The Content Marketer's Sure-Fire Strategy for Success

A 2-step plan to help any organization achieve its marketing goals

Upwork®

Table of contents

Foreword

Many see content marketing as an easy way to scale traffic and brand exposure. Who can resist statistics that show small businesses with blogs get **126%** more lead growth than small businesses without? Who can ignore how content marketing converts at a rate **six times** higher than other methods and costs **62%** less to generate than outbound marketing?

Many marketers assume that to increase their exposure and conversions, they just need to create more content, and faster. But the reality is, new pieces of content are created online daily. You can't stand out just by adding more to an already overwhelming pile.

To stand out, you must stay true to the needs of your prospects. Instead of going for the hard sell, your content should build a long-term relationship with your audience by showing how you can solve their problems—so that when they're ready for a solution, they come to you.

Content isn't a short-term tactic, but a strategy for growing your business tomorrow and beyond. Success requires consistency, patience, and the alignment of your content with your business goals. This ebook provides suggestions to help growing companies like yours avoid common content marketing pitfalls, and to help you achieve greater results from your digital marketing efforts.

Lisa Oda

Director of Content Marketing,
Upwork

Content Marketing Is Today's Softer, Savvier Infomercial

If you've ever encountered a ShamWow!, Snuggie, or ThighMaster, you've seen the power of the infomercial at work. The power of "as seen on TV" marketing is still a **$250 billion industry**, with big brands investing millions of dollars to generate leads, test new products, and drive in-store sales.

But consumer behavior has changed. It isn't enough to have a catchy sales pitch anymore. In fact, consumers are pretty adept at tuning them out.

Consumers are increasingly skeptical and hypersensitive about being pushed into a sale. Demanding control and armed with a landslide of information at their fingertips, they want one thing: value.

Changing the game even more, consumers tell companies what's valuable.

Content marketing responds by creating value through content that is educational, entertaining, personal, or relevant. Think of it as an infoproduct—today's shinier, more powerful infomercial. Like an infomercial, content marketing drives sales by increasing brand awareness and traffic to a site or store, as well as by generating quality leads.

And it works. Consider this:

- A survey by Kapost and Eloqua found that, per dollar, content marketing produces **three times more leads** than paid search marketing.

- According to **Demand Metric**, 90% of organizations use content marketing.

- Content marketing **generates over 3X** as many leads as outbound marketing and costs 62% less.

- **61% of U.S. online consumers** made a purchase after reading recommendations on a blog.

Using a Soft Sell to Reverse the Sales Process

Instead of pushing yourself in front of prospects, content marketing reverses the traditional sales process by driving prospects voluntarily to you. Successful content marketers do this by distributing content that's strategically created to attract and engage a target audience.

It works essentially like this: Consumers want a solution to their problem; your content provides the answer. While they benefit from your content they develop a relationship with your brand and become more willing to engage further.

In a nutshell, content marketing is a savvy way to soft sell.
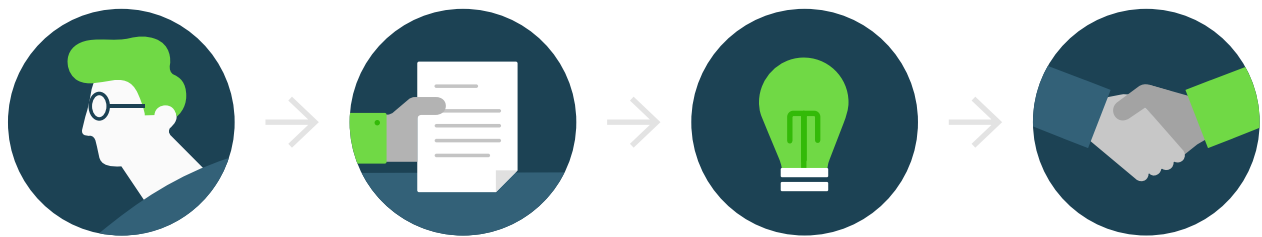
Get it right and you're rewarded with increased sales, better leads, higher customer engagement, and stronger brand loyalty.

Although this sounds fantastic, many marketers don't realize the success they had hoped for. That's because content marketing takes because content marketing takes time and resources to set up and execute properly. Thankfully, you don't need to do it all yourself. Freelancer websites such as Upwork can help stretch your time and resources by providing cost-effective access to the specialists you need.

The Most Common (and Costly) Content Marketing Mistake

Content marketing is more than just words on a page. Successful content marketing creates a dialogue, then skillfully turns it into business results.

To do this, you need a plan that addresses two fundamental elements: what will be written, and who will write it.

