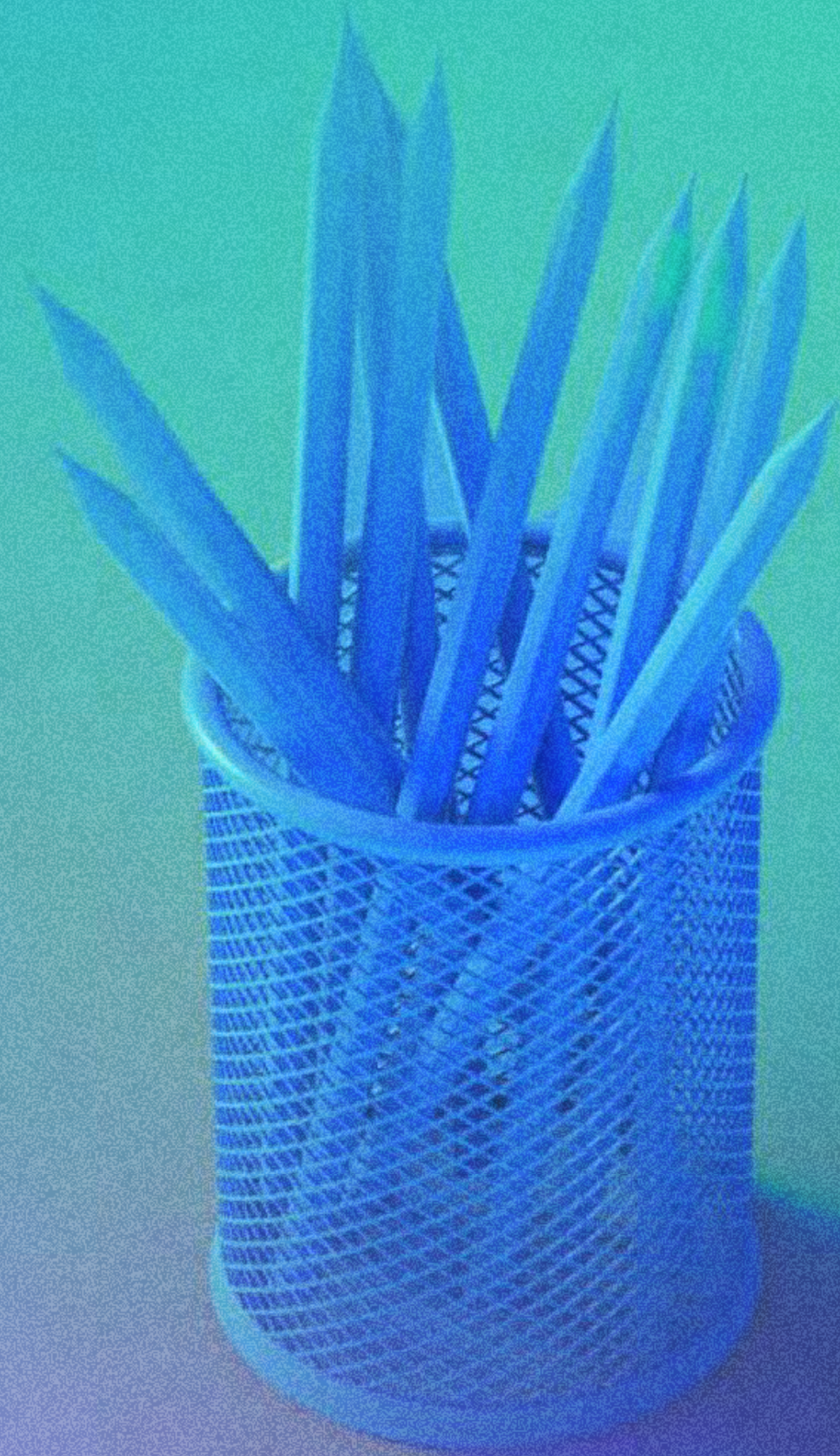


# content marketing guide





# welcome to your content marketing crash course!

Content marketing is a digital marketing strategy in which companies create honest, transparent, and educational content on a consistent basis for an ideal buyer profile. Typically, the goal is to use the publication and promotion of content to drive organic website traffic, increase qualified lead generation, and (ultimately) empower the sales team to close more deals faster.

## **So, what does that mean for you? Is content marketing the right fit for your company?**

This is your ultimate guide to gaining a clear and comprehensive understanding of what content marketing is and how you can use it to better communicate with your customers to grow your business.

This guide will cover topics such as what content marketing is, what it's not, the many faces of content marketing, how to get started with content marketing today, and how it differs from other forms of marketing.

Are you ready to learn more about content marketing and disrupt the way you're currently doing business?





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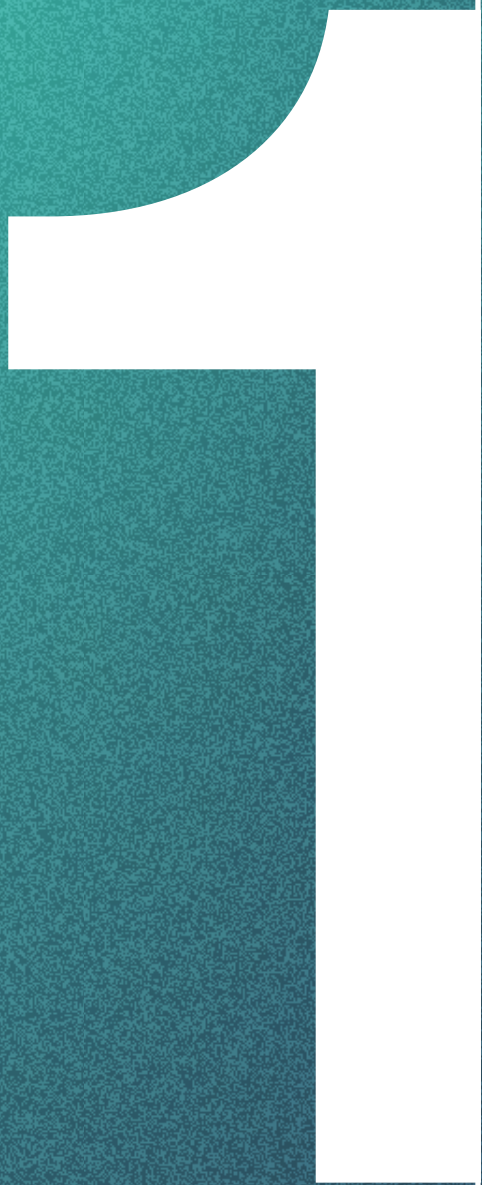
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# first, why content marketing?





# it was 2001 & i needed a car

Tell me if you've ever experienced a situation like this.

Back when Eminem was the biggest pop star, The Sopranos was the best show on TV, and America Online dominated the internet, I bought my first car.

I had moved from Alaska to Oregon to work at a snowboard resort for \$6.50 an hour and a season pass. I needed a vehicle that could get me up and down Mt. Hood every day through heavy snowfall for work and play.

**I knew nothing about cars; I only knew the *problem* I needed solved.**

I had a friend drive me into Portland, Oregon to a used car lot in search of the perfect vehicle for my situation. I was greeted fairly quickly, but also a bit reluctantly (due to my age and perceived cash flow), by a used car salesman.

I told him my problem:

**I need a dependable vehicle that can handle a heavily trafficked mountain road through rain, sleet, snow, and ice.**

I had a lot of questions for him, but he only had one question for me:

**How much money do you have?**

I told him I could go as high as \$2,000.

*"Perfect," he said. "I've got a 1987 Subaru GL Wagon for exactly \$2,000."*





He took me for a test drive in what is arguably the ugliest station wagon you've ever seen. It wasn't going to turn any heads (at least not in a good way), but he promised me it could get me anywhere I needed to go.

During the test drive, he had me stick to residential roads near the dealership. Twenty-five MPH was the top speed I was able to hit. I wanted to get it out on the highway, but he seemed insistent on getting back to the dealership quickly to talk terms.

At the dealership, I attempted to haggle on the price a bit. He entertained me some by giving me the old, *"Let me talk to my manager,"* as he stepped into another room for less than two minutes.

He came back and said, *"Sorry, \$2,000 firm. Take it or leave it."*

Not being an experienced negotiator at all, I practiced what a friend had coached me to say.

*"Well then, I'm going to drive up the road to another dealership and see what they have to offer."*

He quickly countered, *"This Subaru just came in here yesterday. They are the most popular used vehicles we sell. If you leave here right now, there's a good chance it will be gone when you come back. \$2,000 for this car is a sweet deal. Trust me. You'd be foolish to leave."*

**He called my bluff, and I forked over the cash.**

He shot me a shark-toothed grin that I still remember distinctly to this day as he said, *"And it's 'As-Is.' You drive it off the lot, it's yours."*

As soon as I drove off the lot and got onto a highway up to 55 mph, I noticed the RPM tack was slipping a little.

Two days later the clutch went out, and I had to spend a couple hundred more dollars replacing the flywheel – not easy to do on a minimum wage budget.

## “ Everything I knew about that vehicle I had learned from the salesman.

I felt cheated. I had been duped. He must have known there was a problem with the clutch and had kept me off the highway so I wouldn't notice the problem.

I had buyer's remorse.

Everything I knew about that vehicle I had learned from the salesman. With no other resources at my disposal, I was forced to take him at his word that this car was a good fit for me.







Image Source: MotorTrend.com

# here's what happened 14 years later

Fast forward to 2015, and I needed a new vehicle for my growing family. I was back living in Alaska and wanted something large, safe, affordable, easy to fix, and able to tow a trailer.

While the internet was around back in 2001, it wasn't quite the amazing research machine that it is today. This time around, I was able to study the living heck out of my problem and set my heart on getting a Toyota Tundra.

I found a Chevy dealership in town that had a slightly used Toyota Tundra on the lot. The listing for the vehicle was on their website and I was able to look at all the details of the truck.

I went in, met with a sales rep, took the truck for a drive, and decided I wanted it.

Don't bother whining, Chevy, Ford, or Dodge fans. This was my purchase, not yours. 😎





When it came time to haggle, he wouldn't budge on price. I told him I might be back after I drove to the next town's Toyota dealership.

He gave me the exact same reply I had heard nearly a decade and a half before: *"These trucks are some of the most popular vehicles out there. If you leave here today, I can't promise that it won't be here tomorrow."*

But this time, I dropped this knowledge bomb on him:

**Well, it's been here for 72 days already.**

He flinched a little and sat back. *"What are you talking about?"*

*"Well, I found the truck through your website. And on the page with all of the info about the truck it also shows the truck has been here for 72 days. So, I'm not entirely worried that it'll be gone by tomorrow if I do a little more shopping."*

An hour later, I drove away in my new truck. I not only got the dealership to knock a couple grand off the sticker price, but I also got the windshield replaced, a lifetime of oil changes, and an extended warranty at no additional charge.

## **Kevin, what does your car buying experience have to do with content marketing?**

**When I bought my first car in 2001, I was at the mercy of that salesperson.**

He had all the knowledge, and he was able to pick and choose what he wanted to share with me. I was a young, uneducated buyer; he chose not to share any of that knowledge with me.





Back then, if you had a question you weren't able to ask Google, Alexa, Siri, or even ChatGPT for help — you might have "Asked Jeeves," but I wasn't even aware of that resource. Also, there was no Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, or Reddit to crowdsource your answers. And there definitely weren't YouTube tutorials or video reviews to browse.

Heck, Wikipedia had launched, but most of us didn't even know about it yet.

Instead, if you wanted to research a purchase decision, you asked friends and family first. If you were really digging in, you'd go to a library. Savvy internet users — which were few and far between — might be able to find pages or use AOL chat rooms to ask around.

Too often, you were stuck getting all your information from the salesperson you were buying from and had to trust they were being square with you. *It sucked.*

**Fortunately for consumers, a lot has changed since then.**

We now have access to the same information these sales folks have.

The power dynamic has shifted. We no longer have to rely on the transparency of the people selling us products and services, we can look up the information ourselves. We can dive as deep into any topic we want and gather all the information we need to make the best purchase decisions for us.

## “ We now have access to the same information these sales folks have.

Salespeople are no longer the gatekeepers of information.

It's a great time for consumers.

So, how can businesses adapt to this shift? What is the best way for them to communicate with today's sophisticated consumers? Rather than continue to play your cards close to your sleeve or rely on misleading advertisements, it's time to get honest.

And this is where content marketing can help you attract, educate, convert, and close happy customers.







# what is content marketing? (and what it isn't!)





# consumers are suspicious and exhausted

Consumers are wary (and weary) of brands, salespeople, and advertising that only promote the attractive elements of products and services. They've grown tired of being misled, shortchanged, or flat-out lied to by those selling them products.

So, where are they turning to for information about products and services they need and/or want?

They're going online and learning from third parties. They're reading blog articles, watching YouTube videos, and listening to podcasts created by other consumers that are aimed at educating rather than pitching; teaching rather than selling.

(And while I say "they," I really mean "we," because I'm in the same boat, and so are you.)





# don't forget, you also buy stuff

Even though most of you reading this are marketers, salespeople, and business owners, **you're also consumers**. While you spend most of your day pitching and selling products for your company, you're also making purchases weekly – or maybe even daily.

Aren't you sick of making a purchase based on false promises only to have the brand blame you for your ignorance?

Remember when Vitaminwater claimed that their products could “boost your immune system” and fight “free radicals?” And when they were called out in a lawsuit for blatantly lying, **Coca-Cola blamed consumers for believing them in the first place** with this message:

**No consumer could reasonably be misled into thinking that vitaminwater is a healthy beverage.**



**Wow, Coca-Cola, we are so, so sorry.** We trusted you when you preached what your product could do for us – how silly of us! We should have known it wasn't anything more than overpriced Kool-Aid for grownups.

Sigh. Anyway.





# content marketing definition

For a short, to the point definition of content marketing, nobody says it better than the [Content Marketing Institute](#) — so I'm not even going to try:

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.

Such a swoon-worthy definition.

## let's break this definition down

First, **content** can be defined as “something to be expressed through some medium.”

For marketers, the thing we need to express is information about our products and services. The **mediums** we use include written articles, videos, infographics, images, social posts, and so many more that we'll discuss in later chapters.

Before you get all crazy and say, “*Oh man, I've got so much content already. Have you seen this awesome ad we have running on YouTube?*”

...pump the breaks a bit.

If the video's goal is to promote your product or service, **it's not content marketing.**

The key to defining content marketing is that the information you're presenting is *valuable and relevant* to your audience. Promotional content is just that, it's meant to promote a product, to express only the benefits, uses, and *awesomeness* of the product.

## but how often is content valuable, helpful, & relevant?

Does a piece of content help your prospects solve problems? Does a piece of content help consumers make the best well-informed purchase decision possible for them? Even if they decide to go with another vendor?

Content marketing is about producing educational content with the goal of helping people improve their lives; to arm them with as much information as possible so they make informed purchases.

When done right, they'll make that purchase through you.

“ **If the video's goal is to promote your product or service, *it's not content marketing.***”





# content marketing is a strategy

Of course, as a business, the end goal of content marketing is to make sales. But rather than just selling your products and services, **content marketing is about developing trust.**

When you produce great content frequently, you become a trusted source of information. You become a resource consumers turn to for education on the topics relevant to your field. As long as you're focused on educating over selling, you will sell more.

Consumers want to buy from brands they trust. **Become the Wikipedia of your industry, and you'll grow your customer base.**





# what content marketing isn't

At the risk of beating a dead horse,  
I can't emphasize enough:

**Content marketing is *not* promotional content.**

But that doesn't mean you have to stick to being  
100% educational and 0% promotional.

If that was the case, after reading a piece of  
content you created, you wouldn't want  
customers saying, "Great. I'm ready to make a  
purchase. Now I have to go find someone who  
sells this."

That would be terrible. So, what do you do?





**Try using the 80/20 rule when creating content** — 80% of the content should be aimed at educating your audience and only 20% should be aimed at selling to them.

It's okay to let them know you sell the services you're discussing. Just don't beat them over the head about it.

If you're writing an educational blog post, let them know in the introduction that you sell the service you're talking about but that your intention is to be educational.

The body of the article should be mostly information with as few mentions of yourself as possible.

The conclusion of the article is where you can give your pitch. They've learned what they've come to learn, now what? This is when you can offer your services to them in a way that feels more natural.

