THE CONTENT CONVERSION PLAYBOOK:

YOUR GUIDE TO CONVERTING INBOUND LEADS WITH PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCES

überflip

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INTRODUCTION

If we look back at the state of B2B marketing just 10 years ago, it's remarkable to see how much has changed. In the late 2000s, content marketing was really just emerging as a category and brands were faced with the new challenge of creating content that would garner the attention of prospective customers. At the same time, businesses were finding their way onto social media too. When a company published a new blog post, they'd spin up a quick tweet or Facebook post to drive traffic to it. And some really savvy marketers may have even been thinking about how to optimize their blog posts for search. But again, if you were a marketer doing any of these simple things, you were pretty much #winning.

Fast-forward to today, and content is no longer a nice-to-have for businesses—it's a must-have. For years now, experts have been declaring the death of organic reach on social, and in a world where 93% of all online experiences begin with a search engine, optimizing content for search isn't something marketers can afford to ignore anymore. But just as the state of inbound marketing has evolved, buyers have evolved too. People are constantly being sold to, and it takes a lot more than it used to to not just capture someone's attention, but keep it.

It's our job as marketers to create experiences that our prospects will actually want to engage with. But that's something that's easier said than done. Getting someone to click through an ad or search result is only the first step—the real challenge is getting them to engage with your content long enough to convert. To do this, we need to shift our focus to leverage thoughtfully curated experiences as destinations. Why? Because on-page elements like contextual calls-to-action, content recommendations, strategic asset placement, and carefully planned site navigation have proven to increase conversion rates.

In this guide, we'll dig into some actionable ways you can start attracting and converting your ideal audience by leveraging segmentation and personalization to ensure you're reaching the right people in the right places, and serving them the right content at the right time. From there, we'll look at how to measure the success of your efforts by evaluating everything from pages-per-session and time-on-page to attribution reporting and pipeline influence.

Read on to find out how optimizing your content experience for social, search, and ads will help you net a higher conversion rate and start seeing more return from your content. Let's dive in!

Section One

1 ATTRACT

DRAWING PEOPLE IN:

Leveraging Buyer Personas to Create Experiences That Convert

Having great content and a healthy advertising budget does not matter if you're not reaching the right people and optimizing your web experience to cater to their specific needs. That's why identifying buyer personas is the starting point of any effective inbound marketing strategy.

Buyer personas allow us to get more personal with our inbound marketing efforts and speak to specific audience segments about their unique pain points, which are significantly more likely to get clicks than generic, one-size-fits-all ads or search engine results page (SERP) snippets. (Seriously, a generic ad or search result is basically the digital marketing equivalent of shouting into a void.)

TARGETING CONTENT BY BUYER PERSONA RESULTED IN A 171% INCREASE IN MARKETING-GENERATED REVENUE

SOURCE: MARKETINGSHERPA

Beyond high-level demographic traits like their business, their career, their job responsibilities, and their most-visited sites, a comprehensive set of buyer personas will include:

- How they are finding your website
- Which assets they typically convert on
- The number of touchpoints it takes before they convert

It's important to base your personas on not just your ideal customers, but also your current customers and how they interact with your product or service. This will require some digging into your CRM, leveraging client intel from your Customer Success team, and potentially even surveying some of your users.

The best advice we can give when it comes to personas is to start with one core buyer persona and build out from there. It can be tempting to create as many as you can think of in order to cast the widest net for outreach, but you're actually not doing yourself a favor here. Having too many personas makes it difficult to differentiate between them, making targeting and segmentation harder on you. As a rule of thumb, try to stick with three or four buyer personas at the most.

Allow us to introduce you to Uberflip's buyer personas! Have an idea of which one you are?

MARKETING MARY   **DEMAND JENN**   **STRATEGIC SAMANTHA**

Creating Persona-Focused Content

Every piece of content you create should map back to a specific buyer persona—and in some cases, you can create something that will appeal to them all. Whenever we publish a new piece of content at Uberflip, we tag it in the backend of our content experience platform with the persona(s) it's intended for. This makes it easy to filter when it comes to building out persona-specific experiences.

Beyond that, it's important to also think about the types of content that appeal to each persona as they progress through the buyer journey. When it comes to purchasing your product or service, who will have to convince their boss, or their team? What objections does a particular persona usually have, and how can you ease their concerns? Having a strong understanding of each persona's needs will help you answer their questions before they have them, and keep them from looking elsewhere.

Using Personas for Smart Targeting

After identifying your ideal buyer personas, you can start leveraging what you know about them to create more personalized ads and digital destinations. This information can inform everything from the channels you advertise on to the creative assets and copy you use. The more detailed you can get, the better!

Some channels, like LinkedIn, will allow you to target by job title or skills, while with Google Ads you can target by keyword or topic searches. Either way, it's important to have a holistic picture of the types of people you're trying to attract so you can adjust your targeting strategy to appeal to them on each channel.

Let's look at the most common places marketers are attracting inbound leads and what you'll need to consider in order to start drawing people in from each channel.
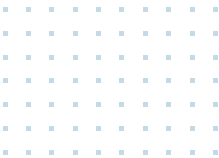
HOW TO ATTRACT INBOUND LEADS

As nice as it would be to have customers coming directly to you, the reality is that the majority of your inbound web traffic is likely attributed to search results, online advertising, or social. The thing is, if you don't take an individualized approach to not just engaging each persona, but each persona on each channel, you're basically throwing time and dollars out the window. Your strategy for each needs to be adapted to both browsing habits and the nature of the platform they're coming from.

SEARCH

When people are looking for content through search, their intentions are typically more purpose-driven. They're looking for an answer to a specific question or for more information on a particular topic. So while keyword planning and URL structure are certainly important strategies for getting your website to appear in search results, there are some additional steps you need to take to ensure that people actually click through to your content.

○ KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

This is where your buyer personas come in. Ensure that you're not only optimizing for content that your audience cares about, but you're also speaking the right language. Tech companies, for example, typically have audiences comprised of developers, architects, systems admins, or other individual contributors who are looking for in-depth, practitioner-focused content. This is a group you're probably not going to engage with inspirational thought leadership pieces, so you'd want to optimize your content accordingly.

○ PROVIDE VALUE UPFRONT

Chances are, your competitors are trying to rank for the same keywords you are, so if you want to make sure you're getting click-throughs instead of them, you need to write compelling SERP snippets that show searchers exactly what they're going to get by clicking through to your site.

○ TARGET FEATURED SNIPPET OPPORUINTIES

Featured snippets appear above the top search results in position zero, on top of the number one result. This spot can be earned by optimizing your content to answer important questions quickly, building brand visibility through voice search, and driving more traffic.
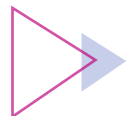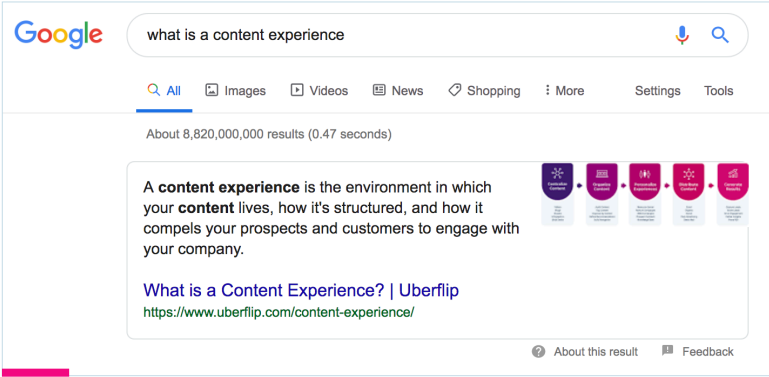
We knew a lot of people were asking this, so we optimized for it. While this snippet doesn't dig into the nitty gritty, it gives people enough information to know that they'll find the full answer to their question by clicking through to our website.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Your social media followers can sometimes be a tricky audience to engage, particularly in the B2B space. It can be discouraging to think about how your company's ebook launch post is sandwiched in between photos of someone's new puppy and someone else's newborn baby—but that doesn't mean we shouldn't do it, it just means we need to put extra care into crafting messages and using creative that will make someone pause and click.