Studies show companies following a content marketing plan met their daily business goals and were less challenged along the way. Yet only about one-third of content marketers have a documented content marketing strategy. It's no wonder only 2 in 10 content marketers consider themselves very successful.

89%
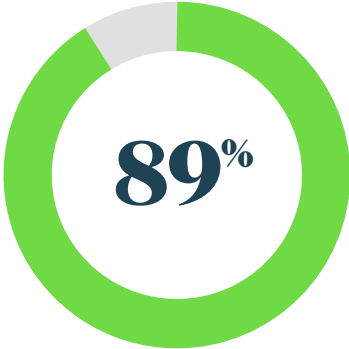
89% of B2B marketers said they used content marketing.

19%
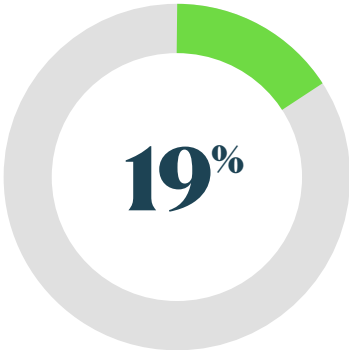
Only 19% of them said they were very successful at achieving their content marketing goals.

What You Can Gain From This Ebook

This ebook gives real-world ideas for figuring out what content to create, hiring the right team to create it, and coordinating the creation process. It's based on processes we use for creating successful content marketing programs at Upwork™. By incorporating these tips into your content marketing strategy, you can reach your business goals with more efficiency and at a higher level of success.

Create Your Content Strategy

Decide What to Write About

For content marketing that supports your business goals, context is everything. Start your content strategy by answering two questions:

1. Who do I want to read it?

2. What action do I want them to take?

If you're targeting a B2B audience, your readers represent an organization and base their decisions on what's best for it. This means your content needs to do more than inspire action. Your content must educate and deliver more facts so the reader can sell your ideas to others. Common B2B content includes white papers, case studies, ebooks, and thought-leadership articles.

If your brand is in the B2C space, your readers will make decisions based on what's best for themselves. They usually require less information about your product or service, are more affected by emotion, and make decisions much more quickly. B2C content is usually shorter: social media, blog posts, and direct-response promotions.

Marketing B2B vs B2C

	WHO	CONTENT	DECISION-MAKING	PURPOSE OF CONTENT	END GOAL
B2B	Manager or executive. Operates based on needs on the corporation.	Easy-to-access, data-and research-rich content from turstworthy sources—i.e. case studies, white papers, third-party or analyst reports.	Longer sales cycle. More layers for approval before the final sale is reached.	Build brand identity, establish trust, value.	Drive leads.
B2C	Client or consumer. Operates based on the needs of the individual.	Promotional, entertraining, engaging. Direct response, social media.	Faster sales cycle. Usually, sole decision maker.	Spark emotion, build awareness, increase trust, entertain.	Increase sales and engagement.

Due to time constraints and an overwhelming amount of content available, **46% of B2B buyers** prefer shorter-format content. This includes infographics and on-demand audio or video content. The majority prefer tailored content organized by business role or industry. More than half prefer mobile-optimized content they can view from their tablets or smartphones.

With less time to spend researching, B2B buyers are also more skeptical. They give more credence to content from trustworthy sources, such as industry influencers and third-party publications.

The takeaway here: never guess or assume anything about your audience. Always do your research first.
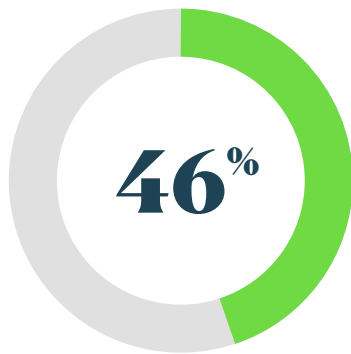
46% 46% of B2B buyers prefer shorter content.
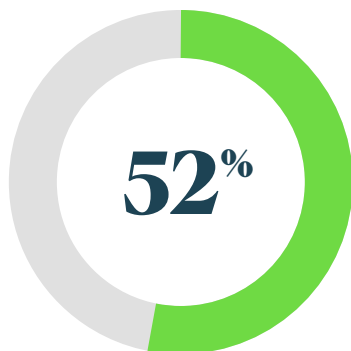
52% 52% prefer mobile-friendly content they can access on the go.

6 Tips for Creating Results-Driven Content

01 Know your business goal. Make it measurable (e.g., increase leads by 21%).

02 **Create personas** for each audience group. Know each persona as well as you do your own family. Identify their concerns and how your product or service resolves them.

