

Content Marketing Made Simple

What is Content Marketing?

While you've likely heard plenty about why your business should embrace content marketing and how your business can practice content marketing, you might not have a clear understanding of what it is exactly or what it can do for you.

That's what we'll cover here in this eBook. Also called **inbound marketing**, content marketing is the information you put out there: blog posts, newsletters, social media posts, white papers, videos, pictures, infographics, webinars, podcasts, eBooks, SlideShare presentations plus more that has not yet been invented.

The most important distinction between content marketing and traditional marketing is the value it offers your target audience. Traditional marketing's job was to capture attention and tell you about something. One of the most basic principles of content marketing is to **educate**—not to sell. This concept may seem counterproductive to selling but it's a proven sales technique!

Content marketing works by generating more interest in your company by showcasing your knowledge and establishing your credibility as an expert. Just think of yourself and your employees as teachers. That means the content you create should seek to inform your audience and gain their trust first.

This goes for both B2C and B2B companies. It's also important to recognize that consumers are in the driver's seat. They choose what brands they engage with so advertisers need to create appealing ideas and content that works across multiple media platforms.

By publishing helpful information, it's there online at the ready whenever someone starts to research and buy. It works because it is presented to a consumer via a search at the very point they are in the buying process. The goal is to stay on the consumer radar with consistent helpful content and ultimately you get more website traffic, customers and sales.

How have your buying habits changed?

Now think about how **you** shop. When you are buying a new product, do you call the company and ask them to mail you a brochure? Do you approach a salesman and ask him to sell you a product? Do you write down the phone number from a TV commercial

and call the next day during business hours? Do you wait for a cold call? What's the first thing you do?

If you're like most people, you research a problem, need, solution or purchase in a search engine first. (Search engines like Google, Yahoo and Bing). You type what you're looking for in that search bar.

Is this the way you shopped 10 years ago? If you have changed the way you approach a purchase, do you think others have made this shift?

The Sales Funnel

The sales funnel is just a fancy phrase that refers to the steps people take before they make a purchase. These days, an average of 70% of the sales funnel happens before the prospect ever speaks to a company representative. Are these people big brochure readers? Not likely. They are searching for information online prior to making a purchase just like you do. And the websites that supply the information are the most likely to get the business.

A super simplified sales funnel for a service oriented business might look something like this:



That call to action could be a form that offers a quick quote, a contact button that goes to a form, a phone number to call, an invitation to a video or webinar, and so on.

Before we go further, you need to know how search engines work. So we'll start with the one 90% of the population uses.

How does Google work?

Google's objective is to offer people the very best answer to any question or any phrase typed in the search box. If information on your website is the best answer or one of the best answers to a question or search phrase, you will rank higher. The more visits and time consumers spend on your site, the more valuable that content is considered to Google.

That's it. That's the big secret. Given the fact that shopping behavior has changed and knowing that Google's goal is to offer up the best answers to consumer queries, how can you capitalize on that? That's what content marketing can help you do.

As Marcus Sheridan, a successful content marketer would say, "They ask. You answer." It's as simple as that. People typically won't buy something until they have a sufficient amount of information about it. They research price, compare products, research the pros and cons, find which product is the "best".

The good news is that your website can do more selling for you. It's not likely you need more practice answering the same questions you've been answering over and over again.

So what do people search for?

#1- Cost – People want to know how much something costs. It's often the elephant in the room and businesses don't want to reveal that information too soon. But people like transparency and it builds trust. There are ways to present pricing, even if it's variable, such as a range.

#2 – Problems – They search for solutions to problems or problems associated with a given type of product. So articles on your site that present a problem a customer had and how you resolved it gives people a reason to contact you. If one person in your industry has that problem, it's likely others are searching using the words that customer used.

#3--Comparison – Comparison shopping is next and articles with titles *this vs. that* are very popular. People want to know the assets and attributes of one product or service versus another.

#4 – Reviews – What do other people think of this company or product? How important are these ratings when you shop?

#5 – Best –Who is the best at 'such and such'?

