The Ultimate Guide for Content Marketers

by SEMrush
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Introduction

You will hardly find a business that doesn't know how important content is and why it should be created. However, when it comes to planning and writing, there are many challenges for content marketers. These include questions like what to write about a particular topic, how to make your content appear on good positions in SERP and where to distribute it, how to measure content performance, and subsequently adjust your content strategy.

The modern content marketer, along with knowing the audience's needs and being a good writer, should also be a bit of an SEO specialist, a PR manager, and an analyst. Considering the lack of knowledge and practice in some of these areas, it’s no wonder that many of them feel confused and helpless. And even if you are a professional across the board, it still takes a lot of time and effort to implement everything neatly.

We at SEMrush know how painful it can be, and that’s why we have created this guide explaining how to implement each step the right way, and with a minimum of time investment, using our tools. We are also constantly working on the development of a comprehensive toolkit to help content marketers of all skill levels reach their goals with minimal effort.
Who is this guide for?

This guide is for content strategists/digital marketers that choose the content approach as a key marketing strategy. In this guide, we’ll show you how to carry out content marketing from A to Z using SEMrush.

It is also for content writers who work on article structure, content optimization and distribution.
Content Analysis & Optimization
A strategic approach to content creation implies that no content should be created out of the blue. Before writing a new piece, you need to know how it’s going to fit into your current content strategy and serve the goals that you set for your website.

Moreover, sometimes it’s not necessary to produce new content from scratch, when you could update old material: older pages have a ranking advantage, so it makes more sense to optimize them rather than create new ones.

With all this in mind, step one for any content strategist is a proper content audit.

**Content Audit**

Tools to use: **Content Audit**

Analyze and assess your content based on SEO/user behavior/engagement metrics.

A content audit is a comprehensive task, and should involve monitoring of various performance metrics. But whatever you do, your ultimate goal is to create an optimization plan that includes a list of pages to update / optimize and new materials to create.

Each metric should not be considered as a sole measure of success, since only a combination provides a full picture. These are the main metrics that you should constantly monitor:

- Traffic and user behavior signals,
- Social media engagement,
- Backlinks,
- Search queries,
- Organic positions.
In the **Content Audit** tool, you can monitor each of these metrics in dynamic. To begin using it, set up the tool by selecting the subfolders from your sitemap.xml file.

![Select domain subfolders you want to audit](image)

Traffic and user behavior signals

How many users read your content? How much time do they spend on a particular article? Are they ultimately satisfied?

There are five metrics that will help you answer these questions and all of them can be found in the **Content Audit tool**.

- **Sessions** shows the total number of Sessions, where a Session is a period of time a user is actively engaged with your website.

- **Avg. Session Duration** demonstrates the average length of a session.

- **Pageviews** is the total number of times the page has been viewed.

- **Avg. Time on Page** shows the average time a user spent viewing a specific page.

- **Bounce Rate** is the percentage of users that left the particular page without visiting any other pages on your website.
Each of these metrics is a source of insight on improving your content strategy. For example, a small number of sessions may indicate a poor choice of keywords. The rest often signal that you don’t give your audience what they expect to get.

You can switch between Sessions and Pageviews data for every page by simply clicking on the ‘Pageviews’/‘Sessions’ button at the top of the report.
Social media engagement

In this section, you can see the number of shares across various social media: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Sorting the pages by the total number of shares in each social media can help you see what posts get the most engagement and determine your audience's preferences.

For instance, if one of your Facebook posts gets significantly more shares than usual, it could be a sign that the topic that you’re talking about is popular with your Facebook audience, so it makes sense to create a discussion around it or deepen the research and produce more content.

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Backlinks

Sorting the pages by number of backlinks is a good way to analyze what content has the best referral potential. In the Backlinks column, you can see how many backlinks a certain page has and how many of them are new.
Later on, you can analyse the pages with the richest backlink profiles to look for link-building ideas for other materials.

Search queries

If you connect your Google Search Console account, the Content Audit tool will also give you the number of Search Queries your page was displayed for in Google search results.

Data from your Google accounts represents the last 30 days. If you click on the search queries' number, you’ll see the Top-5 Search Queries for your particular article and the position it has in Google.

Monitoring your search queries will reveal insights into how people actually find your article among other search results and give you the opportunity to find new keywords to target.
Tracking your content performance for target keywords is crucial for visibility. In the end, it’s the keywords that users search for, so getting your content to the first page of search results requires constant monitoring.

Also, checking how much engagement your post gets on social media and how many backlinks it earns is an unending source of motivation.

And last but not least, it’s always useful to keep track of your competitor’s performance, paying special attention to their most popular or recent publications.

To do this, you can add the posts that interest you to the Post Tracking tool.

Here, you can select the target keywords of your post by clicking on the Add keywords button. You can add the keywords of your choice, or select the ones suggested by SEMrush.
The Daily changes button will take you to the charts with the:

- Post referral traffic trend,
- Visibility trend,
- Shares growth trend,
- Daily changes trend, and
- Backlink trend.

These charts will give you new insights into how your performance for a certain article is changing daily. The charts’ data can be filtered for the last 14 days, 1-3 months, or all time.
If the page rankings have dropped and do not improve over time, it’s the right moment to check for optimization opportunities.

All the content performance metrics are interrelated indicating one thing: whether your audience likes your content or not. It’s not enough to monitor just one of those metrics, as the others can be a good source of ideas for optimization and improvement. To keep track of all the optimization work that you do, you can edit the Workflow section in Content Audit.

Here, you can add single tasks, such as “Get 5 backlinks from www.website.com” or “Update meta tags”, assign different statuses to those tasks and then evaluate the results of your optimization efforts.

Go to SEO Writing Assistant whenever you’re ready to optimize your article.
This is just an introductory excerpt

You can download the full version here: