



# THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO GETTING STARTED WITH CONTENT MARKETING

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PHOENIX



**PHOENIX CONTENT MARKETING**

*Keep rising*



## WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

Let's be frank; the last thing we want to do is waste anyone's time. This book is for **absolute beginners** to content marketing.

So, if you've perhaps heard of content marketing, but don't really know what it is or how it works - or even where to start, this digital guide (or ebook) is definitely for you.

If, however, you're already publishing regular content that converts, and just want to find out more on things like call-to-action placement, or the best place to create landing pages, you probably won't find much value in this guide.



### PRO TIP: BLOG

We're currently working on intermediate and advanced blog posts for you guys, so don't worry!

Check out [our blog](#) to see the latest. We've made it our mission to always be startin' something!







# AN INTRODUCTION TO CONTENT MARKETING

Content marketing can be one of the **most effective** (and **cost-effective**) ways to help attract more visitors to your website - and convert more of those visitors to leads.

It can even help shorten your sales cycle. How? Well, it's all about being helpful.

Your (potential) clients have questions. They turn to **Google** to research your products and services, and to ask those burning questions.



## AND YOU? WELL...

It's your job to **provide the answers** they're searching for, so they can make more informed decisions - **faster**.

By publishing regular, helpful content on your website and blog, you can do just that.

It's not about being salesy - it's about giving them all the information they need, and establishing a level of **trust** and **authority**.

That way, when it comes to finally making a decision, they'll be more likely to turn to you.





# WHAT CAN CONTENT MARKETING HELP YOU ACHIEVE FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

Want to learn more about how content marketing can help you? In a nutshell, content marketing can:

## ATTRACT YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS

At every stage of the buyers' journey

## GENERATE MORE LEADS AND SALES

Without being salesy

## WORK FOR MOST INDUSTRIES

With a sales cycle of over one week

## HELP YOU CLOSE SALES FASTER

By reducing the sales cycle

## ESTABLISH TRUST WITH IDEAL CLIENTS

By becoming an authoritative source

## INCREASE THE CHANCE OF REPEAT BUSINESS

Build a lasting connection

## KEEP VISITORS RETURNING AGAIN AND AGAIN

They'll become proud advocates of your brand

### *Psst!*

It's not uncommon for content marketing clients to increase their sales by 100% - 400% - now, that might sound incredible, or even too good to be true, but we've seen it happen time and time again.

And there are plenty of case studies online to back it up! (Just look at [HubSpot clients](#) for starters)







# CONTENT MARKETING: THE STATISTICS

It's no secret that content marketing can really get results.

Let's take a look at some of the most compelling content marketing statistics out there:

- 47% of buyers viewed **3 - 5 pieces of content** before even contacting a sales rep (Demand Gen Report)
- Senior marketers recognise that using content on their website is **driving up response and engagement rates by 56%** (Newscred)
- **60% of marketers** say blogging is their top inbound marketing priority (HubSpot)



- 1 in 10 blog posts are compounding, meaning **organic search increases** traffic over time (HubSpot)
- **70% of marketers** are actively investing in content marketing (HubSpot)





## WHERE TO BEGIN...



If you're new to the concept of content marketing, without a doubt the best place to begin your first campaign is with a **content marketing agency**.

I know what you're thinking: We would say that, wouldn't we?

Well, to be honest, with the right guidance, time and tools, there's no reason why you can't give it a go yourself.

However, an agency has the **knowledge, experience** and (hopefully) **certification** that means you're really going to be in the best possible hands.



So what will they actually do for you?

## WELL, LET'S SEE...

After asking you more about your business, goals and revenue (qualifying you into a sales lead), the first thing they'd tell you is that you need to take a much closer look at your buyer personas (in other words, your **ideal clients**), and the types of questions they're asking on a daily basis.

It's these **questions** that they'll be typing into Google, and by answering them, you can help provide them with all the info they need to make a decision related to your products or services.

An agency can then use this information to help create a **solid strategy** for your content marketing campaign.







## AN EXERCISE TO TRY RIGHT NOW

Think about the **problems** and **challenges** your ideal clients are facing before they come to you.

Try writing down as many questions you know your customers (or potential customers) ask you on a daily basis.

### PRO TIP:



Get your whole team involved - or anyone who deals directly with your clients. You can come up with potentially months worth of content in just 30 minutes!

This can include questions such as:

- **How much** do your products and services cost, and which factors can affect price?
- **How long** do your products/services take to deliver, and **what can affect this**?
- What's the best solution to [insert common problem they're facing]?
- What are the **benefits** to this particular solution? Are there **pros and cons**?
- Which **alternative solutions** are there, how do they differ, and how can someone decide which is the **right solution for them**?
- **Where else** can they find these solutions/what are your **competitors** offerings? [Keep your answer non-biased and as neutral as possible]





# PUTTING TOGETHER A SOLID STRATEGY

Whether you have an agency behind you, or you decide to go it alone, the next step is to create a **content marketing strategy** to help you achieve the results you need.