03 Add value to your readers' day. You want to grab their interest and stand out, so make your content useful, intriguing, and informative… and do it better than everyone else.

04 Optimize your content for search engine visibility.

05 Keep the momentum going. As your content starts to attract attention, serve up additional calls to action (CTAs) and/or additional thought-leadership pieces.

06 Encourage downloads of relevant content to drive lead generation, enable lead scoring, collect valuable information about your customers, and foster two-way communication.

Cull the Good Content Ideas From the Great

As you brainstorm topics, you'll likely come up with more suggestions than your resources can support. Identify the strongest topics according to volume (i.e., audience reach) and value (i.e., benefit to your business).

Begin by establishing what issue or question your content helps solve. Remember, if it isn't useful to your audience, don't create it.

Then, follow these five steps...

Step 1: Gather

Gather all supporting data related to your topics, including the number of people who seem to care about or find the topic or keywords useful. Ways to gather data include:

- Searching keywords and keyword phrases people used to arrive at your site

- Gathering keywords from your internal search data

- Reviewing topics from your Twitter feed

- Analyzing themes from your customer support inquiries

- Reviewing your competitor's top-performing content

Step 2: Organize

Now input all of this data into a spreadsheet. You'll notice common themes and topics surface. Make a list of these themes and topics, including their popularity.

Step 3: Prioritize

This step identifies each topic's reach. From data on your new list, you should see the number of people who care about or find a topic useful. The greater the number, the higher the topic's potential reach. It's tempting to automatically remove topics with the least amount of reach, then sort your topic list from highest to lowest reach. But that's not enough to truly prioritize result-driving content.

Prioritizing content requires balancing reach (how many people search for that topic) with conversion rate (how many people who read this content will become customers). If an IT consulting company writes an article "How to get six-pack abs in 60 days," it may drive a lot of search volume, but it probably won't generate many new customers. That's why balancing reach with conversion rates is essential when prioritizing content that will drive results.

Step 4: Cut

Narrow down this newly sorted list by determining each topic's value to your business. To determine value, consider which products or categories each topic or keyword will influence and then associate it with revenue potential. Assign a value "score." The higher the revenue potential, the higher its value score. If a topic has high volume (i.e., reach) but a low value score, you may end up pushing it off your list.

Step 5: Check

Narrow your topic list further by keeping only topics that match your overall marketing strategy. Do you want more top-of-the-funnel visitors coming in, or do you want to upsell existing customers? Maybe you want to optimize for the top of the funnel, then nurture leads with engagement tactics such as email capture.

Congratulations, you've defined your content. You now have a workable list of high-volume and high-value topics that support your marketing strategy. This process takes time, but it's definitely worth it. Focusing your topic list will ultimately help you save resources, guide your writers, and keep your project on track.

Pro Tip

Sometimes you may see topics that aren't high volume but may be trending. You can spot this through something like a recent surge in search volume. If you're willing to take the risk, publishing content early can help you rank for the topic.

Define Your Content Structure

With your content established, you can maximize its impact by defining your content structure. Organizing content into a solid structure gives you better control over branding, engagement, distribution, and the "next steps" you want a captivated reader to take. A properly defined structure creates a direct path for your reader to the most relevant part of your business.

A content structure includes three parts. We'll discuss each one briefly:

1. Content hub

2. Content categories

3. Content channels

Content Hub

A content hub organizes branded and curated content from various sources—blog posts, videos, social media, ebooks, etc.—into one cohesive presentation. Although the content may still remain hosted on other properties (e.g., YouTube, SlideShare, Medium), creating a single presentation gives you more control over context and analytics, which can help you:

- Boost social sharing

- Establish thought leadership

- Heighten brand awareness

- Increase time visitors spend on your website

- Expand website traffic

- Improve sales

- Generate leads

- Shorten the sales cycle
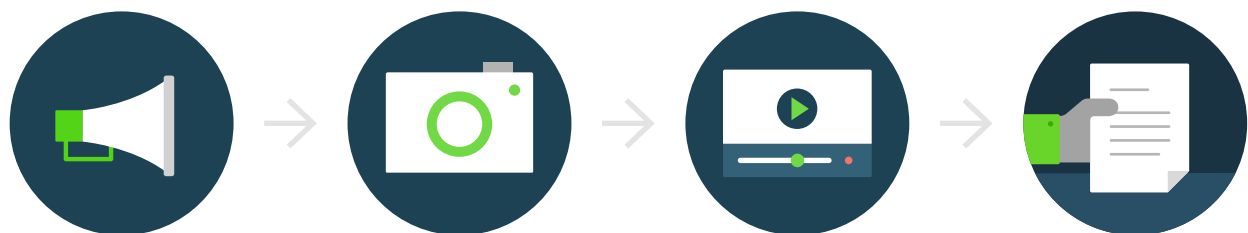
Content Categories

If you picture the content hub as the center of a wheel, its spokes are your content categories. Here's how it works: One piece of content draws readers into a specific category. Through your central hub, they may browse other relevant content located in related categories. As readers hop from category to category, they become more engaged, spend more time on your site, and gain greater awareness of—and trust in—your brand.

