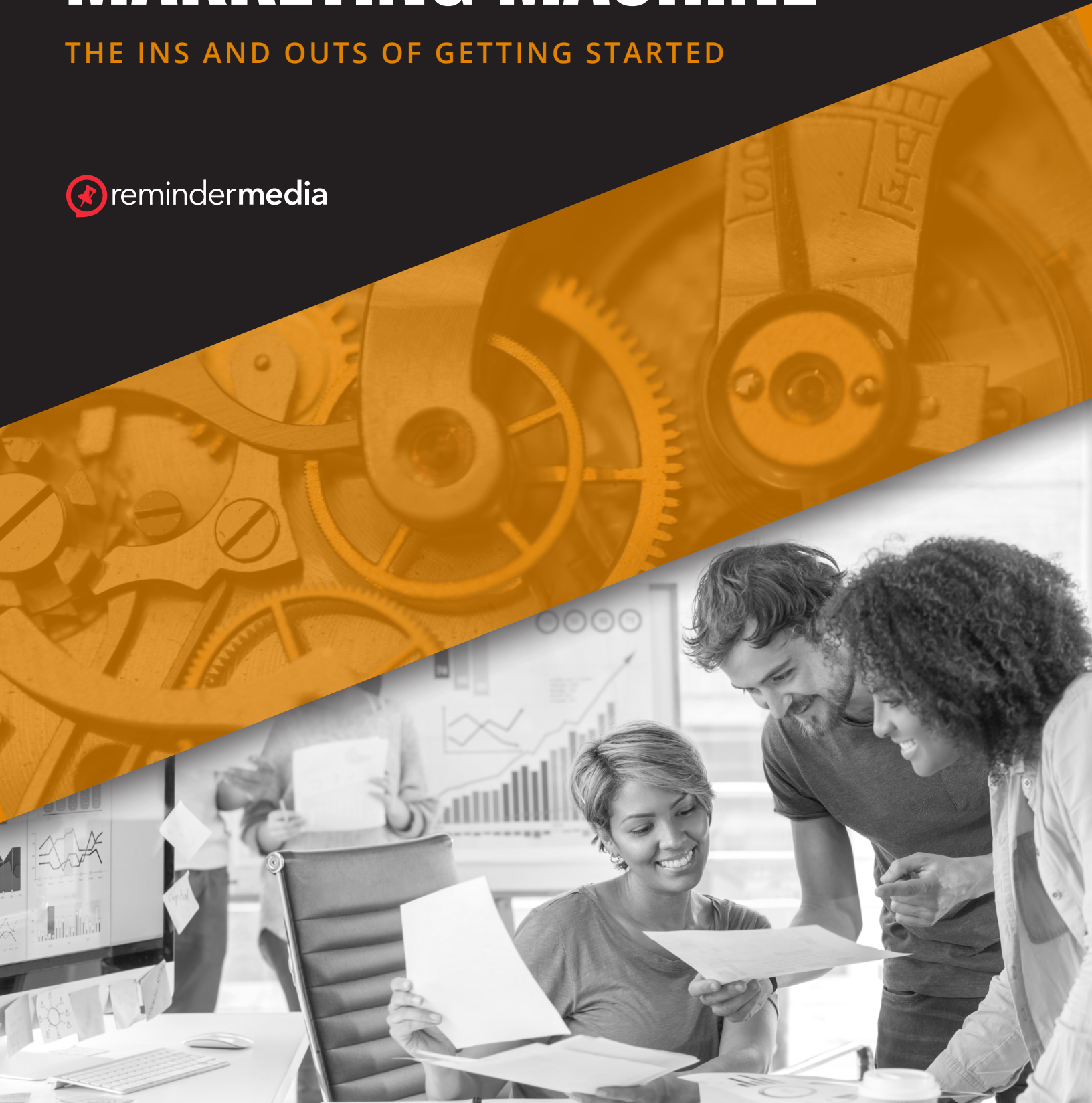


BECOME A CONTENT MARKETING MACHINE

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THE INS AND OUTS OF GETTING STARTED



INTRODUCTION

Let's face it: people are exposed to hundreds of digital marketing tactics a week, from e-mail newsletters to boosted Facebook posts. However, society has grown so accustomed to these messages that, unless they're aware of your brand, the chances of potential clients paying a moment's attention to you are slim. So how do you become noticed in a room packed like sardines by your competition? **Content marketing.**



*It's that little subliminal nudge
to remind them that*
you're still around.

