

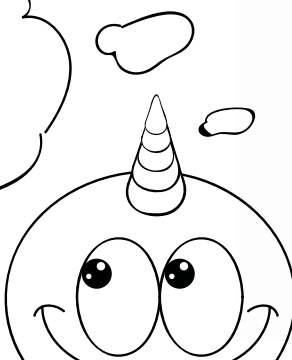
Your Hands-on  
**CONTENT MARKETING**  
**WORKBOOK**

# WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING - AND HOW CAN YOU MASTER IT?

Content is (or should be) your new best friend. It's the fuel to everything you do in marketing. So if it's not already, content marketing needs to become your priority. Succeed and you will have what it takes to be an integrated marketing guru.

This workbook walks you through the key elements of an effective content marketing strategy, and is chock-full of checklists and exercises to get your content marketing muscle pumped up. Work through the steps listed below and you'll be well on your way to delivering relevant content at every turn...and becoming a master of the content marketing domain!

1. Document your goals and figure out how you will know whether or not your content marketing is hitting the mark
2. Identify your ideal customer and develop buyer personas
3. Lay the foundation of your SEO strategy by deciding the conversation you want to own
4. Develop an editorial calendar and map content throughout the purchase cycle
5. Think global from the start as you decide what resources you'll need to create, publish and promote your content
6. Produce a Big Rock to fuel your social and demand generation, then carve it up into turkey slices
7. Publish on LinkedIn
8. Incorporate visual content
9. Amplify your content reach
10. Measure your results and tweak your content for maximum impact



"Content marketing was deemed the most effective marketing tactic by a group of B2B marketers surveyed in North America, receiving a rating of 7.8 out of 10." – eMarketer

1: Content Marketing Institute, Developing a Content Marketing Strategy

Content Marketing Institute's research<sup>1</sup> found that those with a documented content marketing strategy:

- Are far more likely to consider themselves effective at content marketing
- Generally consider themselves more effective in their use of all content marketing tactics and social media channels

# Quarterly Assessment

Think about the last 3 months and rank yourself on the smiley scale

LET'S  
FACE IT



GOOD



FAIR



POOR

DOCUMENTING  
CONTENT GOALS

☐

SLICING YOUR BIG ROCK  
CONTENT POST LAUNCH

☐

IDENTIFYING YOUR  
IDEAL CUSTOMER

☐

PUBLISHING ON  
LINKEDIN

☐

DEVELOPING AN  
SEO STRATEGY

☐

INCORPORATING  
VISUAL CONTENT

☐

CREATING AN  
EDITORIAL CALENDAR

☐

AMPLIFYING YOUR  
CONTENT REACH

☐

THINKING  
GLOBALLY

☐

MEASURING  
RESULTS

☐

# 01 DOCUMENT WHERE YOU'RE GOING AND HOW YOU'LL GET THERE

Moving prospects closer to making a purchase is the goal of all your content marketing.

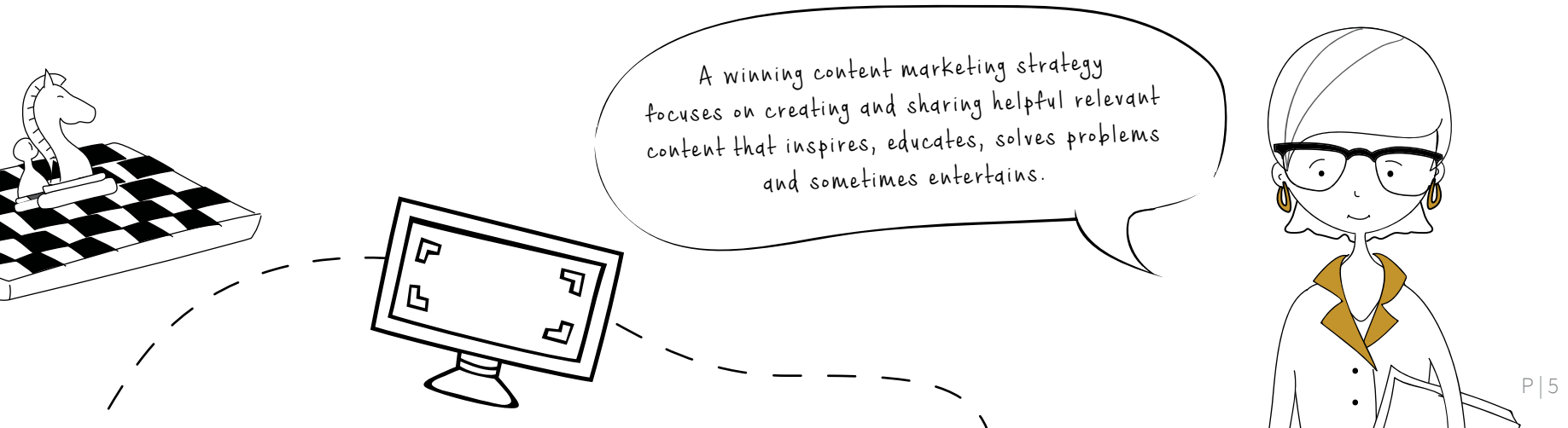
So make a plan - and check it twice! Once you figure out how to answer those pressing questions keeping your prospects up at night, you need to see if your answers are on target. Start by jotting down your content marketing aspirations. Then think of ways you can measure how well you're reaching those goals. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

