



CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGIES

for a **Technical Audience**

Introduction

In a 2017 report, Content Marketing Institute found that 86% of B2C organizations use content marketing. It defines content marketing as “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.”

For advertisers looking to engage with a technical audience, this definition may raise more questions than it answers. What does valuable content look like to a developer who primarily consumes code? How much content do you need for your strategy to be consistent? And given the breakneck speed at which technology evolves, how do you define your ideal developer audience?

In this guide, we'll take an in-depth look at how you can adjust the most tried-and-true content marketing tactics to:

- Build trust with developers through content
- Gain a better understanding of your target audience
- Create a content marketing strategy that drives developer engagement over the long-term

Table of Contents

The Essential Components of a Content Marketing Strategy

Understanding Your Target Audience

Creating a Library of Relevant Content

The Right Set of Content Marketing Goals

Creating Content for a Technical Audience

Promoting Your Content to a Technical Audience

Conclusion

The Essential Components of a Content Marketing Strategy

In its [comprehensive guide](#), HubSpot outlined the necessary headcount required to lead content marketing at companies of all sizes. Among a variety of other tasks, these professionals are responsible for creating original content, optimizing it for organic search, and promoting it on social media channels.

Still, the majority of companies don't have the luxury of large content marketing teams. In its [2018 B2C Content Marketing Benchmarks report](#), Content Marketing Institute found that only 40% of enterprise organizations have a dedicated content marketing team—and that they were more likely than all other respondents to have dedicated content marketers. Additionally, 36% of respondents said that their organizations were in the young/first steps phase of content marketing.

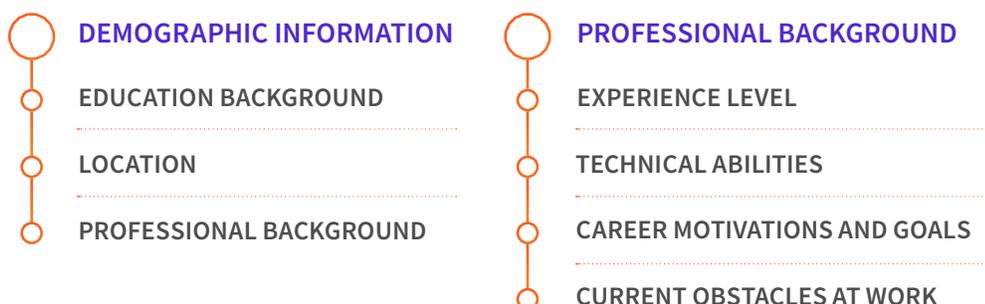
For advertisers without a fully-staffed content team, there are still a few ways to get started. Below are the most essential components of a successful content marketing strategy. Later in the guide, we'll tweak these tactics slightly to tailor them even further for developers.

Understanding Your Target Audience

For most advertising campaigns, your target audience drives what you promote and how you promote it. The same can be said of content marketing. In fact, creating a content library is virtually impossible without a basic understanding of the consumers that you want to engage with.

Content marketers often conduct “buyer persona” research to document and define their ideal audience. Typically, this research involves a combination of market research and interviews with developers in their networks.

Below, you'll find a template that you can use to guide your own persona research and lay the groundwork for a developer-centric content marketing strategy. Because each advertising campaign has different goals and target audiences, you might find it necessary to create multiple developer personas.



A Library of Relevant Content

Once you've identified your ideal audience, the next step is to create a library of content that addresses their most significant needs. But with the saturation of content on the Internet today, determining how much content to produce is a unique challenge.

While a content library should consist of more than just a few whitepapers, it's also important to avoid publishing content just for the sake of publishing it. Ann Handley, Chief Content Officer at MarketingProfs, argues that quality should always come before quantity.



I don't think how much is the right question. It's more about how effective your content is. Focus on whether it's meeting your objectives: Is it igniting conversations? Is it enabling relationships? Is it sparking business?

Ann Handley, Chief Content Officer at MarketingProfs

Rather than focusing on the volume of content that you publish, think more critically about the types of content that your target audience wants to consume. Answer the following questions to get a better understanding of what your content library should look like, rather than how comprehensive it should be, even if you're just getting started.

- What content formats does our target audience typically consume?

NOTE

The most common formats include blog posts, eBooks, and whitepapers. However, you might find that your ideal consumers might prefer podcasts, product tutorials, or videos.

- How much content do we currently have that addresses our customers' needs?

- Where are the current gaps in our content library, and what types of content can we produce quickly to address those gaps?

The Right Set of Content Marketing Goals

How can you determine if your content library is resonating with developers? It's up to you to set your own content marketing goals. The challenge is identifying the right set of outcomes for your developer content. To illustrate this further, let's walk through a couple of common scenarios that an advertiser might face when he or she wants to engage a technical audience.

SCENARIO 1

Your company offers a robust platform that enables Android developers to create usable apps with just a few clicks. Last year, you did not have as many sign-ups as you anticipated, and your marketing team has been tasked with increasing trial memberships by 25%.

In response, you publish a series of whitepapers about the amount of time spent creating and optimizing Android applications. With this in mind, the goal becomes obvious.

GOAL

Create content related to Android development that increases traffic to your sign-up page and grows trial memberships by 25%.