While search is about answering questions, social media is about capturing people's attention with questions they didn't know they needed the answer to. They aren't looking for anything in particular; they're just browsing. So every post you put out needs to catch their eye—especially your paid posts. Some things to keep in mind are:

○ **KEEP IT CONCISE**

Ain't nobody got time to read a lengthy explanation of what you're promoting. Save that for once people actually click through to your website. Instead, make sure your post shows the value of clicking through (much like a SERP snippet) and leaves people wanting more.
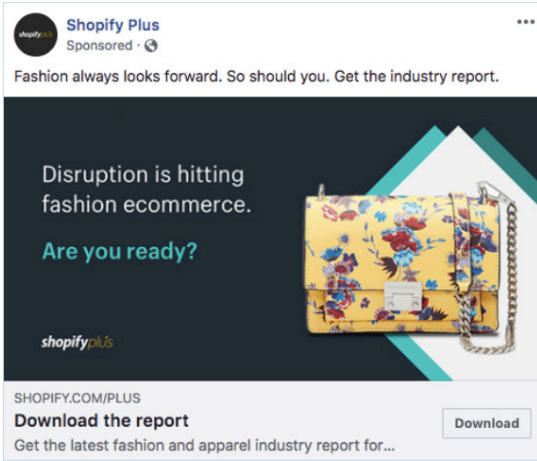
The best Facebook posts abide by Twitter's wordcount. This ad from Shopify Plus is both short and sweet!

O MAKE IT EYE-CATCHING

Social is highly visual, so make sure that whatever you're putting out there is something that will stop thumbs from scrolling and make them click that "Learn More" or "Download" button.

O ENSURE IT'S CONSISTENT

If you have a brilliant flashy ad running that links to a less-than-remarkable-looking content experience, you'll get a lot of clicks, but also a lot of bounces. It's important to make sure your social post or ad matches the experience they'll be getting on your site.

O PRACTICE SMART TARGETING

When it comes to paid social, make sure you're segmenting your ad audiences by persona as well as stage of the funnel. Showing relevant ads to someone at the appropriate stage in their buying cycle will not only improve your click-through rate, but will build people's trust in your brand's ability to cater to their needs.
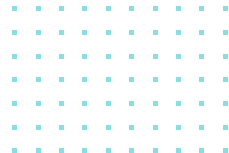
DISPLAY ADS

If you're like most people, you probably tune out the majority of display ads you see. It's one of the most common forms of online advertising, and most people have become desensitized to them. So there are a few ways to make your display ads stand out to ensure you're both capturing attention and getting those clicks.

○ BE RELEVANT

Even more so than other advertising platforms, relevance is essential to making a display ad stand out. Some platforms offer IP address targeting which means you can get super personal about a particular company's interests or pain points. (Be careful with this one though, because there's a fine line between making something stand out and making it super creepy.)
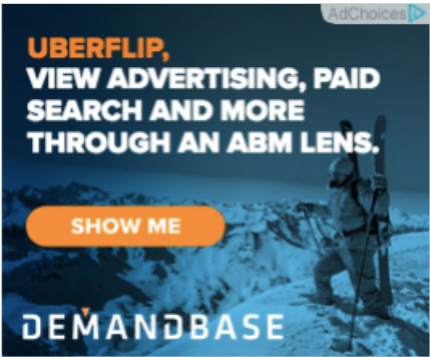
This Demandbase ad calls out Uberflip by name and speaks to a particular marketing challenge. It's definitely hard to ignore!

BANK ON BRAND RECOGNITION

If you're retargeting customers or website visitors and there's an element of your brand that would stand out to them, use it! Display ad audiences are usually doing something else entirely, so make sure you're leveraging strong branding to build recognition and ensure people are connecting each of your ads to the others.

ALWAYS, ALWAYS SIMPLIFY

Display ads are not the place to tell your brand story. Most display ad placements are small, making anything more than a few words overwhelming and hard to read. An ad with clean design, concise messaging, and a clear call-to-action is always the most effective.
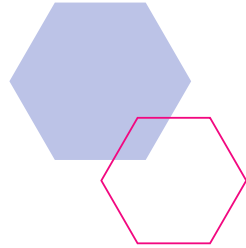
STRATEGIC TARGETING + COMPELLING ADS = QUALITY CLICKS

Any modern marketer is no stranger to the likes of social media advertising, Google Display Network, AdWords, and SEO tools to effectively reach, engage, and convert audiences. But how often are you served ads or content that you: a) completely ignore or b) wonder what targeting misstep made you see it in the first place? If we get better at targeting and optimizing for these placements, we'll be more likely to bring in qualified traffic that will actually convert.

While organic search and social strategies are certainly important to optimize, we need to be especially strategic about the ad experiences we create for paid search, social, and display ads. When we're paying for each click, we want to make each of them count. What happens post-click, well, that's a whole other strategy.

Section Two

2 CONVERT

MAKE THE CLICK COUNT WITH PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCES

When it comes to content, 85% of marketers report that lead generation is their primary goal. At the same time, we're faced with the challenge of marketing to a customer base where 38% of people will stop engaging with a website if it's unattractive. So while most of us are on the same page about using content to generate leads, there's a chance that your website is actually standing between you and that goal.

If you're a marketer who finds yourself scratching your head at why your bounce rate is so high, or why you're getting so much traffic on your site but very few people actually converting, this section is for you. You may have a perfectly good website. It may even be great. But today's buyers don't want good or great, they want highly personalized content experiences that will guide them through their customer journey.

Give the People What They Want

If today's buyer wants personalized content, that's what you're going to give them. But without a strategy in place, that can be something that's much easier said than done.

It's also important to remember that personalization doesn't necessarily mean your landing page has a "Hi Steve from ABC Company!" splashed across it for each unique user. It can mean that your content is delivered in a way that feels customized for the channel a person is coming from, the business area they're in, or their browsing habits.

So in this section, we'll look at what you need to focus on to convert inbound traffic coming from search, social, and display ads, along with some kick-butt examples that will get your gears turning.
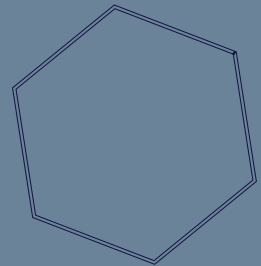
What Makes for a High-Converting Content Experience?

Before we look at what will appeal to visitors coming from each channel, let's take a look at what makes for a high-converting content experience in general. Besides looking good, there are some extra steps to consider if you want people to actually engage with your content.

○ YOUR CONTENT'S ENVIRONMENT

This is how your content is packaged and presented to the world. We judge books by their covers, wine by the label, and we judge content the same way.

When you look at your blog or website, consider these questions:

- Is it aesthetically pleasing and attention-grabbing?
- Is the presentation and layout engaging?
- Is it consistent with what I'd expect from this company or brand? Does it look professional?

PLACEMENT

DESIGN

ENVIRONMENT

DISPLAY

VISUAL
AESTHETICS
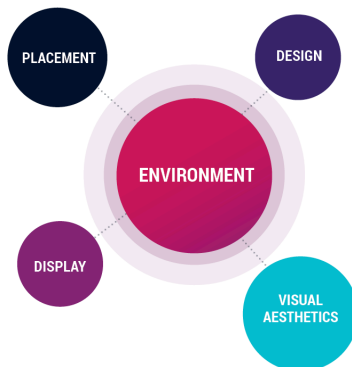
○ CONTENT STRUCTURE

Structure isn't about how each individual blog post is laid out, it really refers to how all of your content (blogs, videos, ebooks, infographics—you name it) is organized and whether or not someone is able to find what they need when they come to your site with a question.