GOALS	METRICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raising brand awareness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Search volumes on branded terms</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Driving higher quality leads</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conversion rate to opportunity and to customer</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better engaging prospective buyers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow-on content requests and downloads</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accelerating lead velocity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Change in funnel velocity or time to close</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establishing your organization as a thought leader</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of speaking engagements and executive-level meetings secured</li></ul>

While your main goal is answering every question your prospects could possibly pose, you will probably have lots of little goals along the way. All you need to worry about is mapping those to the different stages of the buying cycle – and then getting a pulse on your progress. By measuring your content marketing “health”, you’ll figure out which content has a strong beat and which is beyond resuscitation.

Jot down your top goals and metrics here:

GOALS	METRICS



## 02 GET INSIDE YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER'S HEAD

Before you fall victim to writer's block, just think about what information your buyers want and need.

**Step 1:** Do your homework! Figure out who you should sell to. In other words, which companies are most likely to buy what you're offering?

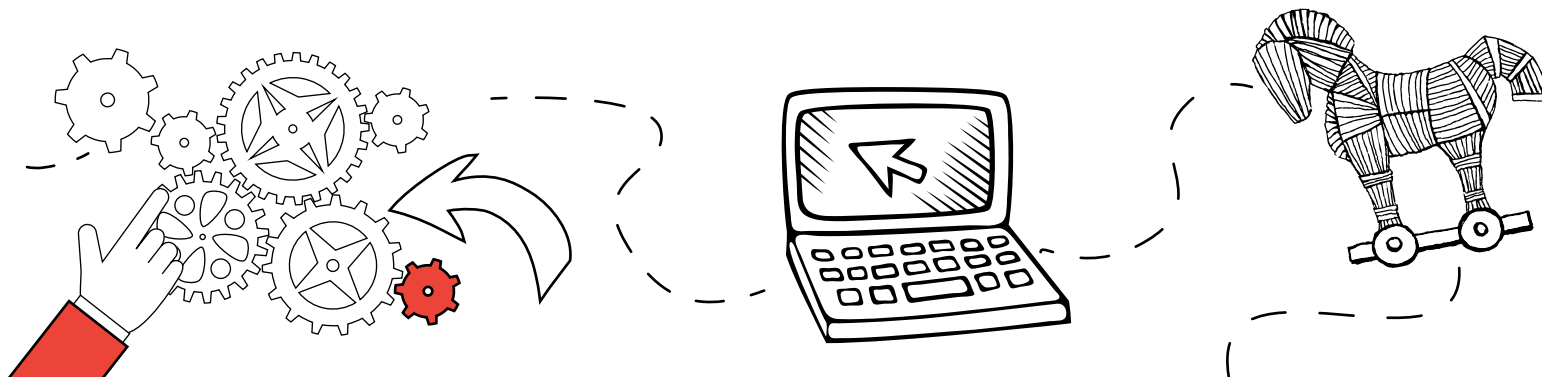
**Step 2:** Get focused! Zero in on the people who will be involved in the purchase.

**Step 3:** Lights-camera-action! Interview anyone who can help you paint a picture of your target audience: some existing and potential customers, colleagues and partners that interact with your customers. Your goal is to discover:

- Top-of-mind issues
- Typical workday
- Decision-making process
- Purchase motivators
- What information do they need during the buying process?
- How do they describe their challenges and aspirations?
- Where they turn for purchase-related information and advice?
- What makes them open their wallets (aka sign on the dotted line)?

**Step 4:** Be a good listener. Listen to online conversations (you know, like those taking place in LinkedIn Groups).

**Step 5:** Get the word out! Document and distribute your buyer personas so everyone is working from the same understanding.



Here's an interview guide to get you started. Change it to suit your needs!

Buyer persona interview guide					
Name					
Title					
What are your main responsibilities?					
Role in purchase process					
Describe your typical buying process					
What are your main challenges and goals and how do these align with your organization's top challenges and goals?					
What information do you need at each stage of the process?					
Awareness	Interest	Consideration	Evaluation	Purchase	Use
Where do you turn for information during the research and decision-making process?					
What keywords would you search on when conducting research to address your challenges/achieve your goals?					
What would prevent you from considering a vendor or making a purchase?					

