

# **Content Strategy 101**

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## Content strategy and business goals

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The issues to consider are the following:

- The real cost of low-cost documentation
- How to create an efficient content-development process
- Whether high-quality documentation can lower the cost of technical support
- The most cost-effective way to share technical content across the enterprise

**Note:**

Ignoring content can have cost implications across the organization.

To implement your project and improve your chances of success, we recommend that you follow this sequence:

1. Identify and interview stakeholders.
2. Establish implementation goals and metrics.
3. Define roles and responsibilities.
4. Establish timelines and milestones.
5. Build the content creation system.
6. Convert legacy content.
7. Deliver content.
8. Capture project knowledge.
9. Ensure long-term success.

## Supporting marketing with technical content

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Tech comm and marcom have long occupied opposite ends of the content spectrum. The stereotype is that tech comm is text-heavy, dense, and badly formatted whereas marcom is shiny, beautiful, and content-free. From there, the debate just intensifies:

*Marcom versus tech comm: The stereotypes*

	<b>Marcom</b>	<b>Tech comm</b>
Design or automation?	Design	Automation
How much detail?	As little as possible	As much as possible
Assumed impact on revenue	A lot	None
Primary purpose	Persuade people to buy	Inform people

Give people a friendly interface that lets them quickly narrow down their options and choose the one they want. You don't have to expose all of the fields in the database—just the ones that help people narrow down their choices.

