Manual for a successful content marketing strategy

## INTERACTIVE INDEX

Introduction

Sweet, sticky golden honey –– it's a sacred elixir that takes a lot of time and effort to make. To ensure it's not wasted, it should be stored in a dedicated honey pot or a honeycomb.

Like honey, good content also needs its own special pot –– a pot made up of all the essential inbound marketing activities that ensure your content is of good quality and attracting the right kind of buzz.

There's a lot of demand for great content on the internet; having a constant supply of high-quality content is therefore essential. You may find that your pot empties quite quickly, and you have to rush to fill it with new content. But producing fresh, engaging and exciting material isn't something that can easily be conveyorised. Just like bees need access to the right flowers to infuse their honey with new and delicious flavours, you need the tools, skills and expertise to analyse your results and continuously optimise your content.

Content marketing is currently the most sustainable form of advertising, linked with social media and effective SEO activities, and it's a central component of the inbound marketing strategy. At BEE, content marketing is something we take very seriously, and we'd like to share our expertise with you so that you can enjoy the benefits too.

Ben Klein, CEO
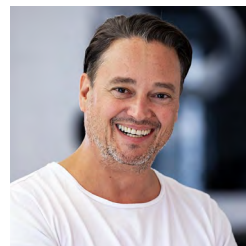
Authors

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Romy supports BEE.Hive as Head of Marketing. With her experience in the agency environment and as a HubSpot trainer, she can actively support our clients and us in matters of inbound marketing. Her passion is finding new ways to make your own marketing more successful. Sometimes you have to rethink completely –– and that's what she does. She also has in-depth social media knowledge, which she has used in recent years, especially for IT technology companies, and is now using it to build up BEE.Marketing.

Manuela Krapf

Manuela loves things that have a powerful dynamic: innovative marketing technologies, content marketing strategies, and the creation of an exciting online presence. She soaks up life's compelling content, extracts the essence, and makes it clear and shareable for others. After receiving her training, Manuela has implemented flourishing inbound marketing strategies in the corporate world and now brings valuable experience to BEE's clients as Director Customer Success.

Adrian Siuda

Adrian is a digital native. After completing his studies, he now buzzes around BEE's HQ in Zurich, delivering his expertise as SEO specialist. Relaxed yet hyper-imaginative, Adrian achieves rock-solid SEO results for our clients.

Carina Rieger

Carina has worked in the agency sector and account management for around 20 years. With strong conceptual and writing skills, Carina has a genuine passion for content in all formats and covers an exciting range of subject areas –– IT and telecommunications, insurance, architecture, medicine, non-profit organisations and more.

What is Content Marketing?

According to Wikipedia, content marketing is „a marketing technique that is intended to address the target group with informative, advisory and entertaining content in order to convince them of one's own company and its range of services or one's own brand and to win or retain them as customers".
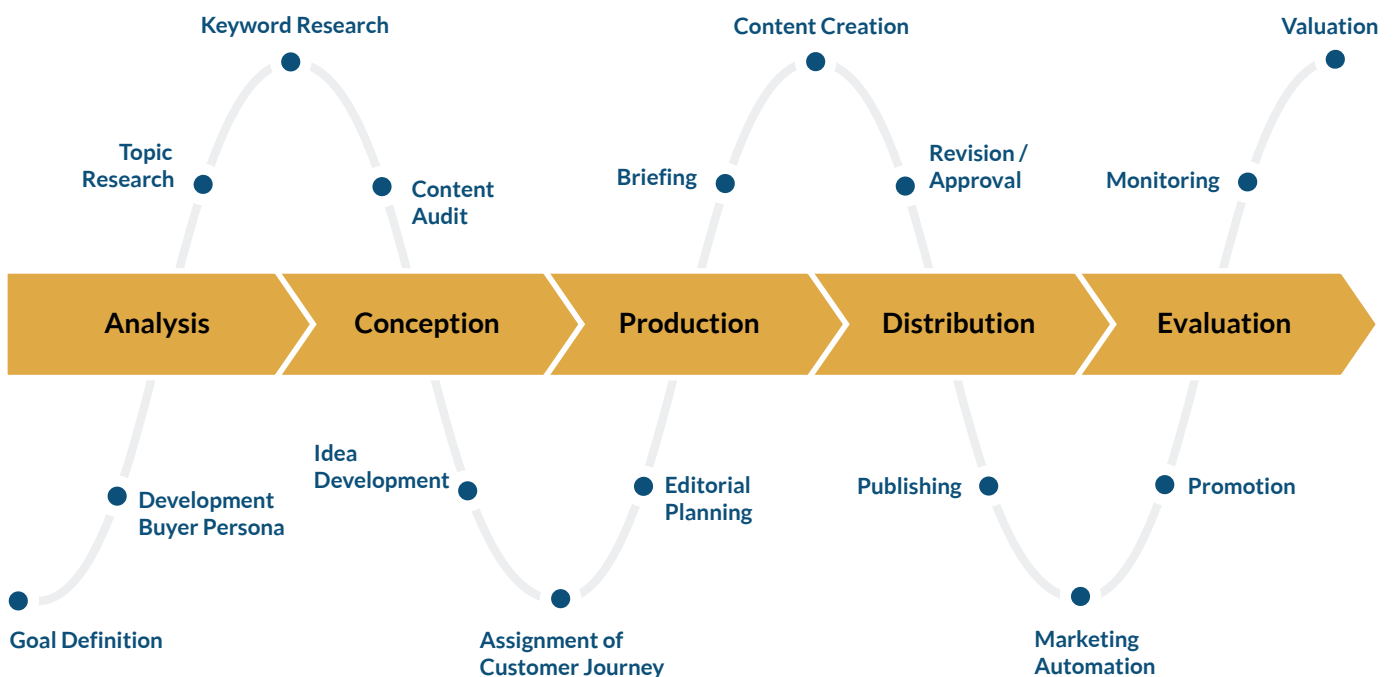
In line with this, content strategy is also defined by Wikipedia as follows: „A content strategy regulates the professional and structured hand-ling of digital content. In principle, this includes any information that is available on the inter-net. The focus is primarily on the content of a website –– starting with navigation naming and web texts to images, podcasts, videos, etc.". Whether content strategy should now also be distinguished from the content marketing stra-tegy is currently rather controversial.