CUT THROUGH THE NOISE.

Yes, at the end of the day marketing as a whole is done to help your business. It's used to spark a response and light a fire under your audience. It's that little subliminal nudge to remind them that you're still around.

But content marketing is done for your audience with your business in mind. It's anticipating what they want to see. It's providing them with a plethora of consistent, valuable information so that you become their go-to expert for all things relevant. You stand out from the crowd, not because you spent thousands of dollars on a snazzy logo, but because you're becoming a resource for them to rely on.

This e-book will take you on a journey to grasp the general understanding of how content marketing can positively impact your business and ultimately help you to develop a plan to start pumping out award-winning content.

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01

IN A NUTSHELL

SO, WHAT EXACTLY
IS CONTENT MARKETING?



According to the Content Marketing Institute, content marketing is ***“a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.”***



IN SHORT,

content marketing is the action of providing your intended audience with valuable content. But value doesn't come free. Your mind may be humming with what type of content would be of most value to your audience, but put a halt to that until you take these nine pillars of valuable content into consideration. By following these pillars, you will be able to determine if the content that you create is providing the high level of value that is required to find success with content marketing.



1. ORIGINAL

Sure, sharing content from thought leaders is great for various reasons, but it won't make you an expert in your audience's minds. Providing your own spin will make your content stand out.

2. HEADLINE-DRIVEN

Regardless of the piece of content, a strong headline will pull your audience in. Drumming up intriguing headlines will compel someone to want to learn more.

3. ACTIONABLE

Your content should include actionable items. Whether you include tips or steps, your audience should walk away with something tangible from every piece of content you produce.

4. ANSWER-PRODUCING

Content that provides answers to common questions or concerns that your audience has will make a world of difference, while reinforcing your knowledge.

5. ACCURATE

If you're pulling stats or factual information from other resources, always make sure that it's cited correctly. Give credit where credit is due.

6. THOUGHT-PROVOKING

Providing content that your audience is particularly opinionated about will increase the chances for engagement.

7. IMAGERY

Graphics are easier to digest and can help to capture your audience's attention.

8. CONCISE

It's a known fact that people have short attention spans. Keeping content succinct will entice your audience to spend adequate time on each piece.

9. TIMELY

Sharing content should be constant. Once you're on board, there's no stopping. Your audience will come to expect the content.

Go to page 9 to read about three top-flight types of content you can create.

02

THE IMPORTANCE

Why should you spend
your time and money on
content marketing?





WHEN YOU LEAD WITH VALUE THE VALUE IS IN THE LEADS.

Take your website, for example. A properly designed website should be able to convert visitors to customers without a hitch. But, often, the trick is actually getting visitors to your website in the first place. However, businesses that use content marketing experience 7.8 times more website traffic than nonusers (Aberdeen Group, 2014). On top of that, content marketers have conversion rates that are nearly 6 times higher than their competitors (Aberdeen Group, 2014).

As mentioned previously, in today's overcrowded market, brand awareness is everything. It's the bread and butter when it comes to consumers selecting your services over a competitor's. Content marketing plays

