



ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

CONTENT MARKETING

What is Content Marketing?

You've probably heard the term 'content marketing' before, right? Howabout, 'Content is King?' For the modern marketer (i.e. business, entrepreneur, website, startup), content marketing is what builds trust between you and your potential customers.

It is basically any type of information that you put out into the world that communicates a message to your audience. This is traditionally seen as a written article or video, but also includes podcasts, social media posts, graphics - *really anything that you're publishing online that ultimately helps grow your business.*

Why Should You Use Content Marketing?

Content marketing turns the casual observer into a raving fan. It helps you become a *thought leader* in your industry. It builds loyalty between your brand and your customer-base.

Most importantly, it's a way to sell your products and services *without having to be salesy*.

This is why I love content marketing, because I can truly help people and at the same time direct them to my own products that can help them even more.



You don't have to *only* have a content marketing strategy. A well-rounded marketing strategy also includes traditional paid advertising and marketing techniques too.

We live in a world where people are constantly on the search for information to consume. Content marketing fills their desire for information (both educational and entertaining).

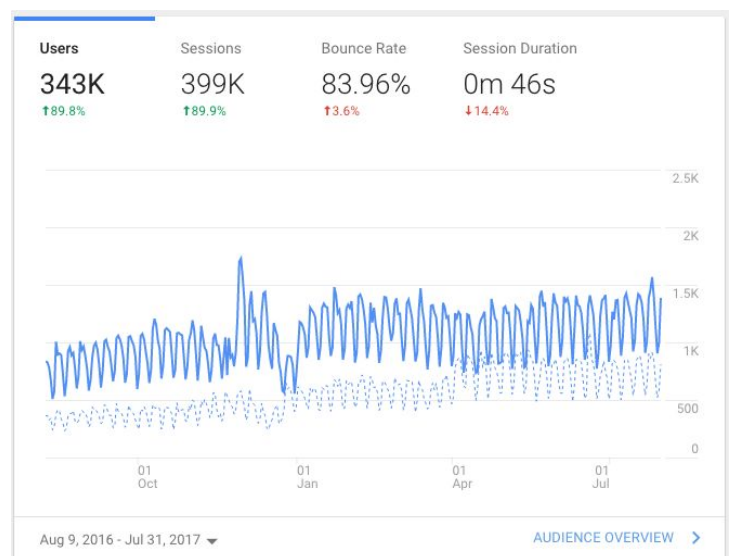
Traditional forms of advertising work less effectively now with the overabundance of information. Most major businesses have added a new content marketing strategy to their marketing plan.

Get Tangible Results from Content Marketing

If you're concerned about putting effort into creating content (*because it can take a lot of time to do properly*), here are the tangible results that your business will benefit from:

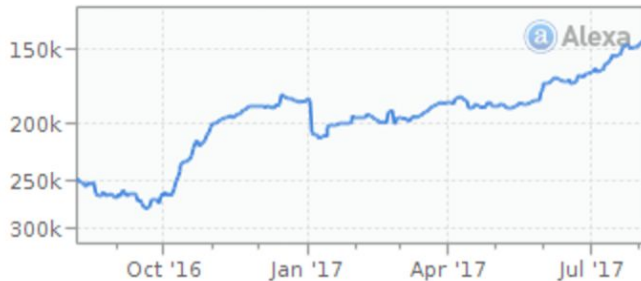
Web Traffic

Obviously traffic is important. With better content, you'll get more traffic to all of your web spaces - social media, content platforms like YouTube, and your website itself.



Alexa Traffic Ranks

How is this site ranked relative to other sites?



Global Rank ?

145,854 ▲ 39,540

Rank in [United States](#) ?

48,352

Above is the Alexa ranking of VideoSchoolOnline.com - a good indicator for the popularity of your site. VSO ranking has increased as we consistently put out content.

Better Ranking

With content that appears for many more keywords, you'll have better SEO (search engine optimization). This doesn't just mean that keywords are in your content or headlines. Ranking also about time spent on your website. Bounce rates will decrease as people spend more time on your site, increasing the ranking of your website.

Sales

At the end of the day, unless you are just running a business for fun and have another stream of income to pay the bills, you'll want to see actual monetary results from your efforts. Content marketing will ultimately bring people into the top of your funnel (see more in the Content Marketing Funnel section).

So, yes, you should be doing content marketing. Don't expect to succeed in the modern business world without content marketing.



This graph shows monthly revenue from our membership site, just one of our many streams of income.



Define Your Content Strategy

Before you even think about creating actual content (videos, articles, tweets, posts, pins), you should have a solid vision for why you are creating content.

What is your vision?

Think about where you want your business to be in 3-5 years. *Why did you start your business?*

- Are you trying to make the world a better place?
- Are you trying to become the largest business in your industry?
- Are you ending world hunger?
- Are you making it easier for people to plan their next meal?

Once you have a vision, the next step is figuring out who your target audience is.

Who is your target audience?

Without a specific target audience, it'll be hard to create content that is engaging and fulfills it's purpose of growing your business.

By understanding the **demographics** (age, gender, location, interests), **places** and **communication preferences** (Twitter vs. Pinterest, YouTube vs. Facebook, podcasts vs. videos), and **pain points** (what do they struggle with?), you'll have a much easier time knowing what kind of content to create.