For us, both definitions result in the following:

- the target group must be defined
- the content must be tailored to them
- the content must be generated on an ongoing basis
- the content must be made accessible to the target group
- the content must be reviewed on an ongoing basis

In summary, the content process is as follows:

Analysis	Conception	Production	Distribution	Evaluation

Above the line:
- **Keyword Research**
- **Topic Research**
- **Content Audit**
- **Content Creation**
- **Briefing**
- **Revision / Approval**
- **Valuation**
- **Monitoring**

Below the line:
- **Goal Definition**
- **Development Buyer Persona**
- **Idea Development**
- **Assignment of Customer Journey**
- **Editorial Planning**
- **Publishing**
- **Marketing Automation**
- **Promotion**

We will look at the individual steps of this process in more detail in the following chapters.

Goals and KPIs in Content Marketing

To be successful in content marketing, it is essential to set goals. These goals should be SMART. SMART is a methodology that helps to create concrete and realistic goals. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound. HubSpot has put together a detailed guide on how to do this.

As a rule, content marketing goals can be divided into three categories:

1. Brand positioning (brand building)
2. Customer acquisition and lead generation
3. Customer retention

These can, in turn, be broken down into short-term and long-term goals. Short-term goals include all activities that increase awareness by increasing reach through share of buzz, social growth and interactions, or by improving the number of visitors and backlinks.

The long-term goals in content marketing include the following:

- Community building
- Establishing your own communication system via chat, messenger, etc.
- Building a brand
- Building trust and reputation
- Building up social media channels
- Findability in search engines
- Building blog subscribers
- Influencer retention
- Long-term loyal customer relationships
- Return website visitors

Content marketing requires time and staying power. But with the right strategy, the right and juiciest fruits can be reaped in the long term.

To measure the goals and thus the return on investment (ROI), you need the right key performance indicators (KPIs). ROI is one of the most difficult values to determine in marketing. It reflects the profitability of a campaign by comparing the costs with the returns. The costs can usually be determined quickly, but it's more challenging to work out the return. That's why we recommend using a holistic software like HubSpot because it stores both the cost of marketing and the sales revenue generated. This makes it easy to calculate an ROI.

According to the SMART rule, only measurable KPIs should be chosen. These include figures like:

- Number of website visitors
- Number of leads generated
- Number of customers generated
- Conversion rates
- Number of blog hits
- Completed subscriptions
- Number of emails opened
- Number of links clicked in an email, etc.

In addition, these KPIs should always be linked to the above-mentioned goals and show whether you are on the right track to achieve them.

Once the goals and KPIs are set, the next step is to find topics.

Content Topics

One crucial point in advance: research takes time! Sometimes, a lot of time. And for the content to be successful in the long term, it must be strategically researched. This requires the creation of a buyer persona. Only those who know their customers precisely can address them in a sales-effective way. Therefore, all content and activities must be squarely aligned with the challenges and needs of the buyer personas –– the ideal customers.

The goal is to reach prospective customers and get them to follow you and, ideally, to close a sale. So, how do you manage to address the target person with the right content at the right time in the sales cycle? The answer: If the buyer personas are clearly defined, you hit the mark in every phase of the customer journey.

