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5 Ways to Boost Your B2B Content's Performance

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Creating content takes significant time, resources, and effort. The last thing you want is for it to underperform. Yet so often, that's exactly what happens. According to a recent CMS Wire survey, 50% of B2B vendor content goes unread or isn't valued.

To improve content performance, the majority of marketers (55%) say the number one thing they can do is create more content and post more frequently. But creating content consistently isn't enough.

Many factors impact content performance, such as ensuring it's getting in front of the right audience to making it engaging and relevant enough for your audience to want to read.

If you've been disappointed in your content's performance in the past or want to further improve your content, we've put together our top five tips. These tips come from over a decade of working with leading B2B tech brands and seeing what works – and what doesn't.

1 Start with the end goal in mind

Content can do many things – drive more traffic to your website, build authority or brand awareness, generate leads, move customers further down the buying funnel, and more. But just like the saying that "you can't be all things to all people," the same is true of content. Not every piece of content can meet every marketing metric you have.

To evaluate your content's performance, you must first be clear on what "performance" means (i.e., which metrics you will measure) for a specific piece of content. Once you know your performance goals, you can then identify the best format, topic, and distribution strategy for the content – all of which will be an important part of ensuring your content gets the results you want.

The Best Type of Content for Specific Performance Metrics

Goal	Best Content Types
Organic traffic	• Link-building content • Keyword-focused evergreen blogs • Original research • Guides
Brand awareness	• Guest blog posts • Original research for media mentions • Keyword-focused blogs
Brand authority	• White papers • Original research • Thought leadership articles from internal SMEs • Educational blogs, articles, and eBooks
Lead generation	• Quizzes • Webinars • Original research • Mini video courses • White papers/eBooks • Analyst reports • Guides • Checklists

2

Align your content with your audience

Aligning content with your intended audience is key to creating valuable content. Yet, less than half of marketers (47%) research their audience. Taking the time to speak to your target audience, either through interviews or surveys, can help you better understand what topics are relevant.

You also need to create content that is personalized for different audiences. Perhaps you need content for both marketing executives and IT executives, since both are part of the buying committee. Each audience will have different needs when consuming content. The marketing executive may be focused on how to better segment their email lists, while the IT executive may be much more concerned about how easily the tool can integrate into the marketing tech stack.



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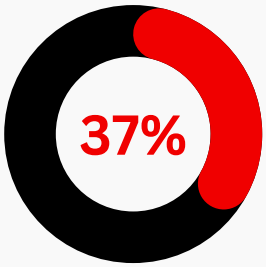
Audience alignment also includes aligning the content to where the audience is in the various stages of the buying journey.

Awareness – Educational content that focuses on how to or best practices, research data, and opinions or insights from thought leaders.
Consideration – Content that helps your audience understand how your product or service differs from competitors, what your product does, and what business results it can achieve.
Decision – Content that will help sway a final decision, such as case studies, reviews or testimonials, or other content that can answer final questions, such as implementation guides.

3

Include unique insights

People read content to be entertained or educated. When it comes to B2B content, the most likely reason they're reading is for education – whether it's to learn a new skill, solve a problem they have, or better understand their industry and competitors.



Only 37% of marketers are prioritizing research-driven content.

Education can only happen when the content has something new to say that your audience doesn't already know. The best way to get these "unique insights" is through original research and interviews with industry experts, internal thought leaders, or subject matter experts. In fact, research and survey reports were cited as the most valuable source for researching buying decisions, in one recent survey on B2B buyers content preferences.

Gathering original qualitative or quantitative data does take more time and effort than simply researching a topic online or repurposing third-party data. But, without taking this extra step, it's unlikely that your content is truly different from the ocean of content already out there. This is why prioritizing research-driven content is a top three tactic for marketers who want to boost content performance.

4 Create a strong narrative

B2B content often gets a bad rap for being boring. While your white paper or eBook may not be an action-packed thriller, it can still have a narrative that drives the reader forward in the same way a plot drives the reader through a novel.

One way to do this is using a problem/solution/benefit format. Just like every hero has a challenge to overcome, your reader has a challenge they are trying to overcome that you can help them solve. That challenge may not be that they are being held hostage at gunpoint, but it could still be deeply anxiety-inducing.

In today's "do more with less" work culture, even a feeling of overwhelm can be a serious problem for your audience. If you have a solution that can lift that problem from their shoulders, they will want to keep reading.

Another way to keep your audience engaged with the narrative is by inserting mini-stories into the content. Case studies are a great way to do this as they use a narrative structure that moves from challenge to solution to a positive outcome. What's more, it often allows your reader to see themselves and their challenge in a relatable way. Finally, using case studies can add credibility by showcasing how you've solved this problem for others.

5

Have a solid distribution plan

Your content can be the best on the planet, but if you don't have a clear plan to publish and distribute your content where it can reach the most people that match your ideal audience, your content won't perform the way you want to.

Back in Step 1, you identified your key metrics for your content. Those metrics will also help you determine where and how you'll distribute your content once it's ready for publication. For example, if your main goal is to increase organic traffic and you create a keyword-focused article for your blog, you'll want to publish it to your blog. But you can further optimize the performance of your content by promoting it as many places as possible – on your social media channels, in an email or newsletter, through paid ads, or through other content mediums such as a webinar, video, podcast, or infographic.

A little more effort goes a long way

Tailored, high-quality content will resonate most with your audience.

High-quality content that incorporates unique insights through original research and interviews, has a strong narrative, and is appropriately aligned to your audience and stage of the buying journey does take more time and effort to create. However, when your content is seen as offering unique insights and value, it will position your brand as a thought leader, drive more engagement, and help your content perform better overall.

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Interested in producing high-quality content that will make an impact with your audience?

Get in touch