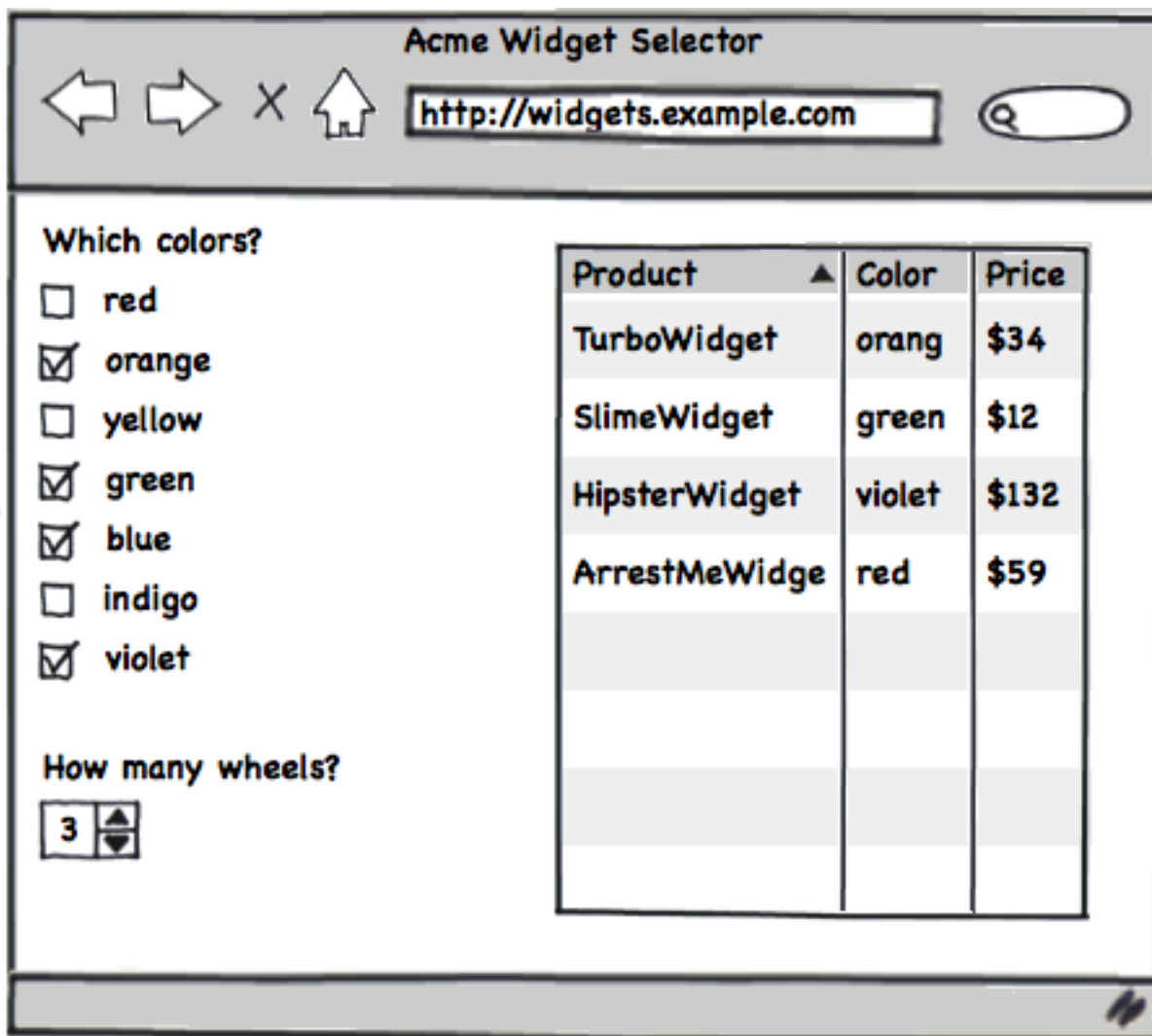


Figure 1: The product list on the right updates as you make selections on the left.

## Increasing product visibility

Technical content can help organizations increase the visibility of their products in the marketplace. Officially, technical content is intended for *product customers*—people who buy a product and then look at the documentation.

But one opinion poll indicates that about one-third of buyers<sup>1</sup> look at the documentation before buying a product, and the quality of the documentation will affect their purchasing decision.

To reel in new prospects, your content must perform in three different ways: be searchable, findable, and discoverable.

### Searchable

Information must be available via an internet search.

### Findable

Information must perform well for relevant keywords.

### Discoverable

Information must increase the likelihood that people will link to your information.

<sup>1</sup> “Consumer Feelings about Product Documentation,” an opinion poll conducted online by Sharon Burton

To read more, go to **Contents > Business goals > Marketing and product visibility > Increasing product visibility**.

## Developing and implementing a content strategy

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Create a content strategy.

1. Identify and interview stakeholders.
2. Establish implementation goals and metrics.
3. Define roles and responsibilities.
  - Education
  - Development
  - Review
  - Approval
4. Establish timeline and milestones.

Implement your content strategy.

5. Build the content-creation system.
6. Convert legacy content.
  - Convert everything into the new system.
  - Identify high-priority content and convert it.
  - Just-in-time conversion.
  - Assess for conversion.
  - Convert nothing.
7. Deliver content.

Delivery method	Benefits
PDF	Visual design, option to print
HTML	Accessibility, interactivity, responsive design
EPUB	Electronic content when internet access is unavailable

8. Capture project knowledge.
  - a) Document your content model, specifications, and best practices.
  - b) Provide training to authors on writing in the new environment.
  - c) Provide training to staff on maintaining the new system.
9. Ensure long-term success.

You can tick off the items you listed at the beginning of the project as accomplishments now.

## Creating a business case for your content strategy

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Thoroughly assess your content and content development process so that you can understand the gap between the strategy you need and the strategy currently in place.

These instructions will show you how to develop a business case that you can use to show that your company needs a new content strategy.

You may find that your company could save money on content production in the following areas:

- Automation
- Reuse

- Localization

## Managing change

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1. Demonstrate value to upper management and those in the trenches.
2. Offer training and knowledge transfer.
  - Classroom training.
  - Live web-based training.
  - Train the trainer.
3. Differentiate between legitimate issues with the new workflow and reflexive recalcitrance.
4. Enlist participants in a pilot project to explain process change.

Good management is critical when a company changes workflow; without it, the implementation of new processes will likely fail. Bad management kills implementations, and things can get ugly for everyone involved.

Without good change management, a percentage of staff who will be dead set against changes on general principle could gain the support of other team members, until almost everyone refuses to use the new system.

When you have managed change successfully, you can start creating useful content in the new system.

## addEntry

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The `addEntry` command is used to enter a new documentation release into the content-analysis database.

`-addEntry {nLanguage | nVersion | nOutput}`

Required	Parameter	Description
Yes	nLanguage	The language displayed by default.
	nVersion	The version of the content displayed by default.
	nOutput	The required delivery format.

## Content-strategy terms

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### structured authoring

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An environment for creating content where the required structure is enforced by the authoring software and following the template is not optional.

### structured content

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Information that is organized in a predictable way.

## **searchable content**

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Information that is available via an Internet search.

## **findable content**

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Information that performs well for relevant keywords.

## **discoverable content**

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Information that has in-bound links, especially on social media.