In order to evaluate your blog, resource center, or website's structure, ask yourself:

- Is the content organized in a way that's intuitive for your customers and prospects?
- Is it easy to navigate? Do you have a search bar and functional navigation bar?
- Has information been grouped together by topic, role, or industry? Is your content discoverable in more than one place?
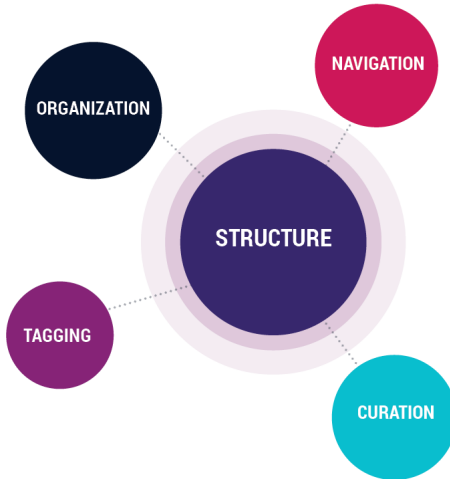
ENGAGEMENT

The environment and structure of your content, or what we refer to as your content experience, can either compel action (more clicks, more video views, and more form submits) or lead to a dead end. As a marketer, you're going to want the former.

In order to determine how engaging your content experience is, think about:

- In what ways do you compel action?
- Have you used personalized and contextua calls-to-action?
- Are you recommending more relevant content?
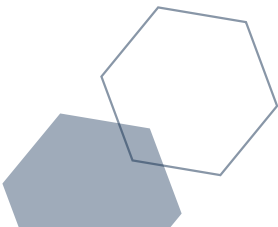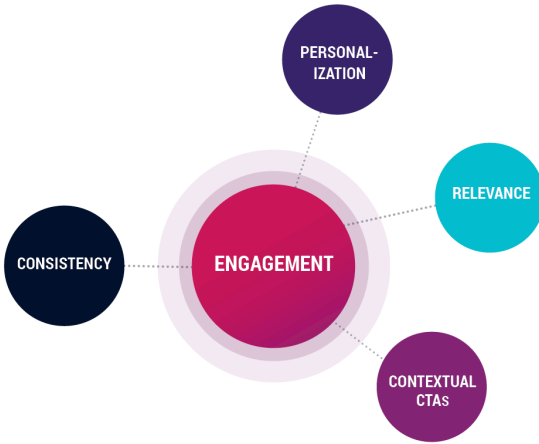
Making Content Discoverable for Inbound Search Traffic

Content discoverability refers to how you **structure your content.** SEO is a practice that helps you rank on Google, but your content's discoverability is what's going to get your search traffic to stay on-page and actually convert!

Rethink How You're Organizing Your Content

Ordering content from newest to oldest has always been the "standard" way to go about organizing your blog content, but when you think about it, very few people would actually be able to tell (or even care) if a great blog post was published last week or last year. What does matter, however, is whether people coming in through search know how to find what they're looking for when they do land on your blog or website.

There are a few different ways to organize your content. The most popular are by type or format (ebook, blog, video, infographic), by persona or job title, by topic, by industry, and by vertical, but you'll need to do some experimenting to find out what works best for you. At Uberflip, we've tried a few, but we've also dug into the data to see what works best for our customers. In The Content Experience Report, we found that marketers who organize their content by topic see 2x the number of views than those who organize their content by type. Crazy, right?
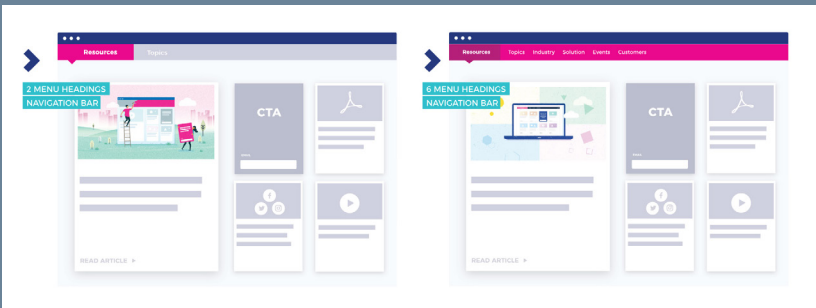
It's also important to make sure your content can be found through a search bar. If you don't have one, there's really never been a better time than right now to set one up. Even the most well-organized content can be overwhelming to someone in search of a specific answer, and a search bar allows people to quickly find it.

Lastly, you'll want to look at the menu headings you have across your navigation bar. We've seen as few as two and as many as six—but the marketers who had more headings saw as much as a 200% increase in content views. Why? The more opportunities you can give someone to spot what they're looking for, the better.

TrendKite has organized their PR Resources Hub by resource type, topic, industry, and solution, giving people plenty of ways to find what they're looking for.

Encourage Netflix-Like Content Bingeing with Contextual Experiences

The way you segment your content can not only help your audience find it, but also determine how much of it they consume. Creating a dedicated experience for each topic or pain point makes it easy to push people from one piece of content to the next. Just think about how Netflix does it. Immediately after you're done watching an episode, it sends you to another. As marketers, we can replicate this experience by immersing our customers and prospects in a content experience tailored to fit their needs.

A particularly effective way to achieve this is by organizing by persona or job title like Trimble has below. As soon as someone lands on their site, they can select their unique role and find resources that speak to their specific interests or problems.

Trimble has their content organized by topic, resource type, and job title. Visitors can select their job title from the "I am…" dropdown and find themselves in an experience that's perfectly tailored to their needs and challenges in that role.

Provide Opportunities for Further Engagement

While there's a good chance that anyone coming to your website through search is looking for a specific answer to their question, that's not to say that you can't strategically place some opportunities for further engagement to try to get them to stick around.

Say someone lands on the homepage of your blog right now. Have you given them the chance to engage with you further if they like what they see? On the homepage of our Content Hub, in addition to our featured content, we've strategically placed some calls-to-action for webinars and ebooks our visitors may be interested in, as well as a subscribe CTA where people can fill in their information and join our email list without ever interrupting their scroll. By doing this, we're able to take advantage of inbound traffic and capture leads at first visit.
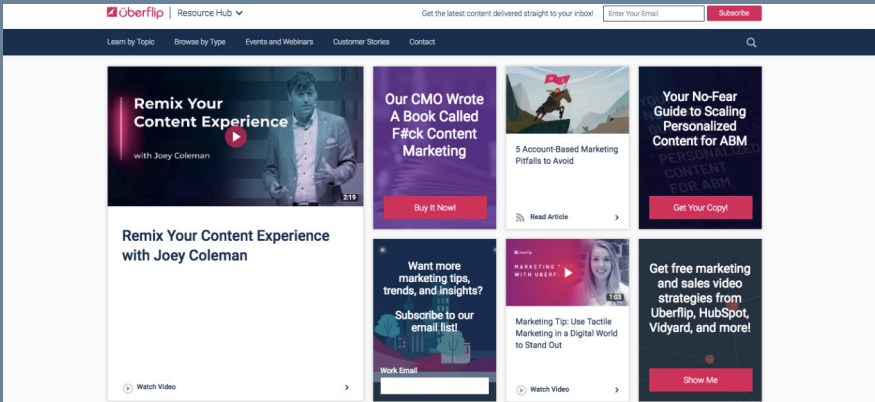
Check out another example of what we're doing on our Content Hub below. If someone lands on a piece of content in our account-based marketing stream, they're shown a call-to-action to download an ebook on a similar topic, and directed to some recommended content based on what they're currently viewing.

Whether you're leveraging AI or manually setting up content recommendations, you want to make sure you're giving users an opportunity to engage with a next step if they want to.