If you already have a website/brand, you can use analytics to see who is currently consuming your content, and build a customer profile with that data. Surveys are great tool too!

If you are starting from scratch, you can typically use yourself as an example (as we usually create businesses around our own passions and problems that we have previously solved).



What are your goals?

Beyond your vision and target audience, goals are the next step towards a content strategy. They are the actual ways you achieve your vision.

Basic goal ideas include:

- Introducing your business to new customers
- Selling products you already have to more people
- Creating brand new products to sell
- Growing an email list
- Growing your social media followers
- Becoming more recognized in your industry
- Supporting customers with answers to their problems

Beyond goals are OKRs (Objectives and Key Results). OKRs are much more effective at helping you achieve results. This is a goal-setting strategy that Google internally uses - so it must work well!

Similar to S.M.A.R.T. goals, the key is to make your goals more measurable and actionable.

Objectives

The *basic goal ideas* listed above were examples of an objective - something you wish to accomplish in the future.

Key Results

These are the quantitative (measurable) ways to achieve the objective.

One of my Video School Online objectives is to *increase course completions*. The key result would be to: *increase course completions by 25% by the end of this year*.

Another example specific to content marketing:

Objective - Grow our social media presence

Key Results - Increase YouTube subscribers to 100,000 by end of next year.

With OKRs, you can better track if your goals are actually being attained.



Beyond the Objective and Key Results are the *Actions*. Actions are the actual steps you'll take to achieve the key result. For example, to increase YouTube subscribers an action could be to publish weekly videos; add subscriber calls-to-action on every video; and/or start a live-streaming show every week.

Now it's time for you to take action. If you haven't done so yet:

- Write a simple vision statement
- Define your target audience
- Write out your OKRs

I promise, it'll make the next steps a lot easier!

The Content Marketing Funnel

A marketing funnel is the process by which someone becomes aware your business exists, and then ultimately decides to purchase your product/service. We call it a funnel because the number of potential customers decreases with each step of the funnel.

AIDA is an acronym used in the traditional marketing funnel, which is still very relevant today:

A - Awareness
I - Interest
D - Desire
A - Action

I also like to add 'R' to the end for Retention, so AIDAR.

Remember, the goal is to move people through the funnel so that they purchase your products/services.



Awareness

Every person in the world is either inside or outside of your funnel. The people at the top, the largest part of our funnel, have become *aware* of your brand.

With content marketing, this is the stage where someone finds your content because they were searching for it online. Or, perhaps, they were told about your business from a friend - *word of mouth marketing*.

The person becomes aware that you exist.

Interest

A customer becomes interested in your content. They read your blog. They watch your videos. They go to your website when looking for an answer.

How do you increase interest?

Put out consistent content that answers all of your target audience's questions. When you are consistent, some of those *aware* of your business will become more interested in your other content.

Desire

Moving a customer from liking to *wanting* your product or service. You build an emotional connection with them. Perhaps you interact personally on social media. You respond to their questions via email.

You show the benefit of your business for them with testimonials and reviews.

This is when the customer is ready to make a decision.

Action

You prompt the customer to take action - *to make that decision*. This could be a sales email, a simple call-to-action at the end of a blog article, a landing page or sales video - among other things.

It doesn't necessarily have to even be for a purchase. This could also be for a non-monetary decision: *to subscribe to your email newsletter; to download your free PDF; to join your Facebook Group*.

The key to this step is providing an easy way for them to make that decision.

Retention

Because it is cheaper and easier to get a current customer to purchase another product of yours, than to find a new customer, retention is so important.



How do you retain loyalty among your followers?

What kind of content do you need to provide to keep them interested and engaged?

Perhaps it's an email sequence that follows up on their purchase. It could be special offers that only current customers receive. Or it could simply be the continuation of your content

marketing schedule so that they are frequently and consistently getting new content that helps them.



So, how does content marketing fit into the funnel?

During each phase of the funnel, you should be creating content for that specific person. Here are examples of the types of content you'll create for each stage:

Awareness & Interest

- Blog posts
- Videos
- Podcast episodes
- Email newsletters
- Guides

Action

- Sales pages
- Sales videos
- Sales emails
- Product descriptions
- More testimonials

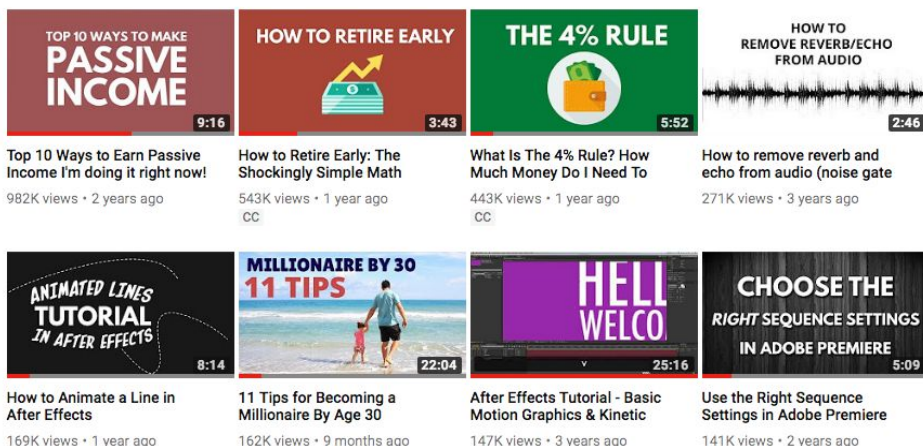
Desire

- Case studies
- Testimonials and reviews
- Product demonstrations
- Inspirational posts about the benefits

Retention

- Follow-up emails
- Special offers
- Customer support & FAQs
- Email Newsletters

During each phase of the funnel, remember to get inside the mind of your customer - *talk to them where they are.*



The image on the left shows examples of YouTube content that builds awareness and interest in my brand.