**👉 80% of the content should be aimed at educating your audience and only 20% should be aimed at selling to them.**

## **you won't get rich quick with content marketing**

It takes time for content marketing to bear fruit. Sometimes a couple of weeks. Sometimes a couple of months.

Be patient. Content marketing is a long-term strategy that picks up momentum as you go.

It's like the snowball effect. When you first start at the top of the mountain, you've only got a tiny little snowball in your hand that you gently roll downhill. But as it starts going, it picks up more snow and more snow — and, next thing you know, you've started a raging avalanche charging downhill ready to bury a poor, unsuspecting village.

You monster.

**Content marketing takes a lot of work.**

You can't have content marketing without content. And if you're doing it right, you're creating high-quality content regularly. Good content takes time and effort to create. So let's get rolling and start an avalanche.







**what's in your  
content  
marketing  
toolbox?**

**3**



# a carpenter is only as good as his tools

This line has stuck with me since my first day on a construction site when I showed up on the job with nothing more than a 12-ounce finish hammer. My foreman took one look, pulled me aside and asked, “*Son, you plan on building this house with that toy hammer?*”

I flushed with embarrassment and stood slack-jawed without an answer. I was sure I was about to get sent home before I even got started.

**Instead, he softened.** He lent me some tools but made me promise to invest a portion of each check acquiring new tools — starting with a framing hammer, tape measure, speed square, cat’s paw, razor knife, chalk line, pencil, and a few levels of varying sizes. The essentials.

**A carpenter without tools is just some guy who's... well, not going to build a house.** The same can be said of content marketing. If you’re going to attract more business, you’re going to need a few tools.

**So, what are the essential tools in content marketing?**





# blog posts

When most people think of content marketing, they think of blog posts. And for a good reason — great content marketing begins with creating awesome blog articles that address the questions your audience is asking.

That's the key right there to a high performing blog. **You need to write about topics your audience cares to learn more about.**

Too many businesses start blogging and only have posts like *“Breaking News! We Have a New Head of Sales! Meet Steve!”* or *“We Sponsored a Local Little League! Goooooo Tigers!!!”*

*(All the exclamation points are so you can hear how hard we pat ourselves on the back.)*

I'm not against this kind of blog article. Your team will love it, and it's good to give internal praise and give back to the local community. But your audience isn't searching for stuff like:

**Hey, Google, which local dentist had the best office Christmas party?**

**Rather, when people turn to search engines, they do so for themselves.** They care about solving their problems. Once they begin to see the value in your helpful responses to their questions and recognize you as their go-to resource, their interest in learning more about you will naturally grow.

So, if you want to connect with them, write articles that address their most pressing questions about your industry.





# video

**You can't escape it anymore.** If you want to be top-notch at content marketing, you're going to have to produce video content. It's what consumers are consuming and demanding more of. In fact, [HubSpot's 2022 State of Inbound Marketing Trends](#) showed that consumers watched 14.6 billion minutes of video in 2021. Up 20% from 2020, and up 121% from 2019. People are hungry for video content and eat it up like a toddler left alone with a birthday cake.

## “ Consumers watched 14.6 billion minutes of video in 2021.

If video content is what's in demand, you can either meet their expectations or stand by sulking as buyers walk off holding hands with your video producing competitors like you're a brand that just got friend-zoned.

Whether you've got the budget for high-end video equipment and a studio, or only have the camera on your smartphone available, you're more than equipped to create video content for your brand.





# podcasts

**Got something to say but don't feel comfortable on camera?** You might consider starting a podcast. Podcasts are an awesome hands-off medium for people to learn about new subjects.

As much as I love to continue educating (and entertaining) myself, I can't necessarily give my attention to articles and videos while performing tasks like driving, washing dishes, and shoveling snow from my driveway.

Podcasts are great tools for consumers to use to learn-on-the-go or multitask while performing other actions.

You might say, *"Yeah, but who would want to listen to a podcast on my boring subject?"*

Um, probably people who want to know more about that subject. And who says just because the topic is boring that your explanation of it has to be boring too?

As of November 2022, there are 383.7 million podcast listeners globally, and it's predicted there will be around 464 million by then end of 2023.

You can shoot your content as a video for your YouTube channel, Facebook Live, or another social platform, upload the audio to iTunes or Stitcher, and *boom* – you've got yourself two mediums of content to satisfy the different learning styles of your audience.

**“ As of November 2022, there are 383.7 million podcast listeners globally, and it's predicted there will be around 464 million by then end of 2023.**





# premium content

Let's say you create an awesome blog that ends up on the first page of Google when people search that topic. Visitors come to the content, read every word, love it, now what?

How do you retain their attention? How do you get them to convert into a lead? By offering them free premium pieces of content.

Something of high enough value that they're willing to exchange a little information about themselves (name, email, persona-based question) for a download in return. **These can be easy to create resources like tip sheets and checklists or comprehensive pieces of content like workbooks, guides, and whitepapers.**

**This guide you're reading right now?** *It's a premium content offer.* Sure, it's ungated — but up near the top, you'll see you have the option to have a PDF of this guide sent to you. It's optional, but it's there.

Premium offers are how you can easily turn anonymous website visitors into contacts that you can nurture through email campaigns to drive them through your marketing and sales funnels faster.





# multimedia content

In addition to video, there are tons of other forms of multimedia content your audience may find valuable:

- Pictures
- Charts
- Infographics
- Graphs
- Presentations
- Memes
- Webinars
- GIFs
- Tables

Visual content can serve as standalone pieces, perfect for sharing on social media channels or even as premium content. Alternatively, for a more significant impact, you can seamlessly embed visual elements within your blog articles.





Pictures, infographics, charts, tables, and more — when used in blog articles — gives more context to the conversation, provides clarity, adds depth, and boosts information retention.

In fact, when people hear information, they're likely to remember only 10% of that information three days later.

However, if a relevant image is paired with that same information, **people retain 65% of the information three days later.**

Visual content is awesome for consumers because of how easy it is to consume. Many folks on the internet may not have time to read your 3,000-word post comparing several types of riding lawn mowers.

But, if you create a quick infographic, table, or graph showing how they compare in various categories, it might be a lot easier for your audience to unpack and retain the information.

**“ If a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retain 65% of the information three days later.**

Think of visuals as the fast food of content marketing — without the guilt.

Sure, it's not my wife's locally-famous Hawaiian chicken and rice, but it's quick to consume, filling, and easy to share with others.

The same way I share fries with my dog when my wife's not looking.

*I mean, what? Who said that? (Hi, honey.)*

In fact, infographics often have the highest opportunity for many businesses to experience viral success.





# 3 pieces of advice about visual content

**#1: Whenever possible, use original visuals.**

**#2: If you don't have original images, stock images can work in a pinch, but *always make sure you have permission to use the content.***

**#3: *Keep an eye on file size.* Large images can bog your page down and make it load slowly. People are impatient, the longer your page takes to load, the more people will abandon your clunky ship in favor of your competitor's speed boat.**

Learn more about [how page load time can impact your bottom line.](#)







# how to get started with content marketing

# 4



I know, I know — all these different types of content you're going to create, buzzwords you'll need to learn (I really hope I haven't used too many myself), and tools you'll need to hone can seem overwhelming.

Committing to content marketing is like being asked, *“Hey, you see that mountain over there? Yeah, that huge one, Denali. Can you climb up there for me?”*

**Daunting right?** You don't even own any rope.

You'd be overwhelmed with questions like:

- When's the best time of year to climb?
- What's the safest route?
- How do I train for a climb?
- What equipment do I need?
- What kinds of food should I bring?
- If attacked by a bear, do I fight back or play dead?

Not to fear. Let this next section be like your copy of *The Scout's Guide to Climbing All Kinds of Stuff. And How to Fight Bears.*

## blogging best practices

Since blogs are the most common way you'll create content, we'll start there. Blogging best practices begin with knowing the appropriate topics to create content around. You have three important factors to consider:

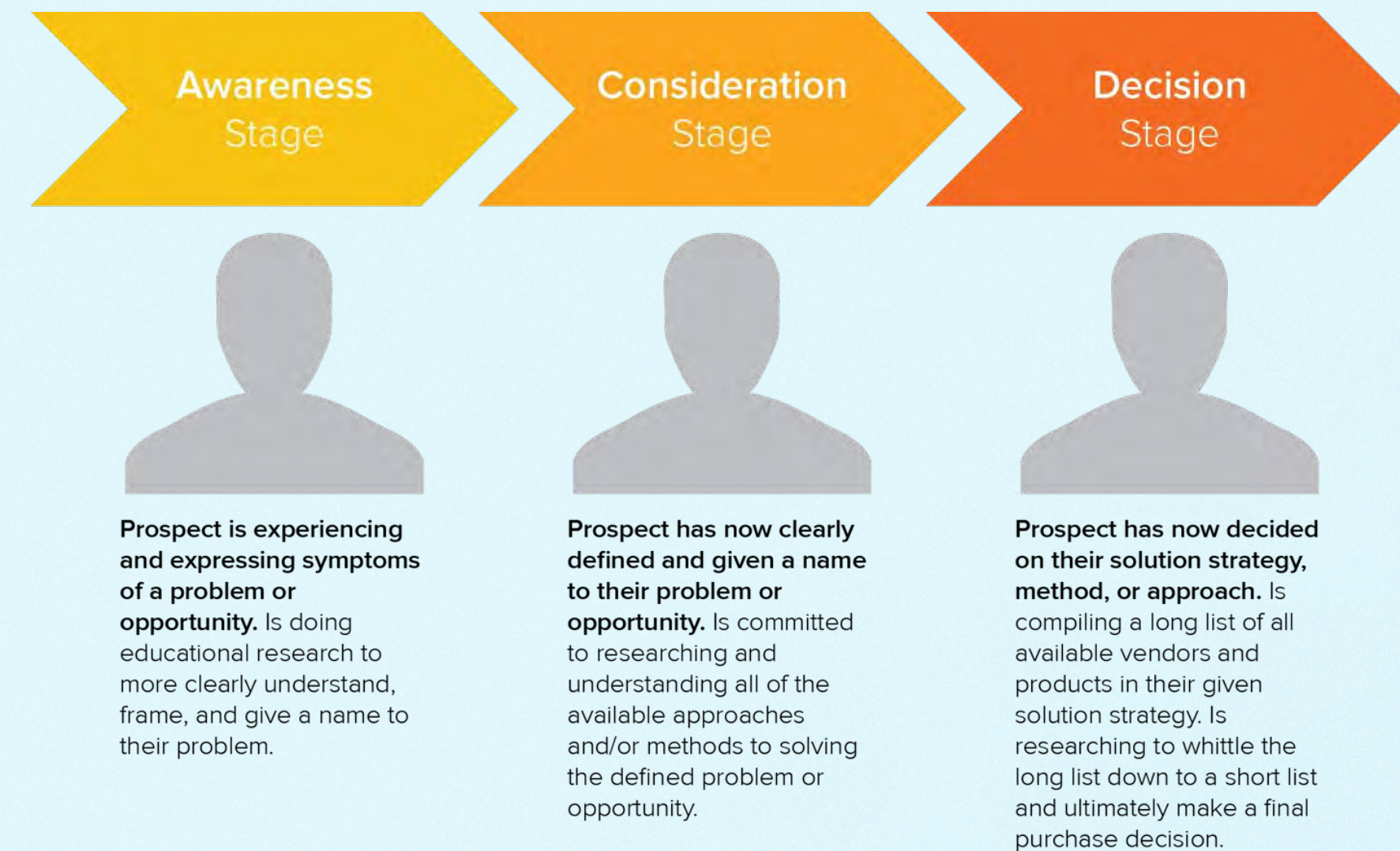
- The buyer's journey
- The topics people research at each stage
- How you can get people from one stage to the next





# the buyer's journey

The buyer's journey describes a series of choices consumers make while researching a purchase decision. It's comprised of three main stages – **awareness, consideration, and decision.**



You can thank [HubSpot](#) for this lovely visual overview.

**First**, people become aware of a problem and begin to research solutions. **Next**, they consider the various solutions to their problems. **Finally**, they consider which vendor to purchase from.

Understanding the buyer's journey and the types of content we can produce at each stage will help us better connect with buyers.





# the right kind of content at each stage

Let's say you run a sporting goods store and have a target audience segment you like to call "Backcountry Bill."

Backcountry Bill is a bit older — maybe mid-twenties on up. Having grown tired of sharing the resort with large crowds and long lines at the lifts, Bill yearns to push into the backcountry and carve untouched lines. But as much as he wants to have fun shreddin' fresh pow, he's got a family at home and wants to stay safe while still getting dangerous.

Now, let's say you want to help Backcountry Bill choose the best equipment. In order to do that, you have to be aware of where Bill is in the buyer's journey. You'll want to create content that will help him out at each stage and get him to move to the next stage.

For the sake of simplicity, I'll focus on blog article topics and premium offers we can create for Bill.



If you haven't guessed it, I'm a Backcountry Bill, myself.





### Awareness Topics for Backcountry Bill

- What Is Backcountry Snowboarding? (blog)
- 7 Reasons to Explore the Backcountry on a Snowboard (blog)
- How to Stay Safe in the Backcountry (blog)
- Where to Explore the Backcountry Near Me (blog)
- Types of Equipment You'll Need for Backcountry Snowboarding (blog)
- Backcountry Snowboarding 101: A Complete Guide (premium content)

The awareness stage is where Bill first becomes *aware* that he even has an interest in the backcountry. Before Bill starts shopping for backcountry supplies, the appeal of the backcountry needs to hit his radar.

**The awareness stage is top-of-the-funnel (TOFU)**, meaning that it can take a lot of time to get people from the awareness stage to making a purchase. It could be as short as a few hours, or who knows, maybe Bill is kind of terrified of the backcountry, and it takes years for him to really decide to get out and explore.

For a snowboard retail shop, creating content that brings the appeal of the backcountry would be fitting for the awareness stage.

### Consideration Topics for Backcountry Bill

- Top 10 Avalanche Beacons (blog)
- How to Choose the Best Backcountry Airbag (blog)
- Split-board vs Snowshoes: Which Is Best? (blog)
- Ultimate Buyer's Guide for Backcountry Equipment (premium content)

Once Bill is convinced that backcountry snowboarding does in fact appeal to him (probably because it's amazing), he'll really start to consider what kinds of gear he'll need.

Which means, you guessed correctly, he's moving into the consideration stage.

**In the consideration stage**, Bill is convinced, "*Yes, the backcountry life is for me!*"

But what kind of gear will he need?

He's already read some articles that mention some of the types of gear he'll need: beacon, probe, shovel, airbag, and other safety equipment. He might have thought he was going to have to buy snowshoes to get out there and throw his board on his back, but then he heard about split-boards.

The consideration stage is where folks do a lot of actual research. He'll closely analyze the different pieces of gear he wants to purchase.

### Decision Topics for Backcountry Bill

- How Much Does a Splitboard Cost? (blog)
- Jones Mountain Twin Splitboard vs. LibTech Splitboard (blog)
- Pros & Cons of the Arc'teryx Voltair 30 Avalanche Airbag (blog)
- Reviews of the Backcountry Access Tracker 2 Avalanche Beacon (blog)
- Best Online Backcountry Stores (blog)
- Where to Buy Backcountry Gear Near Me (blog)
- Split-board Pricing Guide (premium content)

Thanks to your amazing content — go you — Bill is now moving into the decision stage. He has a pretty good idea of some of the equipment he's interested in.

**The decision stage** is where Bill will fine-tune his options by narrowing down which pieces of equipment he's interested in and pick a retailer to purchase from.

If you're the website that is answering Bill's most pressing questions, how do you think he's going to feel about you? For one, he's going to trust you more as an expert on all things backcountry snowboarding.

**Trust is one of the core tenets of content marketing.** The more someone trusts us and turns to us for information, the more they'll want to buy from us.





# where do i start with blogging?

The 17 blog article topics and premium pieces of content I listed for Backcountry Bill are just the tip of the content marketing iceberg. Similar articles can be written for all of your different audience groups, and there are tons more topics we can write about.

So, where do you start? How do you decide which articles to go after first? Which stage of the buyer's journey should you begin with?

Most companies will look at the buyer's journey and start creating content at the awareness stage because they think, "Hey, that's where customers start. Why not start there ourselves?"

**It seems to make sense, but it's the wrong approach for a few reasons.**

**1. First, as mentioned before, people can spend a lot of time in the awareness stage.** Bill may dream of riding the backcountry for years before he finally commits to getting out there.

