic, we wrote and published a blog post for it. For visual aids, we embedded Instagram photos throughout each blog post where it made sense to include them and provided value.

And to take our user experience a step further, we repurposed our blog content into a video. We hosted the video on our YouTube channel and embedded it near the top of the blog post. This was a nice value-add for readers, as it gave them the opportunity to engage with the same content in a different way. Again, the video content follows the same story of our Instagram page and our blog post, but it's in a different content format on a different distribution channel.

Let's say, for example, someone is looking to weatherize their truck cap and they go to Google to perform research. This is what the search engine results page would look like. Notice how we claim three organic non-paid listings at the top of the page for this search query: The featured snippet, which is Google's way of answering your query without you having to click through to a page to learn more, the first listing within the video results section, and finally the coveted #1 ranking on Google.

Clicking through the first listing takes you to a blog post on our website. Notice how we lead with a more engaging experience by offering a relevant video that's embedded from our YouTube channel near the top of the page. In fact, this video is the same video that's featured twice above the #1 Google result listing. We did this because we know we have a visual audience, one that prefers video content over text-based content.

Scrolling down the blog post, notice how we sprinkle in images and embed relevant posts from our Instagram channel to help break up our text.

Are you noticing a trend here? Not only are we telling a cohesive story across multiple channels, but more importantly, we integrated all the content formats together. Our site visitors now know our other content channels and can choose to engage and follow us there as well.

Let's move on to step five, download or create a template for your guide.

Once we had all of the content we needed to repurpose into our guide, we downloaded a free ebook template from HubSpot's Marketing Resource Library. If you're looking for marketing resources and templates for various content offer types, then you should definitely check out HubSpot's Marketing Resources Library. From resources about lead generation to building editorial calendars, there's something for every content marketer.

Step six, recycle blog content and format it into chapters.

We recycled all of the blog content we created, various Instagram photos, and YouTube videos to help build the majority of our comprehensive guide. And while we could have just copy and pasted the blog content, we adjusted, combined, and expanded upon the content we already created to provide additional context and value within the guide.

Here's a pro tip: If you're looking for a way to set yourself up for content that can be expanded upon, consider using bullet pointed lists in the original piece you create. For example, we frequently use bullet pointed lists in our blog posts to make it easier for people to sift through our content. Doing this also makes it easier for us to repurpose our content in the future because we can expand that bullet point into several sentences or paragraphs.

Moving on to step seven, create the rest of the content needed to complete your guide.

Once we finished our chapter content, all we needed to do to complete the guide was write an introduction and a conclusion. Effective writers always wait to do these tasks last.

By nurturing continuous growth of the roots, they helped form into our step-by-step guide.

And there you have it, an effective way to form a compelling long-form offer by making sense of and recycling a series of short-form content initiatives.

But we're not done yet! We still have one last step, update the calls-to-action on your blog posts to connect everything together. Because each of our blog posts was created before the offer launched, we didn't have a relevant call-to-action to offer. Instead of just leaving the call-to-action out, we allowed visitors to subscribe to email updates. This way we could promote the guide to them once it was available.

Once the offer launched, we went back and inserted a call-to-action image in each blog post to promote the guide.

This method of creating and repurposing content can work for any type of content offer you want to create. You just need to take the time to plan out the contents of your offer and make use of your weekly content activities.

If you're looking for a place to start, consider organizing your weekly short-form content initiatives to grow into monthly or quarterly campaigns tied to a content offer. This will help identify connections more easily and get into a rhythm to become a content repurposing expert.

Once you have a content offer, start thinking about how you can recycle this content.

Ask yourself, "How else might this content be consumed?" If you're looking for a place to start, then consider looking to your buyer personas' journey. Not only will this help ensure you're creating content with a purpose, but more importantly, this will help keep your message consistent through each stage of the buyer's journey.

To better understand this, let's quickly recap our guide example. We identified a format and topic for an offer we wanted to create, built a foundation through a series of Instagram posts, videos, and blog posts, and we recycled that content into a comprehensive guide. Now, let's review how we could branch out this content into new formats for our buyer personas to consume.

To start, what about recycling our guide into a slide deck? We could use that slide deck to host a digital training or a webinar. This could be a great opportunity to create a more engaging learning experience for our audience — one where they have the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about our thought leadership and what we have to offer. We could take key information from each chapter and create a slide for it. This would condense the information while still communicating the value in a more visual way.

And we could upload the recording of our digital training to our YouTube channel and embed it on a page on our website.

Additionally, now that we have a slide deck, we could post to SlideShare and embed on our website underneath the recording of our digital training video.

What about recycling our slide deck into an infographic? Infographics are a great way to visually tell a story. They're also great attention drivers that could help get the word out about the guide.

We could write a blog post about the infographic and share it across all our social channels.

What about recycling our infographic into a videographic by animating it and adding a voiceover to provide additional context?

We could upload to YouTube, write a blog post about the videographic, and share it across all our social channels.

What about recycling our guide into an automated email series? We could help organize the project by splitting up each chapter into a series of emails over a specific span of time. This could make the content more digestible as opposed to reading it all at once.

We could offer a landing page that allows people to subscribe to the email series, helping to hold them accountable to their transformation.

What about recycling the email series into a podcast? We could recycle the email content into an audio episode. This way, people could listen to our content while actually doing the project.

We could offer a landing page that allows people to subscribe to the podcast and host through Soundcloud, Podbean, or iTunes.

As for our example, after going through this process and making many trips to the hardware store for materials and tools, we decided to first recycle the guide into a checklist. This way, if the reader wants to get started on their project they have everything they need to stay organized. I really could have used a checklist during our build. Whew.

And because we used the content from the guide to create the checklist it only took us a few hours to complete. That's what I call efficiency.

The opportunities to recycling content are endless. Just make sure to always keep in mind the buyer persona and the buyer's journey to make sure you get the most impact out of your efforts.

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## Video 4: How to repurpose your content exponentially

Hey there, I'm Nadya, Chief Growth Officer for Venngage, a platform that helps you tell stories and present your data with infographics.

Let me paint a picture for you: You spend hours on end working on an amazing piece of content. The research, the writing, the visual assets; you've poured your heart and soul into this thing and it performs wonders and everyone on your team is praising the amazing results.

So your boss comes to you and tells you, "Hey, figure out how to make that happen again." And as a result, what do you do? Well you repeat the process because that's usually what we've been instructed to do when we find something that works. But this time, the results are minimal in comparison.

Your team is confused, and so are you. Why didn't this content yield the same results that it did before? After all, you did everything the same. Unfortunately, this is a really common story, and the reality is that for many content marketers, only a small percentage of blog posts or videos or e-books and infographics drive the majority of traffic and conversions for your business and yet we continue to try and re-create that magical piece of content but fail over and over again.

Why waste your time when you've already discovered what works? Instead what you should be doing is figuring out how to take that one rockstar article, and figure out how to stretch as much value as possible by repurposing it into new formats and onto new channels.

In this video, I'm gonna walk you through four easy steps that you can take to get the most out of your content efforts with one blog post.

The first thing I want to talk to you about is identification.

The idea of repurposing content isn't new. A lot of marketers talk about the benefits of repurposing content into different formats and media, like webinars, or YouTube videos, or podcasts, and the list goes on. Visually repurposing your content in itself opens up many opportunities for driving different kinds of engagement, as well as traffic from new channels. In addition to repurposing blog content into infographics, or e-books, and presentations, there's also a wide range of opportunity to continuously leverage this visual content across social media platforms. And on top of that, you can get away with sharing that content on a more frequent basis. But before you can do that you need to identify which content to repurpose.

Let's take a look at how Venngage identifies some of its top performing content. For us organic traffic coming from search engines is where we put most of our focus, but this might be different for you. You might drive more traffic from other channels, like direct, or referrals, or Facebook, or other forms of paid media. No matter what the channel is you should be able to identify your top-performing content. In Google Analytics, we can go back several years to when we were just getting started with our efforts and where we had some really clear winners on our blog. You can see that this article on Graphic Design Trends is a clear winner that made up 23% of all of our blog traffic during this timeframe in 2017. Look for metrics like these to get an idea of which content is sending you more traffic, or better conversions, or engagement across the board. They will become your biggest bets for repurposing content.

Now instead of trying to re-create yet another article like this one, we decided to keep finding ways of recycling it and re-promoting it. As a result, even today, we still see a considerable amount of traffic from this one article.

The next step is extraction.

Extraction is breaking down your content into components that you can use when you are starting to think about repurposing that content. To better explain this, let's quickly walk through the concept of modularity. Processes can either be interdependent or modular. An interdependent process means that in order to achieve one outcome, you are entirely dependent on the step before it. In terms of repurposing content visually, generally a marketer will create a blog post first, then send it to a graphic designer who will create or modify it into several visuals that the marketer can use to promote that article. In this case, the marketer and the designer are both totally interdependent of each other. However modularity is the idea that components can be broken down into pieces that can work in multiple different patterns. There is less interdependence, and because of this, processes become a lot more scalable.

How does this apply to repurposing content? Well, the concept of repurposing content visually is highly based on this idea of modularity.

To better understand this, let's take a look at this Venngage blog post. Now let's say we wanted to make an infographic based on this article. Following the interdependent process I mentioned earlier, the marketer most likely created an outline first. Then, once the article was written, they sent it to a designer to procure a unique infographic.

But what would happen if they needed an e-book or some social graphics in addition to that? Chances are the marketer would need to create unique outlines for every single image. Does this sound familiar? Well, at Venngage, we found this process extremely time-consuming, and not scalable. So we started asking ourselves, "if in the same amount of time it took a marketer to create one outline, could they actually structure that outline in a way that provided an unlimited amount of visual content?" In other words, we started to create a modular process for repurposing content visually. So if you take a closer look, you can see that this article is broken down into different sections that guide the article. The introduction has been paraphrased multiple times to create various options. Important definitions from the article have also been documented. Facts and statistics are grouped as well, and the list goes on. Notice that the outline is not exactly linear, as is the typical practice. Instead the outline is clustered in modular pieces that can be easily woven together to create unique visuals that can be repurposed exponentially. Here are a few examples of what we were able to create from just one of these outlines.

The next step is creation.

I thought it would be helpful to show you in Venngage how we would actually take content snippets from an outline and repurpose them into multiple social media graphics.

So when you get into Venngage, you'll be taken to the Templates section. You'll notice there's a lot of different recommendations based on the preferences you listed when you went through your onboarding process. Over here you can see that there's a number of different categories that you can create. You can open and close different categories to see different types of subcategories to make navigating through the templates a lot easier. We also offer a search function in case there's something specific you want to look for.

To show you Venngage's tool in action, I'll show you how I created an image for a Facebook post.

You can search for Facebook just to see if there's anything that pops up immediately that catches your interest. Let's go with this one because I think this might fit what I'm trying to do.

To give you a little bit of background context, I actually started with this content repurposing outline where we created more modular structures. I actually went through to see what I could potentially turn into an image or a visual. I decided to focus on definitions like this one to repurpose into a visual. So what I've actually done is I've taken some of the components and I've put them into this other document just so I can follow the process a little bit easier. So over here you can see I have my definition for Facebook, I have my list for Twitter, and I have my step-by-step instructions for Instagram.

So if I go back to my template that I've selected, I'll be taken here into Venngage's editor. The image is farily large for me to start working with, so let me shrink that down a bit so I can have a better view of my canvas. So I'll jump back over here. I know that the definition that I want to focus on is a marketing plan definition. So because I'm working on a definition, I want to let my audience know that that's what I'm actually trying to create. So let's go with: What is a marketing plan? Maybe what I'll do instead is move this down over here just to create a difference in hierarchy for the text. I want to make this a little bit bigger so that I can actually fit the definition that I've selected. And over here, I can add some other content if necessary. As you can see, I also have this image here that's overlaid, and maybe I want to create something that's a little bit more relevant to marketing plans. So if I double-click, I can search through different photos, maybe I can do marketing, and I'll go with something like that. You can also change the opacity of this visual. So if you want to make it a little bit more prominent, you can just go into this icon over here and decide how much more prominent you want it to be, but I think I liked where it was before.

So I'll go back to my definition. I know that a marketing plan is a report that outlines your strategy for the coming year, so I copy and paste that here.

Now of course the purpose of what I'm doing here is to drive people back to the original article that I knew was performing really well. So I can just leave a simple note that says, "to learn more about marketing plans, visit this address." I can even emphasize this part by bolding it so that it catches people's eye. I also want to make sure that this is branded properly. So I can go to my brand kit over here where I can select my logo. I can either put it at the top, or maybe I'll put it at the bottom just so people know what the company is. One last thing, I want to make sure that these fit my brand colors. So I can change it around until I find what works for me, and this will auto-brand everything.

There are a lot of opportunities here for you to not only repurpose the same content across different platforms, but also take advantage of testing different visual styles to see what your audience actually engages with most.

On average, our team at Venngage creates anywhere between 30 to 80 unique designs from a single article by following this process.

Lastly, let's review how to share the content you create.

There are a number of tools that can help you automate this process. I'm a fan of using Zapier integrations to automate the posting process. It's easy to upload images to Google Sheets, and then use Zapier to auto post on your behalf on social networks like Pinterest or Facebook. Alternatively, you can use a social scheduling tool, like Buffer or HubSpot, to preschedule different visuals on various days throughout the week.

Submitting infographics to different websites, blogs and image creation sites is not only a great way to build quality inbound links to your website, but it's also a really great way of building more brand awareness around your content.

And that's it, four steps to repurposing your content exponentially. We covered a lot, so let's quickly recap everything we discussed.

First, identify what's already working well for you. Look at your web analytics to see which content is already driving the most traffic, conversions, or engagements.

Second, extract the most valuable information from that content and create modular components that can help guide you on how you design your visuals.

Third, use those content snippets that you've created to design unique and custom visuals that can be shared on a frequent basis across different channels. You can use a free tool like Venngage which has a range of easy-to-edit templates for social media images, infographics, reports, e-books, presentations, and many more.

And fourth, share your content on an ongoing basis.

Take these suggestions and use them to create a scalable process for repurposing the content that you already know works well for your business.

## Video 1: Why are topic clusters important?

Hi, I'm Justin with HubSpot Academy.

Content marketing has seen a lot of changes over the past several years. Many of these changes can be attributed to the rapidly evolving search landscape, as well as a shift in the way people search, discover, and consume content online.

All that said, many marketers still experience the same pain points that were common 5 to 10 years ago. "I struggle to measure the return on investment of the content I create." "We know the content we're creating provides value, but we still don't seem to rank high on Google for our target keywords." And, "I've done my keyword research. Now what?"

Let me start by telling you that creating more content in the hopes of having your website show up on Google is not the answer. In fact, adding more content to an outdated existing site architecture can make it harder for Google to find and rank your content. That's not a situation any marketer wants to find themselves in.

The answer to these problems spans way beyond the amount of content your business publishes per week or month; the real problem lies in the way that most content strategies are being developed and organized.

SEO is evolving, and marketers need to adapt.

Today, we live in a digitally informed world, one where there's millions of people searching for content every minute as well as millions of pieces of content being published online every minute. This makes the job of a search engine like Google increasingly difficult to serve you the most relevant, high authoritative content possible. To remain a relevant and helpful search engine, Google released a series of algorithm changes over the past several years.

The first notable update, which really shook things up, was Google's "Hummingbird" algorithm update in 2013. This update focused on parsing out phrases rather than focusing on specific search queries. Many search engine optimizers and content marketers viewed this as an initial shift from a keyword to topic focus.

The next major update happened in 2015—Google's RankBrain algorithm update. RankBrain is Google's machine-learning artificial intelligence system that interprets people's searches to find pages that might not have the exact words they searched for. Google is able to do this by associating past search history with similar themes and pulling together keywords and phrases to provide a better context-driven search engine results page.

For more information on the evolution of SEO, check out the resources section below.

All this change brings opportunity to be found by your ideal audience. That's a key facet to creating successful content in today's online environment. Most forget it's not just about creating content for the search engine. Search engines aren't the ones filling out the forms on your website. Search engines aren't the ones sharing your content on social media. Search engines aren't your customers—humans are.

If you want to create effective content that converts visitors into leads and eventually customers, you need to create a helpful, positive user experience that solves for both the searcher and the search engine, not just one or the other.

Here's how you can solve for both: Create targeted clusters of relevant content that each cover a specific topic in depth. These targeted clusters then need to lead to a centralized hub, known as a pillar page.

A pillar page (also known as a content pillar or power page) is a website page that covers a specific topic in depth and is linked to a cluster of related content.

The topic cluster model, at its very essence, is a way of organizing a site's content pages using a cleaner and more deliberate site architecture. Topic clusters rearrange the architecture to clusters of related content that link to a central pillar page. Each pillar page should provide a comprehensive overview of the topic you're writing about. By linking all internal content within that topic to a pillar page, search engines such as Google can easily scan all the content and understand that there is a semantic relationship between the pages' content. The cluster setup also signals to search engines that there is real breadth and depth in the content, which gives the pillar page more authority on the topic. Algorithms like Google's RankBrain reward this orderly linking with higher search placement.

So whether you're new to creating content or just getting started, consider mapping out the topics your business wants to be known for and build authority around. Then map and organize your site architecture to support it.

## Video 2: How do you create an effective topic cluster

So you're looking to create a topic cluster for your site's content.

First, you need to identify a broad topic that you want to be known for and build authority around. Instead of thinking about specific keywords you want to rank for, focus on terms with high monthly search volume, usually 2–3 words in length.

For example, let's say you're a marketing agency who does inbound marketing for your clients. In this case, "inbound marketing" would be a great example of a broad topic that you might want to be known for and build authority around.

However, actually trying to rank for broad topics like inbound marketing could seem impossible. Not to mention, broad topics like this don't offer context as to what you're specifically talking, making it difficult to solve for searcher intent.

If your goal is to rank for a broad topic like inbound marketing, then you need to be specific as to what you're talking about by bringing context to the equation. Let's say your marketing agency offers a service to build personas for your business. After all, knowing who you're trying to reach is an important facet to a successful inbound marketing strategy. In this case, "inbound marketing personas" would be a great example of bringing context to the broad topic, inbound marketing. The trick to doing this effectively is finding specific terms in support of your broad topic that have adequate search volume to justify the content creation time. This is because you will be creating a pillar page around this specified topic with the intention of getting that page to rank on the first page of search engines like Google. And while I'd love to provide you with a magic monthly search volume number as a baseline to go by, it really will depend on your industry and location.