On each video, there are YouTube Cards and links in the description

that drive people to my website for more related content.

Come Up with Content Ideas

It's best to be thoughtful about the content you create, so you get the highest ROI (return on investment) for each piece of content you create. You probably have dozens if not hundreds of ideas for content you can create. *Or maybe you have no clue!*

Here are ways to get started:

The Idea List

To start, brainstorm all of the ideas you have right now. Just write down anything that comes to mind related to your brand. Whenever you have a new idea, add it to the list so that you don't ever run out of content ideas.



This list isn't specific to type of content (i.e. video, article, social media graphic, etc.). It's about the topic of your content.

How do you actually come up with great ideas?

An idea list is great, but how do we come up with these ideas in the first place.

Customer Pain Points

Start by answering your audience's key questions. You probably know most of these already because they're questions you've had to answer yourself or they're questions that people already ask you.

Think about the key pain points your customers have. *Answer those.*



Competitive Research

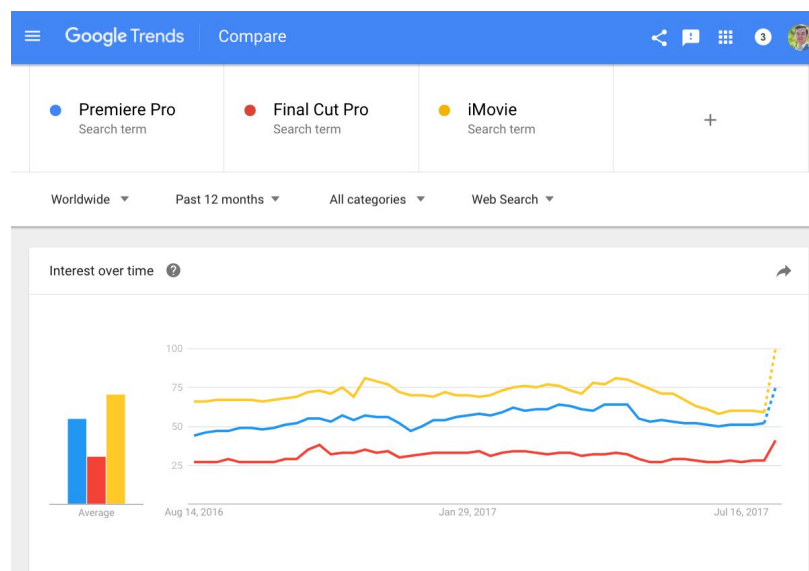
What are your competitor's creating content about? Follow your competitors on social media. Subscribe to their email newsletters. Subscribe to their YouTube channels.

See what they're doing. Don't copy. Do it better with your own style.

Keyword Research

Check out [Google Trends](#) to see what is trending related to your topic.

Search for your main business keywords (*i.e. the words someone searches to find your business*) on places like Google, YouTube, iTunes, and Amazon, to see what kind of content is out there - *and what kind of content ranks highest*.



Take it to the next level and use the [Google Keyword Planner](#) (with a Google Adwords account) to see popular keywords in your niche.

Don't get stuck on creating content for just the most popular keywords. Some of our best articles on Video School Online are ultra-specific keywords or phrases. These have come from solving specific problems our customers face.

Page		Pageviews	% Pageviews
1. /green-screen-how-to-chroma-key-in-adobe-premiere-pro/		1,528	14.11%
2. /what-is-the-difference-between-adobe-premiere-pro-and-adobe-after-effects-and-why-i-use-both/		1,346	12.43%
3. /		1,050	9.69%
4. /choose-the-right-sequence-settings-in-adobe-premiere-pro-every-time/		718	6.63%
5. /how-to-charge-for-freelance-work-hourly-day-or-fixed-project-rate/		625	5.77%
6. /course-library/		465	4.29%
7. /how-to-remove-reduce-reverb-or-echo-in-audio/		425	3.92%
8. /motion-graphics-the-trim-paths-feature-in-after-effects-will-change-your-life/		398	3.67%
9. /video-editing-101-course/		339	3.13%
10. /10-key-takeaways-udemy-live-2017/		246	2.27%

Above you can see our most popular web pages from the past month. Some of our highest ranking articles rank for very specific keyphrases like 'difference between adobe premiere pro and after effects.'

Create Great Content

Beyond coming up with ideas, you need to find out what makes it *great*. Here are things to keep in mind.

