

# Leverage Your Content Marketing to Nurture the Lead

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If lead generation is the backbone of a successful digital marketing strategy, then content marketing is the muscle. In a marketplace where consumers are increasingly wary of direct-marketing ads and are self-educating through the sales funnel, content marketing provides a channel for your brand-specific voice.

Simply put, content marketing is the process of creating relevant and valuable content - blog posts to infographics to video - in order to engage and educate your audience. Your buyers are combing the web for answers to their questions and resolutions for their problems that brands are strategically positioned to provide.

## Lead Nurturing to Inform

The awareness stage is the first level of the buyer's journey through your sales funnel. The buyer encounters a problem that they need solved and seeks information about a product or service without the intent of buying. They desire to find free, high-quality educational content that will lead them to a conclusion. Think of this stage as a first impression using these specific content formats:

**INFOGRAPHICS AND BLOG ARTICLES:** While infographics and blog articles are a valuable resource of shared educational material, they are also low-commitment content geared towards developing your brand's personality and voice.

Using infographics also results in an average of 12% more site traffic and what's sometimes referred to as "stickier" websites - sites that encourage visitors to linger longer. Their visual content enables people to remember up to 65% of what they see up to 10 days later (as opposed to only 10% of what they read).

While some may say that “infographics are the new blogs,” you can’t really beat the viral nature of a good article. But fancy HTML tags and meta descriptions are not a primary source of clicks. The untapped potential of infographics as the initial hook to a well-titled (and well-written) post can serve as a way to boost likes, shares, and follows from even those people who are reluctant to open your link.

**EBOOKS AND WHITE PAPERS:** Unlike blogs and infographics, eBooks and white papers are often strategic opportunities to require registration - name, email, and other basic information. It’s still a free offering. It still provides educational value for the uncommitted. But the format can be leveraged to address value propositions while simultaneously generating email lists based on different topics.

Once a user reveals their interests via the eBook or white paper they download, you can create more targeted future content and email marketing to a more segmented audience.

**HOW-TO VIDEOS AND EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS:** Videos and webinars are easily adapted to various stages of the funnel. At the awareness level, webinars are most useful at establishing your brand’s credibility and ethos. Running a webinar on the basics of social media or B2C content marketing establishes your role as a knowledgeable informational resource, while you might consider tackling your brand’s specific solutions for those buyers in the middle of the funnel.

## Lead Nurturing to Make Them Believe

As the funnel narrows in the consideration phase, so too must your focus. Buyers in the middle of your sales funnel have already committed their interests in your offerings, and they now need an impetus to continue forward with your solutions. You may also need to convince them that your product or service is superior to that of your competition:

**EMAIL MARKETING:** Despite The Wall Street Journal’s somber fortune-telling in 2009, email marketing is still one of the most effective ways to communicate with a tailored audience with an ROI of 4,300%. Relevant emails drive 18 times more revenue than broadcast emails.

Email marketing and automation is not simply to create customers, but to evolve

customers from unaware visitors to loyally subscribing advocates. To reach that specific lead with specific content, it must be relevant. The days of email “blasts” have been replaced by audience segmentation into small, highly-personalized and automated campaigns.

**CASE STUDY:** Because case studies are presented as the story of a satisfied customer, readers are naturally more inclined to take interest - especially if the story has some sort of benefit to them. Unlike sales presentations, case studies are all about showing, rather than telling, how a product or service works. And because the product benefits are extolled by an actual user, instead of the manufacturer, the claims are more believable.

A survey by Forrester Research shows that 71% of buyers base their decisions on trust and believability. Readers also believe case studies more than other sales literature. Ads, podcasts and company blogs often appear self-serving, but case studies read as objective praise.

## Lead Nurturing to Close the Deal

At this point, your buyer knows they want to buy the product, but you need to convince them to buy the product from you. Many companies flood the market with flashy calls to action, newsletter sign-ups, and other attention-grabbing features.

However, these are services that are meant to benefit you instead of the buyer. The strongest content that motivates buyer-investment in your brand is that which gives them real incentive:

**FREE TRIAL OR CONSULTATION:** The main aim of a free trial is to activate users, to create usage, and to demonstrate value. But they're not actually free. Both customers and businesses will have to invest something at every stage of the trial: customers invest time and resources to use your product; businesses give away a small part of their infrastructure.

That's why users should be able to perceive your value without investing too many resources throughout the trial in order to increase the chance for conversion. But it's impossible to get 100% of people to convert to paid usership. So, what can you do with users who don't convert?

They simply may not be ready to buy right now., so be sure to contact them personally in order to learn more about their motivations and engage them to make the sale at a later time.

**LIVE PRODUCT DEMO:** How well can your product “sell itself”? Will your prospect be able to see the true value of your service by themselves? There are plenty of ways to show value to customers; however, high-priced or difficult-to-understand products may not be best suited to a free-trial method.

Many companies are now choosing demo scheduling over free trials. Make contact directly with the buyer to pitch your product or use webinars and interactive videos to access many ready-to-purchase customers all at once.

## Automate Beyond One-Size-Fits-All Content

Not all leads have the same interests, priorities, and timelines. While content marketing allows you to touch multiple prospects at once, not every lead will be responsive to the same content or proceed at the same pace. This is the role of strategic content marketing in its varied formats.

It keeps you in the front of the prospect, accomplishes the multiple touches necessary to create warm leads, helps demonstrate your expertise, and shows your prospective buyer that you offer valuable assistance.

### Do you have content or a content strategy?

We can create solid content that touches hundreds to thousands of qualified leads and strategically guides them through your sales funnel to conversion.