

# How To Create Content That Converts (All Year Long)

You and I both know that content is the foundation of our businesses. You use it to drive traffic. You use content to engage your audience and to learn about their wants, needs, and goals. Content is used to build a brand, to establish authority and a number of other goals. One of the primary goals for your content is to convert. You convert prospects to leads and leads to customers. This report focuses on 9 tactics to help you do just that. Let's get started.

## Emotions Sell

The next time you buy something, anything, think about why you're buying it. Researchers and skilled marketers know why you're buying it. They know that we buy for emotional reasons. We buy because we want to feel something or stop feeling something. For example, if you buy a pack of gum you might want to feel confident that your breath is fresh. Or you may want to stop feeling stresses and chewing gum alleviates stress.

As a business owner, you can leverage the emotions of your prospects and leads to grow your list and sell products. You know your prospects and customers better than anyone. You know the problems they're facing, the solution that your products and information provide.

For example, a personal coach might understand that one of the primary emotions their audience faces is frustration from not being able to reach goals or dissatisfaction from an unfulfilling career. Conversely, those very same prospects may be seeking to feel happy, content, or fulfilled. There are both positive and negative emotions to consider. It's not only your job to identify those emotions but to integrate them into your content.

In fact, emotions can and should be integrated into content throughout your sales funnel – from lead generation and list building to converting those leads to paying customers and then increasing sales and repeat purchases.

## How to Identify Your Audience's Emotions

Take a look at your audience at every level of interaction with your company. For example, why do they contact you? What challenge are they facing or dealing with when they start searching for information or solutions online? A business owner might start researching for administrative help when they begin to feel overwhelmed by the time it's taking to run their business or ready to take their business to the next level.

A Virtual Assistant can tap into that emotion by providing an opt-in report that shows overwhelmed business owners how to get more done with a virtual assistant or shows motivated business owners how a virtual assistant can help them take their business to the next level. The opt-in offer taps into the emotions the prospect is feeling and provides a solution. Overwhelm is replaced by hope with one simple opt-in report.

Once your prospect is on your list and they're a lead, you can then focus on the next emotions they're experiencing. What's their problem or challenge now? Email content can then focus on

tapping into those emotions and converting the lead to a customer. Take a look at your sales funnel and identify the positive and negative emotions that your prospects and leads may be experiencing. Start integrating those emotions into your content and watch your conversion rate increase. Next, we'll look at long content and why that can help boost your conversions.

## **Longer Content Converts**

You might be surprised to learn that longer content consistently outperforms short content for conversion. There are a number of reasons why this is true. Next, we'll explore the three biggest reasons why longer content converts and we'll talk about how to create content that your readers respond to.

### **Long Content Has a Higher Perceived Value**

Imagine this. Imagine choosing between a report that offers 5 tips and a report that offers 30 tips. The 30 tips report will often win. Why? Because it has 25 more tips. It's longer and that means that it has more substance and more value, right? That's the perception.

It's up to you to follow through and make sure your longer content really does provide more value. Add facts, figures, and reliable information. Back up your claims with proof and ensure that each article or opt-in helps solve a problem that your reader or prospect is currently facing. When you're able to accomplish that, then you tap into some powerful buying triggers. Credibility is just one of the buying triggers that you tap into.

When you provide longer content that gives your readers value, you establish yourself and your company as a credible source of information. We buy from those we consider to be credible experts.

There's also the concept of reciprocity. When you feel like someone has given you something, you're more inclined to want to give back to them. For example, you give your new subscribers a free eBook that they feel is highly valuable and they in turn feel a desire to return the favor and buy from you.

### **More Opportunity for Storytelling and Personal Branding**

It's also fair to say that when you have more room to write, it gives you an opportunity to share more information about you, your company, and stories. It gives you the ability to brand. You can add comments from customers. You can share mini case studies too or share personal experiences. When you're writing a 500-word article, blog post, or email message it doesn't give you a lot of room to brand.

You have to stick to the topic. And to be fair, there are definitely reasons to write shorter content. However, if your goal is to convert readers to subscribers or customers, then longer content can do the trick. Why does it work? It engages your reader and helps them get to know you. And guess what. This taps into another buying trigger; trust. We buy from companies that we trust. Long copy enables you to build that relationship with your prospect.

