The Beginner's Guide to Digital Marketing: What is Content and why do I need it?

They say Content is king...
But what makes a king?

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CREATIVE STUDIO

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Introduction: What is content?

Glossary:

Content: Information on your site. This can be through words, images, videos, and more.

Simply put, it's information.

That feeling when you've had 3 slices of extra cheese pizza. That's content if there was.

In the online world, what is **Content**? Simply put, it's information. That's the most straightforward way to define it. That information can be in words, pictures, or videos; all of those are content.

If a website is the dough, content is the sauce and cheese of your pizza. And it's not pizza without sauce and cheese. Ever had a pizza that's just dough? That's bread, folks. It might still taste good, but it ain't pizza.

You don't want to sprinkle 1 or 2 shreds of mozzarella on it with a teaspoon of sauce either. Sure, it might technically be pizza, but for most people, it won't be enough substance.

The point of having content on your website is to get visitors to do something. If you're an author, it might be to read your most recent short story and give you praise in the comments. As a business owner, it might mean to come in to your store and buy something. If you're a scammer, maybe you want them to put their credit card information on the page so you can steal it and buy tickets to the Rugby World Cup.

No matter what your goal is, you aren't likely to achieve it if your site is just a few blank pages with a pretty navigation bar. Content, the information on your site, is the substance, the way to attract visitors and have them do a positive action once they're there.

But not all content is equal.

Content includes website pages, pictures, videos, blogs, infographics, and more. Confused? That's okay; we're going to go over each of these in detail in this eBook. So read on to learn more—until you too, are content!

1.

Website/ Service Pages

At a minimum, we recommend that you have a page for each type of service you do

Website/Services Pages
Images
Blogs / News Articles
Videos
Social Media
Emails
Case Studies / Testimonials
Infographics
eBooks

1. Website/ Service Pages

Glossary:

Services Pages: Pages on your website describing your goods and services in detail.

What do you do? *Incoherent Mumble* Okay, but what do you DO? *Incoherent Mumble* WHAT DO YOU DO?!

If someone comes to your site and has to ask this over and over again, then your website isn't doing it's job, and that someone won't stick around for long to try and find out. Having a great-looking, easy to use homepage is important, but your **Service Pages** are the kind of content where you can really hone in on what makes you special, what sets you apart.

A service page is simply a page on your website that explains one of your services in detail. If you were in lawn care, for instance, you could have a page about weed spraying. For a company that sells tractors, you could have a page about the different styles of vehicle or even individual products. If you're running a pyramid scheme, it could be a page about the uncountable benefits of Multi-Level Marketing while vaguely avoiding any specifics about what you're actually selling (which is generally a bad practice for creating content–the more information and details, the better!)

At a minimum, we recommend that you have a page for each category of business you do. For instance, back to landscaping, if you do lawn care, weeds, water blasting, and garden sculptures, each of these should have their own page.

The more specific information you can include on these pages, the more effective they'll be. The goal is to explain to visitors why they should choose you. What makes you unique? What do you offer that the competition doesn't? Why should they choose you over your competitor?

Again be specific. So you offer the best customer service? How? What do you do different? The best warranties? What are they? How are they unique? Your quality is the best around, you say. How so? What makes your business model special?

We can't say it enough; your service pages should cover what services you offer, how you do them better than the other guys, and why they should get in touch with you first.

Use the content on your website to tell people what you do and why you do it best!

2.

Images

Liberal use of images gives your website a boost, both in appearance and rankings

2. Images

Glossary:

Stock Image: An image in a large catalogue that you license out for your own use.

Picture this: You go to a website and it's filled with walls of text. Not blocks that you can trudge through and get by, but actual walls. Insurmountable walls.

Images are another form of content and are more important now than ever before. While text-only website pages might be appropriate for something like a detailed academic study about "The Essentiality of Nab proteins for Peripheral Nervous System Myelination", for regular websites, images are needed to break up the text and to provide a helpful visual.

65% of people are visual learners. And images are more visual than text, you know, 1000 words and all that. Liberal use of images gives your website a boost, both in appearance and rankings.

But not all images are created equal. Have you ever searched for something and came across the exact same image on multiple sites? And that image seems almost... Fake? That's because it is a **stock image**, a professional picture taken by a company that sells the license for anyone to use. Stock images on their own aren't bad. They can be extremely useful in a pinch or when you don't have a good quality image to represent something you want to talk about on your site.