Your content categories will vary to reflect your product or service, your industry, and your audience's interests.

Here are a few examples:

Sample Method 1

You sell a platform for email marketing automation. Using search volume as a guide, your content categories may include: Growing your list; Best practices; Effective subject lines; Testing; Improving delivery rates.

Sample Method 2

You sell art and stationery through an online shop. You could organize your categories in a number of ways such as by product type. You can also look at search volume to see which keywords your customers are using. You may also find that organizing products by sales volume or value makes more sense for your business.

Sample Method 3

If your company doesn't fall neatly into a B2B or B2C model, look at internal search queries. Find out what people are searching for, then group and categorize those topics. Using the volume and value information, pick the top keywords. From this cleaner list, pull out your content categories.

Content Channels

Content channels are how you publish and distribute content you create. This includes your blogs, social networks, email, and paid advertising. Most businesses have multiple channels to reach different types of people. Maintaining multiple channels also provides flexibility, because if one channel becomes less effective, the others are still reaching your audience.

Where many content marketers make a mistake is spending the majority of their time thinking about creating great content instead of distributing it. To get the most out of your content, spend more time thinking about effective content distribution. Otherwise, you'll end up spending most of your time creating a stellar white paper, then feel disheartened because hardly anyone viewed it.

The goal is to make each piece of content as impactful as possible. When deciding which channels to funnel your content through, consider the four S's:

- **Setting:** Based on the audience personas you created, figure out where each content piece will have the most impact. Your blog? On Twitter? Through LinkedIn?

- **Support:** What do you already have that helps tell your story? An existing website, a Facebook page, or corporate materials can boost your message and provide context.

- **Shifts:** Does anything need to change in order for you to tell your story? Do you need to add a blog, develop a campaign-specific site, or revisit your social web strategy?

- **Stops:** What must stop—if anything—for you to tell your story properly? Do you need to divert resources from one channel to another?

Distribute Your Content Through Online Syndication

For decades, content creators have used syndication to get more eyes on their content. Radio stations, print publishers, television networks, and news services expanded their audiences exponentially by pushing their content out across numerous outlets. Online syndication enables you to do the same with your content.

As mentioned earlier, how you distribute content is as important as what content you create. Once you start publishing content on your own site, shift your focus to generating more traffic to that content.

One way to do this is by redistributing your content out to third-party syndication channels. These content aggregators and email digests can increase your brand exposure, expand your audience, drive traffic back to your site, and boost domain authority through link building.

Want to start syndicating your content out to the world? Here are some helpful tips to get you started.

Choose your syndication partners wisely

Not all syndication sites are created equal. Research to find sites that are best suited to your content. Base potential partners on criteria such as the size of their audience, the quality of that audience, what categories they focus on, and their mission.

For example, if you're writing about startups and technology, you probably want a business-focused syndication partner that aligns with your content, like Business2Community or Hiring Headquarters. If you're primarily sharing design work, it may resonate better with a creative online community like Dribbble.

Do your homework to find the partners that are most likely to be win-wins.

Know what you're getting from each partner

Partnership agreements vary with each syndication site. Your content may be licensed, free syndication, or ad-supported. Before giving a partner permission to publish your content, know how it aligns with your business model and how it supports your marketing goals.

When choosing a partner, possible questions to ask include:

- Will I be able to handpick and publish my content, or will it be automatically pulled from my RSS or Atom feed?

- Does it publish an entire article (a full rendition) or a summary of the content?

- Does it screen content? If yes, what are its screening parameters? Make sure a site is at least monitoring for inappropriate content, so that your content isn't published alongside something that doesn't support your brand.

- What are the site's content republishing guidelines? You may not want to be limited on republishing your content elsewhere.

- Is the site a community where members can share or republish your content to their own profiles?

- Are comments enabled? If so, how are comments moderated? Be sure you have a way to track comments left on your content, so you can respond appropriately.

