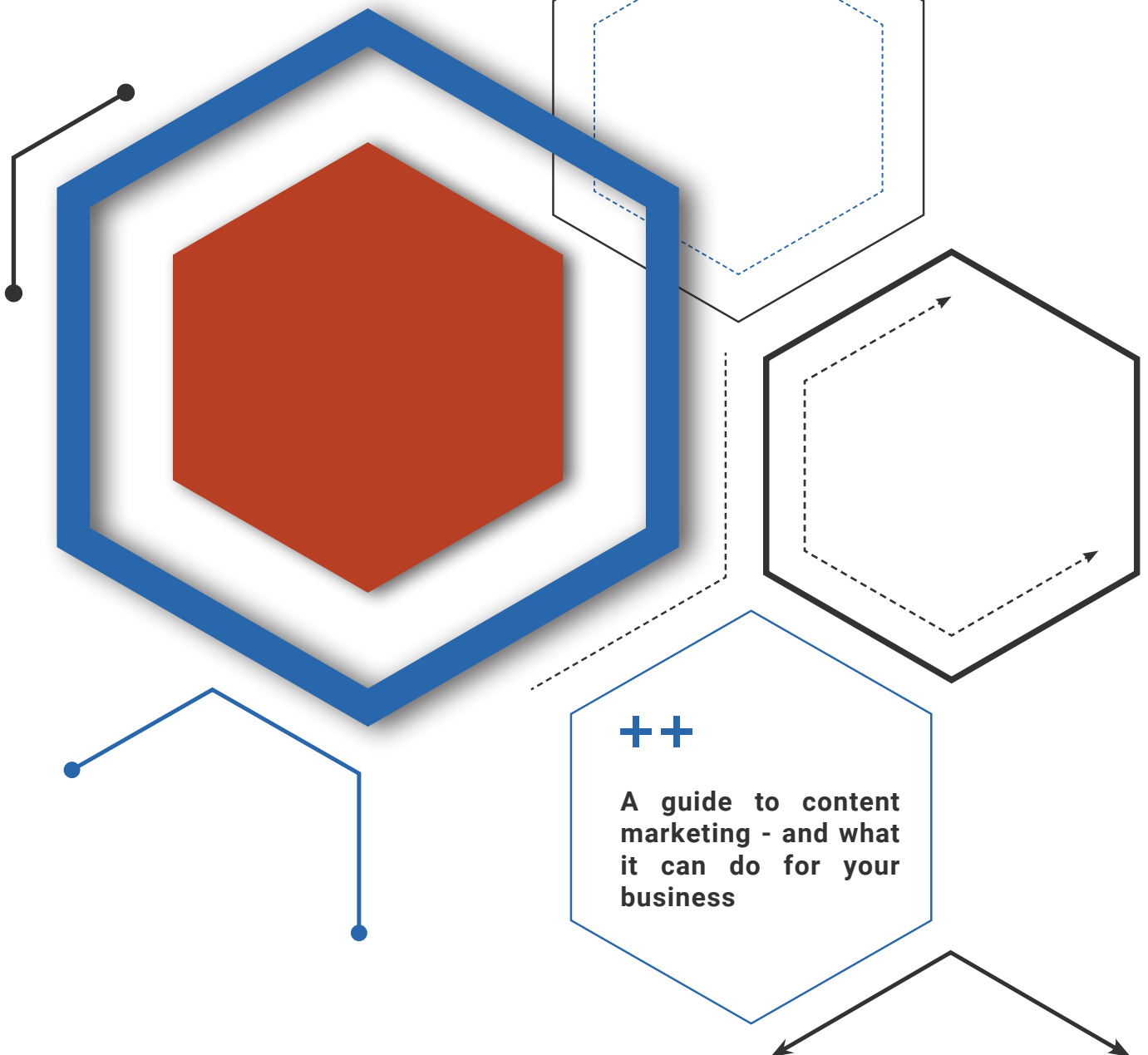


CONTENT MARKETING



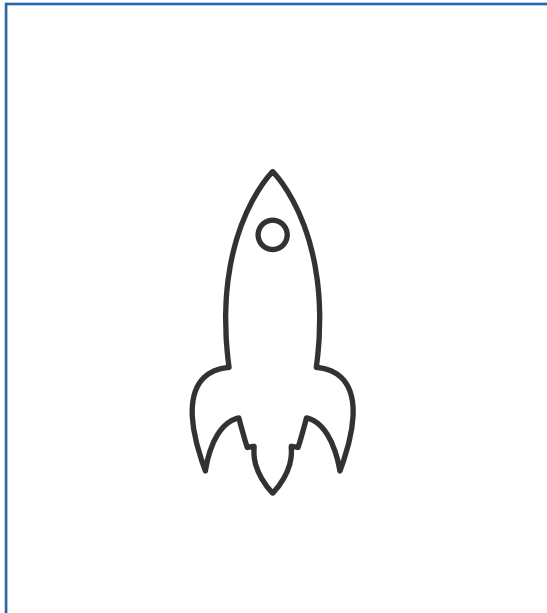
Introduction

The Internet and social media allow customers to engage with brands on a regular and in-depth basis. This applies equally to consumers and business-to-business clients.

Your prospective customers are online and you need to be there too. They are looking for information,

and great content is the way to ensure they engage with you rather than your competitors.

Content drives inbound marketing, and this short guide from Rocket Content aims to explain the benefits of this approach and outline how you can start to build a strategy.



**Content is how
you engage today's
prospective buyers.**

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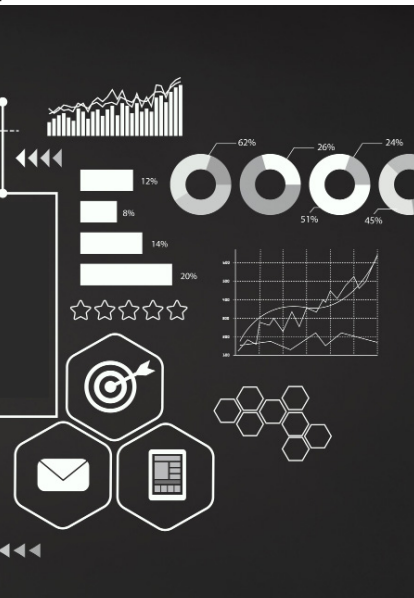
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Content driven marketing



What if someone came to your business looking for advice and you helped them? It wouldn't result in an immediate sale, but you have started a conversation; initiated a relationship.

Your business then continues to keep that person updated with information that helps them do their job – white papers, videos, how-to articles. Your relationship grows stronger. Then, when they're ready to make a purchase, they are far more likely to spend their budget with a business they have a relationship with.

Build relationships

This is known as inbound marketing and it is built on a strong content marketing strategy.

This approach is also about retaining customers by ensuring they come back to you again and again because you offer sound advice and make their work easier.

Great content is the route to building long-term relationships that lead to sales growth and

Put customers first

brand promotion. That's why it's so important to get it right from the start.

The key point to remember about content marketing is that it must put the customer at the heart of your messages.

This sounds simple, but it is probably one of the most difficult aspects of content marketing to grasp – and to get right.

Too often, an informational article is actually just an advert

Get it right

in disguise. Or an FAQ blog for LinkedIn is simply a list of reasons to call the sales team.

Inbound marketing is definitely all about making sales; but they are created by building trust and strong relationships.

Inbound marketing built on your content strategy won't work overnight, but it will enable you to build your very own interested and

Your own audience

engaged audience.

This makes it much easier to understand when a potential buyer is close to making that important purchase, and you can be there ready to make the sale. The relationship works



Focus on content

both ways because customers who trust your content will be interested in hearing about your new products and services - far more open to buying from you.

Creating content that focuses on what's important to your potential customer base (rather than simply on making a sale) will demonstrate that you understand the challenges they face.

