

Mineral™

Content Marketing Essentials for Brokers

Introduction

If you want to grow your business and be a trusted advisor to clients, you need to do content marketing. When done right, it distinguishes your expertise from others and gets the attention of customers and prospects who are drowning in a sea of options. It's a much healthier and more efficient use of your time.

We know it can seem complicated, so we took the time (and did a little research) to boil down the essential elements of what you need to be successful at content marketing.

About the Author

Hey, I'm Douglas. I am an attorney-turned-content marketer who loves finding insights. We've worked with brokers for over 10 years and are committed to supporting you as much as we do small employers. We believe that if you win, then your clients win too.



Douglas

The Essentials

What is content marketing?

Content marketing provides consumers with relevant information in a way that delivers them value.ⁱ How simple is that?

Content is what you are producing, and the marketing aspect is delivering value to consumers, be them customers, prospects, or your industry at large. Some people roughly call this “thought leadership.”

Why content marketing?

Because it works. Research shows:

- Content marketing generates over three times as many leads as outbound marketing and costs **62%** less.ⁱⁱ
- **88%** of professional marketers consider content marketing to be an “important” part of their marketing strategy.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **79%** of would-be buyers claim that thought leadership was important in determining which providers they wanted to learn more about.^{iv}
- Content marketing develops a relationship of trust between yourself and clients and prospects.^v



The Essentials

What is good content?

Technically, posting legible content counts as content marketing. But that doesn't mean it's good. So we broke down four (4) elements of good content that you should aim for.

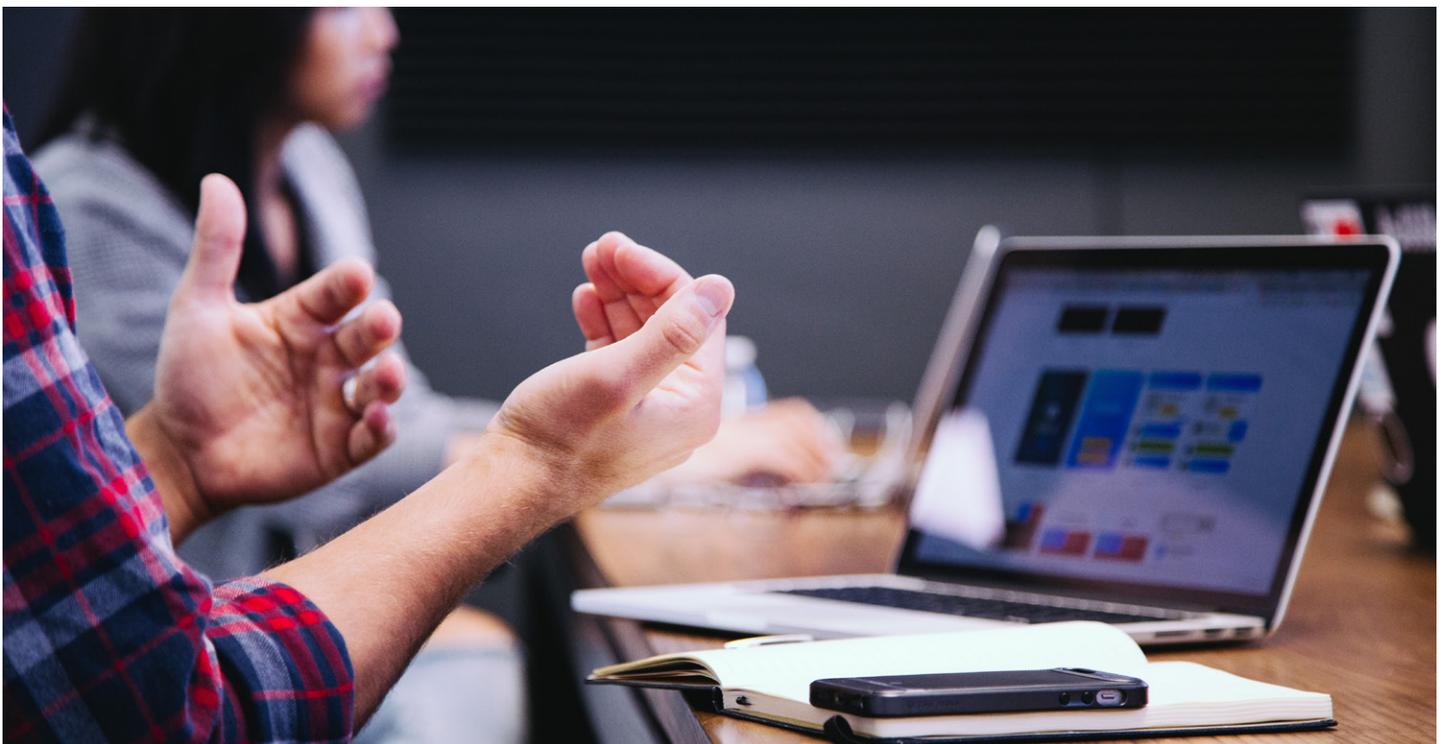
1. Come from authority or expertise

Good content happens when you know what you're talking about. In a world of anonymous postings and online contributors, people who speak with credibility gain trust.^{vi}

Being licensed as an insurance professional gives you instant credibility to talk about anything in the industry. To distinguish yourself from your peers, find an additional angle. It could be based on experience ("**After 10 years in the insurance industry, I know...**"), background ("**As a former construction worker, I know...**"), or identity ("**As a working parent, I know...**").

Good content happens when you know what you're talking about.

You don't need to have a famous name, a big title, or a fancy degree – but you do need to be well positioned to speak on your topic, and able to convey it.^{vii}



The Essentials

2. Benefit the Consumer

Good content needs to help the consumer in some way. Give them something of value outside of your product or service. For example, creating a glossary of common insurance terms helps readers understand the industry better. It's related to what you do, gives your reader something, and it's not a pitch. As experts emphasize, content marketing is not about "selling," it's about "helping."^{viii}

3. Solve a Pain Point

Good content adds value. But what kind of value? To start, aim to solve a problem your consumers are experiencing or show them how to do something better. For example, creating a checklist of how to evaluate different health plans in the market helps a benefits administrator save time.

While there are other ways to add value to consumers— you can entertain them or inspire them with a quote— research shows the "pain point" approach is very effective.ⁱ

If you're curious about how to identify pain points or understand your target audience better, check out our piece "Cutting Through the Noise." [Get the eBook.](#)

The Essentials

4. Foster a conversation

Good content marketing fosters a conversation. Research shows that having those conversations further promotes the trust and relationship-building benefits of content marketing.^x

Maybe you've seen "What do you think?" at the end of LinkedIn posts by your peers to encourage a conversation. That's a direct approach. Asking for collaboration on a tricky topic, showing empathy for the consumer, or simply talking to anyone who interacts with your content are also effective approaches.^{xi} We've also found success in addressing unique or interesting topics that largely aren't being talked about in the industry.

We understand it may be difficult to write content that meets all four qualities, so we recommend you start with writing about something you know (authority) that helps your target audience in some way (benefits consumer).

Good content marketing fosters a conversation.



The Essentials

What Worked for Us

Here is an example of a content marketing piece that worked really well. The “**Top 9 HR Questions of 2020**” was an eBook that organized the most common questions our internal HR advisor team received in 2020 from mainly small-to-medium businesses.

It came from authority because...

...the HR advisors who answered the questions were certified and averaged over 10 years’ experience in their fields.

It benefited the consumer because...

...it provided real answers to questions that we knew a large portion of consumers were asking.

It solved a pain point because...

...while common, the questions were not cut and dried; they required expertise that we knew many small businesses did not have.

It also fostered a conversation.

You can imagine that some consumers had their own unique questions. But through consuming the content, they at least became aware of who they could go to with those questions.

Was it perfect?

Content will never be perfect. But it was successful because it roughly met the essentials and, after we published it, strongly resonated with consumers.



The Strategy

Once you create content, you need to have a strategy. There are a lot of strategies, but the one we have found most helpful is the **buyer's journey**. Think of the buyer's journey as a consumer story. Before a consumer will want to buy, they have to become aware of you, consider what you're offering, and evaluate if your solutions are worth buying.

Different consumers will be in different buying stages, so you want to have enough content to fit whatever stage they are in.

The Buyer's Journey

Awareness

Buyer recognizes they may have a problem, and discovers that you might be able to solve it. Content doesn't mention your product or service.

Consideration

Buyer has diagnosed the problem, and wants to know what can solve their problem. Content connects with the value of your product or service.

Evaluation

Buyer is engaged in the sales process and is evaluating whether you're the right solution for them. Content expressly addresses the features and benefits of your product or service.

Purchase

The Mechanics

Once you have a content approach and a strategy, you need to decide what format your content will be in, where to publish it, and how to track its performance. These are the basics. As you gain more experience with content marketing, you can get more sophisticated.

Format

Your content can take many forms. We recommend starting with **short articles**. They, along with **virtual events** (ex. webinars), have been shown to produce the best overall results.^{xii} Short, **casual videos** (think **TikTok** or **YouTube**) are also becoming increasingly popular.