Here's a pro tip: When doing keyword research, identify a list of keywords you could use to bring context to your broad topic. Keep in mind, the higher the monthly search volume, the more difficult it will be to rank for. On that note, choosing keywords that have lower monthly search volume can still make a big impact on your search engine visibility. You may think that 250 monthly searches for a specific keyword is low, but ranking for a keyword with this monthly search volume can pay off in the long run. That's because the average first-page ranking will also rank well for about a thousand other relevant keywords. Remember, search engines are much smarter nowadays. Their main goal is to solve for searcher intent. Yes, keywords are still important, but if search engines think your content solves for the intent of a search query, even if that search query doesn't have the specific keywords you used to optimize your content, then chances are they'll choose to rank it anyways. That's why it's important to think in terms of topics over keywords.

Once you determine how you intend to rank for a term that's specific to the broad topic you're going to write about, you'll want to identify your topic cluster, which will be made up of relevant subtopics. A subtopic should be strong enough to be published on its own — in the form of something like a blog post or video — but when combined with other like-themed subtopics, it should be relevant to and support the specific topic you're writing about.

In this case, "What are negative marketing personas?," "How do you build a persona?," and "What content does my persona want?" are examples of strong subtopics that provide value on their own, but when put together, support the specific topic "inbound marketing personas."

Here's a pro tip: If you're looking for a place to start when identifying subtopics, consider the questions your audience has around the specific topic you chose to write about. If your audience uses search engines to do research, then chances are they're doing their research in the form of a question. And if you're the one who's offering the answers to their questions, then you're off to a good start with creating an effective topic cluster.

And to complete the topic cluster, and solve for both the searcher and the search engine, connect the pillar page and subtopics together through a series of hyperlinks.

At a minimum, make sure all subtopics link to your pillar page. By linking all relevant subtopics to the pillar page, you're funneling all your traffic to the main resource hub on this topic.

Let's see this in action.

If you performed a Google search for inbound marketing personas, this is what the first-page listing would look like.

At the top, you'll see Google generated a featured snippet, which is the search engine's way of answering your search query without you having to click through to the page. In this case, Google chose to feature a snippet about what an inbound marketing persona is — information that's pulled from a comprehensive resource published by an inbound marketing agency called SmartBug Media.

Below the featured snippet, you'll see SmartBug also claims the number one listing for "inbound marketing personas" with the same resource, "The Ultimate Guide to Inbound Marketing Personas."

In a world of trying to build authority and awareness for a broad topic that's relevant to your business, this is what you're striving for: the featured snippet as well as the number one listing for a term that's aligned with your broad topic.

Let's say you're a company looking to create your business's personas, so you click the link in the search result to learn more. You're taken to this page:

Near the top, you're greeted with a video as well as an overview of what you're going to learn. Below that is a form to access a guide with a bonus template to use for applying what you learn to your business. But let's say you're not sure you're ready to give your information just yet in exchange for the offer. Maybe you need more information to make sure that this offer is right for you.

SmartBug understands this might be the case, which is why they offer the majority of the content in the guide on the actual pillar page. This way, visitors can check out the content first to make sure it's what they're looking for.

And for people who do find value in SmartBug's content and want access to the downloadable guide and bonus getting started template, SmartBug makes it easy to access it by offering a sticky form at the top of the page that follows visitors as they scroll. This way they're being helpful without disrupting the visitor's experience.

One last thing before moving on, SmartBug includes helpful links throughout their pillar page. These links connect to other websites as well as content on their site, including subtopics a part of their topic cluster. For example, notice how this hyperlink, "getting the answers to some basic questions," connects to a blog post on SmartBug's site. This way the visitor can continue consuming content around this topic. And at the top of the blog post, there's a link that takes you back to the pillar page.

Something important to note: Not every subtopic you have will be referenced on your pillar page (and that's okay). That's because you may have dozens, even hundreds, of subtopics that make up your topic clusters. Instead, you can strategically link to relevant subtopics throughout your pillar page when it makes sense and when it provides value to the website visitor. Just make sure all important subtopics connect to the pillar page. Remember, keep the user experience and the story you're trying to tell in mind.

So that's how this page solved for the searcher by offering a positive user experience, but how did this page solve for search engines in terms of traffic and visibility?

In the first 3 months after publishing their pillar page and linking their topic cluster together, SmartBug's pillar page received over 4,800 views and 1,000 downloads.

With results like this, SmartBug started to rethink their overall content strategy and structure of their website. Remember, search engines want to connect people with the best content possible based on their intent. Focusing on user experience is a strong and sustainable way to search engine optimize your content.

## Video 3: Examples of commonly used pillar page types

Let's cover three of the most widely used pillar page formats, starting with the resource pillar page.

The resource pillar page focuses on internal and external links. The goal of this pillar page is to be a helpful resource in connecting the reader with the most relevant sources on a broad topic (even if it means sending people off your site).

Let's take a look at the pillar page Colgate, an oral hygiene company, created on "gum disease."

This resource pillar page is composed of multiple sections that are specific to their broad topic, gum disease, like "gum disease prevention" or "gum disease signs and symptoms." Notice how this section offers an overview of the specific topic using a bullet point list. Additionally, there's a list of helpful links that connect the reader with various, like-themed resources to continue reading like "common warning signs of gingivitis." When clicked, Colgate takes you to one of their helpful blog articles that explains this subtopic in depth.

Here's a pro tip: If you have a lot of subtopics related to your broad topic, let's say over 75, then consider only promoting your top-performing subtopics on your resource pillar page. Colgate's resource pillar page on gum disease links to fewer than 60 Colgate resources related to gum disease. However, they have over 2,400 pieces of content related to gum disease published on their site.

Remember, keep the user's experience in mind. Too much information might be overwhelming. And if users are overwhelmed, then chances are they'll leave your site.

Now, let's say you want to create a resource pillar page that's made up of the best resources that exist on the subject, not just what your brand has to offer.

Let's see an example of this in action from Help Scout, a customer service software company, with their resource pillar on the broad topic "customer acquisition."

This resource pillar page is made up of multiple sections related to customer acquisition, like search engine optimization, conversion rate optimization, and content marketing. Notice how each section offers a short blurb on the broad topic, a list of specific topics that bring value to the broad topic, like "content marketing tools," and a list of links to resources the learner might want to check out. For example, Help Scout includes a link to BuzzSumo, a research and monitor tool, which sends the visitor off their website.

Generally, you wouldn't want to send people away from your website, but this approach is solving for the visitor, not your business.

The biggest advantage of a pillar page format like this is you have the opportunity to generate inbound links from sources you include on the page. This page has hundreds of inbound links pointing to it, most of which are sources mentioned on the page.

Here's a pro tip: If you decide to create a resource pillar page like this, then you'll want to develop an outreach plan to let the sources you include on the page know it exists. Letting others know that you're linking to their content could lead to that source linking back to your page if they find value in promoting it to their audience, further expanding your topic cluster's authority.

Next up, which is the most commonly used pillar page type, the 10x content pillar page.

The goal of this type of pillar page is similar to the resource pillar page: to provide a comprehensive overview of a specific topic. But the 10x pillar page is generally made up of your owned media. Owned media is content you own and can control, like social media channels, your website, and so on. The format of this page is similar to that of an ungated ebook or a guide. Ungated means the content is not gated behind a form.

Ungating educational content in the awareness stage solves for both the search engine and the website visitor, not one or the other. It solves for search engines because they're able to recognize the clustering of like-themed content pointing to a comprehensive website page or blog post. It solves for your website visitors because it gives them the opportunity to view your content before deciding to commit to downloading it.

The trick is making the 10x content pillar page a conversion-focused asset by packaging the page's content into a downloadable resource.

You may be asking yourself, "why would someone share their email address just to view the same content in a downloadable format?"

Well, HubSpot did a study, and we found that 90% of website visitors prefer to read lengthy content in the form of a PDF as opposed to a website page. But this preference is not limited to HubSpot's content. It's human nature to want to take something with you if you find value in it.

Think of it this way: Let's say you go to a bookstore looking for a new book. You'd probably wander up and down the aisles, flipping through pages of various books until you find one that meets your needs. Once you find a book you enjoy, you'll probably go to the checkout counter and buy it to take it with you, as opposed to staying in the bookstore hour after hour and day after day, reading this piece of content.

This is the experience you're trying to replicate, but it can only be done if your content provides value to the reader. We've reached this age where everyone seems to have an ebook or guide, but the quality of that content is a different story. Sure, you may be getting leads, but what if people don't find value in your content? They most likely won't continue building a relationship with you. So that lead you captured won't be as valuable as you think.

In contrast, the people who can view your content before downloading it and who then choose to fill out your form will be more qualified because they're willingly giving you their information even though they've already seen part or most of what your content has to offer.

For example, take a look at this 10x content pillar page on email outreach created by Mailshake, a helpful email outreach tool.

This 10x content pillar page covers a comprehensive approach to email outreach with sectioned content.

Let's say you wanted to learn more about what an effective outreach email looks like. Click section 3 at the top of this page, "examples of good (and great) outreach emails and what we can learn from them," and the link will direct you to that specific section on the page to learn more about it.

Let's assume this is the content you're looking for, and you stay on Mailshake's website for more than 20 seconds to read it. In this case, Mailshake generates a pop-up form and offers the content as a packaged downloadable resource. This way, you can take the content with you and consume it on your own time.

How well is this page performing? Well, in less than one year, this page has been viewed over 43,000 times, shared on social media 398 times, attracted 372 inbound links, acquired 5,321 email opt-ins, and acquired 402 customers.

Now those are some serious results for a piece of content that's less than a year old.

And lastly, we have the product or service pillar page. This type is best used when creating pillar pages for products or services your business offers.

With this type of pillar page, the aim is not necessarily quantity and breadth of content. You probably don't need to write a long overview about how your dentist office performs root canals or your legal practice litigates divorce. But the content should be informative and clear.

A good example is Vital's page on their PPC Management Services. As a digital marketing agency, their prospects regularly ask them about their team's PPC capabilities. This page does a great job at describing what type of services they offer, what's included in monthly management, their step-by-step approach, their step-by-step account setup process, and a little bit about their pricing. It's descriptive but not overly so. And not only is it optimized well for search, it's clearly written for an audience who's looking for paid media services.

Lastly, and something important to note, this pillar page type is best suited for the decision stage — notice the decision stage offering to get in touch with sales to get a PPC management proposal.

One more thing: A pillar page can either be a page on your website or a blog post on your blog. It depends on how you organize your overall site structure.

HubSpot uses our blog for educational pillar pages that span the awareness and consideration stages. For example, let's say you wanted to learn more about the topic, "customer feedback." HubSpot offers a 10x content pillar page on our blog that teaches people the specific topic, "customer feedback strategy."

Now if you're someone who's looking to implement a customer feedback strategy for your business, then we offer a product pillar page for our customer feedback software. This pillar page is a page on our website that's organized under our product offerings.

There's not a right or wrong way to go about this. But whatever way you choose to organize and map your site architecture, stick to it. Your audience as well as search engines will appreciate it.

These 3 types of pillar pages are by no means exclusive or fixed. Feel free to take elements from each type and build something custom. But hopefully they give you enough guidance to create something truly amazing.

## Video 4: How do you create an effective pillar page?

Let's cover how a company called Etuma created their business' first 10x content pillar page. Etuma is a company that helps businesses transform unstructured text data into decision-making information.

Before diving in, keep in mind there's more than one way to create an effective topic cluster and pillar page. For example, if bandwidth is not an issue for you and your team, then you can create your pillar page in as little as a week. However, if your business is strapped for time, then you may need to create a plan to construct your pillar page over time. That's exactly what Etuma did. Let's review a 7-step process Etuma used to create their first topic cluster and pillar page with limited resources.

First, identify a specific topic you want to be known for and rank for online.

Here's how Etuma did this.

To start, Etuma performed research on keywords their primary persona, Customer Experience Manager Maggie, might use when looking for information online. They identified the broad topic "text analysis" and decided this would be a helpful starting point.

Next, Etuma brought focus to their broad topic by being specific as to what Maggie might be looking for when doing research. They know Maggie is trying to make sense of a lot of text data and is actively looking for step-by-step guidance with possible solutions or tools she can recommend to her team. Keeping this in mind, Etuma decided to focus their pillar page around the specific topic, "text analysis guide." This way Etuma can provide a comprehensive overview to becoming a text analysis expert as well as a list of solutions and tools to consider, including their text analysis tool.

Here's a pro tip: If you're going to take the time to create content that educates your audience, make sure it connects to, and supports, at least one of your products or services. If it doesn't, ask why you're creating it in the first place.

Second, identify your topic cluster.

You may already have content created in support of the topic you're intending to rank for. Instead of re-inventing the wheel, identify current owned media that's relevant to the specific topic you're planning to write about.

In this case, Etuma already had 4 pages of text analysis-themed blog content and a series of YouTube videos.

And while having existing content is great, don't sell your business short.. Brainstorm a list of as many subtopics as possible that bring value to your topic that have yet to be published.

Once Etuma made a comprehensive list of subtopics, they narrowed it down to 6 of the strongest subtopics to repurpose and expand upon to create their pillar page. Remember, you can continue growing and improving the authority of your topic cluster and experience of your pillar page over time, so having a list of subtopics already identified will make that process easier. That comprehensive list you made is the content gift that keeps on giving.

Third, create blog posts for needed subtopics.

Etuma needed content for their subtopic "text analysis categorization systems," so they created a blog post titled "How to Create a Customer Feedback Taxonomy."

Once Etuma created this article, they had a blog post for each one of their 6 subtopics.

Fourth, repurpose your subtopic content into a downloadable content offer.

I recommend you create the content offer before the pillar page. This way, you can include a form on your pillar page as soon as it's published to start generating leads immediately.

Once you have all the content you need to create your pillar page, repurpose and expand the subtopic content into a downloadable content offer. And repurpose doesn't mean copy and paste. Etuma used the content from their blog post as inspiration and repackaged it to bring new value and meaning as a downloadable content offer. Remember, the goal here is to use the content you already have to put together a helpful story for the reader, which explains the topic in depth.

Fifth, deconstruct your downloadable content offer into a 10x content pillar page.

Etuma took the same content offered in their guide and formatted it to fit on a website page.

You may have heard the phrase "content is king." Matt Cutts, formerly with Google, coined this phrase many years ago. However, design is sometimes forgotten, even though it's just as important as the content. You want people to have a positive experience when they're reading your content.

Think about it: If you walked into a restaurant with fantastic food but a poor design—dark, cramped, noisy, cluttered—would you stay? No way! Design is just as important as what you offer—whether that be food or site content.

To make sure your 10x content pillar page provides a positive experience, check out these 13 layout tips outlined on Etuma's example.

Let's review each layout tip in more detail.

Starting at the top-left of the example, with tips one, two, and three: Apply consistent on-page SEO best practices, referencing the specific topic you're intending to rank for in your page title, URL, and H1 tag.

Moving down to tip 4, include conversion-focused landing page elements. Really, this is what a standard landing page looks like: text to the left with bullet points to describe the offer's value, an image of the offer's cover in the middle, and a form to fill out and access the offer to the right.

Insert the form directly on the 10x content pillar page. Doing so reduces the amount of conversion actions a reader needs to take to download the resource. That being said, if you're more comfortable with a dedicated landing page with a form to access the offer, insert a call-to-action that links to it on the pillar page to send readers there.

Moving down to tip 5, add an anchor-linked table of contents below the conversion point with the line "Click the link to go directly to a specific section." An anchor link is a web link that allows users to jump to a specific point on a website page. This makes it easier for people to navigate your content and see what it has to offer.

Additionally, adding an anchor-linked table of contents near the top of the page helps Google understand what this page is about and what it has to offer in a condensed fashion. This is a great way to optimize your page's content for Google's featured snippet.

Moving up to the top-right of the example and layout tip 6, you'll notice there's website navigation. The goal of this page is to create a positive experience for the visitor, not force them to convert as a landing page would.

Moving on to tip 7, use relevant images throughout the page, with the specific topic referenced in the alt text. This optimizes the images used on the page for image search results.

Moving down to tips 8 and 9, use H2 tags for sub-headers and H3 tags for list items. A proper HTML structure provides a clean user experience and makes it simpler to update the page. Not to mention, taking time to do this the right way is another opportunity for your website to be chosen as the lisitcal featured snippet.

Moving down to tips 10 and 11, use relevant internal and external links to dig deeper into resources. That's right: external. External links validate your claims. Just use them strategically, like to support a claim or data point you need to reinforce. If you don't want to drive people off your site, then consider having the links that point to external websites open in a new window.

Moving down to tip 12, reference the keyword of your specific topic throughout the page. But don't just repeat the exact phrase — search engines are smart enough to understand synonyms of what you're talking about.

And lastly, tip 13, have a back-to-top button. This way, when people click a section they want to learn more about, they can easily jump back to the top. People probably won't read your entire page, but they may find one section interesting enough and want to download it and take it with them. You want to make this process as easy as possible for the visitor. Forgetting this step would require the reader to scroll endlessly, or it might feel like it, which could lead to frustration, which could lead to them leaving your page and going elsewhere.

Here's a pro tip: If you want to make it easy for people to access your packaged downloadable content offer, then consider inserting a pop-up form on your pillar page.

The average top-performing pop-up forms convert at 9.28%, with some instances as high as 50.2%. To put that into perspective, if you get even 150 visitors per day to your site, you'd have 418 sign-ups in a month.

Moving on to step 6, link your relevant owned media to your 10x content pillar page.

Once you complete your 10x pillar page, you need to hyperlink your subtopics to it, forming your topic cluster.

The goal here is to connect all owned media that's relevant to the pillar page using a hyperlink. The more content associated with your topic cluster and pillar page, the better.

And don't just add any old link text. Take the time to update the anchor text to something descriptive to let the visitor know where they're going.

Etuma linked over 20 relevant pieces of content to their 10x content pillar page. And you'll notice they took the time to create descriptive anchor text to let the searcher and search engine know where they're going.

And 7, create a conversion path for people to access your 10x content pillar page.

The goal here is to let people know this content is available. If you don't, you run the risk of a large portion of your website visitors never finding it. Forgetting this step would be similar to building a new addition on your house without a door. No matter how great that room is, no one would be able to get in, so what's the point?

Consider calling out your pillar page in the top navigation through a 1- or 2-click process: 1 click if you offer it directly in the dropdown menu, 2 clicks if you have a resources page with multiple assets to organize and call out.

Etuma calls out their 10x content pillar page as a one-click option in their Resources tab.

Another place to consider is the top of the home page with a call-to-action, with an image and descriptive supplemental text.

