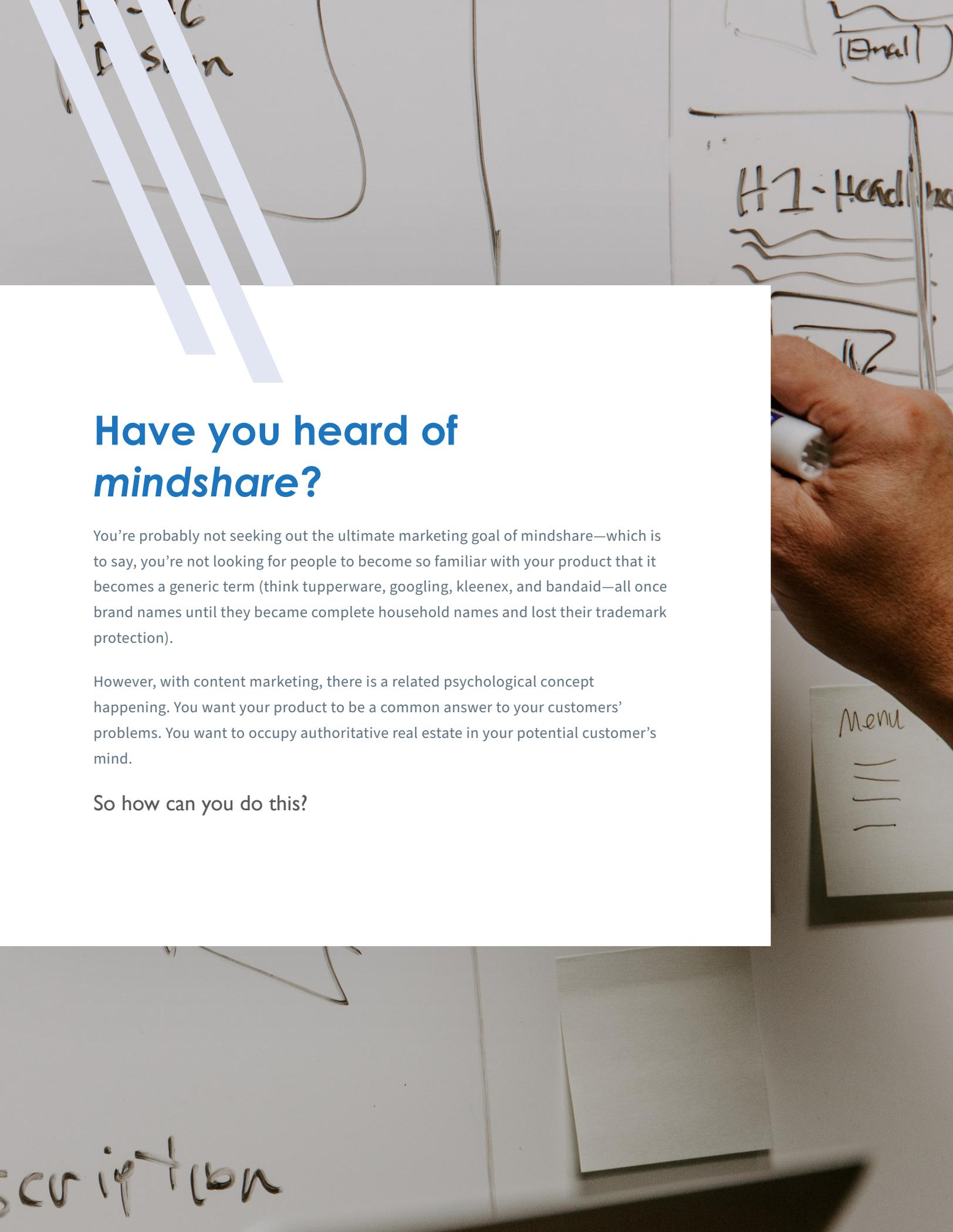


# Modern Content Marketing

SharedTEAMS





## Have you heard of *mindshare*?

You're probably not seeking out the ultimate marketing goal of mindshare—which is to say, you're not looking for people to become so familiar with your product that it becomes a generic term (think tupperware, googling, kleenex, and bandaid—all once brand names until they became complete household names and lost their trademark protection).

However, with content marketing, there is a related psychological concept happening. You want your product to be a common answer to your customers' problems. You want to occupy authoritative real estate in your potential customer's mind.

So how can you do this?

# You tell a story.

Content marketing is storytelling. With content marketing, you're doing (at least) four things. You're there to—

- Educate
- Inspire
- Entertain
- Answer questions

By giving customers answers, you're helping them find solutions. Solutions your business provides for free through your content and paid through your products or services. Solutions that come to the forefront of the customer's mind when they're ready to take advantage of your business as an answer to their problems.

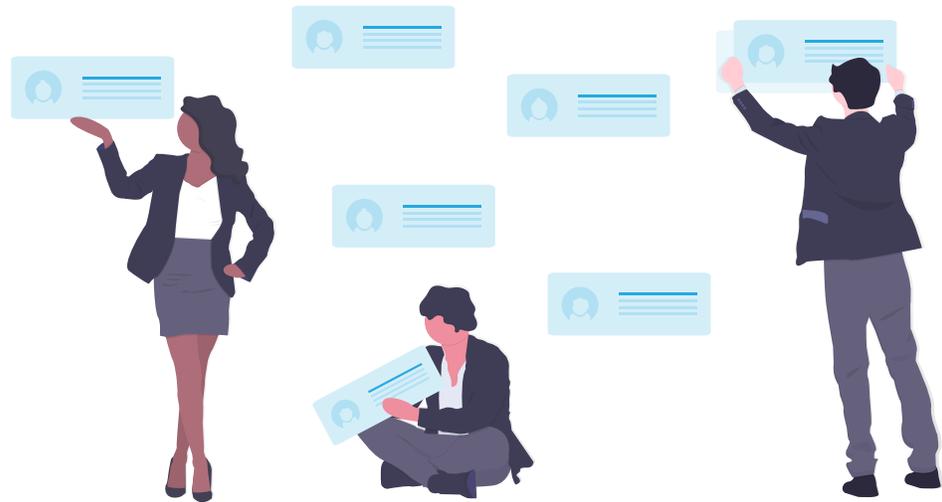
According to the [Content Marketing Institute](#), "Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing **valuable, relevant, and consistent content** to attract and retain a clearly defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.

"Instead of pitching your products or services, you are providing truly **relevant and useful** content to your prospects and customers to help them **solve their issues.**"

According to [Neil Patel](#), "if you produce free and helpful content for your target market, they will engage with you, spread your message, and probably even buy from you."

# You build trust.

By providing stories and information, you're not only building trust with prospects and providing detailed



insights to customers, but you're also expanding brand awareness, helping SEO efforts, and showcasing your business's areas of expertise in your field and community.

As [Conductor](#) says, "Nowadays, you need to earn customers, not acquire them, because they are in control. And the only way you can do that is by building trust."

When you think of brand awareness and trust, you may be thinking of reviews, testimonials, and other reputation boosting strategies. While these strategies are great, you need to be standing in front of those customers, ready to deliver on their questions and concerns.

Marketers and businesses need to not only be calculating, strategy-driven and structured in their marketing, they must also cultivate relationships between the business and their customers long before a purchase is made.

This means that your content needs to be ready and waiting for those customers when they seek out answers to their solutions in the most common platform available: a cursory internet search.

This is where the relationship starts.

# What is the purpose of content marketing?

Customers are inundated with [up to 10,000 advertisements every day](#).

