

## 50 Best Content Writing Tips from the Experts for Blog Posts, Articles, Website Copies, Social Media Posts, Newsletters, Product Descriptions!

### What is content writing?

Content writing does not just constitute writing grammatically correct sentences in a sheet. Content writing is a holistic amalgamation of meticulous planning, creating, and publishing written material for various kinds of media and sources. This process follows a linear progression which starts when the writer employs informative content production, engaging plot and flow which is tailored to a specific audience with the aim of achieving a particular objective such as educating, entertaining or persuading the readers for something or someone. Some of the wide ranging formats of content writing are:

- Blog posts
- Articles
- Website copies
- Social media posts
- Newsletters
- Product descriptions
- Research papers, etc.

### Aspects of content writing are highlighted below:

#### 1. Purpose

Multiple purposes can be served with the help of content writing, depending upon the context of the writing, and the platform. Objectives of the same are:

- **Informing** - providing valuable information and educating the audience.
- **Engaging** - writing compelling narratives and showcasing interactive elements will help gripping the reader's interest.
- **Persuading** - This is an important objective as it is the ability to be able to convince and compel the audience to take a specific action, like making a purchase. For example, signing up to a service etc.
- **Entertaining** - creating content that entertains and captivates the audience builds up affinity and loyalty.

#### 2. Audience understanding

Crafting effective content requires a thorough understanding of the target audience. This involves being aware of their preferences, interests, challenges, and the language that resonates with them. Tailoring the content to meet the audience's needs ensures it is relevant and captivating.

#### 3. Research

Conducting comprehensive research is essential for creating precise and authoritative content. This involves collecting information from reliable sources, staying informed about the latest

industry developments, and analysing the competition. Research is instrumental in fostering trust and credibility with the audience.

#### 4. Structure and format

Structuring content effectively makes it simple to read. Crucial structural components include:

- Eye-catching titles that engage readers
- Subheadings that divide the text into manageable sections, facilitating skimming
- Bullet points and lists that present information concisely and systematically
- Compact paragraphs that sustain reader interest and enhance understanding
- Visuals such as images, infographics, and videos that complement the text and add visual appeal

#### 5. Writing style and tone

The writing style and tone should match the brand's voice and the audience's preferences. This can vary from formal and authoritative to casual and conversational. Maintaining a consistent tone helps establish a distinct brand identity.

#### 6. SEO Optimization

Optimising content for search engines is crucial to enhance the online visibility of your material. This includes incorporating pertinent keywords, fine-tuning meta descriptions and headings, and structuring the content in a manner that facilitates efficient indexing by search engine algorithms.

#### 7. Proofreading and Editing

Carefully reviewing and revising content writing is crucial to produce a polished, error-free final product. This process entails checking for grammatical and spelling issues, refining the sentence structure, and ensuring clarity and coherence.

#### 8. Publishing and Promotion

Once the content is ready, it must be published on appropriate platforms and promoted to reach the target audience. This can include sharing on social media, email marketing, and collaborating with influencers or other brands.

#### 9. Performance Tracking and Analysis

Analysing the content's performance helps understand its impact and effectiveness. Metrics such as page views, engagement rates, conversion rates, and social shares offer insights into what works and what needs improvement. Continuous analysis and feedback enable refining content strategies for better results.

### **Why is good content important?**

Compelling content is essential for various personal, professional, and business endeavours. Here's why high-quality content is so important:

#### 1. Engagement and Retention

- **Captivates Attention:** Exceptional content captures the audience's focus, encouraging them to spend more time engaging with your website or platform.
- **Fosters Interaction:** Engaging content prompts readers to comment, share, and participate, cultivating a sense of community and connection.
- **Builds Loyalty:** Consistently providing valuable content helps retain your audience, inspiring repeat visits and long-term engagement.

## 2. Trust and Credibility

- **Establishes Authority:** Well-researched and accurate content positions you as an authority in your field, enhancing your credibility.
- **Builds Trust:** Transparent, honest, and useful content cultivates trust with your audience, making them more likely to rely on your recommendations and return for more information.

## 3. SEO and Visibility

- **Improves Search Rankings:** Search engines prioritise high-quality, relevant content. Compelling content can boost your search engine rankings, making it easier for potential readers to discover you.
- **Increases Organic Traffic:** By optimising content for relevant keywords, you can attract more organic traffic to your site without solely relying on paid advertising.

