
The Maker Files

10 TYPES OF CONTENT MAKERS LOVE



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We Move People



Makers Love Content

Content naturally derives from a community of like-minded people and brands with the same goals. Makers, DIYers, and crafters are inherently community driven. They have to be. Most makers don't have access to traditional advertising or a broad network of manufacturers or connections. Therefore, online maker communities are created around content that these creative individuals create, utilize, and share.

Content can be anything from a how-to book to an inspiring Instagram post to a podcast discussing methods with a knowledgeable industry veteran. The word "content" encompasses so many things nowadays: patterns, templates, step-by-step guides or how-tos, blog posts, stories about the journey of other creative types, or even product demos to show the correct use and versatility of a product. Any way you can package your expertise for someone else to learn from: that's what content really is.

In this e-book, you'll find a detailed list with ten of the most popular types of content that makers love to consume, as well as some hints as to how your brand can make your own great content that attracts those passionate makers. You can refer back to our list when you're planning your content calendar or brainstorming for fresh, new content ideas. Remember, your brand doesn't have to provide every type of content, you just need quality content that genuinely adds value to a maker's life and process. Let's get started.



Meet Valerie Mayen





10 Facebook Groups and Discussions

Facebook groups are a vital place where makers get support from fellow makers. Whether it's in regard to ideation, the process, or even the finishing touches, makers have found a sense of community on Facebook and, specifically, within Facebook Groups. Creating a Facebook Group can ultimately be the most effective way to bring a large number of people to a single platform to share information and to get support related to your industry or segment. The content that then resides on a Facebook Group can ultimately help makers get questions answered, problems fixed, or ideas inspired.

"I belong to a lot of Facebook groups and online communities and that's where I learn from other people's mistakes in order to avoid running into problems. I always put out my mistakes if I'm explaining how to do something or answering questions, too. I get questions daily about how to make armor from friends and family because they're curious."

- Elyse Ohryn, Space Cat Senpai Cosplay

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"I'm in a Facebook group where we share our challenges and ideas and encourage one another."

-Theresa Morrow, Thread + Love

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"The use of FB Groups is constantly increasing by companies, clubs, organizations and individuals. However, many inexperienced Facebook users and internet marketers can be demoralized in an attempt to build a group or a social community via in-person networking as it requires a great deal of time and efforts."

09 *Email Subscriptions & Newsletters*

When it comes to learning more about their craft, industry news, or new product releases and reviews, makers still like to subscribe to email subscriptions or newsletters. The unique thing about a newsletter is that it allows for customization on the maker's end. They can usually get as much or as little as they want from a newsletter. They can seek out a niched newsletter or they can sometimes "create" their own custom one by selecting which topics they want to receive notifications from. When creating your own email newsletter, consider the options you can offer your subscribers in terms of the amount or type of information you include.

In addition to great, individualized content, newsletters also keep the line of communication open between the maker and your brand. Makers will notice personal touches, and in turn, your brand gets to directly reach your consumers with the most important and relevant information you want to share.

"craftbeer.com is great. I subscribe to a lot of emails and they all come to me. I read the parts that I think are relevant."

Ali Hovan, HiHo Brewing Company



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from HiHO Brewing Company





08 *Material Reviews*

Material reviews are a vital piece of content that almost every maker uses at one point or another. The quality of a maker's product is of the utmost importance: it's what sets them apart from mass-produced products. So in turn, the quality and price of tools and materials used in the creation phase are just as important. And once again, community is key. Makers trust the opinions of their peers, and they actively seek out reviews when it comes to purchasing tools and materials.

If you pay attention to the features reviewers love or are missing, you can get great insights as to how to innovate your products or develop new and better ones. Your brand can also discover whether it needs to do a better job of promoting a certain use or technique along with the product to ensure a good customer experience. By delighting your customers with a great product and experience with your brand, you'll earn reviews that influence the buying decisions of potential customers.

"I am always interested in price points because I want to make the most profit I possibly can. So I spend a lot of time researching pillow inserts, for instance. I wanted to make sure that I was using a pillow insert that was made in the United States, that's kind of important to me."

- Linda Lackey, Linda's Other Life Sewn Goods

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"When I consider new materials, the first thing I do is I always read reviews. I have to make sure that everyone who bought that particular brand thought it was good. I trust what other people say based on their experience."