Buyer personas and customer journey: in the context of inbound marketing, these are two important terms that take the place of the target person and target group. Why? They are, so to speak, further developments. Because conventional categorisation has had its day in the digital age –– the idea of „target groups" is no longer purposeful. Above all, this is because the former seller's market has changed into a buyer's market. Products and content are no longer created to be brought to the man or woman, i.e. to the target group. No, buyers are independently looking for their favourite product or brand on the internet and via social media.

What is a Buyer Persona?

In contrast to the target group, the Buyer Persona is a semi-fictitious representation of a real customer. The Buyer Persona is precisely characterised and described in the context of their complex life –– demographic characteristics, actions and desires, personality, online behaviour, problems and needs. A name and photo are also attached to the Buyer Persona, helping to truly visualise them. It is the imaginary person for whom your products, services and solutions are perfectly suited.

Preparation is half the persona

Before creating the buyer personas, these three important preparatory steps should be taken:

1. Look at your own client base: Who is the main contact person in the respective departments of the customer's organisation? Which contacts will be needed in the future to achieve the sales goals? There will also be cases where two Buyer Personas from different industries are similar. Defining industry-specific buyer personas is the easiest way to simplify things for buyers: doubts about whether the product is also suitable for their industry do not arise at all.
 Pro Tip: Companies should always make it clear for whom their offer is suitable. After all, a potential buyer will always search for the ideal solution for his or her industry.

2. Rough estimation of buyer personas: It is quite possible that there are very many different Buyer Personas in a company.
 Pro Tip: Do not work with the maximum number of buyer personas! Limiting the number of buyer personas to 20 per cent of the existing customer base, who bring the most significant success to the market, will lead to the goal. This will result in about ten buyer personas.

CONTENT TOPICS

3. Segmentation: Instead of segmenting buyer personas based on industry or demographics, also look at the people behind the ideal customer. What kind of personality do you and the team like to work with? For this, it doesn't hurt to talk to the sales manager or the customer service team. After all, colleagues know the customers best and know who likes to work with one's own product and company.

Now it's time to create the buyer persona. Here, it is important to answer the most important questions and create a „person" from them. Our checklist should make this easier.

With the existing buyer persona, it becomes apparent that certain content topics should become your main focus –– as a rule, these are the challenges of the buyer persona and how to solve them.

## Five sources for finding topics

1. **Content recycling**
   Most companies already have some content but don't know it. That's why a content audit is always recommended at the beginning. Using a list, all existing content should be recorded and sorted by type and topic. This can then be used to quickly and easily create a recycling plan.

2. **Surveys/feedback/reviews**
   It costs nothing to ask. Whether you ask customers via an online survey on the website or feedback requests via email, or whether you exchange ideas on topics with your project managers during telephone calls, depends on your own company structure and culture. Honest feedback from surveys can be used to improve one's own content offering.

3. **Social networks**
   Anyone already active on social networks knows that many topics can be found quickly and easily here. Twitter, in particular, makes it easy for searchers: the hashtag trends tell you what the hot topic is at the moment. On LinkedIn and Facebook, groups can be found to discuss current topics. Thanks to social listening, new ideas can come to the surface.
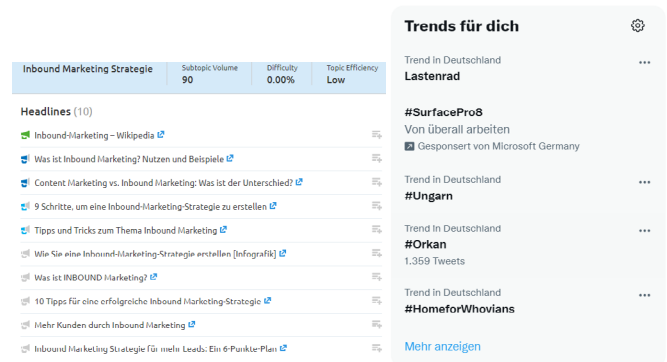
4. **Tools**
   W-questions are increasingly used in search queries and can therefore be helpful in finding ideas. Particularly pleasing: there are already some useful tools. Among the free tools is AnswerThePublic, for example. Paid tools such as Semrush or contentbird also offer this.

5. **Competitors**
   The competition is reading up too! And they are certainly also researching interesting new ideas for their website or blog. That's why you should always take a look at your competitors. What are they doing particularly well? Which posts land first places in the Google ranking? Are there niches that they do not serve?

Keyword research

Now that the most important topics have been found, it's time for keyword research. The search terms must be matched to the right target persons (Buyer Personas). A central task in keyword research is the exact definition of the target persons and their needs.

To get enough high-quality traffic to the website, using keywords that only describe your offer isn't enough. Rather, it is about:

1. Keywords or word combinations that exactly fit the target personas and offer.
2. Keywords or word combinations that have a chance of being listed on the first results pages.
3. Keywords or word combinations that many users search for.

Keyword, short-tail and long-tail keywords

The keyword is a single search term. Today, however, users usually enter several terms or word combinations in search engines. Studies show that currently, two-thirds of search queries are for word combinations instead of single words, and the trend is rising. The word combinations are also called short-tail or long-tail keywords. Short-tail keywords are short keyword phrases, such as „real estate Switzerland" or „necklace diamonds". Such search queries usually have a high monthly search volume. Long-tail keywords are search queries that are longer, more complex and less frequent than short-tail keywords, such as „buy dog collar with small diamonds" „older family home in Bern". Whether a single term makes sense as a keyword or rather a combination of words depends on the business, the market environment and the goals.

Attention with highly competitive and unknown keywords

When selecting keywords, you should check whether it makes sense to optimise the website for this keyword. Two criteria speak against this:

1. Extremely highly competitive keywords

If you find a highly competitive keyword, your website may not stand a chance with this search term. This applies, for example, to general terms or umbrella terms such as „insurance" or „cloud computing". If you are not one of the global players, such as AXA, Allianz, Amazon or Microsoft, it is better to optimise for a combination of two to three keywords instead of the highly contested keyword.

An example: An estate agent in Bern with a focus on the regional area should not rely on the keyword „real estate" for SEO. A word combination such as „real estate Bern", „real estate agent Bern", „buying a house Bern", „buying a detached house in Bern", etc. would make more sense. The advantage is obvious: the word combination reaches the right users right away, namely those looking for a property in the Bern area.

-> Optimisation for individual keywords is only sufficient if only a few other websites have the same topic.

2. The other extreme: „dead" or unknown keywords that no one searches for.

It is equally pointless to optimise your website for a keyword that hardly anyone searches for. It is relatively easy to appear at the top of the results lists by placing a rare keyword. But what good is it if only a few users a week search for it?

An example is self-designed artificial words: The exclusive dog collar with small diamonds is called „Diamonddog"? Fair enough. But no

one will find it if you choose „Diamonddog" as a keyword, at least not if it is not yet a self-runner. Terms like „diamond dog collar", collar for dogs with diamonds", „diamond dog collar" would perform better.

-> Even a number 1 ranking is useless if hardly anyone searches for the keyword.

Finding the right keywords

In order to find the target keywords, one should analyse which keywords or combinations of terms the target customers enter into the search engine when they want to find a page that has one's own content.

Probably the best-known tool for keyword research is the Google Ads Keyword Planner. It is actually intended for advertisers. The Planner shows the monthly search volumes of the queried search terms. In addition, matching related search queries are listed.

Another option is Google Suggest (Google Autocomplete). When the user enters the first letters of his search term, it displays matching keywords or keyword combinations directly below the input field. According to Google, these are the most frequently used search terms in the relevant context. Google Suggest can therefore serve as a first orientation. Incidentally, many of the available keyword tools use Google Suggest as a data source.

To find related keywords or questions, it is also advisable to use tools that suggest so-called LSI keywords (= Latent Semantic Indexing Keywords). LSI keywords are words and phrases that are very strongly related to a main topic in terms of meaning. The tools LSI Graph, Ubersuggest (taps into Google Keyword Planner and Google Suggestions) and AnswerThePublic, for example, can be used for this. At this point, the reader is also recommended to use the tool Buzzumo. With the „Question Analyzer" feature, the most frequently asked questions on forums, e-commerce sites, and Quora can

be elicited. The use of many related keywords makes it easier for Google to classify an article thematically correctly. At the same time, it signals that many aspects or questions of a topic are addressed. The use of many keyword variants and synonyms is also well received by search engines.
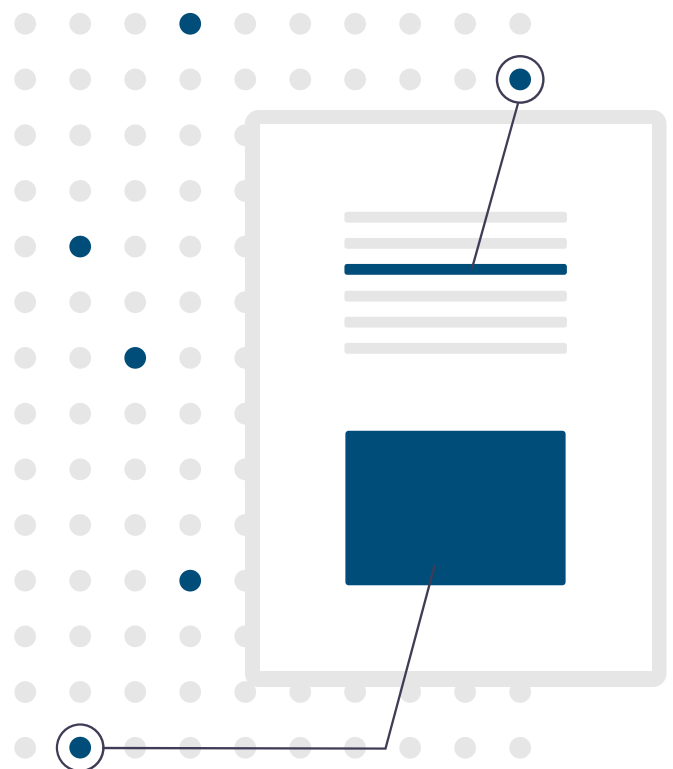
Content Plan