## 03 PICK A CONVERSATION AND OWN IT!

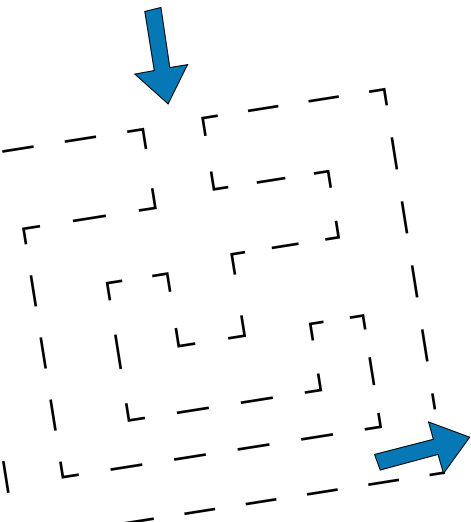
Remember how we said content should be your new best friend? Well, you should also make yourself the best friend of your prospective buyers and existing customers. And you do that by making them see you as the go-to resource for the topics they care about.

How to go from being a nobody to being your audience's best buddy:

1. Write down what's keeping your prospects up at night.
2. Use tools (see below) to understand the key phrases they're using.
3. Figure out the topic you can "own." In other words, what do you know a lot about that matters to your audience?

Ways to find out what is keeping your prospective buyers up at night:

- Go it alone using tools like Google Analytics, Ubersuggest, or Buzzsumo
- Hire a pro like **www.moz.com** or the very smart folks at **www.toprankmarketing.com**



Here's a handy worksheet to help you keep track of your findings – and zero in on your content sweet spot. We've even included a few sample responses to get you started.

Topics identified when developing buyer personas	Hot topics per keyword research	Topic we can own
Capitalizing on Internet of Things	Converting products to services	Collecting and making sense of data
Gaining and acting upon insights from data feeds	Launching new business models	
	Products are becoming marketing channels	



## 04 MARK YOUR CALENDARS

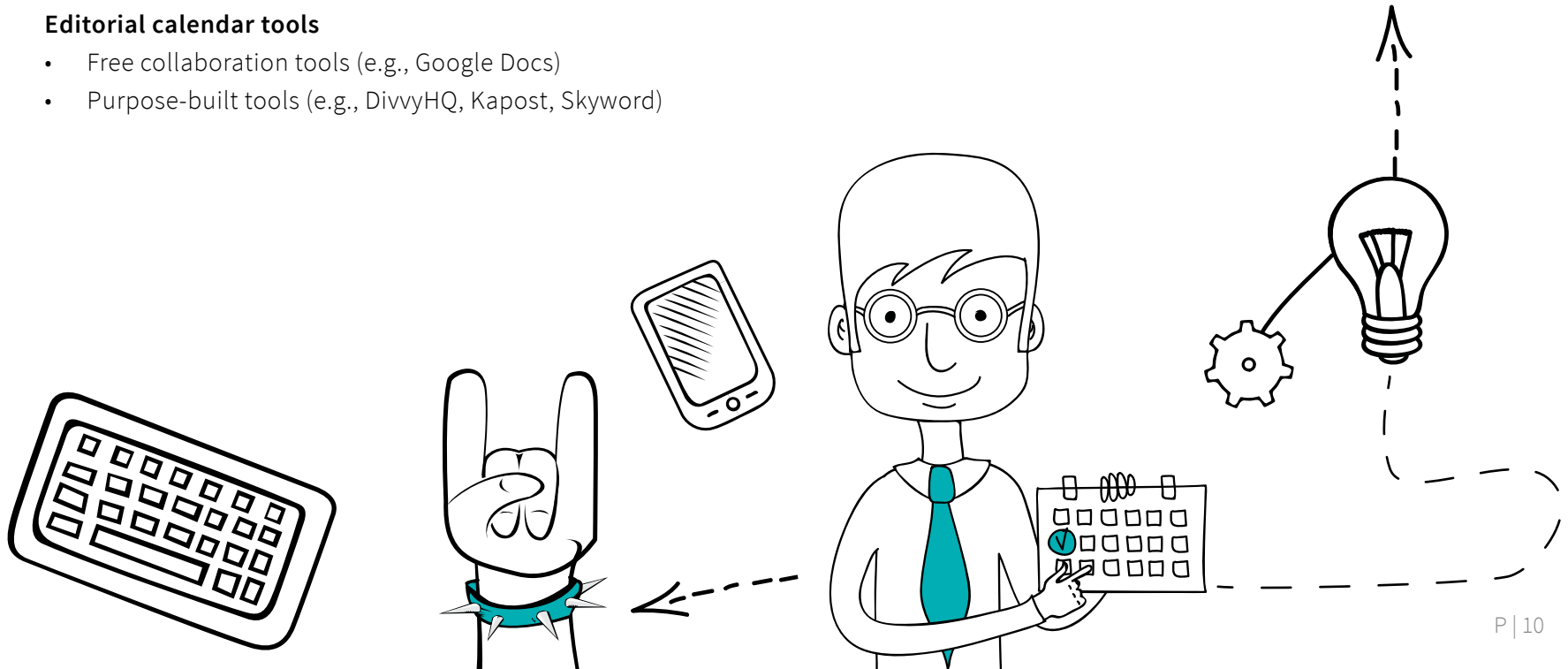
So you've figured out the topics you're going to cover and who is going to create all that content goodness. Now you need a plan and tool to keep it all organized. Get ready to mark up your editorial calendar!

### Benefits of an editorial calendar

- Keeps everyone on the same page and on track when it comes to producing content
- Makes it clear who is responsible for what and when
- Helps keep marketing, sales, demand gen and the events group in lockstep
- Reduces content duplication
- Allows everyone to take advantage of each other's content

### Editorial calendar tools

- Free collaboration tools (e.g., Google Docs)
- Purpose-built tools (e.g., DivvyHQ, Kapost, Skyword)



As you populate your editorial calendar, map it to the buyer's journey so you can be sure you're doing all you can to engage prospects at each stage and move them to the next. To keep things simple, we recommend dividing the buyer's journey into two parts: early stage and later stage.

	Goals	Marketing Tactics
<b>Early Stage (Reach)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build brand awareness and gain mindshare with those not yet ready to purchase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PR</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Blog posts</li> <li>• Display advertising</li> </ul>
<b>Later Stage (Nurture)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate and influence prospects once they are aware of your brand but before they are ready to engage with a sales rep</li> <li>• Nurture after a sales conversation but before a purchase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paid and/or organic search marketing</li> <li>• Email marketing</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> <li>• Landing pages</li> </ul>

### Ways to drive early-stage prospects into the later stage

Drive site traffic using search, social media, and advertising



Offer engaging content, such as blog posts, white papers, eBooks, videos, and webinars



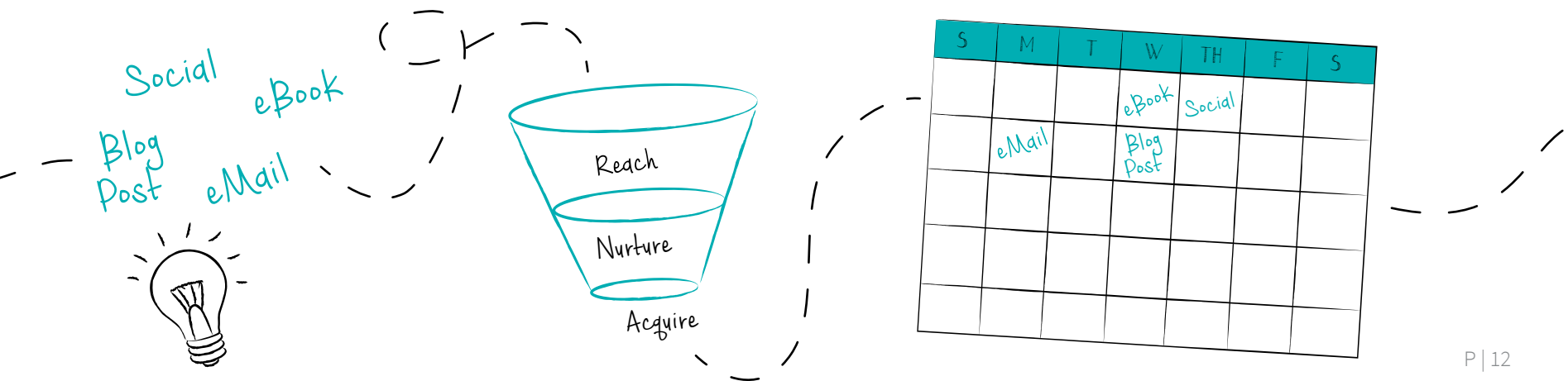
Gate valuable content in exchange for contact details



Continue engaging prospects with compelling, relevant content offers and information

Make a list of existing assets and map them to the purchase cycle - beginning, middle or close to the end.

List of Assets	Purchase Cycle



## 05 EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

For the best possible results, your content amplification plan should be a global effort. Have you considered partnering with colleagues outside your region? Here is a checklist for expanding your content potential.

### Checklist for success:

- ✓ Ask your global colleagues to weigh in on how long it will take to translate content
- ✓ If working with an agency to produce your content, find out if they'll make it painful and expensive to share the original files with your colleagues
- ✓ Figure out which thought leadership and case studies will be a hit with local audiences
- ✓ Whenever possible, use images and references that anyone can understand
- ✓ Let your colleagues have a say in who will be responsible for localizing and promoting the asset in each geo
- ✓ Give each geo enough time (a minimum two weeks) to translate and localize the asset once it is finalized
- ✓ The morning of your content launch, email everyone involved: tell them what the asset is about, your plan to launch it, and a thank you for their involvement
- ✓ Include a few social sharing messages in your launch email and ask everyone to share the content with their social networks
- ✓ Measure launch and demand-gen metrics for each geo, and bubble those individual stats up to a global view

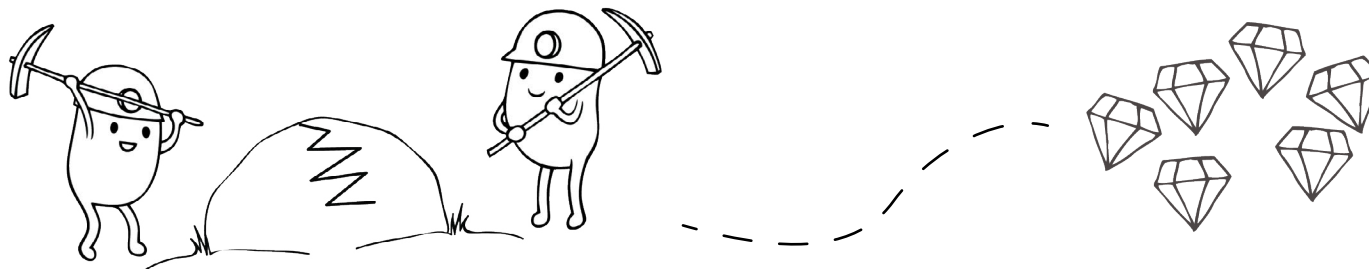
## 06 PRODUCE A BIG ROCK...THEN TURN IT INTO DOZEN OF TINY GEMS

Overwhelmed at the thought of developing content that keeps prospects engaged and interested down that (sometimes lengthy) path to purchase? Take a deep breath - it's all good.

Start with a single piece of content that can power your demand-gen engine for months on end. We call this a Big Rock - this is a major piece of content (think 15, 20, 30 or more pages) that shows you are the end-all and be-all on a topic.

Should we create a Big Rock?	YES	NO
We can back up our decision with data.		
The content is going to solve a problem or answer a pressing question for our prospects.		
We can offer a fresh perspective on a hot topic or on a status-quo approach to business.		
We can reap SEO value by creating this content.		

If you can answer “yes” to one or more of these, you’ve got a winner on our hands! So confidently move forward knowing you’ll be publishing a relevant piece of content that will serve you and your audience well, both now and in the future.



## Sources of inspiration

- **Answer the number-one question on your prospects' minds.** Use keyword research, insights from your colleagues, and a survey tool to generate potential topics.
- **Pull from the blog.** Identify five or more blog posts that follow a theme and stitch them together into a Big Rock.
- **Flip the content funnel.** Pick an overarching theme, choose five relevant case studies and bundle them into Success Stories.

## Re-serve your Big Rock in bite sizes

Reimagine your Big Rock in many different formats to gain the most mileage from it:

- Slice out a series of short blog posts
- Pull an infographic
- Reformat as a SlideShare
- Walk through it during a webinar
- Present expert Q&A as a blog post or article



## Steps to develop thought-leadership content

1. Understand what stakeholders in target companies believe.

2. Develop and articulate a well-informed point of view.

3. Frame a story in terms of the value delivered to help buyers see new possibilities.

## 07 PUBLISH ON LINKEDIN

If you produce a bunch of content but it never gets consumed and shared, what's the point? Don't fret! By posting your short and long-form content on LinkedIn where it will be seen by the world's largest network of professionals.

**Step 1:** Use the intuitive blogging tool embedded into the LinkedIn platform to publish new and previously published content on LinkedIn.

**Step 2:** Share your content in the places where you publish content, such as your Company Page, Showcase Pages, and employee profiles.

**Step 3:** Multiply the impact by calling upon a combination of organic and paid media, including LinkedIn Sponsored Content, LinkedIn Direct Sponsored Content, and LinkedIn Sponsored InMail.

### Building the perfect post.

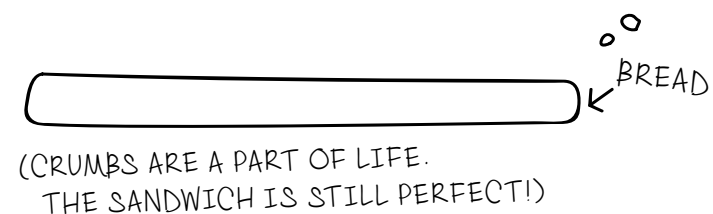
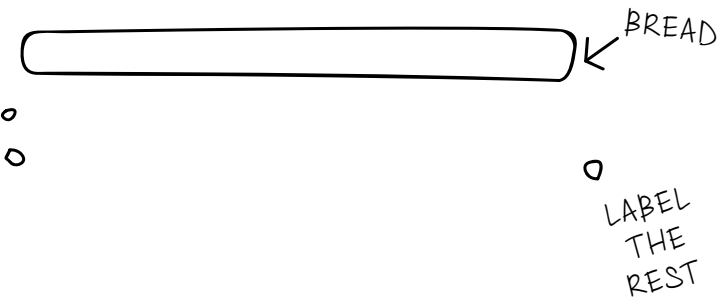
**Top** - The visual

**Beginning** - Share what the marketer can expect to learn

**Middle** - 3-6 paragraphs is best

**End** - CTA to a piece of content, your site or your personal social channels.

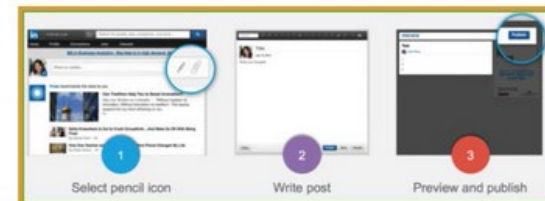
### BUILD THE PERFECT SANDWICH



How to get views, comments, and shares:

- ✓ **Write often and publish when it's timely.** Share insights and perspectives on a current event or news.
- ✓ **Write what you know.** Use details from your life to help others be better in theirs.
- ✓ **Use links to drive site traffic.** Link images and keywords back to your company blog or Big Rocks.
- ✓ **Use clear headlines.** Use puns and jokes sparingly since a misinterpretation or misunderstanding might keep someone from reading your post at all.
- ✓ **Beware of listicles.** While fine for raw clicks, we have found they don't encourage engagement.
- ✓ **Share!** Share your posts on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter; tweet it via LinkedIn Pulse; and let friends, colleagues, and employees know so they can amplify the reach.

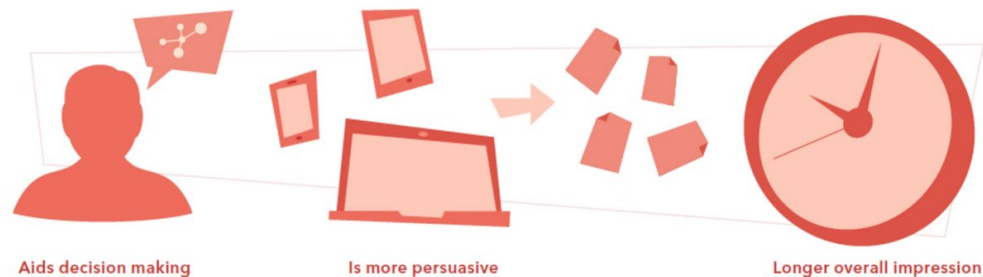
### Publishing on LinkedIn: how it works



## 08 INCORPORATE VISUAL CONTENT

Give your prospects and customers an eye-ful - the visual is the new headline.

Start by adding images to your LinkedIn posts (you'll stand to boost comments by 98% in the process). Next, reimagine your existing content in more visual formats. Can you create an infographic or SlideShare deck from a white paper? Remember: video counts as visual content so work it in.



### Best practices for including a visual element in every content asset and campaign:

- ❑ **Skip the stock photos.** People crave authenticity, so give it to them in the form of real-life photos.
- ❑ **Choose images wisely.** Select images that will resonate with your target audience.
- ❑ **Dress up emails and landing pages.** Use JPEGs or GIFs in email to ensure the highest likelihood of images displaying properly in any email client; ensure your emails look good even with the images turned off; and make sure there's synergy between your email and landing page images.
- ❑ **Compliment your copy.** Use images that relate to your topic and help readers better understand and digest your copy.
- ❑ **Be mobile-friendly.** Make sure your images render well on mobile phones.

Image databases  
you may find useful

Creative Commons  
Pixabay  
PhotoPin  
DotSpin

# Visual Pop Quiz

See how well you understand imagery best practices:

1 Because people crave authenticity, we should NOT use:  
a) porcupines  
b) stock photography  
c) mug shots

2 The images we use should \_\_\_\_\_ our copy.  
a) upstage  
b) conflict  
c) complement

3 Our images should render well on:  
a) holograms  
b) on mobile  
c) Pokemon GO

4 The images we choose should \_\_\_\_\_ our target audience.  
a) resonate with  
b) disturb  
c) confuse

5 We should make sure images look good in our:  
a) emails and landing pages  
b) trapper keepers  
c) imagination



## 09 AMPLIFY YOUR CONTENT REACH

Don't just post your content and hope prospective buyers stumble upon it—promote your content to make sure they find it.

- Encourage your employees to share your content using **Elevate**, a LinkedIn product that helps your employees be social and share content across LinkedIn and Twitter.
- Take advantage of native advertising to get your content in the content stream your target audience is already consuming.

### Examples of native advertising:

- Sponsored Content on LinkedIn
- A lead form that pops up on a SlideShare slide
- A video that someone can view before reading an article



Introductory Text

Title

Description Text

### 4 ways to boost engagement with

#### LinkedIn Sponsored Content:

- Sponsor two to four Sponsored Content ads at any time to maximize your reach to your target audience
- Run each campaign at least three weeks
- Optimize or retire the updates that aren't delivering the results you hoped to achieve
- Develop clear calls to action, telling people exactly what they'll get and what they'll learn when they click

### 4 steps to add influencers to your content

#### marketing strategy:

- Identify relevant thought leaders by searching Buzzsumo on the top influencers in your space or by topic, and follow an exclusive group of influencers on LinkedIn.
- Engage with influencers to build a relationship.
- Invite influencers to contribute their perspectives for inclusion in your content.
- Send 3-5 questions for influencers and include their answers in your content asset, and re-publish in a series of blog posts.

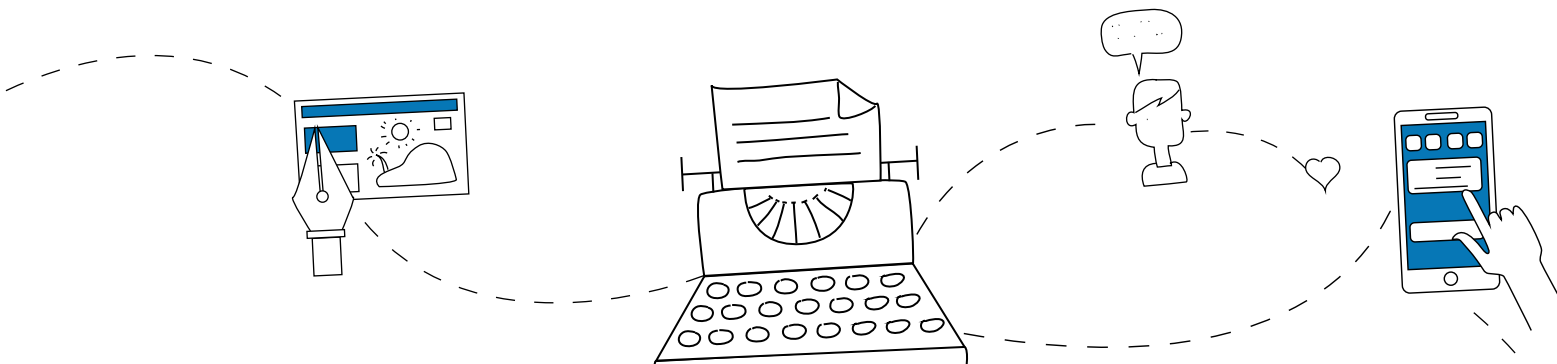
# Native Advertising Exercise

Create 3 pieces of LinkedIn Sponsored Content. Keep the headline under 60 characters.

Start with a question or quote to hook the reader and use “You” to speak to your audience.

Make the call to action clear and compelling.

Introductory text (150 chars max)	EXAMPLE: Everything you need to know about marketing on LinkedIn: Download this must-have guide to getting the most bang-for-your-marketing-buck on LinkedIn.
Introductory text (150 chars max)	
Introductory text (150 chars max)	
Introductory text (150 chars max)	



# 10 MEASURE YOUR RESULTS AND TWEAK TO OPTIMIZE

Once your content marketing engine is humming along, you need to measure the impact.

- ✓ Use paid and free tools to track and gauge the impact of your content both offline and online
- ✓ Gain insight into performance on the LinkedIn platform:

## Profile Analytics

Track Comments, Shares, and Likes to see who's engaging with your content

## How You Rank

Track how trafficked your profile is among Connections, Colleagues, and Comparable Members

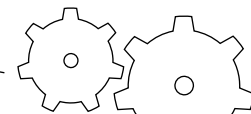
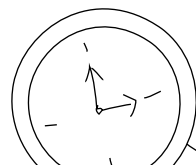
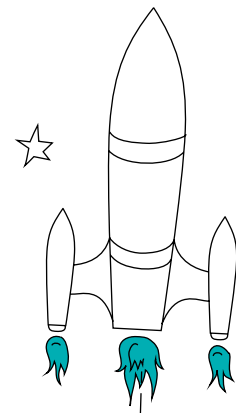
## Audience

See what types of professionals are following you

## Content Marketing Score\*

Analyze who engages with your content; see how you compare to peers; gain suggestions for improving your score

- ✓ Measure how well you are reaching the goals you defined at the outset



\* To receive your custom Content Marketing Score, please contact your LinkedIn account executive or account manager.

### Goal

Reach your audience at scale to build awareness and a positive impression of your brand

### Track

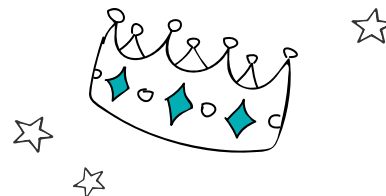
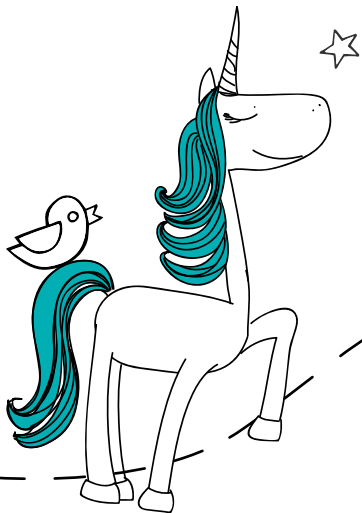
- Awareness
- Branded search
- Brand recall and Lift
- Website and referral traffic lift
- Page views, pages per visit, and time spent on site lift
- Subscriber/opt-in-lift
- Engagement (open rate, shares, likes, comments)
- Bounce rate decline
- Unique visitors lift
- Inbound links lift