-Elyse Ohryn, Space Cat Senpai Cosplay

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*** To learn what "quality" might mean to different makers, [click here](#) to view our blog post on perceived quality.**

07 Books & Magazines

All makers and DIYers learn differently. Some are audio learners, some are visual learners, and some are a mixture of both. Going to the local library or bookstore to get a book on everything you need to create something extraordinary holds a certain appeal for many makers. A book is tangible, and its content is always within reach.

Magazines are still thriving to this day because of their niche appeal, too. There's a magazine out there for everything. Soft Dolls & Animals, a publication for cloth doll, stuffed animal, and teddy bear makers. — yeah, that's a thing. Emu Today, a magazine for emu enthusiasts —yeah, that's real too. Don't believe us? [Check these out!](#)

If you're looking to reach a maker niche, find out what they read, then consider if your brand can get involved in one way or another.

"Initially there was a lot of research involved. There was reading books. I still read things like The Brewer's Bible and trade magazines. As the years have progressed, you start to learn what kind of hops do what, what grain does what, how long to boil, how long to ferment, types of yeast, all the different components of the beer."

- Robert Hernandez, Aqueduct Brewing
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"Being part of the Brewers Association, we get New Brewer's Magazine, which talks about everything from trends to quality control. All I do is read and think and do beer stuff. That's always on my mind. It's a job that's not really a job. It's not like I am forcing myself to: I want to. I strive to learn more and gain more knowledge on beer and brewing."

- Jon Hovan, HiHo Brewing Co.
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"I get books out of the library. I recently wanted to learn a little more about how you create a pattern that repeats over a large space. I went to the library and got books on pattern design and that actually works really well for me. I think having something printed that I can hold and read, it's easier for me to learn that way. Just reading through those books and having my sketchbook right there and making that practice of working with that repeating pattern."

- Susan Hazel Rich, Hazelmade



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from Hazelmade**



"I had my own business for seven years. I started when I was 13, and I would sell at craft shows and to friends, just minimally. I started on Etsy when I was 13, and it grew from there. A year and a half ago I decided to take a serious route and have this product that I was really passionate about. So I rebranded, changed my name, change the whole brand, and introduced skyline silhouette products and just three skylines. I tested it on Etsy, and from there it showed success, so I scaled up 900 percent within three months."

- Anne Skoch, Anne Cate Accessory Boutique



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from Anne Cate

06 Etsy Listings

Etsy is the go-to marketplace for today's makers to sell their wares. It's a clean, easily navigable site that allows makers to reach customers all over the world. While you may not realize it at first," to the beginning of this sentence.. Etsy is filled with content. A maker must have colorful and detailed product and shop descriptions as well as professional and attractive photos to accompany each product. A great looking Etsy page can make a world of difference when it comes to the success of a DIYer's business. A maker just starting out can pull a lot of inspiration from the top Etsy sellers and how they're photographing their products and reaching their customers through top-notch, approachable descriptions.

Your brand can get a great idea of trends in your target maker industries by sifting through Etsy listings. You can tell what matters most to makers by reading their shop descriptions, missions, and values. All that information from Etsy can help you identify what problems your maker audience is trying to solve, as well as what types of language, messages, and visuals they respond to.

"I started making things and people started to want to buy them. I thought if I make more of them, then more people will want to buy them. So I started an Etsy shop in the fall of 2012. My first sale took me by surprise, someone I don't even know from another state wants to buy this table runner? So I started doing more and more. I have expanded beyond my wildest dreams. What I am doing now is not at all what I started off doing. It just kind of was following what people want to buy and seeing what the market was good for."

- Linda Lackey, Linda's Other Life Sewn Goods

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05 Podcasts

Podcasts have grown in popularity over the last few years. Like books-on-tape, podcasts allow makers to listen and learn more about their craft and industry anytime and anywhere, like on their way to their full-time job or on the beach in Florida. The content is most often free and attainable to anyone with a smartphone or computer. Podcasts allow makers to gain insight into their craft from industry experts to newbies, and everywhere in between.

A podcast is a great type of content that allows your brand to share your knowledge and form trusting relationships with your maker audience. Building a library of resources through a podcast also helps establish your brand as an expert in your field. Perhaps best of all, podcasts are relatively inexpensive and easy to produce and share.