However, personalised professional photography is a shot above when it comes to quality and getting people interested. Across the board, people preferred professional photos to stock images, even when they weren't told which was which. We talk about that more in detail on our blog post.

While we recommend having a professional take shots of your products or services in action, you probably don't have a professional photographer on-hand for just whenever. If that's the case, authentic shots can carry a lot of weight. Pictures of your staff at work, being silly, or caught off-guard can help you look like actual people--and help your business too! These are great to share on social media or maybe even your staff page if it fits your company's tone.

Get the picture? Images are a crucial kind of content essential to your website!

3.

Blogs and articles

Storytelling is as much as 22x more effective than lists of facts

3. Blogs and News Articles

Glossary:

Blog: A series of related articles; tend to be created and posted on a regular basis.

Call-to-Action: A prompt or statement that tells customers to do a specific action like calling, getting in touch with you.

The unlikely offspring of a blob and a frog; a blog. A lot of blog articles might sound like nothing more.

With **blogs**, it takes time and effort to see results, but investing in blog content that can be very worth your while. Just keep in mind that storytelling is as much as 22x more effective than lists of facts. 22x. Add in that over 2/3 of people would rather hear about a business through articles than advertising, and not doing a blog could cost you a lot of business!

If you're having trouble coming up with topics or ways to fill out your blog, you can also add in news articles. Did your company recently win an award for excellence in your industry? Brag about it! Did you just cross the 10 year mark? Let people know and update those years of experience on your service pages.

If you're an expert or an authority in your field, your blog is a fantastic place to prove it. Use it as a chance to educate people, answer common questions, or show you have solutions to frequent problems. You'll also likely find that people that do come in to do business with you are more prepared and know what they want—all because you educated them already. Blogs and news articles are an excellent way to give your brand a voice. Be authentic! If you're professional and straightforward, let your blog reflect that. But if you're quirky and a wee bit odd, that's all good too! Most people are perfectly happy if you write like you talk, in a conversational tone—and many actually prefer it. Lots of companies adopt a serious tone that doesn't match their personality or style because they think customers won't respect them otherwise. But being authentic has the best results—be yourself!

Finally, it's important that your blogs include a **Call-to-Action**. What do you want someone to do after reading the blog? Do you have more information to link to they might be interested in? Do you offer free consultations? Are you looking for them to call? Let them know and be direct about it; a direct call to action can be the difference between getting a new customer!

So tell us a story with your blog, and you may just get some happy endings to your business ventures.

4.

Videos

Videos are the single most popular form of content on the internet in 2020

4. Videos

Glossary:

Brand Videos: Official videos that represent your brand. Being informative, relevant, and high-quality are very important here.

Ha, that cat plays the piano! And that dog fits in a teacup! Ooh, is that a snake or cucumber?

Have you ever been on YouTube and spent literally hours doing nothing but watching random videos? You aren't alone. Videos are the single most popular form of content on the internet in 2020.

Video content can be very interesting and fun to watch. Plus you don't have to sit and try to focus on reading (unless subtitles are your thing). What's not to love?

Remember when we said that 65% of people are visual learners? That's one of the reasons why video thrives. But when businesses use video to promote their product, is it effective?

In a major survey, 83% of companies that tried video marketing said it was successful. Pretty good odds, eh?

However, successful video marketing involves more than picking up a product and pointing a smartphone at it and filming for 10 seconds. Videos need to be informative and look good to be effective—and bad videos can be worse than having none at all.

There are a few main types of videos. One is spontaneous videos. These quick shots around the workplace show what people are up to in the moment. No editing or pre-planning required!

Another are feature or **Brand Videos**. These ones are more in-depth about your company, a product, or a feature that you provide. Professional quality is important for these ones. They represent the brand itself, and they need to look good! The cost and time is worth it though; you can display them on your site, share them on social media, and more!

Invest in video, and one day it might be you that people are watching to procrastinate!

5.

Social Media

It's important not to forget that social media is meant to be social

5. Social Media

Glossary:

Business Pages:
A separate type of account or page available on many social media websites. Business pages typically have different/extra features as well as additional rules to follow.

It's not stalking if you're only looking at their photo albums online, right? Right? Better update those privacy settings!

Social media is a kind of content that has the potential to be an enormous time waster or an incredible resource depending on how its used. This is true both for personal accounts and for **Business Pages**.