Your content should be relevant, varied and consistently published. For this reason, the various topics must be evenly distributed over the entire period. A sequence of publications and the distribution channels should be defined according to the respective persona. In addition, however, this plan should be flexible enough to be able to react to the unexpected, such as events, current topics or company news.

We recommend the following content in a content plan:

- Topics
- Owner
- Topic Cluster / Keywords
- Measures
- Social Media
- Working title of the blogposts
- Buyer Personas
- Customer Journey Stage
- Challenges
- Content Writer
- Draft and Publish Date

Search behaviour has changed - Topic Clusters and Pillar Pages

All websites have a homepage; let's take hubspot.com as an example. As soon as their blog is clicked, we see a domain change: blog. hubspot.com. Below that, are the blog articles that are subordinate to the blog domain. These articles are then simply assigned to different topics; a process called filtering—for example, Inbound Marketing, Inbound Sales, Inbound Recruiting, etc.

When writing blog articles, every content marketer makes sure to use SEO-relevant keywords - in the optimal density between 2 - 4%. Ideally, there should already be existing blog articles in your archive that also contain the keyword. We then link these blog articles in the new post. However, the extent to which the article fits with the actual topic is secondary; after all, the keyword fits, and Google ranks it positively.

Sidebar: That used to work well, but Google has since changed its algorithm so much with the latest update that you have to react in order to be still visible. It is time to think in terms of topic clusters.

Why does Google do that? To annoy us ⬚. Okay, maybe not quite…

Search engines adapt their algorithms to the search behaviour and preferences of users. And this changes over time. Whereas in the past people searched for keywords, for example: „content marketing strategy", today they search for the actual solutions to questions: „What must a good content marketing strategy contain?" This is possible not only through text input but also through voice recognition. Moreover, readers want to consume content that goes into depth and thus delivers real added value. Superficial content usually does not lead to the desired goal.

RankBrain, Google's machine learning, must therefore increasingly be able to scan content for relevance and quality, and this requires more than just keyword scanning.

For content marketers, this means adapting their own habits to those of their readers–– because search engines do it too! The constant

CONTENT PLANNING

development means that current SEO knowledge is always evolving.

And what does the new structure look like? Well, the new structure that has a significant influence on Google's ranking since the new „Fred Update" is called Topic Cluster. Topic Cluster is a new structure. The web pages have a holacratic structure that arranges topics specific to each other. The subordinate blog articles are assigned to a so-called „Pillar Page".

www.bee.digital
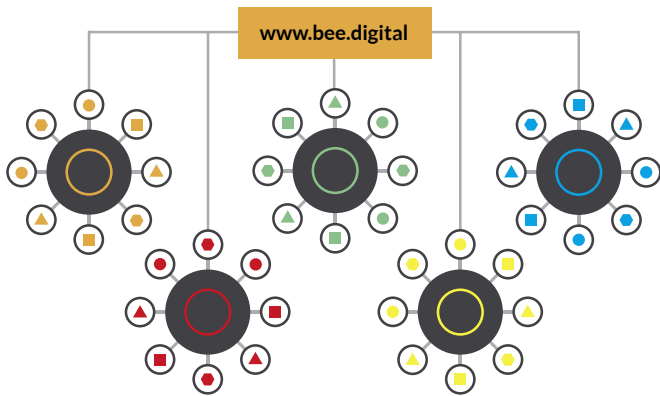
Step 1: Develop a Pillar Page

By knowing and interviewing your own buyer persona, you find out their challenges. Themes emerge from these challenges.

An example:

My website traffic is very low.

We have invested a lot of money in our website, but it is simply not found by search engines.

We invest a lot of time in producing content. But this content does not reach the readers.

These challenges lead to the topic of SEO.