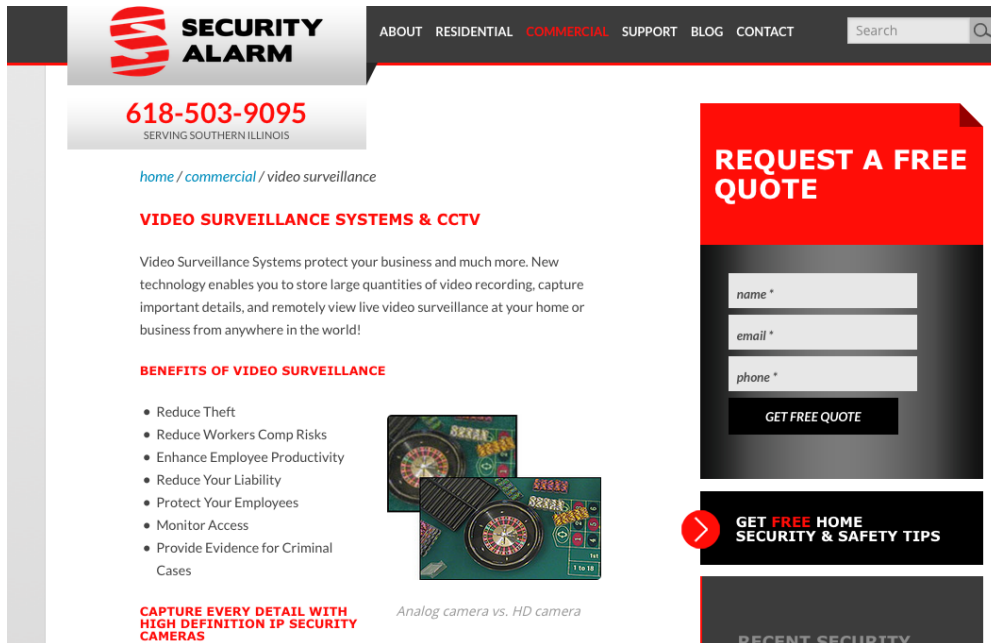
Nobody wants to do business with a second rate company. They want the best for their money.

Example of a cost related blog post and the traffic it generated. (1) Source- The Sales Lion

TRACK KEYWORDS?	SEARCH ENGINE	KEYWORD	VISITS	VISIT TO LEAD	LEADS
	Google	Unknown keywords (SSL)	24,650	.93%	229
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	fiberglass pool prices ↗	13,537	.22%	30
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	fiberglass pools problems ↗	11,133	.48%	53
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	river pools and spas ↗	7,310	1.3%	94
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	cost of fiberglass pools ↗	7,279	.37%	27
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	fiberglass pools prices ↗	6,127	.34%	21
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	fiberglass pool cost ↗	4,790	.38%	18
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	fiberglass pool problems ↗	3,533	.4%	14
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	fiberglass pools ↗	3,048	.33%	29
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	how much does a fiberglass pool cost ↗	2,972	.44%	13
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	fiberglass pools cost ↗	2,276	.44%	10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	how much does an above ground pool cost ↗	2,169	0%	0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	small pool designs ↗	1,990	.5%	10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	how much does an inground pool cost ↗	1,971	.1%	3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Google	how much do fiberglass pools cost ↗	1,920	.16%	3

From 2009-2014, this one single article on River Pools & Spas, “How much does a fiberglass pool cost?” has generated \$2,500,000.00 in sales. So you have to think of content marketing as an investment in your business, not an expense. The consumer does the research, they land on a page and they call you. It happens all the time.

See the results one of our clients got from a single blog post. The customer searched for security companies in southern Illinois that did video surveillance. They landed on this blog post.



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SERVING SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

618-503-9095

home / commercial / video surveillance

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS & CCTV

Video Surveillance Systems protect your business and much more. New technology enables you to store large quantities of video recording, capture important details, and remotely view live video surveillance at your home or business from anywhere in the world!

BENEFITS OF VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

- Reduce Theft
- Reduce Workers Comp Risks
- Enhance Employee Productivity
- Reduce Your Liability
- Protect Your Employees
- Monitor Access
- Provide Evidence for Criminal Cases

CAPTURE EVERY DETAIL WITH HIGH DEFINITION IP SECURITY CAMERAS

Analog camera vs. HD camera

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE

name *

email *

phone *

GET FREE QUOTE

GET FREE HOME SECURITY & SAFETY TIPS

RECENT SECURITY

From that blog post they went to the contact form on the right hand side and sent the following note.

Southern Illinois	
First Name	Pete
Last Name	
Email Address	@gmail.com
Phone Number	
I want to know more about:	Video Surveillance or CCTV
How can we help you?	<p>We are interested in installing a approximately 55 camera video surveillance system. This system will require a DVR and a web portal for remote viewing.</p> <p>Minimum specs will be as follows: 600 lines per inch (analog) or D1 (IP) and a minimum light factor of (0.7) LUX.</p> <p>90 Days storage via hardware, plus 90 via cloud.</p> <p>I can submit a layout of the building and more required specs once I have a point of contact from you.</p>
Are you a new customer?	Yes
What is the best time to reach you?	Any time via email.