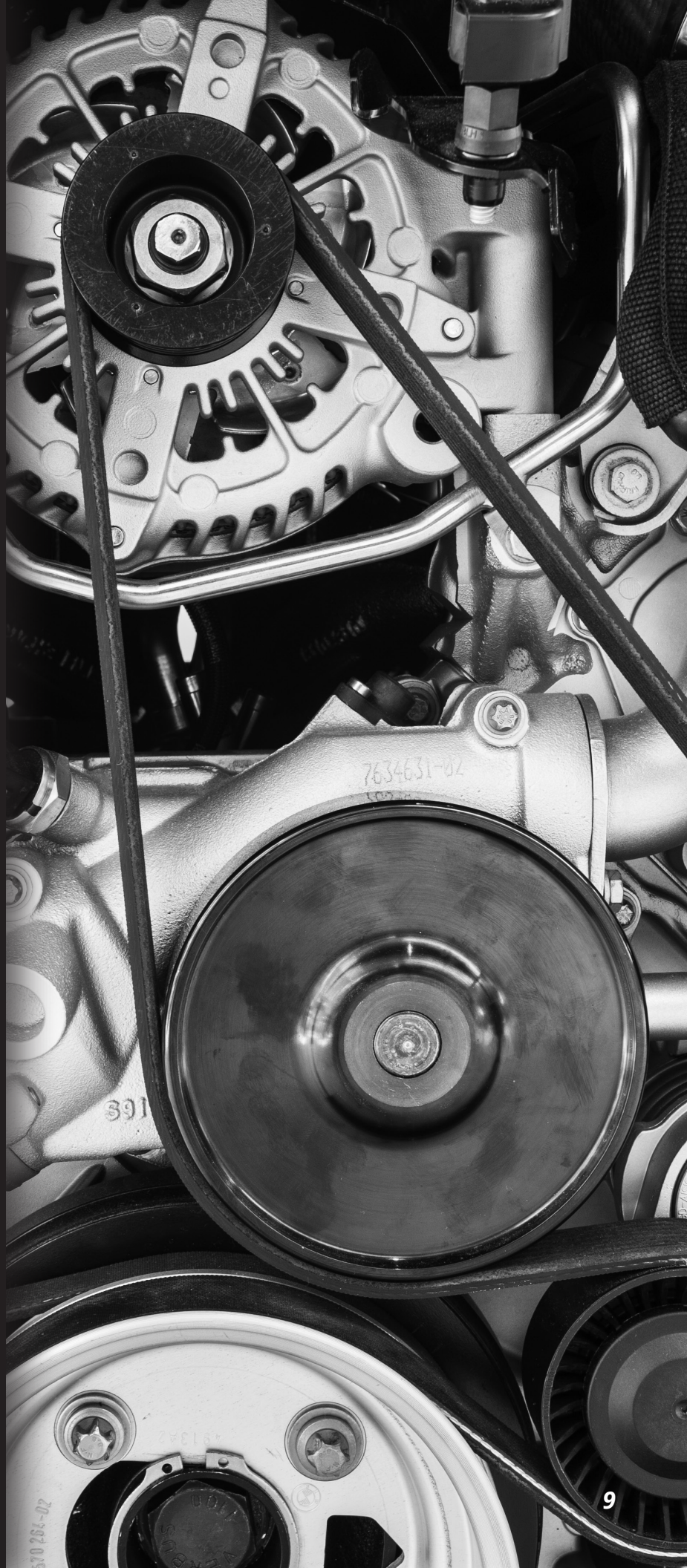
a large part in brand recall. Providing personalized content to your intended audience has been shown to increase engagement across various platforms and will ultimately help keep your business top of mind with those who matter.

While paid advertising continues to be used as a form of digital marketing, ad-blocking software has made it increasingly harder to get in front of an audience. Over 200 million people worldwide use ad blockers (PaigeFair, 2016). Fortunately, content marketing provides an organic avenue for you to reach your audience without running into an issue with ad blockers.

03

TYPES OF CONTENT

There are three specific types of content that can be utilized regardless of your marketing budget.



VIDEO

Video is the Amazon® of content marketing. To put it lightly, videos are everywhere, and for good reason. They are not only an entertaining form of content but also provide boundless engagement, brand awareness, and conversion opportunities.

75% of online video viewers have interacted with an online video.

90% of users say that product videos are helpful to the decision-making process.