Evergreen

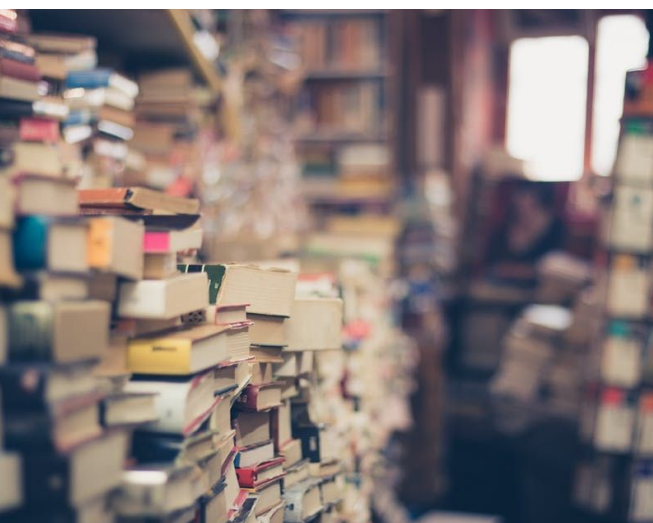
Unless you're a company that thrives on the latest newsworthy topic, creating content that will last for months, if not years will have a better ROI. So when thinking about content ideas, ask yourself whether this is something that people will be searching for next year. If not, then it might not be worth your time.



Quality & Quantity

There's a balance between being consistent (writing weekly or daily articles) and putting out high value content (typically comprehensive long-form content). It's different for different companies. Ultimately, I believe consistency is most important, but not with a lack of quality.

Heck, if you can put out a high value daily podcast, by all means do that. But if you're struggling to write high quality articles three times per week - perhaps you should scale back to weekly articles.



Just like I'd rather have an engaged email list of 1,000 subscribers over a list of 100,000 that doesn't open my emails, I'd rather write one solid article per week that my audience loves than daily articles that people don't love.

Quantity does play a role - *not in the amount of posts*, but in what you put into your post. Give away as much as you can for free. If you feel like you're giving out too much value for free, *great!*

This means your customers will love you. It means your customers will want even more from you - *and most likely will be willing to pay for it!*



Get Personal

Getting personal means both sharing your unique voice, story, and personality in your content, and also writing to your specific audience's needs.

Don't just write *at the general world*. Speak directly to the reader / viewer/ follower.

Know your target audience's personality, and talk to them in that way. If your audience is a bunch of PhD students, you'll write much differently than to a bunch of teenagers.

Your personality comes across not just in the words, but also in the visuals. Create a graphic brand identity with specific fonts, colors, imagery - *and be consistent with it*.

Showing off your personality in your content will make it more entertaining and help build more of an emotional connection with your audience.

Authenticity is the name of the game now.

What type of content should you create?

You just learned more of the *how* you should create content.

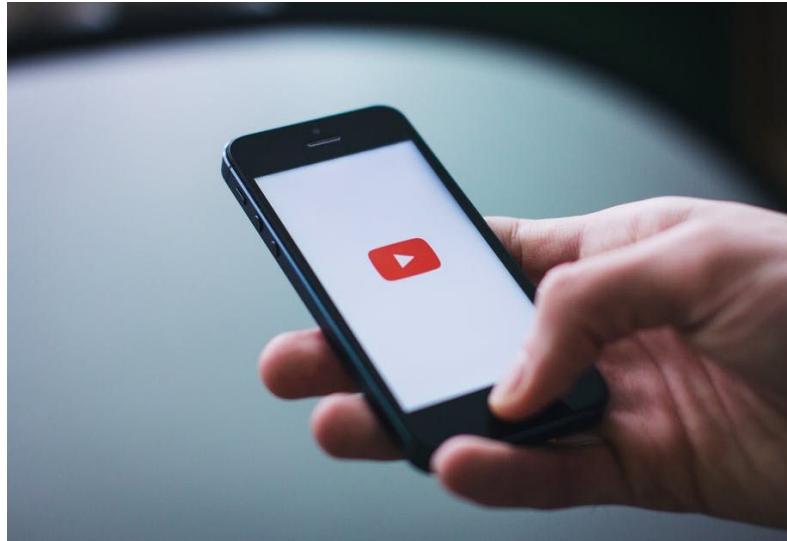
Now, which type of content should you create? Videos. Podcasts. Articles. Emails. Downloadable guides. Live streams. Tweets.

I focus on creating content that is searchable - so primarily articles and videos. This content lives on my website and YouTube. *I do often re-upload videos directly to Facebook, as Facebook-hosted video has better engagement.*

Unlike social media posts that have a lifespan as short as minutes and if you're lucky hours, content on your website and YouTube typically lives on, primarily because YouTube is a search engine and your content is searchable. Facebook posts, while technically searchable, are much harder to be *evergreen & searchable*.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't be snapping, tweeting, and posting. It's a great way to share content (that lives on YouTube/website) with your audience.

It also depends on your strengths, your passions, and your target audience.



If you hate being on Facebook every day, either automate the process so whenever you post a YouTube video or article it posts automatically - or outsource it. At the very least, batch schedule it with a tool like Buffer or Hootsuite so you don't have to spend time on social media every day.

On the other hand, if you hate writing articles and are more of a visual creative, focus your attention on making videos, infographics, and other visual content.

See where your audience lives. Do they mostly spend time on YouTube? If so, create videos. Do they spend all their time on Instagram? Do that!



How to *actually* create content?

The purpose of this guide isn't to show you how to make a video, or how to write an article. I have other resources for that. Instead, here are tips to make content creation more efficient.

Have an Editorial Calendar

Big news outlets don't use an editorial calendar just for the fun of it. It not only organizes your content schedule, but helps you stay on target.