This doesn't mean it always needs to stay here on this page. You can promote the pillar page for a limited time, possibly for 2 weeks or a month, to support its publishing launch.

And there you have it: 7 steps to creating an effective 10x content pillar page for your business.

Etuma has been creating content consistently for years, but this 7-step process helped them make more sense of how to create, grow, and connect content effectively.

But how well is it performing?

After 2 months, their VP of Marketing and Sales said, "We are receiving about 4 times the leads (if you measure by quality) compared to before the text analysis pillar page."

And why do you think Etuma's quality of leads went up? Because their content provides so much value that interested visitors are willing to give up their information to take a packaged download with them.

If you're looking for a place to start with creating topic clusters and pillar pages, consider deconstructing your existing awareness- or consideration-stage offers into 10x content pillar pages. For example, in an effort to solve for website visitors as well as search engine web crawlers, I deconstructed a do-it-yourself truck camper guide I created for my alternative lifestyle website into a 10x content pillar page.

The result? In 4 months, our non-paid, organic traffic coming from search engines increased 329%.

Remember, if you have something valuable to say to your audience and the world, don't keep it gated behind a form. Get it out there for all to see. Just make sure to package it in a way that makes it easy for people to take with them and enjoy elsewhere.

## Video 5: How to optimize and grow your pillar pages over time

Your pillar page should always be under construction. You might need to make updates to keep it relevant or add new, fresh content to keep it performing at a high level. You need to maintain it. Otherwise, you're leaving yourself vulnerable for someone else to come in and outperform you — it happens all the time.

Let's check out a company that's taken the time to grow their topic clusters and pillar pages into the backbone of their content strategy. That company is Townsend Security. They're a full-service data security provider.

Townsend started 2016 with a positive lift in organic, non-paid visits coming from search engines due to their content efforts. They worked hard in 2015 with regular blogging, webinars, podcasts, white papers, and ebooks. The result: Their traffic held steady in 2015, and in the first quarter of 2016, they had a 27% rise in organic search visitors.

But all that changed in the second quarter of 2016. Competition for their narrow band of keywords increased as new competitors entered the marketplace, and their larger rivals outspent them on online marketing. After a record high in March and April, they saw a 38% decrease in organic search visitors during the next 3 months (with a 28% decrease in one month alone). Their hard work from the previous year evaporated. While they fought back and did recoup some of that traffic, they still struggled to regain their high ground in the organic section of the search engine results page.

In late September of 2016, Townsend's HubSpot Inbound Consultant, Erin Sliney, introduced them to the concept of creating a pillar page and supporting it with a relevant topic cluster. They took this advice and ran with it. The Townsend team's goal was to become thought leaders on "encryption key management." And that's exactly what they did.

During the editing process, Townsend wrote 20 social media updates and scheduled them to be published to their Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn accounts once the pillar page published. They mixed their publishing dates with their regularly scheduled updates during the following 8 weeks. Coupled with an email campaign promoting the pillar page to their active lead community, they were able to get the word out to those already familiar with them.

To reach the wider community who might not yet know them, Townsend inserted links to their pillar page by thoughtfully answering questions on Quora, adding insights to other websites by visiting their blog and commenting on relevant blog posts, and contributing thought leadership guest blog posts on other websites that shared a similar audience.

And lastly, since Townsend had been blogging on encryption key management for years, it was easy for them to identify a topic cluster through a few dozen subtopic blog posts that were contextually similar. They could place internal links with descriptive anchor text on these posts pointing back to their pillar page. The links enhanced the reader's experience, since they were providing additional, relevant content for them to binge (as well as being a clear signal for search engines to understand what the pillar page was all about).

This is how Townsend created and promoted their initial 10x content pillar page. But how did they continue growing it to become the authoritative source on encryption key management?

Let's review 3 ways to improve the on-page experience of your pillar pages based on learnings from Townsend's encryption key management pillar page.

To start, offer various forms of media per section for the reader to engage with.

First, Townsend created graphics and optimized them for Google search results. To take it a step further, Townsend turned their images into interactive infographics with pop-up text using HTML5, which search engines can also read.

Next, Townsend repurposed various data points into infographic-like images.

And lastly, Townsend repurposed content on the page into a short descriptive video, providing a quick overview of encryption key management. The video led to a 20% increase in average time on page.

Second, Sprinkle in relevant content offers that progress your buyer personas through their buyer's journey

Townsend offered additional content offers throughout the page based on relevancy, like an ebook and a whitepaper.

This is an effective way to guide your visitors through the buyer's journey — showing them what other content you have to offer when it makes sense.

Nowadays, people love to binge content. Platforms like Netflix promote this by releasing full seasons of a show at once. People want content now, and as much of it as they can consume until they're ready to make a decision, whatever that may be. The best thing you can do is find a way to keep people coming back to your content. Continue to either educate or entertain them (or both). If you don't, someone else will.

Now back to Townsend. 10 months after first publishing and promoting their 10x content pillar page, Townsend's organic search engine traffic increased over 150%.

10 months after first publishing their 10x content pillar page and continually promoting it, Townsend's non-paid, organic search engine traffic increased over 150%.

On top of that, 63% of people who visited the encryption key management pillar page decided to download the content and take it with them.

What about visibility on search engines? In August 2017, Townsend's 10x content pillar page claimed the number one position on Google for "encryption key management," the specific topic they intended to rank for on Google. And it's remained at the #1 position for close to 2 years.

Something else interesting to note, Townsend has built so much authority to their pillar page over the past few years that they're actually ranking at the third position on Google and claim the image featured snippet for their broad topic, "encryption key." No surprise here, as Townsend is constantly looking for ways to improve and optimize their pillar page to keep it performing at a high level. Remember, if Google deems your content as a relevant, authoritative resource, then chances are your average first-page ranking will also rank well for about a thousand other relevant keywords, even ones that are more broad with higher monthly search volume.

And third, Insert a heatmap on your pillar page to better understand performance and optimization next steps.

Townsend's pillar page offers a lot of valuable content with multiple conversion actions. And because they want to ensure their visitors are receiving the best content experience possible, they used a heatmap to see the engagement patterns on the page using Hotjar.

Hotjar offers a fast and visual way to understand your user's on-page website experience.

After placing a Hotjar heatmap on their pillar page, Townsend learned that people who visit the page are more interested in learning about what encryption key management is before downloading the content as a packaged resource. Here's a screenshot of Townsend's heatmap at the top of their pillar page. Notice how all the engagement is happening around the call-to-action.

But once visitors start clicking around to learn more about encryption key management, they're more interested and willing to give their information in exchange for a packaged download of the content. Interestingly enough, the call-to-action for the guide three-quarters of the way down the page led to the most conversions.

This information helped Townsend understand which sections people found the most value in that lead to conversions. It also showed them that people prefer to peruse through their content before giving their email address to download it and take it with them — another effective data point to support Townsend's choice to ungate their content and offer it as a packaged download.

This experiment sparked a lot of interest at Townsend. News traveled up to the CEO, who was so delighted by their results that he decided to create Townsend's next pillar page for the specific topic "SQL server encryption." Townsend created this page using the same template and learnings from their first pillar page. There's information about what this page is about at the top of the page, followed by an anchor-linked table of contents, a call-to-action to access a packaged download of the page's content, as well as a relevant short video.

Currently, this pillar page ranks at the fifth position on Google and claims the featured snippet. And just like Townsend's encryption key management pillar page, they know if they constantly look for ways to improve and optimize this pillar page, they're giving themselves the best chance at claiming the #1 position for the specific topic, "SQL server encryption." And once they achieve that, chances are this page will also rank well for about a thousand other relevant keywords. It's an on-going cycle, one that can be repeated.

## Video 1: Why should you create engaging videos?

Hi, I'm Justin with HubSpot Academy.

In the past 30 days, more video content has been uploaded online than the major U.S. television networks have created in 30 years.

Let that sink in for a minute.

It's no secret that video is a powerful force that's been growing in usage year over year. In 2018, 87% of online marketers used video. What has changed is how important video has become on every platform and channel across your entire business.

And these days, video isn't just for people with big budgets. Years ago, video was almost exclusively produced by the creative department—not marketing, sales, or service teams. Equipment costs were high and measuring video success was limited.

Today, all that has changed. Thanks to the rise of technology, video is used more widely as a business strategy across marketing, sales, and service teams. When done correctly, a video marketing strategy is an effective way to attract, engage, and delight your audience in a human and helpful way. In fact, more than 50% of consumers want to see videos from brands – that's more than any other type of content.

But creating any old video isn't enough. You need to create memorable videos that engage your audience. Here are some reasons why.

To start, video content creates trust. If you build trust with your audience, then they'll be more willing to come to you when they're ready to make a purchasing decision. 90% of customers say video helps them make buying decisions, and 64% of customers say that seeing a video makes them more likely to buy. However, to build that trust and close those customers, , your video content needs to have a purpose and capture the interest of your viewer. Mediocre or low-quality videos just won't cut it.  In fact, 62% of consumers are more likely to have a negative perception of a brand that published a low-quality video.

Next, engaging videos that are optimized correctly can improve your search engine optimization in a few ways.

- First, adding a video to your website can increase the chance of a front page Google result by 53 times. This is especially helpful if you include a video near the top of your educational website pages. Why? Because if people take the time to watch your video, then it'll reduce bounce rate. Your website's bounce rate is the percentage of people who land on one of your website pages, then leave. They don't click on anything. They just get to one of your pages, then leave quickly. Having a low bounce rate is a strong indicator to Google that people find value in your content. And if Google thinks your content provides value, then that can lead to first page rankings for the topics you want to show up for. For example, this web page ranks #1 on Google for a list of high-volume terms related to truck camper. When you click through to the page, you'll notice there's a YouTube video embedded at the top that's 4 minutes and 13 seconds long. In most cases, the majority of people who visit your site – 79% to be exact – would rather watch a video to learn, than read text on a page. That's exactly why I included a video at the top of this page to engage the visitor with video content first. In case you're curious, the average time a visitor spends on this page is five minutes.

- Which brings me to my second point: Not only is YouTube a popular search engine, but YouTube videos rank near the top of a search engine result page—another opportunity to claim real estate on a search engine results page. Google offers more than just listings to website content – there are other options like image and video search. The best part about these other search options is when Google does offer them, they're generally offered near the top of the search engine results page, even before the coveted #1 website listing. For example, let's go back to the search engine results page for the search query "DIY truck camper." Notice how the video that's featured at the top of my educational website page shows up in the video search results, which ranks above the #1 website listing. Anyone who clicks through to the YouTube video will see there's a link above the fold in the video's description, which connects them to the most relevant page on my website. This way, if the viewer wants more, I'm offering them that helpful next step.

And while we're on the topic of YouTube, it's important to note that it's the second largest search engine behind Google. If you want to learn more on how to create a YouTube strategy, then check out the resources section. I've included a link to help you get started.

And lastly, a lot of video content is constantly being published online. In the time that you watched this video, over 216 hours of video content was uploaded to YouTube. Let's be honest. Do you really think the world needs another piece of mediocre content? I don't think so. Make it a point to focus on the quality and purpose of each video you create. This way, you'll stand out from your competitors and gain your audience's trust. Remember, quality always outweighs quantity when it comes to creating content, especially video content.

## Video 2: How to use video throughout the inbound methodology

Often, companies jump too quickly at the opportunity to create their first video. They think they'll be left behind if they don't start doing video, which could actually be true. However, instead of investing in video in all aspects of their business, they spend thousands of dollars on a highly produced brand video for their homepage. After that, video is no more.

On the other hand, plenty of businesses churn out videos constantly for social media. But since most simply replicate fads they've seen without any true intention for their videos past likes and shares, they hardly consider their audience's challenges or habits-not exactly the best way to build trust.

Considering the time, money, and resources involved, video marketing can't be an impulsive guessing game. Instead, you need to create a video marketing strategy that applies to every stage of the inbound methodology. Your goal with video should be to attract your ideal audience, engage them with helpful, useful video content, and delight them to the point where they become promoters of your brand by sharing your content with their network.

Let's cover the types of videos you can create for each stage of the inbound methodology.

Let's start with the attract stage, which is generally a function of marketing.

The first step of the inbound methodology is to attract - or turn strangers into visitors. Consumers at this stage are identifying their challenges and deciding whether or not they should seek out a solution. Therefore, the videos you create should empathize with their problems. Use your expertise to create video content that creates a meaningful and memorable experience.

Ultimately, the goal of this kind of video is to expand reach and build trust and credibility with your audience.

Examples of videos in the attract stage include:

- Short social videos that show off your brand's personality;
- Thought leadership videos that establish you as a source of industry news and insight;
- Brand films that share your values and mission;
- And educational how-to videos that provide relevant tips for solving your audience's pain points.

For any "attract" video, avoid speaking too much about your product. Instead, focus on your brand values and personality. Remember, this video may be the first time someone comes in contact with your brand. So, make a positive first impression. If you do, then it's likely the viewer will go looking for more. Finally, because these videos can live on a variety of channels, keep in mind the strategies of each platform, especially when it comes to social media.

For a breakdown of how to use video across different social media platforms, check out the resources section of this lesson.

Now that you've attracted video viewers and website visitors, the next step is to build lasting relationships with them by providing insights and solutions that align with their challenges and goals. This brings us to the engage stage, which is generally a function of marketing and sales.

Your intention is to help them through their buyer's journey to making a well-informed, confident purchasing decision. In simpler terms, "engage" videos are meant to convert your visitors into leads and ultimately close them as customers.

"Engage" videos that are meant to convert your website visitors into leads could include:

- A webinar filled with tactical advice;
- Product demos sent via email;
- Landing page promotional videos;
- Case studies;
- And in-depth educational how-to videos.

For example, while an "attract" video might provide a quick tip for writing blog post titles, an "engage" video could be a more thorough breakdown of how to create a long-term blogging strategy.

When your goal is to close leads into customers with "engage" videos, help your audience visualize themselves using your product or service - and seeing success. Yet, as important as this stage is, "close" videos are often the most overlooked by marketers and salespeople. But there's a reason 4 times as many customers would rather watch a video about a product than read about it. Videos are able to display functionality and leverage emotions in ways a product description never could.

"Engage" videos that are meant to close your leads as customers could include:

- Testimonials of customers with relatable stories;
- In-depth product demos;
- Culture videos that sell viewers on your quality of service;
- Or even personalized videos that explain exactly how your product or service could help their business. This is especially an effective tool for your salespeople who are working with people who aren't the decision makers. Imagine the impact you can have on your close rate if you recorded a personalized sales pitch that your point of contact can share with decision makers. It's the next best thing to actually being in the room with them.

So, let's say your "engage" video was great, and a purchase was made. Great! But you're not done yet. , There's still a lot video can do to leverage the post-conversion stage of the inbound methodology. This brings us to the final stage, delight, which is generally a function of your services, success, or support team.

During the delight stage, your goal is to continue providing remarkable content to users that makes their interaction with your product or service as incredible as possible. You want them to tell their network about their experience or up-sell on another one of your products or services. Therefore, the goal of this type of video is to encourage your customers to embrace your brand and become brand evangelists.

Examples of videos in the "delight" stage include:

- A thank you video in an email welcoming them into the community;
- An onboarding video to get them set up for success with their new purchase;
- Or, and this is a much heftier strategic initiative, building out a library of educational product training videos to cater to consumers who prefer self-service or want to expand their expertise. For example, HubSpot offers a marketing software certification course that takes you on a tour of the marketing product and demonstrates how to use the tools to create and implement a cohesive inbound marketing strategy. There's even a case study at the end of the course which features an example of what an inbound marketing strategy looks like in action. Paint a picture of what success looks like for your audience, then help them transform by teaching them how to do it. Empowering your customers to become successful users of your products or services creates well-informed, educated evangelists of your brand.

And that's it, an overview of how to successfully implement video at every stage of the inbound methodology. Before we finish, here's a pro tip to keep in mind: Get creative and test various video types to see what works best for you and your business. For example, maybe your audience prefers longer videos in the attract stage - in this case, consider creating longer educational videos and embedding them at the top of your website pages as an attract stage play. The key here is to experiment and document your findings. This way, as you grow, you can focus on growing better, improving your experience, which your audience will appreciate.

If you're looking for a place to start, consider creating at least two videos for the attract, engage, and delight stages. Don't forget to include call-to-actions to help lead your audience through their buyer's journey and into the role of promoter of your brand. Over time, you can improve based on conversion rates and the content gaps you discover.

## Video 3: Tips for getting started with video marketing

Getting started with creating video content can be a daunting task, especially if you've never created an effective video before. But remember, the first time is always the hardest. It will get easier. As Mark Twain once said, "The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one."

Now you may be asking yourself, "What are the complex, overwhelming tasks that you need to break down into manageable tasks to get started with creating video content?" Let's check in with Wipster, a video workflow and collaboration platform, on their checklist of tips for getting started with video marketing.

Know your audience and the type of video is best suited to them.

Start by defining very clearly the persona of your audience: Imagine the person on the other side of the camera. Who are they? And what do they care about?

When it comes to promoting video on different channels (like, your website, social media, or email etc.) you want to make sure your content fits with the spirit of the channel as well as how people behave on that particular channel.  Sometimes it helps to think of LindkedIn, Twitter and other social media as TV channels—HBO versus ESPN versus History channel. Each has a different vibe and content style.

Create goals for each video.

Videos can have both softer goals like brand awareness as well as clearly defined, concrete business goals. It helps to create a framework for your goals to keep them top of mind and organized. At Wipster, we use a goal framework with three categories: 1. brand moment, 2. business moment, and 3. an entertainment moment.

Goals related to "brand moments" have to do with company milestones, new product features, a new team member, or other company- related news we'd like our audience to know about. Goals related to "business moments" address the desired business outcome from the video—and tend to be more tactical in nature. Goals related to entertainment moments have to do with making the content entertaining for your audience.

For example, we created a Wipster Portland Office video and defined its goal framework as follows:

- Brand moment: Wipster mission and office expansion in the US
- Business moment: promote roles we're recruiting and hiring for in Portland
- Entertainment moment: behind the scenes/piece to cam style and humorous look at our quirky culture and obsession with LaCroix

Determine topics for videos.

Before choosing specific topics for a video series or video blog, it's much easier to think in terms of "collections." Collections are like a miniseries covering a set of topics that are indirectly related to your business but of interest and relevance to your specific audience.

Come up with a list of questions that can influence what your video is going to be– very similar to how you approach the content creation process when blogging. The goals are twofold:

- To create an ongoing relationship with your audience and establish credibility.
- Increase the number of people who discover your company through organic search for your topics on google.