Syndication sites: paid and unpaid

You have two options: paid syndication and unpaid syndication. If you pay to syndicate on a site such as Business.com, it's important to weigh the cost against its value to your content. Here are a few popular sites and how they stack up.

Paid syndication sites

Taboola—content is delivered across a network that includes hundreds of thousands of small and large publishers. The engine chooses where your articles will best fit and seems to have more success with video content at this time.

Medium—the platform offers paid and unpaid distribution options. It directly publishes articles, photos, audio, and video. An algorithm determines which content is most relevant to each user, and the network actively promotes user engagement.

Outbrain—the platform recommends your content on large online media properties such as CNN, People, and ESPN. It boasts a monthly global audience of 557 million.

ARC—part of PR Newswire, the platform sends content across various channels. Content is shared and published on other sites with links back to the original source (no-follow links).

Unpaid syndication sites

Flipboard—a highly visual, magazine-style syndication site where you can publish content and also republish content to your own magazine.

The Hiring Headquarters—Upwork.com's curated blog where you can publish content about the future of work, trends in marketing and development, and business growth. Articles posted here may also be promoted through social media or Upwork's other syndicated channels.

BizSugar—a social sharing, bookmarking, and networking site for small-business owners, managers, and entrepreneurs where you can categorize content to make it easy for readers to find. Note: the free account does limit how much you can publish a day.

Business2Community—this site hand-selects articles from your feed and republishes the full article out to its audience.

Startup Digest—you can submit your content to the email digest, but without a guarantee it will be chosen.

Scoop.it—free forum allows publishers to share content with the large, online community.

AppleNews—Apple's news-aggregation service where you can publish a wide range of newsworthy articles. Because it's owned by Apple, your content will be automatically available on all iOS devices.

SmallBizTrends.com—an online publication where you can submit to publish advice and resources geared toward entrepreneurs and small businesses.

A few important tips before you begin

1. **Consider which articles you want to syndicate.** If you opt in to a partner site that auto-publishes your content from your site's feed, chances are not everything will be a good fit. Consider parsing content into categories and only auto-publishing content from a specific category.

2. **When you submit content, get it as close to final as possible.** The beauty of publishing via a content management system (CMS) is you can edit content when you want. But when it comes to syndication, don't count on quick turnaround of edits. Most sites have strict policies against pulling published content, making edits, then republishing.

3. **Pay attention to formatting.** Periodically check your syndicated content to see how it looks because you likely can't control how a third-party site displays your content. If you notice awkward formatting, make adjustments to minimize issues (e.g., if a partner site never respects your site's CSS when it comes to tables, embed an image of a table instead). Also, note how images and embedded video display and be sure you're choosing correct aspect ratios.

4. **Use tracking links to analyze your incoming traffic.** Tracking links enable you to dissect what traffic is coming from where, which can help inform your syndication choices. If traffic is minimal or low-quality from one source, you might reevaluate the time and effort (or money) you spend syndicating there.

The right content structure helps you tell your story with greater force, which then cuts through the noise and attracts your audience to you. This first planning step is what most marketers fail to do. So congratulations, you're ahead of the curve!

But don't rest on your laurels yet. What ultimately makes your content marketing a success isn't just the framework you build around it. It's also how you support this framework with amazing material.

Create your writing strategy

Securing Talent: The Biggest Challenge for Content Marketers Today

In today's hyper-competitive climate and info-saturated world, it's difficult to stand out. This is not the time to skimp, rush, or shortchange production in any way. As the Content Marketing Institute emphasizes, "Marketing is impossible without great content." And great content takes great writers. Therein lies one of your biggest challenges…

It's tough to find skilled professionals with the knowledge and experience to align with your business objectives, understand your topics, and meet your timeline.
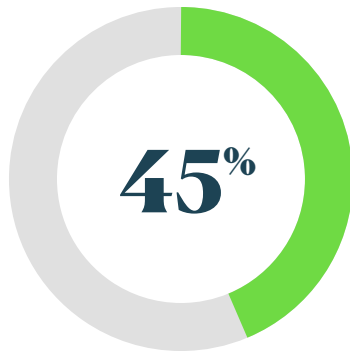
45% of advertising and marketing executives say it's difficult to find and attract quality content team members.

Adding to your challenge, competition for talented, creative professionals will only intensify as demand for their skills continues surging. In fact, **45%** of advertising and marketing executives say it's difficult to find and attract quality content team members.