While an advertisement puts the first inklings of a business concept on a consumer's radar, this is just one step into the customer journey. Ultimately, this is just one small touchpoint on a lengthy path, and there are plenty of other advertising avenues out there that you'll have to contend with.

But today's shopper has many options to choose from when seeking out a solution. Because of this, buyers are likely to research their options before they make a purchase. They want to trust the companies they purchase from and when they do, many become repeat buyers. However, before that happens, businesses need to provide prospects with a reason to trust them. Content marketing is a way to do this.

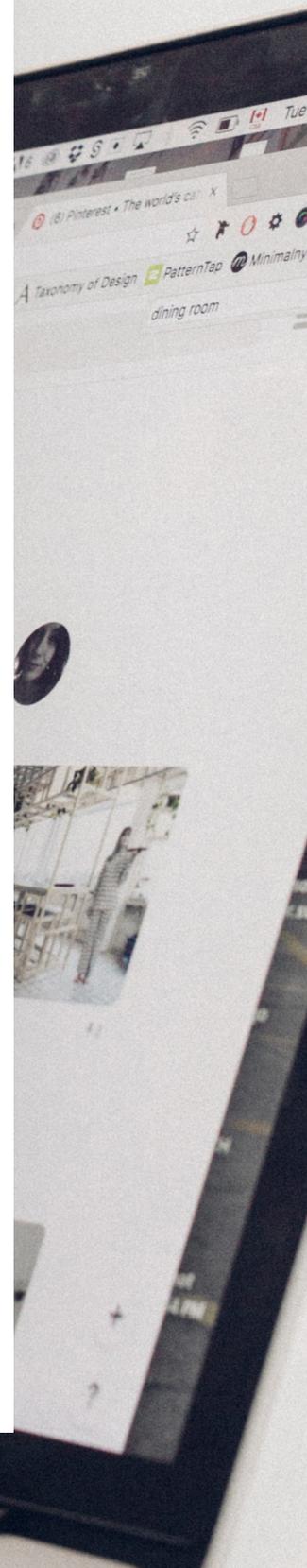
Today's shopper is also savvy. They know what an advertisement is, even if it's packaged in a new way.

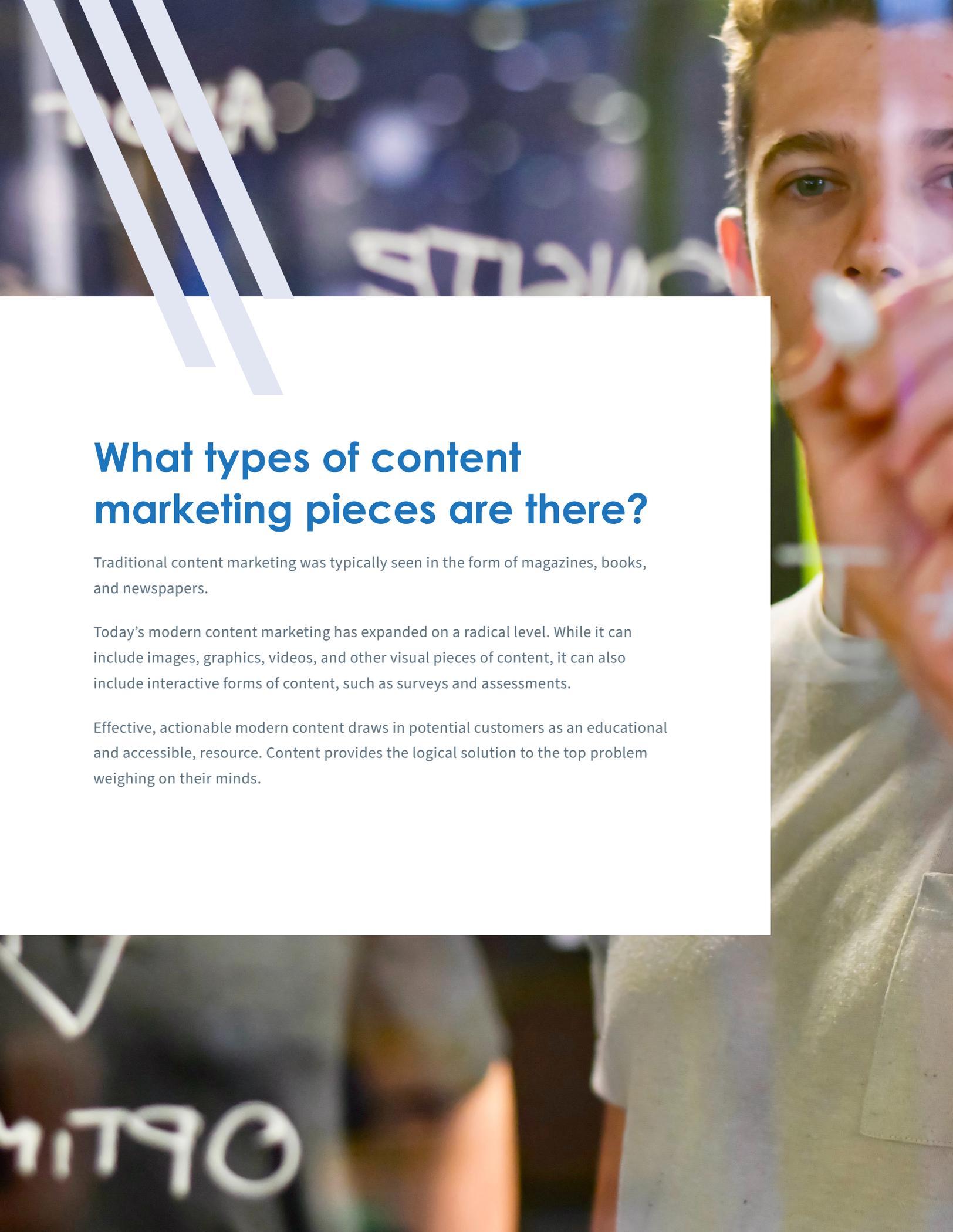
By recognizing your target audience's needs and questions and creating content to address those needs and questions, you can show them that you can provide answers and solutions through your products and services.

According to [Demand Gen Report](#), "47% of buyers viewed three to five pieces of content before engaging with a sales rep."

## So, how do you carve out an area for yourself within this highly competitive environment?

To cut through the noise, businesses can optimize their use of content marketing. This content is then ready and waiting for the shopper that is seeking out specific information.





## What types of content marketing pieces are there?

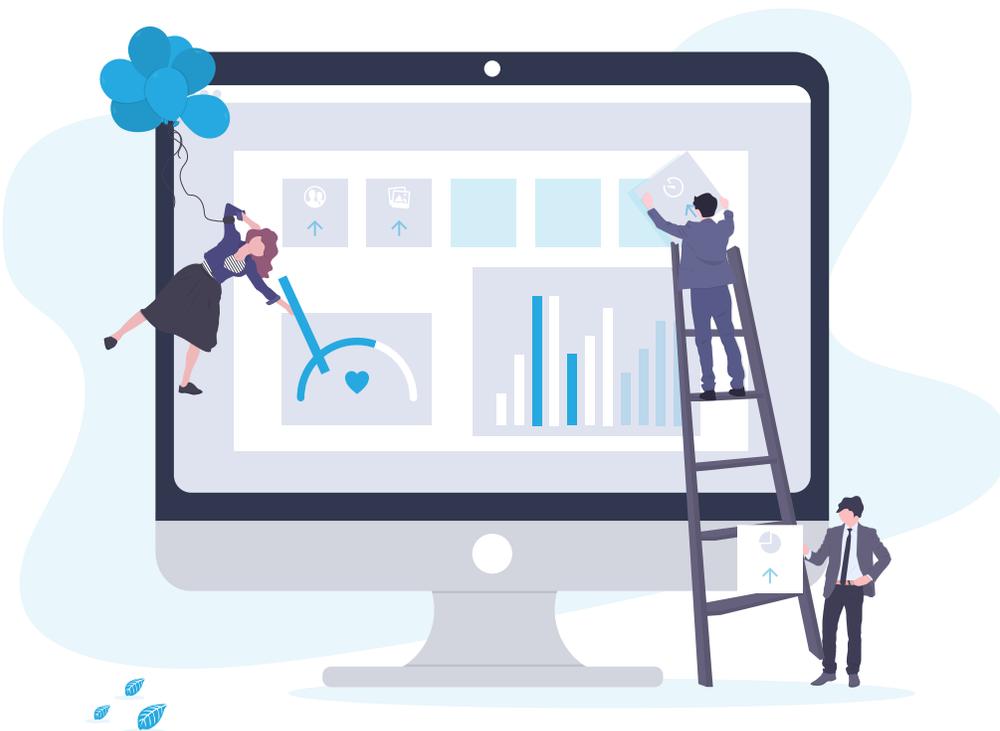
Traditional content marketing was typically seen in the form of magazines, books, and newspapers.