Here's another example from HubSpot. As you scroll through this blog post, there's a flyout that appears in the bottom right for a downloadable asset. But the flyout only appears once you get to a certain point in the page.
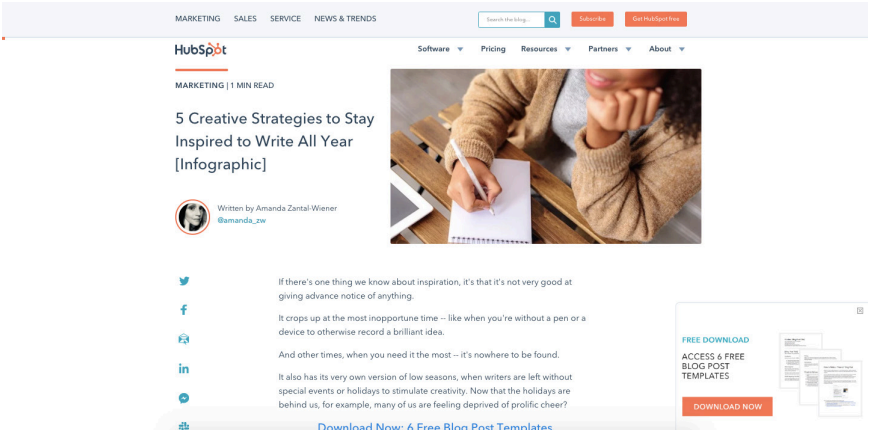
If the user isn't quite ready to fill out an ebook form (but they've indicated they're still interested by getting to the bottom of the page), there are three recommended articles to be viewed next.

If you continue through this process, HubSpot will eventually stop recommending new blog posts and suggest another gated asset. After viewing a few pieces, a search visitor will likely be more warm to the idea of giving you their information, now that they have a better idea of what you're all about.

Related Articles
↓

10 Simple Ways to Write Stronger Introductions

MARKETING | 6 MIN READ

How to Improve Your Writing Skills and Escape Content Mediocrity (Infographic)

MARKETING | 1 MIN READ

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MARKETING | 3 MIN READ

When mapping out content recommendations, you'll also want to outline a strategic engagement path. Don't just keep sending people to more and more top-of-funnel content. If they're that engaged, give them an end goal! Since B2B buyers typically consume five pieces of content before making a purchase decision, five steps are a good place to start when building out a content journey. No matter where prospects start to engage with you, your recommendations should gradually get more product- or service-focused so that they eventually end up at a demo request, free trial, or consultation with a sales rep.

Optimizing Experiences for Ad Traffic

When people come to your website through ads, they have completely different browsing habits than anyone coming to your website through search. This is because search traffic is purposeful, and anyone coming in through ads may not know why they found themselves on your site, they just know that something about your ad grabbed their attention. That said, there's a good chance they don't know anything else about you. So for the sake of your bounce rate, you need to make it your mission to provide value upfront to traffic coming from ads.

A lot of marketers make the big mistake of using generic ad destinations rather than dedicated experiences. Say you're trying to get someone to download your latest ebook. Your team has put together a killer asset, you created a great set of ads, and put a hefty chunk of marketing budget into distribution with the goal of generating net new leads. But where are you sending your ad traffic? If you're about to say landing page—stop right there. There's a better way.

It's time to consider creating an experience separate from your website or blog to use as an ads destination. You can tap your web team on the shoulder and have them build out some micro-sites for you, or look into software that will allow you to build out content experiences on your own. Either way, you're going to need more than a landing page to truly engage (and convert) visitors, and this way, you'll be able to have more control over the entire buyer journey.

The most important elements your experience should include are:

○ **A CLEAR CALL-TO-ACTION**

What are people supposed to do when they land on your page? Fill out a form? Watch a video? Make sure your direction is obvious enough that the user doesn't get confused and leave.

○ **COHESIVE EXPERIENCE**

Much like not having a clear call-to-action, a disjointed experience can throw people off. Does the branding on your ad match the destination you're sending people to? Does your copy provide them with any additional context?

○ **NEXT STEPS**

If your content resonates with people, you'll want to give them an opportunity to self-nurture by engaging with even more. If someone is particularly interested, a curated content experience will empower them to skip through nurture stages.

___

Let's dig into an example of this. We created this experience for one of our ebooks. When someone clicks through a social or display ad, they're sent straight to the PDF, which is embedded in its own experience. To gate it, we've set up an overlay CTA. This way you can still collect leads without sacrificing your experience for a boring, old landing page.

Once someone has flipped through the ebook or downloaded it for later, the CTA on the side of the page encourages them to click through for more must-reads on the same topic. (If they like your content, they'll be hungry for more!)
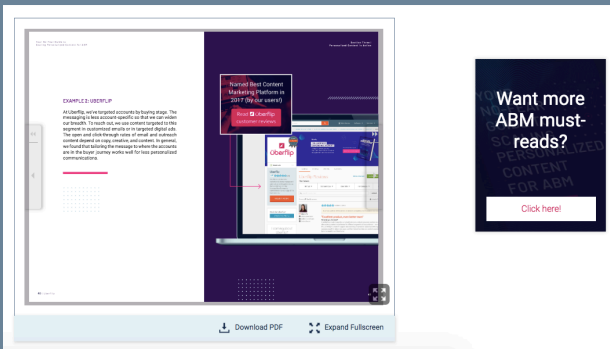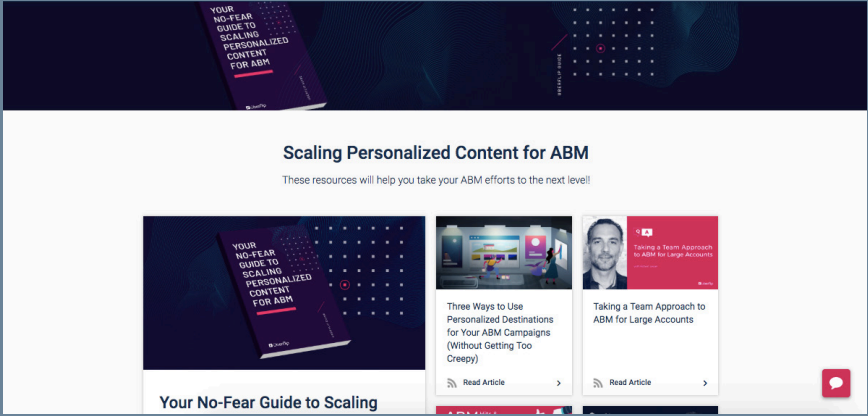
After clicking through, they're taken to a stream of supporting content. Ideally, this would be the same content you plan to use in your email nurture for the asset, but you're giving people the opportunity to binge it all at once if they want to. Who are we to stop a prospect from hitting MQL status faster?

Make sure that you're leveraging your marketing automation platform to track when a known user is skipping through nurture stages, though—that way you can exclude them from receiving emails about content they've already engaged with. Talk about a bad experience!

Get Personal with Your Ad Experiences

People are more likely to convert on an ad if it resonates with them so, if possible, it's best to start segmenting your ads by persona as early as possible. If you know who your ideal customers are, you can even make prospecting ads feel more targeted by appealing to a particular persona's pain points or goals. In this case, personalization can be as simple as sharing something relevant that makes a person want to engage with you.

When it comes to segmentation, it can get complicated (and, let's be honest, expensive) to split up your ads and distribute budgets in a way that will make a true impact, but even starting with two segmentations is better than one generic ad.

Drift creates experiences specifically designed to engage their Facebook audience with Drift Insider videos. The way this video is cut and titled for social just screams, "Click me!"

Depending on the platform you're using (LinkedIn, Facebook, Terminus, AdWords, and Google Display Network are probably the most common advertising channels in the B2B world), there are a number of demographic and technographic criteria you can use to target your audience. And if you use your own data or leverage a technographic provider like Datanyze, the possibilities are virtually limitless. The most common targeting criteria includes:

- Industry
- Company size
- Company name
- Job function
- Location
- Keywords
- Topics

- User intent
- Similar audiences
- Interests
- Skills

tech stack you're working with allows—career level (executives vs. managers), company size (solopreneurs vs. small businesses), industry (automotive vs. healthcare), or marketing technology (Marketo vs. Pardot). Then, you'll want to spin up different versions of your creative and messaging that target each unique group.