So basically Pete, an IT guy for a commercial business, researched where they could get surveillance cameras and a system installation in Southern Illinois, he landed on this blog post and decided to contact *Security Alarm* about buying a 55 camera surveillance system. No one had to call repeatedly to get details out of Pete or try to sell him on their cameras. Pete did his research, knew what he wanted and was ready to get the job done. As a matter of fact, he offered to send a layout of the building next!

Would you like to have leads like this landing in your email inbox?

How your content works to get leads and sales

At the most basic level, you should be utilizing your company blog to publish helpful and educational articles. They can be written as informational articles or case studies, they can be videos or podcasts, newsletters, pictures, eBooks or whitepapers. Start by making a list of the most frequent questions your clients or customers ask and write those down, careful to use their words, not yours.

These are the questions they use when they call your office, when in front of a sales person. These are the phrases and questions they often type in a search engine. If you hang out with one of your salespeople for one day, you'll get a year's worth of blog topics. And we emphasize blog topics because that's a great place to start.

To make content work to boost your website traffic, sales and leads, focus solely on information your customers want and deliver it in a form that they use frequently.

So if your audience is into antique cars, a series of YouTube videos on some of the finer points of how to get the most out of antique car shows would be popular with this group. If you are trying to appeal to an audience of millennials, you'd focus on content that displays well on smartphones or can be consumed on the go, such as podcasts.

Once you create articles (blog posts) on your site that answer the questions your customers and clients ask, you will start to get more traffic to your site since the phrase you use in the headline is the phrase they type in. Remember, this is the question/phrase they've used a 100 times before when asking you. So you know what those questions are. And writing an article on your site ultimately saves you time since many of your customers' questions will have already been answered when they do contact you.

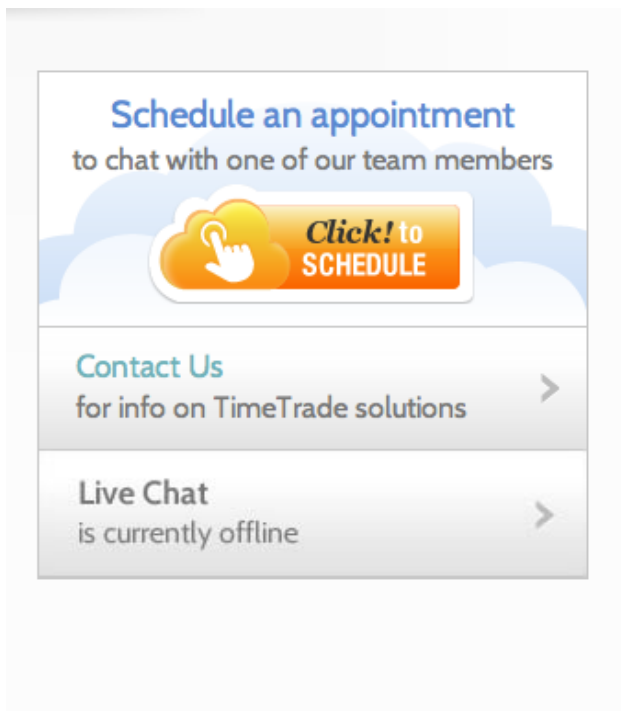
If they don't find it on their own, you can send prospects a link or a pdf and ask them to read it before a sales appointment.

More traffic to your site will often result in more sales but you have to have the right "call to action" in place for a lead to become a sale. So once they read the article, what do you


want them to do? Call you? Send you a contact form? Fill out a form for a quick quote? Make an appointment? A donation? Download a white paper? Get on an email list? These are “calls to action.”

If you know that it takes your consumer a while to make a purchase decision, it might be prudent to have a form that allows them to fill in their name and email and download more information such as a whitepaper or eBook. That form will also sign them up for your email newsletter, which can supply additional helpful educational information for your buyers. You stay on their radar; they get the information they want. You’re educating your target market, which is always a good thing. When it comes time to make a purchase, who might win in terms of being top of mind for getting the business?

Examples of Calls to Action forms are below.