You can check out a couple of examples of content collections on Wipster's YouTube page. Wipster is a video collaboration platform for creative video and marketing teams so our video series—or "collections" are meant to establish trust and build community with our audience of video creators and video marketing teams:

The actual titles of your topics should be written based on what people might actually search for in Google so that people can find your content organically. For example, "Choosing a microphone for a remote interview" or "how to place video inside of text." You will pair your videos with a blog post for maximum impact on your audience—and search rankings.

Own the video process at your business.

The marketing team might ultimately be responsible for video content but who specifically will own the content calendar and manage the people, goals, and timelines? When it comes to establishing who you'll need from your team, the "video process" can be broken down into 3 main categories:

- Project management —which refers to the content plan and schedule as well as different people involved week to week
- Video Making—which is the actual shooting and editing of footage
- And Sharing– which refers to video sharing and publishing, tracking analytics, and communicating with viewers as they react and respond)

If you're a bigger company, you might have a couple of people or teams involved, and if you're a smaller team don't worry - these responsibilities can all fall under the same person.

Project manage video making and sharing.

You can have the absolute best and most strategic video strategy in the world, but in our experience, if you don't have the following pillars—the three "Cs"– in your process, you'll struggle to get things off the ground:

- Commitment: You absolutely have to commit for a certain amount of time and a certain number of pieces of content - don't worry about the audience size or views, the value is in the video collection as a whole.
- Calendar: Making video routine and part of the schedule is so important! Block everyone's calendars for a set amount of time per week to dedicate to the initiative.
- Content: map out key themes and think through how they build on each other and other events or happenings going on in the organization or industry.

Create a repeatable process.

Let's review two key categories when it comes to video software and hardware:

- Production
- Post-production

Production has to do with all of the items needed to create a script and actually shoot the video: a phone or video camera, mic, lighting, people or items to film, a location to shoot in, etc. Post-production refers to what occurs after the initial shooting or recording. This is where collaboration and review occur as you stitch footage and music and graphics together to tell a story. Once you have your final, approved version, you can then distribute the video for people to see.

Analyze and measure videos.

When it comes to video, there are three metrics that we care most about: Views, viewing length, and engagement. And at Wipster, we use the 10,10, 10 rule to measure success.

Audience Views - shoot for 10% - out of all the people who could have watched it, how many did? If your video will appear in front of a targeted audience of 500 people, did at least 50 watch it?

Viewing Duration: out of that 10%, did they stick with it? Or did they drop off after 10 seconds? This is important and lets you know whether your target audience is interested in the content itself! And helps you know what to do/not do in the next one.

Engagement—in the form of likes, comments, or shares. Did at least 10% of people who watched the video feel inspired to act and engage with you?  You can always nudge people during the video to comment below the video or add overlays to the video with specific calls to action like "start a free trial"

Final thoughts.

Video marketing is a lot like other forms of marketing: you must put your audience first and curate video collections that benefit them and also helps you hit your three "moment" goals.

More than anything, the one takeaway we'd love for you to have is that video should be a routine part of your life now! Simply commit to a daily or weekly video, embrace the feedback and just keep iterating.

## Video 1: Why is Guest Blogging a Critical Piece of Your Blogging Strategy?

Hi there, I'm Justin with HubSpot Academy.

Guest blogging is an effective tactic that helps your business in more ways than one. Not only does it help you build authority as a thought leader within your industry, but also, and more importantly, it's a powerful way to optimize your website for search when done correctly.

Before moving on, let's define what it means to guest blog. Guest blogging is writing and publishing an article on someone else's website or blog. You may be asking yourself, "Why on earth would you take the time to write a blog post for someone else's site as opposed to your own?"

Here are three reasons why you should consider guest blogging as a key facet to your business's overall content strategy.

First, it expands your audience.

Websites with a helpful blog most likely have a dedicated audience. Guest blogging allows you the opportunity to share your thoughts, ideas, and expertise with this particular audience. Without guest blogging, it could be difficult and would likely require more time and resources to reach this audience.

*lưu lượng truy cập giới thiệu*

Second, it increases referral traffic to your website.

The goal should be to educate and inspire with every guest blog post you write. Doing so helps position you as a thought leader in your industry. And if people see you as a trusted advisor, then it's likely they're going to want more, which leads to targeted visitors coming to your website.

For example, take a look at this graph which shows incoming referral traffic to a website page I published in March of 2018. Notice the spike of visitors coming to the page in May 2018. That's because of a guest blog post I wrote that included a link back to my website, which led to over 600 visits from that post in just one month.

And third, which is the most important reason of all in my opinion, it helps your website's search engine optimization. *optimize SEO*

Guest blogging is a great opportunity to build inbound links back to your website. An inbound link is a link coming from another site to your own website. Inbound links help increase domain authority. Domain authority is a prediction of how well your website will rank on search engines. The higher your domain authority, the more credible your content will appear to search engines. And if search engines think your content is credible, then it's likely you'll see an increase in rankings.

Guest blogging was the main tactic I used to get one of my educational website pillar pages to claim the number one position on Google for broad terms with high monthly search volume like "DIY truck camper" and "truck cap camper."

I did this by writing 24 educational guest blog posts for relevant, high-authoritative websites over the course of 12 months and building links back to that specific page. And if you're curious about the impact, this page received over 16,500 visits from search engines over the past 12 months, and my organic traffic keeps going up and to the right month over month. Just the way I like it.

So if your goal is to get your website ranking on search engines, then you really need to create a guest blogging strategy. Doing so will help you and your business grow better.

## Video 2: How to Create a Guest Blogging Strategy

Before getting started with guest blogging, it's important to outline a strategy to make sure you get the most out of your efforts.

Let's review five things you should consider when creating a guest blogging strategy for your business.

First, your goal should be to write for websites that have higher domain authority. Writing for websites with higher domain authority will ensure you're getting the most value out of your guest blogging efforts from an SEO perspective.

Let's simplify this by splitting the domain authority ranges of sites into three tiers.

Tier one, a website with a domain authority between 0 to 20.

These websites are either fairly new or are not active. Inbound links from these sites won't make that much of an SEO impact on your site. However, don't count these sites out. They're generally going to be the easiest to secure a guest blogging spot. If you do write for a site with lower domain authority, then do it strategically. For example, if the site is new and up and coming, then consider writing a guest post for them as it could pay off in the long run.

Tier two, a website with a domain authority between 21 to 70.

These are the websites you should be aiming for. Websites in this tier generally have a healthy dedicated audience and enough domain authority to justify your content creation time. Keep in mind, the higher the domain authority, the more writing guidelines you'll likely receive and the more difficult it will be to secure a guest blog opportunity.

And tier three, a website with a domain authority above 71.

These websites generally have top-industry blogs. Unless you're already well-known in your space or have a contact already established at the company, then steer clear of these sites in the near term. I'm someone who loves a challenge, but you want to set yourself up for success.

You may be asking yourself, "How can I find the domain authority of a website?" You can do research with Moz's Link Explorer. This tool will tell you the domain authority of any website you plug into it. Plus, you get 10 free queries per month.

Second, syndicate your educational content.

It takes a lot of time to create a valuable piece of educational content. An efficient way to get the most out of your guest blogging efforts is to first create a valuable piece of content on your own website, then repurpose and package it to provide new value and meaning for someone else. And when I say repurpose and package, I don't mean simply copy-and-paste. Use snippets from your original content as a framework to build a new narrative. This approach is how I was able to get my website's digital nomad website pillar page ranking from the fifth to the first page of Google in two months.

Here's a step-by-step approach on how I did it.

To start, I created an educational website pillar page on how to become a digital nomad. A pillar page, which is also known as a content pillar, is a website page that covers a broad topic in depth and is linked to a cluster of related content. The page offers multiple sections of helpful content from job training for digital nomads to working tips for digital nomads. Each section of content has an anchor link at the top of the page, making it easy for people to navigate from section to section. And creating long-form sectioned content like this makes it that much easier to repurpose and package it in the future.

Next, my wife, Ariele, and I repurposed and expanded the content from the pillar page into a practical step-by-step guide on how to live and work from the road. This way, people who enjoy the pillar page's content and want to continue learning and start a transformation of their own have a resource to help them through their journey.

The digital nomad guide is a comprehensive resource that covers every major topic in-depth. It took us about eight weeks to create. Once we finished we knew we needed to build authority to our pillar page through guest blogging and inbound links. Instead of starting from scratch, we repurposed content from our guide to produce a series of guest blog posts. In fact, we were able to create three high-value guest blog posts in one week.

One recommendation when doing this: Consider optimizing your guest blog posts for the keywords you want to rank for.

For example, notice how a couple of our guest posts start with "becoming a digital nomad." This is a high-traffic keyword that we want to rank for on search engines. If you're writing on websites that have higher domain authority than your own site, then it's likely your guest blog post will initially rank higher than your website. That is, until you build the authority on your own site page.

Third, think critically about your link-building efforts.

Inbound links are not created equal. Here's a list of ways to navigate how to get the most out of the links you include in your guest authored content.

To start, link to specific pages on your website.

A page with multiple quality inbound links will rank higher on search engines than one with no links.

If your goal is to get a specific educational page on your website ranking in search engine results, then build links to it.

Next, link to educational content.

I understand that you might want your landing pages to rank on search engines, but using guest blogging as a way to build authority to them is not the answer. Most websites won't link to landing pages because it doesn't provide value to their audience. Instead, link to something like an educational pillar page that promotes the landing page you're trying to send people to.

Next, include your most valuable inbound link near the top of the page, if possible.

Search engine bots crawl through a page's content the way a human would read it – left to right and top to bottom. Links that are found near the top of the page pass more authority to the page they're linking to. Each link thereafter will have a reduction in value.

On this note, if you're able to be descriptive in the anchor text, then do so. Anchor text is the actual text of a link to a web page. On most websites, this text is usually dark blue and underlined, or purple if you've visited the link in the past. Anchor text helps search engines understand what the destination page is about; it describes what you will see if you click through.

Most high-quality websites will only allow one link to your website. Keeping this in mind, make it a goal to include one high-quality link to your website per post and try your best to naturally fit it in near the top.

With the rest of the links in your post, consider:

- Linking to other guest blog posts that you've authored on other websites when relevant. This is important for two reasons: First, you can build authority to your guest blogging portfolio. This way, you're not technically building links back to your site. Instead, you're building links to pages that link to your pages, which will still help from an SEO perspective. And secondly, this gives you a reason to check in with those you've guest blogged for with an update on how you're supporting their content with inbound links. Information like this could help strengthen the relationship with those you collaborate with as it shows them you're invested in your content on their site.
- Another way to effectively use links in your post is to link to other relevant content on the website you're writing the guest post for. This may take a little more time to do, but it's a nice touch that your contact will appreciate.

And lastly, expand your guest blogging portfolio.

The first inbound link you receive from a website will be the most valuable for your site from an SEO perspective. This doesn't mean you should be a one-and-done guest blogger for a website. However, if your guest blogging goal is to increase your website's domain authority, then it's better to have a more diverse group of inbound links as opposed to all of them coming from one source.

Fourth, provide outstanding service to your guest authored content.

You should never publish and forget your guest blogs. Once your content publishes, that's really just the beginning of your ongoing support for it.

Here are a few things to consider paying attention to.

To start, engage with people in the comments.

Really take the time to provide value and delight those who have questions or comments. If a reader is going to take the time to read your post and engage with you, then you should do the same. This could be further explaining something you wrote about or encouraging them to reach out to you personally to learn more.

Keep in mind, it's possible you'll get people who challenge your content. Whether they're right or wrong, that's not the point. Always be professional when engaging with others online. Getting defensive and lashing out won't do you any good. You should welcome a healthy debate, as it keeps people engaging with the comments section. The more comments a blog post gets, the better—comments keep it relevant.

Next, engage with people on social media.

Similar to the comments section, social media is another place where you'll want to monitor and engage with people sharing your content. Again, if a reader is going to take the time to engage with you, then you should do the same.

This should be fairly easy to keep track of if people tag you in the post. In this case, you'll get a notification and can respond accordingly.

That being said, not everyone will tag you on social media when sharing your content. Instead, you can find this content by doing a search on that channel using the keywords from your post. For example, I did a search on "pillar content," a recognizable keyword from my guest post title, and found this tweet.

And fifth, nurture the relationship with your contact.

It can take time to source high-quality guest blog opportunities. Once you land one, do everything you can to create a strong relationship with your contact. People do business with people they know, like, trust, and value. Make it a point to create a positive, meaningful experience for your contact. Doing so could lead to another future guest blog post, or, even better, another guest blog opportunity sourced by your contact.

And that's it, five things to consider when creating a guest blogging strategy to ensure you're getting the most value out of your efforts. Keep these in mind when outlining a guest blogging process of your own.

## Video 3: How to Find Guest Blogging Opportunities

It can take a lot of time and energy to find websites that accept guest blog authors. On top of that, you want to find the right opportunities to make sure it's worth your while.

Luckily there's a list of things you can do to help you find ripe opportunities as opposed to guessing and hoping for the best.

To start, define your niche.

Make it a habit to write for websites that are relevant to your industry. This is important for two reasons:

1. It ensures you'll reach a target audience that you want to get in front of;

2. And building links from external websites to your site will be more valuable if they're related.

Let's assume your business sells financial planning services. In this case, writing for a fashion blog might not be the most effective approach. However, that doesn't mean you can't identify opportunities that exist outside your market. There's definitely a way to get creative and find overlap between two semi-related niches.

For example, your financial planning company could write for a home improvement website by creating a post on "financial planning tips for your upcoming home renovation."

With this approach, you can strategize opportunities that come your way and justify whether or not they're beneficial for you. But remember, don't stray too far off the path. The more relevant your website is to the site you want to write for, the better from an SEO perspective.

Next, find relevant websites that allow guest authors.

There are multiple ways you can approach this. Let's review each in depth.

First, do research on Google.

Perform a series of search queries on Google. To make it easier for you, consider using a formula, like [your market] + "guest post." But don't just limit it to one search—get creative and exhaust your options, like [your market] + "contributing writer" or "submit content" or "writers wanted" and so on.

Going back to our financial planning example, this is what a sample search engine result page looks like.

There's a wealth of opportunity in here to get you started. You can see specific websites as well as a lists of websites that may offer guest blogging opportunities with just one search. You'll even notice there are specific guest bloggers in the industry that're mentioned, which brings me to my second suggestion: Research potential influencers.

Are there names of influencers in your industry that keep you informed and up to date? If so, then research them and learn about their guest authoring opportunities.

You can do this by doing a search on Google with [their name] + "blog." If they've written for multiple websites, then Google will find them.

To take it a step further, you could copy and paste the first sentence in their author bio and use that to do another search query on Google. This could help you find more blogs they've written for.

Third, do research on Twitter.

Using the same logic as doing research on Google, go to Twitter and type in a formula like [your market] + "guest blog." This approach can help you find new influencers to research as well as websites that allow guest blogging.

Fourth, research websites that your buyer personas might visit often.

Are there specific websites that you know your ideal audience visits frequently? What better way to get in front of them than to have one of your guest blog posts pop up in their Twitter feed or show up in a newsletter in their email inbox?

And fifth, prioritize outreach to websites based on domain authority.

Websites with high domain authority will provide more value in regards to building inbound links. My recommendation: Focus on websites with domain authority of 70 or below.

Do your research and make a list of websites you want to pitch with a guest blog idea and document their domain authority. This will help you better strategize your approach on who to reach out to first. If you're just getting started, then maybe consider getting your feet wet with lower domain authority opportunities that are easier to secure.

Then once you start building a portfolio of work, as well as build up your confidence for a guest blogging process, then you can approach the top-industry websites with a domain authority of 71 and above.

And there you have it. Now you know how to go about finding guest blogging opportunities. And to help you get started with some blogs that are looking for guest authors, I've added a helpful link to the additional resources section. So get after it.

## Video 4: How to Secure a Guest Blogging Spot

Securing a guest blogging spot is a game of persistence and patience. It's going to take more than blasting an email to a bunch of prospects to secure a worthwhile opportunity. The best way to approach the process is to consider it as if you're building a new relationship because that's exactly what you're doing.

Remember, you need them more than they need you, so you're the one who's going to have to make an effort initially. Take the time to form a connection with a genuine intention because once a bond is formed, that's when the magic happens.

Let's review some tips on how to go about building a relationship with a company that can ultimately lead to a guest blogging opportunity.

First, do research on the companies you want to write for.

There's a few things to consider here. You can start by going directly to their blog and review the last two to three months of published content. Make note of the authors in each post. Which one writes the most content? Are you able to find a senior staff writer or possibly a manager? This information will help you identify either one or several people you should consider building a relationship with.

Researching LinkedIn can be another helpful way to learn more about contacts and their role at a company. You can do this by searching for the company name, then click the "See all employees on LinkedIn" link on their business profile page.

Second, engage with companies you want to write for before pitching an idea.

The goal here is to get on the company's radar before reaching out to them formally. Here's a few ways you can do that.

Find a recent blog post by a member of their team that you intend to build a relationship with and share it on social media. And I don't just mean liking or RT their content on Twitter. That's not going to make you stand out. Actually take the time to read their content so you can provide a helpful anecdote in your social post. When crafting your social post, consider:

- Speaking to the author directly and tagging them in the post;
- Listing one helpful piece of information or quote from their article;
- Including the link to their article;
- And tagging the company.

A piece of advice, make sure to tag the author as well as the source of where you read their content. Why? Because tagging a profile on social channels like Twitter gets you in their notification feed, making it easier for them to respond to you, especially if they don't know who you are.

Then, once you've engaged with them on social media, write a thoughtful response as a comment on their actual blog post. Instead of just saying "great post!," tell them why you liked it. Consider even offering a few tips of your own if it makes sense and provides value. If you want to keep the conversation going, then consider asking them a question in your comment. However, make it about the post and building a relationship with them.

I recommend doing this one to two times before actually reaching out via email to a contact at the company. This way, you have something to talk about as a conversation starter – how much you like their content.

One last thing you can do if you really want to stand out is send a warm email to the person one to two weeks before you're going to pitch them an idea. Keep it short and concise, and focused on them. If it's too long, then they might not read it because it could look like you're trying to sell them something.

Here's an example of something you can use and customize to your situation:

- Start by Introducing yourself;
- Let them know which blog post you liked and link to it;
- Tell them that the post helped you;
- Explain something specific you liked in the article;
- Thank them;
- And end with a salutation.