And in order to determine those results, you should first...

## SET SOME S.M.A.R.T GOALS

Now, that doesn't mean you should set goals that are relatively intelligent. S.M.A.R.T. actually stands for:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Attainable**
- **Realistic**
- **Timely**

An example of a S.M.A.R.T. goal could be that you want to increase your projected annual revenue by **25%** within the next six months.

And in order to do that, you need to **increase** the number of traffic coming to your website, and **convert** more of that traffic into leads.

Simple, right?

Well, it could be, if you have a holistic strategy behind you!







## DEVELOP YOUR BUYER PERSONAS



These are the people you're going to be writing for, so it's important to know what they're going to actually care about.

You should be coming up with content that **helps them** in some way, or addresses their problems, challenges, concerns and questions.

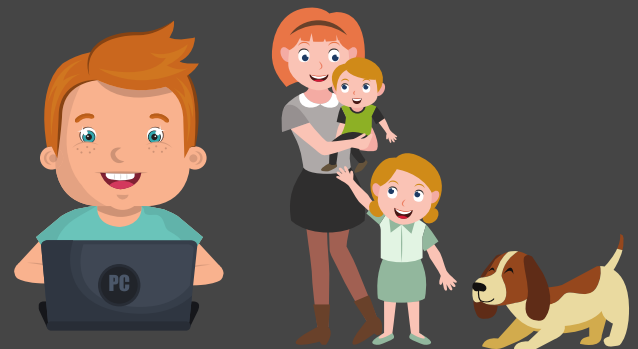
In order to do that, you have to ask yourself (or them!) some **basic questions** to get started:

Who are they? How old are they?  
What's their job role? Which sites do they like to hang out at in their spare time?

For instance, you could have a buyer persona called 'Dave the Developer'.

Dave is 43 and has a wife, two kids and a dog.

He manages his own business, and he spends time on places like TechCrunch, The Hustle, and Facebook.



His biggest concerns are keeping up with the latest tech developments, and growing his customer database by getting plenty of **new leads** to engage with.

Perhaps you already have some buyer personas of your own, but you should never close the book on them; it's something you should always be adding to, revising and updating.





# DO SOME INITIAL KEYWORD RESEARCH

If you want to do SEO but you just don't know where to start, you're not alone.

And to be honest, keywords aren't absolutely essential to begin your content marketing strategy; as long as you can mirror the language your best customers use when they speak to you. You can put more time into refining key phrases later.

In the meantime, it doesn't hurt to get some initial base keywords, as a good starting point for your content marketing campaign.

Use UberSuggest and Google Ads/Analytics to determine which keywords relating to your products or services are getting the highest monthly searches, and the competition on those keywords.

Don't like the sound of that? Any good content marketing agency will be able to do all of this for you.

## A CAVEAT...

These days, Google is smart enough to look at **context** rather than just keywords, and it's looking to prioritise helpful content its users will find of value.

So, if you're answering a question no-one else has already answered (and you know your ideal customers are asking), but the competition is very high, there's still a good chance you'll be able to rank high for that title.

Just focus first and foremost on being **as helpful as possible**, rather than stuffing your content with keywords - SEO (thankfully) no longer works that way.







# USE A BLOG TO ATTRACT TRAFFIC TO YOUR SITE

If your website doesn't already have a blog, you'll need one.

After all, a blog is an **essential ingredient** of content marketing, and, in fact, one of the most useful things you can have on your website.

By regularly publishing content that matches the things your best customers are typing into Google search, you'll start attracting more and more traffic to your site.

This traffic will **compound** over time, which is why content marketing can have a bit of a snowball effect.

Use your blog to address all of your customers' **biggest questions, challenges** and **concerns**.

You'll find the same person may read 5, 10, 20 or 50 blog posts before they even get in touch! (And when they do, they'll be more or less ready to buy)

You may even be able to add a Wordpress blog to your site with as little as one click.





# GUIDE THAT TRAFFIC WITH CALL-TO-ACTIONS (CTAS)



There's a lot more to content marketing than just publishing content on your blog.

For example, what do you think happens when your visitors have finished reading the latest product of your hard work?

Well, if you give them nothing to do next, they'll probably just click away again. Maybe go and make themselves a cuppa.

Instead, you should introduce calls to-actions (CTAs) on your blog and website for people to interact and get in touch.

These CTAs are bright, clear, and should grab the attention of customers at different stages of their buyer's journey by complementing the blog post they've just read.

It could be promoting a guide, ebook or whitepaper. Or, perhaps it could simply encourage people to subscribe to your blog or newsletter:







# CONVERT THEM INTO LEADS WITH COMPELLING LANDING PAGES

Once your readers click through to a CTA, they'll reach what's called a landing page.