If you don't have the talent you need, finding it may be your first priority. "Content creation challenges" were cited by **47%** of B2B marketers who saw a drop in success this year over last. But find the talent you must, as **85%** of companies celebrating success attribute it to their ability to create quality content.
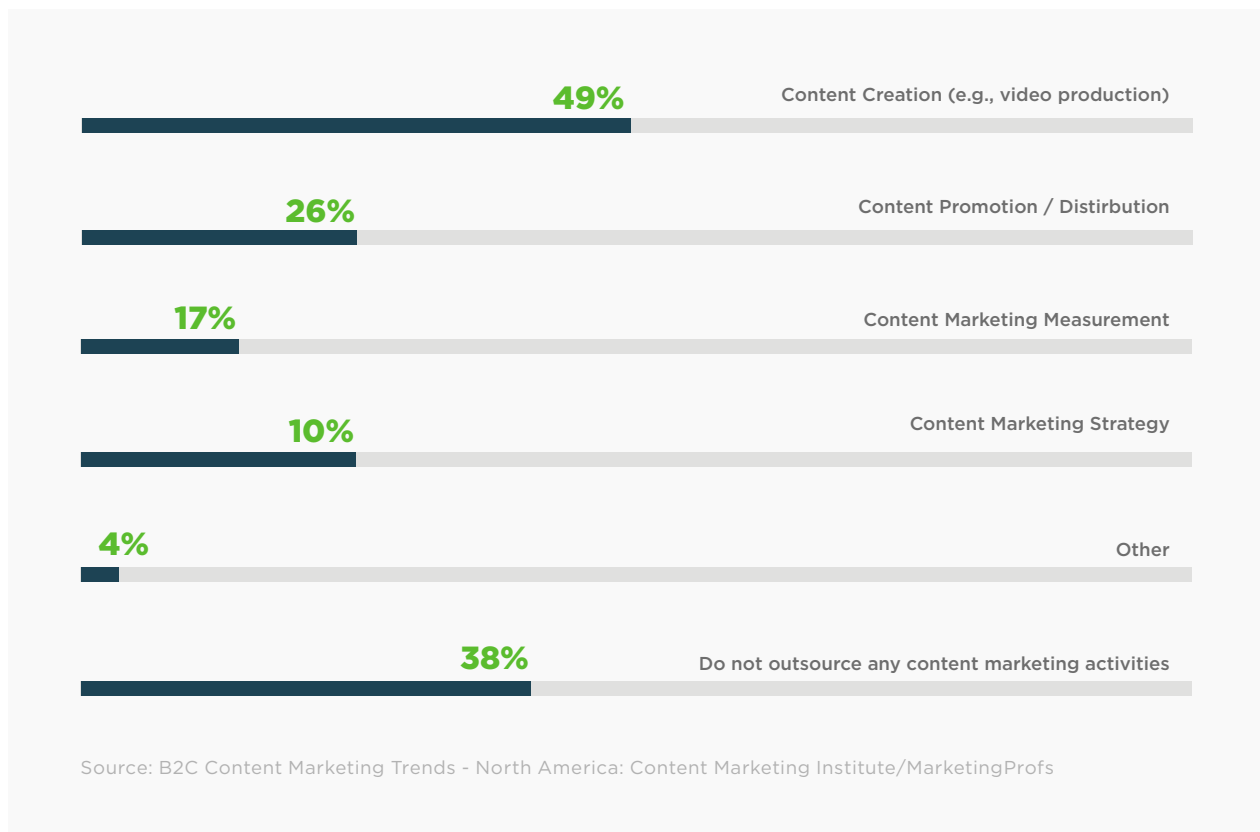
That's why more marketers are adopting…

Distributed Content Teams

Distributed teams are a hybrid of freelancers working with your employees on a project basis. Between talent gaps and tighter budgets, **62% of companies** already outsource their content marketing. A recent Upwork survey found six in 10 marketing strategists plan to hire freelancers within the next year.

These trends clearly show: Marketers must remain flexible and open about using remote freelancers.

Content Marketing Activities B2C Marketers Outsource

Percentage	Activity
49%	Content Creation (e.g., video production)
26%	Content Promotion / Distirbution
17%	Content Marketing Measurement
10%	Content Marketing Strategy
4%	Other
38%	Do not outsource any content marketing activities

Source: B2C Content Marketing Trends - North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

You will often find using geographically dispersed content writers saves you money. And they free up your time to consider effective content distribution strategies.

Increasing Productivity and Creativity With Freelancers

For Instapage CEO Tyson Quick, using a distributed team helps his Silicon Valley-based company. Because it's not limited by geographic location, the company can secure the best talent for each project. And the cost savings allows it to reinvest more into marketing and other full-time staff.