Here's an example of a display campaign we ran at Uberflip. We used Datanyze to identify which marketing automation platform our top prospects used, then segmented our ads to target the top three. We didn't call out anyone or their companies by name—we didn't even have to know much about them—but this small level of personalization got people's attention.

From this particular campaign we ran using Terminus, we saw a 6-13% engagement rate on all ads.. When people clicked through, they were sent to an experience that provided more context. You'll notice in the Uberflip + Pardot example below that the branding is aligned, the content is relevant, and there are a few pieces of content for an interested user to interact with.
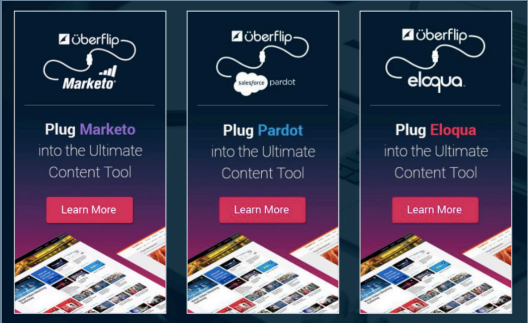
Leverage Your Tech Stack to Hit Visitors on All Channels

When it comes to converting inbound leads, marketers often focus heavily on optimizing for form fills or demo requests on their websites, but forget that there are a ton of other channels to lean on to push visitors further down the funnel. If someone lands on your website through search or an ad but fails to convert—or maybe they do convert and you want to push them to consume the next asset in their buyer journey—there are a few smart ways you can continue to engage them without scaring anyone away.

Retargeting Ads

Retargeting ads can serve two primary purposes: to capture the attention of someone who landed on your site who you want to bring back and convert, or as a way to consistently deliver valuable content to your audience across all platforms.

As long as someone lands on your site once (provided you have the appropriate tracking pixels installed), you can hit them up with ads on other channels to try to bring them back and get them to convert or engage with you further. The smartest way to do this is to place retargeting pixels on specific pages of your site, then tailor your messaging and creative based on their engagement level with specific pages. When someone lands on your homepage or any top-of-funnel blog posts, for example, retarget them with more high-level brand awareness ads. Anyone who looked at your product pages can be shown more specific ads about how your product can help them achieve their business goals.

Retargeting ads are also a great way to build trust, engage customers and prospects, and move them down the funnel faster. Some people may spend more time on LinkedIn or Facebook than in their inbox, and it makes for a frictionless way to share new content. Don't worry about people getting annoyed with your ads—if you're providing value, they'll be excited to see them knowing you provide great experiences.

How you execute this varies depending on the platform you're using, but there's virtually a limitless number of ways you can segment and retarget your audience based on where they are in their buying cycle, engagement level, demographic or technographic data, the pages they've visited, and the campaigns you have running.
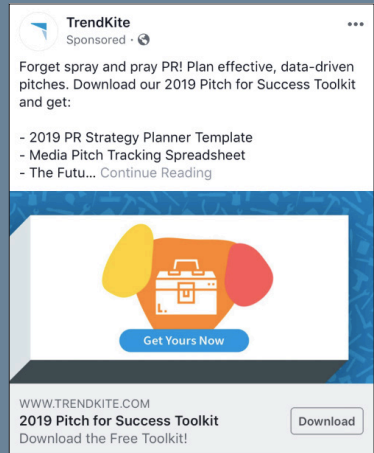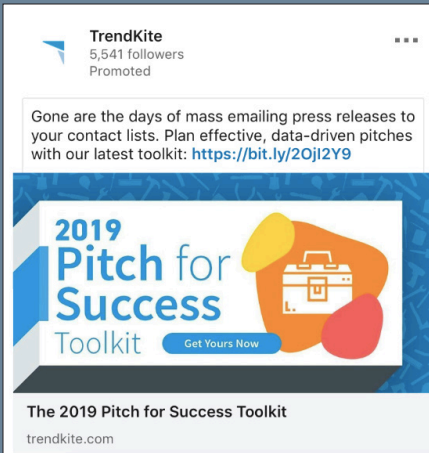
Remember when we showed you TrendKite's PR Resources Hub on page 26? They're retargeting us already! This is a great example of how to bring back website visitors who don't fill out a form on their first visit.

○ CHATBOTS

Conversational marketing is on the rise and the strategic ways marketers are taking advantage of it are growing every day. When it comes to inbound traffic, chatbot conversations can be a more organic way to give people the extra push they need to convert. There are a ton of creative examples of how to use chatbots to engage visitors, but for the purposes of this guide, we'll be focusing on two in particular: chatbots that warm up unknown visitors (from search, social, and prospecting ads) and chatbots that engage known visitors (from social followers and database targeting or retargeting ads) and push them further down the funnel.

CHATBOTS FOR UNKNOWN VISITORS: SEARCH, SOCIAL, AND PROSPECTING ADS

In this particular example of AdRoll using Drift, we can see they're using a bot to qualify leads as prospects visit their website. For net-new visitors, this 1) makes for a more engaging and interactive experience with your content and 2) helps you determine how to treat this person and what content to show them.
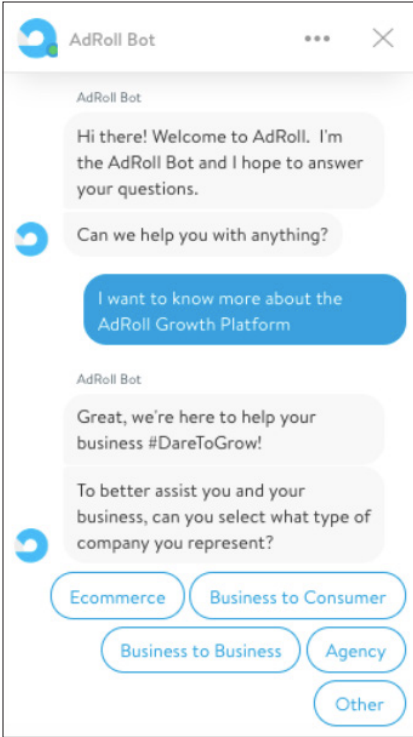
This bot asks the same qualifying questions that a sales rep would ask when trying to identify a prospect's fit for your company, so it's not just a fun and interactive element. This information will ultimately help speed up sales cycles and give people a better overall experience with your brand.

CHATBOTS FOR KNOWN VISITORS: SOCIAL FOLLOWERS, DATABASE TARGETING, AND RETARGETING

Chatbots aren't just for lead generation. They can be used to help convert leads into sales-ready prospects sooner. Oftentimes the premium assets that will help a lead hit MQL status faster are gated behind a form. Someone who registers for a webinar, for example, is probably a lot more engaged than someone who passively skims a top-of-funnel blog post. In order to reduce any friction in the experience and make it as seamless as possible, a chatbot can be leveraged to identify known visitors so they can skip the signup process and consume more content.

Another way to leverage chatbots for any known visitors that land on your site is to use progressive profiling. Connecting your chatbot to your marketing automation platform enables you to ask additional ques-
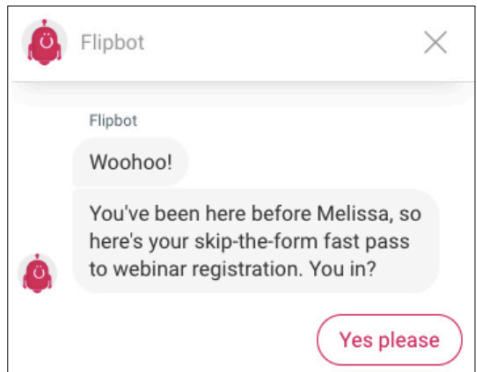
At Uberflip, we're leveraging a Drift chatbot for known contacts to skip the webinar signup form for our webinars.

tions that will help qualify and more effectively target leads in your database.