Today's modern content marketing has expanded on a radical level. While it can include images, graphics, videos, and other visual pieces of content, it can also include interactive forms of content, such as surveys and assessments.

Effective, actionable modern content draws in potential customers as an educational and accessible, resource. Content provides the logical solution to the top problem weighing on their minds.

Common pieces of content include:

- Blog posts
- Articles & press releases
- eBooks
- Checklists
- Templates
- Listicles
- Emails
- Case studies
- Texts or in-app messages
- Quizzes, surveys, & assessments
- Generators & calculators
- Photos + caption
- Curated images (that include text)
- Cartoons
- Videos
- Webinars
- Infographics
- Podcasts
- Social media posts (which may include any and all of the items above) wheel every time you create another piece.



According to [Neil Patel](#), “Remember that a solid content marketing strategy isn’t only about written content. It’s also about visual content, audio content, and more.”

Don’t worry. You don’t need to create every type of content out there and you don’t need to reinvent the wheel every time you create a piece.

## Let's get to know your audience.

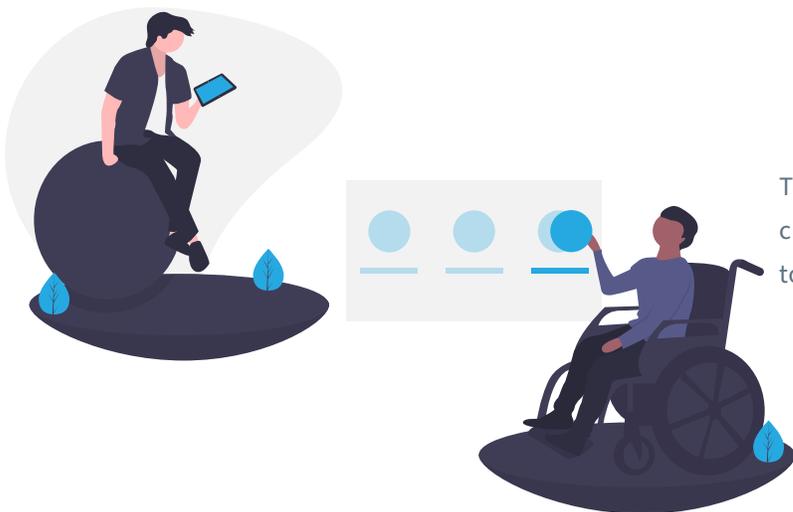
Before deciding on what type of content to produce, **ask yourself a few questions:**

- How does your audience consume information?
- Where do they search for information?
- What will they be looking for that leads them to you?
- How will you keep their interest?

Start there. We suggest choosing one type of content to start with and then expand your options from there. Many businesses begin by offering blog posts because they are hosted on the company's website and can be shared easily.

For example, maybe you'd like to start with blog posts that anticipate and answer common questions that your potential customers might have—this is an extremely common area where businesses start their content marketing strategy.

Utilizing content marketing is the perfect opportunity to situate yourself as an educational leader in your industry. The best precursor to generating awesome content is getting excited about it.



## Reduce, reuse, recycle (your content)

No content marketer has the time or sanity to create a fresh piece of content every time one is needed. The best content marketers repurpose content over and over again in different formats for different audience segments to reach and inform more people, in more places and in less time.

### Every piece of content has potential.

After all, it started with an *idea*. Creativity led the content in one direction, such as a blog post. But the content could be developed further—consider the content as the representation of a theme and discussion of sorts, that could be applied to email marketing, infographics, and so on. A small idea could open up to even bigger pieces of content as you grow, such as a white paper.

Don't stop the discussion with just one piece of content. Intrigue your audience and leave them wanting to know more. Then provide more.

### Get creative:

- A video series discussing a common problem in your industry could be turned into an automated email series.
- A blog post could become the precursor to the development of a case study.
- A common template you developed in your industry could become a lead magnet.

The possibilities are endless. That's the fun part: creativity and business developments can always lend to new developments in your content marketing.

Once you've developed a piece of content, don't just slap it up on your website and call it a day:

- Don't purely share an eBook link within a signup form requesting an email address (although, yes, this is a great lead magnet strategy and one you should implement).
- Instead, go a step further. Pull tidbits of information from the eBook to create blog posts. Further develop the pieces by creating an infographic for that blog post.
- From the blog posts, pull quotes to create social media images and videos to share on multiple social media platforms.
- Then, using an analysis of your engagement across social platforms, you can choose the best social media posts to develop paid advertisements that lead to the eBook or blog posts, and collect even more leads.

## Supercharging your content marketing

Content pieces not only work even harder when repurposed but also when packaged together appropriately.