"I'm not good at reading a bunch of stuff and really absorbing it. I have to listen to podcasts or go to discussion groups to get it. It makes me feel better when I hear other people's stories."

-Sarah Harste, Sarah Harste Weavings

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"We listen to a lot of podcasts. One of our favorite ones was 'How I Built This.' Starting a business is not easy. It is really encouraging to listen to the stories of other businesses because they put it all out there for you."

- Jackie Wachter, FOUNT Leather

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04 Forums & Chat Rooms

Most would believe that social media has all but eclipsed the concept of forums and chat rooms. But in reality, for niche maker groups, forums and chat rooms can be the perfect place to get a question answered. Forums can especially come in handy for auto DIYers working on older cars or makers looking for blueprints or tutorials.

One thing to note: for a brand to enter a forum or chat room, your posts must be incredibly genuine and helpful. Only start truly insightful and interesting threads, and provide answers to questions in a way that doesn't come across like a sales pitch. Forum and chat room users can smell spam from miles away, and they can be hostile toward it when it appears. An alternative might be to encourage your brand supporters to share their fan-made love of your brand on forums and chat rooms on their own.

"Web forums used to be a really big deal, even though they've kind of died off over the past few years. But if you're working on anything older, there's still really fantastic information out there. The thing is cars, for the most part, are really, really similar creatures, so you can find a similar procedure on something else."

-Cameron VanDerHorst, Automotive DIYer and Podcaster
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"I use a Telecaster forum where people just post all kinds of information, like CAD drawings of perfect replicas of Fender shapes, or videos of themselves making guitars so I can learn how to do some particular process."

-David Lackey, Lackey Road Guitars
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03 *Opinions and Advice from Industry Experts and Entrepreneurs*


Sometimes there's no greater source of information than that straight from the mouths of fellow entrepreneurs and industry experts. People who have been crafting and DIYing for years have a wealth of knowledge that is invaluable to other makers. By connecting with other makers and industry experts, in person or online, they can begin to create a real network of support and content, curating skills, advice, and knowledge along the way.

If you have industry expertise to share (and we're willing to bet you do), the key is to make it easily accessible to the makers who need it. There are many ways to go about connecting with the makers who need your advice. Think of your company's blog as the most direct outlet for your expertise and advice: your backlog of quality, informative blog posts will appear in maker's online searches, and can become a trusted companion they turn to for tips and tricks.

However, there are plenty of other ways to share your expertise, too, from a customer service phone line to things like ebooks and maker events and workshops. Yes, your company can become as trusted a partner as a real-life mentor when you can help makers overcome their challenges.

"My grandfather died when I was a year and half and, for me, he's a part of this. I feel like he would be proud of it. I worked for my uncle's small family business growing up, and he was a maker. Part of the reason I'm doing this is because of him. My mother is an amazing woman, and it wasn't until later in life she started painting and putting things up around the house. Then she saw me go to shows and do things in the public eye, and she started asking questions. I pushed her a little and said, "Let's get you into something." It doesn't have to be something big where you're paying \$300 for a space, you can just get your stuff in front of somebody. It's taking that step and being uncomfortable with everything you're doing but trusting your process. Ultimately, people are going to be receptive to it. That's the Maker Movement; that uncomfortable nature and unlocking creative limitations."

-Craig A., Lifetime Carpenter
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"I connect with other woodworkers through the Buckeye Woodworkers and Woodturners Club. It's once a month and there are generally about 50 people there, men and women. Some of them are novices, but there's a handful of them that are very skilled and started woodturning when it really took off back in the 60s. I've actually cultivated really good friendships through that."

- Jason Horinger, Birchwood Supply, Co.



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"It's so much easier now to DIY because any provider you can think of, if they made more than one of the car you're working on, somebody has done what you have to do, and they've made a YouTube video about it."

- Cameron VanDerHorst, Automotive DIYer and Podcaster



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02 *How-To YouTube Videos & Online Tutorials*

There are many learning methods and types of content for makers to consume in order to hone their skills. YouTube videos and online tutorials in general are excellent resources for visual learners.

Almost every maker we've spoken with has said they utilize YouTube or online tutorials in some way or another to learn or solve a problem in regard to their business. It's a quick and easy way to get a question answered or learn a new method or skill in relation to their craft.