LEAD NURTURING

Once you have someone's email, there's a lot you can do on the nurturing front to help push your inbound leads further down the funnel, direct them to more gated assets and, again, leverage progressive profiling to help you collect more information about them. Progressive profiling is typically an extension of dynamic form fields and allows you to ask more questions to gain information about a particular lead each time they fill out a form on your site.

When it comes to nurturing inbound leads, it's likely that the most common type of nurture you'll be employing is a post-download nurture. When a net-new person fills out a form on your site, you want to warm them up to the idea of you before you start hitting them with product-focused messaging. A good way to do this is to email them follow-up resources that provide a friendly introduction to you and your business
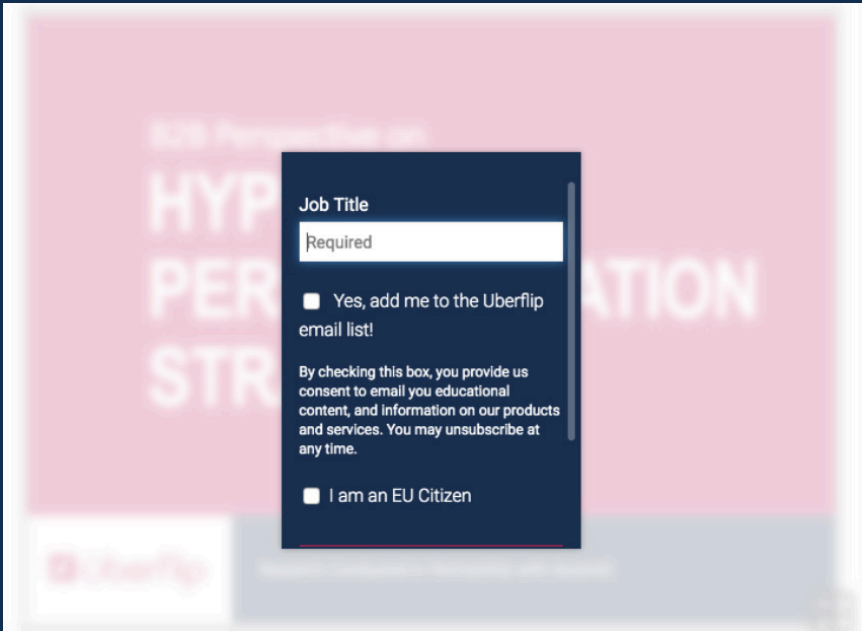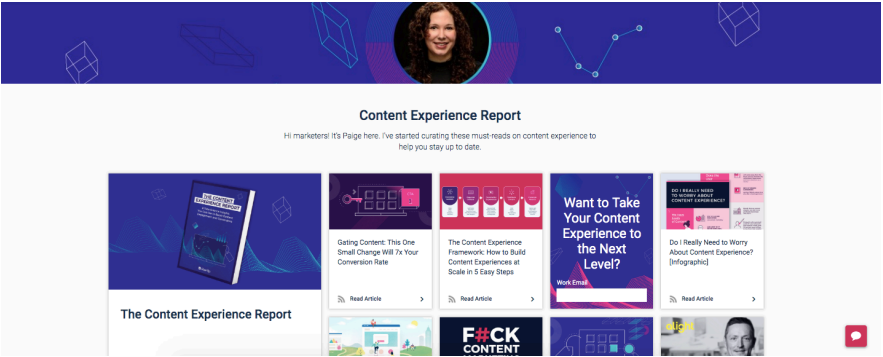
To effectively nurture inbound leads, it's important to be able to collect information like job title or company size—not just so you can determine whether or not they're an ideal customer fit or so your sales team can prospect them down the line, but so that you can distribute target-ed content and essentially get your leads to choose their own content adventure. Much like ad experiences, serving up relevant content is essential to getting maximum engagement. And by using content engagement data, you'll be able to trigger the right workflows in your MAP to provide one personalized experience after the next. People are way more likely to keep engaging with you if you're sending them resources that are actually relevant to their needs.

Map Back to One Cohesive Experience

Hitting visitors on multiple channels can be a great way to engage inbound leads and website visitors, but if it's not done right, it can be confusing and messy for the person on the other end. Seriously, you don't want to be sending mixed signals at the beginning of a brand new and fragile relationship. That doesn't bode well for anyone.

To get ahead of this problem before it even starts, make sure your team is aligned. Ensure your retargeting ads match the experience your inbound leads are getting from your nurture emails, and any post-conversion experience is consistent with what leads saw from you when you were trying to capture their attention. You don't want newly converted leads to think you were pulling out all the stops just to woo them, only to drop the ball once you actually got their information.

In some instances, it may make sense to go truly multichannel and set a singular destination for social, display, and email. This works especially well when you're trying to engage inbound leads with a particular campaign and can hit all new leads with similar messaging on all the channels they're using.

3 MEASURE

EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF YOUR CONTENT EXPERIENCE

Once you have your campaigns set up, and you're driving leads to your website and they're converting on assets, the next step is to dig into some metrics to see if what you're doing is actually working.

We know what you're thinking. Measure the "impact of an experience"? Sounds made up. But there are actually some key metrics you can dig into that will paint a comprehensive picture of how your visitors are consuming and engaging with your content, as well as how those campaigns influence your overall business goals.

Consumption

Consumption metrics are the foundation of all of your content metrics. They're what will give you a baseline understanding of whether or not people are actually landing on your content, how long they're spending there, and what they're taking in (if anything) while they're on your site.

While this particular set of metrics doesn't give you any insight into how your content experience is actually impacting your business, what it will do is give you an idea of whether or not people are actually clicking through search, social, and ads to land on your page. When it comes to consumption, we'd suggest using a web analytics tool like Google Analytics. We've outlined some key metrics you'll want to look at below.

Bounce Rate

Your bounce rate is a metric you want to keep as low as possible. It indicates the percentage of visitors who navigate away from your website after only viewing one page. The average bounce rate for B2B websites is a bit higher than the typical B2C site and sits around 61%. That said, a good bounce rate for content sites falls between 40 and 60%, so if your bounce rate is in that range or lower, it's a good indicator that your content experience is doing what it's supposed to do—getting people hooked.

If you're seeing a higher bounce rate even after optimizing your content experience, don't panic. It may take some trial and error to determine which calls-to-action fit where and what copy drives the most clicks. Just make sure you're documenting every change you're making so you have a detailed picture of what worked and what didn't.

Source

Looking at sources at page level will give you some insight into what channels assisted with the consumption of your content so you can optimize for them. Once you dig in, you'll probably notice that people coming from different channels have different browsing habits. For example, people coming to your site through an organic LinkedIn post may be more likely to spend longer browsing around an experience while sitting at their desks on their lunch breaks than people coming to your site through a display ad and consume only one or two assets before they bounce. When you dig into the user behavior of visitors coming from each channel, you'll be able to be more strategic about what you're putting out on those channels.

Engagement

When it comes to evaluating your content experience, engagement metrics are probably the most telling. Presenting opportunities for engagement is an essential element of a high-converting content experience, after all.

Digging into your engagement metrics allows you to really start to piece together a story of how your visitors are interacting with your digital experiences and enables you to start taking note of any patterns you're seeing. These are the key metrics you want to look at to evaluate how people are engaging with your content and how to improve their experience.

AVERAGE SESSION DURATION

Looking at the amount of time people are spending on your website per session is a good indicator of how compelling your content is, how well-organized it is (or isn't), and whether or not it answers user questions.

If you're seeing session durations of upwards of two to three minutes but you also have a high bounce rate, this tells you that your content is compelling, but you're not giving users an appropriate next step to continue engaging with you.

It really depends on how much content you have on a page, but for some campaigns, we've seen session durations upwards of five minutes. A good way to ensure your visitors are staying engaged is by using different media formats. Don't send people to a curated collection of eight blog posts when you could use videos, podcasts, and infographics to tell your story and keep them interested for longer.

PAGES PER SESSION

When it comes to content experiences, pages per session is a crucial metric. The whole point is to create binge-worthy experiences that will capture people in an infinite scroll and send them through a journey that they can't tear themselves away from—so the more pages you're able to get visitors to engage with, the better!