If you think about it, social media is all about branding—even personal pages. With a personal page, you're building your own "brand" through the types of content you share. That might mean you always use coloured backgrounds with large text. Or you might only communicate through memes and GIFs. Maybe you use complete sentences. Or talk in phonetics.

Do you have any friends on social media who only ever talk about one thing? And that one thing is something you don't care about? Like, dude, I don't care about your diet supplements, I'm only mildly obese at most. Well, the same goes for businesses too.

Some businesses try to spam the same messages about their products to everyone they know and that's it. No fun videos about pranking coworkers. No glove puns the day after Christmas. Not even special deals or competitions to win cool swag or vouchers.

It's important not to forget that social media is meant to be social. That means more than answering direct messages too; create content people want to share! Ask for feedback, run polls, show what your company is doing for the community, there's plenty to do!

Social media is a huge topic to cover and too much for this eBook, but if you'd like to know more about the different kinds of social media for business, check out our eBook Social Media – It's Totally Doughnuts, or learn how to maximise social media effectiveness in a minimal amount of time with How to Monitor Social Media in 10 Minutes a Day.

6.

Emails

You need to send the right email to the right person at the right time

6. Emails

Glossary:

Mass Marketing: Marketing sent to a large group of people at the same time without variation.

Email Marketing: Sending advertisements or brand messages through email.

Fwd Fwd Fwd: LOLOLOL – Share this w/ur 3 best mtes or be crssseedd 2b alone 4evr...

For the most part, emails wouldn't be considered content. You wouldn't typically put them up on your website or on your Facebook page. Yet emails are still a HUGE part of the internet.

How many unopened emails do you have right now? Here at Back9, someone has 50,000 unopened emails spanning the last decade... And he also has another account with 44,000, so in total, nearly 100,000 unopened emails.

What's in these unopened emails? 99% are **Mass Marketing** emails, the main way that email is used as content. So if you want to go into **Email Marketing**, how can you climb your way to the 1% that's looked forward to and opened up?

HubSpot, one of the leaders in effective email marketing, says that you need to send the right email to the right person at the right time. When all of these factors align, you get effective, useful emails that will end up being opened instead of a click to the unsubscribe link.

There is one very important thing you can do to increase the chances of your email being read; segment your contacts into different lists. That might be people that bought a certain product, people who became contacts through social media, people who only buy when you have a discount, and so on.

From there, you can create emails that are relevant to the list. (Don't forget to include images!) If you have the time, you can even create variations of the email based on what the list prefers, like changing the focus to the sale if you're sending to the Discount Club.

Don't discount email marketing yet— But you can always include a discount in your email!

7.

Case studies/ Testimonials

If you know someone was ecstatic with your performance, it's worth asking to share their positive experience

7. Case Studies and Testimonials

Glossary:

Testimonial: A customer relating their positive experience with a brand or product from their point of view.

Case Study: A detailed breakdown of a single customer's experience with your company. Stats and timeframes can be very helpful to get a full picture in a case study.

"When I went to Best Company Ever, they really lived up to their name. Not only did their product give me eternal happiness, they did it at no cost—they paid ME instead! "

Genuine **Testimonials** are a kind of content that give a real insight into your business. And it really is important that they're genuine. Fake, hyper-excited ones like the one above? They're as easy to spot as a magpie among fantails.

Unlike customer reviews—which should also be genuine—you shouldn't have to worry about getting a "bad testimonial". By definition, a testimonial is positive experiences with a product or company. If you asked someone for one only to find out they were unhappy, they aren't the right candidate—though they may have some helpful feedback!

Testimonials usually come in one of two forms. The first is written testimonials. Often, these will appear in a dedicated section of a website. Since they use the actual words of the reviewer, they can vary in length–some people might use a few sentences while others might go through several paragraphs to explain their experience. The other is video testimonials. These tend to carry a bit more weight, but they're also a lot harder to get; plenty of people are camera shy! Like with brand videos, you'll want these to be polished and have them done by a professional if you have the chance.

Case studies are similar to testimonials in that they're meant to show off all your awesome skills. The difference is that a case study is an in-depth review of a single experience. Like if your company sold sci-fi Cold Fusion Generators the title could be "How we saved a company over 100% in electricity costs in 3 months".

Detail is good in case studies, as they're meant to be comprehensive. Quotes from the person or company are also helpful, but they don't have to write the entire thing. They're more of a mix of you talking about your work and the customer saying how they loved it.

If you know someone was ecstatic with your performance, it's worth asking to share their positive experience!