## 4. Brand Building

- **Defines Brand Voice:** Consistent, high-quality content helps establish and maintain your brand's voice, making it more recognizable and relatable.
- **Enhances Brand Image:** Quality content reflects positively on your brand, portraying it as professional, knowledgeable, and trustworthy.

## 5. Conversions and Sales

- **Guides Customer Journey:** Informative content guides potential customers through the buying process, addressing their questions and concerns at each stage.
- **Boosts Conversion Rates:** Compelling calls-to-action within your content can drive conversions, whether that means making a purchase, signing up for a newsletter, or downloading a resource.

## 6. Educational and Value-Driven Content

- **Educates Audience:** Valuable content provides important information that educates your audience, empowering them to make informed decisions.
- **Solves Problems:** By addressing pain points and offering solutions, quality content meets the needs of your audience, enhancing their satisfaction and loyalty.

## 7. Social Media Engagement

- **Shareable Content:** Engaging, informative, and entertaining content is more likely to be shared on social media, increasing your reach and visibility.

- **Fosters Community:** High-quality content on social media platforms encourages discussions, comments, and shares, building a community around your brand.

#### 8. Competitive Advantage

- **Differentiates Your Brand:** In a crowded market, good content helps you stand out from competitors by showcasing your unique perspective, expertise, and value.
- **Attracts Collaborations:** Quality content can attract partnerships and collaborations with other businesses and influencers, expanding your reach and influence.

#### 9. Cost-Effective Marketing

- **Long-Lasting Impact:** Unlike paid advertising, which stops delivering results once you stop paying, high-quality content continues to attract and engage audiences over time.
- **Efficient Resource Utilisation:** Good content can be repurposed across various platforms and formats, maximising the return on your investment.

#### 10. Data and Insights

- **Audience Insights:** Analysing the performance of your content provides valuable insights into your audience's preferences, behaviour, and needs.
- **Improves Strategy:** Continuous feedback and data from your content efforts help refine your content strategy for better results over time.

In summary, high-quality content is a cornerstone of effective communication, marketing, and brand building. It plays a crucial role in engaging and retaining audiences, building trust and credibility, enhancing visibility and SEO, driving conversions, and providing valuable education. Exceptional content not only sets you apart from competitors but also cost-effectively supports long-term growth and success.

**Now let's dive into the 50 tips that are essential for exceptional content writing, straight from the experts:**

#### **Understanding Audience**

**Audience** - Gripping the audience and making them read every word you wrote diligently should be the core purpose of your writing.

**Tip 1:** The secret behind great content writing is being able to create content that will answer a need your target audience has. To answer a question they have or help out with a challenge they are facing.

Understanding your audience's preferences and attitudes, needs, and pain points will help you understand what the audience actually wants and needs. This will help create content that is rich in value and ensures greater engagement and satisfaction.

**Tip 2:** Focus your listening on your customer needs. The better you listen and analyse their needs, the more engaging content you'll have.

**Tip 3: What does your audience want?**

You need to deliver the information and content your audience wants. And to understand just what that is, you need to listen to and address their challenges, aspirations, and top-of-mind concerns.

At the highest end of the budget, you can derive those insights by conducting market research and interviewing prospects and customers. You then develop buyer personas and craft your content with those in mind.

#### **Tip 4: Buyer / Customer Personas**

Buyer personas are valuable in understanding questions. They enable content developers to understand their audience and importantly the type of content that will be valuable and helpful to them. And of course, you are a persona. If you're an expert in your field, there was a time when you weren't. Remember the questions you wanted to ask when you were starting out – is now the time to write the definitive answer for others?

- By developing personas around different potential users of your products and services, as well as where they are in the funnel helps you identify areas of opportunity for your content.
- Do an extensive amount of research into the existing customer, who they are, what they do, where they spend time online, how they consume content, and how they prefer to receive it. Then we create brand personas from that. It's not an easy or fast approach. It takes time and a lot of elbow grease.
- You likely already have some customer data at your disposal – whether it is data found via your analytics, a history of customer buying patterns, customer surveys, whatever. So break it out and start analysing it. Identify what you have and look at it from a high level. You may be able to find strong behaviours and patterns directly from this initial research (don't stop here though). While the plural of anecdote certainly isn't data, sometimes good stories do emerge.
- You can do this in a number of different ways. The first thing is to put together a list of questions you want to know from both customers and employees of the business. Once you get their answers, compile them into a template that you can use to identify patterns. This gives you an easy way to spot trends, but also to continually refer to the data.