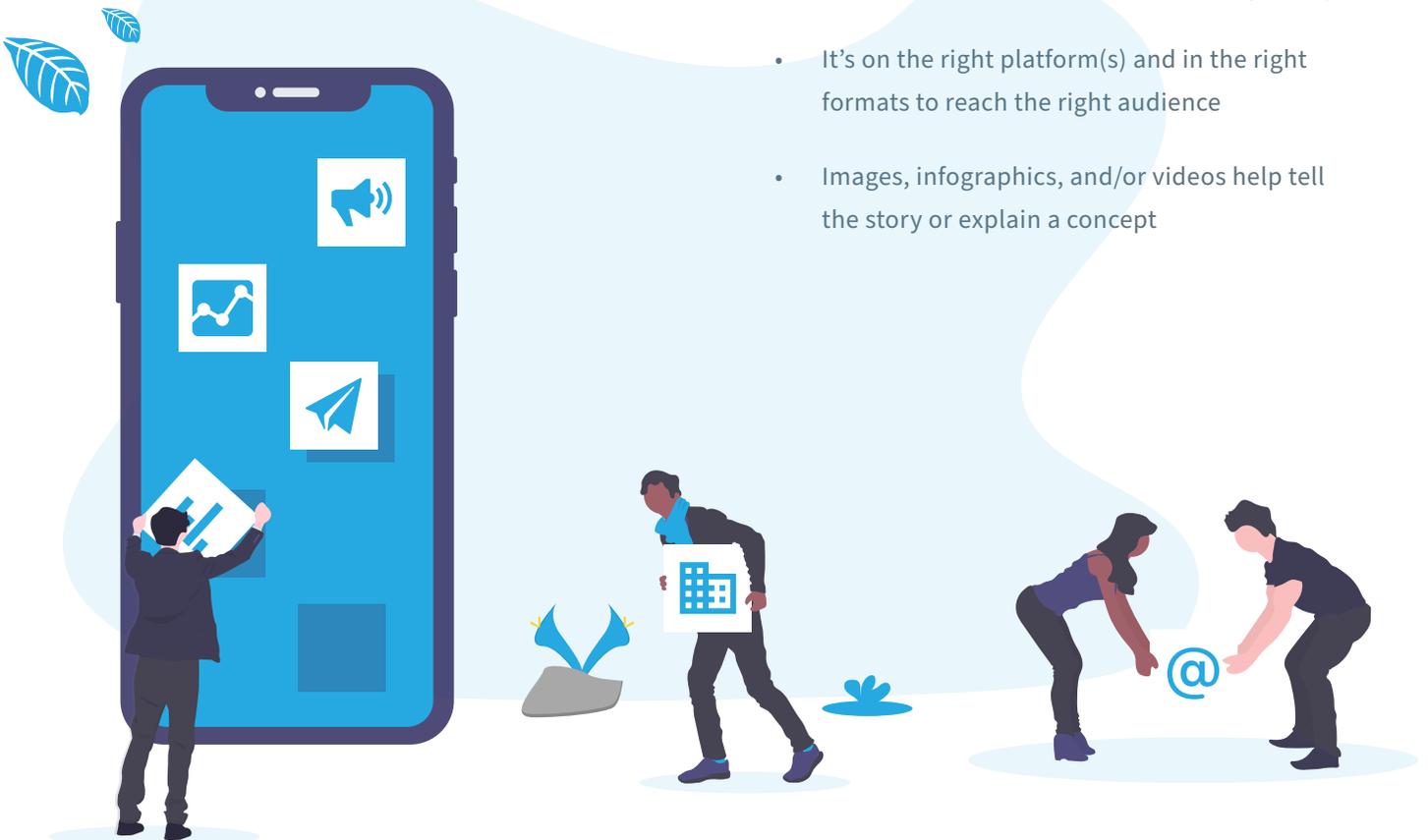
The key is that multiple pieces can be packaged together, such as using an infographic in a blog post and then again in an email and a social media post.

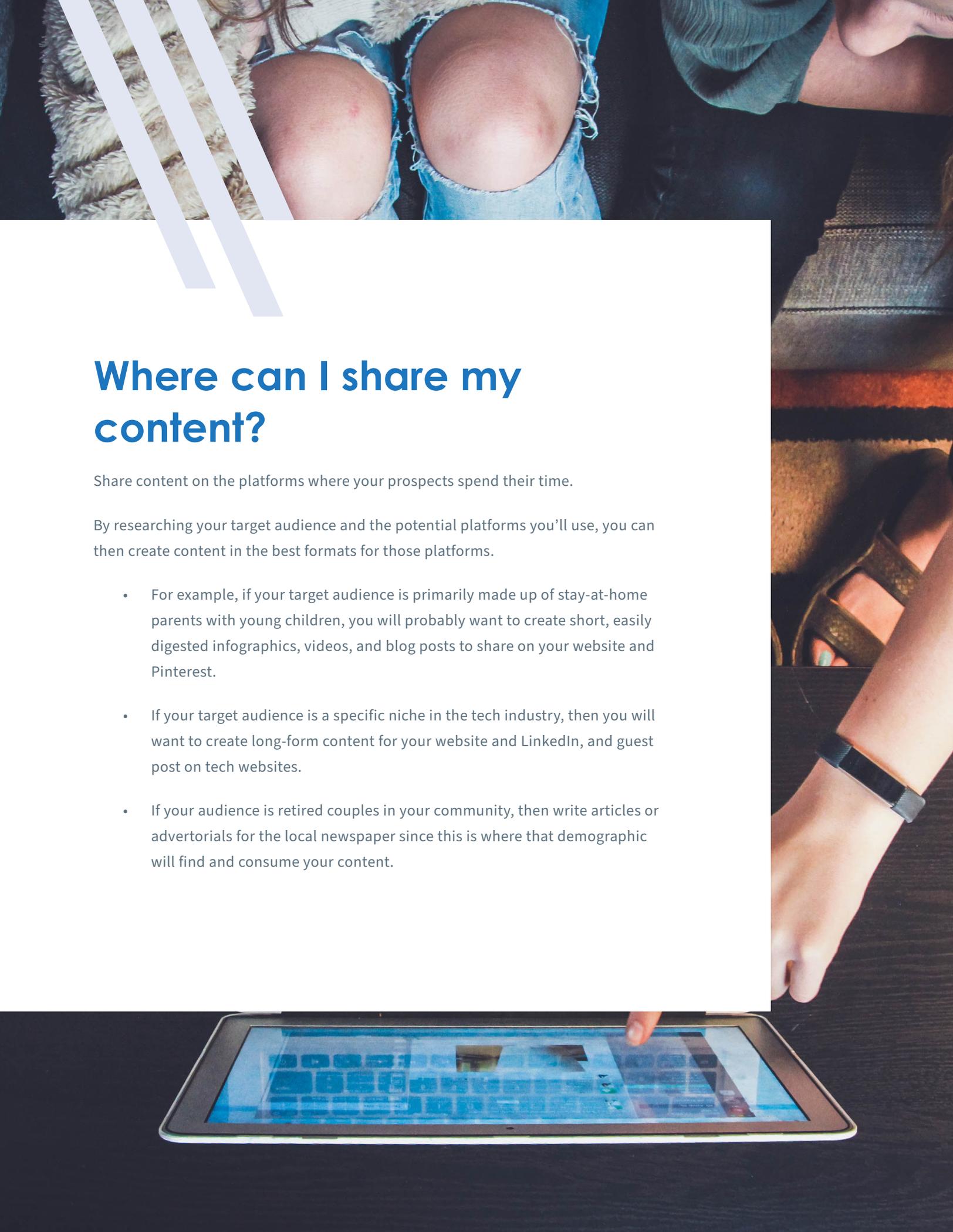
But there are still some crucial elements of your content marketing pieces that must stay intact.

As [IMPACT](#) says, "Each piece of content should have a purpose and a CTA."

When we narrow down the elements of quality content, it has these qualities:

- Content created for your audience appeals to needs, answers, and questions
- Content ends with a call to action appropriate for the reader's place in the customer journey
- It's on the right platform(s) and in the right formats to reach the right audience
- Images, infographics, and/or videos help tell the story or explain a concept