We may not be able to get Bill through the buyer's journey quickly as other life things might get in the way (My own backcountry adventures got stymied when my kids were born. It's hard to find time to get away for an entire weekend when there are little monsters driving your spouse insane.)

We might spend a lot of time creating awareness content that doesn't lead to sales quickly and makes us think, "Maybe content marketing doesn't work that well."

**2. There's more competition at the top of the funnel.** These topics are softball topics. There are likely lots of publishers that have written about these topics, so shouldering our way to the front of the pack is more difficult.

**3. What comes next?** Say Backcountry Bill reads your blog article on Types of Equipment You'll Need for Backcountry Snowboarding and decides, "Yes, I need an avalanche beacon. But what kind?" Where is he going to go for that info? You're busy writing awareness content while Bill has moved to the consideration stage. Where is he going to get this information?

**If you don't have it, he's going to look elsewhere.** You helped him move from one stage to the next, but Bill has now left you behind for other sources — potentially your competition — with consideration stage content.

**4. It's further away from making money.** When you focus on the top of the funnel, you're creating content that isn't going to lead to sales as quickly.





# So, what do we do?

We start at the bottom of the funnel – at the end of the buyer’s journey – and work our way back.

This way we’ve created content for folks that are much closer to making a purchase. They may have begun their journey elsewhere, but there’s a better chance for us to make a customer out of Bill if we’ve got bottom-of-the-funnel content for him.

Also, your competitors are probably focusing on TOFU content because it’s easier to create and less controversial. **But they don’t answer the tougher questions.** Most companies want to answer those hard questions one-to-one between Bill and a sales rep.

Let your content be a salesman that works 24/7/365 for you.



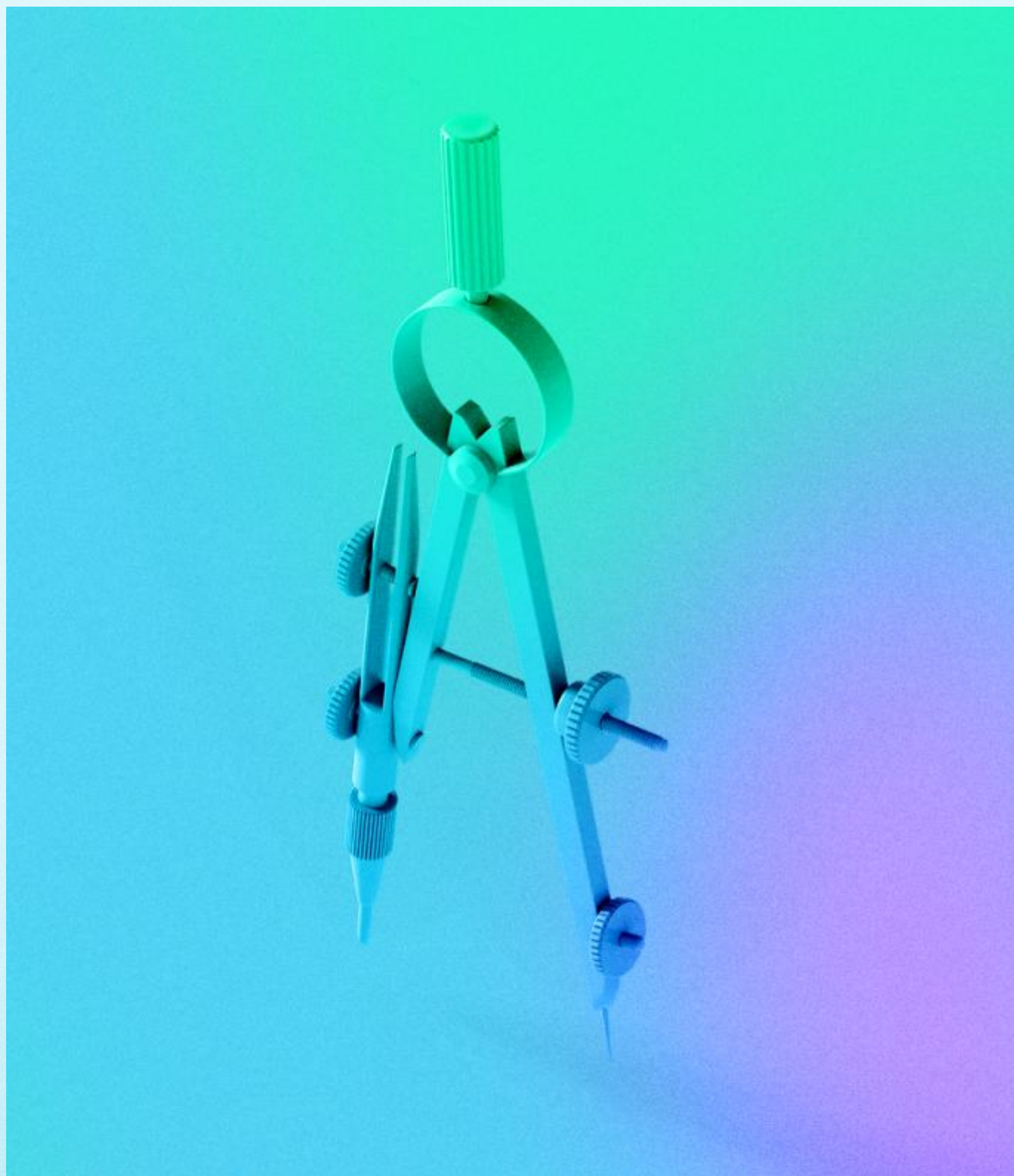




# how to measure the success of content marketing







Alright, so how the heck can you tell if your content marketing efforts are working? First, you're going to want to focus on creating high-quality content.

## success starts with quality content

Make sure you're giving the best possible answer to the questions being posed. If you're not sure of the quality of your own content, enter a search query containing the keywords you hope to rank for and click on the top results and ask yourself:

- What did they write about?
- How thorough were they in their answers?
- Did they leave anything out?

Then head back to the writer's room and commit to creating a piece of content that blows the competition away.





# what should you measure?

What does success mean? What are some of those tangibles you can share with others in your organization to prove your content marketing efforts are working and you're not just writing fantastical stories about dishwashers for an audience that isn't there?

While there are tons of important metrics you can measure, I'm going to list out some of the most important.

Keywords

Traffic

Leads

Sales

and More





# keywords

Before people ever land on your website, review your content, and request to buy your products, the first thing to keep an eye on is your keyword growth.

If you're not on the first page of Google for queries, you're not going to see any traffic. And these days, it's incredibly rare to jump to the first page of search results immediately after publishing.

**“ If you're not on the first page of Google for queries, you're not going to see any traffic.**

Instead, Google first needs to crawl and index your content. Then their algorithm can start to figure out what questions your content best addresses and start to rank your content for related queries.

Often, you'll see your content debut far down the search results, but over a few weeks to months, you'll see them start to snowball their way to the first page (and ideally to the #1 spot).

Once you have some keywords on the first page of Google, then you'll start to see traffic roll in.





# traffic

**Is your content resonating with the audience?** An early sign of success is when people genuinely engage with and read the content you have produced, indicating that it is capturing their interest effectively.

Whether they're finding your content through Google search queries, social media feeds, or within emails, if we're getting an increase in traffic to our website, it means people are viewing our content.

But more than just new eyeballs on the page, you'll want to look at behavior metrics of your visitors.

Are they on the page for a few minutes, or mere seconds? The longer they're on the page, the more likely it is that they're absorbing the information. If they're only there for a few seconds, it's likely there was a disconnect between what they wanted and what you delivered. Or, and this can really hurt, they found your content lacking substance.

**“ An early sign of success is when people genuinely engage with and read the content you have produced, indicating that it is capturing their interest effectively.**

Another traffic metric to review is bounce rates. If people are sticking around reading the page, that's awesome. But what's even better is when people start to explore more of your pages beyond the one they initially landed on.

A bounce is when someone loads one page, and one page only of your website before heading back to the information highway of Google. If you're retaining people's attention and getting them to more pages of your content, Google will see that as a positive sign of the quality of not only your page, but your website as a whole.





# leads

Traffic is great, but converting that traffic to leads is even better. Marketers get excited about increasing traffic, but sales teams rarely care until they have more leads to pursue.

Are the folks coming to your website simply consuming the content and then bailing out to surf the rest of the web, or are they connecting with you by filling out forms on your pages or engaging with chatbots on your site?

If we want to turn anonymous visitors into workable leads, we're going to need premium content offers that give people enough value that they're willing to exchange their contact information to un-gate that content.

# sales

**The ultimate indicator of successful content marketing is increasing revenue.** And if you're using the right tools (which we'll discuss shortly), you can actually backtrack your sales to that initial contact point once you have the data that tells you:

- When did you first get on your customer's radar?
- What content did they end up consuming?
- How did they end up becoming a lead?
- How were they nurtured into closing as a customer?

Knowing these answers can help you fine-tune your marketing and sales funnels.





# other important metrics to review

There are so many factors that go into successful content marketing it can seem a little overwhelming. Not to mention, how do you even measure those things?

How many keywords do you rank for?

How many first page keywords do you rank for?

How many keywords are in the top three positions on Google?

Does your business show up often in the Local 3-Pack?

Do you own any featured snippets?

What kind of engagement are you getting with your content?

Are people sharing it on their social platforms?

Are they linking to it from their websites?

How long are they on a page? (this can indicate quality)

What are the bounce rates for your pages?

What sources are bringing you the most traffic?

Organic

Direct

Social

Paid

Email

Referral

What's your email engagement like?

Anybody opening them?

Are they clicking on your links?





# content marketing reporting resources

Oh man, you're in for a treat — there are *tons* of resources at your disposal. So many in fact, it can be hard to nail down which ones to start with. For me, the easiest place to start is with the **free tools** you have available to you.

## Google Analytics 4

[Google Analytics 4](#) (replaced Universal Analytics July 1, 2023) should be the first place you turn to review your metrics. It's the best tool to learn more about where your audience comes from — both by traffic source and where they actually live.





**While there are lots of awesome metrics to review in the new and improved GA4, I'll list some of the most important briefly:**

These are just some baseline questions you'll want to answer. Dig into Google Analytics and you can get lost for days as you learn more and more about the people visiting your site.

## traffic

- How many visits to your site are you getting?
- How much of that traffic is new vs returning traffic?
- How many average pages are being viewed per session?
- How long is the average session duration?
- Where is the traffic coming from by source?

## audience

- Where does your audience live? Country, state/territory, city?
- What age groups visit your site the most?
- What percentage of men and women visit the site?
- What kinds of devices are they accessing your site from? Mobile, desktop, tablet?
- What browser are they using?

## engagement

- What pages are getting the most traffic?
- How long are people staying on the site?
- How long are they staying on individual pages?
- What is the bounce rate for your site overall?
- What is the bounce rate of individual pages?
- What pages are converting traffic?





# google business profile

If you're a local business (like my imaginary snowboard shop), [Google Business Profile](#) (formerly known as [Google My Business](#)) is one of the most important tools you can use. Have you ever done a search for a specific local business or entered a query containing "near me" like "copier companies near me"?

If so, then you've probably encountered the "Local 3-Pack" listings above the organic content and/or a knowledge card off to the side with important details about the local business you just looked up.

Here's my article on [Google Business Profile Business best practices](#), if you're unfamiliar with it. If you are familiar with it, what should you be measuring?

## What to Look at in Google Business Profile

### How did people find your site?

- Direct searches of your business name?
- Discovery by searching your business type or services — those "near me" searches?
- Through a Google Maps search?

### What actions did they take after viewing your knowledge card?

- Visit your website?
- Call you?
- Did they view your photos on your card?
- Did they add their own photo? (Yeah, they can do that, too.)
- Request directions?
- Did they leave a review?
- Did they ask a question?
- Did they view or click on a post, offer, or event you listed?

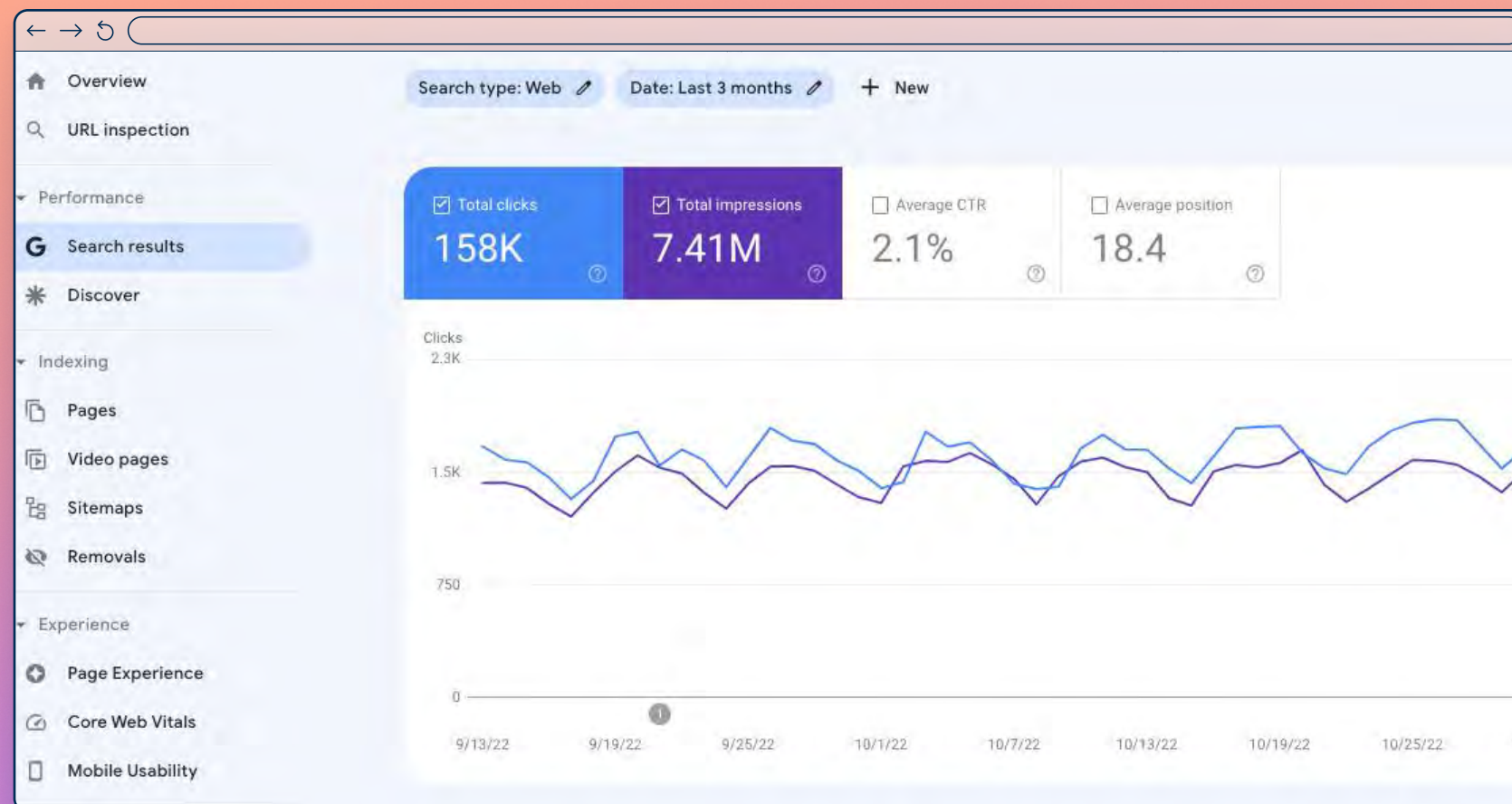




# google search console

Google Search Console (GSC) is another amazing free tool every content marketer should be familiar with. If you want a behind the scenes look at how Google views, indexes, and ranks your site, this is the tool you need to dive into.

You can even submit a sitemap so Google can better crawl your website.



Here are some of the invaluable insights you can learn from GSC:

- What are the exact keywords people have entered in a Google search query that Google has you indexed for in their top 100 search results (impressions)?
- What position do you hold on average for these keywords?
- How many clicks have you received from those keywords?
- What's your average Click Through Rate (CTR) for those keywords (how often do people search those terms and then choose your result?)
- Which pages get the most impressions and clicks?
- Does your site have any broken links?
- Does your site have any pages Google's bots are not able/allowed to crawl?
- What anchor text do other websites use to link to your site?
- What external websites do you link to from your own site?
- What internal pages do you link to the most?
- Are there any issues with the mobile version of your website?
- Does your site pass Google's new Core Web Vitals reports?