Plus it can give you ideas for recurring content themes that happen throughout the year.
You'll never forget to do your big Halloween promotion again!

Easily Create Graphics

There are a number of new websites that allow you to create high quality graphics even if you aren't a designer. [Canva](#) is my personal favorite.

With hundreds of templates for every kind of graphic - Instagram post, YouTube thumbnail, Facebook Page cover image - you can efficiently create nice graphics wherever you have an internet connect.



Use Templates

On top of using an easy-to-use tool like Canva, create templates for your graphics. You *don't* want all your graphics to just look the same! You *do* want to have a cohesive brand identity, though.

Choose a color scheme. Use the same fonts. Use a motion graphics template - like the ones you can find on [VideoHive.net](#) - to be consistent, save time, and look more professional than if you tried to do it yourself.

This is important so that next time you finish a video for YouTube, you don't have to come up with a thumbnail from scratch. Just plug in the best-suited screenshot and some text to a template.

Promote Your Content

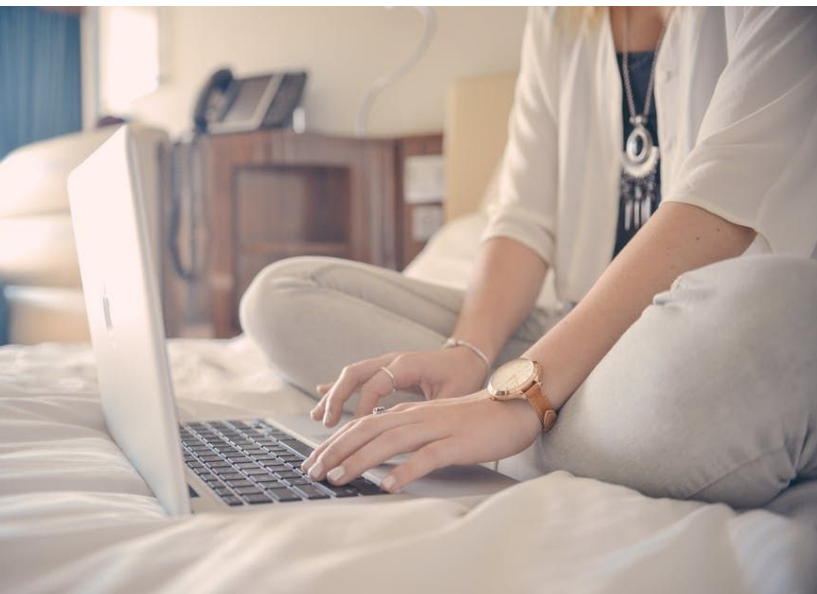
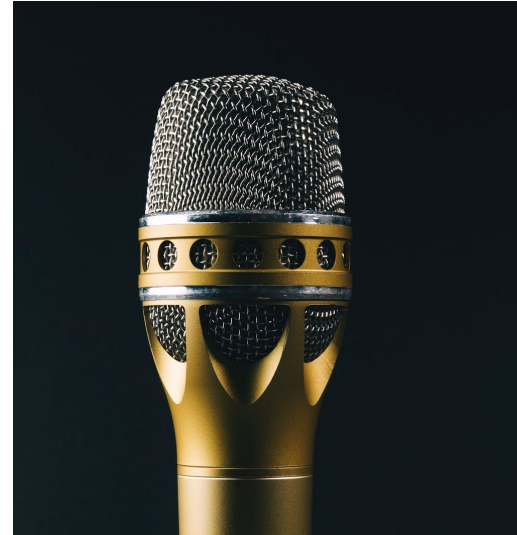
Creating content is great. But no one will see it without a bit of promotion. The best way to do this is to grow an audience so that whenever you have new content, you have people to share it with.

Build Your Audience from Scratch

Where you build an audience doesn't matter as much as the fact that you're building one. By audience, we mean people that are already connected to you - people that you have the ability to share your content with.

Your audience could be an email list, members of a Facebook Group or Page (basically any following on social media), subscribers to a YouTube channel, participants on an online forum, podcast subscribers, etc.

Here are ways to grow that audience from scratch:



Put Out Content

Duh, Phil?! You might be thinking I sound redundant, and it's true. Simply by posting content will you be able to grow an audience. Because people are searching for content all the time, if you put out amazing content, some people should find it.

Just because they find it, doesn't make them a part of your audience. You'll have to provide an easy way for them to join:

- An opt-in form for your email list
- A call-to-action to subscribe
- A Facebook Page like widget

This is the long run approach to audience growth. It's the one that I've had the most success with. But like I said, it's the *loooooonnnnggggg* approach. It's hard to rapidly grow an audience this way.

Here are some ways to grow faster.



Collaborations and Guest Posting

Partnering with people who already have an audience, even if it's a small one, is one of the best ways to grow your own audience. This could be either you creating content for someone else's channel/website (like a guest post) or you co-creating content for one or both of your channels/websites.

Start by searching for businesses and other content creators in your niche. Reach out to them and pitch an idea. Some people are open to these kinds of partnerships, while others aren't. If they are, make sure you pitch something that will be truly valuable for their audience. Also, make sure that the person you partner with shares how people can connect with you on the piece of content.

Commenting and Answering Questions

Participate online. Go where your target audience spends time (blogs, social media, forums), and chat with people. Answer questions. Provide value. Don't spam. Don't just link to your website, unless it's to truly relevant and helpful content.

Go straight to the questions on a site like [Quora](https://www.quora.com/). There you can answer questions related to your niche. This is also a great place to find topics for your content.



Social Media

Choose the right platform for your audience. Pinterest is great for creatives. LinkedIn is great for professionals. Facebook... is a place for basically everything. Start a Page and Group for your niche.

Post great content every day. *It doesn't always have to be your own content.* Use hashtags to make it more searchable (but don't overdo it).

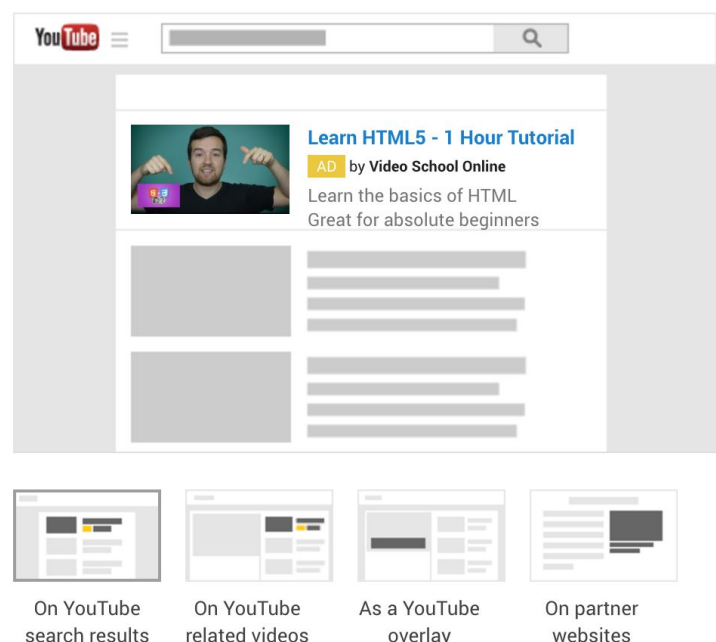
Paid Marketing

To quickly grow your audience, promoting your content on social media and YouTube could be the easiest way to do so... *if you have the budget.*

If you have a Facebook Page, you'll see that when you post, not all of your Page *likers* will see it. You have to pay/promote it.

On YouTube, you can boost your videos views by creating an *ad* out of your content.

Doing this will get a lot of eyeballs on your content in a short amount of time. *Converting these eyeballs into followers is a different story.*



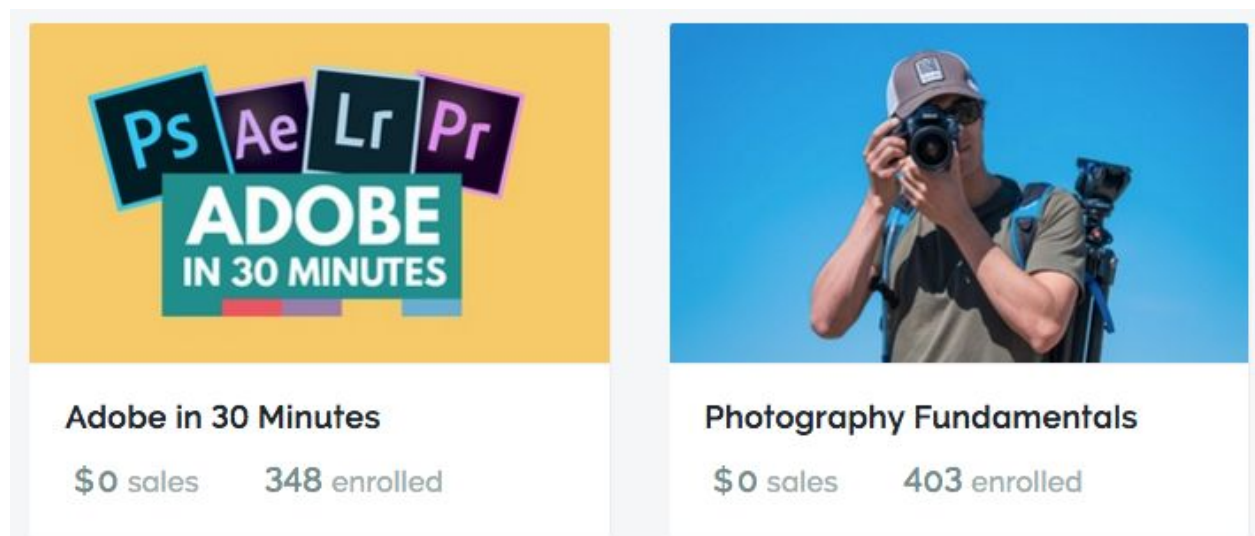
My paid marketing strategy is simple. Find the best content that I put out. Make sure that the content has a clear call to action to join my email list. *If you want to grow your audience another way - social media for example - that's up to you. Just make sure the call to action is there and clear.* Boost the post or video with a small budget (less than \$50).

I usually promote content that includes a free *lead magnet* such as a free online course, a downloadable guide, or similar. That way, there's a higher chance of conversion rather than just hoping someone ends up going to my website and subscribing for no other reason.

It helps to understand what your CLV - customer lifetime value - is per customer, AND what your conversion rate for email subscribers to paid customers is. This way, you can do a simple calculation to see if paying for a promotion is worth it.

