

A woman with long brown hair is seen from behind, sitting at a wooden table and working on a laptop. The setting is a cozy, rustic interior with a red brick wall in the background. A green vine plant hangs from above. To the right, there are wooden shelves with various items, including two glasses and a box labeled 'SCRAMBLE'. A window with white curtains is visible on the left. The overall atmosphere is warm and focused.





# **Why Content Marketing Is Essential** for Small Business



# Why Content Marketing Is Essential for Small Business

**Content marketing** is a strategic marketing approach that attracts your ideal customers through engaging, highly-relevant content and drives them toward actions that lead to a sale.

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	Create Engaging Content.....	03
	• Awareness - Try a contest	
	• Consideration - Encourage reviews	
	• Conversion - Offer a demo	
	• Engagement - Show them how to use it	
	• Branding - Enable evangelists	
	Top 4 Content Marketing Channels for Small Business.....	06
	• Website & Blog	
	• Social Media	
	• Email Marketing	
	• Video Marketing	
	5 Questions to Determine Whether a Content Platform Is for You.....	08
	• Does it help me achieve my business goals?	
	• Are my target customers using this platform?	
	• Are my competitors visible in this space?	
	• Does this platform fit in with my brand?	
	• Can I keep a steady cadence of content going?	
	How to Leverage Every Piece of Content.....	10
	• Have a plan to share it	
	• Include a call to action	
	• Use brand colors	
	• Improve visibility	
	• Engage influencers	





## Introduction

### Traditional Marketing Isn't Cost Effective

Traditional marketing methods, like commercials and pop-up ads, attempt to capture attention by interrupting customers while they are doing something else. These methods are often called “push marketing” because customers see them whether they are interested or not. While push marketing techniques can be effective at building awareness, they can be expensive. Worse, in a world where **98% of the population** cannot focus on more than one thing at a time as a result of information overload, push marketing has lost much of its effectiveness. People don't want to be interrupted by commercials or ads that have no relevance to them.

By contrast, “pull marketing” techniques are directed at customers specifically searching for information. Because you are only reaching customers who are interested, it's more cost-effective and is more likely to convert into a sale.

### Content Marketing Is Affordable and Effective

Content marketing is a strategic, pull-marketing approach focused on creating targeted content for a very specific audience. For a small business on the rise, it's an essential investment that offers the highest probability of return.

Here are just a few of the ways businesses can use content marketing to reach their goals:

- Attract and gain trust of a target market.
- Create a community where the target audience can share information.
- Capture a potential customer's contact information.
- Nurture existing customers through email or social media.
- Prequalify and score leads to prioritize which ones are most likely to buy.
- Convince existing leads to buy.
- Learn more about existing customers.

# Create Engaging Content



## Create Engaging Content

Customers often go through a consideration process before they buy. They move from recognizing that they need a product or service, to researching it, to evaluating reviews and features, and ultimately making a purchase decision. When brainstorming what content to produce, it's helpful to focus the content based on the buying stage and what action you want them to take.

Buying Stage of Customer	Goal of Content	Best Content Type
Suspect: People you believe might be interested in your product.	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thought leadership</li> <li>• Fun games</li> <li>• Contests</li> </ul>
Prospect: People who expressed interest in your product.	Consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews</li> <li>• How-to's</li> <li>• Expert/insider advice</li> </ul>
Lead: People who have either purchased in the past or who have requested more information about your product.	Conversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demos</li> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Testimonials</li> </ul>
Customers: People who have completed a recent purchase.	Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to get the most out of your product</li> <li>• Additional features</li> </ul>
Evangelists: People who love your product enough to help you promote it.	Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusive insights for loyal customers</li> <li>• "Cool" sharable, branded content</li> <li>• Content about what you stand for, social causes, or other reasons customers should feel good about doing business with you.</li> </ul>

## For example, a hair salon targeting bridal parties could develop the following content for each stage:

### Awareness

A photo gallery of the top bridal updos

Short articles on how to choose a style or how to keep the look throughout the day

### Consideration

Video interviews with stylists on best bridal tips with samples of their work

Demonstrations of different looks

### Conversion

Videos of bridal transformations ending with a brief review of how the bride feels

Testimonials from happy brides

### Engagement

An article on how to make pre-wedding preparations more fun for the bridal party



**Make a list of questions customers typically ask—this is a source of ideas on what content to produce.**

## Make It Relevant

Relevancy is often influenced by the customer's mood. Once you've come up with a list of content ideas, here are three questions to make each piece more relevant:

- Is this the right time to present this topic? Are there seasons or even times of day, such as the customer's commute, that work best for presenting this particular content?
- Am I targeting customers at the right point in the buying cycle?
- Is the channel I'm choosing the right channel to promote this type of content?