# YouTube analytics

If it wasn't for YouTube, I wouldn't be sitting here right now talking to you about YouTube Analytics. Seriously, I got my first content marketing job based off of a [snowboard documentary](#) I shot, starred in, edited, and published to YouTube:

*Content marketing in action – watch out, Scorsese!*

The company recognized the value in video marketing and wanted more than just a writer for producing content.

Hopefully, your company also sees the value in video marketing. But, you may be wondering, “What does successful video marketing look like? What should I be measuring?”

While there are freemium and paid tools out there like [Vidyard](#), [Wistia](#), [Vimeo](#), and more, we'll focus on [YouTube Analytics](#), since it's free and accessible.

**Here are the metrics you'll have access to once you start using YouTube to publish videos:**

- How many views do your videos have?
- How many people subscribe to your channel?
- What is your subscriber rate over time?
- How much watch time do your videos have?
- Are people replaying your videos or sections of them?
- What sections of your video are people leaving?
- What sources drive traffic?
- What demographics is your audience composed of?
- What are people saying in the comments section?
- What's the number of likes and dislikes on your videos?
- What keywords do your videos rank for?





# HubSpot

HubSpot is the only paid tool I'm putting on this list since it's one we use ourselves and encourage most of our clients to use. HubSpot is a tool that is useful at all stages of the buyer's journey and sales funnel.

From its content management system (CMS) where you can create blog articles and social media posts, to the customer relationship management (CRM) system, where you can capture and nurture leads, HubSpot is hands-down one of the best marketing automation platforms on the market.

And the reporting options are comprehensive, to say the least...

The vast majority of metrics you can glean from Google Analytics you can also get on HubSpot – although there are some really important ones like demographics, device types, and locations of users that you can't.

HubSpot is such a large and all-encompassing tool, that it would take forever to list everything it can do. If you want to learn more, I highly recommend reading our [guide on everything you need to know about HubSpot](#).







# content marketing vs. ppc (pay-per-click)





If content marketing is a full-on expedition up Denali, then pay-per-click (PPC) is renting a helicopter for a quick trip to the summit.

The view from the top is the same, but one was earned through solid work and effort, and the other was paid for.

(See how I circled back to that analogy from over ~4,000 words ago?)

## effort

With both content marketing and PPC, we want our content to appear on the first page of a search, but each takes a different path.

With content marketing, you create the best answer to a given search — scaling the mountain by hand.

With PPC, you skate past all that pesky hiking and climbing by booking a chopper. **PPC takes significantly less time to enact.**

## impact

At first, it might sound appealing to just buy a ticket. Why not skip all the mosquitos, sharp rocks, and hand-dug latrines for a trip you can do in your house slippers?

With PPC, you have to pay for each heli-ride back up. And helicopters are a lot more expensive than a tent, camping gear, and rope.

**Unlike PPC, each trek back to the top with content marketing gets easier.** As you climb, you're widening the path, packing the trail, and building stairs.

**Content marketing has true staying power.** I've written articles several years ago that you can still find at the top of a search engine result.

PPC results end as soon as you stop bidding on keywords.





# engagement

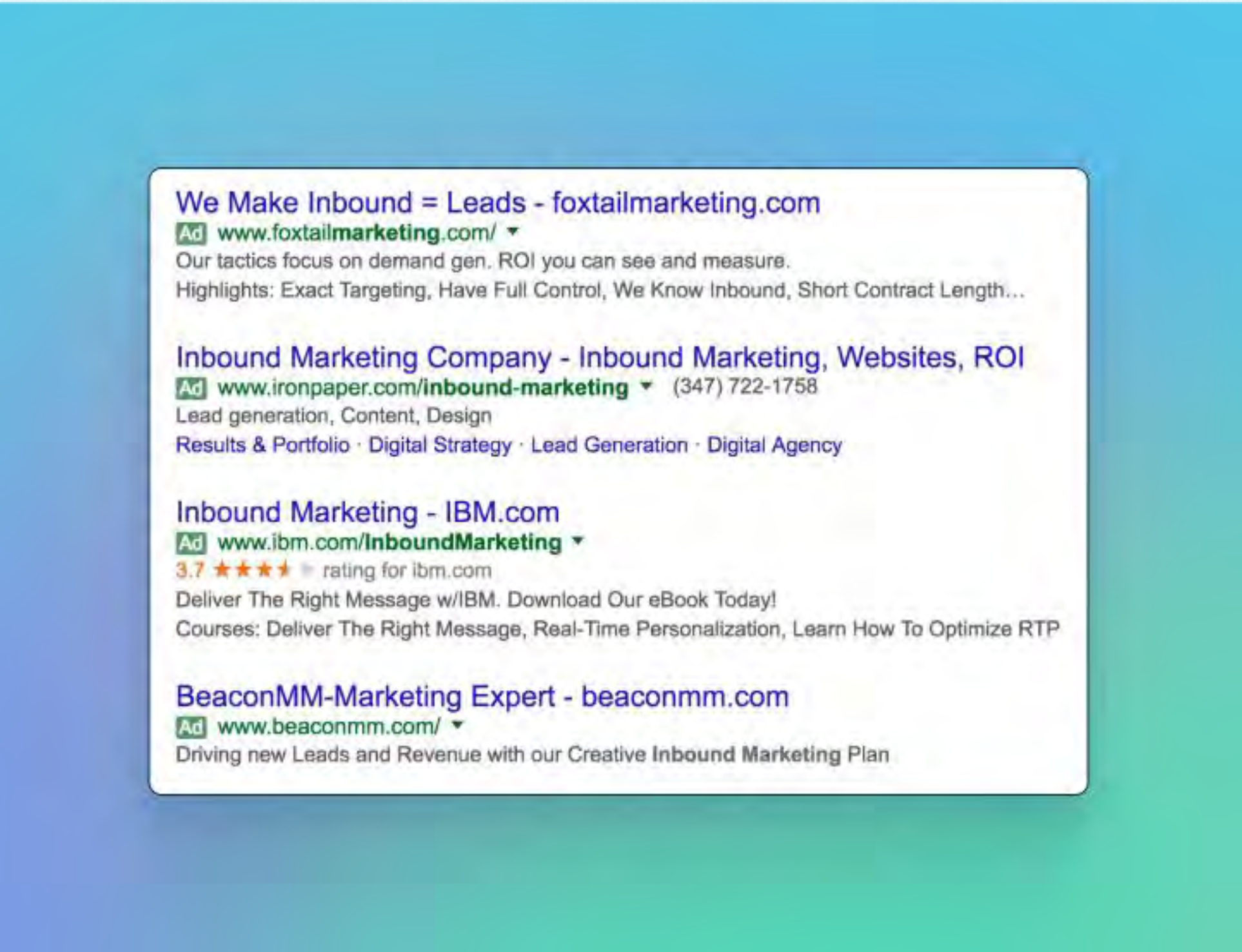
Just as people are more likely to enjoy a story about a group of adventurers braving the Alaskan wilderness than the one about a guy who paid for a sweet Instagram opportunity, people click organic search results far more often than they do ads.

An average click-through-rate for Google Ads is about 2%.

On the other hand, the average CTR for the top organic search results is about 40%, and the seventh-seeded result's average is 2.2%.

Overwhelmingly, **people are drawn to organic results far more than the ads appearing above them.**

Ask yourself: **when was the last time I clicked on an ad?**



The screenshot displays four search results for 'Inbound Marketing' on a light blue background. Each result is an advertisement with a green 'Ad' icon and a link to a website. The first ad is from foxtailmarketing.com, the second from ironpaper.com, the third from ibm.com, and the fourth from beaconmm.com. The IBM ad includes a 3.7 star rating and a call to action to download an eBook.

- We Make Inbound = Leads - foxtailmarketing.com**  
Ad [www.foxtailmarketing.com/](http://www.foxtailmarketing.com/) ▼  
Our tactics focus on demand gen. ROI you can see and measure.  
Highlights: Exact Targeting, Have Full Control, We Know Inbound, Short Contract Length...
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Driving new Leads and Revenue with our Creative Inbound Marketing Plan





# which has a higher ROI?

One of the leading questions in the PPC vs. content marketing debate is – **which has a higher return on investment?**

This is a tough question to answer because, in all honesty, it really depends on the quality of the content you're producing.

If you're doing content marketing poorly, you're not going to make it to the first page, which means you're not going to get much of an increase in traffic, leads, and sales.

If you're doing PPC poorly, you might still drive traffic to your site, but if you don't have strong lead-capturing and nurturing practices in place, you're going to blow through your budget without any conversions or sales.

**When both are done right, PPC has short-term ROI and content marketing has a long-term ROI.**





# can PPC and content marketing work together?

This brings us to an important question — **can content marketing be augmented to support PPC?**

Yes, it absolutely can.

One of the biggest mistakes I see people make with PPC is that they have absolutely terrible landing pages. They put all their effort into keyword research and eye-catching headlines, but they don't really consider the experience the consumer is in for.

What landing pages are you driving traffic to with your PPC campaigns? Are you even driving traffic to landing pages or are you just sending people to your homepage and leave them to navigate themselves?

**The least you could do is give them a map and an itinerary.**

If you're following content marketing best practices, you can use your high-performing landing pages to give visitors a quality experience. Furthermore, if you've developed fleshed out email workflows, you've got a nurturing campaign already set in place to help buyers through the buyer's journey.

From there, the benefits of content marketing are endless.







**if you need  
help with  
content  
marketing**

**7**



# learn from media junction

Maybe you're a true DIY trailblazer that doesn't need a guide up the mountain but needs some advice for getting started. We've got tons of that. We publish several articles a month covering a wide range of topics to ensure content marketers and business leaders are armed with the knowledge they need to be successful in a digital world.

Everything you need to know to get started with content marketing, improve your processes, and excel in today's digital world can be found on our blog.

With so much free information at your disposal, it should be a no-brainer to give it a try yourself, right? Why would you ever need to pay for help?





# train with media junction



Unfortunately, for every content marketing pioneer we meet along the path, we see dozens more young, bright, ambitious explorers whose thrilling adventures turn tragic from lack of experience and guidance.

Yes, we have tons of free information at your disposal. But with so much information, it can feel like drinking from a firehose. Where do you even begin – other than with the blog topics I laid out for you above? How can you expertly apply these principles and methodologies to your business?

**Here at Media Junction, we offer services in four major areas:**

- [Website Redesign](#)
- [Content & Inbound Marketing](#)
- [HubSpot Services](#)
- [RevOps](#)

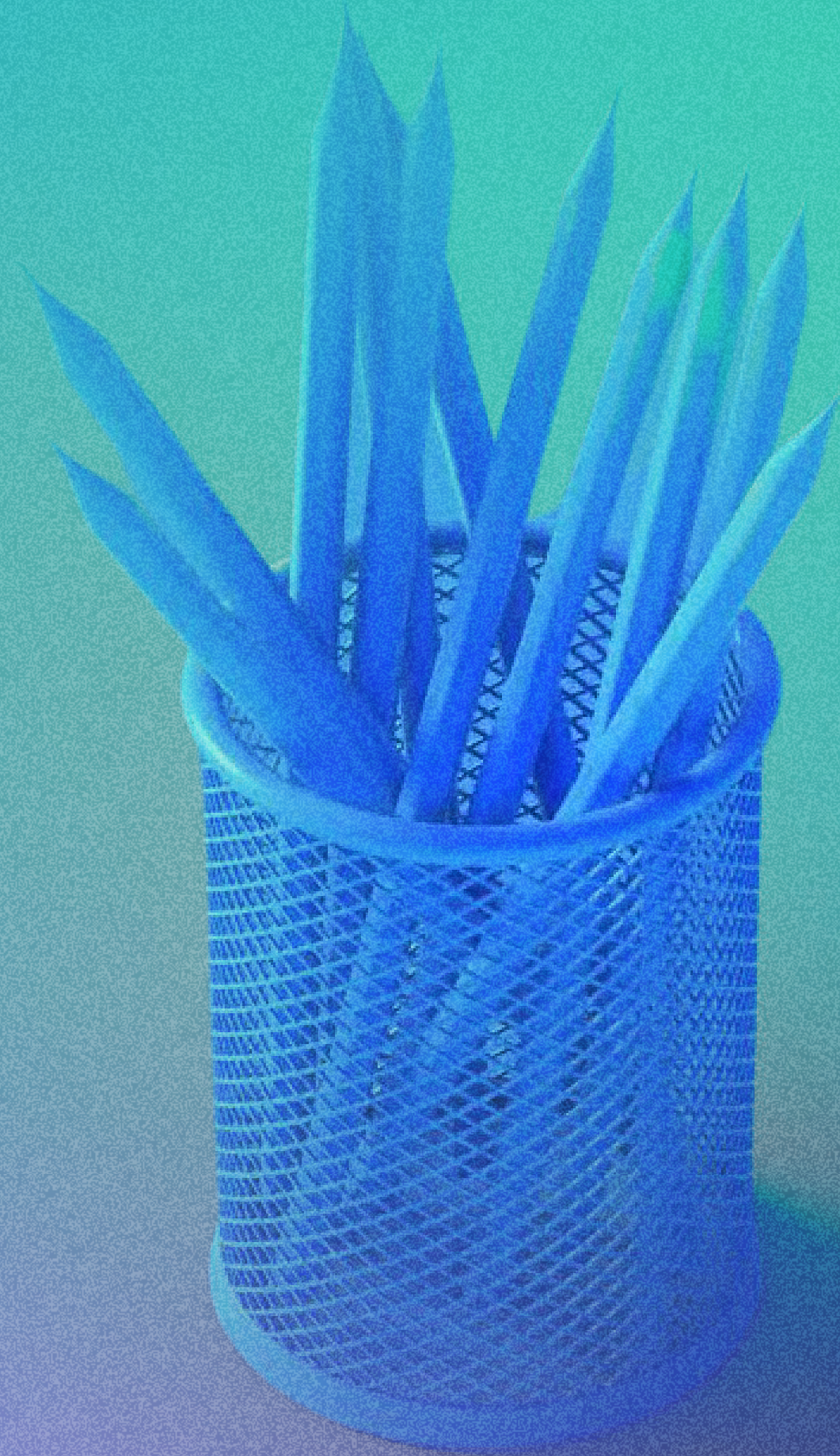
Our services are like having your own personal team of sherpas guide you in your journey. We've helped dozens of companies reach the summit.

When you work with our team, it's like having someone tailor-make all your climbing gear for you. Then, we'll show you how to use it, give you a compass, draw you a customized map of the easiest path up for your hiking style, and walk with you every step of the way.





# content marketing guide





# welcome to your content marketing crash course!

Content marketing is a digital marketing strategy in which companies create honest, transparent, and educational content on a consistent basis for an ideal buyer profile. Typically, the goal is to use the publication and promotion of content to drive organic website traffic, increase qualified lead generation, and (ultimately) empower the sales team to close more deals faster.

## **So, what does that mean for you? Is content marketing the right fit for your company?**

This is your ultimate guide to gaining a clear and comprehensive understanding of what content marketing is and how you can use it to better communicate with your customers to grow your business.

This guide will cover topics such as what content marketing is, what it's not, the many faces of content marketing, how to get started with content marketing today, and how it differs from other forms of marketing.

Are you ready to learn more about content marketing and disrupt the way you're currently doing business?