### **More Opportunity to Embed or Add Calls to Action/Actionable Statements**

Finally, longer content gives you the ability to add actionable statements to your content. In a short piece, you may only be able to fit one or two calls to action. In a longer piece, you can have several more opportunities to link to a sales page or invite an opt-in. Knowing that you should write longer content isn't enough. It's also useful to know what types of longer content perform best. Next, we'll look at content ideas that are proven to convert.

## **Use Content Ideas That Are Proven To Convert**

There are a handful of content formats that convert consistently time after time. They convert because they embrace the buying triggers that we've already discussed. We're talking about credibility, trust, reciprocity, and more. So what are these content formats?

- Case studies
- White papers
- Reports
- eBooks (and workbooks)
- Webinars

Let's take a quick look at them individually.

### **Case Studies**

Case studies are documents that highlight how a company solved a problem for a customer. They have a general format that shows the reader what the problem was, why it wasn't being solved, how the company solved the problem, and the end result. They can be anywhere from 4-40 pages long, depending on the information being shared and the industry.

Case studies work quite well for business-to-business (B2B) marketing, where credibility and proof are essential to get through the buying process. However, case studies can also work very well for service-oriented businesses. A virtual assistant, a coach, or consultant can help convert leads to customers by including case studies in their content marketing.

### **White Papers**

White papers are documents that are designed to inform your reader about an issue, help them solve a problem, or guide them to make a decision. They are often longer documents, 10-30 pages. They work well for business-to-business marketing efforts. They speak directly to establishing credibility and authority.

A white paper is an authoritative report or guide that informs readers concisely about a complex issue and presents the issuing body's philosophy on the matter. It is meant to help readers understand an issue, solve a problem, or make a decision. They're excellent tools for lead generation and make a great opt-in offer.

Like a case study, a general format begins with an abstract or a summary of the information. The next and perhaps main section of a white paper is to talk about the challenges, the product or service, and then how the product or service solves the challenges. There's then a conclusion and an opportunity to encourage some type of action. For example, connect with a sales representative.

## Reports, eBooks, and Workbooks

Reports and eBooks help establish credibility and authority. They work for a large variety of industries and niches. They work better for business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing efforts. Reports are generally structured to help a prospect solve a problem.

For example, a personal trainer might create an extensive report on how to hire the right personal trainer for your needs and goals. It then helps people researching personal trainers solve their problem while at the same time it positions the author as a potential candidate to hire. Reports, eBooks, and workbooks make exceptional lead generation tools. They're readily branded, easy to download, and provide value to prospects.

EBooks specifically work well for businesses where the owner or face of the business is recognizable. Or if your goal is to help brand your name as your business, then an eBook can help. It's generally used as a calling card or lead generation tool.

Workbooks are useful tools to add onto a report or eBook. They encourage the reader, or prospect, to take action and can convert a lead into a customer. For example, an eBook on how to increase your personal wealth could be paired with a workbook that helps prospects track and organize their financial goals. The eBook is the lead generator and the workbook can be used to convert those new leads to customers.

## Webinars

Webinars can be used for both B2B and B2C marketing initiatives. They are also exceptional to build a list or to sell to a list. Webinars become more effective when you pair them with handouts and other content that is disseminated during or after the event. These supplemental pieces can provide additional value and include relevant and timely calls to action.

One aspect that makes any piece of content more effective is the relevancy to your prospect or customer. There are tactics you can implement to ensure your content is more relevant.

### **Increase Relevancy**

Have you ever purchased something and then received a coupon or a promotional offer for that same product, or a similar one, after the purchase? Not only does it make you a little bit mad, the promotion certainly is no longer relevant. Timing is part of making sure your content is relevant.

You want to make sure that the information you're sending your prospects and customers addresses challenges and emotions that they're experiencing. You also want to make sure that the content you're sending is reaching the right person. For example, an email sent to a customer might be very different than an email sent to a subscriber on your list. And an email sent to a repeat customer nearing the end of your sales funnel may be very different than one sent to someone who just made their first purchase.

Segmentation is a tactic that can help you stay relevant and ensure that the content you're publishing is timely and relevant to the receiver. Many autoresponders support segmentation.

You can send messages to your list based on their behavior. You can also create separate lists for customers and prospects.

Beyond email, consider creating blog and social media content that pays attention to the different stages your readers and followers may be in. When you provide a variety of content, you're more likely to attract the attention of the right person at the right time.

Relevant content in the form of emails, blog posts, and social media is only part of the puzzle. The other component that must be present for any message to convert is a call to action. You have to tell your reader what to do next.

