

Content Marketing

Before you Write,
Understand their Plight



Content Marketing: The practice of creating and distributing relevant and valuable **content** to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action. - Content Marketing Institute

Over the last several years, content marketing has exploded in popularity. In fact, 90% of all organizations use content in their marketing efforts and 78% of CMOs see custom content as the future of marketing.¹

Yet, according to Forrester research, 87% of B2B marketers say that they struggle to produce content that truly engages their buyers.

Why is that? To truly engage buyers you need to **create content that people actually want.**

And that's easier said than done.



¹ <http://www.demandmetric.com/content/content-marketing-infographic>

Where most content takes a nose-dive is in its failure to live up to what many marketers call the WIIFM: **What's in it for me?** test.



To clarify, the “me” in the phrase relates to the prospect, not the marketer, the CEO, or anyone else vested in promoting the product or service.

Said, another way: For a piece of content to pass this test, it has to be informative, engaging, and relevant **to the intended audience**. This can be tough if you don’t do your homework.

This eGuide will walk you through some of the best practices we use at NuGrowth Digital to identify, then “get in the heads” of our prospects so we can create editorial calendars that feature content they will care about.

Start by understanding the basics: the demographics of your best clients.

For example:



Then dive deeper.

The more you can learn about your prospects, the better positioned you will be to produce content that they find meaningful. The more you know about their challenges, the better positioned you will be to educate them on solutions.

Some questions to consider:

- What are their business objectives?
- What are their day-to-day challenges? Their overarching ones?
- What do they need to be successful in their role?
- What do they value most?
- What are their priority initiatives at work?
- What tools do they use/ need to conduct their job?
- What is keeping them from achieving their goals?
- What keeps them up at night? (Or would if they knew about it.)

“Customers are people. They appreciate the world through the prism of their experiences. They sense what challenges or bothers them—their pain—but they often can’t even conceive of the solutions—their needs.” - Jon Burgstone and Bill Murphy, Jr., Fast Company



Finding the answers to those questions isn't always easy, but it is doable if you know where to look.

Best practice include:

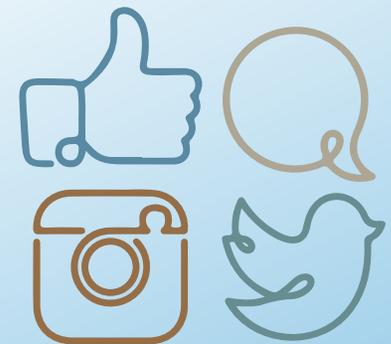
- 1 Assess your client base** — Following the Pareto principle, that 80 percent of business comes from 20% of clients, look at the 20% of your clients that make up the bulk of your business. What do they have in common? What are their day-to-day goals and challenges? If your organization is adept at using your CRM system the demographic part of this equation should be able to be answered by looking at your database. The “real feel” questions however, can only be answered through conversation. Talk to your account managers, your customer service reps – anyone who has frequent interaction with your clients. There's no reason you should not reach out directly to clients too. Not only will you get better insight into their day-to-day challenges, you may get a “success story” or case study out of it too.
- 2 Talk to your sales team** — Your prospects are also a good source of information, and your sales team is the best source for information about your prospects. After all, they are constantly in conversation with folks who have a need for your product or services. They know the market trends, daily challenges, and the trigger points that serve as the catalyst for change. They can provide get up-to-date insight on the issues that prospects and clients are dealing with.



3 **Read industry publications** — Content marketers are publishers too, just not in the traditional sense. Look to industry publications. Many post their editorial calendar online for advertising purposes. Use that to your advantage and mine it for ideas.

4 **Leverage social media** — The big buzz around social media is usually around using it to push content out to an audience. Equally valuable is the steady stream of information it can provide you. Follow industry publications, competitors, thought leaders, clients and prospects. Join industry forums. Actively monitor your Twitter and LinkedIn feeds, and you'll have frequent updates on trending topics and issues.

5 **Pay attention to industry conferences** — Most conferences publish their agenda online. Know what the key industry conferences are. Look at the speakers and breakout sessions. They'll give you more insight into topics that your prospect base wants to learn more about.



6 **Conduct online surveys** — Online surveys are a great way to learn more about the challenges and priorities of your intended audience. Done correctly, the survey results can also serve as the basis for future content. Take the annual Content Marketing Institute, Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends Report. Not only does it help them learn more about the audience they serve (content marketers) it provides good insight to content marketers on what their more effective peers are doing better than they are.

7 **Mine your data** — Capitalize on digital marketing analytics to gain insight into prospects' online behavior patterns. What are your most frequently read blog posts? Most frequently shared social media posts? What topics get the highest click through rates in your emails? This information and more can all help you build a better audience profile.

Lastly, “stick to your guns.” In most organizations, there will be someone asking you to create sales collateral under the guise of content marketing. And that’s OK. Create it. Just be sure to call it what it is: “sales collateral.” Both have their place. But if you try to pass sales collateral off as educational content, the effect could be the opposite of what you are hoping for.





Partner Effectively,

If you are looking to leverage the power of content marketing and don't have the bandwidth or desire to do it internally, it is important to work with team that has "feet on the street," or "fingers on the dial," and is in constant conversation with the marketplace.

NuGrowth Solutions is that team. Our NuGrowth Sales as a Service (SaaS) and NuGrowth Digital arms combine to form a fully-integrated sales and marketing engine that helps organizations grow with pace and purpose.

Call **800.966.3051** to find out more.