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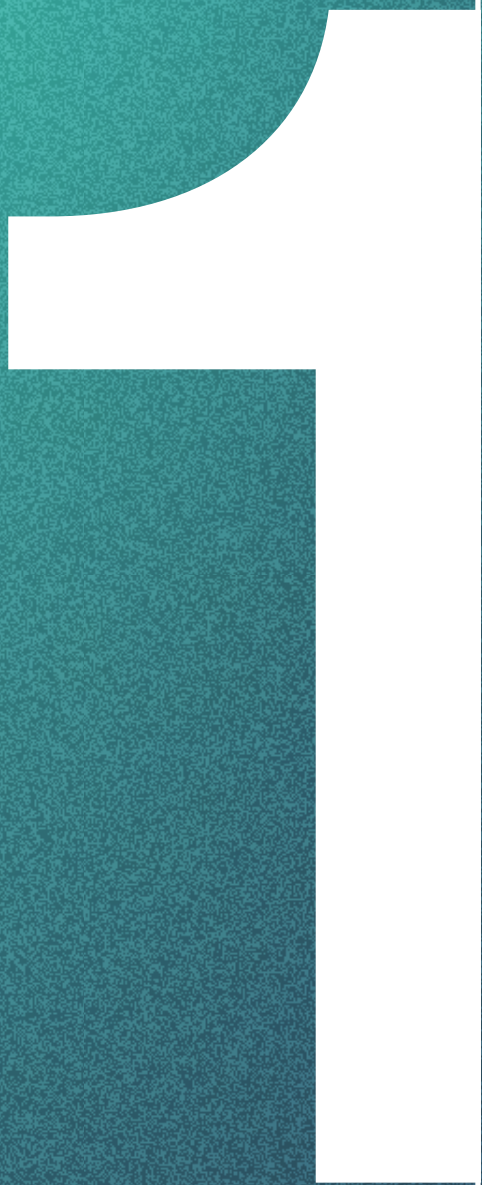
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# first, why content marketing?





# it was 2001 & i needed a car

Tell me if you've ever experienced a situation like this.

Back when Eminem was the biggest pop star, The Sopranos was the best show on TV, and America Online dominated the internet, I bought my first car.

I had moved from Alaska to Oregon to work at a snowboard resort for \$6.50 an hour and a season pass. I needed a vehicle that could get me up and down Mt. Hood every day through heavy snowfall for work and play.

**I knew nothing about cars; I only knew the *problem* I needed solved.**

I had a friend drive me into Portland, Oregon to a used car lot in search of the perfect vehicle for my situation. I was greeted fairly quickly, but also a bit reluctantly (due to my age and perceived cash flow), by a used car salesman.

I told him my problem:

**I need a dependable vehicle that can handle a heavily trafficked mountain road through rain, sleet, snow, and ice.**

I had a lot of questions for him, but he only had one question for me:

**How much money do you have?**

I told him I could go as high as \$2,000.

*"Perfect," he said. "I've got a 1987 Subaru GL Wagon for exactly \$2,000."*





He took me for a test drive in what is arguably the ugliest station wagon you've ever seen. It wasn't going to turn any heads (at least not in a good way), but he promised me it could get me anywhere I needed to go.

During the test drive, he had me stick to residential roads near the dealership. Twenty-five MPH was the top speed I was able to hit. I wanted to get it out on the highway, but he seemed insistent on getting back to the dealership quickly to talk terms.

At the dealership, I attempted to haggle on the price a bit. He entertained me some by giving me the old, *"Let me talk to my manager,"* as he stepped into another room for less than two minutes.

He came back and said, *"Sorry, \$2,000 firm. Take it or leave it."*

Not being an experienced negotiator at all, I practiced what a friend had coached me to say.

*"Well then, I'm going to drive up the road to another dealership and see what they have to offer."*

He quickly countered, *"This Subaru just came in here yesterday. They are the most popular used vehicles we sell. If you leave here right now, there's a good chance it will be gone when you come back. \$2,000 for this car is a sweet deal. Trust me. You'd be foolish to leave."*

**He called my bluff, and I forked over the cash.**

He shot me a shark-toothed grin that I still remember distinctly to this day as he said, *"And it's 'As-Is.' You drive it off the lot, it's yours."*

As soon as I drove off the lot and got onto a highway up to 55 mph, I noticed the RPM tack was slipping a little.

Two days later the clutch went out, and I had to spend a couple hundred more dollars replacing the flywheel — not easy to do on a minimum wage budget.

## “ Everything I knew about that vehicle I had learned from the salesman.

I felt cheated. I had been duped. He must have known there was a problem with the clutch and had kept me off the highway so I wouldn't notice the problem.

I had buyer's remorse.

Everything I knew about that vehicle I had learned from the salesman. With no other resources at my disposal, I was forced to take him at his word that this car was a good fit for me.







Image Source: MotorTrend.com

# here's what happened 14 years later

Fast forward to 2015, and I needed a new vehicle for my growing family. I was back living in Alaska and wanted something large, safe, affordable, easy to fix, and able to tow a trailer.

While the internet was around back in 2001, it wasn't quite the amazing research machine that it is today. This time around, I was able to study the living heck out of my problem and set my heart on getting a Toyota Tundra.

I found a Chevy dealership in town that had a slightly used Toyota Tundra on the lot. The listing for the vehicle was on their website and I was able to look at all the details of the truck.

I went in, met with a sales rep, took the truck for a drive, and decided I wanted it.

Don't bother whining, Chevy, Ford, or Dodge fans. This was my purchase, not yours. 😎





When it came time to haggle, he wouldn't budge on price. I told him I might be back after I drove to the next town's Toyota dealership.

He gave me the exact same reply I had heard nearly a decade and a half before: *"These trucks are some of the most popular vehicles out there. If you leave here today, I can't promise that it won't be here tomorrow."*

But this time, I dropped this knowledge bomb on him:

**Well, it's been here for 72 days already.**

He flinched a little and sat back. *"What are you talking about?"*

*"Well, I found the truck through your website. And on the page with all of the info about the truck it also shows the truck has been here for 72 days. So, I'm not entirely worried that it'll be gone by tomorrow if I do a little more shopping."*

An hour later, I drove away in my new truck. I not only got the dealership to knock a couple grand off the sticker price, but I also got the windshield replaced, a lifetime of oil changes, and an extended warranty at no additional charge.

## **Kevin, what does your car buying experience have to do with content marketing?**

**When I bought my first car in 2001, I was at the mercy of that salesperson.**

He had all the knowledge, and he was able to pick and choose what he wanted to share with me. I was a young, uneducated buyer; he chose not to share any of that knowledge with me.





Back then, if you had a question you weren't able to ask Google, Alexa, Siri, or even ChatGPT for help — you might have "Asked Jeeves," but I wasn't even aware of that resource. Also, there was no Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, or Reddit to crowdsource your answers. And there definitely weren't YouTube tutorials or video reviews to browse.

Heck, Wikipedia had launched, but most of us didn't even know about it yet.

Instead, if you wanted to research a purchase decision, you asked friends and family first. If you were really digging in, you'd go to a library. Savvy internet users — which were few and far between — might be able to find pages or use AOL chat rooms to ask around.

Too often, you were stuck getting all your information from the salesperson you were buying from and had to trust they were being square with you. *It sucked.*

**Fortunately for consumers, a lot has changed since then.**

We now have access to the same information these sales folks have.

The power dynamic has shifted. We no longer have to rely on the transparency of the people selling us products and services, we can look up the information ourselves. We can dive as deep into any topic we want and gather all the information we need to make the best purchase decisions for us.

## “ We now have access to the same information these sales folks have.

Salespeople are no longer the gatekeepers of information.

It's a great time for consumers.

So, how can businesses adapt to this shift? What is the best way for them to communicate with today's sophisticated consumers? Rather than continue to play your cards close to your sleeve or rely on misleading advertisements, it's time to get honest.

And this is where content marketing can help you attract, educate, convert, and close happy customers.







# what is content marketing? (and what it isn't!)





# consumers are suspicious and exhausted

Consumers are wary (and weary) of brands, salespeople, and advertising that only promote the attractive elements of products and services. They've grown tired of being misled, shortchanged, or flat-out lied to by those selling them products.

So, where are they turning to for information about products and services they need and/or want?

They're going online and learning from third parties. They're reading blog articles, watching YouTube videos, and listening to podcasts created by other consumers that are aimed at educating rather than pitching; teaching rather than selling.

(And while I say "they," I really mean "we," because I'm in the same boat, and so are you.)





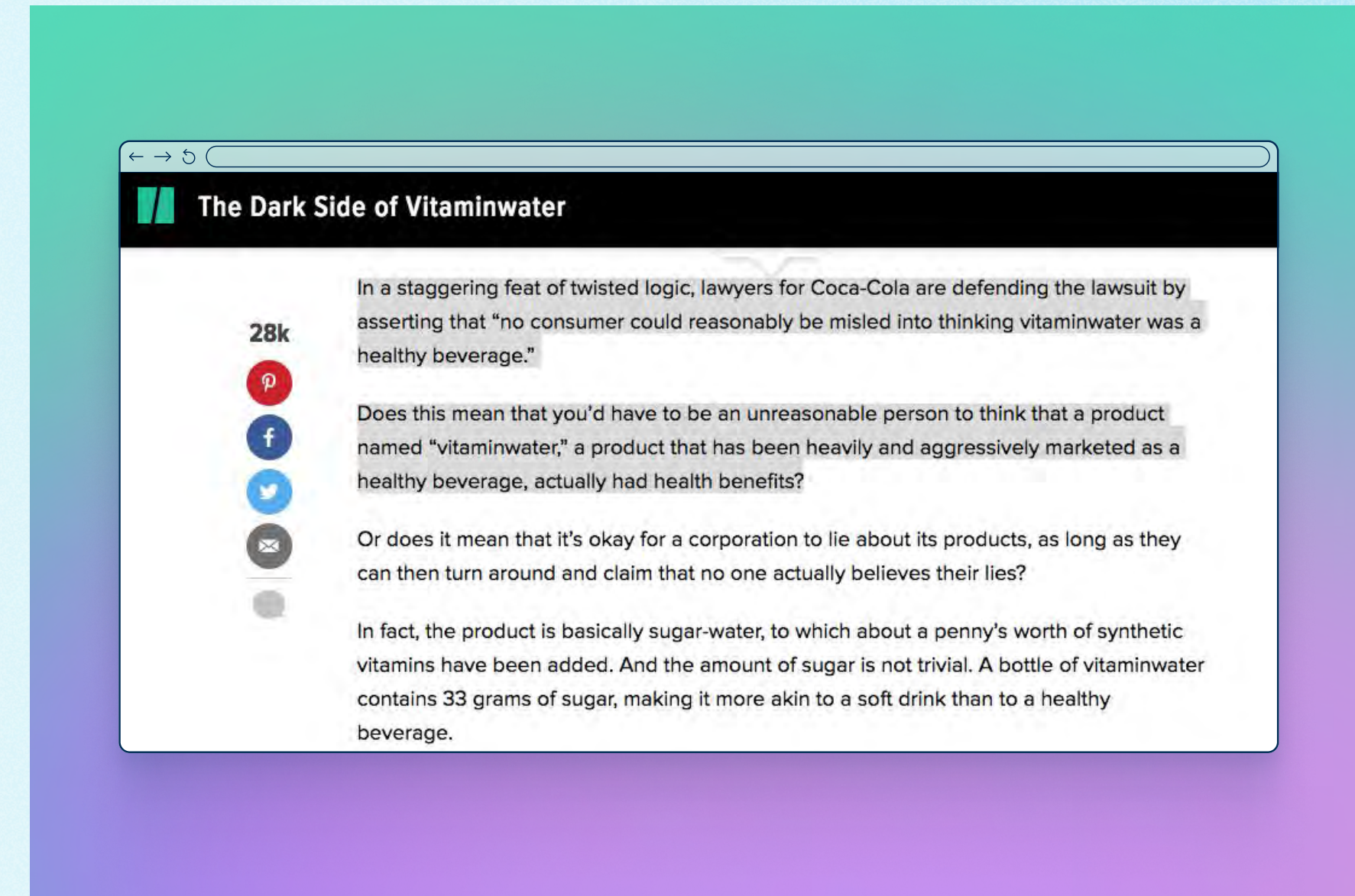
# don't forget, you also buy stuff

Even though most of you reading this are marketers, salespeople, and business owners, **you're also consumers**. While you spend most of your day pitching and selling products for your company, you're also making purchases weekly – or maybe even daily.

Aren't you sick of making a purchase based on false promises only to have the brand blame you for your ignorance?

Remember when Vitaminwater claimed that their products could “boost your immune system” and fight “free radicals?” And when they were called out in a lawsuit for blatantly lying, **Coca-Cola blamed consumers for believing them in the first place** with this message:

**No consumer could reasonably be misled into thinking that vitaminwater is a healthy beverage.**



**Wow, Coca-Cola, we are so, so sorry.** We trusted you when you preached what your product could do for us – how silly of us! We should have known it wasn't anything more than overpriced Kool-Aid for grownups.

Sigh. Anyway.





# content marketing definition

For a short, to the point definition of content marketing, nobody says it better than the [Content Marketing Institute](#) — so I'm not even going to try:

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.

Such a swoon-worthy definition.

## let's break this definition down

First, **content** can be defined as “something to be expressed through some medium.”

For marketers, the thing we need to express is information about our products and services. The **mediums** we use include written articles, videos, infographics, images, social posts, and so many more that we'll discuss in later chapters.

Before you get all crazy and say, “*Oh man, I've got so much content already. Have you seen this awesome ad we have running on YouTube?*”

...pump the breaks a bit.

If the video's goal is to promote your product or service, **it's not content marketing.**

The key to defining content marketing is that the information you're presenting is *valuable and relevant* to your audience. Promotional content is just that, it's meant to promote a product, to express only the benefits, uses, and *awesomeness* of the product.

## but how often is content valuable, helpful, & relevant?

Does a piece of content help your prospects solve problems? Does a piece of content help consumers make the best well-informed purchase decision possible for them? Even if they decide to go with another vendor?

Content marketing is about producing educational content with the goal of helping people improve their lives; to arm them with as much information as possible so they make informed purchases.

When done right, they'll make that purchase through you.

“ **If the video's goal is to promote your product or service, *it's not content marketing.***”





# content marketing is a strategy

Of course, as a business, the end goal of content marketing is to make sales. But rather than just selling your products and services, **content marketing is about developing trust.**

When you produce great content frequently, you become a trusted source of information. You become a resource consumers turn to for education on the topics relevant to your field. As long as you're focused on educating over selling, you will sell more.

Consumers want to buy from brands they trust. **Become the Wikipedia of your industry, and you'll grow your customer base.**





# what content marketing isn't

At the risk of beating a dead horse,  
I can't emphasize enough:

**Content marketing is *not* promotional content.**

But that doesn't mean you have to stick to being  
100% educational and 0% promotional.

If that was the case, after reading a piece of  
content you created, you wouldn't want  
customers saying, "Great. I'm ready to make a  
purchase. Now I have to go find someone who  
sells this."

That would be terrible. So, what do you do?





**Try using the 80/20 rule when creating content** — 80% of the content should be aimed at educating your audience and only 20% should be aimed at selling to them.

It's okay to let them know you sell the services you're discussing. Just don't beat them over the head about it.

If you're writing an educational blog post, let them know in the introduction that you sell the service you're talking about but that your intention is to be educational.

The body of the article should be mostly information with as few mentions of yourself as possible.

The conclusion of the article is where you can give your pitch. They've learned what they've come to learn, now what? This is when you can offer your services to them in a way that feels more natural.

**80% of the content should be aimed at educating your audience and only 20% should be aimed at selling to them.**

## **you won't get rich quick with content marketing**

It takes time for content marketing to bear fruit. Sometimes a couple of weeks. Sometimes a couple of months.

Be patient. Content marketing is a long-term strategy that picks up momentum as you go.

It's like the snowball effect. When you first start at the top of the mountain, you've only got a tiny little snowball in your hand that you gently roll downhill. But as it starts going, it picks up more snow and more snow — and, next thing you know, you've started a raging avalanche charging downhill ready to bury a poor, unsuspecting village.

You monster.

**Content marketing takes a lot of work.**

You can't have content marketing without content. And if you're doing it right, you're creating high-quality content regularly. Good content takes time and effort to create. So let's get rolling and start an avalanche.







**what's in your  
content  
marketing  
toolbox?**

**3**



# a carpenter is only as good as his tools

This line has stuck with me since my first day on a construction site when I showed up on the job with nothing more than a 12-ounce finish hammer. My foreman took one look, pulled me aside and asked, “*Son, you plan on building this house with that toy hammer?*”

I flushed with embarrassment and stood slack-jawed without an answer. I was sure I was about to get sent home before I even got started.

**Instead, he softened.** He lent me some tools but made me promise to invest a portion of each check acquiring new tools — starting with a framing hammer, tape measure, speed square, cat’s paw, razor knife, chalk line, pencil, and a few levels of varying sizes. The essentials.

**A carpenter without tools is just some guy who's... well, not going to build a house.** The same can be said of content marketing. If you’re going to attract more business, you’re going to need a few tools.

**So, what are the essential tools in content marketing?**





# blog posts

When most people think of content marketing, they think of blog posts. And for a good reason — great content marketing begins with creating awesome blog articles that address the questions your audience is asking.