**Tip 5:** I read a lot of marketers and writers almost every day. Understanding what's important to them, their pain points, and what they want to know more about is essential. Writing about industry trends or news is straightforward, but addressing pain points, especially those people avoid discussing, sparks conversation. Some of my most-trafficked posts tackle issues like writer's burnout or "what to do when," which have strong emotional appeal.

**Tip 6:** Many marketers have access to various reports but often lack a comprehensive understanding of how this data interrelates. Resources can be either too academic or overly technical. Approach Google Analytics from a business objective perspective. Constantly ask, "What do I need to know for my business, and how do I obtain that data?" Additionally, analysing competitors' strategies can provide valuable insights and foster buy-in from clients.

**Tip 7:** Relevant content is far more important than high traffic. If you write an in-depth article on a relevant topic and only five people read it, is that a waste? It depends. If those five people are

part of your target audience—interested, curious, and eager to learn—and you engage them as customers, then your article wasn't a waste at all.

### **Content quality and attributions**

**Tip 8:** Ensure that the content you produce is:

- Relevant
- Useful
- Actionable
- Thought Provoking
- Stackability
- Interactive
- Shareable

### **Crafting effective answers**

**Tip 9:** So, let's understand what constitutes a good answer post.

- A good answer addresses the questions your audience is asking.
- A good answer promises specific value
- The best performing answer posts promise something very specific in the headline. The most commonly used phrases of the top posts are as follows:

Phrase	Number Times Used
How to create	9
How to use	9
How to write	5
Need to know	4
Infographic how to	4

Phrase	Number Times Used
How to use	78
How to create	71
How to get	51
5 ways to	47
How to write	36
You need to	36
Content marketing tips	35
Need to know	32
How to build	29
7 ways to	27

Thus it appears that the most shared answer posts use specific 3 word phrases that promise value in the headline. They are simple, clear and to the point. Across all content, if you look at the numbers of shares and links, on average you will find that “how to” posts outperformed other answer post types. Headlines such as ‘the secret to’ or ‘secrets of’ were very popular in the context of consumer topics such as secrets of a longer life or weight loss.

- A good answer is credible and authoritative

A good answer is well researched, it has facts and insights that make it authoritative. To be credible you also need to explain or demonstrate why you have expertise or first-hand experience in the subject. You can demonstrate credibility by providing your own research as well as referring to your experience and other research sources. Bring your own experience to your answer, which also makes it more personal.

The more extensive your research and the more it is evidence backed, the greater the potential to create an authoritative answer which is referenced and hence one that gets links.

- A good answer provides examples or case studies

This is linked to the point above about research. A good answer not only cites the research sources as is the case on sites like Wikipedia but it also provides examples. In B2B marketing there is significant potential to provide informative case studies. Case studies show that your answer is better – because real companies have applied the insights you’ve set out, and are getting results. They don’t have to be case studies you’re directly involved with, of course – but a well-researched answer should be able to cite evidence to back up its position.

- A good answer is comprehensive and complete

This is similar to points about being well researched but goes further. The best answer is comprehensive and long form. The post fully explains in detail and answers the question without needing to refer elsewhere although it will still refer to sources and examples.

We have found that long form answers perform well in terms of both shares and links. The nature of the answer post is often signalled to the reader in the headline eg ‘comprehensive guide’ or ‘complete guide’. Short answers are generally less valuable and this is reflected in less shares and links.

- A good answer has a summary

Whilst good answers are generally long form and comprehensive, the best answers also contain a summary. Someone may not want to read the whole post now and a summary allows them to decide to bookmark or save it for later reference. A good summary also increases shareability.

- A good answer is well structured and scannable

Long form answer posts need to be well structured and scannable with a good use of subheadings, images and structured steps. Structured steps can help walk the reader through an answer or how to do something. In our previous article on the perfect ‘how to’ post we set out the following elements which are often used in ‘how to’ posts:

1. Numbered steps
2. Scannable text

3. Annotated images and videos
4. A case study
5. Links to tools
6. Practical tips
7. Links to further resources

It can be difficult to determine what exactly is an answer post. To narrow things down we looked at posts that included in their headline specific words and phrases, for example:

- How to
- Ways to (often preceded by a number)
- Need to know
- Reasons why
- Secrets of
- Guide (e.g. Comprehensive guide, Complete guide)
- What (though we had to filter out all the viral quizzes eg what animal are you?)