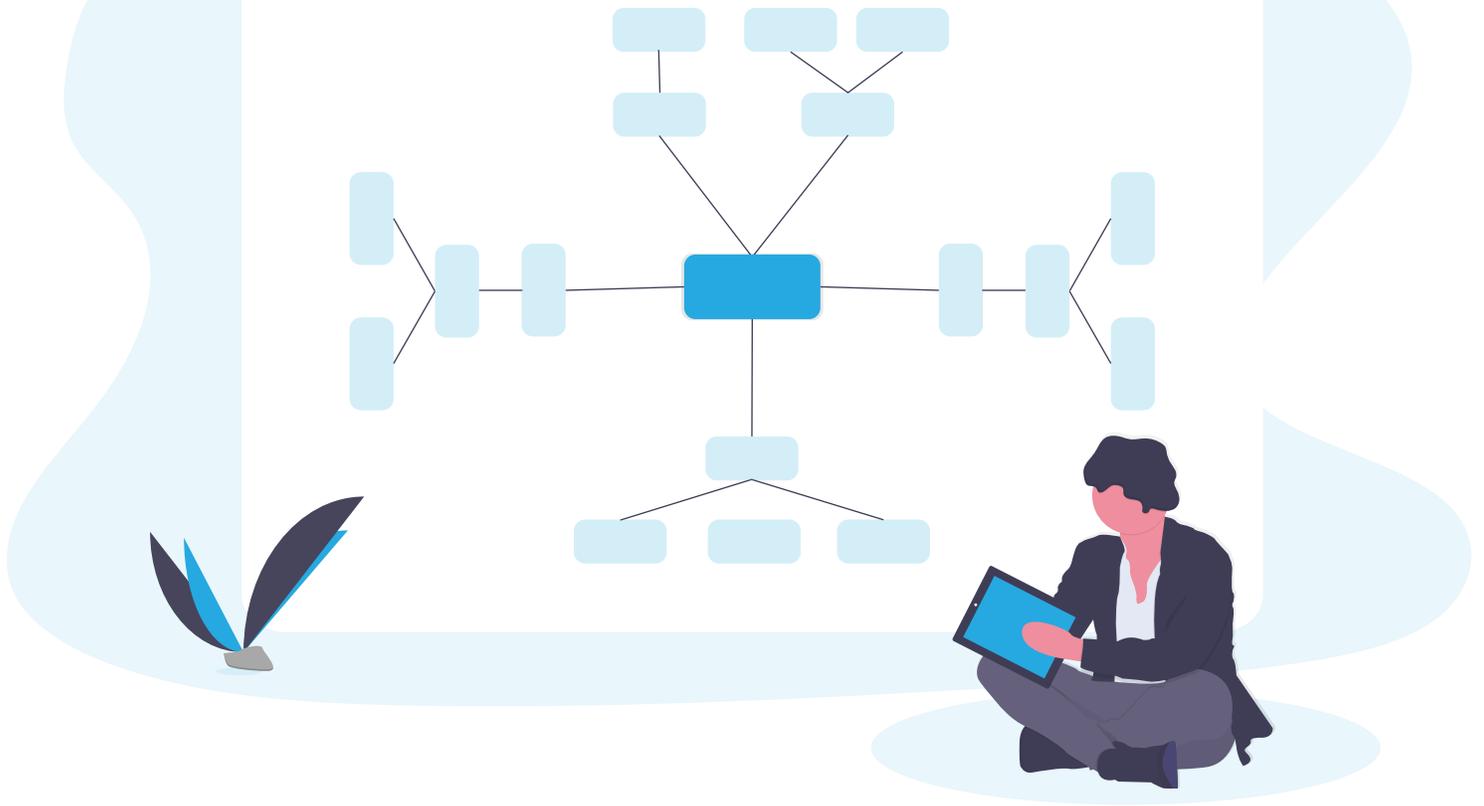


## Where can I share my content?

Share content on the platforms where your prospects spend their time.

By researching your target audience and the potential platforms you'll use, you can then create content in the best formats for those platforms.

- For example, if your target audience is primarily made up of stay-at-home parents with young children, you will probably want to create short, easily digested infographics, videos, and blog posts to share on your website and Pinterest.
- If your target audience is a specific niche in the tech industry, then you will want to create long-form content for your website and LinkedIn, and guest post on tech websites.
- If your audience is retired couples in your community, then write articles or advertorials for the local newspaper since this is where that demographic will find and consume your content.



Actionable insights: Research the best places and platforms where you can put your content in front of your target audience. If you bring the content to them, you will make it easier for them to learn about your business. If you create content in a format that works best for that platform, then they are more likely to pay attention to the content and consume it.

## Think multiple platforms,

Sometimes, a business's target audience will be fragmented across multiple platforms in many locations. Researching the best places and platforms to share your content (and the best format to create the content for those platforms) will be the best way to get your content in front of your target audience.

Distributing content does not solely mean owned or earned platforms. Many marketers only share valuable content on owned and earned platforms while they share salesy content through paid advertisements, which lessens the effectiveness of both strategies.

As [Conductor](#) says, "Customer-focused marketing requires a multi-disciplinary approach – your media mix strategy must include both earned and paid strategies if you're going to effectively deliver value directly to a consumer."

By sharing valuable content you've created through paid avenues as well, your business can see an increase in the ROI of both your advertising and content marketing efforts.





## How does content marketing fit in my marketing goals?

You likely already feel the anxiety characteristic of developing any marketing strategy: you're working toward the goal of turning prospects into customers and retaining those customers.

But the customer journey is never uniform. It's long and complicated. No customer takes the same path as another customer.

When it comes to content marketing, your job is to fill in the spaces of the customer journey by answering questions at every stage in the process, while entertaining, inspiring, and educating them.

Many customer journeys out there are simplified versions of a complicated process. SharedTEAMS likes to dive deeper into understanding the breakdown of this process by using the customer journey created by Joey Coleman in [Never Lose A Customer Again](#).

Let's quickly break down each phase in the customer journey and the types of content that may be appropriate at each phase:

## 1. Assess

It all begins when a customer learns about your company and services or products.

A customer sees an ad, blog post, or social media post.

At this phase, the customer wants to learn a little bit about your business:

- How can you help them, solve their problems, and make their life easier?
- What do you do, what do you sell, and why?

It all begins when a customer learns about your company and services or products.

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At this phase, the customer wants to learn a little bit about your business:

**But customers aren't always there to seek out a brand right away.**

Customers often just want questions answered or want some form of expertise to educate them. The challenging part of the Assess phase is that a customer can take minutes or years in this phase. This means you need to have content that addresses beginner questions about your business and your products or services. As they learn, their questions will increasingly become more complex.

Not only do you need the right content to answer their questions, but you also need enough content to fill their needs.

**You need multiple pieces of content, in multiple formats, on multiple channels.**

At the beginning of the customer relationship, you'll need to reach your audience wherever they are, with the information they seek.

You want to think blog posts, eBooks, videos, infographics, emails, case studies, podcasts, webinars, and much more.

But the Assess phase is where many marketers make a crucial mistake: they focus solely on capturing new leads. They don't cultivate or think about the rest of the customer journey.

While this is a very important phase, as it sets up customer expectations and builds trust, it is only one phase in the entire customer journey, so make sure you save time to create content for when your customers are in the other phases.

## 2. Admit

The Admit phase happens when the customer admits you have the solution to their problem and purchases your product or signs up for your service.

Money is often exchanged at the beginning of the 'Admit' phase. This isn't a "Yes! Please help me!" type of admission, rather, it's your potential customers dipping their toes into the water of your business. They have admitted that your business has the solution to their problems, but they're not stopping here. They are still expecting more from you.

**Go one step further.**

During this phase, many marketers focus on the completed purchase as a win. While that's great, there are still phases remaining. Those phases include content marketing, which helps to fulfill what your customers desire from your business.

Often, this phase will include a physical or email receipt that confirms that purchase. Still, this doesn't need to be boring. You can liven up the relationship you've started with the customer by sending this receipt with your brand's personality and messaging strategy.

While this content may be automated for your ease as well as transactional, this still means you can brighten and personalize the message and even tailor it to what the customer has purchased.

### 3. Affirm

So a customer has decided to do business with you in some shape or form. Maybe they've purchased a product or invested in a service you provide. No matter the nature of the conversion, a customer will often experience some degree of buyer's remorse.

The larger the purchase or commitment, the stronger the remorse will be.

You want to anticipate this likelihood and provide an answer to their worries about the money they've spent.

#### How can we remind the customer that they made a wise choice?

You guessed it—content marketing again!

Sending a thoughtful email or another timely message can help remind the customer about why they purchased your products or services and help them understand what comes next.

#### Right off the bat, you don't want to leave your customers in the dark.

If your customer is waiting for a product to ship, send them a message before they receive the product in the mail.

If your customer downloaded a digital product or service, send them a message reminding them to

install and activate it, or how to best utilize it as they dive in.

If your customer walks out of a physical store with your product or shook your hand during an in-person meeting, try sending a message to thank them again and ask if they have any questions about their purchase.

#### What's the best channel for content in the Affirm phase?

You'll likely want to provide content for your customer in the affirm phase via email.

But this isn't the place to immediately upsell or attempt to sell another purchase, which should wait until the next phase. Insert yourself into the mind of the customer: have they been persuaded by their purchase yet?

#### Content here should be short and to the point. You can:

- Thank them for their purchase again
- Remind them of what to expect next
- Ask them if they have any questions
- Include a how-to video, if appropriate

By sending a personalized message thanking them and being there for them, they are less likely to doubt their purchase and will happily move on to the next phase.

### 4. Activate

This phase begins during the first post-sale interaction and is all about energizing and activating the customer relationship.

This is where you continue to position yourself as a solution to your customer's problems. When your customer has your product, starts using your service,

or knows you're working for them, it's time to energize and personalize messages to them.

**This can be done in a number of ways:**

- If you are a product-based business, give your customer insights on how to use the product. This is a good time to provide a detailed how-to. Providing these details may be best optimized in a combination of video and textual formats.
- If you are a service-based business, give your customer insight as to how you or your team are hard at work in continuing to improve their experience. Try sending an email, video, text, or customer journey map (similar to an infographic). This will help them see what's happening behind the scenes, and paint the picture that they'll continue to reap the rewards of their purchase as your business grows and develops.
- A how-to blog post or eBook could include tips and tricks for optimizing a customer's purchase and can be sent to them during this phase. This is another great example of how a single piece of content can be repurposed and reused.

## 5. Acclimate

Now that your customer has purchased and received more information about what they've spent their money on, it's time to acclimate the customer to the way you do business.

This is not the place to overload with the details. You want to inform your customers just enough and answer their initial questions.

This presents a great opportunity for video content: it's the best way to demonstrate to a customer how something works. This can mean demonstrating how a

product functions, or showing how smoothly you work as a team.

You can tune in your customer to how trustworthy and functional you are as a business, and instill the confidence that not only do you unconditionally support your customers, your organizational strategy allows you to do so effectively.

Has your customer already spoken with a salesperson, and now works with a customer service professional or account manager? You want to make this element of the relationship as clear and accessible as possible. Send them a simple informative email, letting them know who to contact if they have questions, and how they can contact that person or people (whether it's through email, phone, in-person, a live chat, or otherwise).

If you offer a service or are subscription-based, it's best to remind your customers about the following details:

- How much does this service cost and when is the customer charged?
- Do they receive a bill or will the company automatically charge their debit/credit card (and how often)?
- What if I want to cancel?

With the advent of subscription services, customers want to know exactly how they can cancel the subscription if they're unhappy.

### What questions do your customers have?

Anticipate your next customers' questions by sending them an email or video, calling them (the content for a phone call is a script), or sending additional content that will answer questions before they even consider asking.

This element is crucial because it not only simplifies your customer's experience and gains trust, it also

feeds back into the efficiency of your customer service process.

During this stage, if you have a community where your customers can join to speak to other customers, invite them now. Consider giving them a hashtag they can use to join the online conversation and let friends know they just purchased your products or services.

## 6. Accomplish

Now things get exciting for the customer. The Accomplish phase occurs when the customer achieves the results they desired. When the customer gets what they were looking for when they first started the customer journey with you, this is called the Accomplish phase. This might mean they accomplish their desired results by using your product, or services they purchased at the start of the journey yield a positive result.

Celebrate their success with your content. Think cartoons, videos, social media shoutouts, special content like eBooks and webinars, and more.

It can take minutes or years to get to this stage. Either way, you'll want to celebrate with your customers. They deserve your congratulatory input. After all, it's a celebration of your good efforts, too.

## 7. Adopt

Your customer has adopted your customer culture—maybe they've followed your lead and joined the conversation with your brand and others on social media. They've left reviews. Perhaps they use the hashtags you promote on your social media.

Now, your customer is effectively part of your brand as a representation of what your company can do. They're now a loyal customer!

Now is the perfect time to reward your customers with

a personalized message. Think emails and mailers with VIP access and rewards. Think social media giveaways and shoutouts. Perhaps they've stuck with your subscription service for a long time—offer a discount or another exclusive service aimed at long-time users.

Whether you celebrate the customer's loyalty privately or publicly, make sure your content celebrates the customer. This isn't about you—it's about how your customer has become a part of your brand. It's your customer's time to shine.

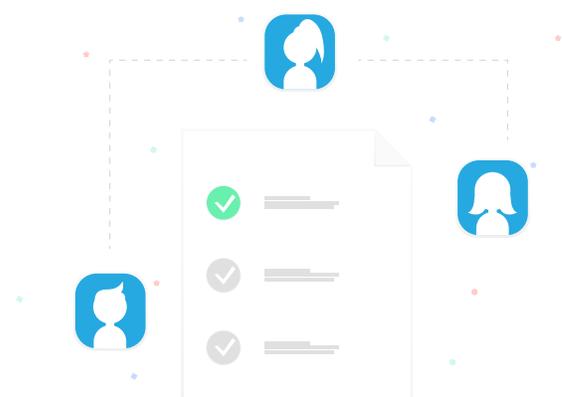
## 8. Advocate

The Advocate phase occurs when the customer wants to share your brand with their friends. At this phase, you will want content that is shareable for your customers.

- Make a short quiz asking them about their experience with your business.
- Draft a testimonial for them so they can advocate your business with zero work.
- Craft a tweet that's embedded into your website that they can easily share.

At this point, it should already have become clear that engagement is also an important part of the customer journey phases. This situates you not only as a responsive business that likely has great customer service, but also a business that genuinely takes customer happiness and needs to heart.

Your customers will have all the more reason to advocate for you.



# Never lose a customer again with your content marketing

The basis for *Never Lose A Customer Again* is to focus on retaining customers, rather than gaining new ones. According to [Small Business Trends](#), the “probability of selling to an existing customer is 60-70 percent. The probability of selling to a new prospect is 5-20 percent.”

Unlike other marketing efforts, content marketing must be an ongoing process, not a short-term effort to boost sales. Focus on the long-term efforts required in making customer service successful.

While it may be disheartening without an end date, the effort behind content marketing will likely bear fruit for years to come, unlike other short-term marketing efforts.

## Be sure to create content for customers at every phase in their journey.

Using the customer journey as a basis for content marketing efforts is to ensure you have content reaching customers at every phase of the journey.

You need to give them what they need, whether with your product or service or with the content you provide.

It’s wonderful to gather new customers, but it’s awful to lose customers because a business no longer gives them what they are looking for in content or with their product or service.

Note that some customers will love your product or service, but they may not (or no longer) be interested in your content, such as your blog or social media pages. Some prospects may love your content but never turn into paying customers.