That's the key right there to a high performing blog. **You need to write about topics your audience cares to learn more about.**

Too many businesses start blogging and only have posts like *“Breaking News! We Have a New Head of Sales! Meet Steve!”* or *“We Sponsored a Local Little League! Goooooo Tigers!!!”*

*(All the exclamation points are so you can hear how hard we pat ourselves on the back.)*

I'm not against this kind of blog article. Your team will love it, and it's good to give internal praise and give back to the local community. But your audience isn't searching for stuff like:

**Hey, Google, which local dentist had the best office Christmas party?**

**Rather, when people turn to search engines, they do so for themselves.** They care about solving their problems. Once they begin to see the value in your helpful responses to their questions and recognize you as their go-to resource, their interest in learning more about you will naturally grow.

So, if you want to connect with them, write articles that address their most pressing questions about your industry.





# video

**You can't escape it anymore.** If you want to be top-notch at content marketing, you're going to have to produce video content. It's what consumers are consuming and demanding more of. In fact, [HubSpot's 2022 State of Inbound Marketing Trends](#) showed that consumers watched 14.6 billion minutes of video in 2021. Up 20% from 2020, and up 121% from 2019. People are hungry for video content and eat it up like a toddler left alone with a birthday cake.

## “ Consumers watched 14.6 billion minutes of video in 2021.

If video content is what's in demand, you can either meet their expectations or stand by sulking as buyers walk off holding hands with your video producing competitors like you're a brand that just got friend-zoned.

Whether you've got the budget for high-end video equipment and a studio, or only have the camera on your smartphone available, you're more than equipped to create video content for your brand.





# podcasts

**Got something to say but don't feel comfortable on camera?** You might consider starting a podcast. Podcasts are an awesome hands-off medium for people to learn about new subjects.

As much as I love to continue educating (and entertaining) myself, I can't necessarily give my attention to articles and videos while performing tasks like driving, washing dishes, and shoveling snow from my driveway.

Podcasts are great tools for consumers to use to learn-on-the-go or multitask while performing other actions.

You might say, *"Yeah, but who would want to listen to a podcast on my boring subject?"*

Um, probably people who want to know more about that subject. And who says just because the topic is boring that your explanation of it has to be boring too?

As of November 2022, there are 383.7 million podcast listeners globally, and it's predicted there will be around 464 million by then end of 2023.

You can shoot your content as a video for your YouTube channel, Facebook Live, or another social platform, upload the audio to iTunes or Stitcher, and *boom* – you've got yourself two mediums of content to satisfy the different learning styles of your audience.

**“ As of November 2022, there are 383.7 million podcast listeners globally, and it's predicted there will be around 464 million by then end of 2023.**





# premium content

Let's say you create an awesome blog that ends up on the first page of Google when people search that topic. Visitors come to the content, read every word, love it, now what?

How do you retain their attention? How do you get them to convert into a lead? By offering them free premium pieces of content.

Something of high enough value that they're willing to exchange a little information about themselves (name, email, persona-based question) for a download in return. **These can be easy to create resources like tip sheets and checklists or comprehensive pieces of content like workbooks, guides, and whitepapers.**

**This guide you're reading right now?** *It's a premium content offer.* Sure, it's ungated — but up near the top, you'll see you have the option to have a PDF of this guide sent to you. It's optional, but it's there.

Premium offers are how you can easily turn anonymous website visitors into contacts that you can nurture through email campaigns to drive them through your marketing and sales funnels faster.





# multimedia content

In addition to video, there are tons of other forms of multimedia content your audience may find valuable:

- Pictures
- Charts
- Infographics
- Graphs
- Presentations
- Memes
- Webinars
- GIFs
- Tables

Visual content can serve as standalone pieces, perfect for sharing on social media channels or even as premium content. Alternatively, for a more significant impact, you can seamlessly embed visual elements within your blog articles.





Pictures, infographics, charts, tables, and more — when used in blog articles — gives more context to the conversation, provides clarity, adds depth, and boosts information retention.

In fact, when people hear information, they're likely to remember only 10% of that information three days later.

However, if a relevant image is paired with that same information, **people retain 65% of the information three days later.**

Visual content is awesome for consumers because of how easy it is to consume. Many folks on the internet may not have time to read your 3,000-word post comparing several types of riding lawn mowers.

But, if you create a quick infographic, table, or graph showing how they compare in various categories, it might be a lot easier for your audience to unpack and retain the information.

**“ If a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retain 65% of the information three days later.**

Think of visuals as the fast food of content marketing — without the guilt.

Sure, it's not my wife's locally-famous Hawaiian chicken and rice, but it's quick to consume, filling, and easy to share with others.

The same way I share fries with my dog when my wife's not looking.

*I mean, what? Who said that? (Hi, honey.)*

In fact, infographics often have the highest opportunity for many businesses to experience viral success.





# 3 pieces of advice about visual content

**#1: Whenever possible, use original visuals.**

**#2: If you don't have original images, stock images can work in a pinch, but *always make sure you have permission to use the content.***

**#3: *Keep an eye on file size.* Large images can bog your page down and make it load slowly. People are impatient, the longer your page takes to load, the more people will abandon your clunky ship in favor of your competitor's speed boat.**

Learn more about [how page load time can impact your bottom line.](#)







# how to get started with content marketing

# 4



I know, I know — all these different types of content you're going to create, buzzwords you'll need to learn (I really hope I haven't used too many myself), and tools you'll need to hone can seem overwhelming.

Committing to content marketing is like being asked, *“Hey, you see that mountain over there? Yeah, that huge one, Denali. Can you climb up there for me?”*

**Daunting right?** You don't even own any rope.

You'd be overwhelmed with questions like:

- When's the best time of year to climb?
- What's the safest route?
- How do I train for a climb?
- What equipment do I need?
- What kinds of food should I bring?
- If attacked by a bear, do I fight back or play dead?

Not to fear. Let this next section be like your copy of *The Scout's Guide to Climbing All Kinds of Stuff. And How to Fight Bears.*

## blogging best practices

Since blogs are the most common way you'll create content, we'll start there. Blogging best practices begin with knowing the appropriate topics to create content around. You have three important factors to consider:

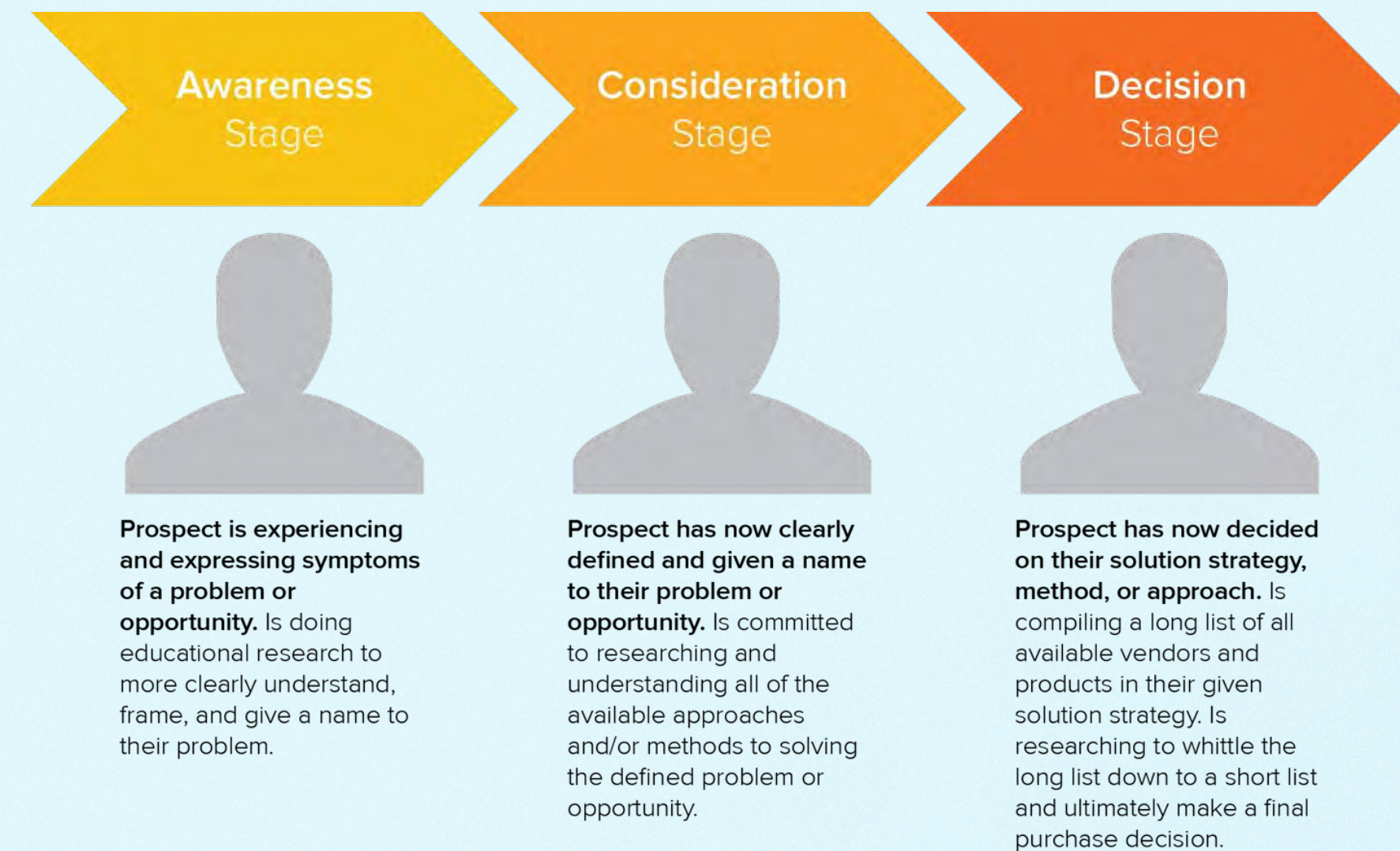
- The buyer's journey
- The topics people research at each stage
- How you can get people from one stage to the next





# the buyer's journey

The buyer's journey describes a series of choices consumers make while researching a purchase decision. It's comprised of three main stages – **awareness, consideration, and decision.**



You can thank [HubSpot](#) for this lovely visual overview.

**First**, people become aware of a problem and begin to research solutions. **Next**, they consider the various solutions to their problems. **Finally**, they consider which vendor to purchase from.

Understanding the buyer's journey and the types of content we can produce at each stage will help us better connect with buyers.





# the right kind of content at each stage

Let's say you run a sporting goods store and have a target audience segment you like to call "Backcountry Bill."

Backcountry Bill is a bit older — maybe mid-twenties on up. Having grown tired of sharing the resort with large crowds and long lines at the lifts, Bill yearns to push into the backcountry and carve untouched lines. But as much as he wants to have fun shreddin' fresh pow, he's got a family at home and wants to stay safe while still getting dangerous.

Now, let's say you want to help Backcountry Bill choose the best equipment. In order to do that, you have to be aware of where Bill is in the buyer's journey. You'll want to create content that will help him out at each stage and get him to move to the next stage.

For the sake of simplicity, I'll focus on blog article topics and premium offers we can create for Bill.



If you haven't guessed it, I'm a Backcountry Bill, myself.





### Awareness Topics for Backcountry Bill

- What Is Backcountry Snowboarding? (blog)
- 7 Reasons to Explore the Backcountry on a Snowboard (blog)
- How to Stay Safe in the Backcountry (blog)
- Where to Explore the Backcountry Near Me (blog)
- Types of Equipment You'll Need for Backcountry Snowboarding (blog)
- Backcountry Snowboarding 101: A Complete Guide (premium content)

The awareness stage is where Bill first becomes *aware* that he even has an interest in the backcountry. Before Bill starts shopping for backcountry supplies, the appeal of the backcountry needs to hit his radar.

**The awareness stage is top-of-the-funnel (TOFU)**, meaning that it can take a lot of time to get people from the awareness stage to making a purchase. It could be as short as a few hours, or who knows, maybe Bill is kind of terrified of the backcountry, and it takes years for him to really decide to get out and explore.

For a snowboard retail shop, creating content that brings the appeal of the backcountry would be fitting for the awareness stage.

### Consideration Topics for Backcountry Bill

- Top 10 Avalanche Beacons (blog)
- How to Choose the Best Backcountry Airbag (blog)
- Split-board vs Snowshoes: Which Is Best? (blog)
- Ultimate Buyer's Guide for Backcountry Equipment (premium content)

Once Bill is convinced that backcountry snowboarding does in fact appeal to him (probably because it's amazing), he'll really start to consider what kinds of gear he'll need.

Which means, you guessed correctly, he's moving into the consideration stage.

**In the consideration stage**, Bill is convinced, *"Yes, the backcountry life is for me!"*

But what kind of gear will he need?

He's already read some articles that mention some of the types of gear he'll need: beacon, probe, shovel, airbag, and other safety equipment. He might have thought he was going to have to buy snowshoes to get out there and throw his board on his back, but then he heard about split-boards.

The consideration stage is where folks do a lot of actual research. He'll closely analyze the different pieces of gear he wants to purchase.

### Decision Topics for Backcountry Bill

- How Much Does a Splitboard Cost? (blog)
- Jones Mountain Twin Splitboard vs. LibTech Splitboard (blog)
- Pros & Cons of the Arc'teryx Voltair 30 Avalanche Airbag (blog)
- Reviews of the Backcountry Access Tracker 2 Avalanche Beacon (blog)
- Best Online Backcountry Stores (blog)
- Where to Buy Backcountry Gear Near Me (blog)
- Split-board Pricing Guide (premium content)

Thanks to your amazing content — go you — Bill is now moving into the decision stage. He has a pretty good idea of some of the equipment he's interested in.

**The decision stage** is where Bill will fine-tune his options by narrowing down which pieces of equipment he's interested in and pick a retailer to purchase from.

If you're the website that is answering Bill's most pressing questions, how do you think he's going to feel about you? For one, he's going to trust you more as an expert on all things backcountry snowboarding.

**Trust is one of the core tenets of content marketing.** The more someone trusts us and turns to us for information, the more they'll want to buy from us.





# where do i start with blogging?

The 17 blog article topics and premium pieces of content I listed for Backcountry Bill are just the tip of the content marketing iceberg. Similar articles can be written for all of your different audience groups, and there are tons more topics we can write about.

So, where do you start? How do you decide which articles to go after first? Which stage of the buyer's journey should you begin with?

Most companies will look at the buyer's journey and start creating content at the awareness stage because they think, "Hey, that's where customers start. Why not start there ourselves?"

**It seems to make sense, but it's the wrong approach for a few reasons.**

**1. First, as mentioned before, people can spend a lot of time in the awareness stage.** Bill may dream of riding the backcountry for years before he finally commits to getting out there.

We may not be able to get Bill through the buyer's journey quickly as other life things might get in the way (My own backcountry adventures got stymied when my kids were born. It's hard to find time to get away for an entire weekend when there are little monsters driving your spouse insane.)

We might spend a lot of time creating awareness content that doesn't lead to sales quickly and makes us think, "Maybe content marketing doesn't work that well."

**2. There's more competition at the top of the funnel.** These topics are softball topics. There are likely lots of publishers that have written about these topics, so shouldering our way to the front of the pack is more difficult.

**3. What comes next?** Say Backcountry Bill reads your blog article on Types of Equipment You'll Need for Backcountry Snowboarding and decides, "Yes, I need an avalanche beacon. But what kind?" Where is he going to go for that info? You're busy writing awareness content while Bill has moved to the consideration stage. Where is he going to get this information?

**If you don't have it, he's going to look elsewhere.** You helped him move from one stage to the next, but Bill has now left you behind for other sources — potentially your competition — with consideration stage content.

**4. It's further away from making money.** When you focus on the top of the funnel, you're creating content that isn't going to lead to sales as quickly.





# So, what do we do?

We start at the bottom of the funnel – at the end of the buyer’s journey – and work our way back.

This way we’ve created content for folks that are much closer to making a purchase. They may have begun their journey elsewhere, but there’s a better chance for us to make a customer out of Bill if we’ve got bottom-of-the-funnel content for him.

Also, your competitors are probably focusing on TOFU content because it’s easier to create and less controversial. **But they don’t answer the tougher questions.** Most companies want to answer those hard questions one-to-one between Bill and a sales rep.

Let your content be a salesman that works 24/7/365 for you.



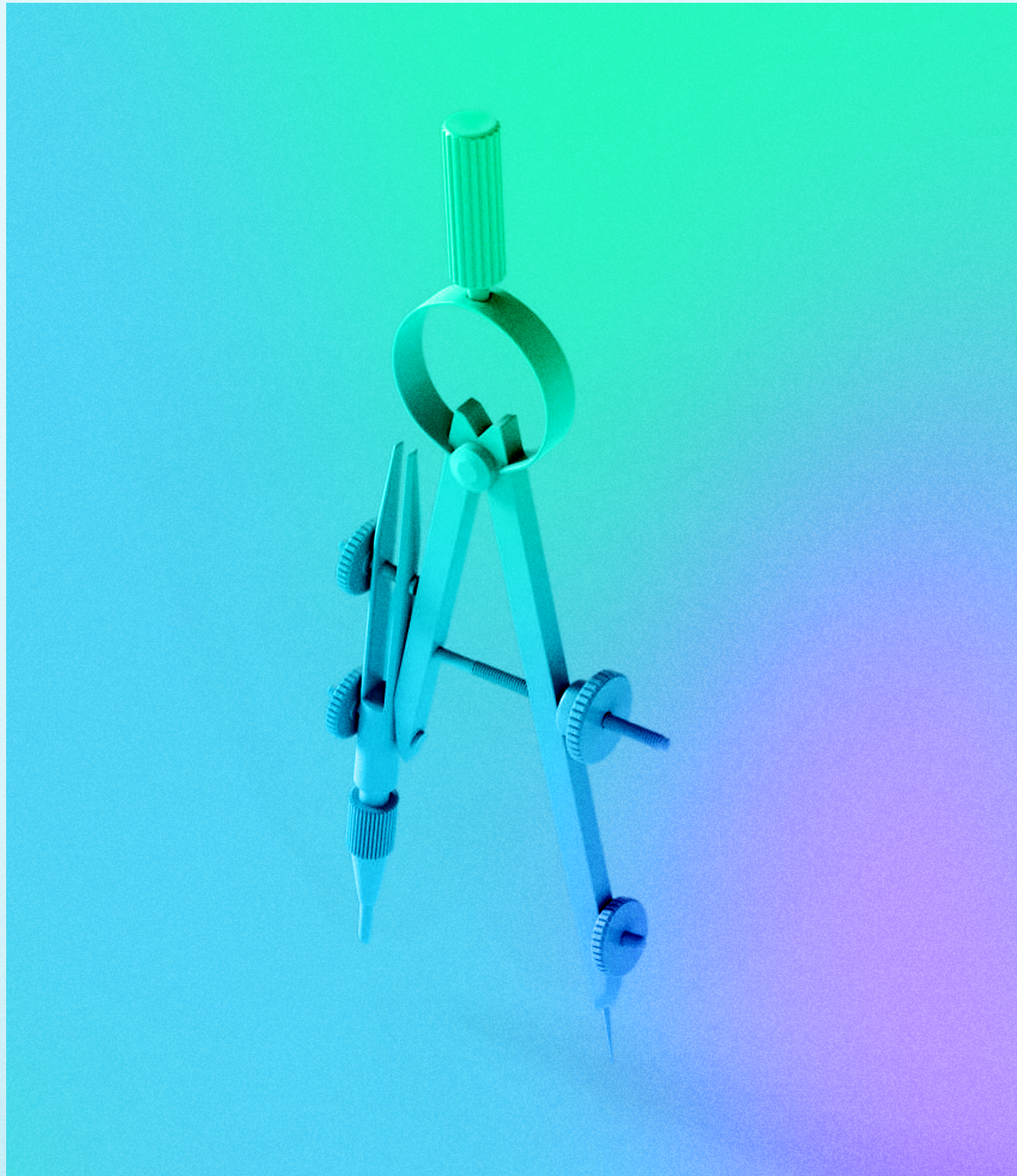




# how to measure the success of content marketing







Alright, so how the heck can you tell if your content marketing efforts are working? First, you're going to want to focus on creating high-quality content.

## success starts with quality content

Make sure you're giving the best possible answer to the questions being posed. If you're not sure of the quality of your own content, enter a search query containing the keywords you hope to rank for and click on the top results and ask yourself:

- What did they write about?
- How thorough were they in their answers?
- Did they leave anything out?

Then head back to the writer's room and commit to creating a piece of content that blows the competition away.





# what should you measure?

What does success mean? What are some of those tangibles you can share with others in your organization to prove your content marketing efforts are working and you're not just writing fantastical stories about dishwashers for an audience that isn't there?

While there are tons of important metrics you can measure, I'm going to list out some of the most important.

Keywords

Traffic

Leads

Sales

and More





# keywords

Before people ever land on your website, review your content, and request to buy your products, the first thing to keep an eye on is your keyword growth.

If you're not on the first page of Google for queries, you're not going to see any traffic. And these days, it's incredibly rare to jump to the first page of search results immediately after publishing.

**“ If you're not on the first page of Google for queries, you're not going to see any traffic.**

Instead, Google first needs to crawl and index your content. Then their algorithm can start to figure out what questions your content best addresses and start to rank your content for related queries.

Often, you'll see your content debut far down the search results, but over a few weeks to months, you'll see them start to snowball their way to the first page (and ideally to the #1 spot).

Once you have some keywords on the first page of Google, then you'll start to see traffic roll in.





# traffic

**Is your content resonating with the audience?** An early sign of success is when people genuinely engage with and read the content you have produced, indicating that it is capturing their interest effectively.

Whether they're finding your content through Google search queries, social media feeds, or within emails, if we're getting an increase in traffic to our website, it means people are viewing our content.

But more than just new eyeballs on the page, you'll want to look at behavior metrics of your visitors.

Are they on the page for a few minutes, or mere seconds? The longer they're on the page, the more likely it is that they're absorbing the information. If they're only there for a few seconds, it's likely there was a disconnect between what they wanted and what you delivered. Or, and this can really hurt, they found your content lacking substance.

**“ An early sign of success is when people genuinely engage with and read the content you have produced, indicating that it is capturing their interest effectively.**

Another traffic metric to review is bounce rates. If people are sticking around reading the page, that's awesome. But what's even better is when people start to explore more of your pages beyond the one they initially landed on.

A bounce is when someone loads one page, and one page only of your website before heading back to the information highway of Google. If you're retaining people's attention and getting them to more pages of your content, Google will see that as a positive sign of the quality of not only your page, but your website as a whole.





# leads

Traffic is great, but converting that traffic to leads is even better. Marketers get excited about increasing traffic, but sales teams rarely care until they have more leads to pursue.

Are the folks coming to your website simply consuming the content and then bailing out to surf the rest of the web, or are they connecting with you by filling out forms on your pages or engaging with chatbots on your site?

If we want to turn anonymous visitors into workable leads, we're going to need premium content offers that give people enough value that they're willing to exchange their contact information to un-gate that content.

# sales

**The ultimate indicator of successful content marketing is increasing revenue.** And if you're using the right tools (which we'll discuss shortly), you can actually backtrack your sales to that initial contact point once you have the data that tells you:

- When did you first get on your customer's radar?
- What content did they end up consuming?
- How did they end up becoming a lead?
- How were they nurtured into closing as a customer?

Knowing these answers can help you fine-tune your marketing and sales funnels.





# other important metrics to review

There are so many factors that go into successful content marketing it can seem a little overwhelming. Not to mention, how do you even measure those things?

How many keywords do you rank for?

How many first page keywords do you rank for?

How many keywords are in the top three positions on Google?

Does your business show up often in the Local 3-Pack?

Do you own any featured snippets?

What kind of engagement are you getting with your content?

Are people sharing it on their social platforms?

Are they linking to it from their websites?

How long are they on a page? (this can indicate quality)

What are the bounce rates for your pages?

What sources are bringing you the most traffic?

Organic

Direct

Social

Paid

Email

Referral

What's your email engagement like?

Anybody opening them?

Are they clicking on your links?





# content marketing reporting resources

Oh man, you're in for a treat — there are *tons* of resources at your disposal. So many in fact, it can be hard to nail down which ones to start with. For me, the easiest place to start is with the **free tools** you have available to you.

## Google Analytics 4

[Google Analytics 4](#) (replaced Universal Analytics July 1, 2023) should be the first place you turn to review your metrics. It's the best tool to learn more about where your audience comes from — both by traffic source and where they actually live.





**While there are lots of awesome metrics to review in the new and improved GA4, I'll list some of the most important briefly:**

These are just some baseline questions you'll want to answer. Dig into Google Analytics and you can get lost for days as you learn more and more about the people visiting your site.

## traffic

- How many visits to your site are you getting?
- How much of that traffic is new vs returning traffic?
- How many average pages are being viewed per session?
- How long is the average session duration?
- Where is the traffic coming from by source?

## audience

- Where does your audience live? Country, state/territory, city?
- What age groups visit your site the most?
- What percentage of men and women visit the site?
- What kinds of devices are they accessing your site from? Mobile, desktop, tablet?
- What browser are they using?

## engagement

- What pages are getting the most traffic?
- How long are people staying on the site?
- How long are they staying on individual pages?
- What is the bounce rate for your site overall?
- What is the bounce rate of individual pages?
- What pages are converting traffic?





# google business profile

If you're a local business (like my imaginary snowboard shop), [Google Business Profile](#) (formerly known as [Google My Business](#)) is one of the most important tools you can use. Have you ever done a search for a specific local business or entered a query containing "near me" like "copier companies near me"?

If so, then you've probably encountered the "Local 3-Pack" listings above the organic content and/or a knowledge card off to the side with important details about the local business you just looked up.

Here's my article on [Google Business Profile Business best practices](#), if you're unfamiliar with it. If you are familiar with it, what should you be measuring?

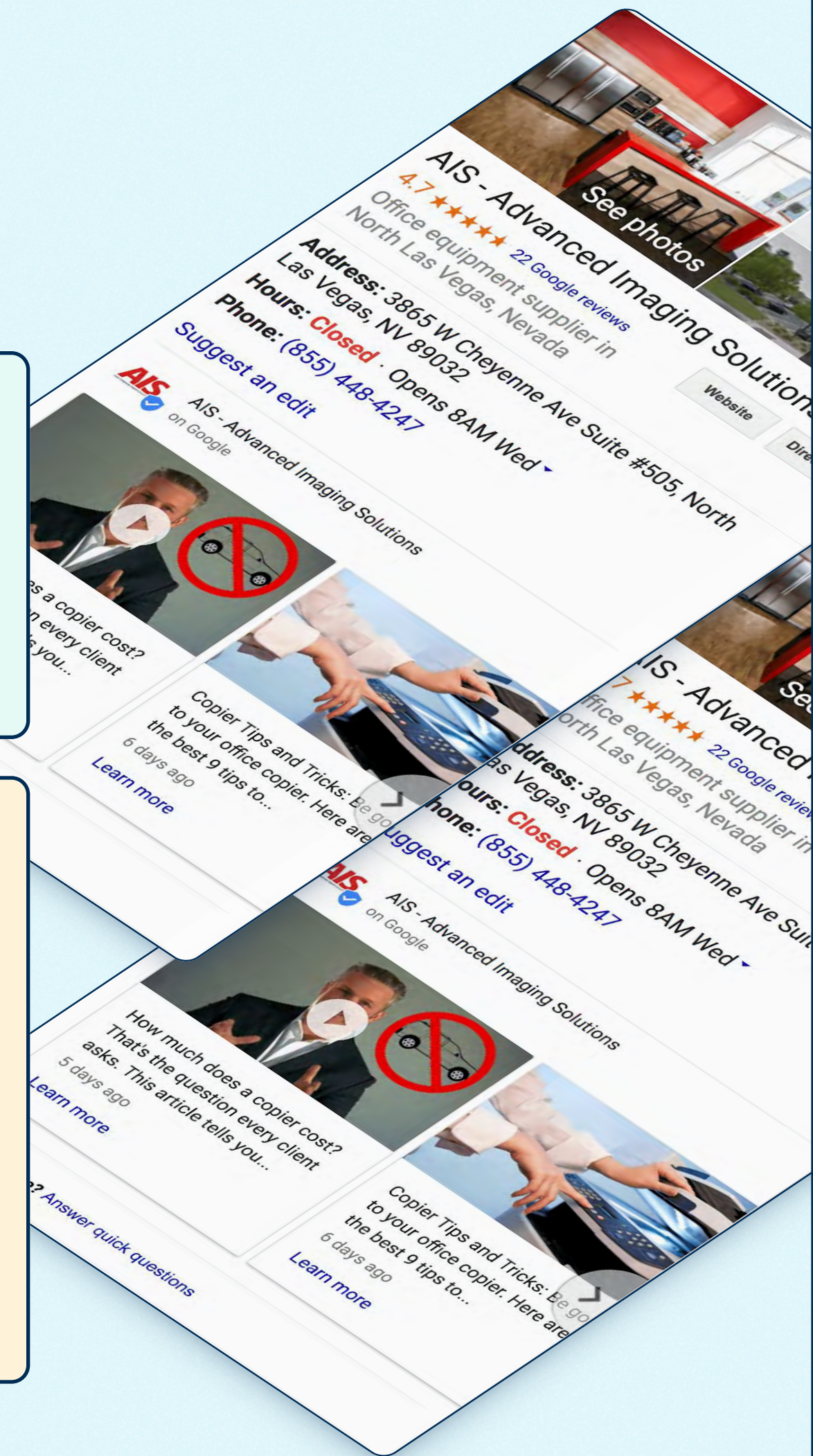
## What to Look at in Google Business Profile

### How did people find your site?

- Direct searches of your business name?
- Discovery by searching your business type or services — those "near me" searches?
- Through a Google Maps search?

### What actions did they take after viewing your knowledge card?

- Visit your website?
- Call you?
- Did they view your photos on your card?
- Did they add their own photo? (Yeah, they can do that, too.)
- Request directions?
- Did they leave a review?
- Did they ask a question?
- Did they view or click on a post, offer, or event you listed?

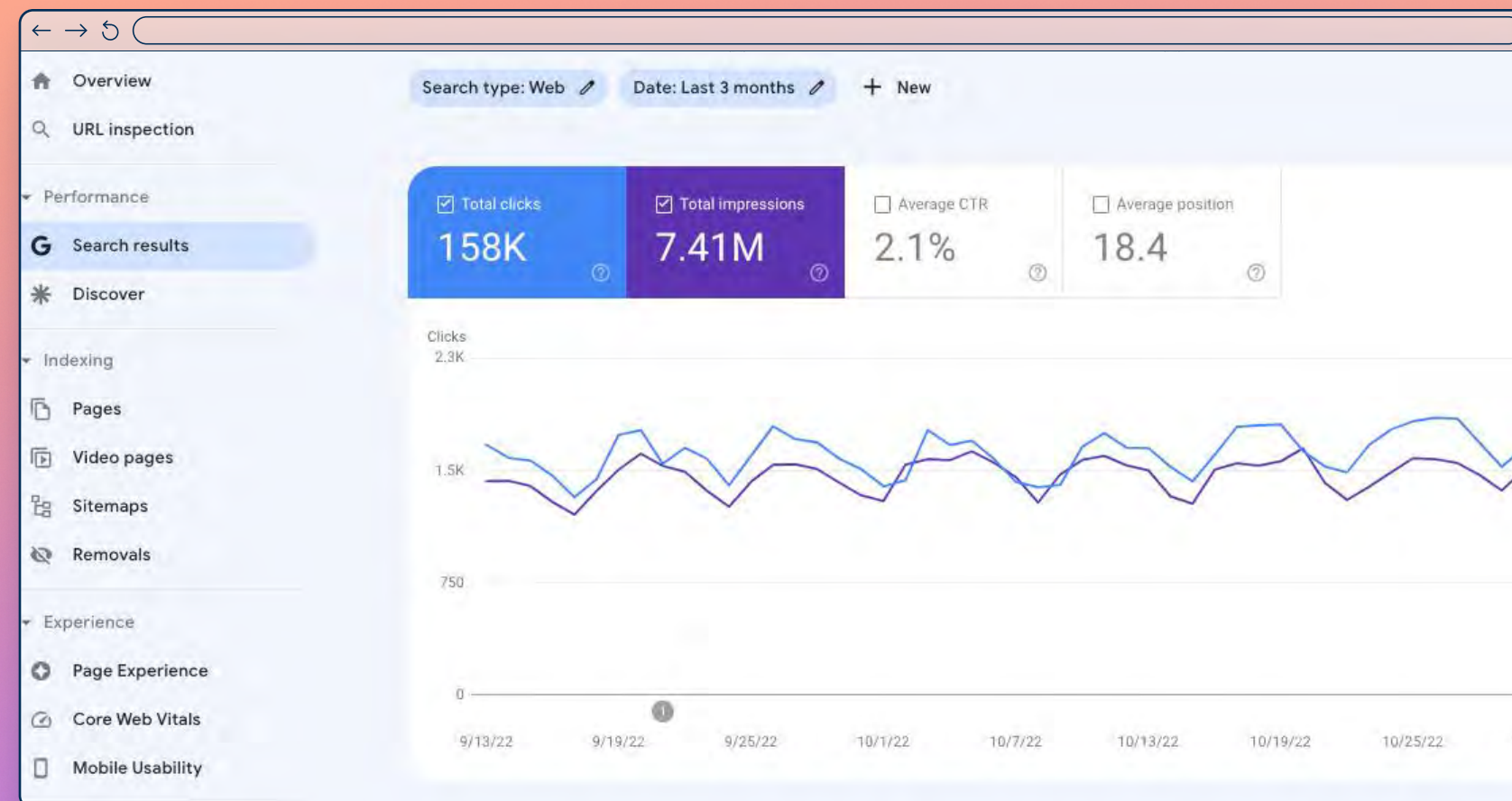




# google search console

Google Search Console (GSC) is another amazing free tool every content marketer should be familiar with. If you want a behind the scenes look at how Google views, indexes, and ranks your site, this is the tool you need to dive into.