You're not asking for anything yet. You're just telling them how much you appreciate them.

If you're having a hard time finding the person's email address, then you have a few options to find it.

You can do it with a tool like Volia Norbert. All you need to do is input the person's name and company website URL.

Another option is to do research manually. I learned this trick early on in my career when I was trying to connect with certain contacts at various companies, and their email address wasn't offered anywhere online.

To start, go to Google and type in this formula: [contact's first and last name] + ["@" followed by company's website URL] + "email address." If you can't find them that way, then try finding an example of the email nomenclature of one of their team members, then create that string.

For example, my @hubspot.com email address is not easily found online. However, you can see that my friend and fellow HubSpot Academy teammate Kyle Jepson's email is kjepson@hubspot.com. Even though you may not know my email address, you know my name is Justin Champion, so you could try reaching out to me at jchampion@hubspot.com and see if that works.

One last thing before we move on, be careful not to go overboard and become a pest. Remember, the goal is to stay top of mind, not annoy them. If you look over eager, they could pick up on it, which could lead to them ignoring you.

Third, take the time to craft your pitch.

You have one chance to make a first impression of how you can be a potential valuable contributor to their website. Here's a list of things you can do to best prepare for an effective email pitch.

To start, know the website's author guidelines before sending your idea. Most high-quality blogs that accept guest posts will publish a list of guidelines. If you're having a hard time finding theirs, then just do a Google search for it by using [company name] + "guest blog guidelines."

If you want to secure a spot, then follow these guidelines closely and use it as a charter to formulate your pitch.

Next, make sure your topic offers unique value.

You can approach this a few different ways:

To start, how trendy is the topic? High-quality blogs love content that's hot right now.

Another way is to review the most popular posts on their blog. It's possible you can see this in their blog sidebar. If not, you can use a tool like Ahrefs that can list any blog's top-performing content.

If your goal is to write a high-quality blog post for a site, then make sure it's something they don't already have content for. If they do, then they may turn you down. That is, unless you frame the content in a unique way and call out how it could be helpful to their current blog content.

And lastly, consider offering ideas that you can repurpose from your content.

Unless bandwidth is not an issue for you, you need to consider how long it'll take to write a quality piece of content on a given topic. If you put in the time and effort to create great content on your own website, then you'll have the opportunity to recycle it in more ways than one.

Fourth, send a personalized email.

Don't waste people's time with an email that appears templatized. I get emails often from people looking to write for the HubSpot Academy User Blog. If the email appears impersonal, like it took the sender two minutes to write, I rarely read it.

Here's an example of an email you can send that shows you've taken the time to craft your ideas and you're serious about collaborating with them.

To start, introduce yourself.

Next, lead with how you admire their content. Call out a piece of content you particularly like and mention how you commented on it. If you sent them a warm email, then choose a different piece of content to show them that you're consuming their content regularly.

Next, explain why you're reaching out. Be clear that your intention it to write a guest blog post for their site.

Next, offer a few topic ideas that you can write. Then supplement those ideas with other types of content you can create if they have a need. To go a step further with optimizing this, consider listing topics that align with their top-engaged content.

Next, if you can find a list of their guest blog guidelines, then include how you'll write a unique topic for them that follows their process. I'd recommend linking their guidelines URL in your email. This shows you've actually seen the page.

Next, include a validation point by showing them the quality of your work. This could be showing them a guest post you've already written, a pillar page you've created on your website, and so on. To go a step further with optimizing this, make the example you include closely related to a topic you suggested earlier in your email.

And lastly, close with how you're looking forward to their response. I like to keep things friendly and show that I'm eager to get started soon.

And fifth, always be seeking new opportunities.

It can take time for people to respond to your email pitches. And it's likely they may not respond ever. Don't let this frustrate you. Prospecting guest blogs is about the forest, not the trees. The more opportunities you pitch, the more likely you are to secure a guest spot.

This means that you need to set an on-going guest blogging quota and stick to an outreach schedule to make it happen. If you're consistent in approach, then you're giving yourself the best chance at landing opportunities.

One piece of advice, don't give up. If you haven't guest blogged yet, then it can take some time to build a portfolio. But with each guest post you complete, the more you'll strengthen your portfolio. The stronger your portfolio, the more likely you'll be able to secure a guest blogging spot.

And that's it, five tips to securing high-quality guest posts. Now it's up to you to take these suggestions and apply them to your situation.

## Video 5: How to Write a Guest Blog Author Bio

When writing a guest blog post, generally you'll have the opportunity to write a short author bio about yourself. Think of it as your personal elevator pitch. An elevator pitch is a 30-second memorable description of what you do and/or what you sell. You want to lead with your strongest attributes that are relevant to the audience. This is an important opportunity that you don't want to overlook because it's the one major facet of off-site branding you're able to control.

So where do you start when writing a guest post author bio? Before getting started, there are two things to consider:

First, follow the instructions given to you by your contact.

It's possible the site you're writing for will offer guidelines for your author bio. For example, your author bio could be up to 100 words, one link to your website, and a high-resolution headshot. Make sure to follow these instructions and use them as the baseline for creating your author bio.

Once you have confirmation on your guest post, make it a point to ask the person you're working with for guest author bio guidelines. Doing so early on in the process will help reduce back and forth via email, making it easier and pleasant to work with you.

And second, research the format for other guest bloggers on their site.

An efficient way to get started with writing your author bio is to review several author bios on their site, preferably guest authors if you can find them. You can do this by navigating to a blog post on their site. The author bio will exist either on the actual blog post or can be accessed by clicking the author's name, which will take you to their author bio on a dedicated page on the site.

Plus, reviewing other examples can help give you creative ideas on where to start when crafting one of your own.

However, it's possible there may not be an order or consistency across author bios on the site. In this case you'll have more creative freedom. Although, it still helps to have guardrails to ensure you're being effective with your author bio.

Here are eight best practices to consider when writing an effective author bio. To help us visualize what this looks like in action, let's dissect an author bio I use when writing guest blog posts for Content Marketing Institute as an example.

First, tell them about yourself.

This should be personal and career focused. For example, in my author bio, I explain that:
- I'm the Content Professor for HubSpot Academy; this is what I do for work.
- I'm a published author of a book, Inbound Content, which is a relevant read for this audience.

- And I'm one half of Wild We Wander, my alternative lifestyle brand.

At a minimum, make sure to include your title and company you work for. Additionally, it's best not to go over the top with jargon or buzzwords in your title, like if I called myself a Content Wizard as opposed to a Content Professor. Doing so could result in my audience rolling their eyes and me losing credibility with them.

Moreover, use acronyms sparingly. If you're an SEO Director, then write Search Engine Optimization Director. If you're a PPC analyst, then write Pay Per Click Analyst.

Next, choose a high-resolution photo of yourself.

Include a professional yet casual photo of yourself. Make sure it's one where you're smiling – you don't want your photo to look like a mugshot.

I chose a high-resolution photo that's true to me and my style.

Next, keep it short and concise.

Make it a habit to write an author bio that's 100 words or less. This is more than enough words to form an effective elevator pitch for yourself. It generally works out to be 3–5 sentences.

This example is 75 words and four sentences in length.

Next, explain what you do in the third person.

Your author bio should be written as if someone else were talking about you. Lead with your name as opposed to "I".

Notice how I refer to myself as "Justin," "he," and "him" in my author bio.

Next, include an element of validation.

You want your audience to see you as a credible source. In order to do this, you need to give them a reason to see you as a thought leader within the industry. You can do this by offering a performance stat or an award you received if it's relevant.

For example, I chose to include that I'm the creator of HubSpot Academy's Content Marketing Certification Course, which at the time had awarded over 25,000 certifications to professionals across the globe. This is something that can help me build credibility with my audience if they don't know who I am yet.

Next, provide something interesting or authentic about yourself.

Remember, we're all human. Offer something personal about yourself that helps the reader better connect with you.

In this case, I led with my purpose. I'm dedicated to educating and inspiring the world how to become better storytellers.

Next, offer social media channels where readers can engage with you.

Don't list all  your social channels– just list the top one to two channels where people can engage with you. Make sure the channels you choose are ones that you monitor and engage with people on regularly.

For me that's Twitter and LinkedIn. Make sure to hyperlink the social channel in your description with your social profile link. This way people can easily find you by clicking the link.

And lastly, but most importantly, include at least one inbound link to your website.

Remember, guest blogging is a great way to build inbound links back to your website. Some sites will only offer a link back to your website in the author bio, so it's important to be strategic about your link choice.

When choosing which link or links to include in your author bio, here are a few things to consider:

- Link to your website. At a minimum, link to your homepage. However, you could link to a specific site page if it's educational and relevant to your article or audience.
- And don't link to a landing page. Doing so could result in the site removing your link altogether.

For example, I included a link in my author bio to Wild We Wander's website as it's helpful and relevant to my audience. Plus, I'm always looking for opportunities to build authority to my site.

In the event you're writing for a site that won't allow you to link back to your website, don't consider this a loss. This will happen. Focus on the opportunity you're getting to educate and inspire a new audience. Do your best to create a meaningful experience. If you do, then people will come looking for more.

And that's it, eight best practices to consider when writing an effective author bio.

## Video 1: Building a promotion plan

Hi, I'm Corey with HubSpot Academy. Let's talk about building a promotional plan for your content. In this video, you'll learn how to manage your content, match your content promotion to the best audience, and keep track of your promotion plan with helpful tools.

One of the biggest challenges marketers face when creating content is visibility. It can be difficult to get your content in front of enough people to make the time and effort you put in worth the investment. Creating great content isn't enough. A successful content strategy should include a promotional plan that doesn't just share your content, but strategically shares content with the people who will benefit most from it. To create a successful content strategy, don't simply promote content across your available channels. Strategically share content with the people who will benefit from it most.

When your content isn't promoted to the right people, on the right channel, at the right time, it likely sits there on your website, blog, or landing page with minimal traffic. There's nothing worse than putting a ton of time and effort into producing great content only for traffic to fall flat. More traffic turns into more conversions on your content, leads for your sales team, and money for your business.

Did you know almost half of your customers likely view three to five pieces of content before engaging in your sales process? This shows just how crucial it is to create and promote content to your audience. An effective promotion plan will turn visitors into leads and leads into customers.

When building a promotion plan for your content, remember – not all channels are created equal. The messaging you use to promote your content should keep the audience and platform in mind. Let's take a look at successful content promotion in action.

TED Conferences is a media organization that shares talks online for free under the slogan "ideas worth spreading." In this TED talk, zoologist Lucy Cooke takes us inside the strange life of the world's slowest mammal – the sloth. To share this content, TED leveraged their social channels to promote the talk. Even though they were sharing the same content, the copy was adjusted to fit within each of their social platforms.

For example, on Twitter, they write "Y'all, it's time to talk about sloths." Twitter's allowed character count limits how much you can say on this platform. So, TED's promotion is short, conversational, and intriguing – a perfect match for Twitter's audience.

On Instagram, however, TED takes a completely different approach. Since Instagram is an image-driven platform, they decided to use a picture of a sloth to get viewers' attention. Instagram supports long-form text, so they decided to share a sneak-peek of Lucy's talk in the image caption.

Then, on Facebook, TED altered their writing style again to resonate with a different audience. In this post, they say, "Get your sloth on this weekend." It's timely, relevant, and funny – the perfect way to recommend their content to watch over the weekend.

Even though TED is promoting the same piece of content on these three social channels, they updated the messaging to resonate with specific audiences.

Let's take a look at some challenges you might face when creating a promotional strategy. Here are a few questions to get you started.

First, ask yourself: “What content do I have available to promote?” What content do you have already, what content are you working on, and what content is coming up soon? It’s helpful to track all of your content in one place so that you know what’s available to promote to your audience.

Use a content audit and planning sheet to keep track of all your content creation efforts. Check out the resources section below for a Google Sheets template. Start off by conducting an audit of all the content you currently have. Ebooks, webinars, blog posts, everything – list them all out. Add the content format and topic into your sheet to make your content easily filterable.

To take this one step further, you could even track past performance of your promotion efforts in your content audit sheet, too. Use this sheet to identify what promotion tactics performed well for your existing content before. Use this past performance to guide you in the right direction when creating your promotion plan.

Next, ask yourself, “When should I promote this content?” By understanding what promotion strategies work best on which channels, you can determine when the optimal time is to share your content with your audience. If you don’t know this already, don’t worry. The optimal time to publish and share content will vary from business to business. This is why experimentation is so important.

Here’s a pro tip. When experimenting with the best times to share content with your audience, optimize for engagement. By tracking engagement, such as likes, comments, and shares, you’ll learn what time your audience is most active online and most willing to engage with interesting content.

Another thing to consider is how frequently you promote your content. Again, there’s no perfect answer to how often you should share your content. However, this is something that can be learned by testing different strategies and studying how your audience responds to the content you share. Remember, your audience across channels doesn’t want the same amount of content. It is likely that your email database only wants a maximum of one piece of content a week, while your followers on Twitter are interested in seeing content from you daily. Play around with your channels and experiment with the frequency of your posts to find the optimal plan for your business.

Next, ask yourself, "Which persona can benefit from this content?" A buyer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer based on real data and some select educated speculation about customer demographics, behavior patterns, motivations, and goals. When building a promotional plan, it is crucial to share content that will resonate with your audience on the channels they're already on. This will maximize the content performance by getting the right eyes on your content.

Once you understand the personas that you are trying to reach with your promotional efforts, you want to ask yourself, “How and where does this persona consume content?” Which channels are best for this type of content to reach this persona? Not all content is created equal, and not all content is effective on every channel. Take a step back to understand your persona’s motivations, goals, and challenges. Adapt the messaging on each channel to match it.

“Is this persona most active on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram?” Is this persona searching for information on your website? Listening to content on your podcast? Choosing the right channels to promote your content on will significantly improve the chances of your content being discovered by the intended persona.

Then, ask yourself “How can my messaging resonate with this persona?” Create custom messaging for each promotional effort that resonates with the intended audience. Promotional efforts on different channels shouldn't sound or look the same. Be sure to customize your messages on each channel to resonate with the personas you're trying to reach.

At this point, you might be wondering: “Why don’t I just share all of my content on all of my channels?” While this may seem like a good way to get the most eyes on your content, it might not offer the best experience to your audience. Your audiences across platforms are probably not the same. They’re looking for unique content and messaging that resonates with who they are. And if your audience follows you across multiple channels, you don’t want them to see the same message on your social channels and in their inbox. An effective promotional plan will deliver unique value to all of your audiences, even when promoting the same content.

For example, one easy way to improve your content promotion on Facebook is to refrain from sharing the same posts from Instagram. It’s so easy to do – with just a click of a button you can share your content on both networks at the same time. But just because it’s easy doesn’t mean you should do it. You’ll see better results by taking the time to craft a custom message and promote curated content on each of your promotional channels.

Keeping track of all of these promotional elements can be difficult to manage. Scaling these efforts can be even more challenging. Thankfully, there are many tools out there for managing your content promotion.

Trello, for example, is a great tool to use to build out your content calendar and track the progress of your content creation process and promotional plan. Trello is a free web application that manages projects in a visual and collaborative way. If you want to learn how to use Trello for your business, check out the guide to digital transformation in the resources section.

Google Calendar is another great way to manage content promotion internally. You can create events for each content piece that is being promoted, log which channels the content is being promoted on, and link to relevant assets. Plus you can share your calendar with your entire team too.

In the resources section, you'll find a number of downloadable resources for organizing your social media, editorial, and content calendars with Excel and Google Sheets.

By asking yourself these questions and tracking your efforts with the right tools, you'll maximize your content performance with a promotional strategy that works.

**Video 2: Promoting content organically**

When creating a content promotion strategy, organic promotion offers a number of ways to expand the reach of your content. Organic promotion is the kind of promotion that doesn't cost any money – other than the time you spend doing the work. In this video, let’s walk through ten ways you can promote your content organically.

First, search engine optimization. Optimizing your content makes it discoverable by top search engines like Google. The methods you use to optimize your content, however, will vary widely depending on the type of content you are promoting. By following SEO best practices, you'll increase your blog's Google rank, your YouTube videos' discoverability, and more. But at its core, your SEO efforts will likely revolve around a piece of content and a landing page that hosts the content. Here are a few strategies you can use to successfully promote your content in organic search.

At a high level, optimize your content for the specific topics and keywords you want to be known for. By building brand authority around these core topics, you'll surface your content to people searching for solutions your company can offer. Building a network of connected and related content builds a topic cluster. This is something that both search engines and people reading your content will appreciate. Connecting related content in topic clusters will raise the authority of not just one piece of content but also all other pieces of content in the cluster. If one piece of content ranks well, the ranking of other related and connected pieces of content will rise through the ranks as well.

Here's what this looks like. Groove Commerce is an ecommerce-focused inbound agency. To optimize their content for search, they used the topic cluster framework. This Inbound Marketing for eCommerce: The Complete Guide is their pillar page content. Essentially, this pillar page acts as one long and comprehensive educational resource on their website that serves as their north star resource on the specific topic, "Inbound marketing for ecommerce." Because they offer so much valuable content on this page, and they've linked a cluster of related blog content found on their website to this page, it ranks well on Google. In this case, Groove claims the featured snippet as well as the number one organic position on Google for their specific topic they intended to rank for. Implementing this strategy can have a huge impact on your content's performance in organic search.

By answering a question in the form of a detailed list, can go after the featured snippet. These results appear as the top result on Google's search engine results pages and are designed to give users quick access to information without having to click a link. In this example, HubSpot's blog post, "How to Develop a Content Strategy," receives a featured snippet in Google for the search phrase "how to do content marketing." Within the blog post, HubSpot directly answers this question with a numbered list. This best practice makes it more likely for you to receive a featured snippet with your blog content.

Acquiring backlinks, also known as inbound links, is another SEO practice that will expand the reach of your content. Inbound links are links that direct visitors from another website to yours. Develop an outreach strategy to pitch your content to relevant blogs and other websites. Acquiring inbound links from relevant high authoritative websites will increase your content's authority on search engines as well as drive referral traffic from a new audience. There are a ton of ways you can acquire backlinks to your content. Here are a few tips to get you started.

First, identify backlink opportunities. Backlink opportunities includes content from websites and blogs relevant to your industry. Look for content on these websites where linking to your content can add value. This could be unique data on a topic that your content provides, information about your business that you think could support their content, or even broken links that you'd like to replace with your own. My favorite tools to use to find backlink opportunities are Ahrefs and SimilarWeb. Both of these tools can be used to discover backlink opportunities by analyzing websites that are linking to your competitors' content or search for content that mentions your company but doesn't include a link. These are great places to start when building out a backlinking strategy.