8.

Infographics

Infographics are used to present data in an interesting and memorable way

8. Infographics

Glossary:

Infographic: A visual representation of statistics or data that combines words and pictures.

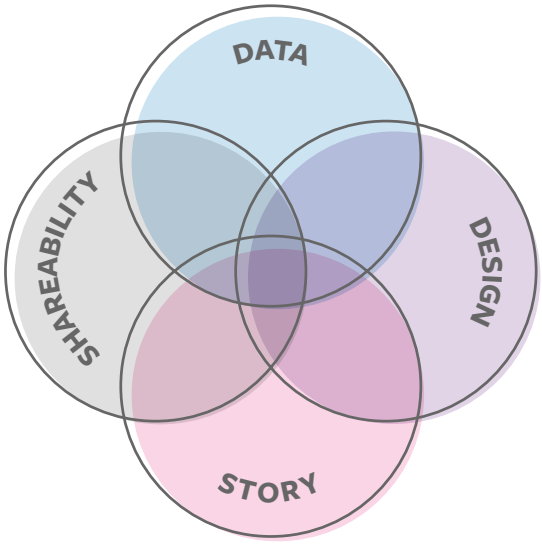
Words and images, we now pronounce you husband and wife. Congratulations!

Simply put, **Infographics** are the children of words and images. Quickly becoming one of the most effective ways to share information, infographics are a type of content that's worth investing in.

Often, infographics are used to present data in an interesting and memorable way. Did you know that over 10% of statistics include numbers? Fascinating. On their own, statistics can be hard to read through and comprehend, especially when a lot are fired at you in a row.

Infographics help to break that down a bit. In fact, in the true spirit of this form of content, we've included an infographic about how infographics are effective below. Enjoy!

What makes an infographic?



Only **20%** of text is remembered

90% of information transferred to the brain is visual

Infographics are **30x** more likely to be read than text

45% of marketers currently use infographics

9.

eBooks

Creating eBooks helps position you as an authority on your topic

9. eBooks

Glossary:

eBook: Stands for electronic book. It ranges from short, single page "books" to entire serialisations of novels.

Gated Content: Content where something must be provided by the user to gain access, typically basic information like their name and email address.

What do you call a book that gets struck by lightning? A hot plot.

An **eBook**, on the other hand, doesn't require the alignment of the elements. eBooks are one of the best ways to send out a lot of content at once. And yes, this is an eBook that's talking about eBooks, very meta.

The market for eBooks is a bit strange. Often, people that want the information in them will actively seek them out. They're looking to learn more about a specific topic in-depth.

Because creating good eBooks is such an investment, it's a common practice to not give them away completely free. Most of the time the currency isn't money though, but information.

eBooks are one of the most common forms of **Gated Content**. Usually, the visitor trades a small amount of information—like their name and email address—and then that "unlocks" the eBook for them to download.

Once you have that information, it's all about using it properly. You could keep them in your database as someone who downloaded the eBook so that you know who they are when you call. Or if you have more related content—like videos, articles, or even another eBook—on the same topic or something related, you could email it over to them.

Creating eBooks helps position you as an authority on your topic. If the other guy's content consists of a page that says "Website coming soon" and you have a site with service pages, articles, videos, and an eBook all about your industry, who's going to look more competent? And which one are people more likely to trust?

You, that's who.

Conclusion

A common expression in our industry is that "Content is King". Having helpful, useful, and cool writing, videos, and images is what brings people to your site and keeps them coming back.

Hopefully after reading this eBook you understand who this ruler is and why he got the crown.

Content is the pages you read on the internet. It's the videos you watch on YouTube. The posts you like on Facebook. The infographic you share from a local charity. And this eBook that you're looking at right now.

Creating quality content takes time and more than a smidge of effort if you want it to be effective. But it's worth the investment. Good content is shareable, and if it's shared, it can continue to bring people over to you to see what you have to offer.

If you're keen to become a king of content yourself but don't have the time or are worried about making enough of it that's high quality, the team at Back9 Creative Studio can help. Content may be the king, but distribution is Queen; and she wears the pants. If great content is put up but no one's around to see it, does it really go online?

Our team of content creation specialists includes a professional web developer, graphic designers, copywriter, digital marketing consultant, and photographer, along with professionals who know how to get it out to the right people. We have several content packages available for all business sizes and you can mix and match what you need.

You won't just be content with our content; you'll be overjoyed!

Get in touch today!

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