You can even submit a sitemap so Google can better crawl your website.



**Here are some of the invaluable insights you can learn from GSC:**

- What are the exact keywords people have entered in a Google search query that Google has you indexed for in their top 100 search results (impressions)?
- What position do you hold on average for these keywords?
- How many clicks have you received from those keywords?
- What's your average Click Through Rate (CTR) for those keywords (how often do people search those terms and then choose your result?)
- Which pages get the most impressions and clicks?
- Does your site have any broken links?
- Does your site have any pages Google's bots are not able/allowed to crawl?
- What anchor text do other websites use to link to your site?
- What external websites do you link to from your own site?
- What internal pages do you link to the most?
- Are there any issues with the mobile version of your website?
- Does your site pass Google's new Core Web Vitals reports?





# YouTube analytics

If it wasn't for YouTube, I wouldn't be sitting here right now talking to you about YouTube Analytics. Seriously, I got my first content marketing job based off of a [snowboard documentary](#) I shot, starred in, edited, and published to YouTube:

*Content marketing in action – watch out, Scorsese!*

The company recognized the value in video marketing and wanted more than just a writer for producing content.

Hopefully, your company also sees the value in video marketing. But, you may be wondering, “What does successful video marketing look like? What should I be measuring?”

While there are freemium and paid tools out there like [Vidyard](#), [Wistia](#), [Vimeo](#), and more, we'll focus on [YouTube Analytics](#), since it's free and accessible.

**Here are the metrics you'll have access to once you start using YouTube to publish videos:**

- How many views do your videos have?
- How many people subscribe to your channel?
- What is your subscriber rate over time?
- How much watch time do your videos have?
- Are people replaying your videos or sections of them?
- What sections of your video are people leaving?
- What sources drive traffic?
- What demographics is your audience composed of?
- What are people saying in the comments section?
- What's the number of likes and dislikes on your videos?
- What keywords do your videos rank for?





# HubSpot

HubSpot is the only paid tool I'm putting on this list since it's one we use ourselves and encourage most of our clients to use. HubSpot is a tool that is useful at all stages of the buyer's journey and sales funnel.

From its content management system (CMS) where you can create blog articles and social media posts, to the customer relationship management (CRM) system, where you can capture and nurture leads, HubSpot is hands-down one of the best marketing automation platforms on the market.

And the reporting options are comprehensive, to say the least...

The vast majority of metrics you can glean from Google Analytics you can also get on HubSpot – although there are some really important ones like demographics, device types, and locations of users that you can't.

HubSpot is such a large and all-encompassing tool, that it would take forever to list everything it can do. If you want to learn more, I highly recommend reading our [guide on everything you need to know about HubSpot](#).







# content marketing vs. ppc (pay-per-click)





If content marketing is a full-on expedition up Denali, then pay-per-click (PPC) is renting a helicopter for a quick trip to the summit.

The view from the top is the same, but one was earned through solid work and effort, and the other was paid for.

(See how I circled back to that analogy from over ~4,000 words ago?)

## effort

With both content marketing and PPC, we want our content to appear on the first page of a search, but each takes a different path.

With content marketing, you create the best answer to a given search — scaling the mountain by hand.

With PPC, you skate past all that pesky hiking and climbing by booking a chopper. **PPC takes significantly less time to enact.**

## impact

At first, it might sound appealing to just buy a ticket. Why not skip all the mosquitos, sharp rocks, and hand-dug latrines for a trip you can do in your house slippers?

With PPC, you have to pay for each heli-ride back up. And helicopters are a lot more expensive than a tent, camping gear, and rope.

**Unlike PPC, each trek back to the top with content marketing gets easier.** As you climb, you're widening the path, packing the trail, and building stairs.

**Content marketing has true staying power.** I've written articles several years ago that you can still find at the top of a search engine result.

PPC results end as soon as you stop bidding on keywords.





# engagement

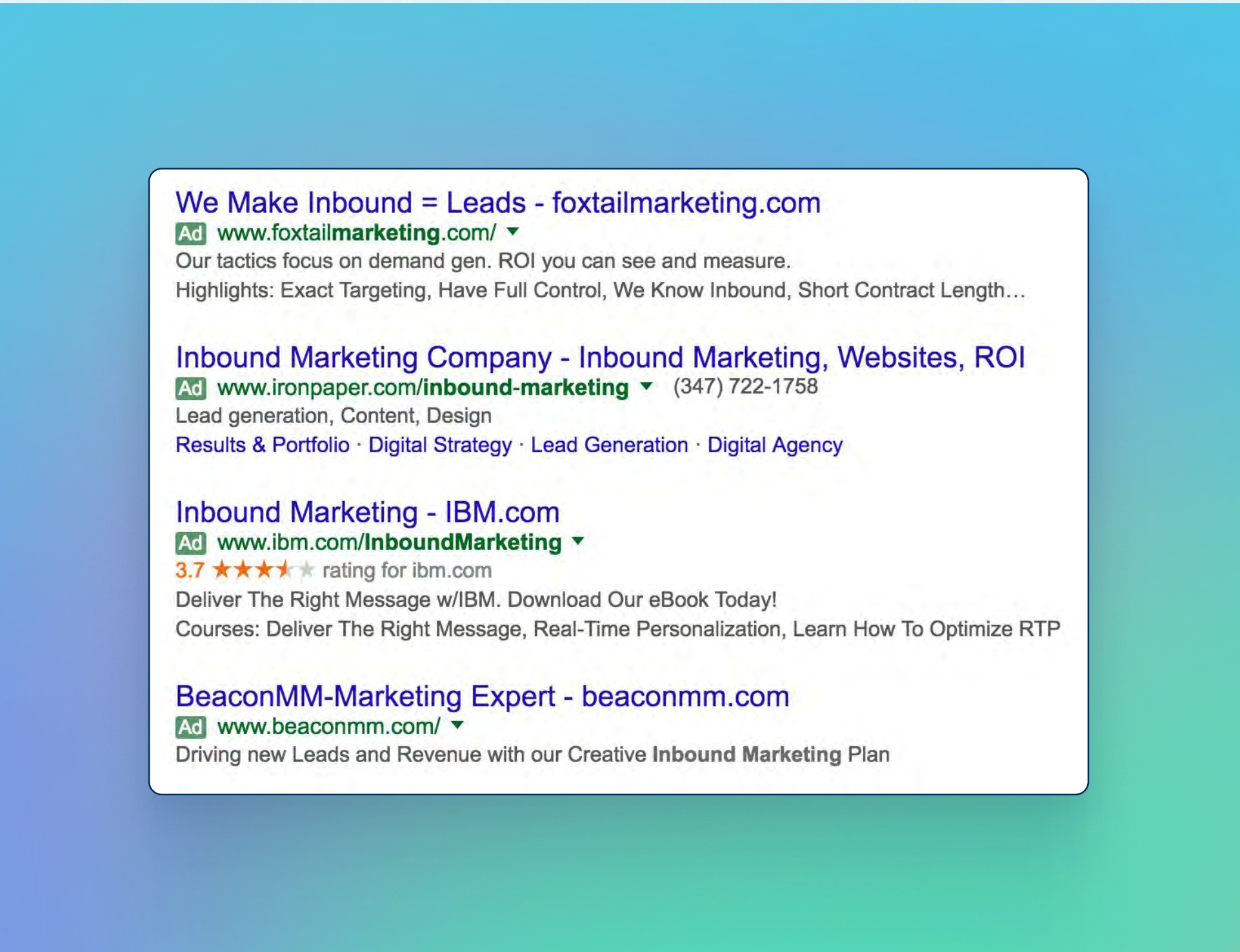
Just as people are more likely to enjoy a story about a group of adventurers braving the Alaskan wilderness than the one about a guy who paid for a sweet Instagram opportunity, people click organic search results far more often than they do ads.

An average click-through-rate for Google Ads is about 2%.

On the other hand, the average CTR for the top organic search results is about 40%, and the seventh-seeded result's average is 2.2%.

Overwhelmingly, **people are drawn to organic results far more than the ads appearing above them.**

Ask yourself: **when was the last time I clicked on an ad?**



The screenshot displays three search results for 'Inbound Marketing' on a search engine. Each result includes a title, a URL with an 'Ad' label, a brief description, and a list of services or products. The first result is from foxtailmarketing.com, the second from ironpaper.com, and the third from ibm.com. The third result also features a 3.7 star rating.

- We Make Inbound = Leads - foxtailmarketing.com**  
Ad [www.foxtailmarketing.com/](http://www.foxtailmarketing.com/) ▼  
Our tactics focus on demand gen. ROI you can see and measure.  
Highlights: Exact Targeting, Have Full Control, We Know Inbound, Short Contract Length...
- Inbound Marketing Company - Inbound Marketing, Websites, ROI**  
Ad [www.ironpaper.com/inbound-marketing](http://www.ironpaper.com/inbound-marketing) ▼ (347) 722-1758  
Lead generation, Content, Design  
Results & Portfolio · Digital Strategy · Lead Generation · Digital Agency
- Inbound Marketing - IBM.com**  
Ad [www.ibm.com/InboundMarketing](http://www.ibm.com/InboundMarketing) ▼  
3.7 ★★★★★ rating for ibm.com  
Deliver The Right Message w/IBM. Download Our eBook Today!  
Courses: Deliver The Right Message, Real-Time Personalization, Learn How To Optimize RTP
- BeaconMM-Marketing Expert - beaconmm.com**  
Ad [www.beaconmm.com/](http://www.beaconmm.com/) ▼  
Driving new Leads and Revenue with our Creative Inbound Marketing Plan





# which has a higher ROI?

One of the leading questions in the PPC vs. content marketing debate is – **which has a higher return on investment?**

This is a tough question to answer because, in all honesty, it really depends on the quality of the content you're producing.

If you're doing content marketing poorly, you're not going to make it to the first page, which means you're not going to get much of an increase in traffic, leads, and sales.

If you're doing PPC poorly, you might still drive traffic to your site, but if you don't have strong lead-capturing and nurturing practices in place, you're going to blow through your budget without any conversions or sales.

**When both are done right, PPC has short-term ROI and content marketing has a long-term ROI.**





# can PPC and content marketing work together?

This brings us to an important question — **can content marketing be augmented to support PPC?**

Yes, it absolutely can.

One of the biggest mistakes I see people make with PPC is that they have absolutely terrible landing pages. They put all their effort into keyword research and eye-catching headlines, but they don't really consider the experience the consumer is in for.

What landing pages are you driving traffic to with your PPC campaigns? Are you even driving traffic to landing pages or are you just sending people to your homepage and leave them to navigate themselves?

**The least you could do is give them a map and an itinerary.**

If you're following content marketing best practices, you can use your high-performing landing pages to give visitors a quality experience. Furthermore, if you've developed fleshed out email workflows, you've got a nurturing campaign already set in place to help buyers through the buyer's journey.

From there, the benefits of content marketing are endless.







**if you need  
help with  
content  
marketing**

**7**



# learn from media junction

Maybe you're a true DIY trailblazer that doesn't need a guide up the mountain but needs some advice for getting started. We've got tons of that. We publish several articles a month covering a wide range of topics to ensure content marketers and business leaders are armed with the knowledge they need to be successful in a digital world.

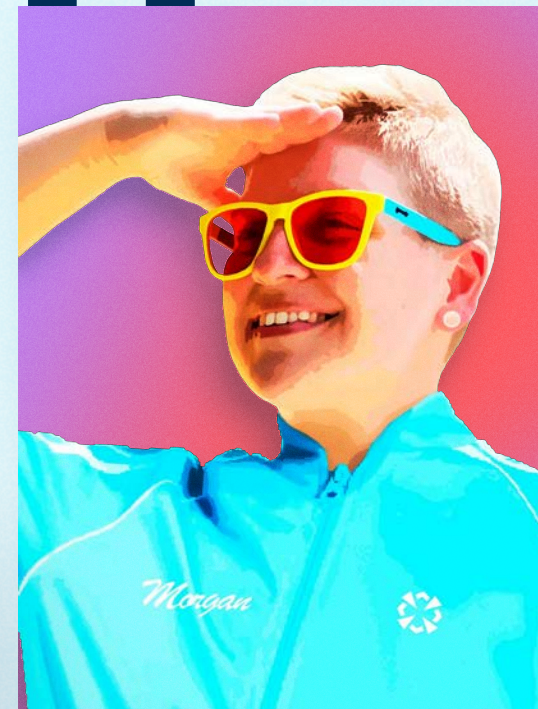
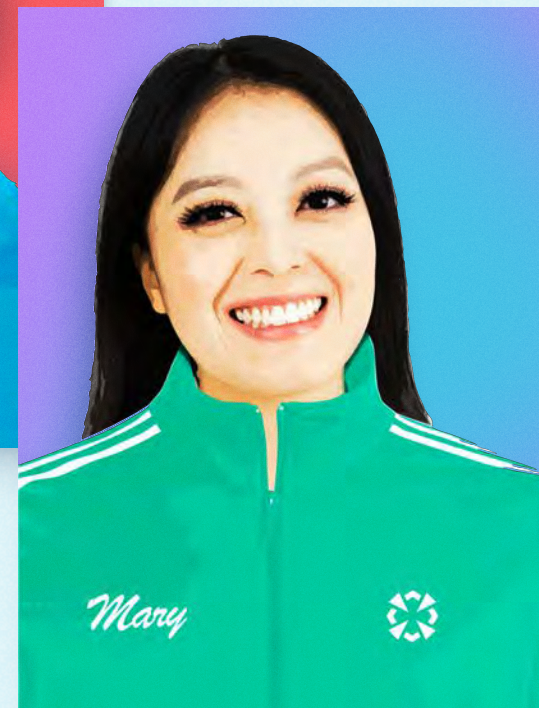
Everything you need to know to get started with content marketing, improve your processes, and excel in today's digital world can be found on our blog.

With so much free information at your disposal, it should be a no-brainer to give it a try yourself, right? Why would you ever need to pay for help?





# train with media junction



Unfortunately, for every content marketing pioneer we meet along the path, we see dozens more young, bright, ambitious explorers whose thrilling adventures turn tragic from lack of experience and guidance.

Yes, we have tons of free information at your disposal. But with so much information, it can feel like drinking from a firehose. Where do you even begin – other than with the blog topics I laid out for you above? How can you expertly apply these principles and methodologies to your business?

**Here at Media Junction, we offer services in four major areas:**

- [Website Redesign](#)
- [Content & Inbound Marketing](#)
- [HubSpot Services](#)
- [RevOps](#)

Our services are like having your own personal team of sherpas guide you in your journey. We've helped dozens of companies reach the summit.

When you work with our team, it's like having someone tailor-make all your climbing gear for you. Then, we'll show you how to use it, give you a compass, draw you a customized map of the easiest path up for your hiking style, and walk with you every step of the way.