It's an important factor in building long-term relationships.

Inbound marketing: It's not about you



Focus on customers

Thinking about your customers is not just about gaining their attention. It can help to think of 'personas'. What do your buyers do? Where do they look for information? What social media do they use? Build a clear picture first



Solve their problems

If you know your clients, then you know the challenges of their job. What questions do they most often ask your sales team? Is there an FAQ list on your website? Your content should help potential clients solve their problems.



Lead the field

There's a lot of content out there! If you write about your area of expertise you can ensure that you are offering something truly useful for potential customers. Lead your field and own your subject.

Content blueprint

TAP INTO THE BENEFITS OF PROACTIVE CONTENT MARKETING



If you have a website, you are already presenting information to customers and potential clients. Content marketing goes further and is a more proactive approach to communicating.

At the heart of the inbound approach is content. Content marketing focuses on originating information for your potential customers that addresses their interests, questions and concerns.

For B2B marketers, it's about helping your customers (and potential customers) do their jobs better so that they see you as a supportive source of trustworthy information.

- ➔ 43% of marketers say they sourced a customer through LinkedIn
- ➔ 50% of LinkedIn members report they are more likely to buy from a company they engage with on LinkedIn
- ➔ 85% of B2B buyers believe companies should present information via social networks

Figures from: LinkedIn Sophisticated Marketers' Guide



And all of this is delivered via your company website, social media presence and search engine optimisation (SEO). So inbound marketing should start with a focus on content – creating a body of engaging, informative and unique intelligence that will build your audience of potential customers. It will also help to play an important role in pushing your business up Google search rankings.



Searching for a potential topic for a guide? Look at social media to find out what topics are 'hot' in your sector. Check out your own LinkedIn feeds and see what questions people are asking. Chat with your sales team to find out what they're hearing from clients first-hand.

The flexible marketing tool

Content marketing is highly adaptable and while there is a cost to initial production, it can be used widely to optimise impact – making it very cost effective. Good content is also referred to as 'evergreen' because it has a long life.

Idea: Start with a guide

A white paper or guide can be hosted on your own website behind a sign-up wall that allows you to collect email addresses and build a list for future email marketing.

But parts of that guide can also be used as shorter articles to appear on LinkedIn – attracting the attention of thousands of potential customers and allowing some of your key sales team members to build their presence online.

You can use short quotes from a guide in your company Twitter feed, extending use of the text even further. And you can also use a guide as the basis for podcasts or videos.

We describe overleaf how a guide can provide fuel for a wider online and social media marketing strategy.



Start with you

Although content is focused on your customers, it should also be about what is central to your business. It's very important to stand out, so identifying a topic where you can own the subject will help you to produce useful content with confidence. You'll also have plenty to say!



Keeping in touch

The power of an email list is that you have direct and personal access to potential and existing customers.

One approach is to offer this group insights and special offers where you can. For example, share more information with them and offer insights to help them use your products or services better.

By offering helpful information, your contacts will be more open to news about new products and services when you approach them.

Collecting contacts

With a guide as your first piece of content, you can host this on your website. Make sure that you can measure traffic to that page – and it can be even better if you can put the guide behind a sign-up gate that asks for visitors' email addresses.

This will provide you with a highly valuable list of contacts.



Customer journey

The concept of the sales funnel is familiar to sales and marketing professionals, and it offers good framework for optimising your use of the content you develop. If we think about promoting a technical guide, it could follow these steps:

Awareness



Once the guide is ready, it is important to raise awareness of it. This is done through social media such as LinkedIn and Twitter. At this stage, it would be appropriate to use social media such as LinkedIn and Twitter – raise awareness through short articles on LinkedIn and blogs on your website that touch on the main issues of the Guide. Ensure that everything links through to the web page so it's easy for readers to download – a clear call to action (CTA) on all messaging.