# **Top 4 Content Marketing Channels for Small Business**

## Top 4 Content Marketing Channels for Small Business

Here are four places small business should consider focusing their content marketing strategy:



### 1. Website & Blog

Whether you decide to post regularly or just publish a few articles to your website, blogs help improve your site's search engine optimization efforts (SEO) and can build credibility and brand awareness by showing your business as a thought leader in the industry.



### 2. Social Media

According to **Statista**, 3.6 billion people were on social media worldwide in 2020, and that number is expected to grow to 4.4 billion by 2025. Given that a majority of your customers are likely to be on at least one of these social media platforms – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube – consider creating profiles and starting to post just once a week. To optimize your outreach, focus only on the platforms that attract your target audience (see section below). Build up your presence over time, and experiment with different types of content (blog posts, photos, memes, and video) to see what goes viral for your audience. As soon as your profile is up, entice current customers to “like” and “share” your page by offering a coupon or other perk, so you build up a following quickly. Check out our **blog post** on questions to ask yourself before launching a social media campaign.



### 3. Email Marketing

Email can be an effective marketing tool to help you connect with your customers. Such formats can include monthly newsletters, personalized communications about sales and promotions, new product announcements, and cart abandonment reminders. Email is also an owned media channel, which means that nobody is dictating when, how, and why you can contact your prospects. Keep in mind, though, customers may unsubscribe if you overdo it on the number of communications they receive daily or even weekly.



### 4. Video Marketing

Video is a very persuasive medium. Studies have shown that **55% of consumers** research products on YouTube before making a purchase decision. In fact, YouTube gets more than **122 million active viewers** per day. Host your videos on YouTube and then add a YouTube player to your website. That way you'll benefit from people searching directly on YouTube, and your site will be more engaging and interactive.



# 5 Questions to Determine Whether a Content Platform Is for You



## 5 Questions to Determine Whether a Content Platform Is for You

**Creating and maintaining a social media presence can take up a lot of your time. Before you dive in and create profiles on every platform, consider these five questions:**

1.

Does it help me achieve my most important business goals for the year?

2.

Are my target customers using this platform? If not, it's probably not worth your time.

3.

Are my competitors visible in this space? Sometimes a channel might not be the best place to engage your target audience, but it's important to be visible there for credibility reasons. If you're unsure, try asking customers casually when they check out whether they use the platform.

4.

Does this platform fit in with my brand? Some platforms are more professionally-minded, such as LinkedIn, and others are more fun and social. Make sure the platform's culture fits in with your brand.

5.

Can I keep a steady cadence of content going? It's best practice not to actively create content and then suddenly abandon a social media profile. Carefully consider how much time you'll have to dedicate to social media, and only commit to a platform if you know you'll have the time to develop and cultivate it.



# How to Leverage Every Piece of Content





## How to Leverage Every Piece of Content

**Content marketing can be a cost-effective way to develop more meaningful relationships with your customers. The key to making content marketing work is to take the time to make a quality piece with valuable information for your customers.**

**Get the most out of every piece of content with the following tips:**



### **Have a plan to share it**

Posting an article on your blog or website is a good start, but consider taking advantage of all the free options available to you – share on social media, include links to your blog in an email newsletter, and pitch to relevant industry blogs. Consider also leaving QR codes to your blog by the cashier, in your waiting area, or on tables that customers can scan to easily get to your content. Having valuable and relevant information helps set you apart from other vendors and builds you up as an expert in your field.



### **Include a call to action**

Every single piece of content should have a call to action at the end that helps you reach your business goals. The call to action can be as simple as “Book an appointment now” or “Buy now”. Other examples include: Sign up to get coupons, Join our mailing list, or Like us on Facebook.



### **Use brand color**

Customers should be able to immediately recognize the content came from you, so use your logo and branding colors.



### **Improve visibility**

If the content is hosted on the web, make sure to optimize it for SEO. If you’re spreading the word on social media, try sponsoring it to get in front of your audience or use hashtags.



### **Engage influencers**

Invite key Yelp and other review site users to visit your store and give a review.

**For more helpful tips on  
how to do business better, visit:**  
[blog.clover.com](https://blog.clover.com)

**To learn more about us, visit:**  
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