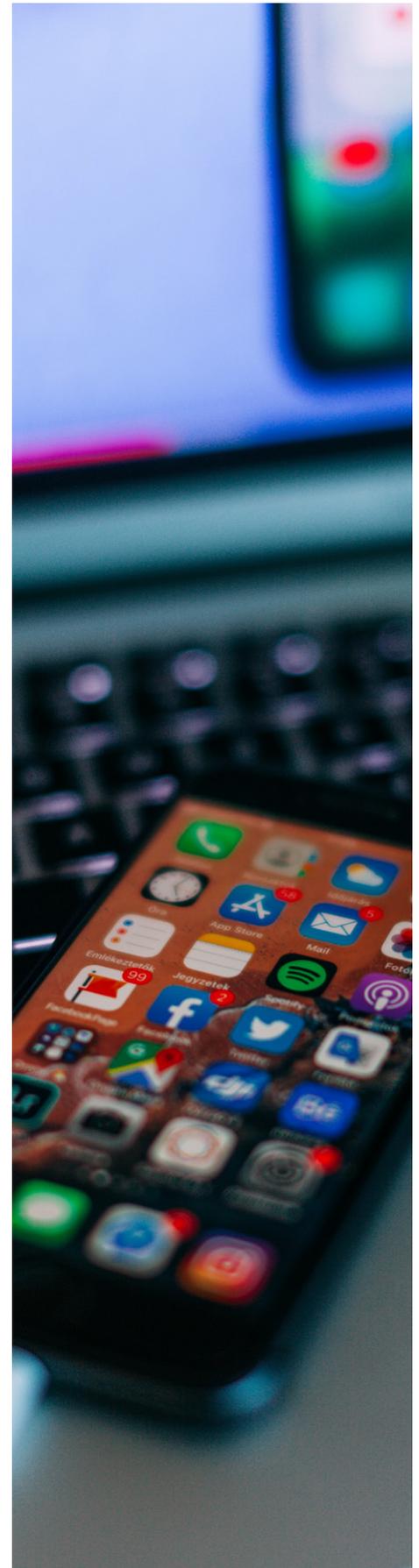
Delivery

Delivery is how you are going to publish your content. We suggest focusing on **email** (to a list), **website/company blog**, and **LinkedIn** (social media). They are simple and the most popular delivery mechanisms used by professional marketers.^{xiii}

Analytics

Once you publish, you need to assess how well your content is performing. This lets you know what content works, and what doesn't.

To start, find some way to see how many people have viewed your content. Social media platforms already offer this in the form of "**likes**" and "retweet" features. Blog editor and website features typically have "**# of clicks**" or "**# of views**" already built in as well.



Conclusion

If you've ever posted on social media, or sent an email to multiple clients, then you're ready to do content marketing. Research and experience show that when done right, content marketing is incredibly effective in engaging current clients and attracting prospects to you and your business. We hope by following these essentials, you can create good content that works for you and that resonates with your intended audience.

About

Mineral is the HR and compliance leader for growing businesses. Through a combination of data, technology and human expertise, our proactive solutions take the guesswork out of HR and compliance, giving clients peace of mind. To learn more, visit trustmineral.com.

Help your clients with their HR and compliance pain points
by offering Mineral solutions. [Partner with Us.](#)

Sources

- ⁱ Vinerean, S. (2017). "Content Marketing Strategy. Definition, Objectives and Tactics." Expert Journal of Marketing. Found at http://marketing.expertjournals.com/ark:/16759/EJM_511vinerean92-98.pdf.
- ⁱⁱ McCoy, J. (October 22, 2017). "9 Stats That Will Make You Want to Invest in Content Marketing." Content Marketing Institute. Found at <https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2017/10/stats-invest-content-marketing/>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Stahl, S. (September 30, 2020). "2021 B2B Content Marketing: What Now? [New Research]." Content Marketing Institute. Found at <https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2020/09/b2b-industry-benchmarks-budgets-trends-research/>.
- ^{iv} Schwartz, J. & Burgess, B. (2015). "ITSMA research report: The four stages of thought leadership: ITSMA's maturity model [digital report]." Found at <http://bit.ly/2xWGw9g>.
- ^v Vinerean, S. (2017). "Content Marketing Strategy. Definition, Objectives and Tactics." Expert Journal of Marketing. Found at http://marketing.expertjournals.com/ark:/16759/EJM_511vinerean92-98.pdf.
- ^{vi} Barry, J.M. & Gironda, J.T. (2019). "Operationalizing thought leadership for online B2B marketing." Industrial Marketing Management. Found at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/James_Barry5/publication/322011357_Operationalizing_thought_leadership_for_online_B2B_marketing/links/5ec5a33a458515626cbb38e/Operationalizing-thought-leadership-for-online-B2B-marketing.pdf.
- ^{vii} "Op-Ed Writing: Tips and Tricks [Getting Started: The Basics]." The OpEd Project. Found at <https://www.theopedproject.org/opedbasics/#gettingstarted>.
- ^{viii} Wang, W, Malthouse, E.C., Calder, B. & Uzunoglu, E. (August 2019). "B2B content marketing for professional services: In-person versus digital contacts." Industrial Marketing Management. Found at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/James_Barry5/publication/322011357_Operationalizing_thought_leadership_for_online_B2B_marketing/links/5ec5a33a458515626cbb38e/Operationalizing-thought-leadership-for-online-B2B-marketing.pdf.
- ^{ix} See Wang, et al. and Barry, et al.
- ^x Barry, J.M. & Gironda, J.T. (2019). "Operationalizing thought leadership for online B2B marketing." Industrial Marketing Management Found at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/James_Barry5/publication/322011357_Operationalizing_thought_leadership_for_online_B2B_marketing/links/5ec5a33a458515626cbb38e/Operationalizing-thought-leadership-for-online-B2B-marketing.pdf.
- ^{xi} Id.
- ^{xii} Stahl, S. (September 30, 2020). "2021 B2B Content Marketing: What Now? [New Research]." Content Marketing Institute. Found at <https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2020/09/b2b-industry-benchmarks-budgets-trends-research/>.
- ^{xiii} Id.