SCENARIO 2

You've just launched a product beta and want to generate additional sign-ups. The product beta will enable Front-End Developers to get real-time feedback from customers on the usability of their websites, without requiring developers to ship any actual updates. Your team has been tasked with generating 150 beta users. In order to drive traffic to your product beta sign-up page, you create a series of blog posts related to the challenges of resolving customer website issues.

GOAL

Increase traffic to your product beta sign-up page, and as a result, generate 150 beta users.

After reviewing some of the basics of content marketing, you might be thinking that these tactics would be effective with a technical audience—and you wouldn't be wrong for making that assumption. But when it comes to developers, it's important to understand the subtle, yet crucial, nuances of brainstorming, creating, and promoting content.

Let's take a more in-depth look at how to apply these basics to a content marketing strategy for developers.

Creating Content for a Technical Audience

In most cases, there are five stages of creating a piece of content, regardless of whether you're writing a blog post, whitepaper, product tutorial, or eBook.



SEO RESEARCH

Based on your persona research, you'll likely have some ideas for topics that your target audience wants to read about. Using these "buyer" personas, content marketers rely on tools like Google Keyword Planner and [Moz Keyword Explorer](#) to research keywords related to those topics. This is a good way to see if you should (or shouldn't) invest the time to create a piece of content about a topic.



BRAINSTORMING AND IDEATION

At this stage, you use your keyword research to create unique ideas related to those search terms. Last year, HubSpot did extensive research that highlighted the merits of creating [topic clusters](#). For example, you might use "Android development" as your pillar, then create shorter pieces related to that pillar, such as debugging common Android bugs and increasing downloads in the Google Play store.



WRITING

Every writer has his or her own process for crafting the first draft of a piece of content. But when it comes to content marketing, there are a few things to always keep in mind, including writing for just one buyer persona, staying true to your brand's voice, and being as clear as possible.



EDITING

This is also a subjective process. But at this stage, editors tend to refine drafts by removing any examples of the passive voice and longer-than-necessary sentences. Additionally, some editors add whitespace to make drafts more readable.



PUBLISHING

This step is much more than clicking a "Publish" button. The publishing phase functions almost like a deadline at a print newspaper. If you commit to publishing new whitepapers once per month, the audience will eventually expect to receive that content each month.

So, how does this differ when you're creating content for a technical audience? Let's walk through each stage again.



KEYWORD RESEARCH AND IDEATION

Notice that we're not using the phrase "SEO Research" here. Additionally, we've combined the first two stages that we reviewed earlier. When you advertise to developers with banner ads or create content for them, you need to ask yourself the same questions. Where do they go for information? Which topics are most interesting to the developers that you want to reach? What are their pain points? Thanks to the conversations that they're having on sites like Stack Overflow and GitHub, advertisers can easily discover content topics and ideas.



WRITING

In our [2018 State of Developer Engagement](#) report, we found that over half of our respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that they enjoy seeing updates from companies that they like. Additionally, those respondents say that advertising can be valuable when it is relevant.

For this stage, think critically about how you can solve a real-world problem for a technical audience. What types of issues are they having using your company's products? What are their most common questions? Rather than offering high-level tips, create pieces such as product tutorials, well-researched whitepapers, and blog posts that address the most frequently asked technical questions about your product.



EDITING

In addition to some of the stylistic choices that we discussed previously, respondents to our State of Developer Engagement survey gave us a few more things to keep in mind while editing content. Programmers enjoy marketing content that seems trustworthy, is honest about its goals, and avoids fluffy language. If a blog post or whitepaper doesn't solve a tangible problem that developers face at work, it will likely fall on deaf ears.



PUBLISHING

To determine an appropriate publishing schedule, continue monitoring the conversations that developers are having about your product. If one issue continues to arise, create a piece of content that resolves (or at least addresses) that problem. If a talking point has a large number of responses on Stack Overflow or GitHub, get involved in the conversation by creating a piece of content that adds something of value to that discussion.

Promoting Your Content to a Technical Audience

Imagine that you've spent weeks creating a blog post that was well-researched and provides incredible value to developers. Now, imagine that you've published it and the engagement numbers you're seeing are low. Your blog post might be incredible, but if nobody is seeing it, you've ultimately wasted your time.

For many non-technical pieces of content, marketers rely on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter to increase exposure to the right audience. The problem is that developers don't visit these sites nearly as often you'd imagine. Instead, they spend their free time on sites like Stack Overflow, Reddit, and GitHub to commiserate with their peers.

Earlier in this guide, we discussed the value of monitoring the conversations that developers have on these sites about your product. These are ideal platforms to promote your content on, as well. For example, [Stack Overflow's Direct-to-Developer ads](#) take your content (technical documentation, tutorials, whitepapers, or video content) and match it to relevant Q&A topics on the site. Not only does this deliver immediate value to the types of programmers you want your content to reach, but it also improves your brand's reputation in the developer community.

Conclusion

In a 1996 essay, Bill Gates proclaimed that [content is king](#). Not much has changed since then, including the expectations that developers have for the online content that they consume today. They value pieces that solve problems for them and make it easier to do their jobs well—especially when they're produced and promoted by companies that they trust.

When you have a library of valuable content for developers, the best practices that we discussed in this guide make it easier to get those pieces in front of the right audience. When programmers trust that your content adds value to their lives, your content marketing strategy can be a lead generation powerhouse over the long term.



Want to amplify your content to technical audiences? Learn more about [Direct-to-Developers on Stack Overflow](#).