Once you've identified a few opportunities, begin reaching out to the authors of the content you'd like links from. Structure your message by stating what content of theirs you were reading, tell them how much you liked it, state the opportunity you've identified for a potential backlink, and provide the resources you'd like them to link to if possible. You won't always receive a response, but when you do it can be the start of a beneficial relationship for both parties.

You don't necessarily have to do this with ALL your content – try it with your ten highest performing pieces of content and see what kind of a lift in referral traffic you see. Analyze what types of content are easier to get inbound links for and optimize your outreach for these types of content pieces. To scale your backlinking efforts, check out the guide by Backlinko in the resources below.

Also, in the resources section, you'll find HubSpot Academy's SEO training course if you want to learn more.

Second, bots and messaging apps are another great way to promote your content. On your website, you can convert website visitors with a bot that recommends your latest content offer. Consider programming your bot to deliver content that is relevant to the webpage that the visitor is on. For example, if the website visitor is on the pricing page, share a case study. If the visitor is interested in learning more about a specific product, deliver a piece of content that is relevant to that product, like in this example from PandaDoc. PandaDoc is a software you can use to create, send, e-Sign and store transactional documents all in one location. In this example, PandaDoc has programmed their bot to deliver relevant content to all types of website visitors. With just a few questions, the bot is able to identify why a visitor is on the website and surface content that will be the most helpful to them.

Messaging apps provide another opportunity to promote your content. Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, for example, are two great platforms to share your content on. When someone connects with your brand on one of these messaging platforms, you have the opportunity to share relevant content with them. In this example, The Wall Street Journal, a major news publication, uses Facebook Messenger to share their latest articles.

Using bots and messaging apps for marketing activities, also known as conversational marketing, is a practice that is still gaining traction in many industries. To learn all about conversational marketing, HubSpot Academy offers a course on the Fundamentals of Conversational Growth Strategy. I've linked to it in the resources below.

Third, email marketing is a tried and tested way to promote content. There are many best practices that you should follow, such as segmenting your audience, including descriptive copy and images, and more. A lot of marketing teams depend on their email lists to promote content. But maintaining a healthy email list can be a challenge. You don't want to saturate your email database. If you do, your emails won't perform well, and it will be an ineffective channel for content promotion. Try segmenting your database into a number of lists based on the type of content that is relevant to them. For example, you can create lists of people interested in regular blog updates, customers who might be interested in new products, and leads who might be interested in a webinar. By segmenting your email blasts, you'll see better email performance and keep your database happy and healthy.

Outward promotion isn't the only way you can use email to drive traffic to your content. You can also promote your content over email by including a link to your latest content offer in your email signature, like in this example from Klowd. Klowd is a software you can use to automate your home's security. In this example, Klowd uses their team's email signature to promote an upcoming webinar. Consider scaling this across your organization to maximize its impact, especially with teams that use email to communicate externally with your target audience.

To create your own email signature like this one, check out HubSpot's Email Signature Generator in the resources section below. Also in the resources section, you'll find the HubSpot Academy certification course on Email Marketing.

Fourth, social media is another common element of a successful promotion plan. There's a lot you can do on social platforms. Using hashtags, sharing visual content, and writing engaging copy are just a few ways you can optimize your social posts.

Let's take a look at an example that does a lot of things right. Dyson, a household appliances company, created video content to promote their air purifying products. The content is unique, engaging, and tells a story. Plus, they use subtitles so that viewers can read the content, too. To promote their video, they turned to Instagram where video content typically performs well. They wrote unique copy that gave viewers information about Paula Radcliffe, the influencer featured in the video. They've included a branded hashtag #DysonHome which allows viewers to discover some of Dyson's other content featuring their home products. And lastly, they aligned their content promotion with National Clean Air Day to raise awareness and show their support of clean air. All of these elements work together to create an effective promotion strategy.

However, it can be difficult to break through the noise on crowded social platforms. One way to increase engagement on your content is to join groups that are interested in topics relevant to your content. Contribute to discussions, give help to those seeking help, and use your content as a resource to solve the problems of the engaged and niche audience.

You can even create a group of your own. Take MobileMonkey, for example. They're a company that offers a marketing automation solution to run chatbots with Facebook Messenger. They've created Facebook groups on topics relevant to their business, like chatbot and messenger marketing. You can see they moderate it, but for the most part, the

community is able to run on its own – meaning that the bulk of the work is done once they set it up and build an audience.

Going live on social media is another way to promote your content organically. In this example from Hootsuite, a social media management platform, three experts go live on Facebook to share their trend predictions. In the caption, they've linked to a related downloadable resource. This is a great way to offer unique live content and promote your existing lead generation offers at the same time.

A lot goes into building an effective social media plan. HubSpot Academy offers a free Social Media Certification course if you'd like to learn more.

Fifth, live events and webinars offer yet another way for you to promote your content. You can promote your content face-to-face at in-person events. Try bringing your online content offline to build brand awareness and be viewed as a thought leader. This just might encourage guests to think of your brand when they have questions on a particular topic in the future. Or, you can even discuss your content on webinars and link back to your content in promotional and follow-up material for the webinar. This is a great way to continue to provide value to your webinar viewers even after the webinar is over.

Sixth, discussing your content on a podcast is another great way to get more exposure. If you or your company currently have a podcast, you can work with the team to find opportunities to promote related content. Let's check out an example (17:14) from the Inside Intercom podcast that promotes Intercom's Product Tours demo page. Plugging your content into the podcast discussion and directing listeners to an easy-to-remember web address can be an effective method to drive additional traffic to your content.

If you don't have a podcast, consider reaching out to other podcasters in your industry and share your content with them. Connect with relevant podcasters on LinkedIn, send them an email, or submit a contact form on their website. However you reach out, don't just share a link to your content. Instead, pitch yourself and your expertise. Share your vision and use your content to give them the resources they need to produce a great podcast. They just might find your content interesting enough to discuss on their podcast or invite you in for a session.

Seventh, partnering with an influencer in your industry is another way to expand your content's reach and discover new audiences. By building relationships with influencers you'll be able to identify opportunities to collaborate on new content in the future. Consider partnering with relevant influencers during the content creation process. This will get influencers invested in your content which will make them more willing to share your content with their networks. This type of influencer promotion is something we do a lot here at HubSpot Academy. And getting the attention of the influencers you want to work with can be a real challenge. Here are some tips on how to stand out.

First, you'll need to identify potential influencers you'd like to work with. To do this, you can read content on relevant industry websites, conduct a Google search for key topics and see who claims the top results, and search hashtags related to topics you're interested in.

Once you find some influencers who might be a good match for your business, do your homework. Get to know the influencer you're interested in working with and understand what they do. You'll be able to decide if an influencer is a good fit. Plus, you'll show the influencer that you understand them and how they'd be an asset to your campaign.

You should also build up the relationship over time. Begin organically interacting with the influencer on the social platforms they use. Comment on their blog posts, retweet their photos, and share their latest YouTube video with your audience. By showing your support before ever asking them for anything, you'll already be on the influencer's radar. This will make future partnerships easier to establish.

Co-creating content is a great way to work with influencers organically. In this example, B2B influencers Tim Soulo and Brian Peters from Ahrefs, an SEO tool company, and Buffer, a social media management company, come together to create a video campaign on increasing web traffic. This type of campaign is an asset for both companies and therefore receives double the promotion.

Eighth, word-of-mouth continues to be one of the most effective forms of promotion. Encourage viewers to engage with your content by sharing it with their friends, networks, and colleagues. A great way to encourage viewers to share your content is by featuring quotes throughout the content that they can click on and easily share with their networks. This is a more effective method than the typical social share icons because the curated content is more impactful and the custom messaging is more shareable than just a link to the content.

Here's what this looks like in action. In this guest post on Content Marketing Institute's blog, there are multiple quotes throughout the article that are highlighted with a click-to-tweet button. When readers click on the quote, the tweet populates with this quote and the source. It also links back to the original content. Your audience will be more inclined to share content by using quotes like this. The tweets feel more personal and fit better on this social platform.

The ninth way to promote your content is through content syndication. Content syndication is when you republish your existing content on additional websites. This way, you get more value out of the amazing content you've created simply by getting the same content in front of new audiences. You should always link back to the original content. This allows Google to understand where the content came from and can also direct readers back to your website. Here are a few ways you can syndicate your content.

You can syndicate your content on other websites by writing a guest blog on an industry website with your ideal audience.

You can also submit your content to be shared on additional websites that publish syndicated content, like Inc.com for example.

Or you can syndicate your content on additional publishing websites like Medium where you can replicate your content efforts to an entirely new audience.

Here's an example of content syndication in action. This blog post on "How to Build a Chatbot for Facebook Messenger in 5 Minutes" was shared on MobileMonkey's blog. To get even more eyes on this content, Larry Kim, CEO of MobileMonkey, shares this same blog post to his audience on Medium. This is a great way to get even more value out of the content you create.

The tenth and final way to promote your content is by repurposing. Consider turning a blog post into an infographic, or a webinar into an ebook. Plus, you can also provide additional resources in new formats. This will shake up the user experience and provide more value to your audience. You may remember Groove's pillar page example on "inbound marketing for ecommerce." In an effort to better engage visitors coming to their pillar page, Groove repurposed their page's content into a 7-part video series. This way, visitors can choose to learn by watching Groove's video series as opposed to reading the text on the page. How did this experiment perform? The average time-on-page for this page is over four minutes what it was without the videos. You are only limited by your imagination here, so make maximum use out of your resources by delivering your content in a variety of ways.

There are a lot of options available for promoting your content organically. With some hard work, creativity, and a great piece of content to promote, you can expand your reach and attract more leads to your business without spending loads of money.

**Video 3: Supplementing organic efforts with paid promotion**

Promoting your content with paid advertising is a great way to supplement your organic promotion efforts. Paid promotion allows you to identify, target, and reach new audiences that are more difficult to reach with organic promotion. In this video, we'll cover 4 ways you can use paid advertising to support your content, including advertising on Google, social media advertising, paid influencer promotion, and native advertising.

First, Google offers ways to promote your content through Google Ads.

You can create search ads for specific key phrases to promote your content. These search results appear at the top of the Google Search Engine Results Pages. This can be a great investment as the first page of Google's search engine results receives over 70% of the page traffic clicks. In this example, SmartBug Media receives two out of the three top placements in Google search for the term "inbound marketing personas." There are two placements that are organic. One is a featured snippet, and the other is an organic result for their marketing personas guide. However, another company called Social Bakers is currently receiving the top spot in Google with their search ad. To maintain brand authority for this search term, SmartBug Media could run their own ad for "inbound marketing personas" and have all three of the top search results. This could significantly increase traffic to their website.

Display ads offer another way to advertise your content with Google. Display ads offer great brand visibility and can be used to reach new audiences on websites related to your industry. In this example, Search Engine Land, a popular online publication that specializes in SEO topics, uses a display ad to promote their webinar to readers on the Marketing Land website. Be sure to match the content you promote with display ads to the audience of the websites you advertise on. In this example, Marketing Land readers are on the website to consume content, so using a display ad to promote even more content is an effective strategy. Keep this in mind when using display ads as part of your promotional plan.

Remarketing allows you to use Google's advertising platform to target ads to a specific audience who have visited your website before. By using remarketing to promote your content, you can encourage those who are already familiar with your brand to consume content. You can use remarketing turn these visitors into leads.

Next, social media platforms offer a variety of ways to advertise your content with paid promotion. Each platform has its own take on paid advertising, so let's go over what you can do on each one.

Facebook offers a number of paid advertising solutions for all types of content. With video ads, you can feature a promotional video while image ads, carousel ads, and slideshow ads feature image-based content. You can even use lead generation ads to collect customer information directly on Facebook's platform. In this example from Dollar Shave Club, a grooming subscription box, they use a slideshow ad to showcase their range of products. Consider using this type of ad to promote your content when you have multiple elements that you want to feature together. Or, you can boost your existing top-performing posts to deliver more likes, comments, shares, and views.

Plus, with Facebook's advertising platform, you can also run advertisements on Instagram. In this example from Volvo, a popular car brand, they created an interactive video ad. Videos are known to perform well on this platform. By making their content interactive Volvo encourages viewers to not only watch the ad but engage with their content.

Remarketing on Facebook can also be very successful. You can target and serve ads only to people who've previously visited your website, used your mobile app, or in some cases, visited and bought something from a physical retail location. This means you can be very strategic and efficient about who you're reaching and where you're spending your marketing budget. If you're new to advertising on Facebook, give remarketing a try first. Remarketing on Facebook is often the most effective form of paid advertising and has the highest return on investment.

Paid advertising on Twitter offers a number of ad formats depending on the type of content you'd like to promote, including video and mobile ads. This advertising platform can be used to expand the reach of your tweets, encourage software signups, get app downloads, and more. Here's an example from Rothy's, a clothing company. In this sponsored tweet, Rothy's checks off a lot of best practices on the platform – short and catchy text, a hashtag, a visual, and a link to their website content.

LinkedIn offers a professional environment where you can pay to share your content to new audiences. For example, you can deliver personalized ads with Sponsored Mail and generate leads with text ads. Here's an example of Sponsored Mail in action from my own inbox. In this example, LinkedIn is reaching out to encourage me to register for a live webinar discussion. This is a great use of paid advertising on LinkedIn to target specific personas to consume your content.

YouTube's advertising solutions are video-based. Ads on YouTube can reach potential customers who take action when viewing videos on the platform. If you don't have video content to promote, don't worry. YouTube has partnered with a number of creative platforms that you can work with to create your first ad. Here's an example of a video ad for reed.co.uk, a recruiting company. They've added a CTA to their ad that directs viewers to their website. This is a great strategy to use a YouTube ad to get more traffic to your website.

If you'd like to learn more about advertising on these social networks, check out the guides in the resource section.

Promoting your content with the help of influencers is yet another way you can pay to advertise your content. If you don't have an organic partnership with an influencer for the content you want to promote, or if this partnership doesn't include a promotion, you can pay relevant influencers to share your content with their audiences.

Here's an example of paid influencer promotion. In this Instagram post, influencer and outdoor enthusiast Callum Snape partners with Mazda, a car brand, to promote how Mazda vehicles can handle the snow. You can tell this is a paid promotion by the hashtag "sponsored" below the post's description. These types of influencer partnerships can have a huge reach – but always be sure that there is a strong match between the influencer's network and your target persona.

There are many tools out there that you can use to find relevant influencers in your industry. Some of my favorites are BuzzSumo and Socialbakers. You can use these tools to search by category and keywords, influence, location, and more. There are also countless influencer networks and agencies you can use to find the perfect match.

Regardless of how you find your influencers, paying them to promote your content offers a unique way to get your content in front of a new audience. Influencers will benefit from having original content to share, and you will benefit from the influencer's stamp of approval and highly-engaged network.

A final form of paid advertising for your content is native advertising. Native advertising includes content found in online publications that are created and paid for by advertisers. This allows you to sponsor content on websites relevant to your industry. For example, if your company is a marketing software company, websites like VentureBeat, a technology news company, would be a great place to run a native advertisement. Here's an example from Qualcomm. Notice how the content fits in with the rest of the articles on VentureBeat's website. The only difference is the "sponsored" tag above the title. When running native advertisements, it's important to promote content that fits in with the rest of the content on the website. Otherwise, there will be a disconnect with the website's readers.

Native advertising placements can range anywhere from a few thousand to tens of thousands of dollars for top publications like Business Insider or Forbes. Advertisement opportunities for smaller publications will cost less.

When purchasing native advertising placements, you are in a position to negotiate. If the publication isn't willing to work with you on price, consider asking for additional publications or a longer advertising window. This way, you can run advertisements for a greater number of content pieces or keep your content ads running for an extended period of time. The details of native advertising agreements will vary between publications. But when you're on a tight budget, it can never hurt to ask.

Remember, paid advertising alone is not a sustainable marketing solution. However, when you pair organic efforts with paid advertising, you can amplify your business impact and see even greater success for your most effective content.

**Video 4: Content promotion in action**

Effective content promotion requires a ton of moving pieces to all come together to create a remarkable campaign. Let's take a look at content promotion in action from startup founder, Larry Kim.

> **Larry Kim:** My name is Larry Kim. I'm known as the founder of WordStream, which is the world's largest pay-per-click marketing advertising software company in the world. I grew that company starting from nothing to over 300 people, managing over a billion dollars of ad spend for tens of thousands of companies worldwide and sold the business last year to Connect for about $150 million.
>
> I'm currently working on my second business, which is called MobileMonkey, as the world's fastest growing Facebook messenger marketing platform.
>
> Today I want to talk about a content marketing campaign that I initiated a few years back. It was around the time of the Facebook initial public offering, so they were becoming a publicly traded stock. And of course this was a really hot trending global topic of discussion across both the technology and business media, and everyone wanted to buy these shares even like Uber drivers, and parents were talking about buying Facebook shares and this was a pretty huge topic.
>
> I was able to craft a relevant story comparing and contrasting the return on investment of Facebook ads versus Google Ads and then quantifying the typical average results in terms of click-through rates and conversion rates and costs and then giving a grade to both Google and Facebook ads according to their strengths and weaknesses.
>
> And we thought that by producing this in a graphical format, that it was very likely to be embedded into all the media coverage around this topic. And we were successful in doing so.
>
> And it actually generated tens of thousands of press pick-ups. So like every newspaper and web magazine in the entire world across over 87 different countries wrote about this particular story generating millions of links back to my website as well as international press opportunities on television like BBC, Fox Business, NPR etc.
>
> So at the time I was working on trying to do link building to my website by coming up with stories that I was hoping would get picked up by the national or even international news media.
>
> We had, had some good success with timing the stories with the timing of Google earnings releases, because we knew that whenever Google releases their earnings, both the technology and business media typically write thousands of stories about what's going on at Google.

And so, we had tried out a bunch of different stories like what industries does Google get all their revenues from or what's the most expensive keywords on Google. And we would do these kinds of spectacular kind of

broadly interesting stories like not too niche, they were appealing to a broader audience, and we would time this to the Google announcements.

And when you we got on CNN and thousands of other websites, and when the Facebook IPO was scheduled, it was like the biggest media within the online advertising world like it was the biggest story of the time.

And so we absolutely needed to come up with some way to insert ourselves into that conversation.

Typically, when it comes to pitching stories, what you do is you build up a Google Doc of all the influencers who cover a particular topic, and come up with both their Twitter handles, which is very easy to find. You just look them up on Twitter, but also using tools like hunter.io and other e-mail prospecting tools.