To promote our recent trends report, we created this experience and filled it with supporting content to help marketers implement the trends that were highlighted in the report. Five of the assets were one-minute tip videos our team created in-house, and the rest were assets we already had on our blog.
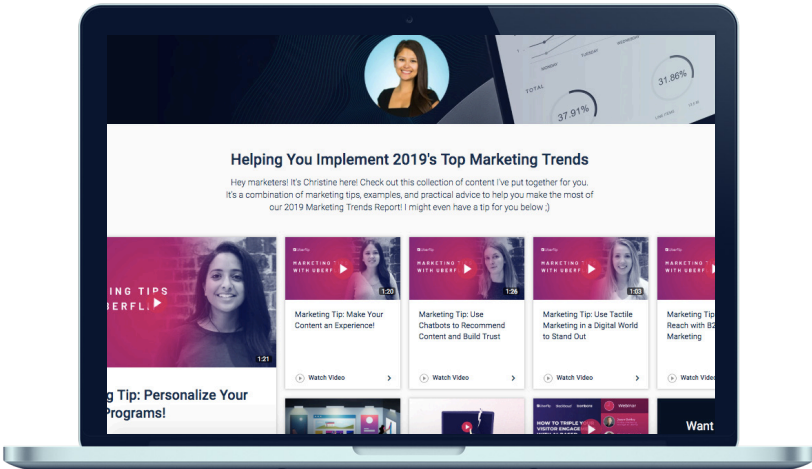
After distributing this particular experience, we found that people were engaging with an average of 6.74 pages per session. Considering anything above two pages per session is classified as a win in the B2B world, we knew that this experience was particularly impressive. While this stream of content is very top-of-funnel, we included a webinar recording for anyone who was interested in learning more, as well as a CTA that linked to more content to move a highly engaged visitor further down the funnel.

CLICKS ON CTAS

Say it with us: Tracking links are your best friend! UTM parameters shouldn't just be used to see how people are landing on your page, but also what they're doing once they get there. It's a fact that most people won't make it through the entirety of an 800-word blog post, so we place next-step CTAs beside or throughout the body copy. If you're tagging each placement, you'll be able to identify which is converting the most.

Looking at call-to-action clicks versus actual conversions will give you an idea of if and where your visitors are dropping off before they get to a gated asset. If you're seeing a low click-through rate, try spicing up your copy and creative. If you're seeing a high click through rate but a small number of people actually converting once they land on your asset, you'll want to look at the experience on that page. Is it clear what a user is getting, and how they're receiving it? Are there too many form fields? Is your page layout too busy? Does your landing page have too much information on it? All of these could contribute to why someone is clicking on your CTA but not actually converting. Determining which one will involve some experimenting!

CONVERSION RATE

Ah, conversions. Impressions and clicks are great, but conversions are what we're really here for, aren't they? We want people to fill out the forms on our gated pieces of content, subscribe to our emails, and register for our webinars so that we can nurture them and eventually pass them off to sales to close a deal.

There are a number of factors that could be standing in the way of your content experience and a solid conversion rate, ranging from not having a direct-enough ask, to making the journey between landing on a page and filling out the form too complicated.

In the previous section of this guide, we suggested using overlay CTAs to gate your content so as not to interfere with the rest of your content experience. We've found that gating your content this way results in 7x the conversion rate of a traditional landing page.
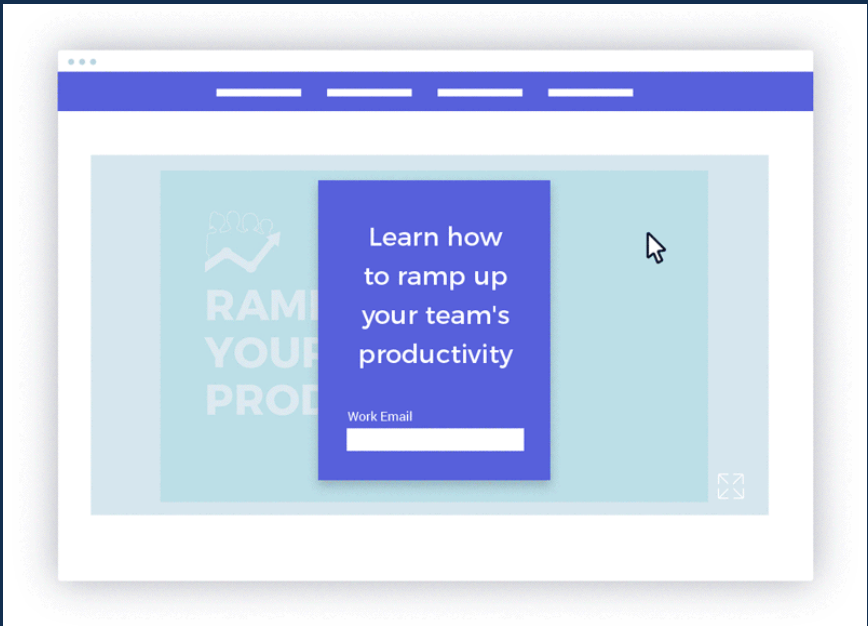
As we put in all this effort to bring our audiences inbound, we need to focus on providing an experience to keep them there, not send them outbound to a static landing page.

Influence

Too often, content is considered to be just a brand-awareness play or a top-of-funnel lead driver rather than the engine that feeds every stage of the buyer journey. When we shift our focus to creating experiences rather than creating content, this becomes all the more true. Proving content's influence on pipeline is what's going to change your organization's perspective of it. News flash: Content DOES help close deals!

So let's recap quickly. After looking at your consumption metrics, you know you're getting people to actually land on your page. When you move on to looking at engagement metrics, you can see that people are spending time on your pages, clicking around, and filling out forms. And that brings us to influence, and the million dollar question (or maybe the ten million dollar question—we don't know what your revenue goals are!). How is your content impacting the bottom line?

LEAD QUALITY

Lead quality is what allows you to identify how likely a lead is to become a customer. There are a number of factors to consider when determining lead quality, but the most common are things like seniority, company size, and revenue.

It's important for you to understand the quality of the leads your content is generating so that you can make informed decisions about what you're writing about, how you're presenting it, and where you're promoting it. That's why it's key to know the personas you're going after, what they care about, and where they spend the most time online.

If you're finding your lead quality is off, it's probably time to make some adjustments. Don't go rewriting your latest ebook right away though—it can be as simple as tweaking your ad targeting or framing your content in a different way. No matter what you do, not all of your leads are going to fit your ideal customer profile,

but it's a good rule of thumb to ensure your content and demand teams are aligned when it comes to expectations around the percentage of ideal customers you can reach and engage with each channel. With social and search as distribution channels, it's likely that you will pull in a higher ratio of unfit leads because that outreach is less targeted, but for paid channels, you should be aiming to reach more qualified accounts.

ATTRIBUTION

The purpose of marketing attribution is to tie revenue to channels and activities along the buyer journey. There are a few different types of attribution models, the most common being first-touch, last-touch, and multi-touch. Your organization may decide to go with one or more of these approaches, but it's good to know how each will impact how a deal is credited to your activities.

○ FIRST-TOUCH

First-touch attribution is exactly what it sounds like. It's the credit assigned to the first marketing touchpoint. Applying a first-touch attribution model means that for top-of-funnel activities like prospecting ads and paid search, first-touch attribution will assign 100% of the deal value.

○ LAST TOUCH

Again, this is exactly what it sounds like. The opposite of first-touch, last-touch attribution assigns 100% of the deal value to the last marketing touch before an opportunity was created. Say someone is highly engaged with your brand, clicks on all your emails, and reads all your blog posts. But filling out a lead form to download an ebook is what pushed them over the edge to sales. That's what will get 100% attribution.