### Goal

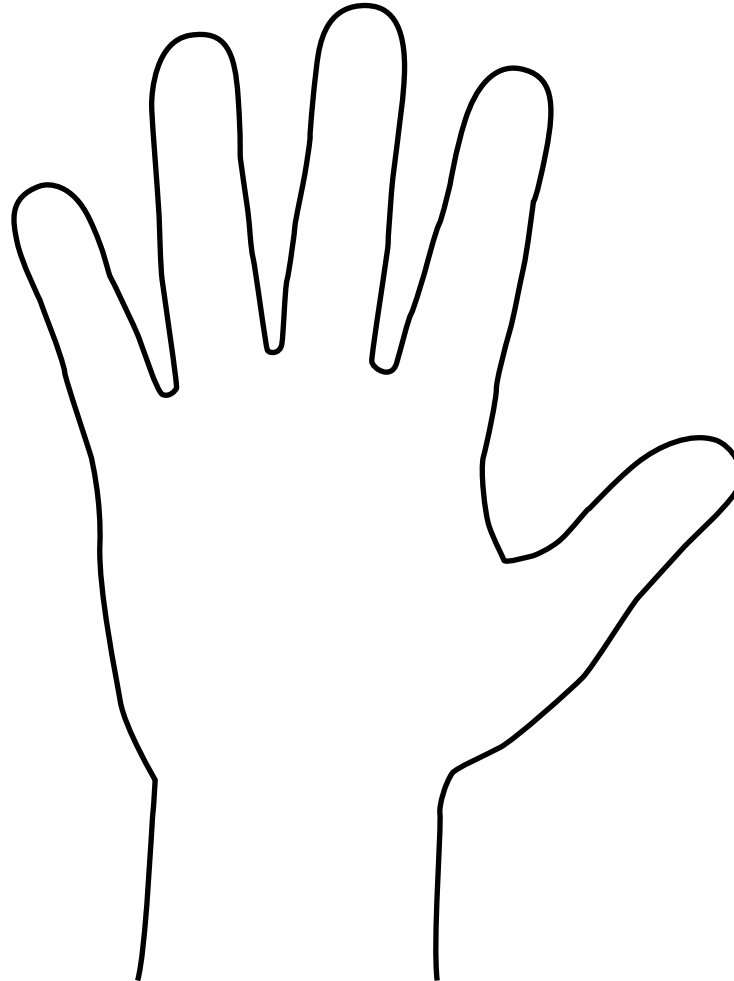
Nurture prospects until they're ready to make a purchase

### Track

- Leads (organic vs. paid)
- MQLs/Sales Accepted/ Opportunities (SAO)
- Sales Qualified Leads (SQL)
- Cost per lead
- Qualified lead velocity rate (i.e., growth in qualified leads)
- Form fills
- Revenue
- Returning Visitors
- Close rate
- Retention rate and/or customer lifetime value and/or upsell/cross-sell



Give yourself a high-five for completing our workbook.



# EXTRA CREDIT

You may have completed this workbook, but a true hybrid marketer never stops learning. Here are some additional resources to help you make the most of your content marketing strategy on LinkedIn.

Content marketing takes many formats. See how many you can find!

eBooks  
Webinars  
Blog posts  
Emails  
Workbooks  
Checklists  
Infographics  
SlideShares  
Advertisements  
Videos  
Case studies  
Landing pages  
Podcasts  
Guides  
Research reports

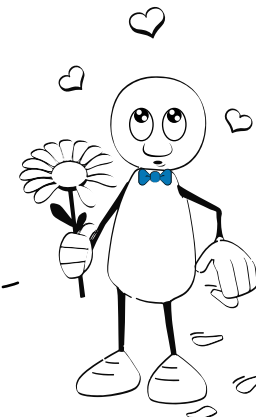
N	G	A	S	E	D	V	N	C	I	M	S	R	X	P
P	O	D	T	V	H	E	I	C	U	M	E	W	L	L
U	L	V	S	F	C	S	O	P	V	S	S	S	A	S
B	B	E	I	S	O	A	Z	I	E	E	W	C	N	N
E	Y	R	L	T	W	C	I	A	E	E	S	I	D	I
S	L	T	K	U	E	D	R	B	B	O	W	H	I	U
E	Y	I	C	D	A	C	O	I	E	Q	I	P	N	B
D	R	S	E	I	H	O	N	D	S	P	H	A	G	I
I	F	E	H	E	K	A	I	R	E	P	O	R	T	S
U	M	M	C	S	R	V	H	L	W	N	A	G	L	P
G	P	E	I	S	I	R	Y	O	K	V	B	O	I	O
D	A	N	W	O	R	K	B	O	O	K	S	F	E	S
K	G	T	L	X	T	N	C	O	G	T	T	N	F	T
U	E	S	G	S	E	R	A	H	S	E	D	I	L	S
G	S	T	S	A	C	D	O	P	W	V	D	C	H	A

## Additional Resources:

[The Sophisticated Marketer's Guide to Content Marketing](#)

[The LinkedIn Content Marketing Tactical Plan](#)

[Amplify: How to use paid, earned and owned media to pump up the volume of your content marketing](#)



## MARKET TO WHO MATTERS

Ready to effectively engage the world's largest network of business professionals and influencers?

### GET STARTED

[Learn about LinkedIn Marketing Solutions.](#)

[Stay on the cutting edge with our blog.](#)

[Follow us on LinkedIn.](#)

[Follow us on @LinkedInMKTG.](#)