The company uses content writers from Moldova, Canada, and Portugal. Quick explains, "It makes sense, not only from a financial perspective but also from a quality perspective—sometimes we just can't find the talent we need locally. It really makes our content manager more effective because now he can produce three times more content every single week while maintaining our high quality standards. It's made a huge impact on our inbound marketing. As we go into new campaigns and verticals, it's amazing to have a pool of talent that lets us tap into different minds from different cultures. Without geographic boundaries, talent is judged solely by what you can do, not by where you are. That's huge."

> **66 Upwork helps me stay competitive, especially with San Francisco being such an expensive, competitive market for talent.**

Tyson Quick, Founder and CEO, Instapage

▯Instapage

Out of Sight Can't Mean Out of Mind

Working with a remote team can seem intimidating if you haven't done so before. Ensuring timelines are met and enabling good communication starts with building the right structure.

Treat your freelancers as important, meaningful contributors and you'll get high-quality work in return. You'll also benefit more from their years of experience as they collaborate more enthusiastically with your team.

You can cultivate this type of communication by putting more effort into including freelancers in relevant project communications. Having the right **technology to connect your team** can also make a significant difference.

Finding the Right Talent

Before choosing a writer, determine the type of content you need for your project. All writers are not the same; each has a different writing style as well as varied skills, industry knowledge, experience, and strengths. Matching a writer with the wrong project type can create a situation where the writer can't do his or her best work and your results suffer.

Types of Writers

Below are general types of copywriters and examples of content they create. Many writers can effectively write across several areas, or they may have additional specialties—like knowledge of a specific culture or expertise in a particular area, such as fundraising copy for nonprofits. Knowing the type of content you want to create will help narrow your search to professionals who have the specific skills you need.

1. **Direct response.** These are your sales writers, trained to get your audience's attention and guide them to take a specific action such as downloading, signing up, sharing, or buying something. Direct-response copywriters write everything from websites and landing pages to long-form copy and product packaging.

2. **Technical.** These writers specialize in a particular industry or area—and good ones are in high demand. If your business is technical in nature, you'll want a writer steeped in the right vernacular, who can write accurate content that's on trend within your industry. Technical copywriters write anything from white papers and instruction manuals to sales collateral.

3. **Business.** White papers, case studies, ebooks, and more—these are the hallmarks of solid business writers. They should understand how to position your business in your industry and how the collateral produced is valuable for B2B marketing and driving qualified leads to your sales team.

4. **Instructional.** These copywriters understand how to create how-to manuals, tutorials, and web instructions. They know what to include and what to leave out. Instructional copywriters are behind almost every user manual from smartphones to cars.

5. **Journalistic.** There's a growing demand for brand journalism, with organizations creating a publishing team dedicated to in-depth, heavily researched content rooted in an organization's interests.

Gauging a Writer's Skill Set

Finding the right talent takes steadfast effort. They must be able to grasp your business, know how to research content, and find the ideal way to present information based on your organization's needs and target audience.

Once you've sourced a few expert writers with the skills needed for your project, it's time to vet them. When determining a writer's skills, Upwork clients often use these methods:

- Review the writer's professional portfolio and past projects

- Conduct an interview

- Review referrals or feedback from the writer's clients

- Give the writer a small (paid) project to gauge skill and style

Depending on your organization and project types, consider other related skills that may be important. These may include:

- **Working with a content management system (CMS).** Do you need the writer to post approved articles in WordPress or other content systems? This can save your staff time, as the writer will be prepping his or her own content for publishing.

- **Search engine optimization (SEO).** Finding someone who has a basic understanding of keywords, meta descriptions, and how the key elements impact visibility in search is a huge bonus. With this knowledge, the writer can smoothly weave keywords into the content and further prep the project for publishing.

- **Image selection and prep.** This isn't as commonly needed, but a basic knowledge of how to select images in adherence to your brand guidelines, add them to an article, and tag them for SEO is helpful. This saves your staff more time, as the copywriter can manage most of the project's content on his or her own.

Paying Your Writers

It's important to promptly pay your freelancers in full upon final project delivery. Remember, finding good writers is tough—growing competition makes keeping them even tougher. Paying them promptly is one way to show how much you value their expertise. It may also encourage them to work with you again on future projects. Working with the same writers on multiple projects can improve how efficiently you create content. As your go-to bench of writers continue working with you, they develop a stronger understanding of your processes, organizational culture, audience, and industry.