You need to also find their e-mail addresses, and what you need to do is come up with a list in our case, we had... Because this wasn't our first media kind of content marketing effort. We had built up a list of about 1000 reporters for all of the major technology and business publications that cover Google and Facebook from our business advertising perspective.

We had that information on hand and basically what I would do is I would e-mail those journalists, just here is some data that you could use for any subsequent coverage of the Facebook story.

Now typically when you do this kind of cold outreach, that the hit rate isn't great. It's like one in 20, one in 50, one in 100 is pretty typical in terms of the hit rate. But I knew I was onto something interesting when after pitching three or four journalists like they all responded and got back to me immediately and said that this is really interesting and that they would be they would be writing a story on this.

Sometimes you have stories that go nowhere and every once in a while you get lucky, and you really time things perfectly with a story that there's a lot of global interest in. And it's really hard to describe because it's an experience that I've only experience is like twice in my career, but it's like to be at the center epicenter of a big media circus.

Once I started to see success organically with the organic outreach, that I was doing for my content marketing project, I immediately thought of paid promotion. Now, you might be thinking to yourself like why the heck would you spend a dollar on paid promotion when you have a runaway story that's doing so great on its own and certainly doesn't even need another dime to get more coverage.

But it's actually the wrong way of thinking of it. The way I think of it is, when you have one of these rare situations where you have a really remarkable piece of content that is doing remarkably well. You really want to pour gas on that fire like you want to pour an accelerant to make that reaction even bigger.

And so we decided to throw money at this campaign because it was doing so well and our thinking was, we have a budget for constant promotion, it's so rare to have a campaign that is doing this well. We should just go all in on this campaign because no other content marketing campaign will generate this kind of ROI for us.

What we actually did was we spent the entire annual budget for content marketing on this one. I think the IPO was in May or something like this. So we spent the rest of the entire year's content marketing budget on promoting this piece because knowing that it's statistically improbable to trump this like later within the year.

And in terms of like what kind of efforts we did, I had previously generated some custom audiences on Twitter and so basically using those Twitter handles of those influential journalists for like the New York Times, and Wall

Street Journal and then CNN et Cetera. Just creating a list of those Twitter handles and uploading them as a custom audience on Twitter. And then being able to target those people individually as reporters to show up on those feeds. We weren't spending a ton of money but it was like very targeted.

And beyond that there were other audiences that I was interested in targeting including like my remarketing audiences because it's not just about getting success from these random news outlets like you also want your core industry peeps to know that you have this interesting story.

But overall we spent tens of thousands of dollars on promoting the story even though it was doing fine organically but it was just to get more mileage out of a winning hit.

One thing that we did, as we were promoting this piece, it was clear to me that there were different personas that were interested in consuming this content. On one hand there was the business press which was interested in it from a financial perspective.

Another one was marketers of course, marketers are interested in knowing how different ad units perform on different platforms. And there was another persona of technology enthusiast, so these would be like the people on Wired magazine or Gizmodo or that kind of technology sites that don't exclusively write about Google or Facebook advertising, but will make an exception if the story is big enough.

And of course there was another kind of interest which was just the general interest of humans at large just users of Facebook basically. And so the idea that we did was I turned my Facebook infographic, my Facebook versus Google infographic, I turned it into four different infographics with slightly different headlines that I believed would resonate stronger with different people depending on who I was outreaching to, taking a more financial like business angle or a more marketing angle.

And so I had the graphic designers that like midnight repurpose the infographic into several different formats. And it's very difficult to know like what the impact was, but we did that effort just as a way to test and optimize the coverage that we were generating for this initiative.

What I found is that even in these little niches like online advertising, there's tons of opportunity for innovation and in your content marketing topic ideation.

When you have an incredibly successful piece of content, like Larry’s report on Facebook and Google ads, the business impact can be huge. By being creative and staying on top of what’s relevant in your industry, you too can create powerful content. And by supporting this content with an effective promotion strategy, you’ll maximize the impact of your greatest campaigns.

**Video 5: Improving your content promotion**

One of the greatest challenges of creating an effective long-term content strategy is staying relevant. Don’t worry, there are a few things you can do to continually improve your content promotion. Let's cover how you can make the most of your content by promoting content regularly, experimenting with your efforts, and keeping up to date on emerging channels.

When building out your content promotion plan, be sure to create a schedule that you can stick to. This best practice has a ton of benefits.

For one, regularly promoting content keeps you at the top of your audience's radar. As you and your brand establish a regular appearance across social channels, Google searches, and wherever else your audience is active, you will build trust with your audience by providing the content they need from a brand they can trust.

This trust comes with additional benefits, too. Quantitatively, you'll be able to increase traffic to your website and blog from these promotional efforts. And qualitatively, your audience will think of you as a thought leader in your industry thanks to your helpful content.

Staying relevant is key. Don't just promote content for the sake of promoting something to your audience. Learn what your audience likes, doesn't like, and wants to see more of. Take this information and promote content that works. It takes work to do this efficiently – but sticking with it over time will have a huge impact on your long-term success. By constantly experimenting with your content promotion efforts, you'll see improved performance over time. Be sure to benchmark your performance to improve your metrics and exceed your goals over time.

In the resources below, I've added a template of the experiment framework I use myself when running experiments here at HubSpot Academy. Use this template to track your observation, develop a hypothesis, state your prediction, develop an experiment design, and track your results. Use a template like this to think through all of the many elements required for successful testing. Create a master internal resource where you can share all of your experiments and results so that others can see and learn from your work. As you do more experiments, you can use these results to optimize your future content promotion.

A major part of experimenting with your content promotion is finding new channels to promote your content on. Here are a few ways you can identify new ways to promote your content.

First, you can learn from your customers. It's amazing what you can uncover about your customers' behavior with just a few customer interviews. By talking to your customers regularly, you'll start detecting patterns you can use for guiding your content experiments.

If you don't have the time to reach out to customers one-by-one to request an interview, don't worry. There are a few other ways you can collect feedback from your customers. Consider including a tool to calculate the net promoter score, or NPS, in your content. These tools might include a scale from one to ten, a set of smiley faces, or other ways to represent the NPS scale. Add this to your emails, ebooks, blogs, or other areas of your content where viewers can be encouraged to share their feedback.

You can survey your audience, too. SurveyMonkey, for example, is an easy-to-use tool for creating different types of surveys. Follow up on your latest content offer with an emailed survey or post it on your social media channels. You just might be surprised how many people are willing to offer up super helpful feedback which allows you to improve your content.

You can learn from your competitors, too. Keep track of the content your competitors produce and how they promote it. You can do this by following your competitors on your personal social media accounts and by signing up to their email newsletter or blog updates. Their content will be delivered directly to you so that you can easily keep tabs on the content they're promoting. This can teach you where your promotional efforts are falling short, or where you are performing better than the competition.

Finally, you can learn from the experts in your industry. Working with influencers can teach you new ideas that you haven't thought of yet. To learn how other experts are promoting their content, follow them on social media, check out their websites, and see how they are experimenting with new channels. You can even attend industry events to meet

some of these influencers in person and hear what's on their mind. Take these insights and test them out for your business. And who knows – you might even identify a potential partnership for a future campaign.

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Promotional strategies should never be stagnant. For your promotional plan to be effective, it should evolve with each piece of content you promote. Learn from your past efforts, experiment with your tactics, and keep track of what is new and exciting in your industry.

# Transcript: Measuring and Analyzing Content

## Video 1: Identifying and setting goals

To determine the success of your content, you have to set goals and track the right metrics for your business.

Chances are, this isn't your first time setting goals for a marketing effort. Even if you're a seasoned marketing professional, a quick refresh on goal setting can have a huge impact on the success of your content efforts.

There are a lot of metrics to report on with each piece of content you create, which can feel overwhelming. So let's take a step back and set the foundation for successful content analysis. In this video, we'll cover how to set SMART goals based off of historical data and industry benchmarks.

Did you know that companies who don't know their key performance indicators, or KPIs, are less likely to meet their revenue goals? In fact, almost 75% of companies that miss their revenue goals don't know their visitor, lead, qualified leads, or sales opportunities data. This can easily be avoided by building out a strategy for measuring and analyzing your content's performance.

There are a ton of metrics out there that you can report on to understand your content's performance. For a blog post, you might be interested in web page visitors, time on page, and referral traffic. For a video, maybe you're more interested in watch time, social media shares, and impressions. And if you're offering a webinar, landing page conversions for registration might be your top metric. Regardless of what type of content you're measuring, there are numerous metrics that impact its success. But, before we dig into all the metrics you can track, let's get familiar with setting and evaluating goals.

Setting metric-oriented goals is essential for determining the impact of your content. Setting SMART goals is a great way to identify the metrics that are important to your business and achievable with your content. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. For example, a SMART goal could be to increase monthly website leads from 1,000 to 1,500 by the end of the year.

To start setting smart goals, use historical data. This data can be used to benchmark your past content performance. You can use your previous performance and key metrics to identify what goals will make sense for your future content efforts.

But if you don't have historical data, don't worry. There are other ways you can get started setting SMART goals. Looking at industry benchmarks is a great way to get a feel for what metrics are important and how other companies are performing. To check out some industry benchmarks, take a look at the guide in the resources section. However, use this as a starting point only. Your content's performance will likely fluctuate from the industry standard.

If you're an online fashion startup, for example, one of your goals might be to increase brand awareness. One of the metrics that you use to measure how well you are progressing towards your goal might be social shares. You want your audience to share the content you publish on social media to expand the reach of your posts and ultimately increase brand awareness.

Going off of the industry benchmarks, you'd likely set a goal to achieve over 1,300 shares on social media. But with a brand new company, it's pretty unlikely that you'd achieve this goal when the company is still in startup mode.

In short, don't feel bad if you're below the industry standard. Do some experimentation to gauge how you're currently performing, and set new benchmarks based on data that's specific to your company.

Lastly, analyzing how your content impacts revenue for your business is another performance indicator to measure. The amount of revenue generated will not always be indicative of a successful piece of content – it all depends on your goals. If you're running an awareness campaign, for example, revenue might not be the best metric to track. However, for your content geared towards lead generation, for example, tracking the revenue generated after a lead converted on your content indicates which pieces of content are most successful at driving sales. Use this data to prioritize future pieces of content.

By identifying and setting SMART goals for your content, you'll reveal which metrics are important to track and set the foundation for analyzing your content performance.

**Video 2: Organic metrics to track**

There are a lot of possible goals for your content marketing efforts. For example, you may want to build brand awareness, develop search engine authority, increase lead generation, or influence customer loyalty.

Regardless of what goal you have attached to your content, organic metrics will play a large role in your content's success. With organic metrics, you can track the performance of your non-paid content marketing efforts. These metrics fall under web page traffic, social media, email, and conversion. In this video, I'll break down each of these and discuss which metrics are most important.

Organic metrics provide insight into two key areas: First, they show content performance across your non-paid channels. And second, they reveal the greatest opportunities for paid promotion. Adding paid promotion to a piece of content that is already proven effective will maximize your return on investment and optimize your content's performance. But you have to understand how your content is performing organically first.

ex: Here's an example. Let's say you're an ecommerce fashion company who wants to increase traffic to their blog to support their summer sale. A SMART goal for this business might be to increase monthly blog visitors from 500 per month to 800 per month before the summer sale starts. One way to support this SMART goal is to write a blog post on "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer".

To analyze how this blog post, or any other piece of content, is performing, here are the four key types of metrics you should consider tracking.

Web page traffic metrics show you how your content is performing on your website. The key web page traffic metrics to track are page views, traffic sources, bounce rate, referrals, and keyword ranking. All of these metrics work together to tell you the story of how website visitors are responding to your content.

Page views and unique page views measure how effective your content is at bringing in new visitors and returning visitors. Unique page views tracks how many visitors come to your web page, while page views counts all visits. By tracking how much traffic this blog post generates, you'll understand how this blog post compares to others and supports your overall goal of increasing blog traffic.

Traffic sources break down page views by the sources your content is being discovered from. By analyzing traffic sources, you'll understand how each element of your content promotion strategy is working together to drive traffic. There are many sources where visitors could come from, like paid search, organic traffic, email marketing, and more. This analysis shows how visitors are discovering your content. In this case, if you promoted the "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer" blog on social media, paid search, and email, you would see all of these sources and the amount of traffic from each.

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Bounce rate is an important metric to track because it is representative of how well your content is living up to your visitors' expectations. Is your content relevant, helpful, and engaging? Does your content offer a good user experience? If so, you will see a low bounce rate – and a low bounce rate is a good thing. The longer someone stays on your site, the more your search engine rankings will improve. If visitors are spending a long time on your blog post on fashion trends, you'd know that this is a valuable and effective piece of content for your audience. This might indicate that creating more content around this topic will be an effective future content strategy.

Hotjar is a great tool to see how viewers are interacting with your web pages. With this heat mapping software, you can identify what parts of your web pages are causing viewers to drop off resulting in a high bounce rate.

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Referral traffic is another great metric to track. Referral traffic will tell you how well your backlinking and content syndication strategies are working. Plus, receiving referral traffic from more sources than you've proactively sought out will indicate a very effective piece of content. To be able to see this you need to create a tracking link for each referral source – or use a marketing software, like HubSpot, that can track links for you. In your tracking link, you need to include a website URL, campaign source, campaign medium, and campaign name. You can add additional fields like campaign term or campaign content as needed. I've included a great free tool in the resources that you can use to create your own tracking links.

The last web page traffic metric you should track is keyword ranking. Keywords and phrases play a large part in the content creation process. By tracking the performance of your keyword strategy, you'll understand how your content is ranking for your chosen keywords. Use this metric to determine what keywords are working well for your business and spot opportunities for additional content. SEMrush and Ahrefs are two great tools you can use to track your keyword performance. For our example blog post, you'd likely be going after the "fashion trends" or "summer fashion trends" key phrases.

There are a few tools you can use to track these web page metrics. Google Analytics is a great place to start. Or, marketing automation software like HubSpot can be used to easily analyze all of your content.

Next, social media metrics are used to understand how the content you promote on social media is performing. Are you expanding your reach on social media? Are viewers engaging with your posts? There are a ton of metrics you can track across social platforms to answer questions like these, and more. Let's go over a few general metrics to keep track of on social.

Reach and impressions measure how well your content is spreading throughout the social platform. Reach is the number of unique people who view your content, while impressions measure the total number of times your content has been viewed. A great piece of content can spread like wildfire on social media, and the reach of a successful piece of content will be significantly higher than average. And when sharing video content, tracking views is an important metric to track that's related to reach. For example, on Facebook a view occurs when your video runs on autoplay for at least 3 seconds. By tracking these social media metrics you'll be able to identify those posts that are viewed more people than usual. You'll find your content's reach in the analytics dashboard of the social platform you're using. Use this data to optimize your social posts by publishing content types with a large reach. If your social posts for the fashion trends blog post has a large reach, you'll know that the blog post is effective and relevant to your audience.

Engagement on social media involves a handful of metrics that are important to track depending on the platform. These metrics include likes, shares, comments, retweets, video views, and so on. A goal of sharing your content on social media should be to influence these metrics and see them grow. Track these metrics to understand how your social media audience responds to the content you share with them. Analyze what works and what doesn't to improve your long-term social media strategy. Great content on social media gets a lot of buzz in the form of engagement. If your "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer" post sparks conversation, receives a lot of likes, and shares, then you'll know that your social media audiences like this type of content. Promoting more content like it in the future will optimize your social media performance.

You'll also want to track the clickthrough rate of your content on social media. Clickthrough rate is the percentage of people who clicked on a link in your post after viewing it. For example, if 1,000 people viewed your social media post for the "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer" article, and 100 people clicked on the link, then you'd have a 10% click-through rate. By tracking this metric, you'll be able to optimize your posts on social media with content that drives traffic to your website.

If you want to learn more about tracking your content's performance on social media, check out HubSpot's Social Media Certification course in the resources section.

Email metrics also play a role in the performance of your content. By analyzing email metrics you improve the performance of the content you share with your email database.

Open rate shows you how many people open your email. Clickthrough rate shows how many people are clicking through in the email to view your content. These metrics work together to show you how your email database responds to the content you share with them. To get you started, here are a few benchmarks. An open rate of between 15% to 20% is strong across industries. And a click through rate around the 2% mark is a good goal to shoot for. But again, these numbers will vary. It is best to test your own email performance and optimize. You can also analyze this data to figure out what type of content this audience likes. Do you see higher email engagement with blog content? Webinars? Sales or product announcements? Tracking your open rate and clickthrough rate can tell you what content to send to which audiences. For your fashion trends blog post, you'd likely only send this post to those who have subscribed to your blog. If your email database contains engaged contacts, comparing your open rate and clickthrough rate for this promotion compared to the promotion of other blog posts will tell you if this audience likes blog posts on the fashion trends topic.

Growing your subscribers, or the number of people in your blog or email database, is another email metric to track. By producing great content and improving your content promotion, you can increase the number of emailable contacts for your business. But remember, while you want to see this number grow, you also want to keep your database clean. If it has been a while since you've tidied up your emailable contacts list, consider removing contacts who don't engage with your content anymore. Having a smaller database of engaged contacts will result in better performance across your metrics. In this example, equipping your blog post with a "subscribe to our blog" form will grow your subscribers to include people who've found your fashion trends blog post that are not previously familiar with your brand.

Finally, conversion metrics show how your content is impacting your business. The key conversion metrics to track include leads generated, conversion rate, and close rate. By tracking these metrics, you can understand how many leads your content is generating, how well your content converts visitors into leads, and at what rate the leads you generate become customers. Combined, these metrics tell the story of the customer lifecycle. With this information, you'll understand which content to prioritize to generate more sales for your business. For your "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer" blog post, you might be interested in how many leads converted after engaging with this blog post, and how many of those leads eventually made a purchase. You can use this information to create effective blog posts that drive revenue in the future.

By following this type of reporting process for your content, you'll discover how your content is actually performing. I recommend doing this for each campaign that you launch. Over time, you'll begin to see trends and will be able to benchmark your performance if you haven't already.

There are many more metrics that you could track to gauge the performance of your content. By setting SMART goals and selecting the metrics that support your goals, you'll be able to determine the success of your content and promotional efforts.

**Video 3: Paid metrics to track**

When you have a high-performing piece of content from your organic promotion, supporting it with paid promotion can be a great way to supplement the success of your content. The metrics that are important to track in your paid promotion will vary depending on the type of advertisement you are running.