## **Adding Actionable Statements and Buttons to Your Posts**

Conversions are not really possible, or measurable, if there is no action for your reader to take. There needs to be a statement that invites, encourages, or motivates your prospect to take another step with your business. Before you create any content, decide what you want that content to accomplish.

What's the goal? Create a call to action that supports your goal. For example, if you want people to sign up for your email list, your call to action will invite them to sign up for your list. If you want them to make a purchase, the call to action will motivate them to buy.

Keep in mind that you're going to have better conversion results if you focus on the benefits and the value rather than the action. What wording or phrase works best? Test and track your results. Some audiences respond to "sign up," while others might have a better response to "Download now." Take a look at what you've tried in the past and how that has worked for you. Split test.

Position matters. As you create your content consider the following:

Embedded links –When using an embedded link as your call to action, consider including keywords in the text of the link. Make sure that the link stands out enough so that the reader's attention is grabbed. You might use **bold lettering**, underline, **different colored text**, or even a larger font.

Buttons – Buttons work well when your call to action is short and simple. For example, "Download Now" fits nicely on a button within the body of your text. They're easy to see and grab the attention of your reader.

Above the fold – There's a general rule of thumb that your call to action should be above the fold. This means that your reader will be able to see the call to action without scrolling down the page. However, with so many different devices, it can be difficult to know just where that fold is. When you write longer content, position a call to action within the top third of the content, but only if it makes sense and is relevant to the content. If you're writing a book or a long report, you can include a call to action in the first or second chapter.

The bottom line with your call to action is to make sure that you include one in all of your content and to test and track the results. You'll learn what your audience responds to and you can increasingly improve your conversion results.

## **Credibility**

We've talked a bit about credibility already. Different types of content help create credibility and trigger purchases or opt-ins. We buy and want to do business with people and companies we consider reliable and credible experts. In addition to providing value in your content, you can use different tactics to strengthen your credibility and thus increase your conversions.

### Use Testimonials in Your Content

Testimonials can go a long way to help you increase your credibility. It taps into what's called social proof. That is to say, we tend to believe the words and recommendations of others. And social proof influences purchases. This is one reason many people turn to social media to research purchases before they buy. Testimonials can be woven throughout your content and can be highly effective as long as they are relevant to the information you're sharing.

### Endorsements

There are wide varieties of endorsements that you can share and use in a number of ways. For example, if you're the author of a bestselling book, you might add that in the email signature of your list. Other types of endorsements may include awards, celebrities, and acknowledgements.

You can include endorsements in your content as logos or buttons. For example, a "Best of the Web" award logo might sit in the upper right hand corner of your blog post. Or you can weave mention of an endorsement right into the copy. For example, "In a recent conversation with Oprah, I mentioned..." (Now you better have had that conversation with Oprah because people will check.)

### Co-Authored Content

Co-authored content, content written with another expert, can also add credibility to the piece. In an eBook, this might be a forward or an introduction. In a report or a long blog post, this can be divided up in a number of creative ways. A co-author might write or create some of the background information or they can add insight to the content. Find qualified content partners and work together to create a piece that promotes and supports both of you.

Credibility is just one of the many reasons people are motivated to buy. Next, we'll take a look at another one and talk about how to integrate it into your content.

## **Personality and Branding**

We buy from people and companies we like. And we like companies because they represent our values, beliefs, and opinions – or what we want our values, beliefs and opinions to be. It's how companies build communities and sell products. For example, Tom's Shoes has built a business on the simple value of compassion and the belief that children should have shoes. Their philanthropy and values are part of their brand and it's reflected in every piece of their marketing.

You don't have to be a philanthropist to build a community around your personality and brand. You simply have to communicate it consistently. So how do you do that?

### Conversational Tone

Write conversationally. Write content that sounds like you're talking directly to the individual customer or prospect. This isn't just in the topic that you choose to write about but also the words that you use. For example, when you use "I" and "You," your reader feels like you're talking to them.

Conversational content is usually less formal. You might share personal stories and examples. To create a strong connection to your reader, it's important to make sure you know who your audience is. Create a description of your prospects and customers and write your content to them.

### Consistent Themes

Consistency matters. You want to make sure that the tone and voice of your content, as well as the subject matter, provide the expected experience. If you write a very formal and structured blog post one day and a free flowing conversational piece the next, you'll confuse readers. They like to know what to expect. It's how you build and strengthen your brand.