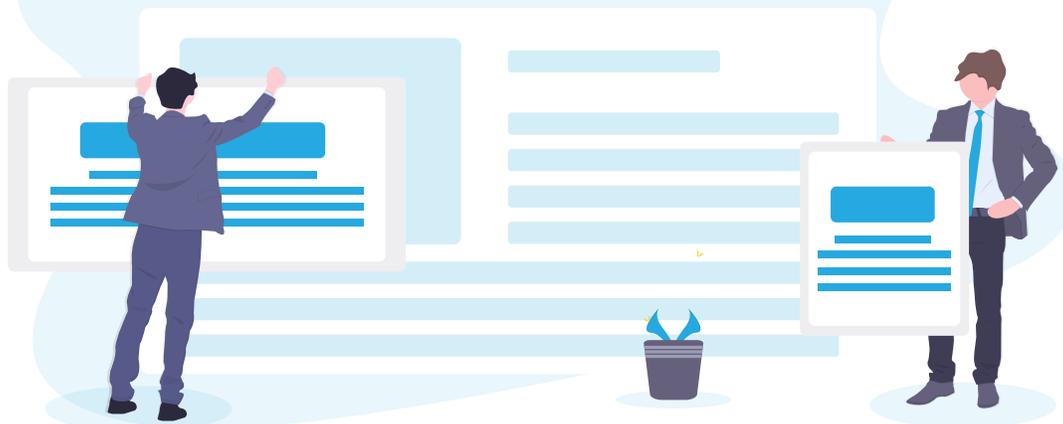
## Both are okay.

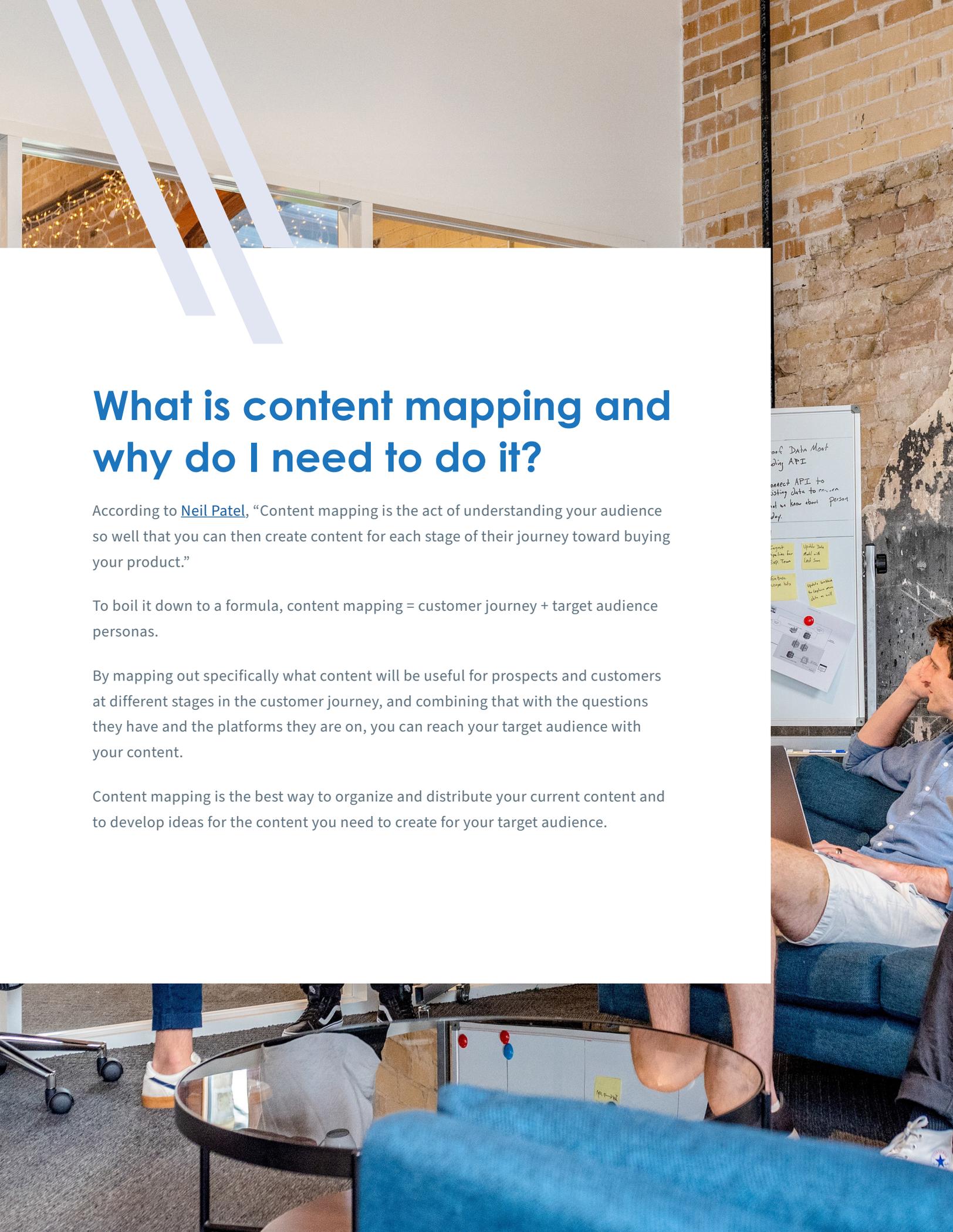
No company can convince every prospect to purchase from them, but that doesn’t mean those content consumers will never share your content with a friend who will purchase from you.

The key to content marketing is delivering what your customers do want. If you’re not reaching them with your content by your current channels, survey your customers for what questions they still have, if any, and how they would like to be informed. Perhaps instead of weekly blog posts, they would prefer a monthly email with a video or a weekly podcast.

Customers don’t want to feel forgotten, and the savviness of the modern customer means that if they feel ignored, they’ll view you as a company that just wanted their money and nothing else.

As [Falcon.IO](#) says, “forward-thinking companies don’t want to just drive sales. They want to help their customers be successful.”





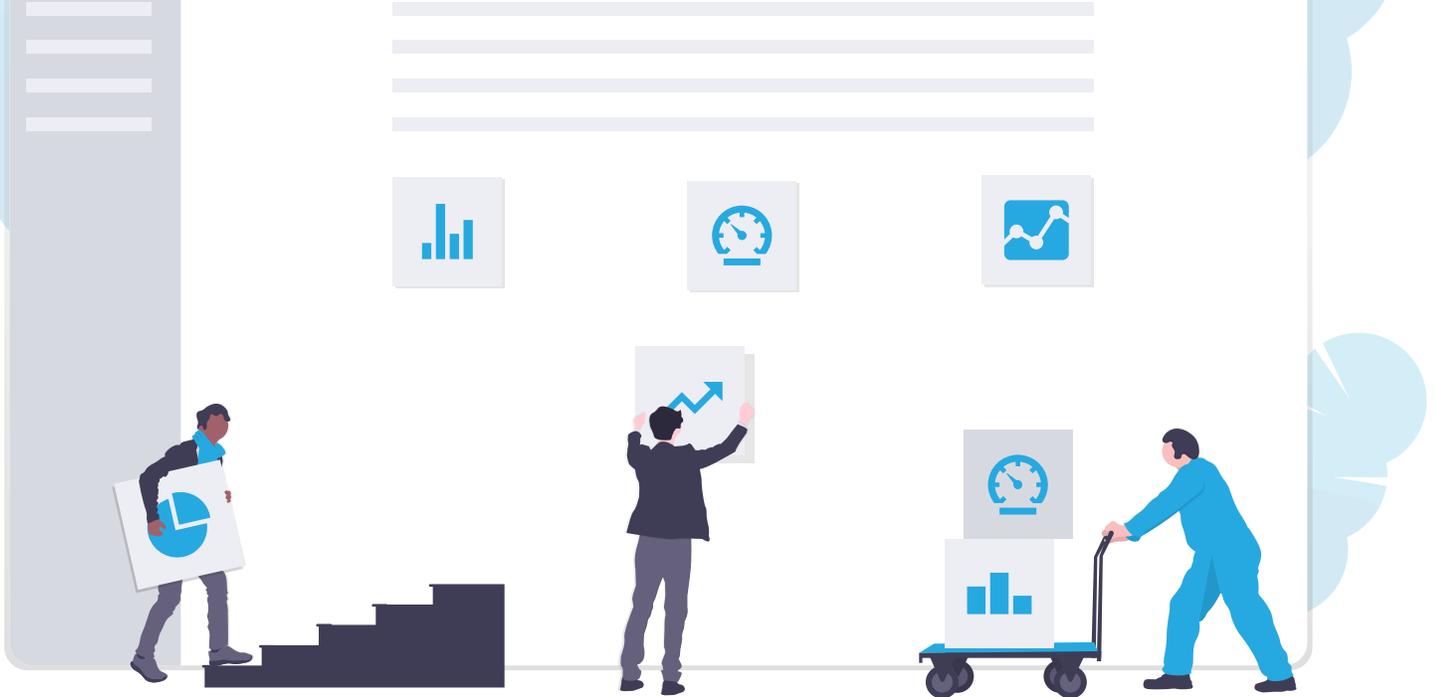
# What is content mapping and why do I need to do it?