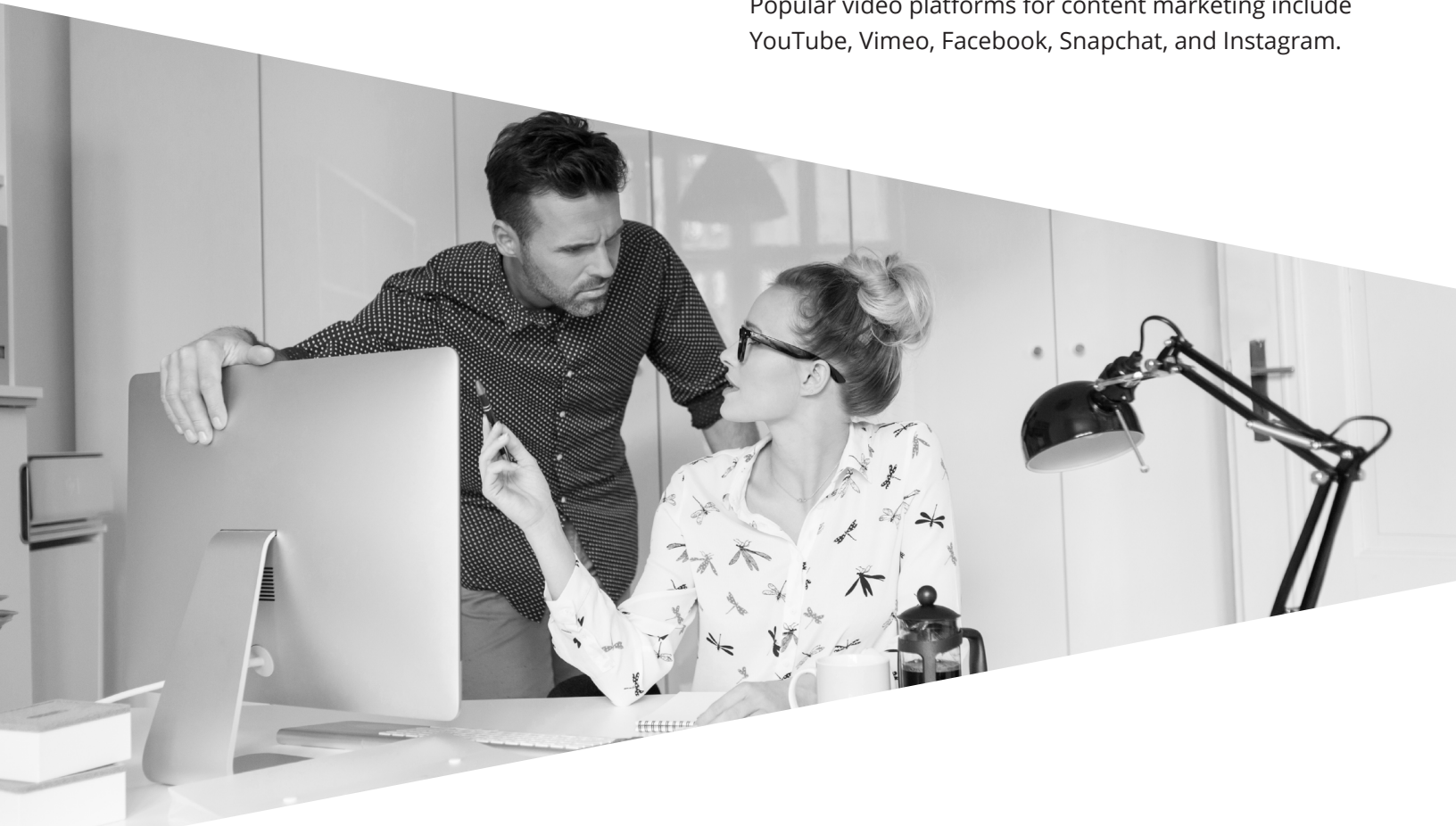
80% of users recall a video ad they viewed in the past 30 days.

**Statistics from Insivia.com.*

When it comes to creating a video, the most effective ones tell a story and are entertaining yet informative. Video content can be extremely versatile, and, quite frankly, whatever your imagination wants it to be. However, some of the most popular topics to record include new product announcements, product or service tutorials, FAQs, testimonials, company-wide announcements, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and company culture.

Video content is meant to be repurposed, which means that your videos don't have to just be posted exclusively on one platform. Sharing your videos across various platforms can capture a new audience, while also maximizing exposure and engagement. For instance, if you utilize Facebook Live for a company culture video, save it, and post it on Instagram and YouTube.

Popular video platforms for content marketing include YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram.





TESTIMONIALS

In business, people’s buying decisions are heavily influenced by others. Consider this—if your friend recently discovered a new product that has worked wonders, wouldn’t you be interested in purchasing one for yourself? Probably so. This influential push is referred to as social proof.

But how do you garner positive social proof for your business? Through customer testimonials.