#### **Tip 10: What are the various forms of content that work?**

Research says that most content tends to either get shares or links depending on the form of the content, for example quizzes mainly get shares. It is, of course, much easier for content to achieve shares rather than links. However, good answer content achieves links as we have seen. This means that answer posts, particularly long form posts, have the ability to achieve both shares and links, a magical sweet spot when it comes to content marketing.

Let's take a look at the highest shared content. I've looked across the sales funnel and identified examples of inspiring highly shared content from some of the leading companies.

- Research Content

Most B2B audiences are interested in findings from new research and how it may affect what they do. It's a great way to provide insights and value without coming across like you're pushing your product too hard. Research white papers have long been a staple of B2B marketing content. Research surveys conducted regularly can become very powerful pieces of content. You can also comment and share third party research.

- eBooks & Guides

Long form Guides and eBooks are another staple of B2B marketing. What have you learnt and what unique expertise do you have that can be turned into a helpful guide or ebook? Can you combine several posts into a longer-form piece?

- Updated Reference Content
- Trending & Hashtag/News Jacking Content

At the opposite end of the spectrum from reference and evergreen content is trending content. This is content that is designed to take advantage of a specific trending topic or issue. The long



term impact and life of this content may not be as great as evergreen reference content but it can help position your brand as being on top of trends and drive significant traffic.

Are you monitoring trending issues and are you able to engage quickly? Internet trends can be very short lived and you can look out of touch if you engage late in the trend. Thus there are dangers but also upside.

- ‘How to’ and Practical Content

Most people want to do their job better and faster. Thus I think there is a unique place for ‘how to’ content in B2B marketing. This content can be helpful and have real value such as tips or guides. The best ‘how to’ posts are well structured, almost educational, with clear steps and images.

Objective: What questions are your audience asking, what issues are they struggling with? Can you develop a practical ‘how to’ post using your unique knowledge and skills? How can you “Be the best answer” to a burning question?

- Provocative Content

You know the headline works. Headlines are more important than ever to attract attention and pull you in. The Next Web do a great job with their headlines, making them provocative and interesting. Can you challenge an existing orthodoxy or come up with a provocative viewpoint? There are risks so you need to be careful, but controversy attracts attention.

- Curated and list content

I am reluctant sometimes to highlight how well list posts work, as we’re all drowning in them, but there is little question they work well whether in B2B or B2C marketing. They work particularly well as a format for curated content.

- Quizzes

Who can resist a quiz? Quizzes can be a great way to drive awareness and create a lighter form of content. Sites like BuzzFeed, PlayBuzz and Disney have driven millions of shares of quizzes such as ‘Which Disney Princess Are You?’ In the B2B world we have few princesses (maybe a few divas) but people still enjoy a quiz, and particularly love quizzes about themselves. As the Qzzr guys say, it’s like walking past a mirror, you can’t resist.

- Product Launch Content

Of course there comes a time in marketing where you need to talk about your own stuff. How do you do this without reverting to old style interruption marketing or brochure-speak?

- Tools

Tools can be great at driving traffic and awareness, and in some ways can work a little like quizzes or assessments. Hubspot have done very well with their Website Grader and this year LinkedIn excelled with their Social Selling Index. This tool calculates your social selling skills and scores you on a number of indices. The tool was one of the most shared pieces of content on the LinkedIn business site this year.

- Infographics

Infographics continue to get highly shared when used in the right context. There were many good examples this year.

- Case Studies

This was an area which was disappointing this year. Case studies offer a great opportunity to tell stories that are unique and to show how your company is adding value to customers. Despite this we found few companies doing case studies well and feel this is an opportunity for B2B companies.

That said, case studies get relatively low shares and views. Why is this? Is it because case studies are niche, because people are less keen on B2B? I think there is a lot more we can learn about case studies as I remain convinced this is an area of opportunity for B2B

**Tip 11:** We always start with an initial content marketing analysis, reviewing competitors and auditing the client's past content. This process generates initial ideas. Collaborating with the client and their PR agency to understand news, events, and key dates is crucial. Brainstorming follows, and one effective method is the checklist approach, asking why, where, when, who, what, and how regarding the client's products and services, unlocking numerous ideas.