Consideration



This is the point where customers are moving towards gathering more information. If they arrive on your landing page, looking for the guide they have filtered themselves out as potential customers – a great boost for your sales team. It's crucial to collect contact information (name, job title and email address). If your content is good people are more than happy to offer their contact details and be open to buy from you too.

Retention



Once you have collected names and email addresses it's important to stay in touch with these people. They have opted in to hear from you, demonstrating a clear interest in your brand and products. So your follow-through must be consistently high quality. It may be appropriate to offer them a webinar about the topic, allowing them to ask Q&As of your experts.

Measurement



Why measurement matters more than ever

There probably aren't many experienced marketers who haven't heard the question 'What's the return on investment for this?'.

The power of the internet and social media is that your audience interacts with you directly – and immediately. A 'Like' or a 'Follow' mean that you have made a connection.

It's also easy to spot what topics work with your audience because you can ask – are they interested in F Gas legislation? Do they want to know more about commissioning? Find out and let that drive your content strategy.

There are a growing number of marketing and sales tools such as Marketo that track a customer on their sales journey. This is helpful to

marketers, as it shows that what they do really has an impact on the business. But it also means they have to ensure their content is working hard to achieve business objectives.

Can customer responses be tracked and measured? With content marketing at the heart of the strategy, you certainly can - and should..

This is why content marketing must be accompanied by metrics that can be measured. Calls to action; links to landing pages; use of tools such as Google Analytics – all are vital to ensure that you know what's working (and what's not).

Your measurement metrics will also help to inform your strategy so that you focus on doing what works, not just on producing content for its own sake.

Find your metrics

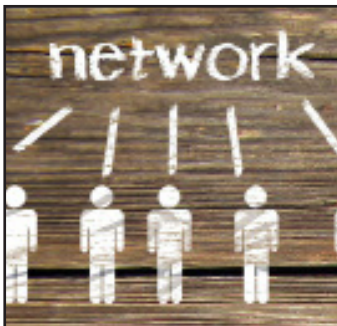
There are a number of free and paid-for tools available to measure the success of your content marketing, and they're constantly updating and developing. Keep an eye on what's out there to find what suits your needs.



Google Analytics

The go-to tool for monitoring website activity.

If you host a guide on your website, don't forget to add the Google tracking ID to that page so you can measure visitors.



Social shares

Clicks are useful, but having your content shared on social media is very powerful

Tools such as Hootsuite offer free or paid-for services so you can track brand mentions across all your social channels.



Customer data

If you're collecting email addresses, this is a crucial metric to bear in mind.

Keep the data safely, and ensure you comply with GDPR rules on using it for marketing.

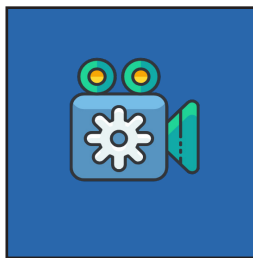
Other useful measurement and content tools to explore

Buzzsumo (free and paid-for levels); Google Trends (free); Sprout Social (paid-for); Feedly (free and paid-for levels)

Content ideas

A guide is just the start: There are other ideas to consider

Video



Video is one of the most powerful online tools. Regular videos can be used on your own website and across all forms of social media. Video is highly rated for Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), so it's great for raising awareness.

Blogs



A regular blog from a member (or members) of your team keeps visitors coming back to your website. Again, a blog can be used on social media such as LinkedIn and used to encourage followers and 'shares' on social media. Use it to address hot topics

Podcasts



Audio is a fast-growing medium on social media, and is proving hugely popular. You can offer a completely different way for potential customers to get to know your business, while offering them useful insights they can listen to on the commute or in the car.

Get in touch

Rocket Content can help you develop, produce and use great content that supports your marketing goals and metrics.

We offer a range of services across different content types and we can work with you to find the best solutions for your objectives.

Our team also has in-depth knowledge of building services and construction.

Coupled with our extensive experience in B2B publishing, we make great content that works for your business.

Contact us today to talk about your goals.



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