This is a page for them to learn more about the action you've suggested in the CTA, along with a form where they can input their details in exchange for that action - whether it's to download a piece of premium content (like this) or to subscribe to your blog or newsletter.

To make your landing pages compelling, they should contain a heading, sub-heading, and some text that appeals best to your buyer personas - along with some compelling reasons why they should bother to fill out their details.

What's in it for them?

Saying that, try not to make your landing pages overly salesy.

They should relate to your buyer personas, and tell them what they can expect if they take the action on the page - you can also provide some customer reviews as social proof.

This is how you can convert visitors into leads.



## PRO TIP:

**You can create professional landing pages using online software such as LeadPages, InstaPages, GetResponse, or ONTRApages.**





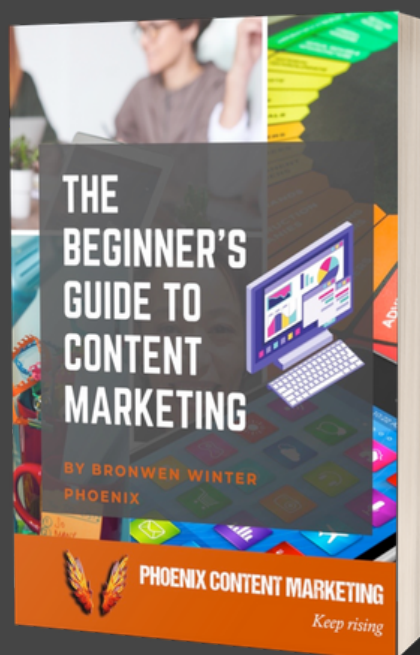
# PROVIDE THEM WITH FREE, DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT

Otherwise known as 'premium content', these are the real hook that encourages your visitors to convert into leads.

Introduce this premium content as special offers at the bottom of your blog posts, and you'll soon start increasing your conversions (like the CTA example on page 13!).

For instance, if someone has just read your blog post entitled '5 Little-Known But Powerful Web Design Tips', or 'The Best Way to Store Your Data on the Cloud', they'll probably find a more comprehensive guide or checklist to be of value.

You can also introduce a CTA to subscribe to your blog or newsletter.



These CTAs can also be strategically placed elsewhere on your website, to capture more of your visitors and convert them into leads.





# NURTURE THEM WITH ENGAGING EMAILS

Imagine your visitor downloads a piece of content (perhaps an ebook, guide or white paper). They sit down and have a good read, and they're now more informed and (hopefully) grateful for your help.

So, what do you do next?

## THE NEXT STEP

Well, the best advice is to help nurture them into becoming a client with clever emails that help answers their questions or concerns at exactly the right time.

Now, this can take a bit of trial and error, and really involves thinking about the buyer's journey.



For instance, if they've recently downloaded an awareness guide from you, it may have only brushed the surface of what they'll need to know to make a purchase.

They're probably going to have a few more questions, so why not answer them in the form of helpful blog posts?

A few well-timed (not spammy) automated emails, including the link to those blogs, can help answer their questions and make them more confident in their decision.

You could even link to a consideration guide as a P.S. so they can find out what to expect if they become one of your clients.







# GROW YOUR READERSHIP BY ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO SUBSCRIBE

If you're regularly publishing articles and content to your blog, you're going to want to make sure people will read it.

Encouraging visitors to sign up to your blog will help keep you in the forefront of their minds, and they'll be more likely to comment and engage with your posts.

They may even be more inclined to share if you post a particularly juicy piece of content!

Adding a CTA to encourage visitors to sign up to your blog can be a great way to increase your readership - you can also have an opt-in tick box on your landing page forms for those downloading your premium content.

## PRO TIP:

Enabling RSS-to-email for your blog will allow people to subscribe easily, so that your blogs automatically go straight to the inboxes of your subscribers!



Don't forget to include a tickbox specifically for **GDPR consent**, and a link to your **website's privacy policy/terms and conditions**! (Unless you're in the US and blocking all European visitors, that is!)





# SHARE YOUR CONTENT WITH THE WORLD

Now that you have loads of lovely content, it's time to reach out a bit further and share it via social media!



You can distribute your content on places such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn - you can even start your own YouTube channel if you're regularly producing video!

## ADAPT YOUR POSTS ACCORDINGLY

Just remember to spend your time on social media wisely, and adapt your posts depending on the channel you go for.

For instance, if you're sharing a blog post on Facebook, you may want to add a longer post than what you'd type on Twitter.

## DON'T FORGET...

If you're sharing a video via Facebook, don't forget to **add subtitles** to it - otherwise people may just scroll past without ever bothering to hear the sound!