We all know that video is taking over the digital spaces in our lives. That said, there's a whole spectrum of video content your brand can share to catch a maker's attention: from quick and easy native social media videos to creatively produced tutorials or walkthroughs. The possibilities are wide open for what a video can be, but we know for sure that your messages can be made much more valuable and memorable by showing them visually, through video, not just telling.

"Before the time of YouTube videos was when I got started, so it wasn't until now that I've started to really go online to teach myself more and to learn more and watch videos on new techniques. It didn't exist when I started, and I can't read a pattern now to save my soul, so thank goodness for YouTube. I'll watch tutorials when something's not working or I'm trying to figure out something new. I go to YouTube and figure out from there. I'm such a visual person that I have to see it be done for it to click in my head. Reading instructions doesn't make much sense to me."

-Tori Tedesco, Little Birdie Design Studio

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"I have a pile of dolls that didn't quite come out right. Usually I can catch issues early enough in the process that not a whole doll is ruined. But reaching out to other doll makers helps with challenges, and if I have a problem, I often look on YouTube for a tutorial for it. I accept it as part of the process."

-Theresa Morrow, Thread + Love

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01 Instagram Accounts & Posts

Instagram has become the go-to social media platform for content for makers and crafters alike. With nearly 700 million active users as of May 2017, it has quickly become one of the most used social media sites in the world. It's not difficult to figure out why the app is so popular with the maker community: the easy-to-use platform allows users to quickly edit photos and videos with various effects and filters, fill in captions, and connect with both their community and customers.

Your brand's Instagram account is a major touchpoint for makers: the images you have to share (accompanied by your stories and messages) represent your style and values — things that makers are looking to connect with. On Instagram, you can meet makers where they are with impactful images that can drive interactions, awareness, and even purchases.

"Instagram draws in more business than a Google search online. I love being active on [this] platform because it offers a great opportunity to interact with customers as well as express the key elements of my business."


-Anne Skoch, Anne Cate Accessory Boutique
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"Instagram has been a huge tool for us as a business. Social media is amazing as free marketing. We are able to show a behind-the-scenes look at our brand on Instagram (and Facebook), whether it's through the photos, the captions, the videos. It has been really fun for us to reach a much wider audience through these platforms. I would definitely say without Instagram (or Facebook), I don't think we really would have been able to launch the brand."

-Phillip Wachter, FOUNT Leather
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"Now I find my strongest platform is Instagram. I think for a lot of artists it is the strongest because it's all image based, and you can show your product and connect with other makers pretty easily as well as with your audience and your buyers."

-Theresa Morrow, Thread + Love
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"Instagram took me a really long time, I didn't want to do Instagram, I was really resistant to it. [Eventually] I did it on a whim, because there were some other artists that I really admire that I wanted to kind of follow. When I saw what a great platform it is for artists and for sharing and connecting with other people, I was like "Oh!" So now I have an Instagram account and I'm probably most active on Instagram of all places. It's been really fun because I can really interact with people through the work process. I post a lot of in-progress stuff so people get to see how things come together. I think people like that. I think people like to see how something starts and how something ends."

- Clara Manfredi, Emporium of Wonders



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from Clara Manfredi



What Types of Content Should Your Brand Create?

Like we mentioned at the beginning of this list, your brand doesn't have to offer every single type of content that exists in order to attract makers. But how should you decide what content you should provide?

The most important step in determining (or overhauling) your company's content strategy is really getting to know the makers you're trying to reach: their process, their pain points, where they get information, what kind of time they have to spend, and what inspires their passion to keep experimenting with new techniques and products. There's plenty of research to be done to determine these characteristics of your target maker audience, online or in the field. Makers love what they do, and therefore they love to talk about how they do it — so sometimes, the easiest way to learn what types of content to make (and what topics to cover in that content) is to simply ask. If you can find where your target audience is already looking for content, that's a great place to start.

Here at ATA, we're constantly talking to makers of all kinds. We've done a lot of research into many maker categories and niches through our interview series *The Maker Files*. Check out our series to read the stories of real makers and learn which of their needs your brand's expertise can help solve through your content offerings. By really listening to and understanding makers, the things your company has to say can make a big difference in their world.



We invite you to check out *The Maker Files* on our website for a series of profiles of the most passionate makers we've met.

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