### Consistent Formatting

Consistent formatting helps too. Create a look and feel to your content. This might include image placement, colors, logos and even the color and placement of your call to action buttons.

Consistency is essential for branding and adding personality to your content. The more you write, the easier it becomes to integrate your brand voice naturally into your message. However, one step, in the content creation process that must be achieved first is finding great topics to write about. Let's go there next.

## **Brainstorm Effective Topics**

Earlier we talked about relevancy. This can become a hurdle over time. You may feel like you run out of relevant topics to write about. Between reports, eBooks, blog posts and social media you might feel like you've already said it all. Yet, it's vitally important to continue to create effective content – content that provides the right value to the right person at the right time. So now, let's talk about brainstorming those topics so that you're able to consistently provide fresh and relevant content.

### Review Your Past Content

Your past content has the opportunity to help you write future content. Take a look at the content that has:

- Performed well
- Has the opportunity to be updated or refreshed

- Can be rewritten in a different format For example, a “how to” post could become a tips article or vice versa.
- Can be bundled or pulled apart to create longer or shorter content.

### Review Your Analytics

Take a look at your analytics. It can provide you an abundance of information. For example, you can learn how long people stay on a particular page or how many page views they have. What they read and where they spend their time will give you good insight about the topics that your audience is looking for and responding to.

### Review Online Content

In addition to reviewing your own content, spend some time looking at what other people are searching for and writing about. Research keywords using simple tools like Google’s External Keyword tool. You can also explore your competition’s content. You know their content is popular when they have an abundance of social shares. Look for the social buttons on their blog, if they have them. They may include the number of Facebook likes, Tweets, and shares. Content that’s frequently shared is content that audiences are responding to.

Start keeping a list of topic ideas. Consider sitting down once a month, researching the past month’s content and planning ahead. Tracking how your content performs and what your audience is looking for online will help you plan your content and create topics that convert.

## **Build Buzz**

Generating excitement and anticipation for a new product, opt-in, or service can help you increase conversions. And there are a number of ways to build buzz. Any new launch or promotion you’re going to announce is worthy of a buzz building campaign. Here are a few ideas to help you get started.

### Content Series

A content series is a simple and effective way to lead a prospect through their decision making process. For example, a series titled 10 Steps to Get out of Debt might begin with an introductory piece about the tremendous benefits of getting out of debt. Each subsequent post or message might discuss the various steps gradually leading the reader to an offer for coaching or a book or even a financial software launch. Content series work well for any type of business model and industry.

### Webinars Pre-Launch

Webinars are an effective way to both build your list and market to it. Webinars successfully build buzz because they allow you to provide value and a solution, while at the same time they give you personal contact with your audience. The ability to talk to your audience and connect to them with your voice and your face can be a significant thing.

When that’s followed up with solid and valuable content and information, conversions come naturally. The buzz happens as you promote your webinar. During the webinar, you capitalize



on your time with your prospects and continue to leverage the momentum through follow up messages and communication.

For example, a virtual assistant launching a new membership service might host a webinar on how to use virtual assistants to take your business to the next level. The VA could then create a marketing plan to promote the webinar and encourage signups with content focusing on the benefits of attending the event.

The VA might even invite some other VAs to speak at the event or other business owners who have used virtual assistants to grow their business. Attendees then receive an abundance of value as they learn how to grow their business. During the event, the VA can give a special promotional price for the new membership service. It's an opportunity to build excitement and then to capitalize on it and increase conversions.

### eBooks and Reports

Publishing a book or a special report is a surefire way to build buzz. You have the opportunity to market and create excitement for the launch of the information product. Then, much like a webinar or live event, you can leverage the momentum of the information product to sustain the buzz and turn excited prospects and leads into customers.

This is a great approach for people who offer consulting, coaching, or a service. The book or information product talks about the why. For example, why hire a virtual assistant or why pay off debt. You then sell the "what" – the virtual assistant service, the debt counseling, or financial advice.

Building buzz takes a plan. Creating content that converts doesn't just happen. It too requires a careful plan. Identify the goals that you want to achieve. For example, a solid goal might be to increase your opt-in list subscribers by 10 percent. Then create a content plan to make it happen.

Start with a new opt-in offer, one that addresses many of the tips and steps discussed. Promote the offer with great content and move forward to convert those new subscribers to customers. With a solid content plan in place and good systems, you can increase your conversions and grow your business.