○ MULTI-TOUCH:

This attribution model is different than the other two in that it assigns a share of the credit to multiple touchpoints. There are countless ways to approach multi-touch attribution, based on the number of steps credited and the

percentage attributed. Some models evenly distribute credit throughout the funnel, while other models assign larger or smaller shares to certain touchpoints along the buyer journey.

IMPACT ON PIPELINE

It's great to have content that educates and engages your audience, but if your efforts aren't influencing deals, it's difficult to prove content's ROI and get your team (and, most importantly, your boss) to think of it as more than just a top-of-funnel activity.

To see how your content is impacting opportunities you have in the pipeline, the best way is to simply look at people who are in the open opportunity stage and see if they've consumed any of your content. It doesn't necessarily have to be their first touch with your business in order to be meaningful, and looking at what point in their journey they've engaged with your blogs, ebooks, and other resources can actually give you a lot of insight into how you're impacting the funnel. Some questions to consider include:

- Did most people consume your content before or after they moved to the opportunity stage?
- How long are sales cycles for people who've engaged with your content versus those who haven't?
- In how many instances was your content someone's last touch before they spoke to a sales rep?

AT WHAT STAGE ARE PEOPLE MOST ENGAGED?

Engagement metrics are one thing, but it's especially helpful to be able to determine at which stage of the buyer journey people are most engaged with your content. Looking at this will give you a good idea of whether you're showing people the right content at the right time.

The way you track this depends on what tool or approach you're

using, but what you'll ultimately want to do is ensure that all of your content is somehow tagged with the stage of the funnel it's intended to engage. Whether you're sharing the links with your Marketing Ops team to flag, tagging in your content experience platform (CEP) or CMS, or using a spreadsheet to track links, it's a good rule of thumb to revisit it each week to make informed decisions about how you're marketing your content and how you're creating new assets in the future.

Your Content Experience Toolkit

Our CMO at Uberflip often talks about the importance of hiring the right people, determining the right processes, and only then investing in tech. We've reached the point in this guide where we've got the right people on board (you and your team, obviously), we've walked through how to create killer content experiences to convert inbound leads, and now it's time to talk tech.

We've highlighted some technologies to consider that will help you prove the ROI of your content.

CONTENT EXPERIENCE PLATFORM

A content experience platform isn't the only way to create personalized content experiences, but since that's what it was built for, it's definitely the easiest way (especially when you start to execute at scale).

All of the strategies in this guide can be achieved using a traditional CMS if you get a little creative and get your web team involved. But the real benefit of using a CEP is that you're able to regain control of your marketing channels by housing all of your content in one place, easily build contextual content collections, distribute purpose-built destinations across different channels, and gather insights by integrating your marketing automation platform and other tools. Think of it as your traditional CMS on steroids!

When it comes to measuring the success of your efforts, the CEP's analytics are going to be the best indicator of how much people are engaging with your content experience. The advantage of using in-platform analytics is that they're designed to track metrics in a different way than a traditional analytics platform and will give you a holistic view of things like engagement paths, PDF page views, and impressions of particular on-page elements like CTAs and content recommendations. Plus, it's a lot easier to look at your metrics all in one place, leveraging the tool you used to create your experiences!

Check out this checklist if you're considering investing in a CEP!

WEB ANALYTICS SERVICES

Google Analytics is by far the most popular tool for measuring your web traffic. It's a great way to track and understand visitor behavior, identify what they're looking for, and determine whether or not your website is suiting their needs, especially if your business isn't ready to invest in a content experience platform just yet.

If you're not using a CEP, you'll really need to lean on Google Analytics to pull data like time-on-page, CTA clicks, and pages-per-session to see how people are moving through your experiences.

A major benefit of using this web analytics service in particular is that even if you're not super familiar with it, there are a ton of resources to help you get started. That's why it's so widely used.

MARKETING ATTRIBUTION SOFTWARE

Marketing attribution software allows you to track and measure touches on your marketing channels and map them to the full funnel. It's really what will help you connect the dots from first touch to closed-won and attribute dollar values to particular marketing activities.

Your marketing attribution software is an important part of your content experience toolkit because it's what will empower you to track inbound leads from the first time someone clicks on one of your blog posts through the entire buyer journey. It'll help you justify ad campaign spend, make informed decisions about how you're engaging users on particular channels, and ultimately see how your hard work is impacting the bottom line.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

All smart marketers understand the importance of not just knowing how many people engaged with your content, but which people engaged with content. That's what your customer relationship management software will empower you to do.

Salesforce is probably the most commonly used CRM, but your organization may also be using something like HubSpot or Microsoft Dynamics. When it comes to measuring the success of your content, your CRM is how you'll create campaigns for your assets to see how many people downloaded it, where they came from, and who they were.

Marketing Automation Platform

Your marketing automation is really what will help you take your content experience to the next level, and actually plays an important role in being able to execute and evaluate the success of your experience.

As part of your content experience toolkit, your MAP will play two primary roles:

- It will allow you to gather insights from your campaigns
- It will help you segment your audience to deliver personalized content experiences

Your marketing automation platform is what ultimately connects all of your marketing tools. It's what will show you what was viewed or downloaded and by whom, and whether or not the people you're attracting are a good fit for your organization. Integrated marketing in general would be really, really hard to do without a MAP.

Beyond helping you track success, your MAP will also help you slice and dice your contacts in order to serve personalized and segmented experiences on your website, in ads, and by email.
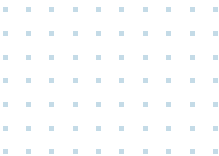
FINAL THOUGHTS

You probably noticed that throughout this guide there was very little mention of how to actually write content that converts. That's because since the emergence of content marketing as a category, that's really all we've been doing. At this point, most of us can whip up some snappy copy for a web page or publish a well-researched blog post. But the area that most marketers are neglecting is the overall experience. And that's what really counts when it comes to generating leads and, ultimately, pipeline.

Great content may drive people to our websites, but in order to create customers out of inbound traffic, we must be strategic when creating digital experiences for the unique personas coming in through search, ads, and social. While the purpose of content marketing is to naturally attract customers by publishing relevant and interesting material, there are certain things you can do to tweak your overall content experience that will propel prospects through the buyer journey faster.

It really all comes down to creating contextual, binge-worthy experiences that lock our visitors into an infinite scroll of content. Building a relationship with an inbound visitor has always been thought of as a long game—show them top-of-funnel content, stick them in an email nurture, and hope they convert eventually. But with the power of personalized content experiences, we can accelerate that process.

So now that you know the types of experiences you need to convert visitors from your top traffic sources, it's time to start creating them on your own. We challenge you to really think like one of your customers (or future customers) before launching any type of experience. Set aside an afternoon to put yourself in a customer or prospect's shoes and navigate through—from landing page to booking a meeting with sales. Sure, it's a little more work than sending someone to a static page and calling it a day, but with this playbook in your back pocket, there's no question that you'll start seeing a higher conversion rate on your content and seeing more return from the hard work you're putting into it.

Überflip

Ready to create your own high-converting content experiences? Request an Uberflip demo to see how you can get started!

Request a demo

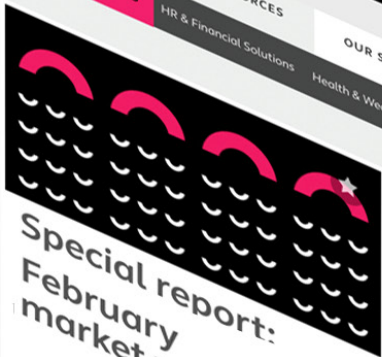Insights & Resources

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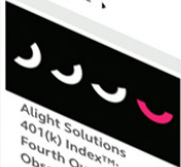
Consumer Experience

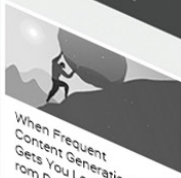Browse By

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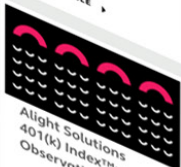
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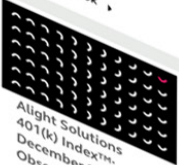
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