

Practical Guide to Data- Driven Content Marketing

by SEMrush



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Introduction



Introduction

Content marketing has become an essential part of any successful digital marketing strategy. However, many content professionals are still unsure of the best way to create high-quality content.

At SEMrush, we know this struggle, as we create both educational and product content to help marketers learn how to solve their daily tasks by using our tools. In order to make headway and strengthen our knowledge, we decided to investigate how the content marketing process is organized 'in the wild'. With this goal in mind, our team conducted surveys with experts from around the world (including agencies [Re:signal](#), [Invox](#) and [1min30](#), who we sincerely thank), allowing us to formalize the standard workflow of content marketing professionals.



Based on the insights gained, we understand that the key content marketing goals are to:

- Create content that delivers value to the desired audience.
- Ensure content will help to achieve the set marketing goals.

At this point, we can state with confidence that **high-quality content relies on precise analytics and trustworthy data**. When content is not supported by data, you can never be sure that it will directly hit the audience's pain points and contribute to your objectives.

However, the data-driven approach to content marketing is no easy matter and has specific challenges:

- 1 Gathering data takes a lot of time.
- 2 Big data is hard to analyze and prioritize.
- 3 Data is usually scattered over different tools, reports and documents, which prevents you from seeing the whole picture.

Our research and experience prove that only when this preliminary work, including data collection and analysis, is done, does content marketing perform effectively and take a good aim.

Having learnt this, we created our all-in-one solution – [SEMrush Content Marketing Platform](#) – where content professionals can easily get all the necessary strategy-building data in one place and make data-informed decisions throughout the entire content marketing life cycle.

Using all of this experience, we created this guide to help marketers develop and refine content marketing strategy based on trustworthy data step-by-step.

Who Is This Guide for?

This guide is developed for:



Content Writers — This guide allows you to find out what exactly to focus on while creating content and how to quickly assess the performance of your articles.



Editors — You will learn how to plan and create content that connects with your target audience and make sure it performs well in search results.



Content Strategists — This guide will tell you how to plan your strategy the most efficient way, discover the essential components, and see how data helps to make your strategy more effective and contribute to your overall goals faster.

What is Data-Driven Content Marketing?

More than the simple creation and distribution of editorial content, content marketing encompasses an entire strategic process. It is deployed at all stages of the user journey: it should attract visitors, identify prospects, turn these prospects into customers, and ultimately build their loyalty and integrate them into your community.

To achieve all of these steps in your content marketing, you have to concentrate on the main goal — bringing value to your audience. The data-driven approach allows you to clearly pinpoint exactly what your audience needs, make data-informed suggestions and confirm them confidently instead of moving blindly in several directions.

Data analysis helps you at every step of the content life cycle:

- 1 Researching and planning content — helps you to develop the right strategy, which includes your target audience and market analysis, define goals and plan your activities.
- 2 Creating content — helps you to create content for selected topics that will not only answer your audience's questions, but also contribute to your website's overall visibility.
- 3 Distributing content — helps you to discover the right channels to connect with your target audience.
- 4 Tracking content performance — helps you to assess the effectiveness of your efforts, test different approaches to your target audience and choose the approach that best allows you to achieve your goals by bringing value to your target audience.

Successful marketing no longer involves going after your prospects with a series of one-way messages delivered in bulk. Rather, it's about engaging your audience by offering them a personalized experience that they themselves will seek out and share with their peers.

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“A data-driven content marketing strategy can make all the difference in the world to your success. In fact, you need data if you want to be able to stand out from the crowd and your competitors. Data can tell you a lot of things that will improve your strategy and your content, from knowing where your audience spends their time online to learning exactly what kind of content they consume, what keywords they use the most and much, much more.

Plus, the more you learn about your audience and their needs and preferences, the easier it will be to create personalized marketing campaigns and personalized content so that you can ultimately convert more people, faster.”



Lilach Bullock

Lead Conversion Expert, Speaker, Content Marketing and Social Media Specialist

It might sound ambitious, but a solid content marketing strategy backed by data is essential to the success of your global marketing strategy. Here are the marketing goals you can achieve with a data-driven approach:

Generate quality traffic

Value-added content that addresses the specific problems or needs of your target audience will improve the flow of relevant visitors, and thus the quality of your leads.

Increase your conversion rate

If you know how to interact with your consumers, address subjects that interest them, answer their questions, or move and delight them; your products and/or services will gain in credibility and popularity.

Build customer loyalty and grow your community

By inspiring your customers, making them smile or keeping them on the edge of their seat, you'll turn them into true ambassadors. Content marketing allows you to create a unique world that your customers want to be a part of.

Improve your online visibility

The level of traffic and relevant content sharing are good quality indicators for Google. The more engaging your content, the better your SEO ranking - and your visibility on search engines!

Boost your brand image

Content marketing gives you an opportunity to stand out and declare your brand's USP. By refining your digital identity, you get closer to your target audience.

Position yourself as an expert in your industry

Creating and publishing content allows you to claim your expertise, your consulting skills, and your awareness of your audience's expectations. This will in turn boost brand awareness and inspire trust in your potential customers.

The Benefits of Data-Driven Content Marketing in Numbers

- In today's digital age, your potential audience is almost unlimited. A good content marketing strategy allows you to take advantage of this opportunity by **increasing the number of visitors to your site by up to 55%**.
- The online visibility of websites offering relevant content also benefits: on average, websites gain **+434% on pages indexed by search engines**.
- Quality content makes your site worthy of being visited... and therefore recommended. **Backlinks** are boosted by **+97%**.
- Targeted content means attracting qualified prospects. Exploit your content and **multiply your leads fivefold**.
- Content marketing will generate a turnover of **\$300 billion in 2019...** even though it costs **62% less than traditional marketing!**

Sources: DemandMetric, Contently, Deliate Digital

The Content Marketing Cycle



The Content Marketing Cycle

As you can imagine, setting up an effective content marketing strategy takes planning.

While developing the strategy, data analysis allows a content marketer to back up their creative ideas and suggestions with real figures. Using data, you can prevent yourself from wasting time on interacting with the wrong audience, or creating content about irrelevant topics, and be capable of setting reasonable and achievable goals.

Successful content marketing follows a **precise, step-by-step methodology**, composed of five key stages:



1. Research: Analyze Your Market (and Your Competition)

One of the main objectives of content marketing is to offer a unique experience to your audience. As such, your first port of call is to examine your competitive environment. What is your industry niche? Who are its leaders? Its influencers? What are your particular strengths as well as your weaknesses? And how do you transform them into high added-value traits?

” *The most demanding part of a content marketing lifecycle is the research up front. I like to plan out my content in advance and during the research I need to:*

- *Identify/update the personas of the people I want to target;*
- *Research the competition;*
- *Research keywords/topics;*
- *Map out all the content for months in advance;*
- *Map out our lead generation process to generate leads through our content;*
- *Define the promotion strategy for content;*

This work takes a lot of time up front but it makes a content marketers job a lot easier.



[Ian Cleary](#)

Founder of RazorSocial and Marketing Keynote Speaker

This is just an introductory excerpt

You can download the full version here:

<https://www.semrush.com/ebooks/guide-to-data-driven-content-marketing/>