**Tip 12:** Another powerful technique is exploring the current zeitgeist of a topic using curation tools. I often begin with provocative questions like "What if the opposite is true?" or "What if it was a million times better?" or "What if nobody knew about this?" This approach leads to interesting and creative ideas.

### **Content writers checklist**

#### **Tip 13: Content Writer's checklist**

In summary, if you are writing content that answers a question you want to be the best answer. So ask yourself these set of questions to make sure you're writing the best answer:

- Am I answering a question that people really care about?
- Am I promising specific value – will people know what they're going to get?
- Am I demonstrating credibility and authority?
- Am I backing up my assertions with case studies and examples?
- Is this answer going to be relevant in a year? When should I update it?
- Is it comprehensive and complete? Could someone act on this advice without another source?
- Do I have a clear summary that could be scanned to get the point across?
- Do I have a clear structure with sections and steps?
- Do I teach effectively, setting out a clear educational model?

If you can say yes to all of these points, you're on your way to being the best answer.

### **Timelessness and relevance**

- The best answer is timeless

Clearly you get a better return on your answer if it is an evergreen answer to a common question. This also allows your answer to gain more links over time. Shares tend to happen quite quickly whereas links tend to build more consistently over a period of time. An evergreen answer can be about a specific time period but contextualised, eg: Why did Obama win the election in 2012?

- The next best answer is one that is regularly updated

Not all answers are timeless, for example, a post on the best social media tools may become outdated. For example, Topsy was a great social media tool but it is no longer available now. Similarly, an answer on how to use Google analytics is likely to need regular updating as the software changes and new features are introduced. If you are answering a question that is not timeless you need to stay on top of things to be the best. Regularly updating your content takes time but gives you the opportunity to be the best answer because you can be both comprehensive and current.

### **Competitive advantage in content marketing**

#### **Tip 14: Remember, with content, it's always 'The winner takes it all'!**

The best answers to a question do not perform a little bit better than other posts, they perform significantly better! As with so much on the internet it is a winner takes all game.

For example, you can write your own post on 'what is content marketing' but unless you can get a better answer than the best post, few people will refer to your answer. Even the 2nd best post on content marketing will have less than a tenth of the links of the best post.

You can actually compare tall city buildings to content marketing. No one visits the 5th tallest building in a city, all of the competitive advantage goes to the tallest buildings. Much the same is true in content marketing. Top content outperforms average content significantly, by a factor of ten or more. It is increasingly a winner-takes-all game as Rand Fishkin pointed out in his post on creating 10x content. People link and share the best post on a topic rather than an average article. To gain traction you need to make sure you have the best content that meets the needs of your audience.

### **Identifying and utilising competitive edge**

**Tip 15:** The key is to identify the areas where you can dominate, relative to your competitors, where you can be the tallest building. Your competitive edge could stem from research, case studies or specific knowledge. Or you could produce the most comprehensive content or the best video. It takes time to become the tallest building. But on the way you could be the fastest growing, quirkiest, most different...in some way your content has to stand out.

### **ROI and longevity of good content**

#### **Tip 16: Good content yields massive ROI**

Good answers to common questions have potential longevity, they are evergreen, as people will continue to ask the question and look for answers.

#### **Tip 17: The objective behind creating content (or) What factors do we consider for measuring the ROI of Content Marketing?**

- Sales

- Leads
- Backlinks
- Engagement (Likes, Shares, Mentions)
- Traffic
- Authority
- Branding
- Referrals
- Word-of-mouth
- Awareness
- Longevity
- Market Evaluation
- Reviews
- PR
- Rebranding

### Emotional elements in contact

**Tip 18:** Check out these essential emotional elements behind viral content, see if you can leverage any of these factors to make your content more interesting:

Emotional element	Content Element	Topic Element	Format Element
Amusing Surprising Heart Warming Beautiful Inspiring Warning Shocking	Images Facts Charts Quotes Video Interaction	Trending topic (e.g. Zombies) Health & fitness Cats & Dogs Babies Long Life Love	List Post Quiz Story Curation Research Insights Practical Tips

### Efficiency and relevance in content creation

**Tip 19:** The real challenge in creating great content is the combination of large quantities of content in a short period of time and keeping it relevant to the target audience and engaging. So optimise your time.

**Note:** Every site needs cornerstone content, something that distinguishes your site, which is comprehensive and authoritative. Something that people know you for, link to and return to read again and again. Start working on it.

### Matching Content with Customer Persona and Journey

## Tip 20: Forms of content

Theoretically speaking, all these content forms need to be matched with the Customer Persona and Customer journey through the funnel.

RAISE AWARENESS	BE CONSIDERED		GET A DECISION	RETAIN YOUR CUSTOMERS
Entertain	Educate	Persuade	Convert	Keep
Quizzes	Guides	Case studies	Webinars	Top tips
Videos	Trends	Reviews	Demos	How to articles
Games	Whitepapers	Awards	Pricing	Webinars
Competitions	Tips	Testimonials	FAQs	
Infographics	how to posts	Comparisons	Calculators	
Animations	Checklists	Client interviews / FAQ	Implementation guide	
Challenges	Expert interviews	Sector focus		
List posts	Elearning	Use cases		
Newsjack post	Webinars			
Best of post	Surveys / polls			
Debate post	why' posts			
Glossaries	what posts			
mythbuster	Slideshares			
	guest blogs			
	ebook			

## Content Sharing and Linking Dynamics

### Tip 21: People share and link to content for different reasons

Note that the majority of content published on the internet is simply ignored when it comes to shares and links. The data suggests most content is simply not worthy of sharing or linking, and also that people are very poor at amplifying content. It may sound harsh but it seems most people are wasting their time either producing poor content or failing to amplify it.

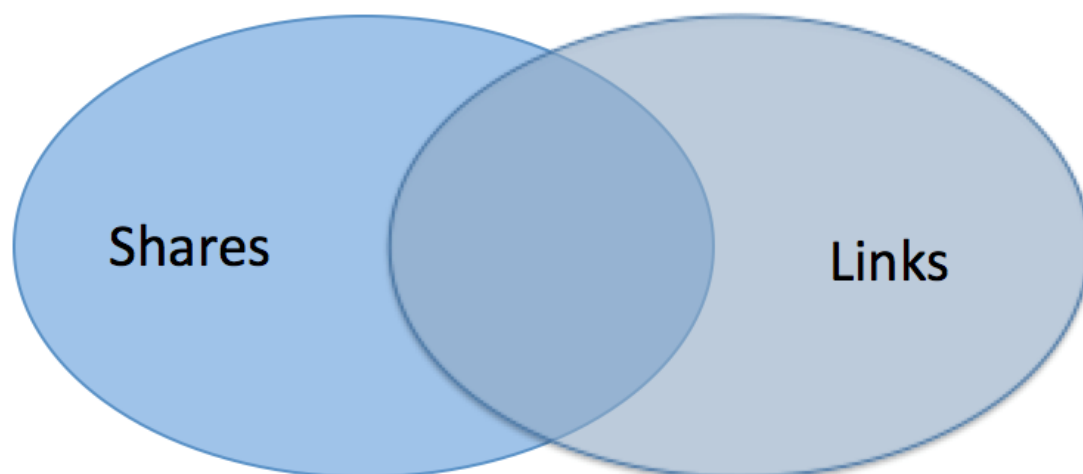
On a more positive note I also found some great examples of content that people love to both share and link to. It was not a surprise to find content gets far more shares than links. Shares are much easier to acquire. Everyone can share content easily and it is almost frictionless in some cases. Content has to work much harder to acquire links. Let's find out:

- The sweet spot content achieves both shares and links.
- The format of the content and the length of the article definitely has an impact on the shares and links.
- 85% of content published (excluding videos and quizzes) is less than 1,000 words long. However, long form content of over 1,000 words consistently receives more shares and links than shorter form content. Either people ignore the data or it is simply too hard for them to write quality long form content.
- Content formats matter. Formats such as entertainment videos and quizzes are far more likely to be shared than linked to. Some quizzes and videos get hundreds of thousands of shares but no links.
- List posts and videos achieve much higher shares on average than other content formats. However, in terms of achieving links, list posts and why posts achieve a higher

number of referring domain links than other content formats on average. While we may love to hate them, list posts remain a powerful content format.