Keywords are still of immense importance, but since the concept of "Topic Clusters" launched, they have simply taken a back seat! Because the Pillar Page must be optimised for on-page SEO (as well as all other content). And for this, the above-mentioned keyword research is neces-

sary. Not only to optimise the Pillar Page but also to know which future sub-topics are to be produced on this topic.

Optimally, the Pillar Page is already a well-running page or landing page and generates leads. Such pages are extremely well suited to function as pillar pages and thus as the basis for the topic cluster.

Step 2: Form topic clusters

If there is already an archive with existing content, the task now is to assign these topics to the Pillar Page by linking them together. If there are no suitable articles yet, go into production –– but with a plan, please.

In addition, it is now important to produce content that generates quality. Search engines rank relevant and qualitative content higher than articles that are simply written to contribute to a topic without really providing any added value.

„Treat your readers' time more valuable than your own" - Josh Bernoff.

The figure below shows a possible topic cluster, using „SEO" as an example. The middle circle „SEO" is the Pillar Page, which is supported by the blog articles (outer circles).

Content Production

Today, the content of a page is increasingly viewed contextually by both surfers and search engines. Values such as quality, uniqueness, depth, trustworthiness, comprehensiveness, user engagement, user experience as well as a high benefit and low bounce rates are of great importance. Today, content is successful as soon as it solves the problems and challenges of the individual visitor by answering all their questions as efficiently as possible –– and the website offers a pleasant user experience in the process.

To achieve this, users are also prepared to read longer texts. This goal is achieved primarily through comprehensive content and focused content with depth, especially in a B2B environment where expert knowledge is in demand. Google also seems to reward this with a good ranking, especially for informal and research-focused search queries as well as product and brand comparisons. Such search questions are usually very general and require a complex and/or multi-faceted answer. Google algorithm updates, such as Hummingbird and RankBrain, have made semantic relevance and optimisation much more important. And texts in which topics are considered in depth using simple language score more points than unreadable texts in which certain keywords appear more frequently. In addition, after the Fred update, pages overloaded with ads with little useful content and benefits for the user were penalised.

Comprehensive content

An article with comprehensive content deals with a specific topic in depth. Within the article, several often related questions are answered in detail or several aspects of the topic are addressed. Short blog articles that only address one aspect or question of a topic usually have a difficult time achieving a first-page position on Google. These questions can be researched through surveys, Q&A pages and social media channels (see content topics).

With comprehensive content, these questions are ideally answered with information that the competition cannot or will not offer and presented in formats in which the competitors cannot or will not broadcast.

Deep content: Like deep-sea diving –– nothing remains hidden at the bottom either

In an article with deep content, from a computer linguistic point of view, many keywords are used that are related to the main topic and at the same time have a high relevance to it.

Focused content: Narrowly defined but broadly conceived

In a focused content article, the main topic or focus keyword is referred to again and again. Keyword stuffing should be avoided, but the repeated use of the focus keyword and its variants is still not a thing of the past.

Thoughtful content: If you illuminate a topic three-dimensionally, you may go longer

Blog articles with comprehensive content and focused content with depth are usually longer than average, but the length and number of words of a text do not automatically lead to a good ranking. It is important that the content

on the website has a high relevance and substance for your target audience, is of high quality and comprehensively addresses all their possible questions. It is therefore advisable to write a few in-depth and longer blog articles/texts rather than many superficial and shorter ones.

Therefore, the content on one's own website should be reviewed, and content that is too concise should be lengthened. This kind of content creation requires strategy and a lot of work, but it pays off for the visitors as well as for the company in the form of higher rankings and ultimately increasing visitor numbers.

Long content: Another argument for more material

Numerous studies and bloggers repeatedly report that longer content ranks significantly higher on SERPs and for several long-tail keywords at once - and therefore attracts more traffic, shares, backlinks and conversions. And not without reason: long texts tend to be more comprehensive, in-depth and focused. Volume alone does not bring a better ranking. However, if other factors, such as substance, style, frequency, format, purpose orientation, audience orientation and medium are also correct, this is definitely seen as a positive signal in most cases. You can demonstrate and convey expertise through carefully crafted, useful and unique content. This has a positive effect on the authority and trust of the brand, and the site or company can eventually become an opinion leader in the market.

Finally, Google itself writes in its „Google Quality Rating Guidelines" that comprehensive content that has been created with a lot of time, effort, expertise and talent/skill has a particularly high chance of ranking well. In order to take this ideal into account, the search engine group introduced a new feature in 2013 called in-depth articles (not available everywhere in the world), which helps three long technical articles gain more attention in a separate box on the SERP.

Last but not least, it should be noted that a study by BuzzSumo and Moz, in which 1 million blog articles were analysed, came to the conclusion that 85% of these articles had less than 1,000 words. Thus, a competitive advantage can be quickly achieved through detailed articles in this area. With a blog article of more than 1,500 words, you are already pretty well in the running.