According to [Neil Patel](#), “Content mapping is the act of understanding your audience so well that you can then create content for each stage of their journey toward buying your product.”

To boil it down to a formula, content mapping = customer journey + target audience personas.

By mapping out specifically what content will be useful for prospects and customers at different stages in the customer journey, and combining that with the questions they have and the platforms they are on, you can reach your target audience with your content.

Content mapping is the best way to organize and distribute your current content and to develop ideas for the content you need to create for your target audience.



## Does this sound like a lot of work? Of course it is.

But would you rather waste your time and develop a disconnect with your audience?

Or would you rather develop a lasting relationship with your customers that brings in sales down the line?

## Don't rush it.

By carefully considering the stages your customer may be in, you'll be using your time wisely and effectively. Besides, it's not wise to expect results immediately. Content marketing is a practice in patience, which also helps you to deliver the content your audience wants to see.

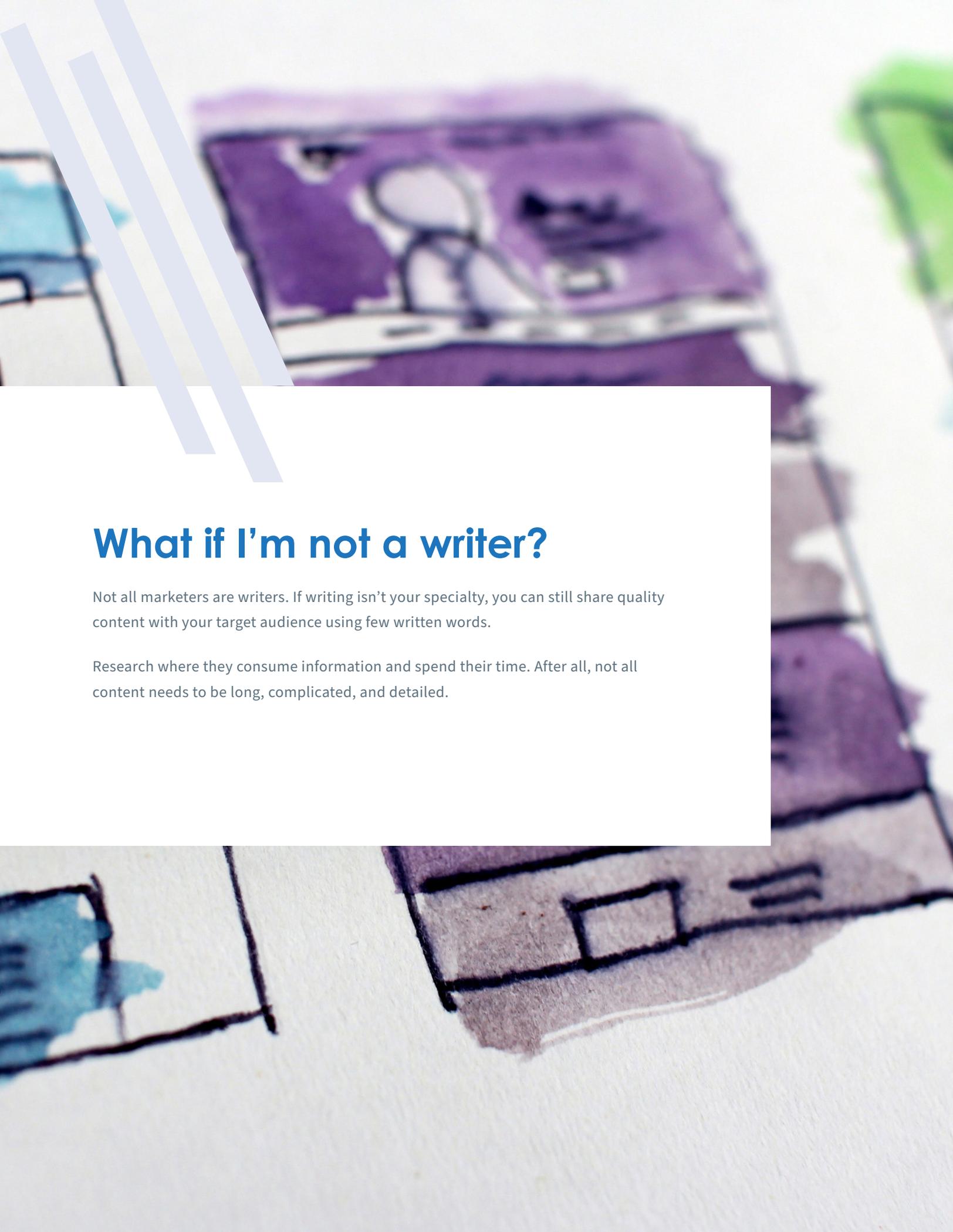
It's important to not simply dive into creating content when you don't have an overarching strategy. It is a far more vital use of your time to make a point to understand where your customers are situated in their journey. This way, you can craft content that speaks directly to their stage in the type of language they want to hear.

For example, if you bombard customers with other products the moment they purchase one, it is likely they will feel, well, bombarded. Your intent to make more sales will be transparent to the modern consumer.

Without content mapping, you are just guessing what content your prospects need and when. Without content mapping, you are blindfolding yourself to throw darts at a dartboard. And that only "works" with luck.

Or worse: you are creating and distributing content your prospects don't need or want. Think about it: would a potential customer at the very beginning of their journey through your cycle want to see product-focused content right away? Remember—the modern customer is savvy. They know advertising when they see it. They know upselling when they see it. They know when content isn't directed at them, and are far more liable to disengage—AKA be far more likely to opt-out of your content.

Without content mapping, your content marketing efforts might be in vain. Don't count on luck to draw in your customers, be strategic. Focus your aim on the section of the dartboard you want to hit.



## What if I'm not a writer?

Not all marketers are writers. If writing isn't your specialty, you can still share quality content with your target audience using few written words.

Research where they consume information and spend their time. After all, not all content needs to be long, complicated, and detailed.

If your audience is busy, they may prefer to consume content in these formats, which may be short or long-form:

- Videos and social media stories
- Podcasts
- Infographics
- Recorded or live webinars
- Social media posts with image(s)

Once you've decided on the type of content you'll use and how you want to distribute it, the content marketing process can actually become quite enjoyable.

Diving into industry trends and the possibilities of the service or product you sell can provoke the development of new business ideas and keep you excited about what you're doing.

But overall, content marketing can effectively become the marker of your brand and encompass the mission and goals of your business.

Your content will work for you and your business.

If you take the time to focus on the many types of customer journeys and the content that can best complement those journeys, your content marketing efforts will be successful. You'll be able to serve a multitude of customers and meet them where they are.

The work you put into content marketing will flow back into your business, as long as you do it right.