Depending on the type and length of your project, some writers may require a 30-50% payment at the start. Payment may also be made based on time, a set schedule, or project milestones. For longer content pieces, you can divide payments to ensure the content is created on schedule. For example, HubSpot often pays 30-40% upon receiving the first draft, then pays the balance once the final copy is received. Many companies and writers have different payment expectations, so it's important to clarify them from the beginning.

How to Keep Your Team on Track

For any project, especially longer or multistep assignments, it's critical to agree on milestones with clear deadlines. This doesn't just keep everyone on track; it also lets you respond faster when progress falls behind or timelines need to be adjusted.

For example, the contract for an ebook might include multiple milestones:

Key Milestones for Your Writing Project

✓	**TOPIC**	10 ROI metrics you should be tracking to thrill your boss.
✓	**MILESTONE 1**	Writer research
✓	**MILESTONE 2**	Writer provides outline
✓	**MILESTONE 3**	Initial draft cue
✓	**MILESTONE 4**	Client provides feedback
✓	**MILESTONE 5**	Second draft due based on feedback
✓	**MILESTONE 6**	Client provides final review/feedback
✓	**MILESTONE 7**	Finished project delivered

Consider Supporting Content Marketing Roles

While writers play a key role in bringing your content strategy to life, the content creation process involves supporting roles too. Conveniently, all of these tasks can be accomplished through a contingent (freelance) workforce:

- Legal review

- Checking to avoid plagiarism

- Polishing (e.g., ensuring SEO components, image tags, and working links)

- Scheduling final publication

- Editing and proofreading

- Illustration and design

Legal review

Plagiarism check

Polishing

Scheduling final publication
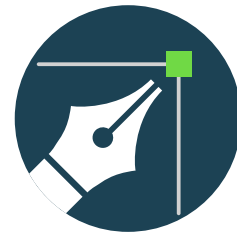
Editing & Proofreading

Illustration & Design

Establish a Content-Flow Process

Never create any content before knowing the content-flow process. Even knowing who should review content and when helps provide clarity and easily identify where delays are occurring so that you can fix them.

Content Marketing Process

	2-3 WEEKS **Content Creation**	2-3 WEEKS **Content Creation**	2-3 DAYS **Review**	2 DAYS **Edit**	1-2 DAYS **Polish**	2-4 DAYS **Publish**	1 DAY **Distribute**
WHAT	Starting with data collection and brainstorming, use value and volume to prioritize a list of topics.	Create a brief for the content writers. For blog content, this maybe a working title and description; long-term content may require an outline and creative direction.	Content draft goes into review	Comments and revisions addressed. Content updated. Final courtesy review.	Prepare and finalize content for publication. This may include selection images, optimizing for SEO, or adding to your contetn management system.	Prepare and finalize content for publication. This may include selection images, optimizing for SEO, or adding to your contetn management system.	Send content to syndication sites you set up agreements with. Some sites max out how many articles you can publish a day.
WHO	Content Strategist	Writer	Stakeholders, Experts, Legal & Editorial	Writer	Writer	Writer	Writer or Admin
HINTS	Ideation is crucial to success—don't skip it! Kepp ideas prioritized to fill your contetn pipeline.	A good creative brief goes a long way here! Review content ideation with writers and ensure that any research—e.g., interviews with subject—matter expertes–is reflected in the timeline.	Provide deadlines ot kepp things on track. Stick to a short list of "must have" reviewers. Assign specific objectives to each reviewer.		Suggestion: Have an SEO expert weigh in here.		It may take a couple of days to research and set up partnerships sites. If your contetn is on automatic feed, assign a person to monitor formatting and comments.

Making time to track progress, complete editing rounds, run through legal, and so on can get tricky. Do it for dozens of projects simultaneously and you'll see how crazy it can get, fast! Thankfully, you have endless options. A quick online search will offer many ways to design a process that works for you. **Technology is also very helpful—a content marketing automation platform like Scoop.it Content Director can help you manage the entire process.**

Planning + People = Success

The most important ingredient for any content marketing strategy is clarity. For the most effective marketers, this means having a documented strategy in place—and the team to pull it off.

Otherwise, you risk spending a lot of time and money wondering what you've accomplished. Or worse, you're left floundering while your competitors take the lead.

Success comes not from churning out a lot of half-hearted content but from knowing who you want to reach and the kind of content that will resonate with them, and then creating a body of work that strategically guides them to take your desired actions.

A solid plan can put you ahead of the **70% of marketers** who aren't sure their efforts are working. You don't have to be one of them.

Let's get started.

Securing your talent is just the start.

For tips on how to optimize freelancers for smoother projects and better outcomes, check out the real-world advice at **Hiring Headquarters.**

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