Sharing customer testimonials as content will provide your audience with compelling trust signals from their peers for them to move forward with your services. In fact, 90% of respondents who recalled reading and/or viewing an online testimonial claimed that positive online reviews influenced buying decisions (Dimensional Research).

Testimonials work well in a wide variety of formats—plain text, images, videos, and even audio files.

They can be used as social media posts, featured blogs, powerful case studies, e-mail newsletters, call-to-action buttons, and website pages.

CURATED

At this point, you may begin to wonder how you'll be able to allot the appropriate time needed to create valuable content. While it's a valid concern, there's really no reason to worry. Content curation is the act of researching and sharing premade, high-quality content, and it can be an extremely effective form of content marketing.

Think of your favorite industry thought leaders. More than likely, you either follow them on social media or frequent their websites. Sharing their original content—whether it's an image or a blog post—can help you save time and still enable you to provide value to your audience.

But before you press “share,” there are a few things to keep in mind. Although it's curated, the content still needs to be high quality. Making sure that the piece contains proper grammar, well-designed graphics, and relevant information will help it resonate with your audience. In order to make it your own, you'll need to put your own spin on it. Providing your own opinion on the topic when you share it on social media will help to establish credibility with your audience.

In addition to being time-effective, curated content helps to spark a conversation with your audience. It can lead to various social shares, with the exposure linking back to you. There's also the opportunity to connect with and impress the original creators of the piece.



04

GETTING STARTED

It's time for the main show—determining how to generate a content-marketing machine.



Step One:

DEFINE YOUR GOAL.

Like any other type of marketing, specific and measurable goals (KPIs) should be put in place. Asking yourself what you want to gain from creating content will help you determine a set of appropriate goals.

Common goals often include developing brand awareness, driving website traffic, generating leads, converting leads into customers, and improving retention.

Step Two:

DETERMINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE.

We've mentioned several times that your content has to appeal to your audience. The best way to create something relevant is by knowing your audience. Conducting persona research will enable you to get a better handle on what your audience really wants to see.

Step Three:

BRAINSTORM IDEAS.

After you've figured out your audience, begin to brainstorm different ideas that you can use. You may be surprised to find that you already have various pieces that can be utilized as content, from graphics to testimonials. Now you can finally put them to good use!

Step Four:

SELECT WHICH TYPES OF CONTENT TO CREATE.

Whether you want to stick to the list that that we provided in the last chapter or do your own research, it's best to have the types of content that you're interested in creating set in stone. You can always continue to branch out to different types as you go along.

Keep in mind that the best results come from consistent efforts, so it's important to try to avoid starting and stopping different types of content. Your audience will come to expect content from you. The last thing you want is for them to become either perturbed or lose interest because you stop producing content.





Step Five:

USE A CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

At first, creating content without a management system may seem doable. But after you begin to ramp up the production, things can quickly become overwhelming.

A content management system can help with the creation, publication, and analytics of content marketing. There are multiple management systems out there, with two of the most popular ones being Contently and CoSchedule.

If your budget doesn't allow for a management system, consider creating an editorial schedule to organize your content and utilizing Facebook's publishing tool to automate your content's publication while on the platform.

Step Six:

PUBLISH AND MANAGE YOUR CONTENT.

You've made it! Your goals are determined, your audience is defined, and you've created your first few pieces of content—it's now time to start publishing and managing your content. During this time, you'll want to keep a close eye on what's getting engagement. If you can get a handle on what is working the best right from the beginning, you can begin to tailor your content accordingly.

Step Seven:

DON'T GIVE UP.

We can't stress how important it is to wait it out. Often, giving up too quickly produces content marketing failure. Not seeing instantaneous results? Try not to let it get you down. It takes time to become recognized as an expert in any area of life, and content marketing is no different. You have to help your audience get accustomed to your content. After time, they'll start to look forward to your next piece of content because they both thoroughly enjoy it and expect it.

We promise that even your favorite industry leaders had to hang tight before they saw a drastic increase in engagement.

Results will come in time—just continue to pump out awesome content!

CONCLUSION

From afar, content marketing can seem like a large undertaking. But if you plan it out and put the required effort into producing high-quality content, you'll find that getting noticed in a sea full of competitors isn't as scary as you once believed it to be.

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