Well-written content: Easier said than done –– but it pays off!

Rule #1 for well-written content: Invest a lot of thought, effort and time. The research work is usually the most important but also the most time-consuming part of content creation.

For long texts, a well-thought-out (story-like) structure, as well as interesting and value-signalling subheadings, are recommended. In addition, short sentences and paragraphs help the reader to digest what he or she has read in small bites. Prepare your knowledge analytically in the text and draw on a lot of data, scientific studies and research. The content should be as varied, entertaining and engaging as possible. When choosing topics, focus on (trendy) evergreen topics that you know best and that are directly related to your products and services. Examples from satisfied customers and case studies will give it more life.

The idea in the text needs as much or as little space as necessary and should not be artificially inflated. Repetitions should be avoided if possible. The rule is: Write with intent. Every word should be contextually relevant and contribute to the overall value of the blog article. Absolutely rely on dialogue-oriented, winning, impeccable, own language.

Finally, it makes sense to enrich the text with visually appealing pictures, videos, infographics, illustrations, diagrams, quotations, tables and structural elements. This not only loosens up

the reading experience but can also contribute to comprehension. Of course, on-page SEO activities such as the intelligent placement of keywords or the use of schema markup should not be neglected in this context either.

After publication, it is worthwhile to keep updating and supplementing the content in case you come up with something clever.

Compounding blog posts

If you analyse the traffic that comes to the website via the blog articles, you quickly notice that relatively few posts are responsible for many visits. These can usually be classified as so-called compounding blog posts (or evergreen content) and show continuously increasing and long-term traffic. In contrast, so-called decaying blog posts can only be expected to have a short-term increase in traffic after publication. The temporary high is often followed by a drop in the number of hits and a place in digital nirvana. Usually, only one in ten articles is a compounding blog post, but overall they generate around 38 per cent of the traffic. In the long term, one compounding blog post generates as much traffic as six decaying blog posts. The following graph from HubSpot shows the traffic trend of compounding posts vs decaying posts:

Figure 3: Average traffic to compounding and decaying blog posts over time

Average profile of compounding and decaying posts over time
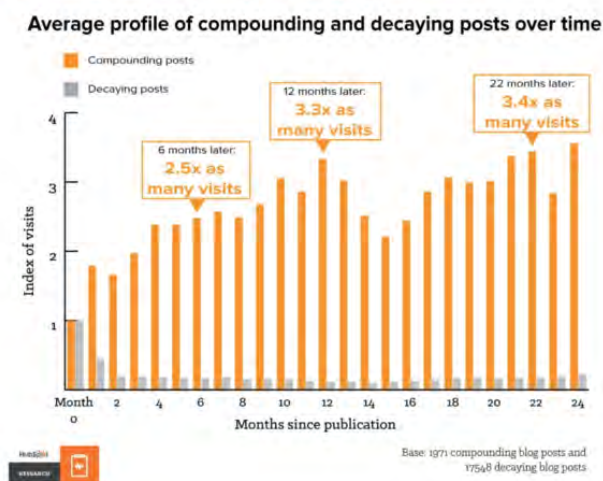
In order to create compounding blog posts, it is essential not only to consider which topic/problem is of great importance but also to see the blog post in a larger context. A deep understanding of the subject in question is essential so that a kind of mind map can be made initially on the basis of this, and core themes can be identified. These can then be intelligently structured on the website or blog in a kind of library. This also makes sense in terms of SEO, as the content can now be sorted according to topic clusters. This now leads to a blogging strategy, in which the blogging schedule and keyword use are addressed in particular. In this blogging strategy, the important blogposts should be scheduled at the beginning, and, over time, around 10 per cent of the posts should be compounding blogposts. As usual, it is worth focusing on long-tail keywords in the keyword strategy. The use of semantically associated keywords/LSI keywords also makes sense here.

Content recycling

New content does not always have to be created. Usually, there is already some content in a blog. Since these posts can lose relevance and truth over time, it is advisable to conduct your own content audit on a regular basis.

Tools like Semrush can help you do this. It checks the blog or website –– depending on the setting –– and gives recommendations in four categories in which the pages are grouped:

- Rewrite or remove. Pages published more than 24 months ago and accessed less than 15 times in the last 30 days are stored here.
- Must be updated. Pages published more than 6 months ago and viewed less than 15 times in the last 30 days are stored here.
- Quick review. Pages published less than 6 months ago and viewed more than 150 times in the last 30 days are stored here.
- Poor content. Pages that are less than 200 words long are saved here.

CONTENT PRODUCTION

Directly afterwards, there is the possibility to create tasks for certain parts of an article and to make decisions on how to improve the content. One must always keep in mind that this article should be relevant to one's own buyer persona(s). If this is no longer the case, it is recommended to remove the text in question.