- There are, however, specific content types that do have a strong positive correlation of shares and links. This includes research backed content and opinion forming journalism. We found these content formats achieve both higher shares and significantly more links.
- Research says that there are specific content types that have a high correlation of shares and links. This content attracts both shares and links, and as shares increase so do referring domain links. Thus whilst content is generally shared and linked to for different reasons, there appears to be an overlap where some content meets the criteria for both sharing and linking.
- The content that falls into this overlap area, our sweet spot, includes content from popular domains such as major publishers. In our sample the content also included authoritative, research backed content, opinion forming journalism and major news sites.
- During this analysis I found that opinion content from these sites, such as editorials and columnists, had significantly higher average shares and links, and a higher correlation.
- The higher shares and links may be because opinion content tends to be focused on current trending areas of interest and because the authors take a particular slant or viewpoint that can be controversial and engaging.
- Data appears to support the hypothesis that authoritative, opinion shaping journalism sits within the content sweet spot. It particularly attracts more referring domain links.
- Over 50% of infographics (53,000 in our sample) had zero external links and 25% had less than 10 shares in total across all networks. This may reflect a recent trend to turn everything into an infographic leading to many poor pieces of content.
- What also stands out is the relatively low number of referring domain links for quizzes. People may love to share quizzes but they are less likely to link to them.
- List posts and videos appear to perform consistently well as a content format in terms of both shares and links.
- Surprising, unexpected and entertaining images, quizzes and videos have the potential to go viral with high shares. However, this form of content is far less likely to achieve links.
- We can see that long form content consistently gets higher average shares and significantly higher average links.
- The combined impact of factors such as overall site popularity, content format, content type and content length is an area for further investigation. However, the initial findings do indicate that shares and/or links can be increased when some of these factors are combined.

## **Content Sweet Spot**



### Industry Insights and Content Trends

**Tip 22:** 71% of marketers are creating more content in 2015 than they did last year and one quarter of them are increasing their headcount just for content marketing. This means that marketers won't stand out just for having content anymore– they need to stand out for having the BEST content.

**Tip 23:** 68% still rate their content marketing as basic or inconsistent, so there is still a ton of opportunity to get ahead of the game if you put the time into getting a good strategy in place now.

**Tip 24:** In terms of content types, 68% found success with infographics, blog posts and articles, the highest rated content type. Again, you need to see which content types resonate best for your audience, topic or target platform.

**Tip 25:** 66% of European marketers measure social shares. But only 39% believe they are able to measure ROI on content marketing.

### Content preferences and performance

**Tip 26:** Of the big three digital papers, readers at nytimes.com liked longer content, 3,000-10,000 words, while readers at usatoday.com opted to share shorter pieces, 1,000-2,000 words. But, this word length is a bit of an anomaly for usatoday.com. For the year as a whole, readers there opted to share longer form content more often.

**Tip 27:** The preferred type of content for social sharing also varied. "What" posts (articles with headlines beginning with "What") were shared more overall by Washington Post readers. At the New York Times, "Why" posts were shared more frequently.

**Tip 28:** The most shared articles on BuzzFeed were List posts followed by How-To articles as can be seen below. In the case of the Guardian the most shared posts were Why posts followed by How-To posts.

**Tip 29:** Long Form Content Performs Well Consistently.

### Future Trends and Content Strategy

**Tip 30:** The future is not what it was. BuzzFeed and the major publishers are learning from each other when it comes to driving traffic and shares. They are constantly reviewing what works and experimenting with content formats such as quizzes, picture posts, headlines and with engaging long form content. As a consequence, the differences between the sites in terms of content formats may be far less marked in the future.

**Tip 31:** It may sound harsh but it seems most people are wasting their time either producing poor content or failing to amplify it. Be consistent with your content and keep up with the Keywords that would amplify the SEO scores.

### **Ongoing research and unique voice**

**Tip 32:** Stay in research mode at all times. To keep your content ideas fresh and plentiful, make research a continuous activity. Quality content is often the result of constant idea generation and ongoing research, rather than reserving it for specific planning or writing sessions.

**Tip 33:** Write in your own unique voice. Avoid mimicking others. Your content should reflect an individual style unique to your personality or brand. Developing your voice is an ongoing process; continually hone your writing skills to maintain and evolve your style throughout your career.