### NOTE:

**Unsure where you should be focusing your content distribution? Don't worry, we've included more about that later in this guide.**





# CREATE CONTENT YOUR CUSTOMERS WILL LOVE

Ready to create your first piece of content, but aren't sure how?

It's really no biggie, as you're the one person who knows your clients inside-out. A content marketing agency may know the practical stuff, but in order to get the real bones of the content, they'll be going to you.

The biggest rule of thumb when creating content marketing is to focus on being helpful; in other words, DON'T try to sell.



Focus on the main question or concern you're addressing, and start off by emphasising or showing you understand where they're coming from - as well as what reading the article will help them achieve.

This instantly builds a connection with the reader, and they'll keep reading.

Your content should always have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Where possible, try to include **practical, helpful advice** - also, any personal stories or experiences you've had of the subject yourself will add a nice, human touch that engages the reader even more.







## (MORE WRITING TIPS)

You can write content in a list-style format (i.e. 'Reasons Why...' or '7 of the Best Ways to...'). Check out our 101 Blog Title Ideas resource to give you some extra inspiration!

Don't forget to always stick to the **problem, challenge or question** you're addressing in the title.

If you go too far off-course, ask yourself: 'Would this be better off as a separate blog post?'

**Here are three examples of blog titles from our own blog:**

### PRO TIP:

**In most cases, try to aim for around 800 - 1,500 words per blog. Any longer and you may lose the attention of the reader.**

**Psst!** Your content should be nicely spaced out (no more than three lines per paragraph is always a good rule to follow) and split into a few clear subtitles for scannability.

Don't forget to have fun with it! Throw in some engaging stories.



#### 6 of the Best Content Marketing Agencies in Edinburgh

May 9, 2017 | Content Marketing  
| 0 Comments

Looking for a good content marketing agency in Edinburgh to develop and implement a solid strategy? We've listed a few for you.



#### Will Content Marketing Definitely Work For Your Business?

May 7, 2017 | Content Marketing  
| 0 Comments

Yo, home skillet! Are you thinking of investing in content marketing for your business, but want to know if it's actually going to work first?



#### How Long Does it Take to See Results from Content Marketing?

May 5, 2017 | Content Marketing  
| 0 Comments

Need to see results from content marketing? Worried about how long that'll take? We've outlined a rough guide to help you get a better idea.





# WHERE TO DISTRIBUTE ALL OF YOUR HARD WORK

In order to get the best results, you need the right people to see your content. That means sharing it to the **right channels** - the ones that your evolving buyer personas spend most of their time.

The websites and social media they're most likely to use is part of that, but you should also be testing which social media sites you're getting the most engagement and responses from.



For instance, perhaps Facebook at first seems like a good idea, but over time you may find you're getting more engagement and conversions from republishing your content on LinkedIn. In the end, you should see which channels best work in practice for you, and build your following from there.

Getting it right on social takes a bit of work to get right (especially if you're not paying for ad space), but the returns can be very worthwhile. Plus, there are handy tools like Buffer to give you a helping hand!

This is how you can **convert** visitors into into **leads**.







# HOW TO GET THE BEST RESULTS FROM YOUR EFFORTS

Just like any good strategy, you need to constantly **track, measure and improve**.

Luckily, there are a lot of ways you can do that, with an almost unlimited number of tools and software to be found online!

Your first port of call should be marketing automation software, such as ActiveCampaign (our fave), HubSpot, Sharpspring or LeadSquared.

These **all-in-one** integrated platforms are a great way to keep track of all of your campaigns, data and incoming leads.

However, depending on the option you go for, it can be a bit of an investment.



Alternatively, you can use various other tools to help you automate your marketing and keep track of all your efforts.

These include Leadpages and Drip, GetResponse, and MailChimp - along with things like ConvertFlow, and HotJar.

Just be aware that this segmented approach **may not be as effective** when it comes to monitoring your ROI (return on investment).







# THE NEXT STEP...

If you think content marketing could be a good solution for you, it's wise to do a bit more research and carefully consider all your options first.

It can be a bit of a jungle out there, so take your time finding a content marketing agency that's a good fit for you, and that **truly understands** your needs. That means also listening carefully to what you're looking to achieve.

Finally, as a rule of thumb, never trust a company that is able to guarantee you **specific results** — if they do, they're lying. #justsayin

Or, if you want to have a go at content marketing yourself...

**Get THE most practical, hands-on  
content marketing course you're  
going to find**

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MARKETING CATAPULT**

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**Only \$775**

**YES! ENROLL ME**



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# ABOUT US

PHOENIX CONTENT  
MARKETING IS A  
PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL  
MARKETING AGENCY  
BASED IN THE HEART OF  
EDINBURGH AND FOUNDED  
BY BRONWEN WINTER  
PHOENIX.

WE HELP BUSINESSES  
CONNECT WITH THEIR  
BEST CUSTOMERS ONLINE.



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