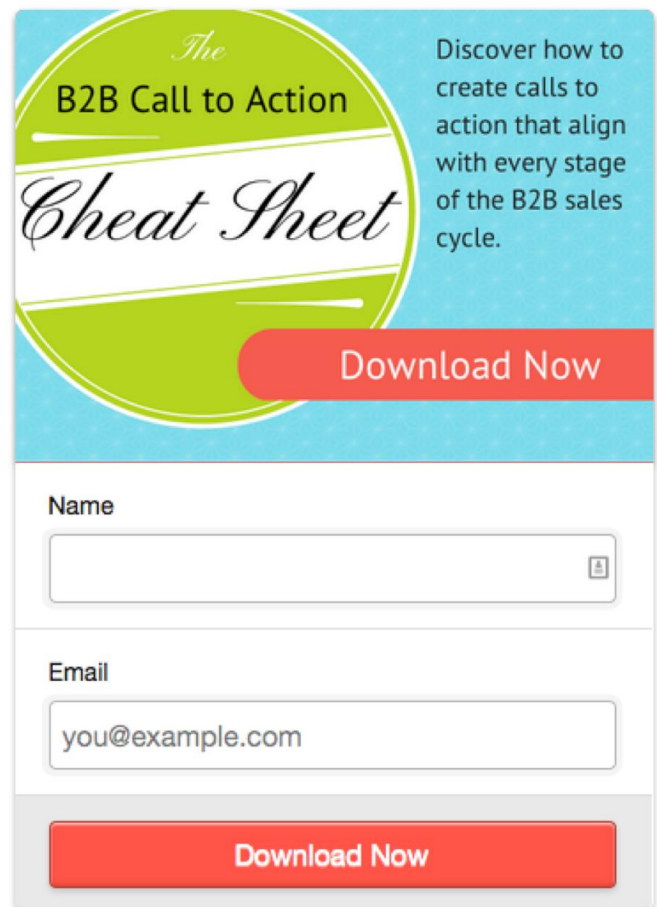


Schedule an appointment
to chat with one of our team members

 **Click! to SCHEDULE**

Contact Us
for info on TimeTrade solutions >

Live Chat
is currently offline >



The
B2B Call to Action
Cheat Sheet

Discover how to create calls to action that align with every stage of the B2B sales cycle.

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\$25 OFF*

YOUR ENTIRE ORDER?

Enter Your Email Here

GET MY \$25 OFF

[NO THANKS, I PREFER TO PAY FULL PRICE](#)

*\$25 off full-price orders of \$100 or more

Get a Free Quote ^

We will contact you within one business day.

Name*

Business

Phone*

Email

Message

(920) 560-2471

info@optimalweb.biz

Submit

Conversion Optimization Tips
You'll Actually Use

Proven strategies from marketing experts, delivered straight to your inbox

Enter your email

SUBSCRIBE TO THE UNBOUNCE BLOG

[No thanks, I am not interested](#)

Example:

Let's say you are a law firm that is known for defending traffic tickets. Helpful information might include, "What are my rights when pulled over for a traffic violation?" This website article (blog post) would be specific to a state since laws differ, and you'd basically give people information they can use so they don't implicate themselves while also stating what their rights are and how to address a police officer. Knowledge is empowering. Who wouldn't want to know the right thing to do in a certain situation?

What is your differentiator?

When asked, just about 100% of our clients will tell us that their differentiator is “customer service”. If 100% of your competitors would say that's what makes them special, how are you different?

It's the *specificity* of customer service that's missing. The key is to break down that very general statement and be more specific. Do you deliver faster? Are your prices more competitive? Do you give out doughnuts with every order? Once you have a list of the more specific statements that translate to “better customer service,” or “patient centered care,” you can use this to generate more content ideas. And while your competitor may indeed also deliver just as fast, it's the person that puts it out there first and does it the best that wins the business.

Who writes all the content?

The absolute best resource for your business content is you, your employees, and your marketing and sales teams. Does anyone know your business better? However, the number one biggest hurdle for getting content from within is “buy-in.” If it's not part of someone's job description, they are less likely to rank it as being important--particularly if they don't know the kind of results content marketing can produce.

You can get outside help for strategy, measuring results, help producing content (such as video), generating ideas and even writing it.

But the best results happen when *content marketing is a company culture*. And the best outsource relationship is one that is a *partnership* and not a hand off. Not every company can afford a Super Bowl TV spot. However, companies big and small can afford content marketing. You simply have to have a strategy and a way to measure results. That's where you can get consultation and guidance.

In short, content marketing levels the playing field. It establishes your company's expertise and establishes you as industry thought leaders. This builds trust. And isn't that the kind of relationship building that is the cornerstone of a successful sales strategy?

You have to ask yourself, why aren't we doing this?

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