For example, if my CLV is \$50 and my email subscriber to paying customer conversion rate is 10%, then paying \$100 to boost a post that gets more than 20 subscribers is worth it.

Of course this is just a simple example. Paid marketing is a difficult science to work out. If it was easy, we'd all be rich! That's why I like regular content marketing better!



The image shows two course cards side-by-side. The left card is for 'Adobe in 30 Minutes' with a yellow background and Adobe logo icons (Ps, Ae, Lr, Pr). The right card is for 'Photography Fundamentals' with a blue background and a photo of a person taking a picture. Both cards show '\$0 sales' and enrollment numbers.

Course Title	Sales	Enrolled
Adobe in 30 Minutes	\$0	348
Photography Fundamentals	\$0	403

Content Marketing Case Study:

Above is a screenshot of two of my free courses that I've launched. In just over two months, these free courses have added over 700 new email subscribers to my list because they act as a lead magnet that I promote via YouTube videos.

This is *content marketing* at its finest. From the emails I've received from students, I know these courses are building awareness, interest, and desire for my premium content.



Now You Have an Audience

Once you've grown an audience, even if it's just a dozen email subscribers, make sure you tell them about your content.

Have a schedule so that your audience knows when and expects to see more content. This is one of the best ways to turn the average follower into a raving fan. This means posting and sharing content on the same day and time of the week, every week.

Send a weekly newsletter. People sign up for your email newsletter for a reason - to be notified when you put out new amazing content. It may come as a surprise to you, but many of your subscribers aren't actively going to your website, YouTube channel, or social media pages to see if you've put out new content. Come up with a template for a weekly newsletter so that you can easily plug in your latest content, and act as a reminder that you exist.

Re-use old content on social media. Most of your old content is still great, right? Many new subscribers and followers don't get the chance to see your great content. Re-post it to social media every few months so that new followers see it.



The 'Stick with It' Attitude

Unless you end up with a viral piece of content, growing an audience will take a while. That's just the truth. Ask most successful companies, and they will tell you that it took them years to be successful. Ask most content marketers, and they'll say the same.

Personally, most of the people who have failed to grow an audience weren't consistent and didn't stick with it. They gave up too soon. Visa versa, most successful people kept putting out content consistently for years before they got any traction.

People in our YouTube Masterclass ask us all the time why they aren't getting subscribers after putting out a handful of videos. They ask why their videos aren't ranking number one on YouTube's search results. A lot has to do with just not being around long enough.

There's definitely *hockey-stick growth* for most businesses - where your growth is very slow at first but increases at a faster rate with time.

It took me a long time to get my first 1,000 YouTube subscribers. After that, things sped up. Once I hit 10,000, they sped up even more... as long as I stuck with it and kept putting out high quality content.



Analyze Your Content and Improve

Here is my best advice, and the one that so many people fail to follow. After creating, publishing, and promoting your content - make sure you analyze how it did. This way, you can see the content that was the most engaging, and create more content like that.

The biggest personal example is with my YouTube channel. The videos that did the best were my personal finance videos. Surprisingly, this was a topic that I created videos on the least. Not only were they the most popular, they were also the ones that made the most YouTube ad revenue.

This follows the 80/20 principle - where 80 percent of your results are driven from 20 percent of your efforts. 80% of my YouTube revenue came from 20% of my videos.

Unfortunately for me, personal finance lovers aren't my main target audience. *Perhaps they should be based off this evidence.* I've continued to create content for my other target audiences. But if I wanted to just grow my YouTube channel based on one topic, personal finance would be the highest ROI topic.



How to Analyze Content

Remember your goals. Use analytics to track how you do on your goals. If you're trying to analyze success based off something else, *make that a goal*.

Typical goals might be:

- Growing brand awareness
- Increasing engagement with your posts
- Customer retention
- Lead generation
- Sales

Basic Traffic Stats

Google Analytics is a powerful tool that is free-to-use for your website. YouTube Analytics are similar, for your YouTube channel.