If you're an ecommerce fashion company that has seen above average success on a blog post titled "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer," paid promotion can maximize the success of this article.

Here are a few key metrics to consider when reporting on your content's paid promotion.

Quality score is the way Google measures the effectiveness of your ad in Google Ads. Achieving a higher quality score will lead to lower prices when bidding on ad placements and a better ad position. The more descriptive your content offer is, the better your ad quality score will be. Plus, optimizing your ads for different devices and adding ad extensions, which are additional links to other areas of your website, will improve your quality score, too. Tracking this metric will show you the most effective ads that use your paid resources efficiently. For example, you might want to run an A/B test with different copy for your fashion trends blog post. After running them for a few weeks, selecting the ad with the highest quality score will improve other areas of the ad's performance.

Cost-per-click, often referred to as CPC, and cost-per-thousand impressions, or CPM, are two metrics that are important to track depending on the type of paid promotion you are using to support your content. The difference between CPC and CPM is simply how you bid and pay for your ad spots. In CPC, you pay every time someone clicks your ad. For CPM, you pay one price per thousand impressions. For CPM, it doesn't matter if a viewer clicks or not. CPM is generally used with awareness campaigns, but if you're looking for conversions or acquisitions, a CPC pricing model is probably your best bet. Tracking these metrics to identify which ads yield the largest return for the lowest cost. For a blog post on fashion trends, for example, you might be only interested in driving traffic to your website. Therefore, tracking your cost-per-click will be an important metric to track. Achieving a low CPC will maximize the use of your budget and drive more traffic than an ad with a high cost.

Cost-per-acquisition is another paid metric that you can use to identify how much you are paying to acquire a new lead. This type of promotion aligns with content that is goaled with lead generation. Understanding how much you are paying to acquire a lead will allow you to optimize your lead generation ads and acquire more leads with less money spent. Determining cost-per-acquisition can take some time to set up correctly. Check out the cost-per-acquisition calculator in the resources that walks you through how to use the formula. For your fashion trends blog post, analyzing how much you are spending to acquire a new subscriber can show you how well this blog post converts subscribers. If you're paying more money to acquire a blog subscriber than a content lead from a downloadable ebook, for example, it might make more sense to use paid on a different piece of content.

Lastly, close rate is another metric that is important to track for your paid promotion. Paying to acquire leads that don't close because they're not a good fit for your business isn't an effective strategy. By tracking the rate at which your paid leads become customers, you'll have a better sense for what types of content attract high-quality leads that ultimately pay for the product or service that your business sells.

As you run your own paid ads, continual evaluation of your performance will optimize your ads to yield the highest return on investment. For example, you can explore promoting new content, experimenting with different ad styles, or running A/B tests with different copy. Regardless of how you optimize your paid performance, achieving the highest return on investment should be your top priority.

There are many methods you can use to determine the success of your content on paid advertising. Let's go over a few popular ways to determine the return of investment for any type of paid promotion.

Return on ad spend, also known as ROAS, is a simple way to gauge the success of your paid promotion. This calculation is the difference in money generated by conversions from the advertisement minus the total spent on the advertisement. If your promotion is goaled on something like lead generation where there is no direct income generated by achieving the goal, you can use an estimated value. Calculate this by multiplying your lead to customer conversion rate and the average value of the initial purchase.

Or, you can take this one step further and also take into consideration the total content investment into your calculation. How much time did it take to produce this content? How much money was spent? By considering these questions in your return on investment calculations, you'll have a more holistic view of the types of content that yield the highest return. Regardless of the method you choose, be sure to pick one and stick to it across teams. This way, you'll have one unified way to measure your content's success.

Lastly, it's important to consider how your paid advertising efforts impact organic performance. There's some psychology that goes into this one, but running paid ads can actually boost the performance of your organic efforts, particularly in search. Here's how. Shopify is a company that offers tools for ecommerce businesses. It's not surprising that Shopify has content that ranks on the first page of Google search results for the search term "how to start an ecommerce business." But what might surprise you, is that they're also running paid search ads for this same keyword.

You might be wondering, "Why would they pay for a place on the first page of the Google search results when they're already ranking on the first page organically?" Well, there are a few reasons for this. First, Shopify is paying to increase their real estate on Google's search results page. Instead of having just one slot, they now have two: one from organic and one from paid. Second, since ads have priority over organic results, they have also claimed the top results of the search engine page. And third, even if people don't click that first result, they might be more inclined to click the second result from Shopify that appears in the organic results. Having that brand recognition in the first ad can influence people to click your organic link because they see the brand twice in the first few search engine results.

As you analyze your paid metrics, don't forget to connect this performance to your organic results. You might be surprised by how paid performance can impact your content's organic metrics.

**Video 4: Tracking conversions with attribution models**

As you build up the number of resources you offer, attributing the conversion to a specific touchpoint or multiple touchpoints can be challenging. Attribution models are a great solution.

Attribution models are a set of rules that measure the impact of multiple marketing touchpoints to make sense of the entire journey from stranger to customer.

Setting up an attribution model can be done with your marketing software. Google and HubSpot, for example, both offer reporting options with attribution models that can be customized to fit the way your business works.

Attribution models can answer a lot of questions you might have about your content marketing efforts. For example, attribution models can tell you how many leads first enter your website by your blog content, which marketing channels generate the most leads, or which promotional channels are most influential when turning a lead into a customer.

Attribution models are directly connected to your goals and metrics for your content. And there are many attribution models out there that you can use to track conversions. Here are a few of the most popular.

First-touch attribution is where 100% of the credit is assigned to the page that originally drove a visitor to your site. This model does overemphasize high-level, awareness stage marketing efforts, but it's an easy way to know what exactly is attracting people to your brand.

Last-touch attribution singles out the first touchpoint of the most recent visit. So if a visitor views a blog post, clicks a call-to-action, also known as a CTA, and converts on a landing page, the blog post will receive the credit.

The last interaction model, however, gives credit to the touchpoint where a conversion directly occurred. This is a useful model to determine the effectiveness of your landing pages.

A simple decay attribution model assigns a weighted percentage of the credit to the most recent touchpoints. I recommend using this model if your buying cycle is short because it assumes the touchpoints closer to the purchase decision greatly influence the decision to purchase.

In the linear attribution model, all touchpoints are given the same credit.

There is no right or wrong answer to what type of report to run — it just depends on what you hope to distill from the data. If you want to understand how all the pages or channels viewed before a conversion affect conversion rates, you'll run one report. If you want to understand what happened at the exact point of conversion, you'll run a different report. You could even run a combination of reports to understand what happens in certain parts of your flywheel.

Let's say you're interested in optimizing your content strategy for lead generation. You can use an attribution model to understand which types of content are best at converting visitors into leads. To do this, you'd want to use the last-touch attribution model. Here's how you could use this report.

Here's how you can compare different methods for converting traffic. To do this, you optimize your blog post with two different methods for converting traffic. One way is by adding calls-to-action to download a related content offer that is gated by a form on a landing page. The other way is by adding a pop-up form directly onto the blog post so that traffic can convert on that content offer without ever leaving the blog post. After running a last-touch attribution model, you learn that blog posts optimized with the pop-up form convert twice as many leads as the CTA and landing page approach. From this, you can infer that optimizing all of your blog posts with the pop-up form will be more successful at generating leads than adding calls-to-action that direct to a landing page.

If you want to learn how to get started tracking marketing success with attribution reports in HubSpot, check out the resources below.

Choosing the right attribution model for your business is entirely up to you and depends on the goals that you have and the questions you want answered. So start exploring, test out a few models, and optimize your content strategy with what you learn.

**Video 5: Analyzing and measuring content in action**

Tracking your content's performance is an essential part of every content marketing effort – and there's a lot to keep track of. Let's take a look at how Larry Kim, founder of WordStream and CEO of MobileMonkey, thinks about analyzing and measuring content.

**Larry Kim:** One of the things I'm most excited about content marketing today is just the magnitude of the return on investment that's possible. You see, on one hand, content marketing has never been harder, it's noisier and more competitive.

To get attention, across any marketing channel like e-mail, or blogging or Instagram or whatever channel that you're thinking of, it's noisier than ever and harder to stick up.

But on the other hand if you stick to the formulaic approaches to content marketing and promotion that we'll be talking about today, I think what you'll find is that it's ridiculously easy to get pretty remarkable results more predictably than ever before.

Today we're talking about the most spectacular content marketing campaign of my life. Now I don't take this lightly, I do 200 blog posts in a given year over the last decade.

But this campaign generated over 10,000 press pickups and significant radio and television pickup as well. And it was an article describing the performance of Google Ads versus Facebook ads, which I had released three days prior to the Facebook initial public offering.

So on the eve of Facebook becoming a publicly traded stock, and this is a rare moment where an online advertising software company like a services company like myself WordStream, was able to insert itself just through luck and timing insert ourselves into a global conversation that was happening at the time which was a force more powerful than anything I've ever witnessed before.

When I created this content initially I knew we were onto something interesting. I mean this was clever, I was giddy. I was looking around other publications and everybody was writing about the Facebook IPO, but nobody was writing about the quality of the Facebook ads product which was actually how they make all of their money which I thought would be very relevant thing to enter into the conversation.

I think that this was, early on, we knew we were onto something interesting and in my head I had kind of set a goal of like, “God it would be so great if I could get 100 press pickups.” Because that would been kind of equal to the greatest content marketing story that I'd ever created previously.

We did substantially better. We generated over 10,000 press pickups and almost a million links to the site. And the primary objective at the time was just link building, we need to rank on content and the algorithm was all about just links to your site from authoritative websites and so like we needed a big number.

We were measuring the return on investment of this campaign primarily based on traffic to our website as well as links to the websites from authoritative publications. However, afterwards we noticed several additional very important benefits.

Number one, I built a lot of relationships during that short period of time when the story was hot for like 48 hours. Basically I ended up meeting dozens of journalists at the world's leading publications like Business Insider and I have built relationships that still today, that I am able to leverage.

For example an occasional columnist to publications like VentureBeat or Business Insider or CNBC, and all of these opportunities were the initial contact with these contacts was just as a result of cold outreach for the story.

And they of course remember me because that story did so well. So they probably write about six stories a day. So it's not likely that they'll remember everyone they spoke to, but this particular story would generate hundreds of thousands of views for these publications and that was kind of interesting to think about the return on investment from a relationship's perspective.

Beyond that it did a humongous, it put WordStream on the map from a branding perspective. So everyone in the industry and people outside of the industry heard of this study and what we found was that our site traffic, we had a huge spike of traffic during that short period of time while the campaign was active.

And then, after that the campaign was over, we didn't recede back to where we were. We actually kind of found a new equilibrium which was substantially higher than where we were prior to this big PR bonanza.

And so branding, it's kind of interesting it just raises the steady state awareness and demand for the products and services that you're selling. And the other thing that we noticed was that there was a profound impact on conversion and click-through rates of our future campaigns, meaning we know that people don't randomly decide to click and read on things, it's actually more subtle than that.

People are impacted by their subtle biases and they tend to favor consuming content from the sources that they have heard of before. And so, we noticed upticks in not just the volume of traffic to our site, but also the quality of the engagement of future visitors was substantially improved from before and we believe that it's just because we just created this positive affinity between into the topic and in our brand such that people who are more apt to engage with us moving forward.

These are incredibly valuable benefits beyond just links which links are of course extremely important but are more difficult to quantify but that we were able to realize.

The tools and resources that I use to track success or failure of my content marketing campaigns are mostly just free Google tools, Google Analytics will give me traffic and engagement numbers.

Facebook Analytics will give me insights into the types of people like their interests, their demographics, and their behaviors like who is consuming the content, search console will give me insight into the links that were generated by the effort and of course there's plenty of other third party tools like SEMrush, like Ubersuggest that provide this type of data as well.

Typically, when we run a content marketing campaign with the purposes of doing link outreach, the follow-up is actually very easy. You just go to Google News and you just search for your brand name and you copy the links of the stories that you were able to generate and typically it's maybe five or ten or maybe if you're lucky like 50 websites that pick up your story.

This was pretty crazy. I would go to Google News, I would search for WordStream, it would say 30,000 articles in the last 24 hours. So of course it was impossible to kind of do press clippings or something like that, that would just take a whole week which is just not really a productive use of time. I think normally there is a way of doing this type of reporting that it was just not scalable for this particular campaign.

That said, what we did do was, we tried to understand how the heck the story really broke. And you know what? It's so random, guys. There was a... I had put up my story and it got a little bit of press pick up quickly but when it really picked up steam, it was because there were several other brands like the General Motors had announced abruptly that they were cutting all their Facebook ads spent at the same time.

So like, it was really interesting to do analysis on sort of the chain of events that led to this crazy PR bonanza. Another one was appearing on cable news because I think what happens is the producers of cable news shows, tend to watch each other's shows if you will, and they'll kind of use that as inspiration for what to run on their networks.

And so it was just like a big domino effect that lasted 48 hours and impossible to fully quantify but nevertheless remarkable.

One of the key takeaways of this most spectacular content marketing campaign of my life is just gaining an appreciation for the scale and power of the kind of the eye of the media – like the eye of that storm.

I thought I had done well before, with getting placements on like CNN or other individual news networks, but for the first time I saw a situation where the success was like orders of magnitude greater.

And so I just got a better appreciation for how powerful content marketing can be. When you have the right topic, with the right data and at the right time, and a little bit of luck beyond that appreciation for the power of this channel.

I think I've gained a greater understanding of how content marketing works in general and that is every time you create a new campaign, like a new blog post, or a new email, or a new whitepaper, or a new infographics, a new video, you're basically you're auditioning a new piece of content that you hope will resonate with your audience.

And most of the time the content that you produce goes nowhere but every once in a while – 1% or 2% or 3% of the time – you get these very rare pieces that just catch fire. And there's so many reasons why they catch fire.

But for me personally, it led me to build to a better understanding of content marketing being effectively a numbers game; that it's really impossible to really with any degree of certainty predicts how these articles will do.

Repurposing the content, doing media interviews, doing radio interviews, and all sorts of things to just really be as well as paid promotions to extract the most leverage as you can from the few times that you do kind of hit the jackpot. You want to leave nothing on the table you'd like this, it's you need to extract every little bit of value when you are successful.

This is like a real niche topic of Facebook ads. Yet it has global interests. And so what I found is that, if you're creative enough, there's definitely ways to cast a wider net for the content that you're producing, that's beyond the scope of just the niche that you're targeting.

Larry's goal of driving press pickups was the perfect match for such a remarkable piece of content. The topic was timely, the content format was effective, and the outreach strategy built lasting relationships with contacts across major publications. It might take hundreds of pieces of content before your find the one campaign that takes off. But by setting SMART goals and tracking the metrics that are most important to your content, you'll be able to identify which pieces of content are the most effective.

**Video 6: Communicating content performance**

Communicating your content's performance compared to your goals is a great way to align teams while being transparent about your work. In this video, let's talk about content performance in a way that benefits your team, department, and company.

The greatest challenge when communicating your content performance is knowing how to organize your results so that other teams can understand the work that you've been doing.

Let's start off with communicating your goals. There are many ways to effectively communicate your goals with your team and organization.

First, make your goals clear and easy to understand. You want people from all backgrounds within your company to be able to understand the work that you've done. Make it easy for them by using simple language. Also, be sure to make it clear which metrics are attached to each goal to make your results easy to understand. It's also a great idea to connect with your manager to make sure you're all aligned on your goals and priorities.

Next, make your goals transparent. By sharing your goals across your company, you and your team will be held accountable for the work done towards achieving these goals. You can do this by publishing them internally so that your team and other teams know your goals and metrics and can follow along with your team's performance. Plus, when establishing or updating your goals, work with key stakeholders to determine and approve the goals you've set. This way, everyone will be on the same page when it comes to reporting and will make transparency even easier.

You can also rally your team around their respective goals. Work with the members of your team to establish which goals fall under whose responsibility. This will give the ownership of the goal to its respective person on the team. Empower your team to share regular status updates on goal attainment. You'll want to bake this into your team's weekly or monthly meetings.

Lastly, use all this information that you've created to communicate goal attainment to leadership within your company. Use your goal attainment documentation to point to all the hard work you and your team do to push your business forward.

Communicating performance can be a little bit trickier than communicating goals. Here, you need to compare and contrast what you wanted to achieve to what you actually achieved. Let's look at an example.

This graph shows goal attainment for a marketing team goaled on generating leads from the company's blog. The orange line represents the target number of leads generated for one month. This number is calculated based on last year's performance and this year's trajectory. The gray line represents the actual number of leads generated for that same period. As you can see in this example, this team is above target. They generated ten leads more than their goal. This proves that the team's efforts are effective. They should continue on this same path and keep executing their current blogging strategy.

At this point, you might be asking yourself, "What do I do if I fall short of my goals?" While this might seem like a bad thing, missing a goal can sometimes teach you more about your business than achieving goals do, particularly when you're early on in the goal-setting process. Here are some ways to communicate your goal attainment.

First, own your performance. Whether your goal attainment is positive, negative, or on the line, the results are an outcome of your work. Use this information to inform others on what will happen next. Will you revisit your goals? Is there a user experience issue that needs to be resolved first? Sharing your action plan will prove that you've learned from previous results and are taking steps to improve performance. Keep in mind, if you're working hard and not hitting your goals, then it's possible that you aren't focused on the right opportunities, or your goals aren't achievable in the first place. Be realistic and set you and your team up for success.

Consider tracking your goals on a weekly or monthly basis and evaluating them together as a team regularly. Reviewing your performance as a team is a great way to improve alignment and help each other by having many people thinking about the performance of the entire team, not just their own performance.

If, from your reporting, it looks like your goals are far too ambitious, that's okay. Use your new insights to set more realistic goals for the following quarter. However, don't shy away from your ambitious goals right away if you don't see the results you want. Stick with it for the month or quarter and learn from your performance before altering your goals.

On the other hand, if your goals aren't ambitious enough and you exceed them by a large number, consider challenging yourself with more aggressive goals the following quarter. Improving your goals over time will show your understanding of the business and desire to continually grow.

To find a balance between being ambitious and realistic when discussing your goals, set expectations by communicating a "realistic" goal and a "stretch" goal. The realistic goal is what you plan to achieve based on past performance, and the stretch goal is what may be possible with some innovative content that really takes off. This will show your leadership you're not afraid to take risks, but you also have a solid understanding of what is achievable.

Communicating your content performance is an important step in a content strategy. By improving transparency across teams, your company will have a better understanding of the role content plays within your organization.