### **Focused Content and Compelling Titles**

**Tip 34:** Talk about only one thing. Each piece of content should focus on a single point. Determine your main point before writing and ensure your content stays on topic. Be ruthless in editing; remove anything that strays from the central point, adhering to William Faulkner's advice to "kill your darlings."

**Tip 35:** Spend as much time on your title as you do writing. An engaging title is crucial to attracting readers. It should create interest and give a clear idea of the content's value, encouraging clicks and engagement.

### **Engaging Openings and Reliable Content**

**Tip 36:** Make the first sentence your best. You have mere seconds to hook your readers. Your first sentence, following an engaging headline, should seamlessly lead into your main point and captivate the reader's attention.

**Tip 37:** Craft an irresistible introduction. Whether it's the first paragraph or the first few hundred words, your introduction should be compelling and hint at what's to come without revealing everything. It sets the stage for your main content.

**Tip 38:** Kill the hype. Keep it believable. Readers value accuracy and trustworthiness. Avoid hype and exaggerated claims; focus on providing valuable, truthful information. Back up surprising facts or figures with sources and provide links to references, establishing trust and credibility.

### **Strong Conclusions**

**Tip 39:** The close is as important as the lead. Great content not only informs but also provides a clear "so what" conclusion. Summarise your main point and explain how it benefits the reader. If possible, tie the conclusion back to the introduction, creating a cohesive and satisfying ending.



## Cross-Pollination of Ideas

**Tip 40:** Reading extensively outside the marketing field can inspire fresh ideas. When at a magazine rack, I deliberately choose a magazine outside of business or marketing (e.g., boxing, psychology, architecture) to see what others are discussing. Applying concepts from entirely different subjects to your own can yield innovative and unique perspectives.

## Diverse Content for Varied Channels

**Tip 41:** Continuously research to discover what interests and engages your audience by exploring sources like Quora, social media channels, blogs, email newsletters, and resources. It's essential to have a variety of content for different channels because what works on one platform might not work on another.

**Tip 42:** Ensure that you create content addressing common questions from customers about your product, advice on overcoming obstacles, and anything else they need.

## Identifying and Filling Content Gaps

**Tip 43:** Look for content gaps in your market. Instead of focusing on what others are saying within the industry, pay attention to what's not being said, what's not being communicated effectively, and what could be addressed better and in more detail.

**Tip 44:** If you're deeply embedded in your market, content ideas will naturally emerge. If you're not, generating ideas will be challenging. Therefore, immerse yourself in your market rather than attempting to produce content from an outsider's perspective.

## Personalization and Audience Empathy

**Tip 45:** People don't care about the size of your audience; they want to be treated as individuals. Become what your customers are interested in, treating them like an audience of one.

**Tip 46:** Audience research is not just beneficial; it's essential. Content is about data-driven empathy, understanding your audience's needs and preferences through data.

## Emphasising Depth and Quality

**Tip 47:** Trends in content marketing show a preference for depth. The average shares by content length increase as the content itself increases in length. Long-form content, as opposed to "snackable" content, drives a successful content marketing strategy.

## Combining Depth with Style

**Tip 48:** If you're interested in the industry, then you'll be able to create interesting content. Combining in-depth content with an engaging style ensures success. To make your content captivating:

- **Go deep:** Deep content is rarely boring.
- **Unleash the data:** The right audience always appreciates a good dose of data.
- **Practice and Experiment:** The only way to get good at this is through experimentation and practice. Expect to attempt this 5 to 10 times before you have a hit. Through repeated efforts, you'll develop a sixth sense for uncovering unique elements, presenting them in a unique fashion, and making them resonate on the web.

**Tip 49:** To keep your readers engaged while providing in-depth information, vary your sentence structures. Mix short, punchy sentences with longer, more complex ones. This variation creates a rhythm that can maintain reader interest while conveying detailed and nuanced information. For example, start with a compelling, concise statement to draw readers in, and follow with a more elaborate explanation or example to add depth.

**Tip 50:** Adding storytelling elements to your content can make even the most detailed information more relatable and memorable. Use anecdotes, case studies, or hypothetical scenarios to illustrate complex points. This not only adds depth by providing real-world context but also enhances style by making the content more engaging and easier to connect with. Ensure your stories are relevant and succinct to maintain clarity and focus.