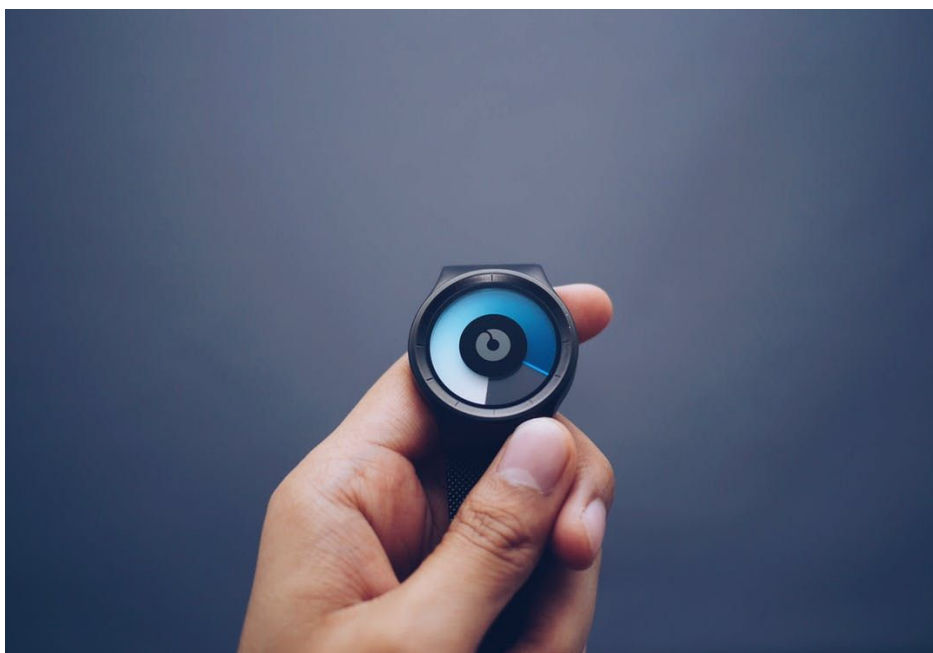
Page Views and Unique Page Views

See how many people visited your website or a specific page. Look at the unique page views to see how many individuals visited, and not just how many visits (even done by the same person) were done. Obviously you'll want to see growth in this area - not just from month to month but also from year to year.

You can also see which pages of yours have the most views. This can tell you if you are ranked well for a specific keyword or phrase. If you're ranking well for a specific page, create more content related to that keyword.

Time on Page

Seeing how much time is spent on each page can help you determine what type of content works best, especially if you compare two pages with roughly the same number of words.



Bounce Rate

The dreaded bounce rate. This measures what percentage of visitors enter your website and leave without any interaction or navigation to other pages.

A high bounce rate can lower your site's ranking. It also could mean your website isn't as engaging as it could be. Ideally someone who comes to your website, will stay on your website.

By linking to other articles and pages within your content, having calls to action at the end of your content, and generally *making your content awesome*, your bounce rate should decrease.

Again if you have a page with a lower bounce rate, see what you did there. Is there something about the layout that works? Is it a specific topic? Did you include more relevant links?

Social and Engagement Stats

Knowing how many people visit your website and how much time they spend on it is great. Having engagement is better: post likes, comments, shares. This is true for your website and social media posts.

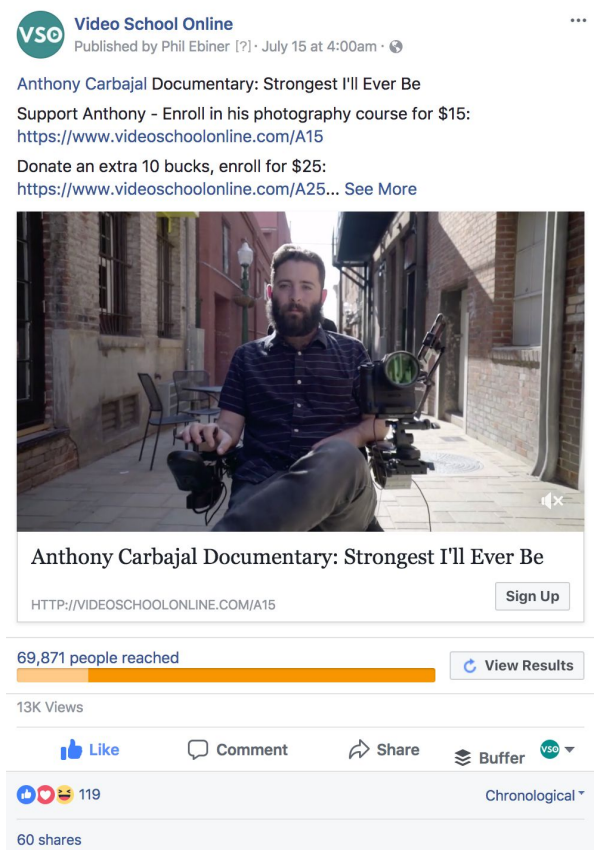
Like I keep telling you - just look and see what is working well. And repeat. See what kind of content get the most likes, shares, and comments. Do that... *more!*

Email Stats

With most email marketing services, you can see stats like open rates, click rates, and unsubscribe rates for every email you send. You can even see what specific links were clicked.

I use [ConvertKit](#), and they have a great tool for increasing open rates. You can A/B test email subject lines. It'll send your email to just a portion of your email list using both subject lines (evenly divided). After a couple of hours, it will then send your email to the rest of your subscribers using the subject line with the higher open rate.

This is incredibly helpful for testing different styles of open rates. You can also do this manually by segmenting your emails. Or at the very least, just looking at all of your email subject lines and seeing which style worked best.



The image shows a Facebook post from the page "Video School Online", published by Phil Ebner on July 15 at 4:00am. The post features a video of Anthony Carbajal, a man with a beard, sitting outdoors with a camera on a tripod. The video title is "Anthony Carbajal Documentary: Strongest I'll Ever Be". Below the video, there is a link to support Anthony by enrolling in a photography course for \$15, and a link to donate an extra 10 bucks for \$25. The post has 69,871 people reached, 13K views, 119 reactions (likes, loves, and wow), and 60 shares. The post also includes a "Sign Up" button and a "View Results" button.

Conclusion

With this guide to content marketing, my goal was to give you a better picture of what content marketing is, why it's important, and how you implement a content marketing strategy for your business.

If I succeeded, yay!

If I didn't, please message me with any ideas you have to make this guide better!

I look forward to seeing your business grow with content marketing!

Cheers,
Phil Ebiner
Founder of Video School Online