Outsourcing content

You don't always manage to write the content yourself. There are many reasons for this. The decision as to whether the job goes to an agency or a freelancer is different for every company. One thing remains the same: a suitable briefing must be created so that the writer knows exactly what the client expects.

This is usually done in the form of a Word or Excel document and again requires a lot of time from the client. Fortunately, there are now tools for this that can make a briefing easier. On the one hand, Searchmetrics offers a comprehensive tool with its Content Suite, which includes research, optimisation and performance measurement in addition to the briefing. On the other hand, Semrush has started to offer similar functions with its Content Marketing Toolkit.

After finding the right topic (see Content Topics), this can be created as an SEO content template, which is used as a briefing for the text to be created. The template displays the Google Top 10 rivals that already contain the topic or keyword and gives recommendations on how to create SEO-friendly content.

Thanks to an add-on for Google Docs, it is then possible to check in real-time whether all keywords have been used in the text, how readable the text is, whether enough words have been used and, as an add-on, whether the text contains no plagiarism.

In addition, the result of the content search can be downloaded as an Excel spreadsheet or created as a task in Trello.

SEMrush SEO Writing Assistant

Recommendations   Plagiarism [BETA]

Overall score
Good   7,1/10

∨ Readability   Score definition
71,6 Fairly easy   Target 54,7

The language of your text may be considered too basic by an expert audience. Try using more advanced words and sentences.

∨ Words
701   Target 869

Reading time: 4 min

∨ Target keywords
Core of your text and all recommendations. Use these keywords at least once.
influencer marketing fails

∨ Recommended keywords
Enrich your text with these keywords to get better SEO results.
marketing fails   micro influencers
influencer marketing campaigns
social media

∨ Title   2/2
✓ Title present: "Influencer Marketing Fails: Du wirst nie erraten, was hier beworben wird"
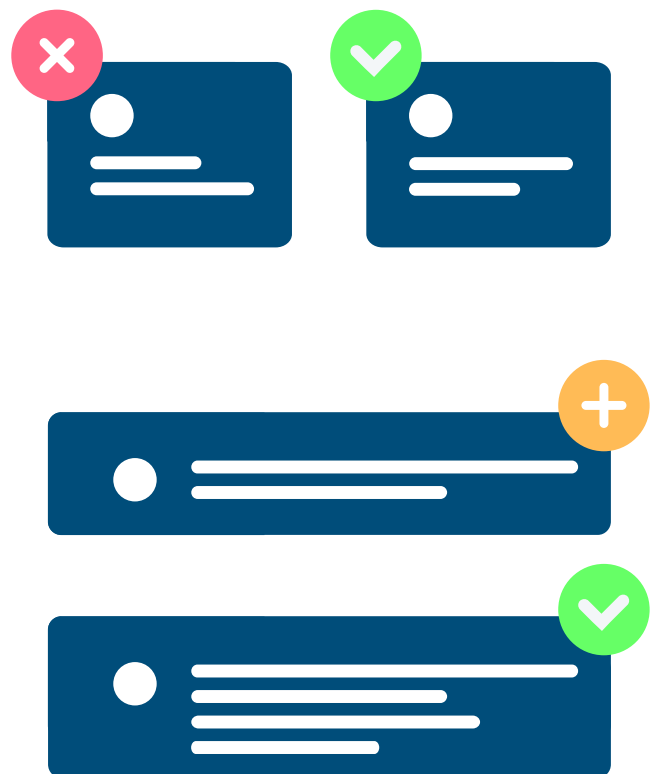✓ 1 target keyword used.

CONTENT PRODUCTION

Furthermore, a content brief should include the following points:

- Initial situation: Is it a completely new text, or is it recycled?
- Main topic: The writer should have an insight into the topic here.
- Buyer persona: An overview of the relevant buyer persona should be included.
- Challenge: Which challenges of the buyer persona should be addressed?
- Stage Customer Journey: In which stage of the customer journey is the buyer persona?
- Solution: What solution does your company offer to solve the challenge?
- Timeframe: When is the deadline?
- Information: Internal and external links to the topic, content to be excluded from other contributions, etc.

Content optimization

Whether the content is written in-house or outsourced, proofreading of the finished text is mandatory. Therefore, grammar and spelling must be checked in addition to content validation. The specified keywords should also be checked. As mentioned before, this task is quickly done with Semrush.

Only after publication does it become clear whether the text will be a hit or inconsequential. Therefore, published articles should be checked and optimised again and again. Be it through new keywords, fresh content (see content recycling) or a completely new structure (see pillar pages). At this point, we are back at the content audit and thus at the beginning of our content process.